

CTFHS NEWSLETTER

Cape Town Family History Society

SEPTEMBER 2009 Vol 4 No 2

EDITORIAL

As the new editor of the CTFHS Newsletter I hope I live up to the standards set by Lois Hartley in the previous volumes.

The genealogical community has always been very computer-minded and so the question must be asked, "Is there still a place for a Newsletter or can it be replaced by articles simply placed on the society's web page?"

I suppose there are as many answers to that question as there are members but I would like to ask you all to think about it very seriously.

I have my opinion but would hate to impose it upon you without first hearing your views.

Although called a "Newsletter" perhaps the philosophy behind it needs to be looked at. It needs to serve a double purpose - both to update members about meetings they have missed and the news and views discussed at the meetings and also as a vehicle for those doing research to see their hard-laboured research work in a formal printed state. This would make it available for all members and (after a reasonable time period) to all, on the web site. This way important research can be printed out in the format of the Newsletter and preserved - web page tend to be very transient - "here today, gone tomorrow".

But this does depend on **YOU** submitting some of the well-researched snippets of family history that one day will become part of that dreamed-of book you have in mind!

There is still plenty of space in the December 2009 Newsletter, so get writing!

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ALAN DUNCAN'S VISIT TO ST HELENA ISLAND

A few years ago my sons asked me to draw up our **Family Tree** and I found that tracing one's ancestry takes us back in time to out of the way and exotic places. This is what makes a family history search such a fascinating subject and pastime. I have almost left it too late to start this task, as I only have one remaining aunt alive today. Too often documents and photos are thrown out when family members die, but fortunately she discovered some photographs of my grandparents. At the start of this project Excel was used to tabulate all the details that I had gleaned from numerous sources. I have also started my own **Personal Ancestral File**.



Alan Duncan researching in the Library at Jamestown

The culmination of the project so far was to make a sea voyage to **St Helena Island** in February this year, to visit the Archives on the Island from whence my grandfather and grandmother came in 1895. Of course, the Island is mostly famous for its connection with the imprisonment of Napoleon Bonaparte, where he died in exile in 1821. There is also a well-kept cemetery for the deceased of the 6,000 exiled Boers, under the leadership of General Cronje. It is one of the remotest inhabited islands in the world – 2500 kilometres from Cape Town. The weather and vegetation are quite similar to that of the coastal areas of KwaZulu Natal.

My wife Jenny and I sailed on the 6,700 ton passenger/cargo Royal Mail Ship, "RMS St Helena", from Cape Town to St Helena, a voyage that took a week on board a well-run ship (who does not remember the Union Castle Liners of old)? We enjoyed all the wining and dining, as well as the usual deck activities.



The Main Street, looking to the Sea

We were landed at Jamestown via a motor launch, as there is no harbour. The "RMS" then carries on to Ascension Island and returns a week later. After settling into a self-catering flat, we met with **Dr Percy Teale**, who is a walking encyclopaedia on the Island's history and its people. On learning the reason for our visit, he took us to the **Public Library**, which has a book "**The Knipe Family of St. Helena**" by **Glennis Snell**. This book has been invaluable as it listed particulars about my grandmother (Knipe), including my father and his siblings (all born in Cape Town). Also listed are some of their graves in the **Maitland Cemetery**. I e-mailed Glennis in Pretoria with some extra details from our sources and have now discovered that our paternal grandmothers were sisters, so we are second cousins, imagine that! There are still many Duncans and Knipes on the Island.

We spent time in the **Government Archives** in the Castle, where sorting through the soiled pages of the old registers was difficult as the fading ink of the old-fashioned, copperplate handwriting was not easy to decipher. E-mail comes into its own for continuing our search and communicating with the Island. Our oldest date for any records is 1836, but we will continue researching. What has been confusing is the fact that there is an area on the Island called "Scotland", so we have to be careful to decide if the reference is from the Island or the UK.

All in all, we spent a very busy and happy week on the Island, both with newly made friends from the ship and meeting the local islanders called "Saints". We also attended a "Burns Evening" hosted by the local Scottish Society and met many more Islanders.

If anyone wishes to have a leisurely two weeks cruising the "old fashioned way" and a week on the Island, then we would definitely recommend a trip to St Helena, whatever the reason or season of the year.

A. Duncan

THANK YOU, DR ORPEN!

On a recent visit to Grahamstown I visited Cory Library and checked out the Graaff Reinets and Colesberg Anglican Registers

stored there. Practically on the first page I found an entry for a distant relative, the baptism of **Frances Treuman**, daughter of Robert Cross **PARTRIDGE** and his wife Anne Catherine (born **WILKINSON**). I am a descendent of Anne's youngest sister Francis **WILKINSON**.

What made this baptismal register entry unique was the extra information that the minister wrote in the entry. As an Anglican minister who has done dozens of baptism myself, **Dr. Orpen** puts me to shame with the details he captured in this Colesberg register. Under the sponsors or godparents, he lists not only the names, but also the relationship these persons have to the parents of the child. (see photo 1).

The first godparent listed was Ann Elizabeth **WILKINSON** who, **Dr. Orpen** tells us, was "mother of Mrs. Partridge". He goes on to tell us that the next godparent was Mrs. Frances Turner **WRIGHT**, "mother of Mr. Partridge - married again in London". The third godparent was Mr. John William Day **WILKINSON** of Graaff Reinet who was "Mrs. Partridge's father". This John **WILKINSON** is my great-great-grandfather, an 1820 settler. Elsewhere, including his death notice, his only forename is given as John and although he has a son with the same forenames I am pretty sure this is not the son but the father. In the margin on the edge of the page, Dr Orpen has additional information written carefully – even around a small hole in the page (see photo 2). It simply states "Mr. Partridge from St Andrew's Parish Holborn, London. Mrs. Partridge born in Graaff Reinet Cape Colony. married 30th August 1846".

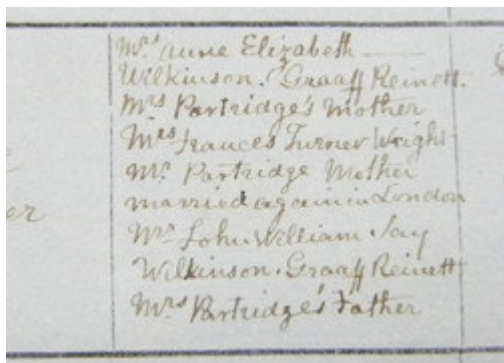


Photo 1: Anglican Marriage Register- Colesberg

So, "Thank you **Dr. Orpen**"! for taking the time and effort to capture this additional information.

Charles Edward Herbert ORPEN was born on 31st October 1791 in **Cork, Ireland**. His father was the **Revd Francis Orpen** and his mother, Susannah (born **Millard**). Charles was apprenticed to **Dr. Gibbings** of Cork and to **Surgeon Todd**. After passing the Licentiate of the College of Surgeons of Ireland he entered Edinburgh University in 1812 and obtained an MD in the same year.

He was a Medical Practitioner in Dublin from 1814. He was appointed Medical Inspector by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1818 and 1820, and Cholera Inspector of Dublin by the Lords Justices, 1832.

On the 10th December 1823 he married **Alicia Frances COANE [or COWAN]**, the widow of the **Revd Conolly Coane**, and daughter of **Major Henry Charles SIRR**, Town Major of Dublin.

Orpen became the **President of the Court of Examiners of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland** and he was also founder of the **National Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb of Ireland**, at Glasnevin in Dublin. In 1834 he and his wife moved to Birkenhead, in England and here he founded the lying-in hospital, Birkenhead.

In 1848 Orpen and his wife joined their three sons who were farming at the **Cape**. They settled in the **Colesberg district** in July 1848.

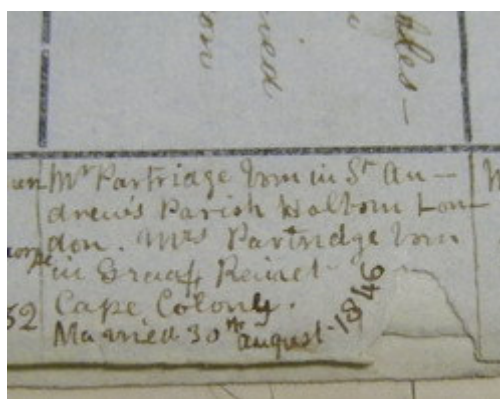


Photo 2: Additional information in margin

In the **Colesberg Registers** Orpen first appears as "**Licensed Catechist**" – which means it was his job to teach the Christian faith to those adults seeking baptism. As such he is listed as being a **Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG)**

Missionary. He was ordained a **Deacon** in **Colesberg** on 12th November 1848 and licensed to work in the Colesberg area from 13th November 1848 in what was then still the **Diocese of Cape Town**. He was ordained priest in **St George's Church** (the present Cathedral) in **Grahamstown** on 22nd September 1850. **Bishop Robert Gray** ordained him to both the diaconate and the priesthood. After 1853 Colesberg fell under the **Diocese of Grahamstown** and . continued to work in Colesberg until 1855. He built **Christchurch** (the Anglican Church in Colesberg) and founded the **Colesberg Public Library**.

Dr. Orpen retired to live in **Port Elizabeth** in the **Eastern Cape** in 1855 and died there on 20/21 April 1856. His wife died in **Grahamstown** in December 1869.

Dr. Open is described as "*a man of great activity of mind, of considerable attainments, of deep personal piety, and soundness in the faith, and of a most benevolent disposition. If there were failings in this good man, which in any degree impaired his usefulness, and for time prejudiced some against him, they are to be attributed to slight eccentricities, and a defect in judgement*" in **The South African Church Magazine and Ecclesiastical Review**.

[The above brief biography was adapted from *Messengers, Watchmen and Stewards* by Andries William de Villiers published by the Library of the University of Witswatersrand: 1998]

Derek Pratt

FROM SEEDS TO BLOSSOMING TREES

Some decades ago my father told me there was a family tree of our family but that in 1949 'someone in Cape Town' had taken it and was now nowhere to be found. What form this family tree was in and how much of the family it covered was also not known, but the seed was planted and I was going to replace that tree with a newly grown one and nurture it till all the branches were well established. Little did I know how long that was going to take and to top it I remarried and decided to get one

started for Brenda's family as well, but that's another story.

Having been brought out to **South Africa** from **England** when I was five the only contact I had with my aunts in the UK were Christmas cards each year. Although I must have known my grandparents, I couldn't remember them and when I started the tree they had all passed away so I only had the information my father could provide, which in the end became the link to the missing ninety-five percent of the jigsaw.

I started with my immediate family and added my grandparents. All I knew about my grandmother was what my father had said in jest on many occasion - "your grandmother was a king". I knew my uncle and my father had given me the names of his uncles. On the return of one of my parents' trips to the UK he presented me with photocopies of recorded births, marriages and deaths pages from a family bible. Armed with this new 'growth hormone' my tree started to branch out and I was able to add in some information on my grandmother's side too, and sure enough, she was a king - but with a capital K. This information, whilst adding to my tree, also unfortunately brought it to an abrupt halt as the only way I could continue my research would be the **Somerset House** route, which time and money would not allow.

Meantime, my cousin reminded me that both his father and mine had always commented that **James "Cunning" Murrell** of **Hadleigh Castle** fame was a distant relative of ours and being in possession of the historical novel written by Arthur Morrison about Cunning Murrell I knew I had to prove or disprove their claim. I asked an aunt in the UK to send me a copy of their local phonebook page with all the Murrells listed so that I could write to each one of them hoping for some feedback.

I then wrote to the local newspaper asking for any information on **Cunning Murrell**. Well, out of all the letters I sent I received only a small fraction in reply but, coincidentally, the columnist for the newspaper turned out to be a distant relative. Needless to say none of the letters received threw any light on a

relationship with the aforementioned white wizard and perceived smuggler, but one made mention of a **Family History Society** run by a gentleman by the name of **Donovan Murrells**.

This was the page that turned over a new leaf and I sent him the same basic enquiring letter I had forwarded previously and waited with baited breath. He was **the** Murrell Family History Society and his joy was probably as much as mine when he said that the branch that headed down in my direction had stunted its growth at exactly the same point my branch had done when growing upwards.

My grandparents turned out to be that link that joined our trees like a horticulturists graft and I'm now the proud owner of my family tree dating back to 1550.

As someone once said, genealogy is 90% hard graft and 10% luck, so now I'm just waiting for that little bit of luck to be able to continue with Brenda's tree, because we've certainly put in a lot of graft and only got back to 1848.

Glyn and Brenda Murrell



THIS QUARTER'S MEETINGS

JUNE

AGNES (MIEMS) VAN LOON – MEN ON A MISSION TO THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

Agnes (Miems) Van Loon was a guest speaker on 20th June. **Godfrey Mocke**, as a friend, introduced Miems, a person of great character and vast experiences. Brought up in **Holland** at **Bergen op Zoom**, having completed school, her first employment with Shell Oil Company was short lived when the Germans invaded Holland. A very difficult time for a young girl, sadly these experiences were not part of her talk so maybe another day! The Canadian forces liberated Bergen op Zoom,

a difficult time as she and her family found themselves cloistered in a basement while hand to hand fighting over the town took place before the Germans withdrew. She served out the balance of the war in the Dutch army as a lieutenant directly under **H.R.H. Prince Bernard**.

During the early 1950's Miems and her husband emigrated to **South Africa**. As a lover of history, she soon realised the early **Dutch Governors of the Cape** had a connection to Bergen op Zoom this inspired her research into the life and times of the early Cape Governors.

Her talk was based on her published work "**Mannen met een missie naar Kaap de Goede Hoop**" – Men on a Mission to the Cape of Good Hope. Spending time in Holland Miems was able to supplement her South African research with research in her home country.

She first introduced **Jan van Riebeeck** – well know to South Africans as being the forefront of European settlement in Southern Africa. His connection to Bergen op Zoom being through his father who served in the town as surgeon under Col. Charles Morgan. Van Riebeeck's legacy is well know to most members, of particular interest however was the pier constructed by Van Riebeeck, cutting the forest of **Hout Bay** (hence the name) transporting the logs by sea to **Cape Town**. This pier still exists to this day, well constructed by Jan and his helpers still in use by the local fishing fleet in front of the newly constructed BOE building at the Waterfront.

The colourful **Simon Van Der Stel** (1697 ~ 1699) although he had no apparent connection to Bergin op Zoom followed. An important **Governor at the Cape** who left an everlasting mark on the Western Cape, a legacy of oak trees, Simon's Town and Constantia to name a few.

Less known than van der Stel was **Maurice Pasques de Chavonnes** (1714~1724), who served as Governor at Bergen op Zoom from 1695. Following St. Bartholomew's night in 1572 when the French Protestants were persecuted and murdered by the Church of Rome, his father and family fled to Utrecht in the Netherlands. De Chavonnes was responsible for upgrading the defence of

the Cape. The guns of de Chavonnes and the remains of the battery were uncovered in 1996 and are today preserved in the Waterfront. De Chavonnes was responsible for establishing the first schools and churches at the Cape, extended the wine industry and extended van der Stel's farm Constantia to **Groot Constantia** which included the re-decoration of his house.

The last of 'Mannen' was **Rijk Tulbach** (1751~1771) who's father Dirk had been transferred to Bergen op Zoom and who in fact under De Chavonnes.

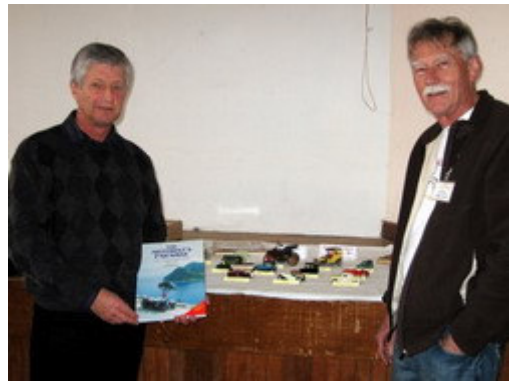
Soft spoken Miems presented her book to our library and I would recommend reading her book.

D.J. Slingsby

JULY

Derek Stuart-Findlay entertained members and visitors with a spectacular overhead display of beautiful pictures and held everyone's attention with amusing anecdotes and memories of what must have been an exciting adventure for all during those early years. Derek gave us very interesting descriptions of early motoring in the Cape, covering not only fascinating stories and descriptions of the cars, but also of the scenery of the Cape's mountains and seas. Derek told us about the challenges that faced some of the well-known personalities as they travelled over mountain passes and rough roads to inland towns.

'The Motorist's Paradise' - Early motoring in and around Cape Town, written by **Bob Johnston and Derek Stuart-Findlay** was on show for everyone to page through and enjoy! Derek told us that the cover picture was of Bob Johnston's wife. The book has over 400 photographs of motoring in the first 40 years in Cape Town.



Derek Stuart-Findlay with his book and Glynn Murrell with his model cars

AUGUST

JANET CARTWRIGHT

Billed as **"192 Years of the Anglican Church in South Africa"** the large number of members and visitors who attended were treated to a fascinating journey through the various registers of **St Francis Church, Simon's Town** by **Janet Cartwright**. St Francis (and its predecessor called St George's), in **Simon's Town** is the *oldest Anglican Parish in South Africa* mainly because it had to act as the land-based church for the **Royal Navy** stationed there. St George's Cape Town, St Paul's Rondebosch and St John's Wynberg lag well behind.

Janet has been the keeper of the Parish's registers for many years and has set up her own index books, not only of babies baptised, couples married and persons buried, but also the various witnesses and sponsors (godparents) of these events. She even has an index of occupations. These were all done before computers became an essential requirement and show her dedication and thoroughness. The examples she took from peripheral registers like the **Sexton's Burial Register** and the **Banns Books** really showed an interesting slice of life in **Simon's Town** in the eighteen hundreds. The Sexton was (thankfully) very verbose and so we have delightful records of how the officiating minister missed an appointment for a burial as well as problems with poorly dug graves etc. The Banns book also was intriguing with marriages that were cancelled because of objections ranging from the bride being under-aged, to the groom being a bigamist! What a pity Banns are no longer a compulsory requirement!

As a clergyperson who has to keep registers today, it makes me realise how important these registers are not only for church history purposes but also for genealogists. If you ever contact a **Parish Church** asking them to look up records, remember that the **Parish Secretary** has other tasks to do during her short stay in the office - usually mornings only - besides looking up your records. So be patient and try to get her on to your side!



Janet with two of her Indices to Simon's Town Parish records

DONATION TO THE LIBRARY

Our Library is growing mainly through some generous donations, especially a collection of books from Sonveig Cluver and we thank her for her very generous donation.

The following books came from Sonveig:

Hermanus 11 D.J. Du Toit

The Rhenish Mission Society in South Africa 1830~1950 Elfrieda Strassberger

Simon van der Stel en sy Kinders A.J. Boëseken

Slaves and Free Blacks at the Cape 1658~1700 A.J. Boëseken

Overberg Anna Rothman/John Warner

Die Kaapse Kombuis Mary Alexander Cook

Stellenbosch te Voet Hannes Meiring Ters van Huyssteeen

Argitektoniese Skoonheid in Kaapstad se Kompanjiesuin 1777~1805 D. Bax/C Koeman

Architectural Beauty of the Old Cape as seen by Arthur Elliot Hans Franssen

Thomas Bowler of the Cape Edna & Frank Bradlow

Kirstenbosch, Garden for a Nation Robert Harold Compton

NEWS IN BRIEF

Don't forget the "**Heritage**" monthly meeting on **Saturday 19th September 2009**. Entrance and tea **FREE** for all!! Members will be displaying a variety of items from their family histories

OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS FUNCTION

SATURDAY 12TH DECEMBER

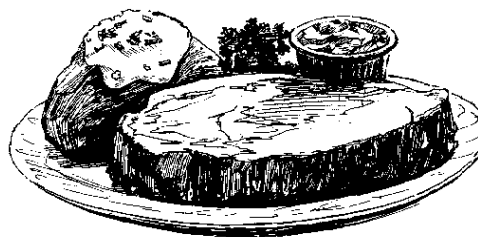
This function will take place at the **Gordon's Holiday Camp in Glencairn**. It will take the form of a picnic/braai. Bring your own food and drink - there will be someone there to help you braai if you need assistance.

Feel free to bring you spouse, children and friends.

The costs will be
R30-00 for members
R35 for non-members
and **R25 for children**.

Come and join us for a casual, friendly get-together with people of like minds. If you want more information contact

Jeanette Goosen
Tel. 021 7822948 or
jeanette1@telkomsa.net



NEW MEMBERS SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER.

Ruger, Denyse

E-mail Address: denyse@ruger.co.za
Family name interests: Ruger, Dittman, Denyssen, Janse van Rensburg

McEvoy, Kevin

E-mail Address: kevin@mcevoy.co.za
Family Name Interests: McEvoy, Leahy, Keenan, Mol, Bancroft, Nefdt, o'Sullivan, Wintle. Irish.

Osman, Mavourneen

Family name interests: Osman, Osmond, Phillips, Steyn, Allen

van der Schyf, Ivan

Mocke, Godfrey

E-mail Address godfrey.mock@gmail.com
Family name interests: Mocke, Steyn, Heinecken, Wabreeker, Labuschagne, Pittat, Thomas.

Van Renen, Errol T

E-mail Address: etvr@sybaweb.co.za

Best, Daphne Emily

E-mail Address: debest@telkomsa.net
Family name interests: Best, Schloms

Chalmers, Nike

E-mail: nikechalmers@telkomsa.net
Family name interests: Linnegar, Dobbins, Georgakopoulis

Riley, Alexandra Christine "Sandy"

Family name interests: Dobbins, Linnegar, Rily, Georgakopoulis

Erikson, Anne

Family name interests: Fairbairn, Graham, Gibson, Erikson, Brinkworth

Dearlove, Charles & Penelope

E-mail Address: cdearlove@mweb.co.za
Family name interests: Waugh, Dearlove

Smith, Rosemary M

E-mail: rosemarysmith@cybersmart.co.za
Family name interests: Nilgrav, Cilliers, Devenish, Firth, Kuit, Marsden, Pachonick, Parker, Sandberg, Sartorious, Woicichowsky.

Cloete, Lilian & Mike

E-mail Address: mikecloete@telkomsa.net

Family name interests: Luyt, Bosman, Hugo, Irving, Shipwreck ca 1822 Blaaubergstrand Maeder- French missionaries 19th Century, Roux , Cloete

Reed, Margaret (previously Donaldson)

E-mail Address: margtpr@gmail.com
Family name interests: Perron, Birt, Harper.

Taylor, Diane

E-mail Address: berwynta@gmail.com
Family name interests: Harris, Lyons, Rose, Green, Wright, Dold, Prentice, Jacobs

Simkins, Peter

E-mail Address: petersim@iafrica.com
Family name interests: Westbury, Bethell, Simkins

Dauids, Fatima Slamodien

Family name interests: John Edward - Hoskin/s/Hosking - Henderson first name George born in Wales Slamodien, Aalam, Kahtaan, Saudi Arabia - Afghanistan

If there is no email address speak to Lucille le Roux for a telephone number or address.

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