

CTFHS NEWSLETTER

Cape Town Family History Society

SEPTEMBER 2010 Vol 5 No 3

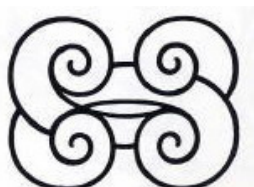
EDITORIAL

What's in a name?

Is there a difference between a genealogical society and a family history society? To a certain extent both societies seem to have the researching of family trees as the main reason for their existence. If one were to look at their respective newsletters, publications and journals both present histories of ancestors, descendent, kith and kin.

When the CTFHS was being formed we met at Heather MacAlister's home and discussed what we wanted from a society. I was very pleased when the name Cape Town Family History Society was suggested. I thought that the name summarized what I was looking for from my family tree – not merely a list of names with Dates of Birth, Dates of Death, marriage partners and descendants but a deeper exploration of the questions starting with "Why?" Why did my 1820 Settler forebear decide to leave Deptford, Kent with the Waits Party? Why did he move to Graaff Reinet? How good was his Dutch/Afrikaans when he married Hester Elizabeth VORSTER in the DR Church in Graaff Reinet in 1821? Why did he join the Freemasons? I won't carry on with my WILKINSON family history but these were the questions I was asking about them and the CTFHS has answered many of these through the informative and interesting speakers the committee has invited to address us.

What questions do you have about your ancestors' history? Perhaps the CTFHS could help fill the information gaps in your family tree – not with more names and dates but with social and historical detail to give a fuller picture of your ancestors. We can do this by inviting experts to address us at our meetings.



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PAGE ONE HUMOUR

Q: Why do genealogists die with smiles on their faces?

A: Because they know they're about to get one more date on their pedigree chart!!

YOU KNOW YOU'RE TAKING GENEALOGY TOO SERIOUSLY IF...

To put the "final touches" on your genealogical research, you've asked all of your closest relatives to provide DNA samples.

Your house leans slightly toward the side where your genealogical records are stored.

You decided to take a two-week break from genealogy, and your Internet Service Provider immediately laid off 500 employees.

You plod merrily along "refining" your recently published family history, blissfully unaware that the number of errata pages now far exceeds the number of pages in your original publication.

"A Loving Family" and "Financial Security" have moved up to second and third, respectively, on your list of life's goals, but still lag far behind "Owning My Own Microfilm Reader."

from <http://www.carrollscorner.net/stuff.htm>

Family Legends - Beware of Red Herrings!

By Peter Erikson



Officers of the 1st and 2nd King's Royal Rifles during the Boer War

Family legends handed down over the years can often lead one in the wrong direction on long and fruitless searches for information!

Let me tell you about my grandfather on my mother's side.

George Kay came originally from Kent in England in 1900 with the British troops during the Anglo Boer War. Before leaving home with his regiment he had become engaged and he asked his widowed father to look after his fiancée for him while he was away at the War.

George was allegedly shot and captured by the Boers and imprisoned at a hospital camp at Ladysmith. While he was there he received a letter from home giving him the news that his father had just married his fiancée! (The father was late in his 50s and not surprisingly the marriage only lasted about 2 years).

George was so fed up with his father that he did not return to England with his regiment but stayed on in South Africa and married an Afrikaans nurse who had been nursing him, Susanna Amelia De Kock, my grandmother.

The first red herring was that my grandfather did not in fact see any action during the war and he was not shot and captured as reported by the family. But the second part about receiving the letter and his father marrying his fiancée was true. Perhaps he was sick in a hospital camp at the time with a fever or some other ailment.

The other thing that led me on a wild goose chase was the story that George Kay had been a Captain in the Kings Royal Rifles during the Anglo Boer War.

Before my wife and I settled back in Cape Town a few years ago we had lived in London for nine years. This afforded me the opportunity to continue the research into the English side of my family. (My main line is Swedish.)

While there I searched for the military records of my grandfather George Kay at the Public Records Office (PRO) at Kew. The records held there are vast and comprehensive and they hold a lot of useful information for family research into English ancestors.

Military records at the PRO are also quite good, especially for anyone who held any rank. Well, I searched through those red books over and over again looking to find some reference to my grandfather's military background. The puzzling thing was that the names of just about every officer in the Anglo Boer War and other campaigns are listed in those records, except for his. Over months and months I went back again looking through the records of other regiments in the hope of finding something without success. I eventually gave up.

A year or two later I noticed in one of the editions of the Family Tree Magazine that a researcher had some information on recipients of military medals, mentioning the Kings Royal Rifle Company (KRRC) in particular. So I contacted him. He asked for my grandfather's name and came back to me almost immediately with the information that my grandfather had been a member of the 2nd Special Service Company of the KRCC and had received a Queen's South Africa Medal with 3 clasps, Transvaal, Natal and South Africa 1901.



The Queen's South Africa Medal with two clasps

But most important of all he gave me my grandfather's army Services Number.

Armed with that vital number, I was able to obtain from the PRO a photo-copy of my grandfather's original Enlistment and Discharge Record and Military History Sheet.

And my grandfather's family secret was finally revealed!

George Kay enlisted as a private in 1900 and was soon promoted to lance corporal only to be demoted eight months later back to a private for 'misconduct'. One can only guess at what the misconduct could have been. He was discharged in April 1901 still with the rank of private.

So much for the family being told that he had been a Captain in the KRRC! Not for one moment did he ever think that there was even a remote possibility that

one day his grandson would go back to the UK and then be able to delve into his old military records and find out the truth. However he did have a good sense of humour and I could just hear him chuckling away to himself when the truth came out!

However I'm proud to say that he redeemed himself back in South Africa. He joined the Union Defence Force and rose to the rank of Major. On the way to achieving this he did in fact serve as a Captain with the South African Forces in 1914-18 in German South West and East Africa.

Then again at the outbreak of the Second World War when he was well over age he joined up once again as a Recruiting Officer with the Defence Force until he finally retired in 1948. So he more than made up for his brief military career with the British army at the turn of the century.

I have newspaper cuttings from the Rand Daily Mail in 1934 with articles about a Rand Bisley held at Booysens in Johannesburg, when a large number of army members took part in several categories of a large shooting competition.

To quote, 'The arrangements were excellently carried out by the Range Officer Major G Kay and his assistants. The prizes and trophies were presented by Bigadier-General Sir Pierre van Ryneveld, Chief of the General Staff.'

So, Grandpa Kay, all is forgiven for hours and hours of wasted searching!



Leon Endemann talking to members after his address

how this concept of belonging is still active today in family research.

From the 19th Century the ties of kith and kin families began to be replaced by gangs and peer groups, by clubs and, today, by Facebook and twitter groups.

This has led to an upsurge in genealogical research where the individual seeks to re-discover a sense of belonging. The individual objected to be merely a number and sought the answer to the question, "What were my ancestors in the total scheme of things?" Sometimes genealogical research is also a purely personal thing where the individual seeks to find out about an adoption or inherited diseases.

Family research has now become one of the most popular pastimes especially since the electronic media have made sources more accessible to researchers. Leon pointed out that in SA research is done by interviewing close family and consulting Death Notices and Church records. Census records are not retained and compulsory registrations of Birth, Marriages and Deaths only come into law in 1895 in the Cape and after 1900 in the rest of SA.

Leon then gave us a brief history of GISA and how it took over from the HSRC the publication of the SA Genealogies (SAG). This was completed by 2008 when the 17th volume was published. The entire collection is now also available on CD for R2700

GISA role is to collect and preserve genealogical material, to undertake genealogical research and to publish manuscripts on genealogy. In this respect the first four volumes—A to K of SAG are being re-edited. Leon pointed out that GISA were partners with the Utah Genealogical Society in digitalising the Dutch Reformed Records.

GISA is an NPO generating its own income through selling and donations, it acts like an archive and it is always in need of support.

Please turn over for the September Meeting

MONTHLY MEETING REPORT BACK.

July Meeting



Our Chairman presenting a Thank You gift to Mr M Stanley.

Cape—its arrival as slaves and its development since then.

August Meeting

Leon Endemann was our speaker on 21 August 2010. He spoke about the rise of genealogical research—showing how it began in biblical times in order to show a sense of belonging to family members and

In July the CTFHS were privileged to have Mr M. Hartley to address us on the history of the Muslim people at the Cape. He gave a brief overview of rise of Islam worldwide as well as a brief survey of the Muslim community at the

SEPTEMBER MEETING— COMMEMORATING HERITAGE DAY

I was not at the September Meeting when the CTFHS commemorated Heritage Day as I was chasing after my own family heritage in England and Ireland. However, I did receive emails with pictures of attached showing me a small bit of what I missed. These pictures show many members displaying artifacts from their history – their heritage. These items help to fill in the “small gaps” in their family history, which I referred to in the Editorial on page 1.



Heather MacAlister being kept busy at the ancestry24.com stall



John Cross mans his stall

John and Mel Cross not only produced a very interesting display of their family tree and family heirlooms at the Cape Town Family History Society Heritage Day Exhibition on 18 September, but Mel brought along a mysterious and puzzling old item for people to guess at what it was. The competition brought forth a wide variety of guesses, from eyebrow shaver to lacemaking tool (!), but the nearest correct answer came from Merry Dewar who said it was for removing corns. In actuality fact it is really a tool for removing the hard skin from the back of your heels, especially for those who wear open shoes or no shoes at all. Merry Dewar won a bar of chocolate for her excellent guess. (See top of next column).



The Mystery item from Mel Cross's collection

This year's exhibition was, most people think, the best we have ever had, with a good number of participants and an every better number of visitors. Apart from the always interesting and varied individual family displays, there was a lovely display of old mechanical toys, including an old fashioned black tricycle with three large wheels, rather than the modern version with small back wheels, old trains and a xylophone, a Morris Minor, doll and other familiar toys. Heather MacAlister with her Ancestry24 stand was there to answer many questions, as was Mbongiseni Mbuthelezi, representing Ancestral Platform. He recently gave us a very illuminating talk on oral history and how it can get distorted for political or power reasons, amongst other facets of his current work and research. We were very pleased to have Siyabonga Ntamesi with the Western Cape Archives and Records Service display. There was a lot of information about what can be found at the Archives and how to go about your research, as well as what exhibitions, workshops and tours are on offer during Heritage Week.



Mbongiseni Buthelezi - Ancestral Platform

As usual, there was tea, coffee and an excellent spread of comestibles offered – thanks to all those who contributed to the delicious food, and to those who manned the kitchen and tea pots (Lucille, who can't stop working, it seems and ??), to Lois Harley for manning the entrance door, to Cynthia Winstanly and Stephen Peel for looking after the library, to everyone taking the trouble to exhibit (it was nice to see so many new people involved), and to those members and visitors who came for ideas, interest and a good afternoon's outing. A number of visitors said they would come to future meetings, and at least one person said she was going to join. Thanks, one and all for a very successful afternoon.



The Cape Archives (Roeland Street) stand with Siyabonga Ntamesi

From what I've heard one of the most popular stalls was Glyn Murrell's stall of old toys—perhaps bringing back fond memories to many members!



Glyn Murrell surrounded his toys from yester-year.



Diane Berwin-Taylor and her friend Sue Gow with a stall with some lovely old photographs, albums and old lace.



Margaret Reed place out her historical heritage upon her stall.



Merle Martin and the St Helenian Society's exhibition.

CAPE TOWN FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Workshop in the rest of 2010

Intermediate Workshops on Selected Topics

Code	Date	Time	Venue	Topic	Cost
IW4	Thurs 28 Oct 2010	9.30 to 12.00	St. Paul's Church Hall	Using Your Digital Camera	R50
IW5	Thurs 11 Nov 2010	9.30 to 12.00	St. Paul's Church Hall	Writing Your Story	R50

Hermanus Workshops

Code	Date	Time	Venue	Topic	Cost
HW4	Wed 20 Oct 2010	9 to 12.30	Hermanus Library	Writing Your Story	R75

Terms and Conditions

Programme and registration forms are available on request from Lois Harley tel 021 797 6537 or email lharley@bicknet.co.za

No more than 15 people will be booked on each course. Registration form and course fee must be received before the class commences.

The Society reserves the right to cancel a class if insufficient bookings are received or a venue should become unavailable for any reason.

Dear Ancestor
Your tombstone stands among the rest;
Neglected and alone.
The name and date are chiselled out.
On polished, marble stone.
It reaches out to all that care,
It is too late to mourn.

You did not know that I exist, you died and I was born.
Yet each of us, are cells of you, in flesh, in blood, in bone.
Our blood contracts and beats a pulse.
Entirely not our own.

Dear Ancestor the place you filled,
One hundred years ago
Spreads out among the ones you left,
Who would have loved you so.

I wonder if you lived and loved,
I wonder if you knew,
That someday I would find this spot,
And come to visit you.

Anonymous



ANGLO BOER WAR WEBSITES



The Queen's South Africa Medal with two clasps

Over the past few months I've had to do some searches for Anglo-Boer War Soldiers and used some of the sites listed on **Cyndi's List**. The list in this Newsletter is **not interactive**, so you can't go directly from here to the website. You will have to go to **Cyndi's List** then go to 'South Africa' and 'Military' and you'll find the headings listed below as hyperlinks.

I found the <http://www.angloboerwar.com/> particularly useful for Nominal

Rolls of Colonial Regiments. Hopeful next magazine I will have completed my article *Finding James Goodwin of the Commander's-in-Chief Bodyguard* which used this website alot.

from Cyndi's List © Cyndi's List The Anglo-Boer War

Tracing Anglo-Boer War Ancestors Online article by Rosemary Dixon-Smith.

Additional Useful Web Sites for Anglo-Boer War Research

- Cape Mounted Rifles - Anglo-Boer War Casualty list.
- Local Armed Forces (Serving in South Africa for the British Cause) During the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902
- Border Mounted Rifles - Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902 Muster roll with casualty information.
- Muster Roll of the Natal Carbineers Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902
- Natal Mounted Rifles - Besieged in Ladysmith - Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902 Muster roll with casualty information.

The Anglo Boer War Discussion Page

This mailing list is for the discussion of the Anglo Boer War and other military related topics pre-1900.

Anglo Boer War Mobilisation Database

A project to create a comprehensive database of information relating to mobilisation and troop movements for the Boer War 1899-1902.

Anglo-Boer War Museum ~ Bloemfontein, South Africa

Australians in the Boer War - Australians in the

Boer War - Oz-Boer Database Project.

This project is dedicated to the memory of the around 20,000 Australians who, a century ago, risked all to serve their Queen, Empire and Country in the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). Includes a searchable database of Australian soldiers.

The Boer War - South Africa, 1899-1902

British Concentration Camps of the South African War 1900-1902

Online searchable database of the registers of the Boer population forced into the camps. It does not include Boer prisoners of war held by the British. Searchable by name, camp, farm or unique ID. Information includes cause of death, farm history, camp history of the individual, relationships to other persons in the camps and even tent number in the camp.

Essendon and the Boer War, 1899-1902

A list of the men of the City of Essendon, Victoria, Australia, who served in the war.

The Mafikeng Siege - A Cultural Perspective

MOWZEL

Primarily a site for those interested in the siege and relief of Ladysmith, an event that occurred during the Anglo Boer War. Also the site contains an extensive list of casualties, both military, civilian and past residents of Ladysmith.

South African Engineer Corps

Victorian Nurses in the Boer War

Yahoo! UK & Ireland...Anglo-Boer War

I haven't tested these links at Cyndi's List to make sure they are still active.

Derek Pratt



English Troops hold a Church Parade on a Sunday in November 1899 on the banks of the Orange River.

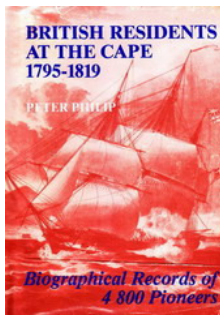
This image is from

<http://public.fotki.com/sagenealogie/abo/>

BOOK REVIEW

What have you got on your bookshelf immediately above your genealogical workbench? Which book do you grab most frequently as you research your Family History?

I suppose, because my genealogical research is more diverse than merely researching my own family my pile of books is a bit more specialized. As many of you know I have taken on the task of researching all those buried at St Paul's Rondebosch Graveyard. But let me share with you something about the books on my shelf and perhaps they might just have the answer to break down that brick wall you are facing.



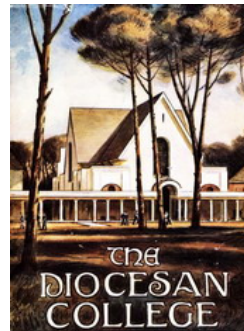
British Residents at the Cape 1795-1819 by Peter Philip (David Philip: Cape Town, 1981). This classic book of British men and women at the Cape before the coming of the 1820 Settlers contains biographical records of some 4800 people. It is freely available in most libraries. The abbreviations take a bit of time to work out but the

information which is all from various archival sources, has been collated under the different peoples names which are in alphabetical order. The information might appear a bit sparse but can be used as a springboard to the next level or generation by following up the Death notices or other archival references given.

Messengers, Watchmen and Stewards by Andries William de Villiers. (Historical Papers, Wits University Library: Johannesburg, 1998). Wim de Villiers is a former chairperson of the GSSA (Western Cape) and therefore this book is thoroughly researched from a family history perspective. This books gives a brief biographical history of all Anglican clergy who were licensed to serve in Cape Town Diocese between arrival of Bishop Gray (the first Anglican Bishop of Cape Town) in 1848 and the death of Bishop William West Jones (the second Bishop) in 1907 but it also lists all the Anglican Clergy before the arrival of Bp. Gray.

Men of Good Hope: the Cape Town Chamber of Commerce 1804-1954 (Cape Town Chamber of Commerce: Cape Town, 1955) by R F M Immelman. Many of the families at St Paul's during its early days were "merchants in the city" who resided in Rondebosch. This well indexed book is useful for me to see how these families were involved in business in Cape Town.

Aided immigration from Britain to South Africa 1857-1867 (Human Science Research Council: Pretoria, 1991). I am fortunate that one of my ancestors arrived in the *Adelaide* as an aided immigrant in 1862, so this book is relevant to me. Once again this a well-researched book giving not only the dates of arrival and the ships travelled on, but also the subsequent destination of the immigrants and their employers. Where found, archival references are given and can be used for ongoing research of the families.



The Diocesan College: A Century of "Bishops" (Juta & Co.: Cape Town, 1950) by Donald McIntyre. Rondebosch in its early days was the residential suburb of the wealthier citizens of Cape Town and so many parishioners of St Paul's attended diocesan College or "Bishops". This book is most useful if the boys of these wealthy families

in the parish happened to go to Bishop especially if they played in the First XV or the First XI.

Cape Times: Cape Peninsula Directory(Cape Times: Cape Town). I have two of these directories – 1958-1959 and 1965-1966. Although too modern for any one buried at St Paul's they are very useful for those of later generations

1881 British Census and National Index (The Church of Jesus and the Latter Day Saints: Salt Lake City) Although not strictly a book this collection of 25 CD-ROMs is certainly in a book-like format so it sits on my bookshelf ready for (frequent) use.

Do let us know which books you find useful. I'll include them in the next newsletter – just send an email to dpratt@mweb.co.za.

