

The Seven Seas Tattler Issue 1.14 - July 2018



This month's Tattler is honoured to dedicate itself to the Club's 150th anniversary. Over the next few issues we will be including historical information as well as keeping you up to date with plans to celebrate this massive occasion.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Seven Seas Club reaches a unique milestone by celebrating it's 150 years of existence.

It initially started off as a Royal Navy Officers Club whilst the British were in Simon's Town manning the Africa Station. When the Royal Navy decided to leave Simonstown as part of the Simon's Town agreement the South African Naval Officers decided to take it over. The Club at this stage was housed on naval property. The Minister of Defence at the time decreed that no alcohol will be dispensed within military property. Senior SAN officers decided that an informal meeting place was required to address issues of the day in a relaxed environment. This resulted in funds being secured to purchase the ground and construct the club on the ground where the Seven Seas Club now stands.

The Club was very strong in the mid-80s and 90s, having 600 plus members. Unfortunately, thereafter, membership has waned to about 300 today. The new generation of Naval Officers are not joining the Club as before as they have other social needs. Numerous functions have been arranged in the past to encourage them to join but with not much success.

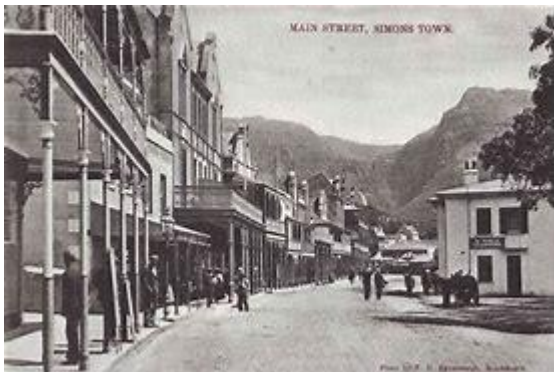
The Committee has compiled a survey to determine the way forward for the Club in order to keep it viable for the future. It is pleasing to note most of the members are still keen that the Club maintains its Naval culture. Your committee will strive to keep this in mind when considering options to keep the Club on an even keel and growing from strength to strength.

Various ideas have been put forward to celebrate our 150th year. Members are encouraged to support the initiatives, which will be communicated as they materialize.

From the Editor

I am sure that everybody will concur that this is a very significant achievement and milestone. We hope to celebrate the event appropriately and will be providing further information about such celebrations in future Tattlers.

To create some perspective we will commence with a little bit of the history of its home, the incomparable Simonstown.



The village of Simonstown was given its name in 1687, when Governor Simon van der Stel visited the area. However, it probably remained a small, informal settlement until 1743 when it was established as the official winter anchorage for ships of the Dutch East Indian Company. That same year it was chosen as the site for a magazine, hospital and barracks, and by the time a stone pier was built in the harbour in 1768, the shore facilities included a bakery, a butchery, a carpenter's shop and a smithy, as well as a residence for the Governor. Two small forts were built in 1794, although these proved ineffective when British troops landed in the bay the following year.

A whaling station was established in the bay in 1810, and although by that stage the village boasted some 40 houses, most were the summer residences of wealthy Capetonians. In 1827 the South African Missionary Society established a mission on the site.

In 1814 Simonstown became a naval base and in 1875 it was ceded to the British Admiralty as a naval station. The local economy received an enormous boost in 1899 as the result of the South African War, and by 1902 Simonstown had about 450 dwellings. Many local residents were employed either by the military or in the town's dockyard. In about 1900 construction was begun on a new naval dock for the port, and on 1 December 1890 the railway line from Kalk Bay reached Simonstown.

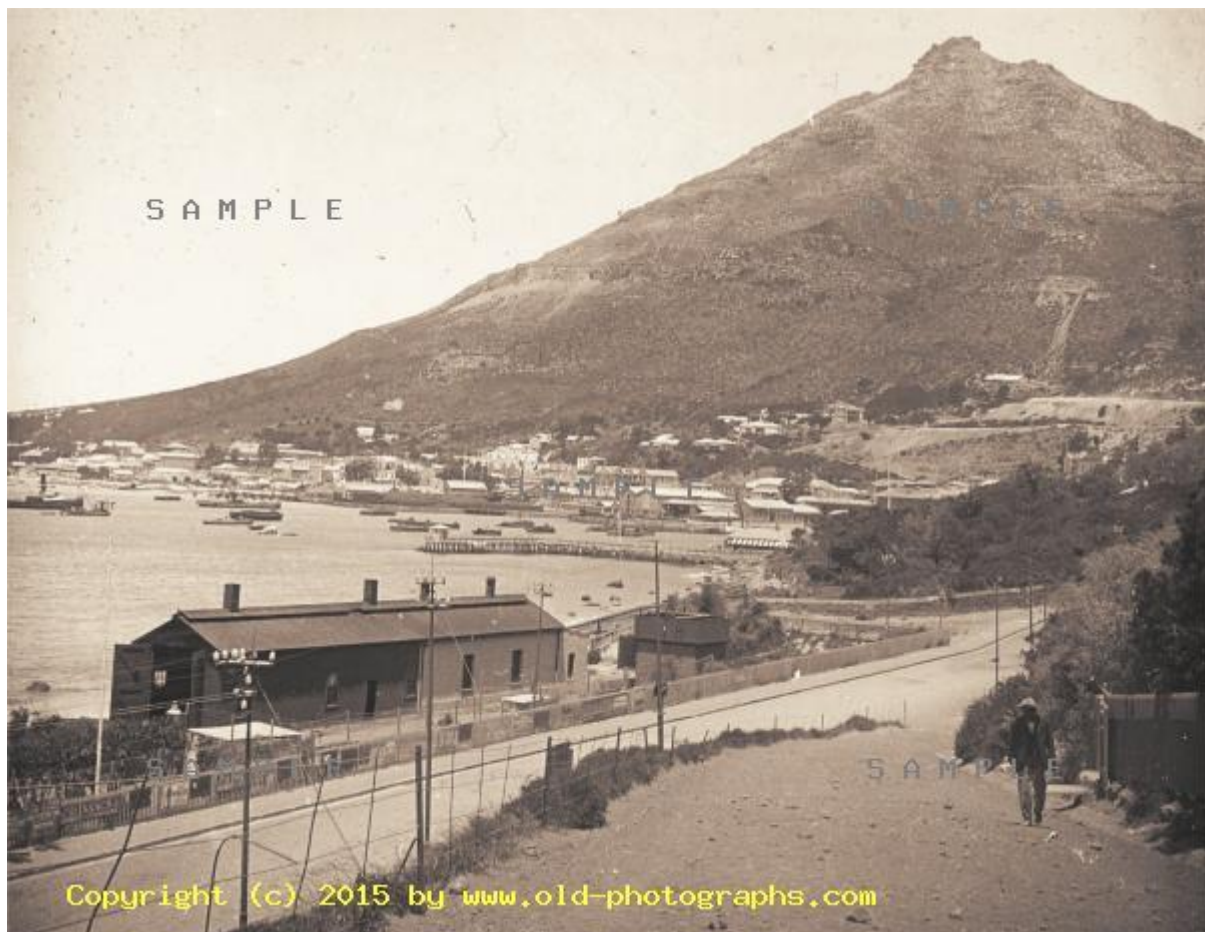
Peopled with many descendants of the world's sailing and exploring nations, as well as many slave families from the 17th century, and many of South Africa's indigenous people who were drawn to the area from across Southern Africa, Simonstown has a rich and multicultural heritage, although it does somewhat resemble an old and quaint Victorian seaside town today.

Admiralty House on St. George's, originally a private dwelling, dates from 1814 as does the Wesleyan Chapel which was built in 1828 and represents the oldest of its type of church in South Africa. Both are said to be haunted by several different ghosts!

Progress may have come slowly to Simon's Town, but it has certainly left its mark. The town grew rapidly when it became a Royal Naval Base and the home of the South Atlantic Squadron under the second British occupation of the Cape in 1806, thanks largely to the construction of a huge man-made sandstone breakwater.

One of the tasks of this squadron was the care of a certain Napoleon Bonaparte during his exile at St. Helena Island some 1200 miles away in the South Atlantic Ocean.

Admiral Lord Nelson himself is also said to have come ashore from his ship to be nursed through an illness in the late 1770s, on the first of his two visits, long before the British occupation.



History of the Cape of Good Hope station

From 1750 to 1779 the Cape of Good Hope became strategically important due to the increasing competition between France and Great Britain for control of the seas. In 1780 Holland joined the American Revolutionary War in alliance with France and Spain against Great Britain; the British Government were aware of the consequences should the Cape of Good Hope fall and the impact it would have on its trade links with India and put a plan into place to capture the Cape and circumvent its use by the enemy. The first attempt was subject to prolonged delays and the fact that the French were able to reinforce their defences enabled them to successfully defend it from the British attack. From 1781 to 1791 various attempts were made to capture the station: all failed and it remained

under the control of France and the French were successful in attacking and disrupting the trade cargo of the East India Company's ships that were travelling between Asian subcontinent and Europe. In 1792 hostilities temporarily ceased and by 1793 the Directors of the East India Company expressed their concern about the cape being retained by the French. The British government and the Admiralty decided to act and successfully retook it in 1795: the first Naval base was established at Table Bay.

In 1802 the British government agreed to restore the Cape to the Dutch control but this was not finalized until 1803 and lasted until 1806 when a new British Administration under William Pitt cancelled the agreement between both countries and re-took the cape once more in 1807 which effectively from this point on remained under British control. In 1811 the Royal Navy decided it wanted to move from its current base to a new base at Simon's Town bay; however, the initial facilities took approximately three years to complete and were not ready until 1814. From 1815 to 1849 the base was mainly used for re-fitting and repair work on vessels and acted as a port of call for nautical surveyors who were mapping the region. During the 1850s and 1860s improvements were made to the dockyard facilities with some being re-built in order to accommodate larger ships. On 17 January 1865, it was combined with the East Indies Station to form the East Indies and Cape of Good Hope Station; however, the station was recreated as a separate station on 29 July 1867. From 1870, it absorbed the former West Africa Squadron. By the start of the Second Boer War in 1899 a long period of relative peace had existed; the station became the main base for British Forces disembarking and embarking during the war and for supplies and equipment being shipped from Britain for the duration of the conflict.

In 1910 a new East Dock was built together with a dry dock facility which proved timely in the event of the breakout of the First World War. From 1914 to until 1919 its primary task was to seek out and destroy German commerce raiding forces. During the interwar period it resumed the work of maintaining and refitting vessels stationed there and those travelling en route to Asia. In 1939, at the start of the Second World War, the base played an early prominent role in the Battle of the Atlantic, and the hunt for the German pocket battleship Admiral Graf Spee, that led to the Battle of the River Plate. After the conclusion of that engagement the station ceased as command operations centre with the senior naval staff moving to the newly formed South Atlantic station headquartered at Freetown. The naval base remained as part of that command until 1957. In 1958 the British government handed over the facility to the South African Navy.

The School

Simon's Town School is the oldest school in the Cape Peninsula and the fifth oldest in the Western Cape. (The oldest school is Mamre Primere Skool, established in 1808, followed by, Outeniqua High & Junior Schools (1812); Pacaltsdorp Hoër- en Primêre Skool (1813) and Swellendam Hoër- en Laerskool (1814).

In 1815 the first English-speaking inhabitants of Simon's Town decided to start their own private English-speaking school because they did not want to send their children to the Dutch District School that had been established at the Residency in 1813. The school was for children of poorer families, without charge, under the administration of the Anglican Church. The school was for both white and coloured children, and was called the Simon's Town Free School.

One of the Churches

The first Anglican Church in Southern Africa is beautifully documented in a book published in March 2014 called 'The Six Saints of Simonstown 1814-2014.

The first built Anglican church in Simonstown, St George's Church, was inaugurated on 24th April 1814.

An excerpt from Boet Dommissie's introduction to the book 'The Six Saints of Simonstown 1814-2014 reads as follows:

"There have been 21 Rectors, with varied personalities, approaches and interests, in the 200 years. They provide the thread which runs through the story, and in some cases insights into the changing pattern of worship and service. They also contributed some interesting anecdotes, not without humour.

The Church suffered two major setbacks: firstly, when the building collapsed in 1821 due to severe floods, and a new church was built in 1837, and secondly when 70% of the congregation of Simon's Town due to the Government's Forced Removal policy. The decimated Church not only survived, but was able to contribute significantly to the building of a Church in Ocean View to serve the displaced parishioners.

The Club (The Seven Seas Club)

At what was to be the last Annual General Meeting of The Royal Naval Club, 5th April 1956, the following was minuted as being part of his address to members, by the then President of the Club, Vice Admiral Sir Ian Campbell;

"Although it has not been possible to establish exactly when this Royal Naval Club came into being, it is known that the Admiralty acquired the building in 1803". "In 1888, the Committee of The Royal Naval Club, was concerned with the question of a liquor licence, and it was then recorded that the Committee hoped that the Government would not withhold from members of the Club, facilities they had enjoyed at the Club for some 20 years - so the Club must have been in existence as such from 1868"

We are therefore hugely and appropriately proud of our club, the oldest club of its nature in the country!

LOOKING BACK: An old photograph of Erf 4053 Simon's Town, taken between 1861 and 1881, and including the rear of the former Royal Navy Hospital. The building in the foreground with the wooden staircase up to the loft level is the former Hospital laundry, with the former mortuary just behind and to the right of the laundry. These were both built in 1861.



A "technology perspective" from Committee Member, Euan Smith

After 150 years of providing great service to its members, the Seven Seas Club finds itself alive and well in the early part of a new century. I have to wonder what our founding fathers would have thought of our new "information age".

Back then in 1868 Charles Darwin had just published his theories of heredity, Helium was about to be discovered and Thomas Edison applied for his first patent, for a form of electronic voting machine. So, they were just starting out on the road to the 20th Century. If only they had known what that next one hundred years would have in store!

Interestingly even way back then the telegraph was already helping America to build the west and the British to put down the Indian Mutiny. Navies had adopted Morse code and were using it to signal with lights but the telephone had another couple of years before it arrived thanks to Messrs Bell and Watson. During the next fifty years radio arrived to change the world and by the time the club was a centurion there was already satellite communication and even email.

Here we are some fifty more years later most of us dependent on our smart phones and computers and never really out of touch with each other and the world. One thing, however, that I am sure hasn't changed over all this time is the need for The Seven Seas Club to communicate to the members. Hence it is that the club itself has also had to adapt over all the intervening years to these new and interesting times. These days virtually everyone has an email address and many of us more than one. The age of writing and sending paper letters appears to have come and gone. Perhaps to the detriment of more personal interactions. Something gained and something lost.

The club now communicates largely over email and we prefer subs to be paid by EFT. For notice boards we use Facebook and to advertise our presence to the world we have our web site. With the younger generations now hooked on such wonders as Instagram and Snapchat, we may well find ourselves looking to be present there as well soon in order to find the future of the club and its future members. And there perhaps lies the conundrum that we face. How do we preserve the nature of our wonderful club built on tradition and shared interest whilst keeping it alive and vibrant in this modern age? Something for us all to think about and work to make happen.

What would the founding fathers think? Well I hope they would approve and see that we are looking after their legacy and wish us well. And in another 150 years I hope some future technologist will look back at this little note and perhaps incorporate it in his or her 300th anniversary edition of whatever The Tattler has become.

Ed - Tattler can only fantasise (and worry!) about a future where a head implant will allow thoughts to be communicated mind to mind, instantaneously. Phew!

Back in the day when our club was a fledgling 100 years old, I started as a computer programmer.

We worked on a (physically) very large mainframe computer known as "Orion". This old beast had 144 000 bytes of "memory" into which we had to fit our programs. Perspective - an eight-gigabyte memory stick which costs R30 contains 6 000 000 000 bytes and most laptop computers (that thing you, your wife or kids tote around) have some 500 million bytes. The speed at which this "steam-driven" machine operated was around 1 to 2 million instructions per second (MIPS). (Perspective - that same laptop of yours does around 10 MIPS)

Even that little device in your pocket (yes, your mobile or cell phone) does about 10 MIPS.

A comparison of information technology with the motor car industry reveals that advancements in IT would be equivalent to a modern car doing 5 million kilometres with one litre of petrol.

We had no disc drives (these came a bit later on our next computer) so all data had to be processed serially or sequentially. Remember the days of wanting to listen to a song near the end of the reel of tape (or cassette?)

The advancement is indeed phenomenal!

From the Treasurer

With 3.5 months of the new financial year already behind us we, your committee, feel a little apprehensive about the Club's financial results going forward. Compared with last year for the same period and compared with our budget, results this year so far have been very disappointing.

Our sales are significantly lower than last year and we are struggling to understand the reason for the dwindling support from members. We are hoping that our recent membership survey will point us in the right direction. Currently, after 3 months, the Club is in a loss situation.

The featuring of "Big Screen" test rugby on the Saturdays in June, have helped to boost income to what would have otherwise been quiet days and the party, after the second test, has helped significantly. Really good support on that Saturday!!

Fortunately, we have managed to keep expenses to a minimum and this has helped to reduce the impact of the lower bar sales.

Not all "doom and gloom" however, we still have 9 months to get it right and with some good planning ahead, and an improvement in Club support, we will be ok.

Then, to change the subject a little, we have been struggling to get the Department of Social Development to register the Club as a "Non-Profit Organisation". It is a government requirement that the Club be registered with this department, as a NPO, to facilitate tax exemption with SARS. Our application has been rejected by DoSD on two occasions so far, for items supposedly missing from the Club's Constitution. This has proven to be unfounded, as every requirement has been catered for in the Constitution. We have subsequently re-submitted the application and now we wait with bated breath.

That's all for now.... see you at the Club!

From our Manager

100 Club Winners June 2018

Mr D.G. Viljoen - R300

Mr K. Priday - R300

Mr J. Payne - R300

Mr R.C. Maydon - R1000

Birthdays July

We wish all of the following a very happy birthday!

1 July - Capt (SAN) W.C. Rice (ret)	14 July - Ens L.J. Samuels
2 July - Mr H.J.C. Appleby	20 July - Mr P.L. Davies
7 July - R Adm R.W. Higgs (ret)	24 July - Mr S.B. Gourley
7 July - Dr E.A. Van Wyk	25 July - Mr A. Rensberg
7 July - Mr B. Rogers	27 July - Mr J. London
11 July - Dr N. Lee	31 July - Mr P. Addington
12 July - Mr R. Castell	

Featured Battle - Trafalgar

Given Simonstown's "ties" with Nelson and Napoleon, we feature this battle.

The Battle of Trafalgar (21 October 1805) was a naval engagement fought by the British Royal Navy against the combined fleets of the French and Spanish Navies, during the War of the Third Coalition (August–December 1805) of the Napoleonic Wars (1796–1815).

Twenty-seven British ships of the line led by Admiral Lord Nelson aboard HMS Victory defeated thirty-three French and Spanish ships of the line under the French Admiral Villeneuve in the Atlantic Ocean off the southwest coast of Spain, just west of Cape Trafalgar, near the town of Los Caños de Meca. The Franco-Spanish fleet lost twenty-two ships, without a single British vessel being lost. It was the most decisive naval battle of the war.

The British victory spectacularly confirmed the naval supremacy that Britain had established during the eighteenth century and was achieved in part through Nelson's departure from the prevailing naval tactical orthodoxy. Conventional practice, at the time, was to engage an enemy fleet in a single line of battle parallel to the enemy, to facilitate signalling in battle and disengagement, and to maximise fields of fire and target areas. Nelson instead divided his smaller force into two columns directed perpendicularly against the enemy fleet, with decisive results.

During the battle, Nelson was shot by a French musketeer; he died shortly thereafter, becoming one of Britain's greatest war heroes. Villeneuve was captured along with his ship Bucentaure. Admiral Federico Gravina, the senior Spanish flag officer, escaped with the remnant of the fleet and succumbed months later to wounds sustained during the battle. Villeneuve attended Nelson's funeral while a captive on parole in Britain.



A 79-year-old man is having a drink in a bar. Suddenly a gorgeous girl enters and sits down a few seats away. The girl is so attractive that he just can't take his eyes off her. After a short while, the girl notices him staring, and approaches him.

Before the man has time to apologize, the girl looks him deep in the eyes and says to him in a sultry tone: "I'll do anything you'd like. Anything you can imagine in your wildest dreams, it doesn't matter how extreme or unusual it is, I'm game. I want \$100, and there's another condition".

Completely stunned by the sudden turn of events, the man asks her what her condition is. "You have to tell me what you want me to do in just three words."

The man takes a moment to consider the offer from the beautiful woman. He whips out his wallet and puts \$100 dollars in her hand ---He then looks her square in the eyes, and says slowly and clearly: "Paint my house."

(Our needs change as we get older, and we tend to look for bargains)

The doctor that had been seeing an 80-year-old woman for most of her life finally retired.

At her next check-up, the new Doctor told her To bring a list of all the medicines that had been prescribed for her.

As The young doctor was looking through these, his eyes grew wide as he realized Grandma had a prescription for birth control Pills.. "Mrs. Smith, do you realize these are BIRTH CONTROL Pills?" "Yes, they help me sleep at night." "Mrs. Smith, I assure you there is absolutely NOTHING in these that that could possibly help you sleep!"

She reached out and patted the young Doctor's knee...."Yes, dear, I know that. But every morning, I grind one up and mix it in the glass of orange juice that my 16 year old Granddaughter drinks .. And believe me, it definitely helps me sleep at night."

You gotta Love Grandmas.

CAR FOR SALE

Joe Johnson wishes to sell his car - please contact him if you are interested (joeztov@gmail.com)

2004 Mercedes Benz E320 Avantgarde (137,400km) R105,000-00

As only Mercedes can do it! All the bells and whistles and in very good condition with spare key fob. Tyres still very good and full-size spare. Six-CD shuttle and DVD. Factory fitted GPS navigation system etc, etc. Ex Mpumalanga "nag-maal" (holy communion) car. Full service history with Mercedes. Surprisingly economic car to run in terms of both fuel and servicing, especially if you stay off the Sport button and use the cruise control. URGENT SALE - Negotiable - make an offer!