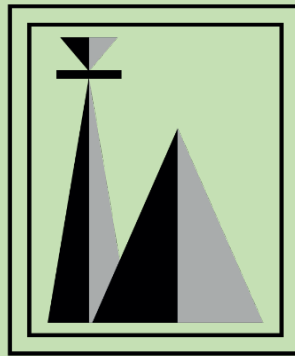


LOOKING BACK

**The Journal of the Historical Society of
Port Elizabeth**



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PORT ELIZABETH
FOUNDED 1959

KYKIES IN DIE VERLEDE

**Die Joernaal van die Historiese
Vereniging van Port Elizabeth**

Volume 63 2024

LOOKING BACK

Volume 63

2024

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Chairman's Report - 2024

During 2024, the Society has further eased out of the restrictions on activities that were brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. Compared to 2023, the number of outings increased, as well as our activities.

Committee

The Society has been in the fortunate position of having Bartle Logie serve as President from 2015 to 2023. Bartle made an immense contribution to the Society with his wide range of contributions over the years. In 2024, Professor Charles Wait, agreed to take on the role of President of the Society.

Charles Wait is an Emeritus Professor in the Department of Economics at Nelson Mandela University with an academic career spanning 46 years. He has taught Economics at universities in the Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Poland, and Germany. He has published widely and served as the Dean of Economic Sciences and as provost Vice-Chancellor at Nelson Mandela University.

Professor Wait, like Bartle Logie, has a deep knowledge of Eastern Cape history, having grown up, lived, worked, and retired in the region. Professor Wait's contribution in 2024 has been supported by a small four-person committee. Throughout the year the 2023 emphasis on meeting regularity, good minutes, brevity, and ease of administration with the use of technological aids, continued. There was a 100% attendance rate of committee meetings during 2024.

Media Outreach

Throughout 2024 the committee continued its interventions to increase the public visibility of the Society through establishing a broader electronic footprint and publishing items in the press. Apart from our website at <https://historicalsocietype.co.za/>, we also have a private group on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1152956971469391>) which has increased to 451 members. We have also established an Instagram page at <https://www.instagram.com/histsocpe/> and will expand our coverage in these media during 2025. Our most popular communication channel is the WhatsApp members group and our regular email mailing list. For any enquiries on joining groups, please email info@historicalsocietype.co.za.

The Society has continued to publish articles in *The Herald*. Over the past year, *The Herald* published our articles on topics as diverse as Fugard and the Main Public Library, Civil Society and Democracy, and Ox

Waggon logistics. As a result, the public profile of the Society has greatly improved, leading to requests to comment on current affairs, with our views having appeared in print and digital media, podcasts, radio, and television. The practice of having media articles reviewed by the committee prior to publication should be continued during 2025.

During 2024 we also invested in branding with the acquisition of a pull-up banner for event presence and the exploration of additional social media channels.

Looking Back

Since its establishment in 1959, the Society has published 143 journals in 63 volumes, with the first volume having been published in 1961. Our 2023 initiative of placing all copies of *Looking Back* on the Society website at <https://historicalsocietype.co.za/> has proven to be extremely popular as evidenced by the website statistics. We are once again receiving requests from libraries to supply copies of journals in terms of the Legal Deposit Act 54 of 1997. The costs of the deposits made by the Society are carried by our membership, but we feel it is an obligatory cost worth paying (given the standing which the Society receives because of the legal deposits).

Due to the availability of digital versions of *Looking Back*, the Society has scaled back its holdings of back copies by making them available at events in *lieu* of a donation. Surplus journals are now stored at our office at No. 7 Castle Hill.

Presentations

The Society has continued to receive requests for presentations and during 2024 we gave presentations at retirement homes, women's groups, Algoa Bay Hope Spot, the Nelson Mandela Business Chamber, Discover Mandela Bay, the Welcoming of the Whales to Algoa Bay festival, and at the Ancient History Society. The Society continues to receive requests for presentations from a broad range of groups, and this popularity bodes well for our long-term growth prospects.

Outings 2024

The Society increased the number of outings during 2024 but is still falling short of its objective of having one outing per month.

In June, the Society attended the *Welcoming of the Whales to Algoa Bay* festival where we spoke on *Global Maritime Trade and the Agulhas Bank*. The Society also hosted a walk for festival attendees, that focussed on the human footprint on the "wild side", from the earliest times to the current day. The walk was well attended, and several kind donations

were made. Now in its seventh year, the festival has grown from strength to strength, and we look forward to continuing our support for the festival in future.

Unfortunately, our planned outing to St Peter's, scheduled for June 2024 was cancelled due to storm damage to the tourism infrastructure of the facility. While we have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Mandela Bay Development Agency (MBDA), it has not yielded the results that we anticipated. St Peter's was originally proposed by the Society, and the late Clayton Holiday, as an outdoor maritime museum and it certainly still holds such potential. However, the fragmented implementation of interpretive information leaves room for improvement and does not do justice to the deep maritime heritage of the city.

In June 2024 we tried hosting talks at Vigne and Howard with a focus on antiques. Talks were given by Jimmy Kirby on the history of auctioneering and Brad Wood gave a talk on decorative mouldings. It was subsequently decided to rather use the premises at *Alliance Francaise* for talks as members preferred cinema style seating for talks.



Visit to Bradshaw's Mill, Bathurst

On 13 July we travelled to Bathurst for an outing hosted by Historic Bathurst. The outing was well attended, and we visited the Methodist and Anglican churches, the Powder Magazine and the Toposcope where Historic Bathurst members treated us to excellent talks on these well conserved facilities.

In July we partnered with the Botanical Society, Dendrological Society, and Fat Tracks Mountain Bike club for a walk on the Ledger Searle Wildflower reserve. Despite a near gale force wind, the event was well attended and showcased the

value that volunteer alien clearing teams and the sporting fraternity are adding to the Baakens Valley by restoring vegetation to its historic past.

In August we toured the Feather Market Hall Centre where we were treated to an outstanding talk by Professor Albert Troskie on the history of the magnificent organ housed in the Centre. A big thank you to Willy de Jongh for making the arrangements for this fascinating tour.

In September, Steve Taylor gave a wonderful talk on Mohair in Port Elizabeth and how we developed into the Mohair capital of the world. Steve is a veteran of the mohair industry, and his talk was enjoyed by a good crowd of people. We used the same Alliance Francaise venue for a talk by Graham Taylor on “Moving Manganese”, that was part of a series of similar presentations, that responded to public demand. An article on the talks, which were also presented at the Madela Bay Yacht Club, and the Port Elizabeth St George’s Club, appears elsewhere in this year’s edition of Looking Back.

Our traditional Christmas lunch was held at *D’Stoep*, a historic house in Richmond Hill. It was well attended and gave an opportunity for many old friends to renew acquaintances over a splendid meal.

Representations to NMBM and the Business Community

Our work on lobbying the NMBM and the business community to protect the historic heart of the city continued over the year. The Main Library Friends continues hosting visitors from cruise ships, however, the security situation in Central remains a challenge. The Society attends fortnightly meetings of the Central Special Ratings Area (SRA), and the work being undertaken by this organisation in supporting cleansing and security in Central is remarkable. Similarly, the Nelson Mandela Bay Business Chamber has been very supportive, and we have confidence that sustained pressure from civil society will make a positive difference in our city – eventually. In our experience working with individual businesses yields the best results. We have continued our lobbying around the property rates legislation to address the continuing degradation of heritage property, particularly within the Central area. We failed with implementation because of the chaotic municipal administration that continues to fail the city. We have submitted countless requests to the NMBM, to the extent that we must question whether the effort is worth the return, but we recognise that non-responsiveness to civil society has come to be a hallmark (if not a strategy) of government. We can only hope for a more efficient administration during 2025. In 2025, we need to intensify our efforts by using diverse forms of media, especially visual media, to ensure that our message of hope gets more widely distributed.

Blue Plaques



During 2024, the Society continued implementing our Blue Plaque programme. We have partnered with the Heritage Association of South Africa for the award of the blue plaques, and the 2024 schools award was made to Collegiate Girls High. The plaques for the schools are supplied from Cape Town by HASA, while our local plaques are manufactured in Jeffrey's Bay. In 2024 the Society awarded the blue plaque to the Serpent Players Garden at 28 Bird Street – the Old Museum.

Publications

The *Donkin and Richmond Hill Heritage Trail*¹, was first published by the Society in 1979, and is now in the 9th edition (2016). Due to public demand, additional copies of the 9th edition were printed in 2023 and are being sold through the Discover Mandela Bay tourism office (with caveats on safety in the area). The Society aimed to issue a 10th edition in 2024, but following consultation with the tourism industry, a more comprehensive planning process for the 10th edition is being undertaken. This is being done in collaboration with the Central Special Ratings Area, the Richmond Hill Special Ratings Area, and the Mandela Bay Tour Guides Association.

Professor Wait and Graham Taylor have been editing CJ Skead's *Early Frontier Footprints*, with the view to reviving the Port Elizabeth series, the last – Series 7 – having been published in 1982. We hope to complete this project, and other potential projects in the digital publishing realm in 2025 following an assessment of market viability and an incentive scheme to support such publications.

Graham Taylor

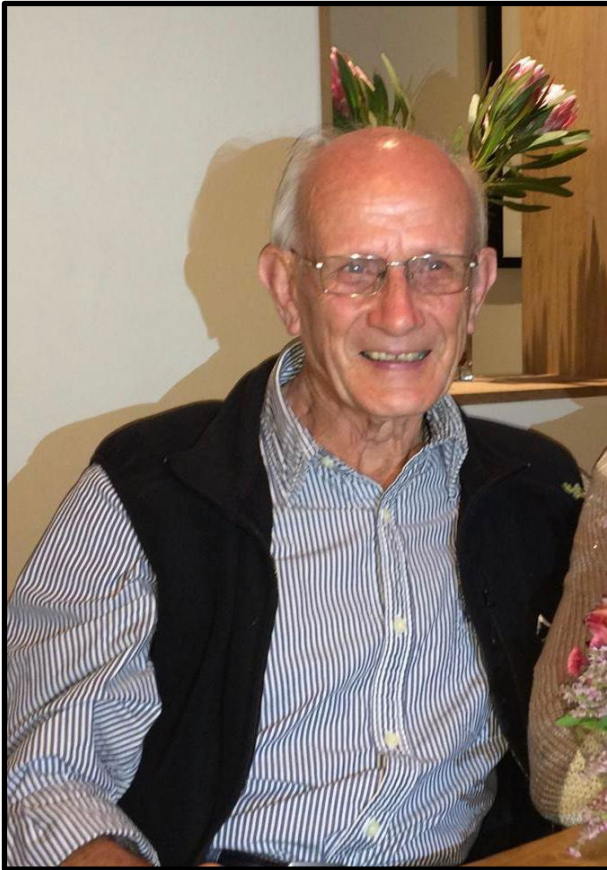
Chair: Historical Society of Port Elizabeth

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¹ Harradine, M. Bennie, J. and Tomlinson, R. 2016. *The Donkin Heritage Trail and Richmond Hill Trail: Two walking tours of Central Port Elizabeth*. Port Elizabeth: Historical Society of Port Elizabeth.

Obituary: Richard Tomlinson (1935-2024)

By: Coleen O Brien



Richard Tomlinson (1935-2024)

The year 2024 ended on a very sad note with the passing of Richard Tomlinson on 23 December 2024. Richard was a dedicated member and former Chairman of the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth and served as the editor of *Looking Back* for many years. Richard and his wife Jill, who passed away in March 2023, were stalwarts of the Society.

Richard was born at Butterton in the West Midlands county of Staffordshire in the UK on 11 June 1935. He was the youngest of four siblings.

His father worked for the family tile and brick business in Stoke-on-Trent. Richard grew up in the Staffordshire countryside during

WW2, attending Kingsland Grange and later Glengorse Preparatory School where he boarded. Senior school years were spent at Wrekin College, in accordance with family tradition.

Growing up in the countryside during the war years, Richard said that he wasn't really aware of the effects of the war, except for rationing, particularly the rationing of sweets, and collecting shrapnel and spent bullets after bombing raids on the nearby town, which were swapped with friends. What finally caught his attention was, on the way to school, finding out that the local sweetshop had been demolished by a landmine that had been dropped by parachute. He said that he never forgave Hitler for that. After moving to Shrewsbury, he and his brother would sit on the steps outside their house and see the British bombers on their way to bomb Germany as well as the German bombers on their way to bomb the docks at Liverpool.

Holidays were spent in various areas around the countryside of England and Wales. When his father was home at weekends, they would go on long bike rides in country lanes. One treat was to be taken by car to a disused railway halt on the London to Crewe line to watch the steam

locomotives pass. A particular treat was to see the *Flying Scotsman* thundering past on its way to Scotland.

During the post war years, Richard used his school holidays to cycle to various areas of England and Wales, usually with his brother. One memorable holiday from Wrekin was spent hitchhiking around Italy, seeing the great architecture and exploring the Italian countryside.

Richard qualified as a building surveyor, specialising in wood science. His work in the UK and in South Africa was mainly as a damp-proofing specialist, a career no doubt inspired by his interest in historical buildings, that began at age 12 and continued throughout his life.

Jill and Richard met at the Commonwealth Club near Trafalgar Square in London. They married on 25 June 1960. They had three children – Geoff, Nicky and Juliet.

Richard and Jill emigrated to Pretoria South Africa in 1975, where he set up a home for his family, before their arrival on the Windsor Castle in March 1975. After several years living in Pretoria, they relocated to Port Elizabeth in 1989, which remained his home till his passing. His family were the most important thing in his life, making for many happy family outings and get-togethers over the years.

Richard was known for his passion for history, especially military history. He was a member of the National Trust in England, giving him access to a wide range of stately homes. His son Geoff has fond memories of annual holidays visiting sites across England and Wales with family and friends.

Richard brought his enthusiasm for history to his adopted country. He was a member of several societies and his contributions to the Military History Society of the Eastern Cape, the Genealogical Society of South Africa and the Cannon Association of South Africa are highly regarded. He was also a member of the Fortress Study Group in the UK for many years, resulting in his appointment to the International Editorial Board of the Group.

But he was most passionate about the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth, serving as Vice-chairman and Chairman. He brought his renowned editing skills to the numerous editions of the Looking Back journal, serving as the editor for many years. He also authored numerous articles for Looking Back.

Several articles written by Richard were also published in journals such as the South African Military History Journal, the Fort International Journal of Military Architecture, and Casemate, the newsletter of the Fortress

Study Group. Richard's articles dealt with various aspects of local history, particularly the blockhouses of the Eastern Cape. He would visit the sites of the various forts and blockhouses and measure and accurately record the sites. His records were meticulously filed and are a treasure trove of information on the subject. His notes have been made available to the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth and have also been placed with military history institutions.

Richard had a love for music with a wide range of tastes, ranging from classical music such as Bach, to Françoise Hardy, to rock music such as Jethro Tull and Queen. His love for serious music was inherited from his father who took him and his brother to symphony concerts with famous orchestras and soloists in Hanley, one of the Pottery towns. At Wrekin, Richard found himself in the choir. The choirmaster and Head of Music at the school was a Doctor of Music and Fellow of the Royal College of Organists who instilled in Richard a lifelong love of organ music.

He was also known for his sense of humour, influenced by Spike Milligan and the Goons.

The most important thing in Richard's life was his family. Everything that he did, was with them in mind. Christmas time was a special family time for both him and Jill and that tradition has been passed on in the family.

Richard was always a gentleman. The family was struck with the number of messages received from people they do not know, all attesting to the kindness and generosity always shown by both him and Jill.

Richard was truly a gentleman and a gentle man. He will be sorely missed by his family and his passing is a great loss to the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth and to the city.

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Gallimaufry

Gallimaufry has been a regular feature of Looking Back for many years, first appearing in September 1961 (Volume 1, No 3) and last making an appearance in 2021 (Volume 60, No 1). As noted in the 2017 journal (Looking Back, Volume 2017, No1), 16th century Middle-French cooks made a meat stew called *galimafree*, subsequently adapted to *gallimaufry*, with a variety of meanings including “hash” or “potpourri”. In Looking Back, *gallimaufry* became the place where the editors could place all those odd items that happen during the year.

For many years the stalwart of the Society, Alfred Porter, the City Librarian, contributed *gallimaufry* under the name of “*Khitab*”, making regular contributions from 1961 for a period 20 years. Porter had spent four years with the RAF during World War II in the Ganges Delta, India, where he learnt the local language. *Khitab* was the name given to him by local people, and Porter used it as his *non-de-plume* in compiling and editing many editions of Looking Back.

During 2024, several items arose that are deserving of a mention in the journal.

Alfred Porter Collection

The daughter of Alfred Porter, Isobel Lemmer (née Porter) relocated from Schoenmakerskop to Kruger Gardens. Isobel kindly donated many of Alfred Porter’s books to the Society. The Main Public Library has a section dedicated to the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth where noteworthy publications and donations to the Society are catalogued and managed as reference texts. Alfred Porter (1910-1998) was a founding member of the Society, having arrived in Port Elizabeth from Lancashire in 1947. His contributions to Port Elizabeth over the years were immense, being instrumental in theatre (PEMADS and the Shakespearean Festival) and the Main Public Library.

One of Porter’s keen interests was shipping, a maritime interest carried over from another former City Librarian – Mr Cooper – who had collected most of the ship’s models currently in the library. The book collection donated by Isobel Porter will represent a valuable addition to the library, to support the development of the maritime heritage theme being proposed by the Society. The value of the collection is not in the individual books, but in the collection as a unit – a classic case of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. The collection reflects the interests and intellectual tradition of a key period in Port Elizabeth history.

The Harry Healing Collection

In pursuit of more information on the maritime heritage of the city, we came across a newspaper article by Keith Sutton in the Evening Post of Wednesday 13 September 1978. Sutton tells the story of Harry Healing who was Bucknall's shipping agent in Port Elizabeth for many years and later joined African Shipping group. As Sutton puts it, Healing had "one foot in the harbour and one on the beach all his life". Photography was Healing's hobby and with his interest in shipping, he amassed a collection of 50 to 60 thousand negatives of shipping photos. Sutton urged that the city should not lose these photos, as had happened to the Arthur Green collection that had been acquired by the Africana Museum (now MuseuMAfricA, Johannesburg).

That set off a quest to find the Harry Healing collection of photos and demonstrated the power of internet technologies. Within a period of six hours, Harry Healing (1903-1993) had been located through www.familysearch.org, and his descendants were contacted. Sadly, it appears that the entire collection of photographic negatives is lost. We appreciate that modern technology creates obsolescence, and its often difficult to retain older formats, but we should try, as technology has provided some remarkable solutions to retain such records.

The photographic records of ships visiting South African shorelines would have been a remarkable maritime heritage resource, especially such a complete record as that captured by Harry Healing. We urge our readers to please consult with the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth or the Africana section of the Main Public Library in managing material that may be of historical value to the city.

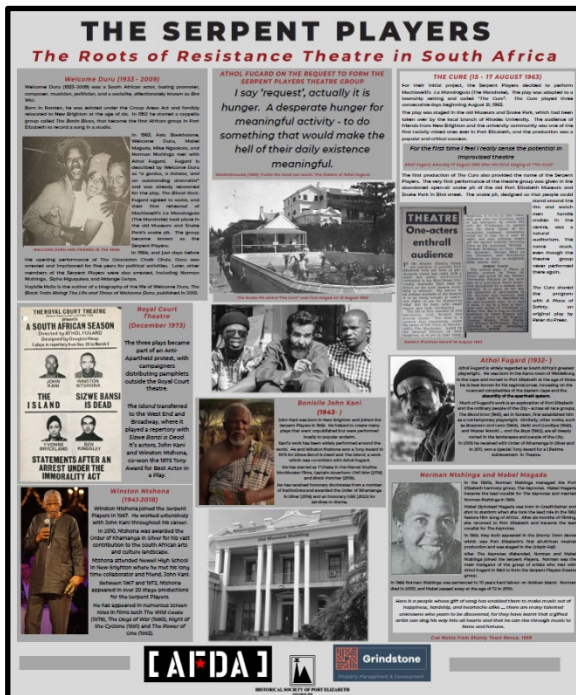
Richard Tomlinson donation

A long-time contributor to the Society passed away on 23 December 2024. Richard was renowned for his meticulous records, his editing skills, and his lifelong interest in military fortifications. Richard, being Richard, neatly compiled all his records and books with specific instructions that they be donated to the Society. His books and records have been catalogued for placement in the Society repository at the Main Public Library. His field notes on military fortifications are a particularly valuable record for any future researchers to consult. Over the years, Richard also compiled a complete set of leather bound Looking Back journals, much like our holding at the Main Public Library. The committee decided to donate the set to the reference library of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum. It's an apt placement, as our former chairman and chief founder of the Society, Eleanor Lorimer, was the Director of the King

George VI Art Gallery (subsequently renamed to the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum). As noted in her retirement address, as chairman of the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth, the early days of the Society and that of the King George VI Art Gallery were “inextricably mixed”. She came to the city to start the Art Gallery, and the Society developed from the public interest in exhibitions held at the Art Galleryⁱ.

The Serpent Players

In November 2024, the Society partnered with the private sector to establish the Serpent Players Garden. The property is widely known as the Old Museum. It was originally a dwelling house for the merchant, Henry Rutherford, built in 1861. In 1896 it became the home of cartage contractor and hotelier, Adam White Guthrie, who became the Mayor of Port Elizabeth from 1912 to 1915. His legatees left the property to the Port Elizabeth Museum with alterations and additions being done by the architect Hendrick Siemerink.



Interpretive sign in the garden

From 1919 to 1961 the property housed the Museum and Snake Park. After the relocation of the Museum and Snake Park to new premises in Humewood, the Old Museum housed the extra-mural activities of Rhodes University until it was taken over by the University of Port Elizabeth. The University of Port Elizabeth disposed of the property, and it is currently managed as a commercial property by Grindstone Property Management and Development. Grindstone has a remarkable ethos of commitment to the heritage character of Central, and AFDA use the building as a school for the creative economy. AFDA was established in 1994 and 2024 was its 30th year of operation, and 2025 will be the 10th anniversary of its Port Elizabeth campus. AFDA was originally an acronym for Africa Film Drama Art, but over the past three decades AFDA has come to be known as one of the leading creative economy institutions of its kind in the world. AFDA currently has over 2700 students and 260 staff on its four campuses in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth.

ⁱ Lorimer, E.K. 1972. How it all started. Looking Back, Vol 12(3):70.

The Serpent Players Garden took shape from months of discussions with other institutional role players, including AFDA, Bay Action Network Alliance, Dendrological Society, Grindstone and the Main Public Library Friends. It was recognised that the Old Museum had a remarkable story that should be told through a garden, interpretive signage, and a blue plaque.

The Serpent Players were a theatre group from New Brighton that was established in July 1963 when they first rehearsed in the snake pit of the Old Museum, from which the name of the group was derived. The abandoned snake pit at the Old Museum premises was used as a stage, with the audience around the walls of the snake pit looking down on the actors below. The group was comprised of mostly black actors who worked as a clerk, teachers, a bus driver and domestic servants. The first production was an adaptation by Athol Fugard of Machiavelli's satirical play *La Mandragola* which was adapted to a New Brighton situation using an African cast.

The stars of the Serpent Players went on to win international acclaim in theatre. Athol Fugard is one of South Africa's outstanding writers, and playwrights. As William Henry, the Pulitzer winning author said in 1985, "Fugard is the greatest active playwright in the English-speaking world". Fugard's regional prose on the complexity of the Eastern Cape and the absurdity of the apartheid system, launched a Tony winning career and he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) in 1993. The Tonys are the Oscars of theatre, and Fugard won it in 2011 for his lifetime contribution, while Winston Ntshona and John Kani jointly won best actor awards in 1975, in plays co-written with Fugard. The Serpent Players conceptualised and co-authored many plays, including the classic works of *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *The Island*, for which Ntshona and Kani jointly won the Tony award for Best Actor in a Play. Ntshona received an honorary doctorate from UPE in 1996 and Kani was honoured with a doctorate by Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University 2013.

Plants of the thicket biome were rescued from development at the Coega Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and relocated to the AFDA campus where an indigenous garden was established. The garden was thematically interpreted with a blue plaque, stainless steel mongering, seven interpretive boards and twenty plant identifiers with snap scan bar codes. The garden was launched on 14 November 2024 and received good coverage in the press.

The Society unveiled a blue plaque at the launch of the garden where guests were entertained by productions from AFDA students and talks

from the Campus Dean, Mr Mark Wilby and Mr Rory Riordan, author of a forthcoming book on Athol Fugard.

We've still got a lot of ongoing work on the garden to complete, including capability building of gardeners, the collection of the rare forms of *Aloe*, and additional signage interpreting the "Lessons from Aloes" thicket gardening theme. The owners and occupants of the Old Museum are to be commended for this outstanding example of how heritage features can enhance property to a theme aligned with the historical and current use of the building.

As Winston Ntshona said in 1973. The Serpent Players *believe in art. We also believe in life. We believe that art is life and conversely, life is art. And no sensible man can divorce one from the other. That's it. Other attributes are mere labels.*

The Serpent Players Garden is open to the public by prior arrangement. Bookings can be made with AFDA by phoning 041-5821266 or emailing pecampus@afda.co.za.

The Livingstone Cottage

During August of 2023 it was brought to the Society's attention that a wall of the David Livingstone Cottage located at the Bethelsdorp Congregational Church had partially collapsed.



Collapsed Wall of the Livingstone Cottage

The Historical Society of Port Elizabeth's involvement with the Bethelsdorp Mission Station dates to 1970 when our Society published Schauder's "*The Historic Village of Bethelsdorp*"ⁱ. In 1988/89 we coordinated restoration work on the original alms houses and lobbied for the facility to be formally protected, and it was subsequently declared a national monument in 1999. In 2003 our Society restored the church windows and upgraded the David Livingstone cottageⁱⁱ.

An inspection of the facility in August 2023 indicated that the northwest wall of the cottage had partially collapsed. The Society consulted Prof Albrecht Herholdt who recommended the use of an experienced

ⁱ Schauder, C.D. 1970. *The Historic Village of Bethelsdorp*. Port Elizabeth: Historical Society of Port Elizabeth.

ⁱⁱ Bennie, 2003. *Bethelsdorp Mission Station*. Looking Back, Vol 42(1):26.

heritage builder, Mr John McIntosh, for the repair.

Following a period of vacillation on who takes responsibility for the facility, we facilitated the issuing of a permit in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) and appointed Mr McIntosh to undertake the work once the permit was approved.

Using techniques specified for a heritage building of this nature, Mr McIntosh did an excellent job in rebuilding the collapsed wall, repairing numerous cracks of a structural nature, and restoring the building's interior and exterior.

The Bethelsdorp Mission is of considerable heritage value and there are clear opportunities for the development of a more comprehensive approach to heritage interpretation within the broader area. There is an imperative for developing an integrated approach to heritage management and our concerns have been articulated to authorities and the broader community.

In late 2024, the Society was also called out to assist the community with a blatant transgression by the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in their excavation of a sewerage line through the church cemetery. The Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority (ECPHRA) is to be commended for their intervention and response to the destruction of heritage that took place.



The completed restoration of Livingstone Cottage

Jacob Petrus (Jeep) Snyman (1936-1975)ⁱ

In 2024, the Society worked on projects focussed on the historical heart of the city. Whether the Livingstone Cottage, the Donkin, Market Square, or the Public Library, one name stood out when reading past editions of Looking Back. Professor “Jeep” Snyman was a vocal advocate for the protection and development of the historical character of the city. In 1970 he was an outspoken opponent of the Baakens Valley Parkway that would have resulted in the demolition of City Hall, the Main Public Library, the Feathermarket Hall and numerous other historical structures, for the purpose of, *inter alia*, establishing a freeway network up the Baakens Valley. Snyman’s views of “*man’s relationship with the environment*”, freeways, and the “*preservation of the future*”ⁱⁱ challenged the status quo, putting him in conflict with the policy frameworks of the time. Snyman initiated the establishment of the Department of Architecture and Building Science at the University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) in 1970. One of our members, Gavin McLachlan, was amongst his first intake of students. From the initial intake of 30 students, that quickly dropped to 15, there was widespread appreciation for Snyman’s efforts. The Department started off in Annerley House on the corner of Annerley Terrace and Cuyler Street in 1970. In 1971 the students were accommodated in the Feathermarket Hall, and in 1973, the Department moved to the Old Museum complex at 28 Bird Street, Central. The students wholeheartedly supported Snyman’s opposition to the plan for a freeway up the Baakens, and Snyman went on to take a similar stand against the proposal by the then Minister of Defence, PW “*Groot Krokodil*” Botha, for an N2 Knysna bypass. The proposal entailed a direct freeway link between Plettenberg Bay and George, Botha’s home constituency. Amongst the UPE students, it was rumoured that Botha victimised Snyman for his stand, which was followed by Snyman’s resignation from UPE in 1972. Snyman subsequently joined the University of Cape Town as Professor in Construction Management. On 25 March 1975, Professor Snyman took his own life in his office at the University of Cape Town. All too often, brave and outspoken opposition to dominant ideas, comes at great personal cost.

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ⁱ For a biography see: <https://artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/archframes.php?archid=2507>. Additional information supplied by Dr Gavin McLachlan by personal interview, 05 February 2025.

ⁱⁱ Snyman, J.P. 1970. *Preservation of the Future: Talk to the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth – 12 October 1970*. Looking Back, Vol 10(4):117-155.

Moving Manganese: Road to Hell or Gateway to Prosperity?

By: Graham Taylorⁱ

Despite the importance of Port Elizabeth as a bulk ore export port, past editions of Looking Back barely mention the export of manganese ore from Port Elizabeth, or for that matter, iron ore. There is one mention of the ore plant for iron and manganese ore commencing operations in April 1963ⁱ, while four other instances are cited where two vessels sank while loaded with cargoes of manganese oreⁱⁱ. In 1975, Williams and Huisman² provided an overview of the development of railways and harbours and gave a summary of the capacity for ore export through Port Elizabeth port. The year 1970 was viewed as an epoch-making feat as 8000 tons were conveyed from the Northern Cape mines to Port Elizabeth in one train of 100 waggons (80 tons per CR waggon), and the capacity of ore storage bins at the ore berth had been increased to 380,000 tons. It was estimated that by 1975 an annual export target of 6 million tons per annum (mtpa) would be exported.

In 1975, both iron and manganese ore were being exported from Port Elizabeth, and long-time residents will remember the white townhouses of South End stained a pinkish colour from iron ore dust. Today, the townhouses are no longer white. They are painted in more neutral colours to mask the black stain of manganese dust, the export channel for iron ore having relocated to the Port of Saldanha in 1976.

The management of manganese ore has become a challenge for the city. On the one hand, manganese is an important contributor to the South African, and city, economy. In 2023, South Africa sold 21.1 million tonnes of manganese ore at a value of R46.8 billion, with 85.7% exported. The South African export volume of manganese ore is approximately 18 mtpa, yet the export capacity of the Port Elizabeth bulk ore terminal is still capped at a maximum capacity of 6mtpa, and even that is rarely reached. The limitations of the rail network and bulk ore handling facilities have resulted in vast amounts of manganese being transported by road, with devastating consequences for the road networks of the country and air quality³.

This paper provides an historical overview of manganese ore in the city, with the view to understanding current constraints of the industry and

ⁱ Graham Taylor is the Chairman of the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth and spokesperson for the Markman Business Forum. He worked for Transnet on the Ore Berth in Port Elizabeth in the 1980s and was responsible for Spatial Development and Trade Facilitation at the Coega Development Corporation from 2003 to 2023.

ⁱⁱ The *Kapodistrias* on Thunderbolt reef in July 1985, and the *Helmspey* in 1943, the latter having been sunk by a U-Boat.

contributing to a better understanding of potential solutions for addressing the challenges associated with the mineral. Given the importance of manganese for the economy and the associated externalities (pollution and damage to infrastructure) talks on the topic were hosted by the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth at the Mandela Bay Yacht Club (14/09/2024), the Alliance Francaise (03/10/2024), and the Port Elizabeth St George's Club (08/10/2024). With the high levels of public interest, and the appreciation expressed by the public for the talks, requests were made for the author to document the presentations for publication in Looking Back. This article has been prepared based on the presentations made by the author.

Grand Plans (Dreams) and *Jan se Plan* (Problems)

The economy of Nelson Mandela Bay centres around what can be termed the big five sectors: horticulture; automotive; ore exports; tourism; and animal fibre and products. Our development within these five sectors has been a tension between all-encompassing grand plans for economic development by government, and that one characteristic of the Eastern Cape - people responding to adversity and solving a problem in the most extraordinary circumstances. The most apt term to describe the tension is *Jan se Plan*. It's derived from that Afrikaans term, *Boer maak 'n Plan*, as a reference to the resourcefulness and ingenuity that people have when faced with adversity and challenges. *Jan* is an inclusive term, of all people, and for that matter animals. It describes that resilient combativeness of Eastern Cape people best described by our greatest playwright and writer of regional prose - Athol Fugard.

So how has this tension found expression in the big five economic sectors? Horticulture is about intensive cultivation and the two citrus farming valleys west and east of the city are examples. In the Gamtoos Valley, the struggles of communities against flooding are well documented⁴. Whether it was the missionary village of Hankey or commercial farmers of Patensie, their struggles were the same. Amid grand promises of irrigation schemes, such schemes only became productive through intense individual struggles with adversity. In the Sunday's River Valley, Jane Meiring has meticulously documented⁵ the bankruptcy of James Somers Kirkwood, the grand plans of Fitzpatrick, government recapitalisation of agricultural schemes, the struggles in the development of Enon – an early mission village - and the ultimate development of the Valley through the sheer tenacity and resolve of farmers. The story of Normal Thal and Frootall, to profit from the losses of spoilt citrus by making fruit juice, is a remarkable story of

entrepreneurial innovation in the face of adversity⁶. Similarly, our automotive assembly industry started in a disused wool shed in Grahamstown Road in 1923⁷. The animal fibre industry, the story of wool and mohair is also one of struggle against adversity. The early government farm scheme of Charles Somerset was doomed to failure with the closure of the Somerset Farm in Somerset East in 1825, yet its manager, Robert Hart, went on to become one of the first and finest breeders of Merino sheep in the Cape⁸. It was enterprising Eastern Cape farmers, struggling with the most meagre resources, that developed the breeds of Angora goats that made Port Elizabeth the mohair capital of the world⁹. Tourism is another remarkable story of entrepreneurial endeavour. Our Eden of biodiversity is well documented¹⁰, our tourism attractions are dependent on it, and our most popular and profitable destinations are in the hands of the private sector. Iconic initiatives such as Amakhala, Schotia and Shamwari were all developed with entrepreneurial verve. They were smaller, less scenic and suffering the consequences of years of agricultural abuse, when compared to the Addo National Elephant Park, yet they still rank as the top safari destinations in the region.

This article focuses on the fifth of the big five economic sectors, the one barely mentioned in past editions of Looking Back – manganese. At the core of all sectors, is logistics, that cross cutting process of managing how economic resources are acquired, stored and transported to their destination. Historically, it has been in logistics that the Eastern Cape story of tenacity has been shaped by the struggles of entrepreneurial effort. Manganese and logistics tell a story of the development of a nation and the tenacity of continuing struggle, under the most difficult circumstances – the story of the Eastern Cape.

The Interior Trade Routes

Our perceptions of trade routes are inevitably shaped by conceptions of colonial expansion in South Africa – concentrated around the Cape of Good Hope initially, followed by the gradual expansion towards the East. Rarely is consideration given to the influence of the ancient trade routes which predate colonialism by several centuries. Ancient long distance trade networks existed well before the advent of colonialism, with the main goods being cattle, copper, dagga, and iron. Evidence suggests that copper, dagga and iron – all commodities originating from the interior, were already at the coast when the first Portuguese visitors reached the shores of the Southern Cape in 1488. Long distance trade between the Khoisan in the coastal areas of the Southern Cape, and the

interior of the Northern Cape, was a regular and important facet of Khoisan life¹¹. Topography and Khoisan knowledge of the interior trade routes placed Port Elizabeth at the forefront of constructing logistics networks into the interior. One of the city's earliest entrepreneurs, John Paterson, a founder of Standard Bank, mapped a hypothetical network of railways which covered Southern Africa, and his 1855 map shows a remarkable resemblance to South Africa's current rail network¹², clearly depicting the alignment of the existing rail linkages to the iron and manganese ore deposits of the Northern Cape. Early missionary travels in 1812¹³ indicate Bethelsdorp as a centre of an ox waggon industry, where Khoisan inhabitants owned oxen and waggon, and were earning income as waggoneers. By 1820, the Khoisan at Bethelsdorp owned 50 waggons and transported goods for the first wave of English settlers¹⁴. The Khoisan knowledge of the trade routes into the interior is further demonstrated by David Livingstone equipping his expedition into the interior of Africa from Bethelsdorp in 1841, having his waggons constructed there, and using their waggoneers to drive the waggons to Kuruman¹⁵.

But it was the 1866 discovery of diamonds in the Northern Cape that became the economic driver for the construction of rail into the interior, with Port Elizabeth commencing rail construction in 1872, in direct competition with Cape Town. The outcome of the race for rail to Kimberley was declared a draw when the Cape Town and Port Elizabeth rail lines converged on De Aar and were officially opened for traffic on 31 March 1884. On 28 November 1885, the first train steamed into Kimberley – the diamond capital¹⁶ - thereby sounding the death knell for the use of ox waggons on the logistics corridor into the interior.

Manganese in the Northern Cape¹⁷ⁱ

Mining brought construction and with modern construction came a steel imperative, all of which was imported. Ironically, the imported steel used for building settlements and industry in the Northern Cape, held some of the world's largest reserves of iron and manganese ores – the base minerals for steel manufacturing. The foundation of the industrial revolution was steel, and the Bessemer Process first enabled the mass production of steel in 1856, and manganese is the essential alloy that converts iron to steel. Britain, Germany, and the United States

ⁱ This section has been shaped by a remarkable book commissioned by Samancor, published in 1977. Until the demographic transition of 1994, two companies dominated Manganese exports: Assmang and Samancor. The book is an authoritative account of the development of the manganese ore industry from 1922 to 1977.

dominated steel production and demand for the base minerals – iron and manganese ores - soared.

In the Northern Cape, the focus was on diamonds, and characters such as Cecil John Rhodes and Barney Barnato, whether considered charismatic rogues or honourable imperialists, monopolised the mines, establishing the British Empire as the world's dominant economy, on the back of South African gold and diamonds. Steel production soared in Britain, Germany, and the United States and within a few decades demand was peaking, while their local sources of iron and manganese ores were being depleted.

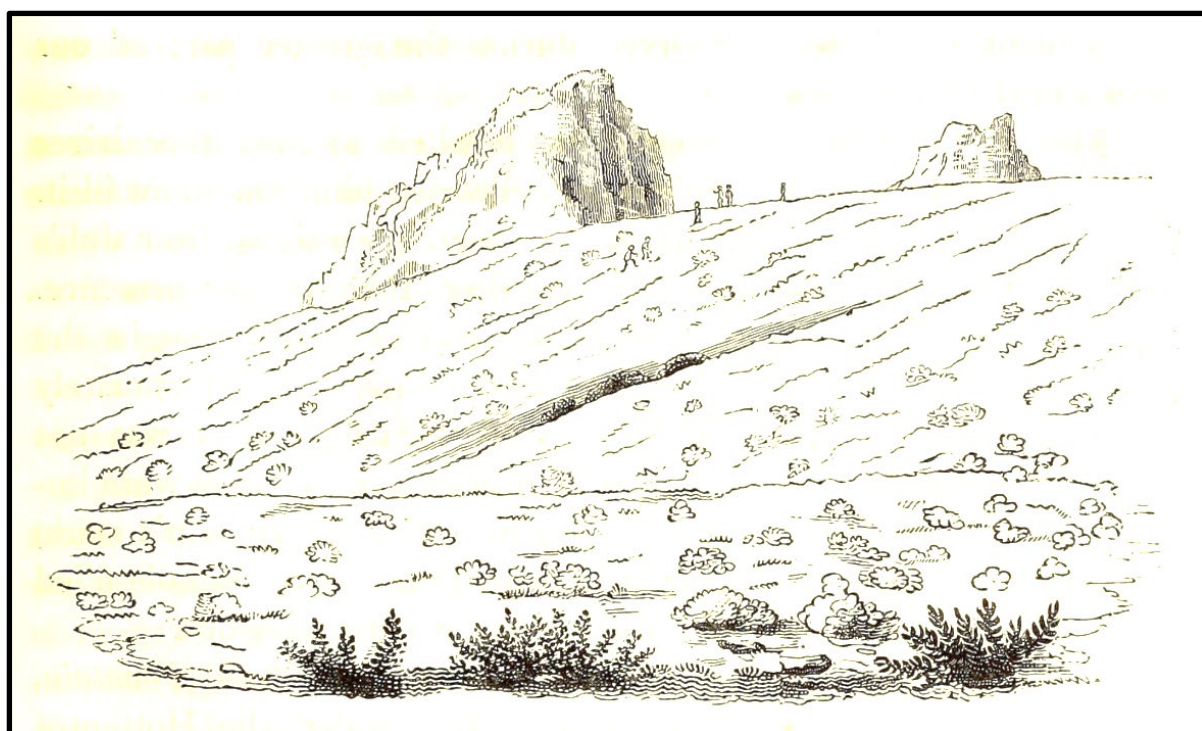


Figure 1 - Burchell's 1812 Drawing of the Khoisan / Tswana mine at Black Rock

Geologists first identified the Black Rock manganese deposit near Postmasburg in 1906, but the area was 350km north of Kimberley and was isolated. The sand containing iron ore was a nuisance to cattle and the black rock of no value. Amongst the Khoisan and Tswana, the manganese was a valued commodity known as *Blink-klip* – shining rock - by the Khoisan, and *sibilo* by the Tswana, and they mined it. In 1812, William Burchell¹⁸ recorded the ground manganese ochre as being traded across an area of at least 5 degrees latitude. For comparative purposes, Graaff Reinet is approximately 5 degrees south of Black Rock mine, about 580 kilometres. The manganese was ground by the Khoisan and Tswana, mixed with animal fat, and applied over the body, mainly on the head. Burchell also used the manganese in the preparation of the paints for his renowned water-colour drawings and oil-paintings.

At Black Rock and surrounding areas, Burchell records evidence of open pit mining (Figure 1). In addition, instances of mine deaths were also recorded, where the roof of the rock collapsed onto Tswana miners, thereby providing clear evidence of mining, long-distance trade and indigenous use of manganese well before the arrival of the first colonialists.

While the foundries of Europe and North America needed the mineral, it was impossible to get it there from South Africa. When the first manganese company was established in 1925, international buyers could not be found, as the resource was too far from the nearest railway located at Kimberley. But international demand was high, and the local South African steel industry was in the throes of being established with the South African Iron and Steel Corporation (Iskor) enacted in 1926. In 1927, the South African Railways agreed to extend the railway line from Kimberly to Postmasburg, pending financial guarantees from the mining companies. Guarantees were provided, and the railway line was completed in 1930, but the financial commitments resulted in near liquidation for the mining companies. The Great Depression ruined world demand for steel, and markets only recovered when South Africa went off the gold standard in 1932, and steel demand peaked with the armaments build-up for the looming Second World War.

Manganese ore was transported by road truck to Postmasburg, for onward rail transport to the Durban port for export. Following intense lobbying from the mining industry, the South African Railways finally assented to providing services for the transport of manganese ore, without insisting on large financial guarantees. The large guarantees were crippling the finances of the mining companies and destabilising them when manganese demand periodically dropped. By 1936, the production of manganese ore was 250,000 tons per annum with most being exported, and a small volume being used by Iskor. The Second World War peaked demand for manganese, but there were severe shortfalls in rail rolling stock to Durban, particularly as facilities had to be shared with coal exports. In the 1950's, new mining areas for high-grade manganese were opened at Black Rock and Wessels mines, but the costs of trucking to the nearest railway line were exorbitant and the South African Railways again demanded guarantees for the construction of the line. Again, the mining companies, wary of their disastrous experience of 1929 which had placed them in such financial distress, negotiated. Finally, the railway lines were built when the miners and the South African Railways agreed to a special levy per rail truck used.

By 1960, the railway line to Hotazelⁱ had been completed, but manganese exports were now being directed to Port Elizabeth for export, at the insistence of the mining companies. Port Elizabeth was preferred as land in Durban was scarce, and the railway line between Kimberly and Durban was congested.

Manganese Ore in Nelson Mandela Bay

The impetus for Port Elizabeth as the manganese export port came from the private sector. In 1955 the John T Rennie Consolidated group had initiated ore exports (both iron and manganese) from Port Elizabeth using buckets and shovels to load the ships. Stockpiles were established at New Brighton and behind North End prison. By 1960, 520,000 tons were being exported annually from Port Elizabeth¹⁹. When ships called at the port, excavators loaded trucks with ore for road haul to the port, whereafter it was manually loaded onto the waiting ship, by shovel and bucket. The financial risks to the stevedoring company were high as any delays led to demurrage penalties.

Work on a dedicated ore berth at Port Elizabeth commenced in 1957. The ore handling facility at Port Elizabeth was completed in 1963 with a handling capacity of 2 million tons per annum (mtpa) and resulted in Port Elizabeth becoming the most profitable port in the South African port system²⁰. From 1963, iron ore exports through Port Elizabeth escalated and continued until the late 1970's when the Sishen – Saldanha line was established by the steel parastatal, Iscor. As recently as 1975, Port Elizabeth was still the second largest port in South Africa in terms of cargo handled²¹. However, in the 1970's, government made the decision to establish two new bulk commodity ports - Saldanha for iron ore and Richards Bay for coal. The 1970's decision to establish a bulk materials export channel through Saldanha was taken in the context of Japanese contracts with the South African government for iron ore and other resources²², and was associated with steel works for the beneficiation of iron ore being established at both Sishen and Saldanha. At the time, the option of establishing a higher capacity iron ore export channel through Coega was considered (off St Croix Island), but the Saldanha decision was motivated on cost projections largely based on the advantages of beneficiation facilities at Saldanha²³.

The decision to establish a new ore port at Saldanha and the construction of the Sishen-Saldanha line was a pivotal one in contemporary South African history, forever changing the geographies

ⁱ The small town closest to Black Rock mine, located 147km north of Postmasburg.

of trade and regional economics. At the height of apartheid, and with economic sanctions looming, the National Party government pursued large infrastructural developments to stabilise economic growth. The 1970s, also known as the Vorster yearsⁱ, yielded epoch changing projects such as: the Verwoerd dam (now Gariep); the Orange-Fish irrigation scheme bringing irrigation water to the Fish and Sundays rivers, and potable water to Port Elizabeth; chemical production through SASOL; energy from the Koeberg nuclear power station and numerous coal power stations; the underwater telephonic cable to Europe; Richards Bay for coal and aluminium exports, and; the Saldanha project, comprising an iron ore mine at Sishen, a Cape standard gauge rail line from Sishen to Saldanha (known as the Orex line), and processing and export facilities at Saldanha Bay.

Over a period of six years, the two options were raised in parliament, studied and debated. Saldanha was agreed as the preferred option; and loading, rail, and export facilities were built at Saldanha, with the first export taking place in 1976.



Figure 2 – Model of the 1970 proposal for ore exports from St Croix Island (Source: Nelson Mandela Bay Business Chamber, photographic archive)

Hendrich²⁴ has undertaken an archivally based study of primary sources for what he terms the “battle of the ports”, over the period 1970 to 1976, which resulted in the establishment of Saldanha as the export channel for the enormous iron ore deposits of Sishen in the Northern Cape. The battle was between Saldanha and St Croix Island as a location for port

ⁱ The Vorster years refers to the period when Balthazar Johannes (BJ) Vorster held power, first as Prime Minister of South Africa from 1966 to 1978, and then as State President from 1978 till his resignation in 1979.

and export facilities for ore. The remarkably short period of six years for the location decision making, design, construction and commissioning of



Figure 3 - Model of St Croix ore export terminal with Hougham Park ore stockpiles and rail terminal in the foreground and St Croix island in the background (Source: Nelson Mandela Bay Business Chamber, photographic archive)

the Saldanha facility, is testimony to the efficiencies of the large infrastructure projects that characterised the Vorster years.

As pointed out by Hendrich (2021) the reasons for the ascendancy of Saldanha are not entirely clearly. While the South African Chamber of Industry and the Cape Midlands Association were in favour of St Croix, and costs for St Croix were considerably lower (R47 million for St Croix, as opposed to R600 to R650 million for Saldanha), the St Croix scheme fell into disfavour. It was recognised that St Croix represented a serious environmental problem and in May 1973 construction commenced at

Saldanha. By 1978, two years after the completion of the Saldanha project, exports of iron ore had increased by 431 percent.

While there is some speculation that Saldanha was favoured by the National Party government, to align with the separate development objectives of a coloured homeland, Figures 2 and 3 lend credence to the notion that the St Croix option was rejected for environmental reasons. St Croix Island is an important habitat for the African penguin (*Spheniscus demersus*) and it is readily apparent that the infrastructure depicted by the models would have had devastating consequences for bird and other marine life.

The Saldanha project was completed in a remarkably short period of time – six years from consideration of alternatives to the first exports. In comparison, the Coega project has taken 30 years without any exports. The Coega project, located adjacent to St Croix Island – Saldanha's 1970 competitor - was advocated by a not-for profit Section 21 company, the Coega Implementing Authority, in 1996. The Coega Development Corporation was established in 1999, the Port of Ngqura was authorised by an Act of Parliament in 2002, and the port became operational in 2009. By 2024, there were still no dedicated ore export facilities in the Port of Ngqura or Coega SEZ, despite both facilities having been specifically designed for the export of manganese.

Soaring Manganese Exports

From a peak in 1975, when approximately 6 mtpa of iron ore was exported through Port Elizabeth²⁵, the capacity of Port Elizabeth's interior logistics corridor has been in steady decline. By 2011, manganese ore exports through Port Elizabeth were restricted to 3.8 mtpa due to the capacity of the railway line²⁶. The national transportation investments of the 1970's saw fundamental changes in South Africa's ability to move goods, particularly bulk products, and established new nodes of economic development. But, as pointed out by Jones²⁷, while the South African transport sector was large and sophisticated by regional standards, it was coping poorly with the fundamental requirements of economic growth.

In 1994, with South Africa's democratic dispensation, the ANC inherited control over a manganese sector which had been a consistent income generator and contributor to the tax base since the 1960s. The sector was dominated by two companies – Assmang and Samancor, both having their founding roots with the inception of mining in the 1920s. The companies had solved their logistical problem for export volumes and

the high-grade manganese commanded excellent prices on the international market. Moreover, production costs were low, and logistics costs were well contained, based on long standing arrangements with Transnet and the export channel of Port Elizabeth.

From 1994 to 2003, manganese ore production was consistent with about 3 mtpa being produced, well within the terminal capacity at Port Elizabeth and the railway line serving it²⁸. But, as pointed out by Mike Rossouw²⁹, the South African manganese story is one of the country's saddest. While South Africa has 80% of the world's high grade manganese ore reserves, it only produces 15% of the world's manganese.

Three events changed everything. A resources boom exploded between 2001 and 2008, fuelled by the rapid growth in the Chinese steel industry in response to demand for steel from developing economies. Manganese ore production increased from just over 3 mtpa in 2001 to 7 mtpa in 2008. Despite the global financial crisis of 2008 resulting in production dropping to 4.5 mtpa, by 2011, production was at record highs of 8.2 mtpa³⁰.

Secondly, government promulgated the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (Act 22 of 2002) which came into effect in 2004. The legislation led to the opening of the Northern Cape manganese area to new role players, a market which had been dominated by Assmang and Samancor. Government had lofty plans of black economic empowerment, infrastructure investments and local beneficiation. A R30 billion upgraded railway line and new manganese export terminal, and a R4.2 billion manganese smelter were promised for development at Coega by 2016³¹.

Thirdly, the demand for manganese was extending beyond steel. Electrolytic manganese dioxide is an important ingredient in lithium-ion batteries which are required for electric vehicles and in batteries for the storage of energy from renewable power generation. But such demand could evaporate overnight with the introduction of new battery technologies that do not require manganese.

By 2020 South Africa had 22 operating manganese mines³² and production figures are estimated to be in the region of 18 mtpa. At face value, this is a spectacular success story of the South African democracy.

But, a considered view of the manganese industry reveals a litany of false promises, corruption, patronage and socio-economic collapse, all

for the economic advantage of an elite few. The resource curse is blatant – if you bother to look. The quarter century of post-apartheid policy on manganese ore is a case study of rent cycling theory³³ - where elites extract high rents from resources for immediate enrichment at the expense of sustainable and diversified economic growth. The rents have created spectacular wealth for very few at the cost of repressed markets and a distorted economy.

To understand how this has happened, it is necessary to go back to 1994. Two manganese companies dominated – Assmang and Samancor. Assmang started out as Union Manganese Mines in 1926, with mineral leases for farms such as Bruce and King. A partnership with Bob Hersov and Slip Menell resulted in the formation of Assmang in 1935, with the first ore shipment leaving Durban in 1936. The early years were bedevilled with logistics constraints, often to the edge of insolvency, with mines having to be closed. In all instances, rail inefficiencies prevented the export of the product. In the 1970's, Assmang was able to double production by exporting through Port Elizabeth, but a recession in the early 1980's forced the closure of some mines.

The Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRD) ushered in a new era, and the law indicated that there had to be 26% black ownership to be considered for a mining licence. These laws were instrumental in developing what Pieter du Toit has termed “*the ANC billionaires*”³⁴ Logistics are one of the key determinants of the price of manganese ore exports. It's an unavoidable cost, as the manganese ore is sold on the manganese markets by a “Free on Board (FOB) Port Elizabeth” price. FOB means that the seller pays for the extraction of the mineral, transportation of the commodity to the port of exit, and all costs associated with loading the vessel. The buyer takes responsibility for all costs from the point when the vessel is loadedⁱ.

The perplexing question remains. Why has South Africa been taking so long to provide the logistics infrastructure for optimising manganese exports? In 1985, government appointed the Burggraaf Committee to assess the potential of making more use of South Africa's ports through greater public use. The committee found that port land should be released for leisure, recreational, commercial and residential purposes and the finding led to the iconic Cape Town Waterfront. Similar findings were made for Port Elizabeth, and a waterfront was initiated in Port

ⁱ For more information consult the services of price reporting agencies such as Fastmarkets that provide transparency to information on the trade in commodities. FOB Port Elizabeth is an established index at <https://www.fastmarkets.com/insights/amendment-to-fastmarkets-37-manganese-ore-indices/> (checked 12 December 2024).

Elizabeth in 1990. The relocation of the fuel tank farm and manganese facilities to Coega was identified as a priority by Transnet, local government and business³⁵. To facilitate the removal of the manganese, bulk liquid fuel tanks, and establishment of a waterfront in the southern part of Port Elizabeth, the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality established the Mandela Bay Development Agency (MBDA) in 2003³⁶ (NMBM, 2005).

As a result, the Coega Special Economic Zone (SEZ), was planned to accommodate a bulk terminal for manganese ore (and bulk liquid fuel facilities - also incomplete, and deserving of its own story), and the local beneficiation of mineral resources³⁷. Despite the Port of Ngqura being established as a port for bulk commodities and container exports, the establishment of a bulk materials terminal has not materialised, despite a commitment in parliament that the manganese would be moved to Coega by 2016³⁸. By 2022, Transnet was indicating that the terminal would only be relocated in 2027³⁹, and later dates have now been mooted on an ever-changing timeframe.

Documentation submitted to the Zondo Commission on “State Capture” indicated significant logistics cost savings for miners, yet the construction of the terminal was still delayed, although upgrades to the railway line did continue. Transnet documentation submitted to the Zondo Commission indicate that the rail costs for a 200 waggon train from the Northern Cape to Coega, would result in a reduction of costs from R180 per ton to R79 per ton. As a result, the establishment of bulk export terminal infrastructure at Coega would result in a break-even tariff of R275 per ton which was well below the R311 per ton “affordable tariff” which was required to support emerging miners⁴⁰.

While the corruption alleged at the Zondo commission may have played a role in delaying the project, four other factors are playing a role, and should be considered.

Money 1: The Take or Pay Principle

As elaborated herein, the manganese industry has always teetered on the edge of bankruptcy induced by Transnet’s requirements for it to fund the necessary rail and port upgrades. The construction of a new terminal at Coega and expansions to the rail network, will require miners to commit contractually to a “take or pay agreement”. Transnet will build the rail, and miners would have to pay for its use, irrespective of the price of manganese, whether the rail is being used, or whether buyers are available. Based on the history of the manganese industry, as discussed

here, it is apparent that miners would be unwilling to contract to such terms.

Money 2: Transnet debt

Given the financial crisis of Transnet, the organisation is unlikely to take on new debt to fund the upgrades. For Transnet, manganese has become an exercise in cost savings, as indicated by Mike Fannucchi, Transnet's chief customer officer, who stated:

If we had spent that R29bn (referring to the Coega terminal) to grow capacity to 16Mt — and bear in mind we've spent a fraction of that to get to 15Mt – the cost of getting manganese out of South Africa would have been a lot higher and we'd have been less competitive in the world market ... If there is a beacon of light on how to do business and best serve South Africa, this is a very clear example⁴¹.

For South Africa, the Transnet cost savings from not constructing rail based bulk ore facilities, were externalised onto the road networks, resulting in massive infrastructure damage - a cost sustained by the taxpayer - and numerous deaths and injuries directly attributable to road-based manganese haulage.

Money 3: A new Port in the Northern Cape?

Since the 1970s, Coega and Saldanha have been in competition for the prize of being the export port for the nation's iron and manganese ore bounty. And the debate is far from settled. Debates on upgrades to the NMBM links to the interior have been protracted and vacillating, disturbingly like the divisions which retarded the development of Port Elizabeth in the 1850s. In 1999, the Head of Spoornet indicated that a second iron ore line was being investigated, but by 2011 Transnet was still studying the option of relocating the manganese terminal to Saldanha.⁴² More recently, plans have been unveiled to establish the Namakwa SEZ and a new port at Boegoebaai that would serve to beneficiate manganese ore and serve as an export port for manganese, green ammonia and other commodity exports.⁴³

Money 4: Land Negotiations at Coega

The Coega Development Corporation (CDC) owns large tracts of serviced land over a vast area of 9,000 ha. When the SEZ was promulgated in 2001, national government made budgets available for the purchase and servicing of land. Nearly 10,000 hectares was purchased by the CDC from private owners, the municipality and from Transnet with the express purpose of inter alia, establishing manganese

stockpiles and associated export facilities. A land exchange agreement was concluded in 2002 between the CDC and Transnet whereby the two parties exchanged land at a nominal rate (approximately R1600 per ha) to form the Coega SEZ and the Port of Ngqura. Provision was also made for future land exchanges, at the historical cost, should either of the two parties require additional land for *bona fide* purposes of facilitating development in pursuit of the core mandate of the respective parties.

In 2008, Transnet recognised that additional land was required for the establishment of the 18 mtpa manganese terminal in the Coega SEZ as the original site earmarked for the terminal was too small (it could only accommodate 6 mtpa). Master planning was undertaken, and the new land requirement was included in the statutory development framework plans for both the Coega SEZ and Port of Ngqura. Under the provisions of the land exchange agreement, Transnet attempted to acquire the identified land from CDC at historical cost. The CDC reneged, indicating that they had added value to the land through the establishment of the SEZ and had supplied services to the site. Over a period of 8 years, protracted negotiations took place which included political lobbying, the intervention of national departments, and rulings by National Treasury. Over this period, the entire manganese project stalled, as CDC would not permit Transnet access to the land to conduct the land and geotechnical surveys required to develop the project. Finally, according to documentation lodged with the Deeds Office, a price of R325 per square meter was agreed, for land which CDC had originally acquired at an average price of R2.30 per square meter. Ironically, 67% of the land acquired by Transnet, was originally owned by Transnet and had been sold to the CDC. Excluding the interest estimate, the CDC had secured a remarkable 813 000% profit on land which had originally been owned by Transnet until 2012.

Conclusion

Manganese is not moving as envisaged by the grand plans created by the state, grand plans that are an abject failure if compared to the logistics and manufacturing success of iron ore in the Vorster years. Since the promulgation of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act of 2002, manganese ore exports have increased by 500% from 3 mtpa to 18 mtpa. The grand plans for Coega, formulated over a period of 30 years, have not produced the infrastructure for the bulk export of manganese ore. The manganese terminal has not been built, some rail upgrades were made, and an unequipped berth is in place. The completion date for a manganese terminal has shifted from

early 2000 to 2030, a date no longer credible amongst institutional role players.

The logistics solutions for managing the 500% increase in the export of manganese have been provided by “*Jan se plan*” in the typical Eastern Cape tradition of creating entrepreneurial solutions for seemingly intractable problems. But “*Jan se plan*” has come at considerable cost, of long-term damage to road and social infrastructure across the country, for the benefit of a small, often foreign based, elite. The savings trumpeted by Transnet, are in fact an externalisation of logistics costs onto the taxpayer. The grand plans of state actors have failed for a host of reasons, all financial, and for the benefit of extractive institutions deeply involved in the objective of establishing bulk ore operating terminals. But ultimately, the reason why manganese is not moving as it should, are the same old reasons which originally constrained the trade of the commodity – logistics and the risk of making long term investments. Consequently, the entrepreneurial verve of “*Jan en sy plan*” have provided solutions, but, at considerable cost to long term infrastructure sustainability. Albeit while significantly enhancing the logistics capacity of the private sector – a potential boon in the longer term for sustainable economic growth.

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A Brief History of Port Elizabeth Auctioneers

By: Jimmy Kirby¹

Many auctioneering firms and auctioneers have come and gone over the 96 years since J.C.L “Cop” Vigne² was sent from Kimberly to Port Elizabeth by his father to go into the auctioneering business on his own. Together with his partner Samson, they opened an office and mart in Rodney Street Central on 2 January 1929. At that time only AE Marks Auctioneers, also situated in Rodney Street, was in existence.



It did not take Cop Vigne long to realise that both he and Samson would never both be able to earn a decent living together, so they parted ways and Samson returned to Kimberly. Shortly before the outbreak of World War Two in 1939, the late Peter Anema joined Vignes and he ran the company while Cop Vigne was on active service. Not long after the end of the War, Peter Anema left Vignes, and a few years

later opened his own auctioneering business known as PJ Anema. PJ Anema or “Anemas“, as they came to be known, used to hold their weekly auctions in the evening and the firm closed down after his sons Peter and Michael emigrated to Australia.

The late Ralph Hancock then joined JCL Vigne Auctions and in 1948 the late Dennis Howard, who was then a teller at Barclays Bank in Grahamstown, also joined. In 1961 Hancock left Vignes and opened his own mart, a stone’s throw from Vignes on the corner of Peel and Morgan Streets. In the interim Dicks Auctions had opened across the street from Vignes, with Louis Nicholaeff, who has since emigrated to Canada, in charge.

With Ralph Hancock’s departure, Vigne made Dennis Howard a partner and JCL Vignes Auctions became known as Vigne & Howard. In 1965 Jimmy Kirby joined Vigne & Howard as the assistant to the late Basil Garner who was then the storeman.

¹ The author, Jimmy Kirby is a retired auctioneer. He joined Vigne and Howard in 1965 and retired in 2015. Jimmy is still a regular visitor to the Vigne and Howard premises in Stanley Street, Richmond Hill.

² Editor: James Coplen-Langford Vigne was one of the earliest members of the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth and contributed generous gifts to No.7 Castle Hill. Looking Back, 1968 Vol 8 (3):129. https://historicalsocietyp.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Looking_Back_1968_Vol_8_3.pdf

In October 1968 Cop Vigne died and in December of the same year Basil Garner was killed in a motor car accident. In the interim, Neil McLaggan had joined Hancocks, and a few years later he too joined Vigne & Howard. In the early 1970s, Neil McLaggan left to open his own auctioneering business.

Next to join Vigne & Howard was David Summerton who was married to Dennis and Nel Howard's oldest daughter Denise. In 1985 Dave Summerton left and he opened an Estate Agency and Jimmy Kirby was made a partner in Vigne & Howard.

Ashton Galpin, son of Attorney Jack Galpin of Joubert Galpin & Searle, then joined McLaggans making him one of the very few Port Elizabeth auctioneers not trained at Vigne & Howard! Later Ashton left McLaggans and opened his own Mart near the Provincial Hospital. He later became the Auctioneer at "The Michael James Organisation" that had opened a branch in Port Elizabeth.

Denis Howard passed away in 1993 and after a brief period with another partner, Jimmy Kirby was joined at Vigne & Howard by his son Clinton.

Since the heyday of auctioneering in Port Elizabeth in the 1960's, 70's and 80's, the number of auctioneering firms who operate from their own premises and hold auctions weekly, has dropped considerably.

AE Marks closed in the 1950's, Hancocks, Dicks, Galpins have also closed, and more recently Anemas. Neil McLaggan and Michael James still hold auctions.

Vigne & Howard are now the only auction firm in the true sense of the word still operating in Port Elizabeth. They celebrated their 95th year of uninterrupted business on 2 January 2024.

Jimmy Kirby is now semi-retired after over fifty years at Vignes. Clinton and his mother Coral are now the owners of Vigne & Howard and Clinton conducts all the auctions. They hold weekly auctions of domestic furniture and monthly auctions of antiques and collectables at their rooms in 20 Stanley Street Richmond Hill.

Clinton is an Appraiser appointed by the High Court, and with over twenty-five years in the auctioneering business, he has followed in his father's footsteps. His knowledge and valuation of antiques is unsurpassed in Port Elizabeth.

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Gustaf Frederik Ernst Andersson (1868 – 1954)ⁱ
Transcribed from the original by: Jenny Bennie

Transcribers note: Lynne Kay, Captain Anderson's great granddaughter, provided his original handwritten documents for this article. They are currently in her possession. There are two versions of the entries - one from Captain Anderson's original reminiscences, handwritten in pencil, and another updated version by the same gentleman some years later. Below is the exact copy of the written version (number two), transcribed with no modifications. Photographs have been incorporated by the transcriber, Jenny Bennie.

27 Weetwood Road Port Elizabeth

A short story of my experience on this coast and in Algoa Bay.

I was First Officer for two years in the Swedish Barque *Medelpad*ⁱⁱ. Arrived at East London October 1891 from Port Adelaide Australia, after an ordinary passage and storms in the bigg (*sic*) Australian Bight A bugg (*sic*) bear, to ships going East. When nearing the Bar the signals told us the Bar was impassable. Hove to under storm sailes (*sic*). The current carried us against the wind in 24 hours south of Port Elizabeth. Next day Wind SE strong the wind and current drove the ship 60 miles further W.S.W. Next day westerly wind strong increasing to Gale running before under as much sails as we could safely carry. The seas running high we could not shorten sails for fear of the seas pooping us. So let them stand until they blew out of the boll ropes. 11am, we pooped one sea which washed a lot of gear overboard. In the afternoon on my watch, I put lifelines on 2 men at the wheel. About 3pm I saw a huge hollow white crested sea comming (*sic*)



Figure 1 – Captain Anderson in 1928

ⁱ GFE Anderson changed his name from GFE Andersson, using the surname Anderson. He was born on 02 March 1868 in Gamleby, Sweden and died in Port Elizabeth on 17 April 1954. He was the Tug Master for Algoa Bay.

ⁱⁱ Transcribers note: The ship names in italics were edited for clarity. All headings are extracted exactly from the original written version (number 2).

up astern I shouted lookout boys and brazed (*sic*) myself with both hands against companion scuttle. When the sea struc (*sic*) me I broke through the 2 inch thick teakwood Dores, (*sic*) and found myself in the W.C. nearly drowned. The sea broke all the Dores in the cabins and Saloon and the main dores leading to the Main Deck. Everything loose washed overboard. When I crawled up on the quarterdeck. What a mess. The old fashioned steering gear washed away. The 2 men overboard hanging on to their Life lines. I hauled them up. The ship broadside to the sea awash level with rails the remains of the sails blown away. When the water eventually ran away trough (*sic*) the parts and partially broken bullwarks (*sic*) we rigged a sea anchor, a 12" 100 fathoms coil of manilla rope loaded with a small ketch anchor to keep it down chackled (*sic*) on a 100 fathoms wire hove the coil overboard paid out the wire and made fast to the windlass. The wind moderating a good deal. At sun dawn started the wind mill to pump the water out. Rode snugly starboard bow to the sea. We were deeply loaded with bagged wheat so we had an anxious (*sic*) time about the water soaking in trough (*sic*) the holes of the broken stancions (*sic*) of the Bullwarks (*sic*). Next day we bent new sails Rigged tackles to the tiller on rodderhead for emergency steering. Eventually arriving at East London discharged our partly damaged cargo. At that time there was no big Tugs and the steam ship companies asked more than the ship was insured for so the insurance paid up, the

ship was sold to ship-braker Watcham he made a good profit on the wood copper and fittings. I was paid off and had offer of passage Home and go to master of the ship in the same coy. They had about 60 small ships. But I had enough of old sailing ships. So I stayed in SA

Early in 1892 at East London I joined as mate of *Germanica* a small Tug owned by Schello & Piel of Port Elizabeth Passengers, lenders to Union Steamship Coy, The Tug had been on the slip for repairs and a new

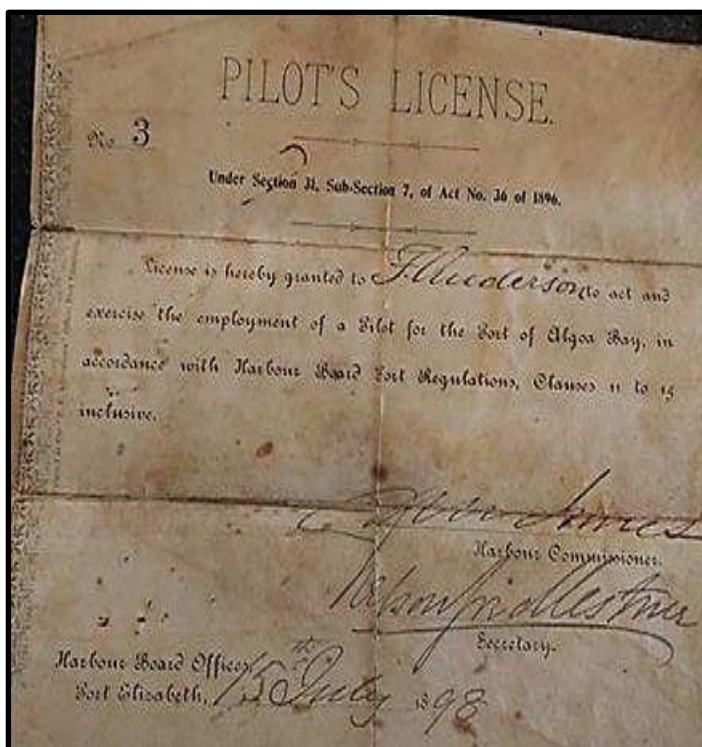


Figure 2- Captain Anderson's Pilot's Licence issued by the PE Harbour Board - 1898

deck was put on the old planks and other rubbish was stored on Deck as high as the rails. We left East London in the afternoon the glass was low indicating strong West Wind. The master Flannagan and part owner Piel were periodical drinkers and had a good supply of Whiskey onboard the skipper was already drunk. So Mr Piel took the boat out over the Bar, and then handed over to me, about 10pm the W wind increased to a storm. The first sea shipped started the deck load I was alone on Deck I put half speed left the wheel cut the rest of the lashings. The next sea cleared the Deck it also took the box compass that was lashed to the pollard (*sic*) in front of the small canvas dodger in front of the wheel After that the small vessel rode the big seas like a Duck. 8.a.m the gale had moderated a good deal. I told the Engineer I was going to steer north for Port Elizabeth he said we canot (*sic*) be of (*sic*) PE yet at our low speed. But I reasoned we were with the help of the current we were off PE. The little craft had a broad beam in comparement (*sic*) to her length 60 feet and she rode the broadside seas beautifully. At one PM we had Cape Receiveⁱ (*sic*) a head. At 4 PM I stopped off the North Jetty and got Mr Piel to come upp (*sic*) and take us to the landing steps (*sic*). He went on shore followed by the skipper. The deck hand who acted as fireman on the tripp (*sic*) came upp (*sic*) to assist me to pick upp (*sic*) our mooring. Messina's Tug *Colonist* took both of them to the jetty so I was left alone on board. Next day a strong S.E. wind set in The day was Sunday and lasted 2 days no communication whith (*sic*) the jetty. All I had to eat was a mouldy Loaf of bread and 1/2 tin of condensed milk. I sat behind the screen dodger looking at Palmerston Hotel, the old one whith (*sic*) the name on the roof, the couple of golden Pounds I had in my pocket was of no use. Tuesday we got under way and I went on shore to get Board and lodgings, as we had no mess aboard. Mrss Schello & Piel thanked me for saving their Boat. and after a few months experience of their business put me in charge of their smaller boat the *Durban A*. In 1895 the launch *Durban* was sold to a syndicate in Port Alfred. On the way of delivery a westerly gale made me take shelter in the gong of Bird Island. Wednesday the wind went down but the sea running high we pulled up our anchor and set course for Port Alfred at 1PM. Bar impassable, anchored outside. In P.E they got ancsious (*sic*) about us and sent their big new Tug *Sir Frederick* to look for us. The Light keeper at B.I.ⁱⁱ informed the Tug that we had left that morning so they went back to P.E. The following Sunday we decided to go back to PE as our coal and water was getting short. When under way the port captain named Drydan, signalled us to stand in, We got trough (*sic*) the

ⁱ Cape Recife

ⁱⁱ Bird Island

breakers and stuck on the Bar in broken water 5 feet deep, our draught was 6 ½ feet turned broadside on trew (sic) everything loose overboard to lighten her The deck hand trew (sic) the anchor over the shoreside and to save the boat being holed I trew (sic) my coat and west (sic) off jumped in picked up the small anchor and dragging the chain and hooked the anchor under the 15 foot high Breakwater so we could reclaim it. In the maintime

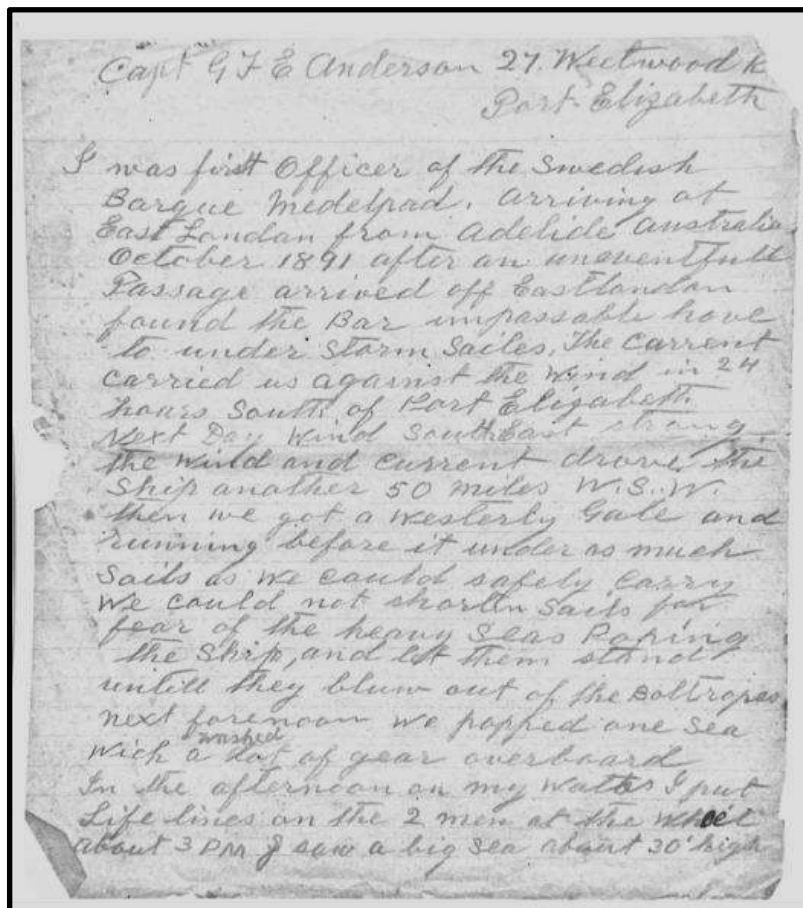


Figure 3 - First page of Captain Anderson's pencil notes

(sic) the Port Capt and his life boat crew got onboard got a line to the E. bank and scores of visitors pulled her over the Bar. When in the river the Port Capt steamed her up the river and made it fast to the wharf opposite the Railway Station. I saw a man standing on top of the breakwater asked him if there was any ringbolts there, he said yes there was plenty of ropes floating about so I trew (sic) one of them up and he made it fast. I managed to claim up I was nearly frozen stiff as it very cold mid winter on this coast. I thanked him for helping me and started running along the sea wall and the westbank of the river Then I saw the Life Boat come down the river for me and I told the Port Capt what I thought of him. Went across the River on the Ferryboat and went onboard. I stayed there a few days to show them how to handle the Boat. I took her several times 15 miles upp (sic) the River. I felt I had caught a bad cold, arriving back to PE I was laid up with pneumonia for 6 weeks. I pulled trough (sic) being young and strong,

How Cecil Rhodes managed to get arms and ammunition for his wars in Rhodesiaⁱ

About 1890 Cecil Rhodes chartered the Tug *Countess Carnarvon* in Port Elizabeth for a mysterious expedition (*sic*). All that the ordinary city folks know was that the Tug loaded a cargo of strong cases for somewhere up the East coast. Late Capt Buckingham in Command Late George Rodgers as Engineer. The Tug eventually ran in and up the Limpopo River outstripped the Portuguese gunboat landed her cargo near the Rhodesian border. When coming down the River the Gun Boat laid in ambush and caught them Tug and all. After some time the crew was released and sent back to P.E. Mr Rodgers died there before being released. The Tug laid there for 5 years. Until bought by the firm Schello and Piel Port Elizabeth

continued

Early 1895 G F E Anderson

Brought the tug to Port Elizabeth and gave it a good overhaul and installed a new Boiler and in first class condition to replace the small *Durban* who was sold to Port Alfred. In 1898 while master of the Tug I was out trawling for the night In the morning at Daybreak I saw a Barque on the Thunderbolt reef with sails flapping. We hauled up the Trawl and went to investigate. The crew had left her after some maneuvering (*sic*) in the broken water. I managed to get a Tow rope on her Stearn (*sic*) and towed for ½ an hour the tide was raising and she came off. When out in open waters I put one more man aboard to haul in our longer towline and make fast to her Bow, and towed her in to the Bay. When off the other anchorage our other Tug *Germania* brought 2 lighter crews onboard to man the Pumps and anchor her. The ship hailed from Portugal empty had sand ballast out from Delagoa Bay.

Allmost (*sic*) new campasite (*sic*) built of oak and coppered. So we calculated on a good salvage. I towed her North off shipping and anchored in 4. fathoms of water. We stood by all the time it was only a few feet of water over ballast, at first we gained a great deal on the water, and had great hopes. But later in the night the sand got in the pumps and choked them, and the ship began to list to Port, at midnight she was on her beamends (*sic*). Got all the men safely onboard the Tug and laid off and saw her sink at 12-30 A.M. So our great salvage turned out to

ⁱ Editor: The arms and ammunition were destined for Rhodes's war in Rhodesia, his first military campaign, aimed at unseating Lobengula, King of the Ndebele. An account of the incursion, led by Englishman Frank Johnson and the American, Major Maurice Henry, is detailed in Davidson, A. 1988. *Cecil Rhodes and his Time*. London: Progress Publishers. Pp 189-213.

be a dead loss. There was a red buoy placed over the wreck to warn shipping it was taken away some years ago

Capt. G F.E Anderson

27 Weetwood Road PE

In 1898 the Stevedoring company Coles and Searle Bought out Schello and Piels Business (*sic*) *Germania* was sold. So with *Countess Carnarvon* and their own 2 Tugs the *Garth* and the *Eveline* they had 3 good Tugs. Attended the Union Mail SS Coy. Messina Brothers had 3 new Tugs namely *Ulundi*, *Talana* and attended the Castle Mail SS Coy. In 1899 before the amalgamation of the 2 Mail SS Companys Coles and Searle amalgamated with Messina Bros. I have heard different statements of the number of ships anchored in the Bay at one time. All below the actual number. At one time in 1901 there were 60 steamers and 55 sailing ships at anchor. The Mail Boats and Transport Ships had preference in discharging and shortage of lighters kept the other steamers waiting for several months. In fact a few laid here for 6 months with military cargo that was not in short (supply?) I ought to know as we attended the ships. 2 Tugs attended the U.C Coy at any time. 2 Tugs to the other steamers 4 times day and had 30 each for the same time. Two Tugs attended the Sailing Ships The only thing that worried the Captains was the fouling of their ships bottom as the British Government paid them handsom (*sic*) demurrage. Things eased of after the big companies imported their own landing crafts to take cargo from their ships so they could get away. And the small crafts always managed to land their cargo before next arrivals. The Clan Coy had a Tug and 6 lighters Bucknil Coy 3 small steamers namely *Balgay*, *Balgawan* and *Ready*. The German Hansa Coy had 6 lighters. The U C mail had 4 large lighters and 2 small steamers namely *Macrie* and *Loch-Gair*. In 1902 I left Messina Bros Coles and Searle. Went as master of U C Coy *Loch-Gair*. Rode out the 1902 Gale at my mooring. The ship was empty so I laid out my bow anchors each side of the mooring to keep her from shearing. The Clan Tug *Sealia* and *Countess Carnarvon* and 19 ships was wrecked. Coast *Clara* went high and dry on the beach and was refloated.

Early in 1903 Shipping became normal, The Harbour Board bought out the Boating Companys Assts and controlled all the landing and shipping of cargo. The Auxiliary Fleet was disbanded and sold. The *Loch-Gair* was sold to the Harbour Board and I was transferred to the Tug *Sir Frederick* as master. In June one day a strong winter westerly Gale started blowing in in the afternoon. At 6pm I was called to the North jetty

and Mr Searle MP ordered me to go out and look for a fishing boat belonging to Fany Frost the whaler who was reported to have lost his mast of (*sic*) Cape Recife and was drifting east towards Ray bankⁱ I am sending Capt Sawyer with you. Steaming out towards Ray Bank, Strong Gale and high seas running at the time. The Boat was anchored with his stone and rope on the Bank and they saw us but we could not see them as they could not show any light. So Capt Sawyers said no open boat could live in this weather, But I had my doubts (*sic*). But he as assistant to Capt Cliff the Port Captain was my superior ordered me back to port, At one AM I landed him at North Jetty and he ordered me to go to our mooring I called my crew and told them that I intended to go out again to look for the Boat, and offered to pay the (*sic*) their overtime if not successful, and the Board likely to charge me for the coal consumed, But the crew good men said carry on no cure no pay. At 4.45 AM it was enough light to see the Boat with binocular glasses standing in towards the heavy breakers of the Alexandria Coast I sent up a Rocket and blew the Tugs whistle. And down went the jibbsail (*sic*) they had stuck up on an oar and put out same oars to keep the Boat away from the breakers. I went head in. Instructed the sounding man to call out at 4 fathoms. The wind had moderated a good deal and managed to throw a thin lime (*sic*) across the boat and told them haul in a stronger line and make fast, *Sir Frederick* was only 10 years old and very strongly buildt (*sic*). Going half speed astearn, (*sic*) the seas struck her broad side and sent bigg (*sic*) sprays over the bridge and funnel. When in deep water I stopped. Pulled the Boat under our lee side took the exhausted men and their gear onboard, told the men to go down to the Engine Room and undress. Sent down a killie of hot coffee and Bottle of Whisky and told them to make themselves comfortable until a warm breakfast would be served to them. (In those days all the Tugs and Launches had a full mess onboard and could supply meals at any time in an emergency. I wonder if our present bigg (*sic*) Tugs could do that). Then we hauled the Boat under or aft of our stearn (*sic*) went full speed for the lee of St Croix hoisted the Boat up on our bigg (*sic*) Davitts and went full sped for the jetty arrived 6 AM Mr Searle and Sawyer was there. Mr Searle complemented me on my fine rescue. I said yes thanks to Capt Sawyer. Capt Sawyer could never look me in the face after that. Next day Mr Frost came onboard to thank me for saving their lives and offered me 2 pounds. I refused to take it. He said I am not a poor man, so I accepted the gift and handed it to the Tugs mess and Mr Searle the gentleman he was paid our

ⁱ Riy bank is an extensive reef system approximately 20km east of Cape Recife and a distinctive feature of Algoa Bay indicated on the Dayman's 1855 Admiralty map for Algoa Bay.

overtime and let Mr Frost off without payment. In those far off days any Tug who saw a fishing boat in distress went out and brought it in.

What a contrast since we got a Harbour. Some years ago when Capt Weller was Port Capt a motor fishing boat with engine trouble in ordinary SE bris (*sic*) anchored NNE of the Harbour. The Light Housekeeper kept phoning the Port Office to send assistance as the boat was slowly drifting to the N.E beach and at nightfall drifted on the Beach 9 men lost their lives. P.S. The Tug *H.B Cristian* (*sic*) was sent out after the crew was drowned.

1903 Gale Algoa Bay

By Capt GFE Anderson Master of the *Sir Frederick*ⁱ

The morning was fine so we brought the Norwegian barque *Elda* to the South Jetty to discharge a full cargo of milies (*sic*) from Argentine In the afternoon the S.E wind increased so we towed her from the jetty and moored well to the N.E of the other ships. We then proceeded with the other Tugs to tow and anchor all the Lighters land the crews, went to mooring ourselves. Th gale increasing steadily. That night 10.PM a Bucknil (*sic*) steamer dragged her anchors and nearly drifted on top of us. So we slipped our mooring and went to open sea cruising in the storm all night, next morning when comming (*sic*) in towards the shipping The Barque *Elda* had distress signals up I went to assist her. She had lost one anchor and slowly dragging so I offered the (The Capt. was on shore) mate whithout (*sic*) contract our 20". 120. Fathoms long coir warp and big anchor I had 3 attempts to pass the end onboard and each time the crew failed to get the end onboard. The ship being deep in the water took seas over the Focksail head and washed the crew down to the deck. The current sweeping a long bight of the warp to the N.E. The third time we were lying broadside on to fleet our steam winch we shipped a great sea that smashed the wheelhouse, the Engine room skylights Bridge ladder, and floated the whole warp overboard the end still fast to the

ⁱ Editor: The *Sir Frederick* is known as Algoa Bay's most famous tug, being considered as "one of the best and most successful boats on the coast, bar none." Constructed in 1893, the tug was initially owned by the Port Elizabeth Boating Company, and from 1901 till her scuttling in 1928, by the Port Elizabeth Harbour Board (Looking Back, 1980, Vol 20 No 4:121). As reported in Looking Back (2002, Vol 41 No1:6), the Main Public Library has the manufacturer's plate. The 2002 article indicates that the vessel was scuttled in July 1926, thereby contradicting the earlier Looking Back (Looking Back, 1980, Vol 20 No 4:121) article that identifies the scuttling as taking place on July 26, 1928. Harradine (2002, *Port Elizabeth: A Social Chronicle to the end of 1945*. Pg 173) indicates that *Lady Elizabeth*, the tug replacing the *Sir Frederick* arrived in Port Elizabeth on January 27, 1928. Therefore, the date of July 26, 1928 is accepted as correct, as described by Dr D.H. Reynolds in Looking Back, 1980 (Vol 20 No 4:121). A photograph of the manufacturer's plate is depicted Figure 4.

anchor and everything loose went by the board. We had 4 feet of water in the engine room that put out the lower fire the 2 upper fires still burning, so I put the Tug head to sea started pumping the steam pump soon put the water out.



Figure 4 - Manufacturer's Plate of the Sir Frederick in the Library in January 2025

Steamed slowly to our mooring dragging the entangled warp astern.(sic) It is a blessing that coir rope floats. We were able to keep our propellor from fouling. Laid at moorings 2 Days before we could go to jetty, to land the warp and anchor. It took Charlie Lorence and a gang of

natives 4 days to clear and coil the warp after a few days we got fine weather. Put the Tug on the slip for repairs. The small wheelhouse was built on a recess halfway up to the Bridge deck. The Bridge Deck was extended 10 feet forward and a fine teak wood Wheelhouse was built on top (Designed by the then foreman Paton who was shot in the native disturbances 26 years ago) That Wheelhouse now decorates the Bridge of the Zwartkops Yacht Club

By Capt G.F.E. Anderson

27 Weetwood Road. PE

Rocks and Wrecks off Cape Receife

Old Tug Masters Experiences From Capt G.F.E. Anderson

Port Elizabeth

In the years before the Boer War a Tugmaster had experience in sailing ships and his Master's ticket and recommended by the Port Captain after a strict examination of a Board of Examiners of Captains from ships in Port. I was granted Pilot Licence No 3. During the Boer War this strict rule was not addhered (sic) to and several tug master without masters (sic) ticket was recommended by their respective owners got a Pilot's Licence some of them had sailed in Deep Water some only lokal (sic) experience



Figure 5 - Maintenance on the Sir Frederick on the Humewood Slipway

(Source: David Asprey collection www.shippingandshipbuilding.uk)

March 17 1901 the Glasgow steamer *Tymeric* struck an object the time being 3am and the steamer about a mile from the Cape Receife light which was then bearing about due west, The *Tymeric* ripped her foredeck and no 1 hold open and flooded the baulkhead (*sic*) and she floated. After a few Days we managed get fine weather. Put the Tug on the slip for repairs the small wheelhouse was built on a recess halfway up the bridge

(There were no further entries.)

Transcribed by Jenny Bennie, 27 October 2023

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A Quarter Century of Travels through Time

By: Bartle Logie

Editor's note: Bartle Logie is one of the stalwarts of the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth. In 1991, he hosted a Society outing to Cadles, a historic road transport coaching inn, originally located at the entrance to the Woodridge Preparatory School. At the time, Bartle was the Deputy Headmaster of Woodridge Preparatory, where he later became Headmaster until his retirement. Bartle is a regular contributor to Looking Back, Society outings, and a prolific author of historical books of the region. Bartle became President of the Society from 2015 to 2024. The Looking Back editorial team cajoled the characteristically modest Bartle to provide a background to his love of history, to summarise his development as an author, and describe his work over the past twenty-five years writing historical books.

It was my father who sparked my interest in history. This was partly due to his being born on a frontier farm with a fortified house. There was even, before it was sold as scrap metal, a real cannon. None of my peers could boast of such interesting ancestry and weaponry. So as far as my interest in history was concerned this was a good start.

Perhaps the stories he told of the people and places we visited played a greater role. I remember walking along a pavement in Fordsburg, Johannesburg. There he pointed out the scars on a building damaged by rifle-fire during the 1922 Miners' Strike. At the time I knew nothing at all about the strike, but his pointing out the bullet marks, together with his brief comments on the circumstances, resulted in my visiting the Johannesburg Library to find out more.

Some years later I became a history teacher. My father, with his interest in history, always maintained that it was more important to awaken an interest in history than to force anyone to swot-up names and dates. Also, it is far better to have one's own opinions regarding the causes for, or results of particular events. Following in his footsteps my connection with the syllabus became less stringent than it might have been otherwise.

So, when my wife Caryl and I were freed from worrying about other people's children, and from marking essays and writing reports, we set out to visit places we knew well or had never visited.

Together we absorbed natural history, particularly plants, and hunted out historical spots and met interesting people. We had some strange adventures.

While we were following in the waggon-tracks of Commissioner-General Abraham de Mist and German Doctor Heinrich Lichtenstein, we drove onto a Northern Cape farm. It was a hot Sunday afternoon. We stopped outside the open kitchen door of the farmhouse. Not a soul was in sight. Not a breath of wind was stirring. I knocked on the door.

Encouraged by hearing some mumbling from the interior of the building, I knocked again, more loudly.

'Kom binne, demmit! Is jy onnosel, of wat? Jislaaik, maar ek kan nie vroumense verstaan nie.' [Come in, damn it! Are you stupid, or what? Goodness gracious, but I just cannot understand women.]

A whiskery-faced fellow in rumpled clothes and stockinged-feet wobbled down the passage. Catching sight of me his jaw dropped, and he stood still for an instant before exclaiming, *'Jammer, jammer! Ek het gedink dis my vrou.'* [Sorry, sorry! I thought it was my wife.]

In the end he proved to be most hospitable and informative. He confirmed that De Mist and Lichtenstein had visited the farm in 1803, had stories to tell, and pointed out the house, now an outbuilding, in which they were fed and entertained. From there they had gone on to an adjoining property. *'You must call in there. The neighbours would be delighted to meet you. In fact, I'll phone them at once to let them know'* he said.

We left him, despite his apparent lack of understanding of the female mind, with our belief in the hospitality of country-folk reinforced. Surely 19th century travellers were treated in much the same way?

At a time when farm attacks were in the headlines, we visited another isolated farm, passing on the way, a group of men working in the lands. The house was locked up and there was no one in the immediate vicinity.

Sitting in the car contemplating our next move, we unexpectedly found ourselves surrounded by the men we had seen earlier. Each was armed with a spade, pick-handle or other suitable weapon. We were alarmed, but soon discovered that they too were in an anxious state. Were we perhaps about to attack them and ransack the farm?

Eventually all was explained, and the weapons laid down. Both sides were delighted that the misunderstanding had been surmounted. The foreman even offered us the key he kept to the boss's house where, he assured us, there was water to drink, and bread in the kitchen. We declined his invitation but parted on the very best of terms. The entire group gave us a goodbye wave as we passed on our way.

We kept a record of our combined historical/botanical journeys, and I began to think of the possibility of a book. Keeping in mind my ideas concerning the importance of creating an interest in history, rather than a full-blown textbook, I considered writing a travelogue complete with historical tidbits.

Publisher and former *Herald* photographer, Colin Urquhart, who had recently (in 1996) written together with Norbert Klages, *East to The Isles*, the story of the Bird Islands of Algoa Bay, liked my idea, and suggested that he publish the proposed book.

We had recently moved to live permanently in our holiday cottage at St Francis Bay and were beginning to learn more about this eastern end of the Fynbos biome. For many years it was the happy, plant-hunting ground of botanical travelers. It was just up our street.

Looking through my papers I came across a copy of the notes Alfred Milner made while undertaking a journey in a horse-drawn spider along what has come to be known as the Garden Route. It contained little real information but provided a useful link along which I could 'pin' historical anecdotes. And so, I settled down to work, and in due course there appeared on the shelves, *Governor's Travels*, the first of my books.

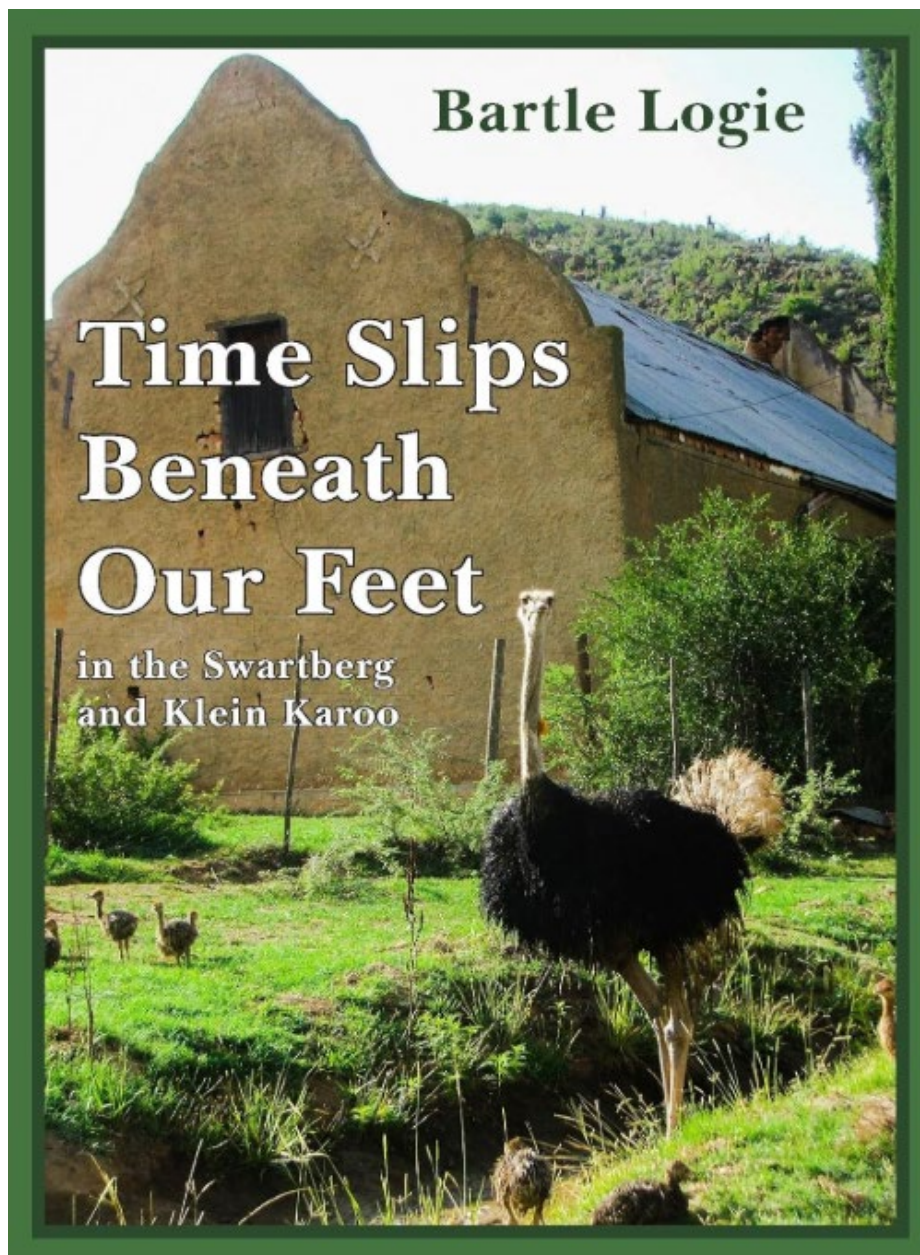
Since then, I have continued in much the same vein. How successful the books may be in converting readers to an interest in history I have no idea. We have, however, thoroughly enjoyed our travels, and also working on the books that record our journeys. And we pay tribute to the many fellow South Africans, of all cultural groups and languages, who have accepted us and added to our knowledge of our common history.

SUMMARY OF PUBLISHED BOOKS

DATE	TITLE	SUMMARY
1999	<i>Governor's Travels</i>	Based on the record of a journey made in 1897 by Sir (later Lord) Alfred Milner in a horse-drawn spider, through the Kouga and Tsitsikamma. It includes mention of some of the successes and failures of the local people, together with the development of roads, railways and bridges.
2001	<i>Traveller's Joy</i>	The building of the first railway from Algoa Bay to Graaff-Reinet, and a look at the historic towns along the way, together with some of the local inhabitants.
2003	<i>Two for the Road</i>	Following in the 1802 footsteps of Commissioner-General Jacob de Mist of the Batavian Republic, and of the young German doctor, Martin Heinrich

DATE	TITLE	SUMMARY
		Lichtenstein on a journey by ox-waggon around the Cape Colony. The two men are accompanied by De Mist's 18-year-old daughter Augusta – who kept a diary – and her friend Elselina Versveld.
2006	<i>Water in the Wilderness</i>	The Great Fish River, once the eastern boundary of the Colony, from the Nardouwberg to the Indian Ocean. Along the way one meets some of the San, Khoekhoe, Boer and English colonists that relied upon its life-giving waters.
2008	<i>Dusty Road to Long Ago</i>	A journey through the land of my father's youth, the Eastern Cape, in a new 1948 Chev. The impact of the English settlers on the land and their relationship with the descendants of earlier inhabitants.
2010	<i>Gazetteer of the Humansdorp Division of the Cape Colony prior to 1910</i>	Co-authored with Caryl Logie, the gazetteer lists the geographical features, farms, villages and towns of the Humansdorp division, their location and some mention of their history. Sketch maps showing the location of the original 1849 farms and boundaries of the wards within the Division. Brief biographies of historical figures associated with the area.
2011	<i>Sundays: Tales from a Winding River</i>	Follows the course of the Sundays River from the Lootsberg, to Graaff-Reinet and on to Jansenville, the Zuurberg, Kirkwood and Addo. Included are brief histories of the families and farmers associated with the area, and of the upheavals resulting from the Anglo-Boer War.
2013	<i>Boots in the Baviaans</i>	From Willowmore in the north and on through the Baviaans Wilderness Area to the rivers confluence with the Groot and the Kouga to form the Gamtoos. An area which in recent times has become a major tourist attraction.
2014	<i>Gazetteer of the Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage Divisions of the old Cape Colony.</i>	(Co-authored with Margaret Harradine) The contents are similar to the 2010 publication, but expanded with additional material by Margaret Harradine, former Africana Librarian of Port Elizabeth.
2016	<i>Tales from an Unmapped Country</i>	The story of a journey through the Border area, together with memories of my youth. The book resulted from a comment by Kain Sisusa, who suggested that I visit the village of his youth, situated not far from Komani, (Queenstown).
2017	<i>Toasted Marshmallows & Obies</i>	Observations regarding the peoples and history of the Eastern Cape together with notes on its flora and fauna. Also, some further glimpses of my youth.

DATE	TITLE	SUMMARY
2021	<i>Travels with 20/20 Vision</i>	The Garden Route and Langkloof as seen from an enforced view from an easy-chair. Short pieces about the area, its fauna and flora, and its people, both past and present.
2024	<i>Time Slips Beneath Our Feet</i>	Travels in the Klein Karoo and Swartberg areas with mention of trains, surveyors, architects, the early inhabitants of the area, the once significant Jewish population and the usual collection of natural phenomena.



Bartle Logie's latest book (2024)

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Like Father, Like Daughter

By: CJ Skeadⁱ

The sixty-seven years between 1869 and 1936 saw the birth and death of a woman who put Port Elizabeth's wild plants on the map with Redhouse in the Swartkops River valley as her special happy hunting ground.



Florence Mary Paterson (1869-1936)
<http://hdl.handle.net/10962/d1016527>

Normally, a girl brought up in comfortable urban circumstances would not be expected to find an outlet to her daily chores by way of wild plants and flowers, but Florence Paterson was lucky in having in her immediate background a father whose interests ran deeply into natural history and a mother with farming origins. Marriage also played its part in that she and her husband chose to live at Redhouse on the Swartkops River where a modest strip of riverside houses was backed by one of the most rewarding plant-rich veld stretches on her doorstep.

With the raising of three children behind her, Florence's days must have seen her probing the veld more and more. Not for her the durable denim trousers and comfortable form-fitting T-shirts worn by today's plant-collectors when warding off the thorniness of prickly *Euphorbia*, *wag-'n-bietjie* and *katnael* thorns, Florence conformed to the formalities of the day with close-fitting bodices and flouncy skirts reaching well below the knees and inviting the attentions of every thorn on every shrub in that very bushy country. No wonder, as we are told, Florence always took with her a servant to scramble about under bushes with greater freedom than her own clothing and feminine propriety would allow her.

ⁱ Extract with permission from the Skead family from Skead, C.J. 2005. *Tales of Plants, Places and People*. Port Elizabeth: Private Publication.

As her collection of plants grew, not only from her own Redhouse and Swartkops valley haunts but well beyond throughout the Port Elizabeth district, often accompanied with fellow enthusiasts, she became closely associated with Dr Selmar Schonland who in 1889 had come from Germany to take up the post of Director of Grahamstown's Albany Museum with botany as his own abiding interest.

In due course the professional botanist in Dr. Schonland and the amateur field botanist in Florence Paterson made a splendid team, the more so because their joint-venture came at a time when the doctor had realised that the coastal strip between the Gamtoos and Sundays Rivers (Swartkops River country intervening) carried some of the most diverse botanical cover in South Africa and beyond. So much was this the case that the 1919 publication of Schonland's Botanical Memoir No.1 on the flora of the Uitenhage and Port Elizabeth districts is devoted entirely to this wonderful region now fast disappearing under manmade expansionism. What is more, Florence is given full recognition in that memoir.

Florence's dedication to her hobby, for that is what it was, was rewarded in her lifetime by having no fewer than twelve plant species bear the name *patersoniae*, seven of which were named by Dr Schonland and three by botanists of the calibre of L. Bolus, AW Hill and NE Brown, the latter on the staff of Kew Gardens.

Sad to say, time and updated reviews have taken their toll of nine of those *patersoniae* and, ever more sadly, none named by Dr Schonland has survived. Only a *Babiana*, a *Delosperma* and a *Thesium* now bear the name *patersoniae* in memory of that conscientious lady plant-collector. Botanical science can be as cruelly exacting as are all other natural sciences in their insistence on accuracy in what is an inexact form of science.

As might be expected from her close co-operation with Dr Selmar Schonland, Florence Paterson's specimens found their way into the Albany Museum Herbarium at Grahamstown. It is now known as the Selmar Schonland Herbarium and is administered by Rhodes University but still housed, as before, at the Albany Museum.

With a father like Russell Hallack in her life, small wonder that Florence's interests moved along botanical lines. His grocery-cum-candle-and-soap-making business might not have seemed propitious in offering much common ground in wildflower hunting but his instincts for plants

were there in good measure and can only have brushed off on a willing Florence.

Not only was Russell Hallack a keen gardener at his Park Drive home but he was ever a leading light in the local Natural History Society with his knowledge of wild plants strong enough to have had two orchid species named after him as *hallackii*ⁱ.



Marianne North (1830-1890)

<https://archive.org/details/recollectionsofh02nortuoft/page/n9/mode/1up>

This near-botanical sideline to his successful business career seems to have brushed off also on another daughter, Annie, who, while no botanist, produced a folio of Port Elizabeth wildflowers now housed in the Botany Department at the Nelson Mandela University, formerly the University of Port Elizabeth. Nor was Russell Hallack forgotten by his town; a Hallack Road near his home in Park Drive runs to the very entrance of today's Settler's Park in all its natural beauty and so fortuitously placed in the heart of a large city, an amenity of its kind rarely to be found in any country of the world.

In 1882 there came into Russell Hallack's and the thirteen-year-old Florence Paterson's life, an overseas visitor, Miss Marianne North, a well-to-do Englishwoman on a globe-trotting mission recording in paint as many flowers of the world as possible.

Miss North's first move on arriving at Port Elizabeth was to call on Russell Hallack at his Park Drive home where she found him, sleeves rolled up, watering his garden. Their common interests soon had the two of them thinking on the same lines with Russell suggesting that Miss North visit

ⁱ *Disa hallackii* and *Satyrium hallackii* ssp. *hallackii*

Cadle's Hotel at Van Staden's Pass, a day's drive by horse and cart, where she would find more scope for painting flowers than the immediate surroundings of Port Elizabeth could offer.

She followed his advice, was captivated by the hospitality of Mr and Mrs Cadle at their country hotel, and found Russell's advice to be more than she could have hoped for. Over a weekend, Russell drove out to Van Stadens where the two hired riding horses and scoured with great success, the fynbosveld as far as the base of the Van Stadensberg. She tells it all enthusiastically in her book published a few years after her return to Englandⁱ.

Such comments tell something of Russell Hallack's influence on daughter Florence. He went further by encouraging a strong natural history element in Port Elizabeth's society at a time when men and women, and especially young men and women, had to make their own diversions and pleasures in contrast to the multifarious distractions available today. Then, too, there was always Florence's grandfather's farm 'Hadley' in the Steytlerville district for rambles in search of plants in an environment very different from Florence's own Redhouse and Van Stadens marches. It was here on 'Hadley' that Florence found a new species of gladiolus which, in time, came to be known as *Gladiolus geardii* after Charles Geard, her grandfather.

Florence Paterson may have been no more than a passing phase in Port Elizabeth's world of amateur botany, but she came at a critical moment in the Eastern Cape's life when a helpful professional botanist in Selmar Schonland could give her wise guidance and, at the same time, advance his own study of this most important part of the country.

We must never forget the likes of Florence Paterson. The Redhouse countryside, where she would have prowled when collecting plants, has almost gone forever. The dross of humankind covers what was once a wildflower paradise.

One wonders whether Florence ever stopped to think of how all that mixed grass-and-bush country between Redhouse and Perseverance towards Despatch and Uitenhage, farmland in her day, had been collected over by some of the most famous botanical men of their times. Here had trodden the very first professional botanists ever to cross

ⁱ Marianne North visited Port Elizabeth in 1882, remarking that "Port Elizabeth is far more like a capital than Cape Town: it is full of life and work, very clean and neat, with an excellent hotel" In North, M. 1893. *Recollections of a Happy Life: Being the Autobiography of Marianne North (Volume II)*. London Macmillan, p239 from https://archive.org/details/b21782301_0002/page/239/mode/1up?q=Port+Elizabeth.

Swartkops Valley country, pass through the Swartkops River drift above the ebb-and-flow at Perseverance, and head onwards to the Sundays River. For that is what had happened in 1772. The Swede Karl Thunberg and his English companion Francis Masson from Kew Gardens did this nearly one hundred and twenty years before Florence went collecting there in her flouncy skirts.

Another Swede, Anders Sparrman, followed in 1776, and many others of his ilk, Karl Zeyher and Christian Ecklon among them, covered the same ground many years later. Those travellers could have done little else; they were travelling on the recognised trek-route of the time and making the most of what they found in front of them. And, there was plenty of that for everyone.

Florence Paterson had the better of them; they were itinerants, she was on the spot and could collect there in every season of the year and whenever the mood took her.

Quietly, she made her way into Port Elizabeth and East Cape botanical history. Largely forgotten now, she led the way in her own good time.



Helen Vanderplank (left) Pieter Coetzee (centre) and C.J. Skead (right) on the Witteklip Mountain, east of Van Stadens Berg on a field visit for Helen's books, now collector's items.

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Lal Harraway and the *Santíssimo Sacramento* Wreck

By: Malcolm Turnerⁱ

Introduction

This article emanated from a discussion with the Chair of the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth, Graham Taylor. The debate centred on whether Dr Vernon Forbes and Lal Harraway had misidentified the cannons off the *Santíssimo Sacramento* as being of Dutch origin. I was encouraged and assisted by Graham to tell the story of Lal Harraway and write the article for Looking Back. I would like to extend my thanks for his enthusiasm and research skills in assisting the compilation of this article.

The Age of Discovery is generally considered as being that period between the 15th and 17th centuries when seafaring countries from Europe explored, colonised and conquered regions across the world. It was the start of globalisation, and it was founded on maritime trade between West and East. For over a century, from 1488 when Bartolomeu Dias rounded the Agulhas Bank of Southern Africa and established a *padrão* at Kwaaihoek, the Portuguese dominated the sea route to the East. The 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas divided the globe between Portugal and Spain, and Portugal's Vasco da Gama opened the sea route to the East in 1498. It was only in 1595 that Portuguese dominance of the trade route to the East around Southern Africa was challenged by the Dutch, and from the early 1600's the Dutch (1602), English (1601) and French (1604) established companies to trade with the East via the Cape sea route¹.

During the period of Portuguese domination, several vessels were lost on the South African coast. From some of those that were recorded, we have the fantastic and often tragic records left by chroniclers². Yet only four pre-colonial Portuguese wreck sites have been found and positively identified to date, namely the *São João* near Port Edward, the *São Bento* on Msikaba "island", the *Nossa Senhora da Atalaia* at the Cefane River mouth, and the *Santíssimo Sacramento* west of Schoenmakerskop. Other sites where Chinese porcelain shards wash out have been

ⁱ Editor: Malcolm Turner started scuba diving in 1963 and commenced his career as a commercial diver with Comex, a French company specializing in engineering and deep diving operations. Malcolm has dived extensively along the Southern African coastline, having located and explored many shipwrecks. In 1988 he wrote *Shipwrecks and Salvage in South Africa: 1505 to the Present*, widely regarded as the definitive work on South African shipwrecks. Malcolm is retired in St Francis Bay, dividing his time between diving, shipwrecks, and surfing.

tentatively named³, but without the necessary definitive proof required for a positive identification¹.

In 1977 the *Santissimo Sacramento* rocketed into the local headlines when a local salvage team claimed to have discovered the wreck after years of in-depth research⁴. For Allen, the key to locating the wreck was the discovery of a cannon west of Schoenmakerskop by Mr Lal Harraway in 1951. According to Allen, the cannon had been mistakenly identified as a Dutch cannon. Similarly, the Evening Post of 3 June 1963 reports that the cannon came from the wreck of “an unidentified Dutch East Indiaman which went down in 1778”. On 04 June 1963 at a Port Elizabeth Museum ceremony, John Grieve described the “Harraway Cannon” as having been “*made of solid brass by Conraet Wegt Woert of Holland in 1650*”, and that it was “*a Dutch naval cannon*”, and that it was first recorded by Gordon in January 1779.⁵ According to Nash (1977:6), the “Harraway cannon” had been “*tentatively identified at the time by overseas experts as 17th century Dutch in origin, and it was taken for granted that it had come from the wreck of a Dutch ship*”⁶.



Figure 1 - The Harraway Cannon at the PE Museum ceremony on 04 June 1963.
(Source: Lal Harraway personal papers)

This article argues that the location of the *Santissimo Sacramento* wreck had been well known since the wrecking of the vessel on the night of 15 June 1647. Furthermore, neither Lal Harraway, nor the historian Vernon Forbes identified the wreck as “an unidentified Dutch East Indiaman”.

The purpose of the article is not to prove Forbes and Harraway right, and Allen wrong. Rather, it is about the necessity for historians to carefully consider source documentation and guard against the ease by which

¹ It is generally accepted that a wreck can only be positively identified once there is conclusive proof that artifacts recovered by diving on the wreck site, can be linked to the wreck. Finding porcelain in proximity to a wreck site, corresponding to reported wrecks in a general area does not constitute conclusive proof as such assumptions have led to many errors in wreck identification in the past.

historical distortions can be carried forward into “fact”. Moreover, the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) poses a challenge to historians - a challenge of sticking to the real facts, and not algorithms that potentially harvest historical inaccuracies that become ever more self-fulfilling over time.

Legislation and the Salvage of the *Santíssimo Sacramento*

The salvage of the *Santíssimo Sacramento* wreck site in 1977 was a brilliant piece of historical salvage work undertaken by a dedicated and hard-working team. In those days it was perfectly legal for anyone to salvage and take ownership of any artefacts recovered from any abandoned wreck along the South African coast. While broad national heritage legislation had been in place since 1969 (National Monuments Act 35 of 1969), no provision was made for underwater cultural heritage⁷.

In the case of the *Santíssimo Sacramento*, the only legal requirement was that the salvor required a salvage licence issued by the Customs Department. Any items recovered had to be declared to the department and housed in a bonded warehouse until the customs duty was paid.

This meant that anyone could remove items from any wreck within South African territorial waters, even if another team was already working on it. In other words, no one could claim sole rights on an abandoned wreck. On the *Santíssimo Sacramento* a rival team arrived and exercised their rights. This of course led to significant conflict and the usual dirty tricks and undercurrents associated with salvage at the time. To protect their rights, the salvage team led by Dave Allen lobbied government for legislative protection. The 1979 amendments to the National Monuments Act (Act 35 of 1969) arose directly from the commercial salvage of the *Santíssimo Sacramento* and the efforts of the Allen salvage team to conserve maritime heritage⁸.

Today all historical wrecks are protected by the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) and as a result, commercial salvage work on historical wrecks no longer takes place in a responsible manner. Legislatively, wrecks are protected. But, in practice, particularly with the widespread use of scuba equipment in the illegal harvesting of marine resources (such as abalone), many wrecks are being looted, and large amounts of historical information are being lost. It is the author’s opinion that a legislative dispensation that enables commercial salvors to work more effectively in partnership with heritage authorities, can yield significant long-term benefits for maritime heritage.

Finding the *Santísimo Sacramento*

Now we must unravel the salvage history of the *Santísimo Sacramento* after she came ashore in 1647. The details of her voyage and ultimate wrecking are well documented, so there is no point in recounting her story here. What is apparent, is that the work undertaken by Lal Harraway and his team was not acknowledged, or it was deliberately ignored by the salvage team leader in the 1970s.

From my personal experience, evidence indicates that the wreck-site was first found by Khoisan communities who lived along the coastline at the time of the *Santísimo Sacramento* wreck. While walking past the shell middens above Sardinia Bay a few years ago, a fellow walker, Eric Tinwell, picked up a crude stone tool manufactured from the porphyry ballast stones that wash out opposite the wreck siteⁱ. Another discovery was made at Bat's Cave near Schoenmakerskop. The late Freddy Jansens, for reasons unknown, began digging into the cave deposit. At about one meter depth he found many large pieces of Chinese Ming porcelain, that he later sold to a collector. There are two possible explanations for Jansens's discovery. Either the Ming porcelain was carried into the cave by Khoisan, or survivors from the *Santísimo Sacramento* shipwreck sheltered in the cave. Unfortunately, we will never know as the fate of those who remained at the wreck site is unrecorded.

The next recorded visit to the shipwreck site was by Robert Jacob Gordon who provided a detailed description in his journal for 21 January 1778, that reads: "*Having heard from an old Hottentot living at Potgieter's that a great ship had been wrecked somewhere here and that there were some anchors, I sent for him. He said that this had happened in his grandfather's time*". Gordon visited the site and described the site in his narrative and on his map. But because Gordon visited the site at high tide his journal reflects:

"we were unable to see any anchors or pieces of large metal, or as he put it, 'copper cannon'. The unfortunate people had made some huts in the dunes and all died of hunger and hardship, an old man living the longest. Saw some skulls and skeletons which we buried. We found many rusty nails and some finely worked ivory, a ciborium, but it had all

ⁱ Editor: On 03 February 2024, the Weekend Post published an article raising the question whether the porphyry is ballast stone or whether it is a local rock, based on observations by a local naturalist, Johann Stassen. The Society and the Main Public Library have provided support to geologist Matt Mullins and Stellenbosch University's Professor Bjorn von der Heyden who have undertaken tests to determine the point of origin for the rock. The outcome of the study has been submitted to the South African Journal of Geology for publication.

disintegrated. There were some pieces of ebony lying on the beach. Here from the soundness of the teeth in the skulls, I decided that it had been a French or Portuguese ship."⁹

More details are annotated to Gordon's drawing of a "Panorama of Algoa Bay from its Western Shore" that is transcribed as below, as extracted from the drawing of the site as reflected within Figure 2.

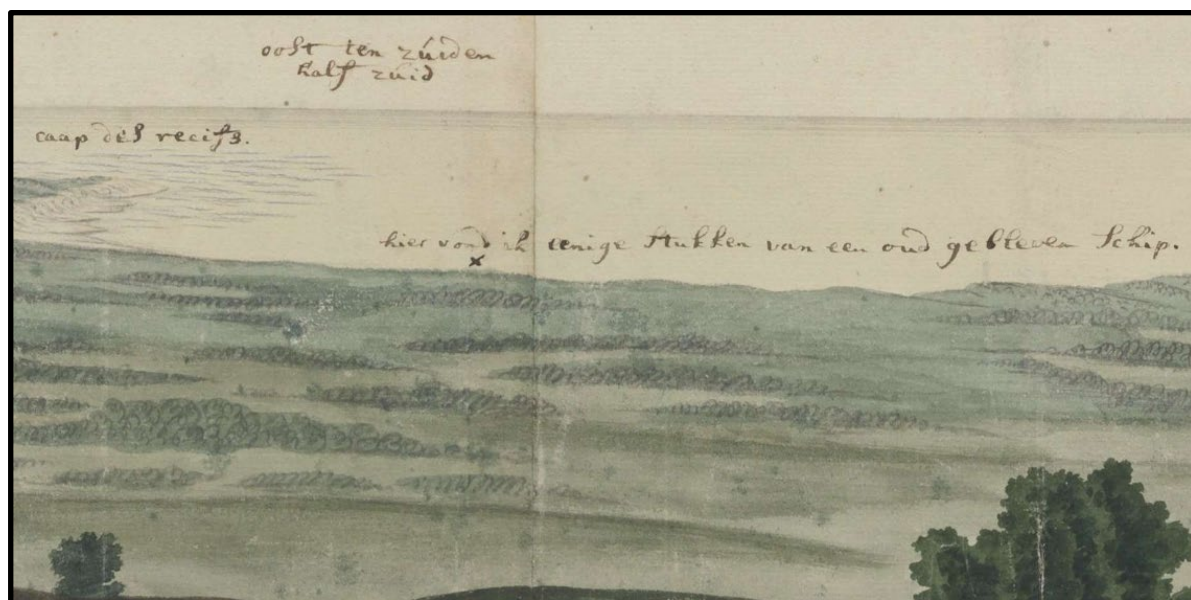


Figure 2 – Extract from Robert Gordon's Panorama of Algoa Bay January 1778 indicating Cape Recife to the left and the wreck site depicted by an "x"¹⁰

Near the wreck, in the dunes, the unfortunate survivors of the shipwreck had made a kind of hut in the sand, having died of hunger after all. There were no inhabitants then. I found some skeletons which I buried with my Hottentot. Here lay the remains of a beautifully carved ivory case, as if it had been a ciborium of a Roman church. There also lay two rusty anchors and a piece of cannon in the water, which I could not recognize because of the strong beating of the water, the beach being very rocky. There were also pieces of black ebony.

Lal Harraway (1900-1975)ⁱ and the Harraway Cannon

Harold Gleeson Harraway (known as Lal Harraway) was a prominent businessman with a deep interest in Eastern Cape history. He was a founding member of the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth and was regarded as "a gentleman in the very best sense of the word" with a very practical orientation to history ¹¹. Harraway had been collecting

ⁱ Upon the death of Derek Harraway (Lal's son) in 2017, Malcolm Turner was tasked by the Harraway family with the responsibility of maintaining Lal Harraway's papers on shipwrecks. The Harraway papers have been used in preparing the content of the current article.

newspaper cuttings and general information about wrecks from as far back as 1947. His interests were wide-ranging, including the porcelain fragments at Haga Haga, the mystery of the ship Hercules, and the cannons on the rocks at Kwelerha.

Harraway's interest in the *Santíssimo Sacramento* was sparked by an Eastern Province Herald article dated 6 November 1948. Harraway had heard folk-lore stories from fishermen of the area who talked about a wreck and objects in the sea in the vicinity of Sardinia Bay. A query appeared in the "Odd Spot" from Professor Vernon Forbes, as to whether the cannon and anchors mentioned by Robert Jacob Gordon in 1778 had been rediscovered. Forbes describes Gordon's tour of inspection on behalf of the (Dutch) United East India Company, and how he was taken to the site by a local Khoisan farm worker on 21 January 1778. Forbes referred to Gordon's references of a survivor's camp, a Roman Catholic Ciborium box, human skeletons, two anchors and a "copper" cannon, and the map prepared by Gordon (see Figure 2), as well as the opinion that the wreck was of either Portuguese or French nationality due to the Catholic artefact.

Harraway's first involvement with the Sacramento wreck was when he was told of a strange object lying in a rock pool below Schoenmakerskop, which turned out to be a bronze ships cannon. He immediately decided to try and recover it. The cannon was fully accessible at low tide, so no diving equipment was required. The first salvage work by Harraway was recorded in an EP Herald article dated 15 September 1951. Mention was made of an unsuccessful attempt by a group of men using block and tackle to recover something from the sea near Schoenmakerskop. The following day the cannon was hauled ashore by a team of volunteers using a team of oxen belonging to Buffelsfontein farm. On the 17th September 1951, the EP Herald published an account of the salvage and a photograph. Another report appeared in the Evening Post of the same day, reporting that the cannon had been claimed by Customs and mentioned the possibility that the vessel was of Portuguese nationality. Harraway, who wanted the operation kept secret until the cannon could be taken to a safe storage area, was livid, and complained in writing to John Sutherland of the Post.



Figure 3 – Oxen Hauling the Cannon ashore (Source: Lal Harraway personal papers)

It was shortly after the cannon was recovered and hidden in the area to await transportation, that vandals started cutting up the gun with grinders and saws, planning to sell it as scrap metal. Before being disturbed they managed to cut off a trunnion and the cascabel which ruined the integrity of the piece. The vandals also stole the block and tackle used by the salvors. The EP Herald later reported that the police were investigating the case, and that Harraway was offering a five pound reward for information regarding the incident. The vandals were identified but escaped justice due to lack of evidence.

At this point it was clear to Harraway that as he did not have the necessary salvage permit from Customs, his operation was in fact illegal. Customs therefore impounded the cannon.

In late September 1951, a letter was received from Dr Vernon Forbes, the Senior Lecturer in Geography at Rhodes University, congratulating Harraway on the recovery and confirming that the wreck was the same one recorded by Gordon. He further stated that due to the presence of the Catholic Ciborium box found by Gordon, the vessel was either French or Portuguese. The presence of the ebony from the cargo pointed to a homeward bound voyage. He mistakenly thought that the vessel was possibly of mid to late 18th century vintage.

On the 20th September 1951, Harraway wrote to Customs for permission to continue working on the wreck, receiving a reply on the 22nd September 1951. Customs granted permission to transport the cannon to the city with the stipulation that they must be kept informed of its whereabouts.



Figure 4 – Volunteers at the wreck site (Source: Lal Harraway personal papers)

By the 24th September 1951, Harraway was already planning a series of ambitious salvage operations. He had targeted four wreck sites along the coast, hoping to establish sole rights by asking Customs to grant him a one-mile radius exclusion zone around each site. The areas were Sardinia Bay, Cannon Rocks, Haga Haga and Kwelerha. To accurately pinpoint the sites, he engaged the Navy survey vessel *HMSAS Protea* to do the survey. In the letter he thanks them for their conciliatory attitude towards his “illegal” salvage operation, and a reply was received on the 3rd November 1951 ordering him to stop all salvage work until he was in possession of a salvage licence. This request was later forwarded to the Department of Lands under whose jurisdiction such applications fell.

A letter received from Customs dated 7th November 1951 waived the payment of Customs duty on the cannon on the condition that it was put on display at Rhodes University. For a good few months all investigations of wreck sites were suspended due to the salvage licence issue, but in February 1952 Harraway wrote to the London and Lancashire Insurance Company asking them to issue a £1000 surety bond as requested by Customs. In the letter he states that he believes the wreck to be Portuguese.

A salvage licence was eventually granted to him on 4 August 1952. As his activities were now legally sanctioned, Harraway engaged divers

from the Dolphin Underwater Club to assist in surveying the seabed offshore. The main diver involved was the late Tony Dicks, a man greatly admired by Harraway.



Figure 5 – Removal of the cannon (Source: Lal Harraway personal papers)

The cannon was now in the municipal stores, under the control of the National Monuments Commission. Harraway wanted it mounted on the cliff top at Schoenmakerskop, where the present cannon now stands. By December 1952 no budget had been passed by the municipality to repair the damage to the gun and have it mounted on a wooden gun carriage. After querying this lack of action, Harraway was assured that the project would be included in the 1954 budget.

In June 1954 the cannon was released by Customs for display at Rhodes University, but Harraway wanted it mounted at Schoenmakerskop, and after considerable lobbying, the gun was transferred to the Port Elizabeth Municipality.

Survey work on the wreck continued and in early 1955 they found some more bronze guns which were periodically covered and uncovered by sand. The Customs warned the Dolphin Underwater Club divers that it was illegal to undertake salvage work without a licence, and Ken Crellin the club chairman had to assure them that they were simply helping Harraway with the survey. By May 1955 the Port Elizabeth mayor, Louis Dubb, was asking for the cannon to be mounted at the museum, but Harraway insisted that it be mounted at either Schoenmakerskop or on the Donkin Reserve.



Figure 6 – Volunteers hauling the cannon ashore (Source: Lal Harraway personal papers)

The following year finds Harraway writing letters to various institutions for help in identifying either the name or nationality of the wreck. A letter from the Artillery Museum at the Rotunda Woolwich London dated 29th February 1956 sowed the seeds of confusion about the nationality of the wreck. Even though they state that *“if the inscription had not been scoured of by the sea, it would read: Conraet Wegt Woert”*, a Dutch gun founder circa 1650. A letter from the National Maritime Museum, London, dated 01 March 1956 stated that they thought it was Portuguese. The Cape Times also published an article on 21 September 1957 about the salvage and stated the wreck was Portuguese.

From 1956 onwards, the nationality of the wreck fluctuated between Dutch, Portuguese and French. But, in November 1960, Eric Axelson convinced Harraway that the wreck was either French or Portuguese, and in 1967 another bronze cannon was found on the site.

But by 1963, the newspapers were emphatic that the “Harraway Cannon” was Dutch. For instance, on 03 June 1963 the Evening Post reported that *“the ‘Harraway Cannon’ is the finest gun ever recovered from a wreck on the South African coast. The wreck from which it comes is that of an unidentified Dutch East Indiaman which went down in 1778.”*

In 1968, the South African spear-fishing community was shocked to hear of the drowning of Harraway’s chief diver, Tony Dicks, during a spear-fishing championship. Harraway was devastated and seemed to lose his passion for the project. In 1970 after repeated requests for his

reports, Harraway's salvage license was cancelled. He died in 1975, without positively identifying "his" wreck.

Conclusion

Over time, the popular press and public opinion can significantly distort seemingly obvious facts. It has been widely speculated, and reported, that the cannons found in the 1950s and 1960s were of Dutch origin. Since the Allen salvage of the *Santíssimo Sacramento*, it has been reported that Harraway and Dr Vernon Forbes had misidentified the wreck as being of Dutch origin.

The personal papers of Lal Harraway provide clear evidence that Harraway was firmly of the belief that the cannon was of French or Portuguese origin. The personal papers of Harraway do not provide any evidence of Dutch origins. However, the media incorrectly reported that the cannon was of Dutch origin, despite clear evidence to the contrary.

The small group of enthusiasts and volunteers that salvaged the cannon in 1951 made every effort to conserve our maritime heritage resources through their attempts to place the cannon on public display, and resisting attempts to relocate the cannon to Grahamstown. It was only 26 years later, that the site was salvaged by commercial divers. In the process, invaluable contributions were made by historical enthusiasts and commercial divers to the maritime heritage conservation. Good legislation to protect our maritime heritage resources is to be welcomed, but this article demonstrates the potential contributions that enthusiasts and commercial diving operations can make in improving research methodologies and maritime conservation.

The facts indicate that the location of the wreck site and the cannon was already known by local Khoisan in the 17th century. Gordon's journals also indicate existing local knowledge, amongst *trekboere* and Khoisan alike, of both the wreck at Schoenmakerskop, and the location of the Doddington shipwreck. Without the assistance of historical enthusiasts, volunteers and commercial divers, the *Santíssimo Sacramento* wreck site could still be unknown, or be plundered by unscrupulous poachers and treasure hunters.

Harraway's perseverance, against seemingly insurmountable odds, in ensuring the preservation of the cannon, have undoubtedly placed him on the South African maritime history record. He is deserving of recognition for having originally rediscovered the wreck of the *Santíssimo Sacramento*. It was his perseverance that retained the

cannon in Port Elizabeth, and his passionate work on East Cape history has had a long and lasting impact.

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A Photographic Record of Changing Places

By: Kin Bentley

Editor's note: Kin Bentley is a retired journalist, widely respected for his writing and art. In an era where heritage destruction is widespread, and decolonisation agendas thrive through a flurry of ill-informed name changes whilst confounding every principle of public participation and administrative justice, Kin Bentley's works are important visual records for understanding the consequences of decolonisation agendas that suffocate African thought and suppress human agency.

Following the success of my coffee-table book, *200 Years: A Celebration of Port Elizabeth*¹, I have extended this sort of history and appreciation of our built and natural environment to include places in the former Cape Province. The books are published in digital "PDF" format for greater accessibility across a broad range of devices and display mediums to optimise the full potential of the graphic rich content of the books.

My training is in fine art, although my 32-year career was in hard-news journalism, augmented by my role as art critic on *The Herald* for about 15 years. The son of an architectural draughtsman, I grew up with a love for well-designed buildings, but in my youth favoured the modern architects of the Bauhaus and, of course, the likes of Le Corbusier in France and Frank Lloyd Wright in the US. It was my move from East London to Port Elizabeth as a junior reporter on the *Evening Post* in 1984 that started opening my eyes to the importance of our heritage buildings.

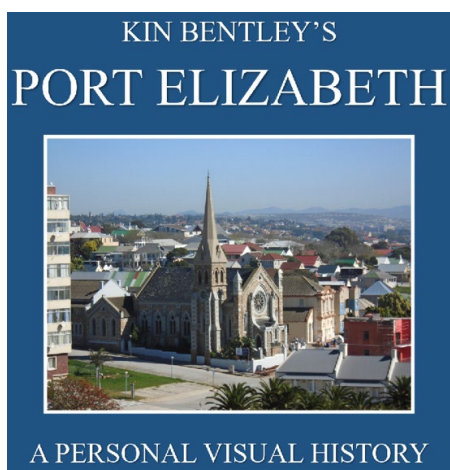
I discovered, through the likes of late Africana librarian Margaret Harradine and the University of Port Elizabeth (now Nelson Mandela University) emeritus professor of Architecture Danie Theron, that there were dozens of unique buildings and monuments in the city that were defining landmarks and an integral part of its character.

During the 1990s, as a then subeditor on *The Herald*, I watched in dismay as the fabric of Central started to come apart under a steady influx of vagrants, drug lords, prostitutes and landlords who seemed happy to allow the historic suburb to go to ruin. There was one ray of light and that was the Mandela Bay Development Agency (MBDA). They did superb work in the 2010s particularly with upgrades to the Donkin Reserve, Opera House, Tramways building and the Campanile. But too much else was ignored and several buildings decayed to a point where demolition was deemed the only viable alternative.

¹ Bentley, K. 2020. *200 Years: A Celebration of Port Elizabeth 1820 – 2020*. Port Elizabeth: Gutsche Family Investments.

Today we sit with many of our heritage jewels facing destruction through neglect, including the Harbour Board building, the Old Post Office (unused for decades) and the 1902 Herald building on the corner of Baakens Street and Military Road. In 2014 I set about walking PE's historic areas, photographing key buildings and streets and posting these walks on Facebook. I generated a lot of interest and in turn was provided with fascinating copies of old photographs and postcards of PE and other towns. It was seeing what has survived and what was already lost to "progress" that led me to documenting these changes in "*200 Years*", the name chosen because the book was meant to mark the bicentenary of the naming of Port Elizabeth in 1820.

Sadly, Covid-19 set everything back, including the very buildings I was most concerned about. The Donkin Reserve looked superb in 2019. A few years later it had gone to seed, with so much of the MBDA's good work undone by vandals, vagrants and municipal neglect.



I have reworked the *200 Years* book, which I had laid out originally, with Stephen Walker applying the finishing touches required for such a glossy publication. I've renamed the PDF book, *Kin Bentley's Port Elizabeth*, because it does rely on my personal experiences. I mean just the changes, often for the worse, but occasionally for the better, were things I personally witnessed and recorded photographically. It is my personal record.

I have to note that, while I sought to take good, even beautiful pictures of my favourite places, I usually relied only on a point-and-shoot camera and a basic cell phone. Carrying an expensive camera around the streets of PE is asking to be mugged. But the pictures are vital in telling the story. For PE, it is old images of, for instance, South End, the North Jetty and the CBD before the flyovers, and so on, that delineate the passage of time. It is hard to imagine that a place like South End ever existed, yet it was a substantial non-racial residential and commercial centre right next to the harbour.

My project on East London followed the same successful formula. The West Bank, for instance, was where the town began. But that suburb is now like a time capsule. It has seen little change in over a century after

a succession of bridges over the Buffalo River saw the town develop primarily on the east bank. East London's harbour predates that of Port Elizabeth by several decades. Every town I've covered has its unique history, tied up with the arrival and migration of European immigrants within the developing country. In the Eastern Cape I have also produced PDF books (all A4-square) on Grahamstown, Cradock, Somerset East and Bathurst, the latter having obvious roots in the arrival of the 1820 British settlers.

I have explored Cape Town at some length and produced a six-part series on the Mother City. It includes a brief introduction with essential historical data, but also material that emerged almost by chance. Muizenberg, for instance, has a wonderful array of historic buildings, including *Het Posthys*, one of the oldest in the country. Rhodes's cottage museum is a gem, while the Castle of Good Hope is an irreplaceable historical artefact. I argue that it was developed to create the ambience of a tiny Dutch town. That atmosphere remains.

Stellenbosch demanded a PDF book all of its own. Again, I believe my images do justice to its beauty and history, though I am well aware it has far more to offer than I have covered.

My latest project, "No Frontiers", similarly uses my photographs to celebrate towns and nature reserves off the beaten track between the Orange River and Cape Agulhas. As I write I am compiling a photographic appreciation of the Cederberg range, or at least that section I explored in 2021. It is an incredibly beautiful place. Thus far I have covered, in varying amounts of detail, Bethulie on the Orange River, farms in the Teebus area of the Karoo, Hofmeyr, Graaff-Reinet (by no means fully) and the Valley of Desolation, Willowmore and the Baviaanskloof, Cape St Francis, Hogsback and Katberg, De Rust, Oudtshoorn, McGregor, Prince Albert and several other places. I have the material for a book on Swellendam but still have to decide whether it belongs in "No Frontiers" or as a separate book like those on PE and EL. My pictures of L'Agulhas are waiting to be turned into a part of the "No Frontiers" series. I'll also broaden my horizons to include material I have from KZN, including of Pietermaritzburg, Durban and the Drakensberg. On a different note, I have begun cataloguing my wealth of images taken since 2014 of key PE precincts. The Donkin Reserve and Market Square precincts are complete. Again, these are based on my experiences. But I don't know if I will have the guts to revisit many of the places where I calmly walked, snapping away, a decade ago.

SUMMARY OF KIN BENTLEY'S PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDS

DATE	TITLE	SUMMARY
2023	<i>Kin Bentley's Port Elizabeth</i>	A personal history and appreciation of the second largest major city in South Africa. Historic and contemporary drawings, maps and photographs explore the town's development.
2023	<i>Kin Bentley's East London</i>	The story of a South African city, founded in 1848 and which became a single municipality in 1873 when the harbour was built in the mouth of the Buffalo River.
2023	<i>Kin Bentley's Grahamstown</i>	Established before the arrival of the 1820 the book documents the town's early origins in pictures and text, then explores the modern city in photographs and captions.
2023	<i>Kin Bentley's Cradock</i>	The Victorian houses known as Die Tuishuise are the best-preserved part of this early frontier town and concludes with views from within the Mountain Zebra National Park.
2023	<i>Kin Bentley's Somerset East</i>	Lord Charles Somerset, Robert Hart and Walter Battiss feature in this historic Eastern Cape town. We also explore the Glen Avon farm and visit the eponymous waterfall.
2024	<i>Kin Bentley's Bathurst</i>	From Bradshaw's mill to St John's, the oldest unaltered Anglican church in SA are some of the iconic gems in this historic 1820 settler hamlet.
2024	<i>The Donkin Reserve: A photographic exploration of this historic PE precinct</i>	The exploration includes the Donkin lighthouse and Memorial Pyramid, the Donkin Row, the Edward and Grand hotels, the Hill Presbyterian Church, Belmont Terrace and Alfred Terrace, and Constitution Hill back to Victoria Street.
2024	<i>The Market Square (Parts 1 to 3): A photographic essay exploring this historic PE precinct</i>	The exploration includes Market Square, City Hall, Pleinhuys, the Public Library, St Mary's Cathedral, St Augustine's Cathedral, the Feather Market Hall, the Old Post Office complex, Fleming Square and Fleming Street, including the Harbour Board building and the old Customs House, the Campanile, No 7 Castle Hill, the Station, the Herald building and lower Military Road, the Opera House and lower Whites Road, the Tramways building, St Mary's Cemetery and the Muslim Cemetery.
2024	<i>Kin Bentley's Cape Town (Part 1)</i>	The first part of this visual appreciation of the Mother City includes a fairly detailed history of its origins, before tackling the likes of the Castle of Good Hope and Kirstenbosch Gardens, Rondebosch and Newlands.

DATE	TITLE	SUMMARY
2024	<i>Kin Bentley's Cape Town (Part 2)</i>	Here we explore, largely in photographs, the Company Gardens, Greenmarket Square, the Slave Lodge, Groote Kerk, St George's Cathedral and other architectural landmarks before ending up at the V&A Waterfront.
2024	<i>Kin Bentley's Cape Town (Part 3)</i>	We start by climbing Lion's Head before tracing the western seaboard from Mouille Point and Cape Point all the way down past Camps Bay, Llandudno and Hout Bay to Cape Point, which is a photographer's dream.
2024	<i>Kin Bentley's Cape Town (Part 4)</i>	Heading up the eastern flank of the peninsula, we explore Simon's Town, Fish Hoek and Muizenberg, where the legacy of the likes of Cecil John Rhodes, Sir Abe Bailey and Sir Herbert Baker is evident.
2023	<i>Kin Bentley's Cape Town (Part 5)</i>	We explore Groot Constantia, the Rhodes Memorial and UCT, before climbing to the King's blockhouse. We hike onto Table Mountain from Constantia Nek and again at Silvermine. A Chart Farm visit ends this section.
2024	<i>Kin Bentley's Cape Town (Part 6)</i>	Woodstock and Walmer Estate offer interesting architecture and history. From Vredehoek we hike around Devil's Peak. Sunset views from Blaauwberg are followed by a trip to Pringle Bay and Betty's Bay.
2024	<i>Kin Bentley's Stellenbosch</i>	SA's second oldest town has a unique character, its early Cape Dutch buildings beautifully preserved. Aside from photographing and detailing the history of many, we also hiked in the Jonkershoek mountains.
2024	<i>No Frontiers: Between the Orange River and Cape Agulhas (Seven Parts)</i>	This series is all about exploring the intimacy of wide-open spaces and places. Some of the places covered in the seven parts are: (1) Gariep Dam (2) Hofmeyr, Graaff-Reinet, Hillston Farm (3) Aberdeen (4) Willowmore (5) Baviaans & Langkloof (6) Cape St Francis (7) De Rust.

Purchase Options

Books can be purchased individually or as a set by contacting bentleykin@gmail.com. Individual titles are priced between R100 and R150, with discounted prices for bulk purchases (six Eastern Cape books for R350 and seven of Cape Town/Stellenbosch series for R400).

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Book Review: Time Slips Beneath our Feet¹

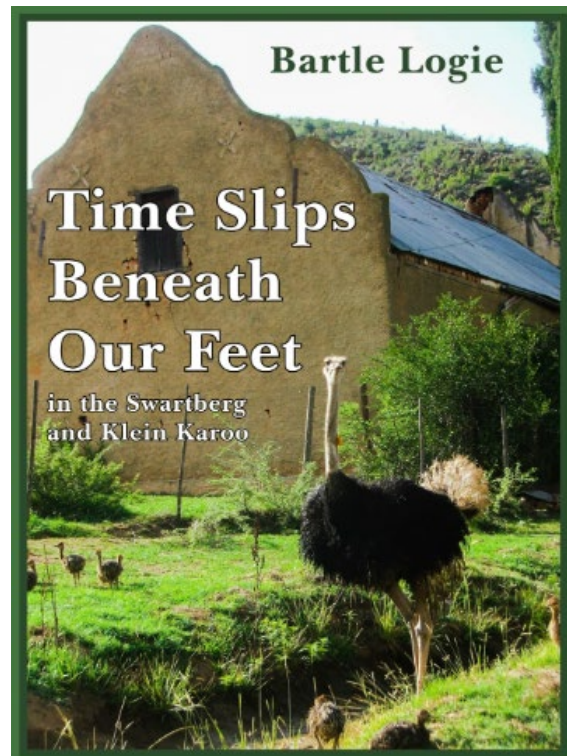
By: Charles Wait

The book is inspired by Bartle Logie's reflection on the Pierneef paintings at Park Station in Johannesburg². Two landscapes were of particular interest to him, the Swartberg Pass and Meiringspoort. The book deals with Bartle's quest to find the place where Pierneef had put up his easel to paint the Swartberg and its famous pass, and the well-known Meiringspoort.

Bartle demarcates the Klein Karoo as "... as a shallow valley between mountain ranges in the Southern Cape. From Montagu in the west, it stretches for roughly 350 kilometres to a point between Uniondale and Willowmore in the east. It is largely 40 to 60 kilometres wide between the Swartberg range to the north and the Langeberg and Outeniqua mountains to the south."

Bartle and his wife, Caryl, started their exploration somewhat outside the Klein Karoo at Touwsrivier in the Western Cape. They wanted to explore as close as possible along the erstwhile Makadas railway line between Touwsrivier and Ladismith in the Klein Karoo, that operated between 1925 and 1981.

On this route the author attends to some history of the locomotives of the time and the devastating effect of the Laingsburg flood of January 1981 that destroyed the rail line and put an end to the Makadas train. Their exploration takes them to Anysberg, a World Heritage Site of eighty thousand hectares. Bartle writes about the history of the places visited, the origin of names, whom the people were who lived there, before and after the arrival of settlers from the Cape, and interesting events that took



¹ Logie, Bartle. 2024. *Time Slips beneath our Feet: In the Swartberg and Klein Karoo* Logie. Write-On Publishing: Port Alfred.

² Johannesburg Park Station was opened to passengers in 1897. Expansions to the railway station were completed in 1932 and the interior walls were decorated with thirty-two panels by the landscape artist Jacobus Hendrik Pierneef. The paintings, owned by the Transnet Foundation, are on a long-term loan to the Rupert Museum. Virtual tours are available at <https://rupertmuseum.org/exhibition/jh-pierneef-the-johannesburg-station-panels/>

place. His “keen botanist” wife, Caryl, introduces the reader to noteworthy vegetation along their travels.

In this book review I’ll cover some of the places visited to whet the appetite of the prospective reader. We have already noted that Anysberg is a World Heritage Site, and we read about a tuber collected for the Schönbrunn Palace Gardens in Vienna by a staff gardener sent to South Africa in 1786 and which was described at the first International Botanical Conference in 1905 in Vienna as *‘the rarest plant on earth’*.

After their stay in the guest facilities at Anysberg our travellers move to Wolverfontein where we learn about Dirk Willem Crafford who came to the Cape from Utrecht and his off-spring who developed the farm Wolverfontein where guest facilities are now available in the restored Môreson Manor.

Next, the history of the railway line between Touwsrivier and Ladismith is sketched together with the two barrels of wine held for its opening, but which evaporated in the 32 years between the promise of the line and its opening on 3 November 1925 – a rail link that lasted 55 years until the Laingsburg Flood of 25 January 1981 washed away bridges and sections of the tracks.

From Ladismith the “Klein Karoo Heartland” is explored – the route from Ladismith along the R62 to Barrydale, where available along the old gravel road, but now mainly inaccessible due to new farm developments. Some incidents from the Anglo-Boer War are relayed.

Before returning to “Early Days in Ladismith” Logie takes a detour to sketch “First Human Footsteps” by short descriptions of the paleontological discoveries at Pinnacle Point near Mossel Bay, Blombos, and Klasies River Caves. Here we learn more about the lifestyle of the Khoekhoe and why *“the Europeans lacked any understanding of the San lifestyle and came to regard them simply as barbaric and a nuisance.”*

Back from the detour to “Early Days in Ladismith”, days that started when *“the first Dutch farmers moved into the Klein Karoo during the second half of the 18th century”*. Land was sold by a farmer for a church and a land surveyor called upon to lay out a town with 130 erven. The governor at the Cape, Sir Harry Smith gave permission that the town be named after his wife, Lady Juana Smith. The reason for the spelling Ladismith and not Ladysmith is cleared up. In Ladismith we meet a Jewish community of whom we learn more in our later visit to Oudtshoorn, once known as South Africa’s Jerusalem. To develop an appetite for lunch a walk around Ladismith is recommended, especially down Church Street.

Chapters VIII to X are devoted to Cape Carts, with a sparkling sprinkling of life on a farm ran by the widow van der Merwe and her daughter, to ox waggons and to the Road Motor Services of the then South African Railways and Harbours, now Transnet and its affiliates.

From these interluding chapters on modes of transport we follow the author as he describes his travels in an eastern direction from Ladismith, not along the R62 but they “...prefer to leave by way of the Hoekoe valley...through delightfully unspoilt countryside and well-tended farmlands...” where “...the majority of visitors head for the Hoekoe farmstead, Stille Waters, birthplace of the Afrikaans poet Cornelis Jacobus Langenhoven “...who wrote *Die Stem*...”.

From this visit, still travelling east, a settlement that originated as a mission named Zoar is visited before entering Seweweekspoort and learning about its history, about the travel in a Cape cart by the first medical doctor who, in 1847, was the first to operate in South Africa using an anaesthetic. This doctor headed for Prince Albert and we read about a mysterious gold nugget that was picked up on the farm Gatzplaatz.

The *trekboere* of the Klein Karoo of the 19th century were “...not so much interested in finding a way through or over the Swartberg, as finding a passage to the south.”

This they found in the Attaquas Kloof “...but even at its best it was never easy for wagons.” In January 1848 the Montagu Pass was opened, “...an easier way through the mountains, but it was a good deal east of Mossel Bay...there was a need for an easier, shorter route from Mossel Bay through to Oudtshoorn...”. Apart from this general need it is interesting how a shortage of candles contributed to the building of a pass that provided the shorter route.

Now follows further descriptions about the investigations into the vegetation of the area and the story of Bloubaard Swanepoel, “... the last person to be publicly hanged at the Cape” on 28th April 1856 and where this happened.

East of Ladismith is Calitzdorp where another easy route had to be found, consequently we are told the history of to-day’s Huis River Pass.

“The odd thing about written travellers’ records...are those things which are not mentioned...one tends to overlook the commonplace.” To fill this gap in his own writing Bartle devotes chapter XIV to “Wildlife: Historical Incidence.” Dassies, their link to elephants, the *witkruisarend*, buffalo,

hippos, leopards, caracals (*rooikat*), lions, kudu, and quagga and their presence are mentioned.

What follows are the visits to Calitzdorp, to Kruisrivier and Kobus-se-Gat, in this case in search of the spot where Pierneef painted the Swartberg Pass, the Swartberg Pass and Gamkaskloof, Prince Albert, from Klaarstroom to Oudtshoorn, here to try and find where Pierneef painted Meiringspoort, from Oudtshoorn, which Logie calls the cultural capital of the Klein Karoo, to Uniondale Road, via Vondeling and Toorwater to, finally, Willowmore.

Calitzdorp, known for its sweet wines, but further a unique way of filling potholes in early days, the days without a hospital but a doctor with a motor car, the goal doubling up as hospital.

In search of the spot from where Pierneef painted the Swartberg Pass, we learn more of Thomas Bain's³ care for his labourers, who built the pass with pick and shovel, who were convicts but whom he, unlike other road builders, treated differently, also his unique method of cracking stones without the aid of explosives.

Next follows the trip into Gamkaskloof including the bulldozer driver, Jacobus Hendrikus "Koos" van Zyl's account of the road building during the 1950s into the Kloof. Prince Albert is described, again from a historical angle, but also for its present-day glory. In 1902 two unique paintings were bought for the hotel, later neglected and damaged, but restored in 2012 and now accompanied by stories of persons who make strange observations while viewing the paintings.

To get to Oudtshoorn from Prince Albert our two travellers take the route through Meiringspoort to see if Pierneef's spot for placing his easel could be found, again we get the history of the construction of this thoroughfare and we are told about the astonishing success of two opposing soldiers during the Anglo-Boer War firing at each other simultaneously. We also come across a stone that has been declared a National Monument.

Many questions are answered in the book. Why was Oudtshoorn considered the cultural capital of the Klein Karoo and why was it known as South Africa's Jerusalem? How did an English born, German-speaking Jewish woman from Russian Poland become curator of the Afrikaans author and poet, Langenhoven's, literary legacy? Where can

³ Thomas Baines and Thomas Bain are often confused. Thomas Baines (1820-1875) is the well-known artist and explorer. Thomas Bain (1830-1893) was a road engineer and son of Andrew Geddes Bain (1797-1864), the renowned geologist, road engineer, paleontologist, and explorer.

one find the only secular museum in the world to house a Jewish synagogue, are just some of the intriguing answers provided.

The journey ends at Willowmore. A postal agency established on a farm in 1860 saw a general dealer's store three years later and in 1879 a Dutch Reformed Church was built, one of the cases of church building accelerating the development of towns in the Klein Karoo. The parents of a man who later became a well-known Afrikaans writer could not afford to send him to school during the Great Depression of 1929-1933. The local shopkeeper came to their rescue, saying: "*don't worry...buy whatever is required, I know that you will in time repay me with eggs and butter*".

This book is written in an easy-to-read style, faultlessly edited and each chapter of the ideal length for that one hour's leisurely read, that is if you can put it down, once started.

This book is a must-read for the prospective visitor to the Klein Karoo, for the persons well acquainted with the Klein Karoo, for the botanist and other plant lovers, for those interested in the history of platteland towns.

And if you want to know the outcome of Bartle's quest to find the spots where Pierneef placed his easel when painting the Swartberg and Meiringskloof landscapes, you'll have to read the book.

Time Slips beneath our Feet: In the Swartberg and Klein Karoo is published by Write-On Publishing and is available in Port Elizabeth at Fogarty's or Jimmy's Bookshop for R350. The book is also available electronically and in hard copy from Amazon at <https://www.amazon.com/Time-Slips-Beneath-Our-Feet/dp/1776484851>

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GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Contributions in English or Afrikaans not exceeding 3000 words are welcome. All contributions must be original and must not have been published elsewhere. Articles must be typed in Arial size 12 font, with footnotes at the end of the article, and must be submitted in MS Word (*.docx) format. Illustrations must be contained within the MS Word document.

For general style and reference techniques, contributors can refer to this issue for guidance. The editorial sub-committee reserves the right to edit contributions where necessary, and the edited draft will be submitted to the author for approval before publishing.

All correspondence in connection with this Journal must be addressed to:

The Editor, Looking Back

Contributions must be submitted by email to:
info@historicalsocietype.co.za

OBJECTIVES OF THE SOCIETY

- i. To foster and promote interest in the historic past of South Africa, particularly of the Eastern Cape and more particularly of Port Elizabeth and district.
- ii. To stimulate interest in historic research.
- iii. The placing of descriptive plaques on buildings or other places of historic interest in Port Elizabeth and district.
- iv. To disseminate the results of its work in the widest possible manner by the publication of a bulletin or journal, or by any other means.
- v. To undertake the organization of lectures and visits to local historic sites.
- vi. To co-operate or associate with any other organization whether local or national having similar interests and objectives.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR THE YEAR 2025

Ordinary Membership: R100

Corporate Membership: R1000

The Society organizes events according to a programme determined in consultation with the membership. Our journal, *Looking Back*, is issued to all categories annually at year end.

Members in each category are entitled to one vote at the Annual General Meeting in February of each year or at a Special General Meeting.

PUBLICATIONS

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PRICE</u>
<i>Donkin Heritage and Richmond Hill Trails</i> booklet (9 th Edition 2016)	R50
<i>Gazetteer of the Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage Divisions of the old Cape Colony</i> , compiled by Bartle Logie and Margaret Harradine	R450
<i>History of the EH Walton Group</i>	R100
<i>Looking Back</i> , an assortment of back copies of the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth journal between 1965 and 2022.	R5
<i>Port Elizabeth – A Social Chronicle to the end of 1945</i> , Margaret Harradine.	R450

To purchase copies of publications contact:

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