ST. JAMES
A CENTURY BY THE SEA
1850 - 1950

MICHAEL WALKER
INTRODUCTION

This prestigious little stretch of 1.2 kilometres along the coastline of False Bay, where the mountains meet the sea, is known as St. James. Small though it may be, the church, the school, the hotels, the old aquarium, the beach, the homes and the people all contribute to make it a suburb steeped in history.

This book reflects the history of this suburb known to both local and overseas visitors for its beauty and tranquillity.

Note: House numbers are of today. Numbering was only introduced c. 1960

Abbreviations: D.T.=Deed of Transfer  c.= circa

Erratum: Page 91 Reverend H.A. Jeffree Jones to read
        Reverend A.H. Jeffree James
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>Early Days</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>The first Roman Catholic Church (1858-1900)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The second Roman Catholic Church (1900 -</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>“Star of the Sea” Convent</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>The St. James Mission School</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>The St. James Hotel</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td>The Seahurst Hotel</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
<td>The Marine Biological Station</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
<td>Beaches - St. James Beach</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Danger Beach</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
<td>Children's Special Service Mission (CSSM)</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
<td>St. James Station</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
<td>St. James Common</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 12</td>
<td>Side-Road Construction</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 13</td>
<td>Boyes Drive</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 14</td>
<td>The Homes of St. James</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 15</td>
<td>Personalities of St. James, 1850 - 1950</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 16</td>
<td>Mountain Fires</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 17</td>
<td>From 1950 - 2001</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chronology</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>References</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

Early Days
Before the railway arrived at Kalk Bay on 5 May 1883, the Main Road from Muizenberg to Kalk Bay was sparsely populated. The condition of the road was poor, with many potholes, large boulders and no pavement or footways. Telegraph lines with suitably placed poles followed the route of the Main Road. Milestone No. XVI has been placed on the hill overlooking St. James Beach (then known as Bickersteth Beach). Previous to the placing of these milestones distances were often measured by time e.g. from Cape Town to Simon’s Town was a five-hour journey, to Wynberg a two-hour journey etc. In 1818, however, milestones were erected from Cape Town to Simon’s Town, with the final milestone, No. XXV, being placed on the roadside in Murdoch Valley past Simon’s Town.

Main Road - 1883
The houses along the Main Road in 1883, of which we know, were “Carisbrooke” and stables (Nos. 2 and 4) (built about this time by Mrs. Sophia Jamison), the late Dr Bickersteth’s cottage (near today’s Braemar Road), “Arderne’s Cottage” and stables (Nos. 26 & 28), “Auret’s Cottage” (later “St. James Cottage”) which stood opposite what was to be St. James Station, and “Botheration Cottage” which was later demolished to make way for the home “La Rivage” and finally the St. James Hotel. The Roman Catholic Church stood on the seaside of the Main Road opposite today’s St. James Catholic Church. A presbytery for Father Duignam and a small Catholic Mission School were on the site of today’s presbytery (No. 80) while next door on the Kalk Bay side was an old whalerman’s cottage (No. 82). The whaling station had already closed and had been converted into the residence “Villa Capri” (No. 86). Further on, “The Homestead” and “Seaforth House” overlooked Danger Beach (known then as Nicholls Beach).

On the seaward side of the Main Road (the site of today’s “Hamilton House” No.99) stood a large thatched cottage belonging to Mr Watson. Further along was Mr Philip Morgenrood’s cottage (No. 105). On the opposite side of the road was a large thatched house, later “Ambleside” (No. 106). This house was on the Kalk Bay side of another old whaling station which had been converted into the residence “Pentrich”. Finally on the corner of Kimberley and Main
Road stood the long, single storey home of Mr H. A. Arderne which was demolished in 1905 to make way for the home “Seahurst” which later became the Seahurst Hotel.

All homes had thatched roofs and were built of stone, plaster and limewash. A total of approximately 14 houses spread along the Main Road from “Carisbrooke” to Kimberley Road.
CHAPTER 2

The first Roman Catholic Church (1858 - 1900)

In the mid-1850s the Right Reverend Dr Patrick Griffith, the Roman Catholic Bishop and Vicar Apostolic of the Cape of Good Hope, petitioned Sir George Grey, Governor of the Cape, for a piece of crown land in the Kalk Bay area for Catholic worship. This was mainly because the Filipino settlers in Kalk Bay were of Spanish descent and were Catholics. They were compelled each Sunday to make the hazardous journey across from Kalk Bay to Simon’s Town either by sea or by road to Saints Simon and Jude’s Church in Simon’s Town in order to attend Mass. Sir George Grey duly granted a small piece of ground 100foot x 100foot with a specific condition that it be used as a place of worship only. The site was opposite today’s Catholic Church at St. James where a railway cottage now stands. Transfer took place on the 27 October 1858, three weeks after the foundation stone was laid on 5 October 1858.

Lt. Col. Ashton, a leading figure among the fishermen of Kalk Bay, immediately objected to the site claiming it was not suitable. It was too close to the beach and the common ground where many weekend holiday-makers camped. (There was no railway in those days.) The area was flat and very popular for tented holidays. Ashton also objected to the distance the fisherfolk would have to travel and that, with the vast area of unused land between the Main Road and the mountain, a more practical site could be found closer to Kalk Bay.

His objection fell on deaf ears and by the time the transfer of ground had been registered in the Deeds Office construction of the church was well underway. It was named St. James in honour of the Apostle and Fisherman and also the Patron Saint of Spain from where the Filipinos’ mother tongue came. The internal dimensions of this church were 40foot x 20foot, which was relatively small. The walls were made of stone, were two foot thick and were plastered on both sides. The outer boundary of the site was enclosed by a stone plastered wall, 4’6” high. Three stained-glass windows graced the north and south walls while the east end (the seaside) had a small room 15foot x 12foot where the first St. James Mission School classes were held for the children of the fisherfolk. The front of the church on the Main Road side had a small entrance porch 10foot x 8foot wide. The small church
served the community well until about 1898 when it became too small for the increased number of worshippers.

Previous to this the Diocese had bought a large plot of ground for £1,200 on the opposite side of the road to the church. Here c. 1885 Father John Duignam, the parish priest, had built a presbytery for himself and a Mission School. The total cost for these two buildings was £400.

On 24 September 1898 the Right Reverend John Leonard, Roman Catholic Bishop and Vicar Apostolic of the Western Cape Vicariate, wrote to the Under-Secretary for Agriculture and asked him to please obtain the consent of his Excellency the Governor for the right to sell the church and the land which Sir George Grey had granted in 1858. Leonard had succeeded Bishop T. Grimley as Vicar Apostolic in 1873 and was well versed with the situation at St. James. He listed his reasons as the smallness of the church, the severe strain on the church walls made by passing trains, especially the luggage train, and the fact that the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality proposed to erect municipal offices in the vacant ground on the Kalk Bay side of the church.

This municipal proposal never materialized due to the strong feeling of the Minister for Agriculture, Mr Sauer, and local objectors who all felt this vacant ground should remain open. Bishop John Leonard also added in his letter that all monies received from the sale of this site would be channelled towards building a new church on the opposite side of the road, alongside the presbytery and Mission School. This new church would also help curb ‘malicious damage’ to the existing church, which had occurred due to it being isolated from the presbytery.

The Department of Agriculture replied on 1 October 1898 that His Excellency had no objections to the selling of the land and using the money to build a church of larger dimensions on the opposite side of the road.

The first offer of purchase came from the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality which wished to convert the church into a Courthouse. Plans were drawn and permission sought from the Governor. These plans never reached the Governor as the Minister for Agriculture, Mr Sauer, refused permission for the conversion of the church into a courthouse. He considered it ‘most offensive’ to place a Courthouse on the opposite side of the road in front of the Catholic Church.
Mr Sauer, now being made aware of the situation, then played a major role in the development (or lack of development) of the ‘foreshore’ of St. James, i.e. the land between the Main Road and the railway line from the church towards Kalk Bay as far as “Hamilton House”. He felt strongly that no development should take place here and to ‘shut off’ the sea frontage any further than had been already done would be a fatal error. He argued that all remaining land between the church and “Hamilton House” should be acquired by the Cape Government Railways and reserved for public use for all time and be used by the railways only when absolutely necessary. This is indeed what happened. Mr Sauer went further in his quest to keep the area free of development and excluded the erection of bandstands. These bandstands were to be erected opposite the seaside platform of St. James Station on the open common ground and “must not have the effect of a closure of view or the curtailing of any other open air activities”.

The Cape Government Railways investigated Bishop Leonard’s wish to sell the church as they expressly wanted a piece of ground for the building of an ‘up-market’ station master’s quarters in keeping with the future of St. James as a prestigious ‘watering place’. The site of the church proved ideal as it would not interfere with the view and it lay to the south of the station near to the railway platform. Funds were earmarked as early as the Loan Bill of 1898 for a station master’s quarters.

Initially the Cape Government Railways offered, on 1 March 1900, a swap of property (similar to their offer in 1886 to the Anglican Church, Kalk Bay, when ‘Stonehaven’, the mission school, was built). This was refused out of hand as the Diocese pointed out that more than sufficient property had been acquired on the opposite side of the road. The Diocese then indicated that it was prepared to accept £2000. This was agreed and the money was paid in April 1900. Transfer was effected by Messrs Van Zyl and Buissinne acting for Bishop Leonard. In the sale it was noted by the Cape Government Railways that the property would be required for station master’s accommodation.

The Cape Government Railways then offered the Right Reverend John Rooney, Co-adjutor to Bishop Leonard, the use of the church for a period of six months until the new church was built, at a rate of 6% p.a. on the amount of £2000. This was refused and on 6 July 1900 the...
church was demolished at a cost of £35 to the Cape Government Railways.

Then an interesting point arose. The Under-Secretary for Agriculture queried the sale and transfer of the ground, and stated that the Church had no right to sell to the Colonial Government (i.e. the Cape Government Railways) as the grant of 1858 specifically stated that “the ground was to be used as a place of worship and when no longer required for that purpose was to revert back to the Government”.

This caused considerable embarrassment and the Registrar of Deeds confessed to an oversight in his department, which he explained was because “this condition of 1858 was inserted in an unusual position in the grant and was quite out of place”.

As the transfer had received the consent of His Excellency the Governor, who was unaware of the oversight, the matter was left to stand much to the relief of Bishop Rooney.

The second Roman Catholic Church (1900 -)

Construction of the Catholic Church at St. James was funded mainly from the £2000 that the Diocese had received from the Cape Government Railways for the sale of the old church across the road. The Right Reverend John Rooney appointed George Ransome as architect in 1898. Ransome was a Yorkshireman who had studied in Europe and was a great admirer of Italian Renaissance architecture. Bishop Rooney was aware of Ransome’s architectural skills as Ransome had completed many buildings in Cape Town, and what better qualification than to have a man with Italian Renaissance ideas designing a Roman Catholic Church.

Two years earlier, in 1896, in competition with five other leading architects Ransome had won the design proposal for the new Anglican St. James Church in Sea Point. His plans for the church were accepted in June 1897. He used a similar design of quarry stonewalls with pitched roofs on the Catholic Church at St. James, and the external likeness of these two churches is noticeable. Needless to say, both churches received wide acclaim.

Work began in earnest in 1900 and Father John Duignam who was best described as Contracts Manager, Clerk-of-Works and Quantity Surveyor took full charge of construction. It was he who organized a
special permit from the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality (on which he had once served) for the use of sea sand from Danger Beach for construction purposes, and it was he who organized with Mr H. Stockman, resident-agent for Sir John Jackson (Pty.) Ltd., contractor for the Selborne Docks in Simon’s Town, for the use of Italian stone masons to shape the rough quarry stone from which the church was to be built.

The actual location of stone used in the construction of the church is unclear. Some claim the stone came from Mr J. Clews’ quarry at St. James while others contend the stone could well have come from the Seaforth quarry used for the Selborne Docks. Here the stone masons could well have hewn the stone to the right shape and size for delivery to St. James. The stone for the church steps, however, did come from the St. James mountains because records show that Fr. Duignam with the help of the Filipino community did remove stone from the mountain for the steps after the church had been completed.

Much of the building work was completed by the Filipino community under the watchful eye of Fr. Duignam and it was a day to remember when the Church opened its doors to the congregation in May 1901.

The stained-glass window behind the high altar which commemorated Fr. Duignam’s Golden Jubilee is indeed a beautiful tribute to his efforts in building the church.

The stone church was built in the form of a rectangle with an organ loft at the back of the nave. From the very beginning the church was too small to take the influx of holiday-makers over the summer season.

To overcome this problem Father Harold Doran (Parish Priest 1943-1971) requested the Council in 1947 to approve the plans of architects Norman Lubynski and Werthmueller for the alteration of the entry to the Church. The proposal was to move the south (Kalk Bay) entrance to the east (Main Road). The reasons for this were threefold:

1. The present south entrance faced the full blast of the winter weather and was often flooded after heavy rains. It was also very draughty.
2. The whole congregation (up to 240 persons) left the church out of one single door and a three-foot wide gate. The new entrance porch on the Main Road would lead people directly onto the pavement through two side-doors.
3. By moving the confessional to the opposite side of the Church the seating capacity would be increased.”

Fr. Doran’s plans were approved by Council. The builder was K. Mann of Fish Hoek, and while the building operations were underway Fr. Doran moved the stairway to the organ loft and built a new Baptistry. This further increased the seating capacity.

The new entrance porch was dedicated to those who had fallen in the two World Wars and was known as the War Memorial Entrance Porch. This work was completed in November 1949. In that year Fr. Doran also built the new choir section for the church.

Stained-glass windows around the nave enhanced the effect of the windows of the altar which in 1924 had commemorated Fr. Duignam’s Golden Jubilee. Above the organ loft overlooking the Main Road there are three stained-glass windows which depict St. James the Pilgrim, St. James the Moorslayer and the beheading of St. James.

The crucifix on the richly ornamental altar remains the focal point of the church while the wooden pulpit, set to one side of the nave, is decorated with carved wooden figures representing the symbols of the four evangelists St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John. The carvings were done by the Salesians for Fr. Duignam in 1911. A pair of beautifully carved heads of St. James is at the base of the moulding around the great arch of the church.
CHAPTER 3

“Star of the Sea” Convent

When, in 1906, Father Duignam drew up the plans with the Right Reverend Bishop Rooney, the Co-adjutor Vicar Apostolic of the Western Cape, for constructing a convent behind the Catholic Church in St James, the concept was for a convalescent convent with medical facilities for sick nuns, similar to the “health farms” of today.

It appears, from available records and notes of various discussions while constructing the convent, that Fr. Duignam was both architect and builder. He was already a man of 60 but had boundless energy, and the plumber on the site, Mr J. D. Robertson has this to say in an article Looking Back.

“Many a time when inspecting building operations, Father Duignam and I would climb onto the scaffolding. From these heights he would observe the labourers at work, and woe betide any one of them who was not working as diligently as the Reverend overseer wished.”

The convent design incorporated facilities for as many nuns as possible, with each nun having her own small room - known as sleeping apartments but referred to by some nuns as ‘cells’. The larger rooms were used for invalid nuns who were in need of medical treatment.

Bishop Rooney wanted the convent built to a much smaller design but Fr. Duignam was insistent, especially regarding the balcony, and it was due to his foresight that we have this magnificent building on the slopes of the St. James Mountains today.

The convalescent concept was based on the firm belief that St. James, with the sea air, was an ideal site for all those sick and weary. When Cecil Rhodes bought a cottage on the Main Road in 1899 to recuperate from the heat and strain of travelling to the interior, this belief was firmly established. That Britain had chosen Muizenberg as a convalescent camp for the soldiers during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), only proved beyond doubt that this area was an ideal health resort, a factor which the Kalk Bay - Muizenberg Municipality actively traded on to increase revenue from tourism and rates, which was guaranteed by the many new homes and hotels.
In many reports from the memoirs of the early nuns it was stated that Fr. Duignam with his own bare hands quarried the rock out of the St. James mountains for the building of the convent. This was more likely to have been one of Fr. Duignam’s many yarns to the younger nuns during the 1920s as it was highly unlikely that any of the faced quarry stone came from the St. James mountains, as there was no quarry there that could have produced such stone in so large a quantity. What did happen though was that the resident agent of Sir John Jackson (Pty.) Ltd., who was commissioned to oversee the building of His Majesty’s Dockyard in Simon’s Town, was friendly with Fr. Duignam, and it is most likely that the bulk of the faced quarry stone came from their Seaforth quarry, as had the stonework for the Church. Fr. Duignam was assisted in the construction of the convent by Italian stone masons, on loan from Sir John Jackson (Pty.) Ltd., and many of the local Filipino fisherfolk of Kalk Bay - all of whom were parishioners of the church.

Life for the nuns at the convent, even though many were there to recuperate, was not exactly easy. There was, in the early years, no electricity (installed 1910, until then paraffin lamps were used) no telephone (finally installed in 1919), no laundry facility (a zinc bath was used), and a very basic wood-burning stove where it was reported that “the heat went anywhere but where it was intended”. Ironing was done with a heavy iron with coals, and the food was simple and unimaginative, for the cooking was done by young lay-sisters who had little experience and, with the limited means available, found the going difficult. A small farmyard at the back of the convent housed hens, chickens, ducks, geese and a pig, which died when his “hokkie” collapsed, much to the anger of Fr. Duignam.

The the arrival of the weekly “Springfield cart”, which brought fresh fruit, vegetables, bread, butter, and milk, was most welcome as were the hampers from the local hoteliers, especially Frank and later Spencer Stansfield of the St. James Hotel, and Harry Scowen of Scowen’s Hotel, Muizenberg, all of whom had daughters at some time or other at the convent. The local Filipino fisherfolk also provided fresh fish, curries, pickled fish and other marine delicacies, which were greatly appreciated.

There were between 15 and 20 nuns at the convent and, although the recreational facility was important, it gradually gave way to the
educational requirements. These requirements made significant inroads into the convent almost from the day the building was completed. In less than four years the convent only housed nun teachers and school boarders. The recuperation by the sea for weary sisters from the “dry wastelands of the north” ceased, and by 1914 “Star of the Sea” was a fully fledged convent school from kindergarten to matric.

The educational aspect of the convent was never initially planned by Fr. Duignam or Bishop Rooney. It simply occurred once the facility of a convent was available. Fr. Duignam’s drawings of 1906 did not provide for any facilities for class-rooms and, when the small white private school of about a dozen children opened in 1908, the dining-room was used for morning classes. Fr. Duignam never conceived the idea of anything larger. The result was that as the convent changed from convalescing to education considerable improvisation and adjustments had to be made as the number of school-going children increased, especially with regard to boarders.

After the Anglo-Boer War ended in 1902 there was a great influx of families desirous of settling in St. James. This can be gauged by the large increase in the number of houses built along this seaside coast. Train services improved and more and more businessmen were able to live at St. James and commute daily to work in Cape Town. The cost of a holiday home at the sea was no longer necessary, one could work and live here. This resulted in a great increase in the number of school-going children living in St. James. Petition after petition reached Fr. Duignam from the Catholic community to have their children educated in Catholic religious doctrine and a sound primary education.

Fr. Duignam duly approached Mother Pius at Springfield after his initial approach to the Holy Cross Sisters had failed, and a happy and long relationship with that school was established. It was Springfield that “footed the bill” for the construction of the convent, at a cost of £5400-12s-8d. This amount had not to be repaid, nor had any interest to be paid.

On 24 January 1908 Mother Joseph (principal) and Sister Benignus opened a “small white private school” at the convent with no pomp or ceremony. There was a total of 10 children, who were housed in a small dining-room, for morning classes only. The 10 children who attended that day were: May & Rose Scowen (from Scowen’s hotel in
Muizenberg), Lily, Nellie and Tommy Heath, Eric and Ethel Sauerlander, Rita Spence, Daisy Pillow and Rhoda Bailey (8 girls and 2 boys who were brothers of the girls).

Within a year the class of 1908 had increased to 21, with a further 7 girls and 4 boys giving a school roll of 15 girls and 6 boys. The staff was increased to 3 nuns and a few secular teachers, with additional art, drawing and elocution classes.

In 1910 Monica Dolphin, the first girl boarder was admitted to the convent with another four boarders following later in the year. In 1911 Jack- (surname unknown) became the first day boarder. The “sluice-gates” were now open and after 1912 the entire concept of the convent changed - it was no longer a convalescent centre for sick sisters, but a feeder school for Springfield. Classes were extended past Standard two, and 12 boy boarders and 24 girl boarders now occupied the original sleeping apartments (‘cells’), the dining-room was converted into a dormitory, and the balcony, with the use of heavy sailcloth, was converted into a dining-room which was used between meals as a class-room.

Still the children arrived and as the facilities became more crowded so instructions were given to Mother Hyacinth, the Supervisor, to send away boy boarders. They would be boarded in “Seaforth House” on the Main Road opposite the St. James Common by Mrs Mary Armour, who would look after them and was to be paid a salary.

In 1914 the School was converted into a Secondary School, from kindergarten to matric, and many more nuns of the Dominican order moved from Springfield to “Star of the Sea”. An article of June 1914 in the S.A Lady’s Pictorial Magazine featured an interview with Mother Hyacinth, the Principal. The number of pupils was given as 86 day pupils and 18 boarders: a total of 104 pupils. It was noted in the article that music was given special attention, as well as shorthand and typing for those choosing a commercial career. Art and dancing under the instruction of Miss Watt, and cookery classes for boarders only, were also offered. Tennis and basketball were the main sports, while the annual play placed the emphasis on the importance of literature.

Mother Hyacinth notes in the interview that she was continually receiving requests to take further pupils, especially up-country boarders, who were unwell and would thrive at the seaside under the loving care of the sisters.
Many parents, both local and up-country, were unhappy to move their children to Springfield and wished them to stay at “Star” until Matric. Thus the numbers grew all the time. There were also many “birds of passage”, as described by Sister Benignus, whose attendance was seasonal depending on their parents’ movements, or whether their parents had two homes, one at St. James for the summer months and another “up the line” during winter.

Dormitories were used as class-rooms as were as the dining-rooms. In the dormitories the children sat on beds. The dining-room and the balcony was divided by sailcloths so that two classes could attend. This area was allocated to the Standard V’s.

In 1917 a laundry was added (architect Fred Glennie). Eventually it was obvious that an extension to the convent was necessary and in 1919 Fr. Duignam again approached Fred Glennie, later architect of Natale Labia’s palatial home, “The Fort” on Main Road, Muizenberg, for plans. The double storey building was to run at right angles from the balcony at the south end of the convent. Fred Glennie’s plan, with an estimate of £4000, was made without the approval of the Dominican Sisters, who were to settle the account, and they rejected it as too expensive. A revised plan for a stone-faced building was submitted by a local builder, Mr H. C. Poole, whose daughter, studying at UCT, drew the plans and acted as architect. The budget was reduced to £2000, but Fred Glennie’s fee of £40 had to be paid. Difficulty was encountered with the Municipality in approval of the plans as the Municipality was reluctant to allow an extension of a private school at the expense of attracting pupils away from public municipal schools. This was resolved when it was agreed that the building was to be constructed only to house existing pupils and it was not the intention to extend the school.

The building budget of £2000 was exceeded by £533-16s-0d and would have been even higher, but for the use of a large supply of quarry stone, which was lying at the back of the convent and which had been left over from the original convent. The cost of removing a dangerous retaining wall and difficulties with an underground perennial spring which had affected the foundations, and the services of the City Engineer to alleviate this problem, only increased the final account, as did another problem. This time it was a large boulder which could not be moved and required the raising the floor slab.
Springfield helped with the bill, and functions such as fetes and dances were held at “Star” to assist with payments. Fr. Duignam contributed £300. The building, which consisted of six additional class-rooms, was completed at the end of 1920 and greatly alleviated the class-room crisis which, by 1924, housed nearly 150 pupils from kindergarten through to matric, as well as 11 sisters and 23 boarders.

The attendance at “Star” grew at a steady pace and by 1944 a major extension was undertaken when a new class-room block alongside the convent on the Jacob’s Ladder (South side) was built. The architects were Norman Lubynski and Werthmueller and the builder K. Mann of Fish Hoek. In addition to this work Mann also built a scullery, further bathrooms, and a dining-room. All the work was signed off as complete in August 1945. The number of pupils at “Star” had now reached 208.

During the period 1945-1948 various extensions were undertaken which included enlarging the laundry and the dining-room. A block of toilets for the Senior School and a dormitory with two class-rooms below were also completed. (The same team of architects and builder were used as for the 1944 extension.) The old tennis court and surrounding grounds alongside Boyes Drive were sold off to Rex Walker to ensure sufficient funds for these extensions. Arrangements were now made to use the public tennis courts on the Main Road, St. James.

In 1949 the old Mission School was converted into a school hall. (The Mission School had moved to Kalk Bay). Joseph Rubbi (Pty.) Ltd. completed the builder’s work on the conversion of the hall, as well as further alterations to class-rooms and the creation of an additional music-room.

The Golden Jubilee of “Star of the Sea” in 1958 was celebrated with the announcement that a start would be made on the plans for a new block in front of the convent. This block, which consisted of an Assembly Hall, four class-rooms, three music-rooms and a dining-hall, was completed at a cost of £40,000 and was formally opened on 9 February 1963.
CHAPTER 4

The St. James Mission School

There is evidence that a school for the children of the fisherfolk existed at Kalk Bay until 1874, whereafter Fr. Duignam arrived and moved the school to a small sea-facing backroom attached to the Catholic Church which had been built at St. James in 1858.

Here he taught them in religious doctrine and the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic up to Standard Two. His class consisted of about 10 to 15 pupils at a time. After Standard Two the children left the school. The boys helped their fathers in the fishing industry, the girls attended to the home while their mothers worked as domestic servants and later in the washhouse at Kalk Bay. Space was at a premium in the small class-room and in a letter dated September 1898 to the Under-Secretary for Agriculture the Right Reverend Bishop Leonard mentions that a Presbytery and a Mission School had been built ‘some years previously’ across the road from the chapel at a cost of £400. Therefore it is safe to assume this little class-room at the back of the chapel must have only lasted for about ten years until the first St. James Mission School was built circa 1885. The move was no doubt caused by an increase in the number of Catholic parents, both coloured and white, who wanted their children to have a basic education from Father Duignam. An inspection report of 14 February 1894 indicated that Father Duignam was then assisted by Miss Florence Crowly, with the school having a total enrolment of 69 pupils. There were 60 pupils present on the day of inspection with 9 white and 51 coloured pupils. The class was held in one undivided room. It was recommended that this room be divided into two sections.

An interesting bit of trivia was the fact that St. James Primary was also referred to as Kalk Bay (RC) Primary in a number of inspection reports.

By 1899 there was still no separate class-room built, due to lack of funds. Miss Millicent Searle was appointed Principal, but left after a short while. Fr. Duignam once again took charge of the school. The inspection report of 8 February 1901 indicated that Fr. Duignam single-handedly taught 64 children with the help of a 12-year-old child. Presumably this was Frances Hilario, who was later to qualify as a teacher and taught at the St. James Mission School until the early
1950s. By 25 February 1901, Miss Elizabeth Murphy was appointed Principal, having previously taught freehand drawing.

From the inspection reports of this time, the following recommendations were made:

1. A school library was needed.
2. There was still no separate class-room for the infant/junior primary classes.
3. An appointment of a qualified teacher to assist the principal was indispensable, if justice was to be done to all the classes.”

Things changed swiftly by the end of 1901. Miss Murphy resigned and Miss Searle was re-appointed, this time as Acting Principal. It was also suggested at this stage that the school be staffed and run by the Dominican Sisters. However, by 1902 Fr. Duignam was once more in charge of the school, but barely able to cope.

After the building of “Star of the Sea” Convent (1908) the future of the St. James Mission School was assured. Both now operated on the same campus and in a letter to the Superintendent of Education on 22 January 1908 Father J. O’Reilly stated that the Dominican Sisters had officially taken over the running of the St. James Mission School. It is presumed that Fr. Duignam’s name was finally removed from the Cape Government School Teachers Roll as it had appeared on and off this roll for many years.

St. James Mission School’s first Sister Principal was Sr. Alphonsus Lynch, who had Sr. Felix as her assistant. Sr. Ignatius replaced her (no date); Sr. Rose was Principal from 1916 - 18, Sr. Philomena from 1919-20, and Sr. Ethnea from 1920-24. Sr. Liguori was appointed Principal in 1925. She was replaced two years later by Sr. Fidelis who retired at the end of 1946. Although the Dominican Sisters held the Principalship of the school from 1908 until 1982, it was never a Dominican School as such. It belonged to the Archdiocese of Cape Town, and throughout the years had the parish priest of St. James as its manager.

After the Sisters took over the school, Fr. Duignam continued to hold night classes for the Filipino fisher boys who had to go to work after Standard. 2. He taught them English and Arithmetic, and placed special emphasis on the Christian Doctrine.

In 1918 when the great flu epidemic hit the Cape, and the Kalk Bay fishing community in particular, the Mission School served as a hospital for the very bad cases, with the nuns acting as nurses.
In 1921 additions were completed to the Mission School, but as the numbers at both the “Star of the Sea” and the St. James Mission School increased it became obvious that a relocation of the Mission School to Kalk Bay, nearer home to many of the children, was necessary.

In 1927 the Principal was Sr. Mary Fidelis (Hughes). She had taught at the Mission School as a young teacher in 1916 (aged 26) and again in 1919. She was appointed Principal in January 1927 and remained Principal until her retirement in 1946, whereafter the Mission School moved to Kalk Bay.

In 1931 Sr. Fidelis took very ill and was forced to take sick leave from April to October due to severe abdominal complications. During this time Frances Hilario was appointed Acting Principal with Elizabeth Jacobs as her assistant.

The school roll in 1937, signed by Parish Priest Sidney Welch, was 74. This increased to 85 in 1937 (Boys 39, Girls 46). This school roll was signed by Father Doran, Acting Parish Priest, and it was through his efforts, due to the steady increase in numbers, that the Mission School was re-located to Kalk Bay.

In 1942, Mr Norman Lubynski drew plans for this new school, which were passed by the City Council with a budget estimate of £3000, but it was only after the War in 1947 that Father Doran had the school built by Mr K. Mann. The building was signed off as complete on 16 January 1947 in time for the first term of the year.

The school building was erected on a site of approximately 500 square metres next to the fisherfolks’ flats, and was utilized both as a chapel for the local people and as a school. After having existed in St. James for close on 75 years, St. James School returned to Kalk Bay with 106 pupils in attendance.

The new Mission School at Kalk Bay brought an increase in numbers, recording 153 pupils in its roll in the first year. It flourished under the leadership of Sr. Berchmans, who was Principal from 1947 until 1954. She travelled each day from “Star of the Sea”. She was assisted by Frances Hilario and Herbert Winn, and two years later when the school grew to include Standards 5 and 6, two extra classrooms were built, and more teachers joined the staff. Miss Lyner joined the staff around this time, teaching the Sub As in a large room which was rented from Wilson’s General Dealers for a year. The school provided an education for not only the Kalk Bay community, but for
the surrounding areas as well, which included Vrygrond, Glencairn, and Noordhoek. It also served the community by providing classrooms for Mass every Sunday morning and for Rosary and Benediction every Thursday evening.

From 1955-58 Sr. Paul was Principal, followed by Sr. Lawrence, who held the post until the end of 1965. Sr. Berchmans returned to the teaching staff of St. James School in 1969 where she remained until retirement in 1982. At this time St. James School also passed out of the hands of the Dominican Sisters and was handed over to a lay principal.

St. James Primary is proud of its history as a community school. It has played an important role in keeping its community together in the face of adversity over the past century. Significantly, St. James Primary still boasts pupils with surnames like Fernandez, Pepino, Almazon, Erispe and Delcarme, a tribute to their Filipino heritage.
CHAPTER 5

The St. James Hotel

On 15 October 1822 Carel Willem Langerman was granted a large tract of land in quitrent along the seafront at Kalk Bay (area now referred to as St. James) by the Colonial Government. In 1825 his son Carel George Langerman bought part of this grant, with buildings, from his mother who had been widowed some two years earlier. She had remarried early in 1825 and, as Mrs Bernardina Magdalena Roedolff, sold him 21,5 morgen at a price of 18000 guilders. He acquired a bond of 8100 guilders from the District Treasury of the Cape Colony Government, which he had to repay at 900 guilders a year for nine years. It was on lots 1-3 (erven 88394/6) of this large property that the St. James Hotel was later to be built.

Langerman divided his land into a number of lots. Lot 1(1,5 morgen) had no buildings and ran alongside the Main Road. In July 1840 Joseph de Vries bought this lot for £25-15s-0d from Langerman’s insolvent estate. He sold this site to Lt. Colonel Henry Ashton some 21 years later, on 21 March 1861. The price had risen to £250 and no buildings were referred to in the title deeds.

Ashton returned to England in 1871 and was represented by the Board of Executors in the next sale of this property, which was to Hermann Rupert, on 1 March 1876. The price was now £400 and it was in this sale that the title deeds first recorded the existence of a cottage, known as “Botheration Cottage”. It can therefore safely be assumed that Lt. Colonel Ashton had built this cottage between 1861/71. Ashton had a large home in Kalk Bay on the site of what was later to become the Holy Trinity Church and throughout his ownership of “Botheration Cottage” it can be assumed he had tenants on the premises. The unusual name of the cottage arose because of a large boulder which could not be moved and around which part of the building was constructed.

Hermann Rupert also bought Lot 2 (1,5 morgen) which ran behind Lot 1. This lot had no buildings and he acquired it in June, some three months after buying Lot 1 from Ashton. The seller was J. C Wicht, and the price was £75. Rupert changed the name to “Botheration House” and ran it as a guest house.

Rupert went insolvent at the end of 1884 and John Wesley Wells
bought both lots from the executors of his insolvent estate on 6 February 1885 for £1450. Wells also acquired the final lot (Lot 3,75 morgen) from W. T. Wiley on 23 October 1886, at a cost of £200. Wells died in October 1890, but his wife Ann Deborah (nee Attwell) inherited the cottage and remained there until February 1896 when she sold the three lots to her brother James William Attwell for £2250. All three lots now became one holding in the form of three paragraphs in the Title Deed.

J.W. Attwell, of Attwell’s Baking Company, demolished “Botheration House” and set about building a double-storey home to the architects Black and Fagg’s design, which was completed in mid-1897. He named his home “La Rivage” (French - thither (there lies) the beach). Regrettably, in the year that “La Rivage” was completed Attwell died of a heart attack while on holiday in London. He was at the time of his death a Cape Town Municipal Councillor (elected 1892), a director of Attwell’s Baking Co., and had previously been Mayor of the Cape Town Municipality (1895-96).

On 27 June 1899 George Daniel Chapman took transfer of the property from the estate of the late J.W. Attwell. Chapman had previously been the proprietor of the Muizenberg Hotel. He paid £5450 and took a mortgage bond of £3000 with the executors of Attwell’s estate. Chapman did extensive alterations and additions to the house and converted the establishment into the La Rivage Hotel. Regrettably, he was in poor health and died on 28 December 1899, aged 47. He left his wife Mary Ann with no less than nine children, all minors including an unnamed baby four weeks old. In his Will he referred to his declining health and the fact that his wife would assume responsibility for the running of the hotel; the entire complex, with an increased council valuation (from £3000 to £6000 after alterations), was transferred on 15 April 1903 to his wife Mary Ann Chapman (born Welch). The name of the hotel was changed in 1903 from the La Rivage Hotel to the St. James Hotel.

Mary Ann Chapman hired out the management of the St. James Hotel to Frank Stansfield until his sudden death on 18 November 1910, aged 38. Frank Stansfield had also acquired the Bay View Hotel in Muizenberg from Henry Magor’s insolvent estate in 1905 and he and his wife operated this hotel at the same time as the St. James Hotel.

Mary Ann Chapman was sued in the Supreme Court in September
"La Rivage" prior to the conversion to La Rivage Hotel c. 1898. Later St, James Hotel

Mission school behind church. Convent visible behind hotel (note flagpole) c. 1910
1913 by the heirs of Estate J.W. Attwell for monies still owing on the bond of £3000 which originally had been taken out with the estate in June 1899. She was subsequently declared insolvent and the hotel was attached and sold by public auction for £9850 to the Opera House (Grand Parade) Restaurant Limited, a subsidiary of Pegrams Ltd. (later Schweppes). The deed of sale was signed on 8 October 1914 on behalf of the purchasers by Thomas Herbert Pegram.

Pegrams were creditors in the insolvent estate of Mrs M.A. Chapman and they had no intention of holding the hotel for any length of time. On 22 July 1915, after less than a year’s ownership, they sold the St. James Hotel to Spencer Stansfield, brother of the late Frank Stansfield.

Spencer Stansfield paid £10388-11s-1d for the premises. A bond of £8000 was granted with the balance paid in cash. The deed of sale had three very clear conditions:

1. That Pegrams Ltd. was to supply all non-alcoholic drinks i.e. soda-water, lemonade, ginger-beer, ginger-ale etc. other than Van Riebeeck natural mineral water.
2. That E. K. Green & Co. was to supply all wine and spirits.
3. That Ohlssons Cape Breweries were to supply all beers.”

The suppliers of these products were, however, obliged to sell them at “a fair and reasonable price”. Such were the days of fair competition.

In August 1916 architect Napier of Main Road, Kalk Bay, did alterations and improvements to the hotel.

Spencer Stansfield remained the owner of the St. James Hotel for nigh on ten years. He employed the services of Captain John Joseph Gentry who joined him from the Seahurst Hotel in 1915. On 16 May 1925 Spencer Stansfield sold the St. James Hotel to Captain Gentry for £20000. Gentry immediately set about preparing plans for the extension of the building which included a new dining-room. These extensions were completed in 1928 and the dining-room at the St. James Retirement Centre, which took over the St. James Hotel in the early 1990s, is named the Gentry Room in honour of this great character.

His wife Beatrice Ann Gentry was very popular with the nuns at “Star of the Sea” Convent and supplied them with food hampers to brighten their mundane sustenance, which the junior nuns had the responsibility of cooking. This was evident in the writings of the early
nuns of the “Star of Sea” to their colleagues at Springfield. She also supplied prizes each year for the pupils of the St. James Mission School. These included six pretty necklaces which went to the top pupils for the year.

In the front of the St. James Hotel alongside Sandhurst Road stood a large wooden bungalow with thatched roof. Spencer Stansfield had built this bungalow in 1915 and had covered the roof with thatch in contravention of Regulation No. 81 of the old Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality. After the local building inspector had discovered this contravention Stansfield was instructed to remove the thatch within seven days. Stansfield appealed to City Council saying that the bungalow was away from the hotel and/or any chimney stack and that it imposed no threat or danger to any properties. Council sent out a deputation to inspect the thatched roof and after discussion allowed the roof to remain, ‘at the pleasure of the Council’. It is of note, however, that Captain Gentry headed the Council’s deputation!

In 1925 Captain Gentry had this bungalow removed to the back of the hotel, and again with permission from the City Council, converted it into servants’ quarters. On the site of where the bungalow once stood Gentry then constructed an additional wing to the hotel (architects Perry and Stocks) which consisted of bedrooms, toilets, etc. In 1927 and 1928 further alterations and additions were undertaken which included the building of garages.

Captain Gentry was a renowned authority on culinary matters and a great character. He was a Councillor of the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality (1911-13) and thereafter of the City Council of Cape Town until 1933. His association with the St. James Hotel was legendary. It lasted nearly 23 years until his death at St. James on 27 July 1938.

The Colonial Orphan Chamber and Trust Co. bought the premises for £21844 from his deceased estate on 23 December 1940. They later sold the property in 1944 to the St. James Hotel Co. (Pty.) Ltd. (£24000). The St. James Hotel continued to cater for the opulent and the wealthy and its early boast, as far back as 1907, that electricity and the highest standard of good sanitation existed, was typical of its continuing efforts to keep up with modern developments and remain the premier hotel along this coastline.
St. James Hotel c. 1907

St. James Hotel c. 1925
CHAPTER 6

The Seahurst Hotel

Situated at the southern border of St. James on the Main Road and alongside Kimberley Road was the Seahurst Hotel. The history of this grand hotel which later became the Robin Gordon Hotel stretches from c. 1905 until the demolition of the Robin Gordon Hotel in the 1990s, and the subsequent building of the St. James Terrace which occupies the site today.

This property was first registered in the name of Carel Mauritz Zastron on 18 March 1842 (D.T. 115). It passed through the hands of various owners from 1848 (Dirk Gysbert Deneys) until February 1877 when Robert Graham acquired it (D.T. 89). Up to this stage there were no buildings on site, but in April 1880 the property was re-surveyed and re-granted to Robert Graham (vide Simon’s Town quitrents Vol. 3 No.1). The diagram shows for the first time a dwelling house, a coach house and stables on the site. The property then changed hands from Robert Graham to Johanna Myburgh on 23 June 1880 (D.T. 485) and thereafter on 26 February 1891 to Henry Matthew Arderne (D.P. 659). From a photograph of the building c. 1896, when owned by Henry Matthew Arderne, one can see it was now a substantially long cottage with thatched roof and whitewashed lime walls which were typical of that period. Arderne sold to William Brown on 12 February 1903 (D.T. 1786). The home was demolished c. 1905 and the property was transferred from William Henry Brown to Jessie Gertrude Miller (D.T. 1485). It was during the period of Brown and Miller’s ownership (1903-1910) that the home “Seahurst” was built. It was an attractive double-storey Tudor-styled house and c. 1908 was linked to the house on the south (Kalk Bay end) side to form the Seahurst Hotel. The well-maintained gardens and impressive driveway made it one of the most attractive and exclusive hotels on the False Bay Coast. A postcard depicting “The Seahurst Hotel St. James CC” indicates that the hotel was operating in the Cape Colony prior to Union. The writer describes the hotel as ‘extremely comfortable’. Jessie Miller sold the Seahurst Hotel to Captain John Joseph Gentry on 26 April 1910 (D.T. 2736).

In 1911 Gentry built a thatch roof bungalow alongside Kimberley Road. Known as “The Tennis Court Cottage” it contained a large entrance hall and five bedrooms with the necessary toilet facilities.
Part of this bungalow was converted into a tennis court pavilion before reverting back to a residence, once the tennis court had closed. It was then called “Seahurst Cottage”.

Gentry remained the owner of the Seahurst Hotel, but moved to the St. James Hotel in 1915 to team up with Spencer Stansfield. At the same time he leased the hotel to Arthur William Toy, who died aged 56 at the hotel on 31 August 1920. He had been in failing health for some time. In Toy’s deceased estate monies owed to him included ‘Sundry boarders at Seahurst £687-14-7’. This indicates Toy may have used the hotel more as a boarding house. He had no immovable property (indicating he leased the hotel from Gentry), but furniture to the value of £3504 was included in his assets.

Stansfield offered the St. James Hotel to Gentry in 1925, an offer which he accepted, but Gentry had now to sell the Seahurst Hotel to consolidate his purchase of the St. James. Gentry sold the Seahurst Hotel to Emily Toy, widow of Arthur Toy, in January 1925 (D.T. 218). Emily Toy had until then continued to run the hotel under the lease agreement of her late husband. She remarried in 1928 in Durban. Her second husband was Mr Charles Osolin.

During Gentry’s ownership, 1910-1925, he undertook major renovations, additions and extensions to the Seahurst Hotel. A pre-1910 postcard shows the hotel with its elegant Tudor buildings and impressive driveway but a later postcard published by the Valentine & Sons Publishing Co. of Cape Town c. 1920 and dated by the writer 13 March 1926 shows a flat roofed single storey extension which housed a billiard room, a reception area and a bar in front of the hotel. This extension did nothing to add to the ambience of the hotel, and the driveway up to the attractive Tudor-styled building was lost forever. This may have resulted in a fall-off of overseas and up-country visitors which could account for the fact that the word “boarders” was used in Toy’s deceased estate inventory. It may also have accounted for the demise of the hotel which resulted in it being auctioned off in 1931 in the assigned estate of Emily Osolin.

There were severe problems with the bend on the Main Road outside the Seahurst Hotel. In 1916 to overcome this problem a section of road alongside the hotel was widened. An area of 620 sq feet was expropriated from the Seahurst at an agreed compensation of £60 between Captain Gentry and the Council. Although this reduced the
House "Seahurst" (right) before linking with house on left to form Seahurst Hotel c. 1902

Seahurst Hotel c. 1920
problem for a while by 1929 further widening of this bend had become necessary. This time the seaside section of this road was expropriated. Opposite the Seahurst an attractive garden had been built, and at the time of road widening in 1929 was owned by the proprietor of the hotel, Emily Osolin. This area had been grassed, a retaining wall on the seaside built, and two attractive summer-houses at each end of the property constructed. Road widening severely reduced this garden and ruined a most attractive open area along the Main Road. The property on the Muizenberg side of this garden, “Larboard Watch”, owned by Mrs. E. Orr, also suffered under this road widening.

On 2 March 1931 at the time of the Great Depression the chances of running the hotel profitably faded and the hotel fell under the hammer of auctioneer Henry Hermann, in the case of the assigned estate of Emily Osolin (formerly Toy). The result of this sale is best described from a report in the “Cape Times” of 3 March 1931.

“The Seahurst Hotel Estate was yesterday put up for auction by Mr Henry Hermann, and sold provisionally for £21075. The estate was divided into 10 lots. The first lot, consisting of two bungalows and the hotel, including the goodwill and licence, fetched £7000. The remaining lots, sold separately, fetched £14075. The estate was later offered as a whole, but there was no advance on the total of the individual sales”.

The first lot which consisted of the hotel and two bungalows was described as follows:-

“The Seahurst Hotel is one of the best known and most palatial hotels on the whole of the beautiful False Bay littoral. The position is undoubtedly the finest on the whole of the False Bay coast line and is practically free from the South Easter. The hotel contains:- Large Lounge, Inner Lounge, Large dining-room, Ladies’ Lounge, Writing-Room, Smoking-Room, Small Bar, 13 Bedrooms, 2 Offices, Children’s dining-room, Waiters’ Pantry, 2 Chefs’ Pantries, Kitchen with Electric Stove, Electric Toaster and Hot Plates, Large Conservatory.

Adjoining Seahurst Hotel there are 2 delightful bungalows, one containing 4 rooms and the other 6 rooms, etc. The whole hotel is furnished and fitted regardless of expense and in accordance with all the best traditions of high-class hotel keeping. The furniture and fittings may be taken over at valuation. The Hotel stands in grounds
amply sufficient for the requirements of guests, standing back 112 feet from the road, and an extremely valuable site on the Sea Front immediately facing the hotel”.

The hotel and bungalows (Lot 1) were knocked-down to a newly formed company, The Seahurst Hotel Co. (Pty.) Ltd. which was managed by the Colonial Orphan Chamber and Trust Co.

In 1934 architect H. J. Brownlee designed additional bathrooms and toilets, and in 1942 the hotel was taken over the Union Government as a Convalescent Home for injured servicemen. It was run by the Red Cross from 1942 until 1945 and was known as the Red Cross Auxiliary Military Hospital. S. Ginnes bought the hotel in 1946, and the name reverted to the “Seahurst Hotel”. The Union Government had safeguarded the liquor licence by a Special Act of Parliament which as an addendum to the Liquor Act protected the liquor licence of all hotels seconded for the war effort.

Ginnes almost immediately met a problem that was to prevail throughout the hotel’s remaining history - that of Council’s refusal to permit the conversion of any part of the hotel into flats.

There had been a huge outcry among the residents of St. James and especially those of Rodwell Estate, when the four storey Bellemer Flats were built in 1935 on the Main Road opposite St. James beach. It seemed as if Council acknowledged this loophole in the Municipal regulations for in May 1940 the Plans Committee requested that the zoning of the St. James area be single dwellings only with a maximum of two floors. Any alteration or extension to this had to receive the approval of the Administrator. The erection of flats was to be prohibited in its entirety. An appeal against Council’s ruling was made soon after it was promulgated. An attempt had been made to erect a block of five flats on the corner of Pentrich and Main Road. The Administrator upheld the Council’s decision. Later Mrs E. M. Findlay tried to convert her existing residence, “Villa Capri”, into two flats. This was again rejected and the Administrator upheld the Council’s ruling. Council’s reasons for this restriction were not only for the obstruction of the view but also because of traffic flow considerations.

Thus when S. Ginnes, the first post-war owner, who lived in “Seahurst Cottage”, submitted plans from architects Walgate and Elsworth for the demolition of “Seahurst Cottage” and “Cloete’s Cottage” (corner of Leighton Road) and the construction of flats the
same fate awaited him as had the pre-war owner Roy Brown, who in 1940 with architect K.V. Commin had submitted a most elaborate scheme of 46 flats, 22 Maids’ rooms and 12 garages - a straight refusal by the responsible Committee of the Council, which was upheld by the Administrator.

Mr Ginnes then sold the hotel, whether out of frustration at seeing his plans refused is unknown, and on 7 November 1948 Good Hope Hotels (Pty.) Ltd. bought the complex and architect Bright Fraser did various renovations including garages and servants’ quarters. The name was changed to the Robin Gordon Hotel. Two blue neon-signs “Harbour Inn” and “Bar” were erected once they had been passed by the Harbour Master, Royal Naval Dockyard, Simon’s Town, as acceptable. The Robin Gordon managed to do some extensions which were passed by Council. (Builder J. Schep.)

Good Hope Hotels went into liquidation in 1963, a fate that awaited many hotels at this time after the introduction of star-ratings. After a series of owners including the Barbary Coast Hotels the Robin Gordon was demolished and a complex of two storey town houses, believe it or not, in the form of the St. James Terrace now occupies this site.
CHAPTER 7

The Marine Biological Station
(Locally referred to as the Aquarium)

During the Marine Biological Survey operations carried out by the s.s. "Pieter Faure" in 1898 it became apparent that this work required to be supplemented by facilities which could only be afforded by a Marine Laboratory in which material collected could be examined and observations made on the living animals. As a result of agitation, in 1898 a select committee of the Houses of Parliament recommended the building of a Marine Laboratory, and a sum of £500 was voted that year to the Department for Agriculture for this purpose. A further sum of £2000 was to be derived from earnings of the "Pieter Faure" as a Government trawler. The estimate for building and equipping a Marine Laboratory was £4000, but it was expedient to make the best use of the £500 that was then available. A commencement was therefore to be made with the construction of an engine room, caretaker's quarters and a tank.

The selection of a site was then top priority. It was to be on Crown Land either at St. James or Simon's Town. Dr John Gilchrist, (see Personalities, Chapter 15) who was the Government Biologist, and chose St. James as the more practical since it involved less travelling. It also lay close to the railway line which would not have been the case with the Crown Land at Simon's Town. The original site agreed on by the Under-Secretary for the Department for Agriculture and Dr Gilchrist was on a piece of Crown Land between the St. James Railway Station and the sea. It was at the north end of this common. Capt. W. H. Brooke-Smith, Mayor of the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality, objected, however, to this site saying that it was not suitable as it would interfere with the public access to the St. James beach. He suggested a more practical site was towards Kalk Bay South end of the common. Dr Gilchrist agreed to this as did the Cape Government Railways provided that the siting was 85 feet away from the centre line of the railway - which it was. Mr T. T. Watson of the Public Works Department thereafter surveyed the ground.

A balance had to be struck between the Cape Government Railways and the Department for Agriculture regarding the fencing off of certain areas and the public right of way to free access of the beach facilities. These included the use of a railway gate.
The design of the first stage of Part One to Dr Gilchrist’s specification was undertaken by Mr A. G. Howard, senior architect of the P.W.D., and architect Mr W. G. Greaves with Mr Curry as chief draughtsman. The design was not to be highly ornamental and was to be of stone and of neat appearance.

Adolph Gislingham Howard had arrived in Cape Town from England in 1870, aged 22. He joined the P.W.D. originally as a draughtsman but became senior architect when Charles Freeman, his predecessor, moved to private practice.

In March 1898 tenders were called for, but “due to the state of the building industry” only one tender was received. That was from Mr George Pallett, the price £2098-10s-3d. This was too high and a re-design followed on a much reduced scale i.e. one engine room with one tank. In January 1900 a tender of £615 for builder’s work was accepted by the Secretary for Public Works from Messrs Mitchell and Mackine for what was described as “Marine Station Tank and Tank house”. The building consisted of two ground floor rooms. The tank glass was to be supplied by Pilkington’s of St. Helens, Lancashire.

In the next financial year (1901) £4000 was voted by Parliament to the Department for Agriculture to continue with what was viewed as an important project. Mr A. G. Howard prepared the plans which included a double storey portion and a further single storey. In the Engine Room a “Crossley Oil Engine” was to pump seawater into a large overhead reservoir which in turn would feed the tanks in the Aquarium wherein the marine specimens were kept. There was to be a specimen room which housed glass-tanks in which live specimens such as fish, anemones, crustaceans, etc., were kept. This room would be opened to the public at various hours and would have a turnstile to monitor the attendance (83886 persons had passed through the turnstile by 1912). In addition to the two main rooms (i.e. engine and specimen rooms) there would also be two offices downstairs, one wherein the specimens would be examined and the other where general office work was done. Upstairs there were dwelling apartments which consisted of two rooms, a bathroom and toilet, and a kitchen, all of which had a linoleum floor covering. Here Dr Gilchrist lived. The roof of the building was slate and the foundation cement concrete on solid rock. Tenders for the building work were called for and the successful tenderer was A. Adams, Main Road, opposite Cape
Forage Co., Newlands. His price was £2784. The supply of the machinery, glass, etc, was under a separate contract. The suppliers of the fish tanks and the one-inch thick plateglass for these tanks were Messrs Chance Bros. & Co. of Birmingham. (described as having the very best British glass).

The building contract was for a six month delivery period but due to delays through bubonic plague all P.W.D. contracts were granted exemptions and extended. Adams did a ‘good job’ according to Mr William J. Steele, the resident clerk-of-works. Extras per the contract were £449-4s-6d which were agreed to by the quantity surveyor Mr Thos. H. Hitchin of 43, St. George’s Street, Cape Town. All in all it was a most successful contract with little incident and by 1902 the laboratory was in full working order.

The first and only attempted break-in occurred on Friday 14 March 1902 when the caretaker William Simons, who had missed work the whole of that day, arrived at the Station at 7pm to find himself locked out. (The premises were locked at 5.20pm and vacated). He took a ladder and threw four bricks over the fence. In the process he broke four windowpanes, a pivot window and fifteen 6-inch tiles. A brick also hit the glass-tank window making a mark but causing no damage. He was sentenced in the Simon’s Town Magistrate Court to a fine of £5 or one month in jail. He chose the one month in jail saying he had no friends and no money.

By 1904 the utility of the work done by Dr Gilchrist was being recognized especially in his research for new fishing banks as well as into the behaviour pattern and movement of fish stocks. Most of his samples were taken from False Bay where a cable thermometer and tubes extended over 100 yards off the rocks at St. James.

In 1904 a Select Committee was appointed to evaluate Dr Gilchrist’s research and recommended ‘the strong desirability of him continuing with his investigations’.

This followed in 1905 with considerable improvements to the Station which included new pumps and the building of a new tankroom (Contractor Messrs Elys and Co.) Five additional tanks were installed at a cost of £380 of which Sir Abe Bailey donated £100 to the Secretary for Agriculture. The planting of American vines around the aquarium was also undertaken.

In 1905 Dr Gilchrist was appointed Professor and Head of the
Zoology Department at the South Africa College, which in 1918
became the University of Cape Town where his position was
confirmed.

In 1907 owing to a financial depression great difficulty was
experienced in providing funds for the maintenance of the Marine
Laboratory and support which was independent of the Government
was necessary. Rather than close the aquarium the Minister for
Agriculture arranged for the laboratory to be handed over to the S. A.
Museum with a special annual Government grant of £240 for the
working and upkeep of the aquarium. The Museum now conducted its
own research and Sir Abe Bailey again donated handsomely and a
further three large tanks were acquired. In 1907 the Station received
electricity for the first time from the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg
Municipality's Royal Road power station in Muizenberg. The use of
electricity greatly improved the performance at the aquarium as
irregular manually operated pumps could be replaced by electric
pumps.

In November 1911 the Sea Fisheries fell under the control of the
Provincial Administration. The Museum take-over of the aquarium,
although well intended and done with great public spirit, had not been
successful and in 1912 the Administrator of the Cape Sir Frederic de
Waal, requested General Smuts, then Minister for the Interior, to allow
the Provincial Administration under a Fishery Advisory Board to take
over and run the research projects at the aquarium. Sir Frederic's
request was agreed to by General Smuts and from May 1912 the
Provincial Administration was responsible for the aquarium.

In 1913 the aquarium received a telephone which helped Professor
Gilchrist considerably and in November that year he wrote to the City
Council and pointed out the increased number of visitors to the
aquarium and asked if the Council would consider a donation of an
exhibition tank for public viewing. This was finally realized in April
1915 when three additional tanks were provided. Mr J. Hackett was the
successful tenderer at £155. Regrettably there was a delay of 4 months
in installing these tanks as the glass was found to have been damaged
in transit from England.

In 1914 the Cape Town City Council entered an agreement with the
Provincial Administration to use sea water for street watering. The
Council was to install the necessary cast iron pipes and the electric
pump. The Council would also supply free electricity to the aquarium for the period that the Council used the water, on the understanding that the Provincial Administration would maintain the pump.

By 1922 this facility was no longer required by the Council as the Steenbras Water Scheme had come on line and there was an abundant supply of water for street watering. Added to this was the fact that all the streets were now tarred and the need for regular street watering had been reduced. The Council then rented the pump, which had been used for keeping the tanks filled with sea water, back to the Provincial Administration for an annual fee of 5% of the cost of the pump (£120). The Provincial Administration had to maintain the pump at its own cost. This arrangement was to last ‘indefinitely’ but ceased with the closure of the aquarium.

In 1916 Professor Gilchrist married Elfreda Raubenheimer and they lived at “Sea Spray” (No. 105 Main Road) which Gilchrist had bought from Judge (later Sir) Malcolm Searle on 9 March 1912. (D.T. 1605) Here they raised a family of two children.

Between 1916 and 1924 no further development occurred at the aquarium besides continual maintenance and upkeep. In 1925 more shelving and lockers at a cost of £174 were purchased for marine specimens.

In June 1926 Professor Gilchrist resigned because of ill health. He returned to residence at the aquarium, having sold “Sea Spray” on 8 December 1924 to Reginald Parker (D.T. 11211) He died of tuberculosis in October 1926 at the age of 60 - a sad and lonely death as his family had left him to go up-country to avoid catching the disease. Professor Gilchrist was, widely recognized for his outstanding work at St. James and was regarded as the founder of Marine Biological Research in South Africa.

The research at the aquarium was then continued by the Fishery Survey Committee under the Directorship of Dr Cecil Von Bonde, M.A., Ph.D., who was Chief Fisheries Adviser to the Cape Provincial Administrator. He was appointed by the Provincial Administrator on the 18 December 1926 at a salary of £250 per annum with the use of the living quarters at the aquarium. Rent was £5 per month and he would also pay 7/6d per month for sanitation and water. No mention was made of electricity in Dr Von Bonde’s contract but by 1933 this was included in his expenses. A separate meter was installed and
immediately on being charged this extra expense Dr Von Bonde requested the Provincial Administration to rewire the entire premises because the wiring had become antiquated. It had not been upgraded since the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality had supplied electricity in 1907. This request was granted.

In 1929 various improvements, which included a library and improved laboratory facilities, were completed after a report from the Director for Fisheries Survey stated:

"The Executive Committee of the British Association realize the importance of marine biological research and that a modern marine biological laboratory should be set up in South Africa. The station at St. James therefore needs upgraded facilities and accommodation of specimens for visiting scientists to perform research work."

By 1934 little money was forthcoming from the Provincial Administration for the upkeep of the aquarium and Von Bonde recommended that the administration of the station be handed over unreservedly to the Department for Commerce and Industry. The property would, however, remain vested in the Union Government. This was done on 1 April 1935 which resulted in all fishery research facilities being accommodated under one administration.

Dark clouds were now appearing on the horizon for the aquarium. Maintenance now seemed to be almost non-existent. The Provincial Administration incurred ever-increasing costs of repairs to the pump, the equipment, the roof, the skylights, and the walls. Losses over the past few years had increased and the income did not cover even the caretaker's salary, let alone the costs of repairs, maintenance, water and electricity. Dr von Bonde found his residence at the aquarium untenable. Breakdowns and leaks were the order of the day.

The Cape Town City Council gave an annual grant of £50 for the purchase of new live specimens and the keeping of the grounds around the aquarium neat and tidy. This, however, was 'a drop in the ocean' as costs continued to mount and towards the end of 1937 it was decided to close the aquarium and move the equipment, specimens and library to Sea Point, where a more convenient site was established with fewer maintenance problems.

Thereafter the Union Government hired out part of the premises to artist G. W. Pilkington as a studio. During the Second World War the aquarium became the headquarters from 1940 to 1946 of the National
Volunteers’ Brigade for the South African Coastal Defence Corps. One of the Brigade’s duties was to monitor the ‘black-outs’ along the coast and to ensure that they were properly enforced.

The City Council bought the aquarium from the Union Government in 1950 for £3550 for the purpose of establishing a pavilion/tea-room. It is of note that, when this land (known as Land Aqua) was made over in 1951 to the Cape Town City Council by the Department for Lands, strict conditions were attached which entrenched its public use, i.e. the forbidding of development of “hotels, industrial buildings, flats, dwelling houses or shops” but at the same time not precluding “a pavilion, tea-room or some other amenity” (Crown Grant No. 95, 10 July 1951).

The pavilion/tea-room scheme never got off the ground and five years later, on 29 July 1954, the City Council adopted a recommendation from the Amenities Committee that the aquarium, now in a state of disrepair, should be demolished forthwith and in due course the area be laid with lawns and sun-shelters. Messrs Beck and Smit of 1, Dunkley Street, Cape Town, were the successful tenderers for the demolition of the aquarium. Their price of £365 was accepted and the job was signed off by the City Engineer’s Department as complete on 25 February 1955.

Thus ended the life of one of the most important buildings that ever graced the False Bay coast.
CHAPTER 8

Beaches

St. James Beach

St. James Beach was originally called Bickersteth’s Beach after the well-known surgeon Dr Henry Bickersteth (1813-1862) (see Personalities, Chapter 15). The bathing pool was constructed over a period of time from 1911 to 1923, whereafter normal maintenance and upkeep followed. Once a Khoi Fish trap, the rocks had been originally separated and formed into a rough pool for catching fish on the receding tide.

In 1911 W. P. Schreiner, a local resident and former Premier of the Cape Colony, petitioned the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality with some sixty residents’ signatures to build a ‘proper pool’ in view of the increased popularity of St. James Beach. What exactly was meant by a ‘proper pool’ is a little uncertain but a construction contract was signed with builder Chas. McGhie and the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality for the construction of a pool. What McGhie did can only be assessed by what followed in later years. There was no south wall. Apparently he built the north wall out of concrete and constructed a rough deepend wall out of rocks and boulders. McGhie’s costs were mainly spent on clearing rocks and placing them at the deepend. He noted in his report that he had considerable trouble especially with the high tides.

Improvements followed almost immediately after the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality unified with the Cape Town City Council. In November 1913, just two months after unification, the north wall was raised another 24cm by adding a quarry-stone coping (today’s present height) and a wall was constructed for the first time on the south side. This was lower than the north wall. The old sluice valve was also replaced.

No sooner had this work been completed than a problem developed with shifting sands when the high tide receded. The beach became denuded of sand which now built up in the pool between the two walls and the rocky deepend. There was no depth to the pool, it just filled with sand. Expert opinion was sought and it was found that the backwash between the north and south walls was being channelled between these two walls, and being now very strong, it pulled the
beach sand into the pool. Various suggestions were made, but the final solution was the construction of an auxiliary concrete wall replacing the existing rock structure at the deepend and linking the deepends of the north and south walls. This solid structure prevented a backwash and reduced the problem to such an extent that this wall was again reinforced in September 1923 (cost £150-11s-7d). Bathers could now enjoy an adequate depth of water through both high and low tides. It is of note that all work on the pool after 1913 was completed departmentally by the Cape Town City Council.

The names of bathing box owners at St. James in 1917 after the pool improvements read like the “Who’s Who” of St. James (there were 12 double bathing boxes and 42 single boxes). It appears that anybody of any importance seemed bent on acquiring a bathing box. The terms of acquisition were:-

“You applied for a site and signed a contract to build the bathing box at your expense to the City Engineer’s design. Thereafter you were allocated a site, which would be pointed out to you by an officer of the Cape Town City Council. You agreed to one month’s notice should the Council wish to remove the box.”

Rental was £1-1s-0d per annum payable in advance on 1 November. The maximum front footage for a single box was six foot and for a double twelve foot.

The box was the property of the owner regarding upkeep, and there appears to have been no problem selling the box to a third party. There were no cases on record of the Council giving one month’s notice to remove the box, so who bore what costs is unknown.

The Council constructed slab footpaths between the rows of boxes in 1925 at a cost of £98.

The layout of the bathing boxes altered dramatically over the years. In 1916 there were 41 boxes: 11 double and 30 singles. The layout of the boxes was -

On the right hand side on entering the beach (Kalk Bay end) - 5 doubles, 2 singles.
On the left hand side (Muizenberg end) - 6 doubles and 28 singles.

The bulk therefore lay on the north end of the beach. There were two rows. The front row started in line with the subway and the pool. On the Kalk Bay end there was one row.
Over the years boxes were washed away and rebuilt and by 1949 the layout had changed completely. There were now 80 boxes (of which 20 were doubles). On the Kalk Bay end there were no less than three rows while on the Muizenberg end the two rows remained. Gradually Council began to buy up unused and damaged boxes.

Today the beach is more open and clean as waves can extend up the beach at the Muizenberg end which is free from all bathing boxes. On the Kalk Bay end there are only 12 singles and 2 doubles (this after a fire in December 2000 which destroyed 10 boxes).

The phase of owning bathing boxes has long passed from those heady days when one simply had to have a box if you were anyone of standing. Today’s more casual beachwear has led to less demand for a bathing box.

In 1931 the first beach church services were started at St. James under the banner of the CSSM (Children’s Special Service Mission). In November 1924 Mr Frank Millard came out from England to organise these services, which had originated as far back as 1868 when the movement started in Llandudno, North Wales.

Mission workers were housed by local residents over a period of two weeks in the school holidays (January 2 to 16) and services were conducted each morning on the beach. The final morning service culminated in the building of a huge sand castle from which the service was conducted. For many years Dr A. P. Moore-Anderson let his home in Jacobs Ladder at no cost to the CSSM workers. It was an impressive movement which attracted many local children with games, hikes and braaais. Sadly, by the mid 1960s the movement had ceased to operate (see Chapter 9, CSSM).

The Cape Town City Council’s Improvements and Parks Committee installed fresh water taps on the beach in 1931, as well as three benches on the grass common which were taken from the Muizenberg Pavilion. The benches were concreted in as the three previous benches had been thrown into the sea by ne’er-do-wells.

There was also a problem with the sand at St. James beach. It had become discoloured and grey along the railway wall from the ash fallout of the steam trains and the prevention of the free flow of seawater at high tide by bathing boxes and the concrete footpath on the Kalk Bay end of the beach. A contract was negotiated by Council with the railways to dump truckloads of sand from Fish Hoek beach to
rectify this problem. The budget for this work was not to exceed £70.

In 1932 two fatal accidents occurred on the Main Road at the entrance of the subway to the beach. First a lady and then later a child were knocked over by cars when leaving the beach. This resulted in the Council erecting a steel tubing frame 6foot x 3foot to stop people running directly onto the road. Housed within this steel frame was a wooden board marked “Mind the Motorcars”.

In 1933 toilet facilities for Ladies and Gents were built. This was as a direct result of the increase in the number of visitors to the beach and the Council instructed that no further letting or building of bathing boxes would be permitted until suitable sanitation had been completed. Previously only the station toilets had been available which proved far from satisfactory.

During 1933 lights were installed on the common between the railway station and the sea and the whole area was grassed, thanks to the efforts of Mr Harry Orpen, who lived at “Melrose” on the Main Road. Efforts to have the manataka hedge removed from the railway property and the common extended to the platform failed, however, as the Council was unable to secure a lease from the railways. (This problem was only overcome c. 1970).

A policy was adopted by Council during the 1940s and onwards to acquire all privately owned boxes and place them under the administration of the Council as and when these boxes became available for purchase. The Council would then let these boxes at £10 per annum. The average repurchase price between 1940 - 1948 was £25 a single box and £50 a double box. This was later increased to £40 and £80 respectively in the 1950s. This Council control over the boxes ensured better management regarding painting, maintenance, and demolition when unsafe or damaged.

During the War, 1939 - 1945, there was mayhem with the bathing boxes on St. James Beach. Messrs J. B. Wiley and R. van Reenen and Advocate W. F. R. ‘Bill’ Schreiner called a meeting of all bathing box owners on 15 October 1945 and forwarded a letter to the Council which included the following: “up to the start of the War the Council through its officials exercised a certain amount of control over the beach with the result that bathing box owners enjoyed a certain amount of protection of their property. Since the start of the War, the withdrawal of any semblance of control has resulted in serious damage
Cast-iron cauldron for boiling whale blubber, St. James station platform (left). Note the bandstand c. 1902.

St. James Beach c. 1920.
to, and in many cases, partial destruction of many of the boxes”. The letter continued on about how overcrowding of the beach had led to chaos, lack of control and damage to property. The meeting requested that a beach constable be appointed by Council to control the behaviour, the lighting of fires (the fuel for which was taken from the boxes), the erection of shelters, the sleeping overnight on the beach, the drunkenness, urinating and breaking of boxes, which continued unabated without proper policing or control. The letter resulted in the appointment of a beach constable and thankfully the practice of policing has continued to this day.

The fall in the number of bathing boxes from 80 in 1949 to 14 in 2001 has also solved, to an extent, the damage to bathing boxes. There are few left to damage! but control of public behaviour and cleansing, as in the 1940s, still remains a problem.

Danger Beach

Although there was a fair probability that Danger Beach was used as a terminus for the loading of Dutch East India Company lighters, when the sea was calm, for transport over to Simon’s Town, it was mainly Fishery Beach in Kalk Bay that was used for this purpose (from c. 1742 to 1795).

Danger Beach, however, was used extensively at the height of the whale-catching boom as a beach onto which the whale carcasses were hauled for processing at the “Villa Capri” and “Pentrich” Whaling Stations (1814-1852). The stench of boiling blubber and rotting carcasses eventually resulted in the beaching of these carcasses being moved to a more uninhabited shore, namely Muizenberg beach east of the Sandvlei outlet. Metal rings embedded in the rocks at Danger Beach were used to secure the whale carcasses and were visible until c. 1950, after which they finally corroded and disappeared.

Danger Beach was the scene of a bathing disaster which is still remembered today in the form of a baptismal font in the Holy Trinity Church, Kalk Bay. It occurred on 7 January 1874.

John Nicholls, manager of the Colonial Bank and co-founder of the Standard Bank of Cape Town, had taken his three daughters to Danger Beach to paddle in the waves. A large wave engulfed the girls and the backwash pulled them out to sea. Their voluminous dresses kept them afloat while Mr Nicholls, a non-swimmer, rushed along the road to
Kalk Bay pleading for help. A group of fishermen, realizing his plight, set off from Kalk Bay in a boat to rescue the girls. They miraculously saved one daughter, Edith, but the other two sisters, Emma and Madeline, drowned. Despite their drowning, John Nicholls rewarded the fishermen handsomely. Later that year he and his three brothers donated the memorial font which is still used today, some 126 years after the disaster.

Danger Beach has remained basically unspoilt and is a wonderful asset to the local community. There were, however, two attempts to commercialize this beach, both of which, thankfully, failed.

The first attempt was in July 1927 when several residents led by Mr A. E. Precious requested the Council to investigate the construction of a swimming pool at Danger Beach. Councillor Matthews followed this request through to the Chairman of the Improvements and Parks Committee. A survey was carried out and an estimate of cost was given by the City Engineer to the Chairman of the Improvements and Parks Board Committee. Three schemes were submitted, a bathing pool 100 foot wide £2410; 125 foot wide £2685; 150 foot wide £2950 plus 100 concrete cubicles, £4550. Total cost to be included in the estimates £7500. Council, under a motion from Mr Abe Bloomberg, rejected this as 'far more urgent work needed to be done', and thankfully all funds allocated for this project were deleted.

However, in 1933 Mr Frank French suggested a circular pool, similar to that in Durban, which was to be cemented to the two extreme rock outcrops. Drawings were presented, but again thankfully nothing happened and Danger Beach has remained unspoilt to this day bar the mountain water disposal pipe which has been there from c. 1920, and the widening of the railway line which, in 1927 after electrification, reduced the sandy shoreline by some eighteen feet.
Memorial Font to Nicholls sisters. Holy Trinity Church Kalk Bay
CHAPTER 9

The Children’s Special Service Mission (CSSM)

Seaside Services on popular beaches had become widespread in Britain during the latter half of the 19th century, especially after Josiah Spiers started working informally with children on the beach at Llandudno, North Wales, in 1868. Many of these were organised by Spiers’ new organisation, the Children’s Special Service Mission. Towards the end of the century the CSSM was joined by a daily Bible reading society, later to be known as the Scripture Union. The Scripture Union was soon active in South Africa in churches and in schools. In the early 1900s a number of beach missions were held by various folk from the Cape to Durban and in the summer of 1911 and subsequent years there were missions on the beaches of Muizenberg, Kalk Bay and Fish Hoek. In August 1923, a group of prominent Christians, including Dr A. P. Moore-Anderson, formed a CSSM Committee for South Africa to raise funds and to organise beach services at various places around the coast. A staff worker was appointed and on 17 November 1924, Mr Frank Millard arrived in Cape Town. He had been educated at a British public school, had done a spell at Oxford University and had had Bible training at the Glasgow Bible Training Institute. He worked very hard to establish CSSM and Scripture Union throughout South Africa, and not only at the coast. He was very talented in his dealings with young people and soon became loved by young and old alike. His nickname was ‘Hippo’.

By 1928 he had established a CSSM programme of summer activities at Fish Hoek that included morning beach services, beach competitions, such as sand modelling, fighting the tide with sand castles, beach sports in the evening for teenagers, and other activities. He had a team of young workers from Cape Town and other parts of the country including university students. There was also a leader for work with the girls and a “housemother” to care for the team.

In 1931 he left Fish Hoek in the hands of other leaders and led a team, including Dr Moore-Anderson, to start a similar programme at St. James. The team was housed at the holiday home of Dr Moore-Anderson, “Leighton”, in Jacobs Ladder. It was used for many subsequent years and became well known to the young people of St. James and Kalk Bay. Morning beach services were held at the southern
end of the beach using the rocks as a pulpit and seats. Games were held on the common near the station and on Danger Beach. The missions were run for about two weeks every January and had a great influence over children and teenagers in St. James and Kalk Bay. An important feature was the annual Birthday Service when a large sand pulpit was built in the middle of the beach and decorated with flowers, some of which formed a short Bible text. This service usually drew a large crowd of children and adults, including many visitors from "up the line."

By 1940 Frank Millard had returned to running the Fish Hoek mission and his place at St. James was taken by Paul Reed, a lawyer, who had come out from England to join the staff of the CSSM. He was well-loved by all who knew him and was well-known for his conjuring tricks. There was always a close contact between the St. James and Fish Hoek missions, and there was an annual 'rag-rugger' match between the teenage boys and a puddox match between the teenage girls. There was also an annual pilgrimage to the Boomsjang caves as well as many other activities.

The annual missions continued until c. 1965. A number of leaders over the years included Phil Gammon, Steyn Krige, Roy Davey, Eddie Prest, Stan Fish and Murray Hofmeyr. By this time the CSSM-Scripture Union had begun to change their emphasis and to concentrate on work in schools and the running of camps and conferences throughout South Africa which also included their literature programmes.
CHAPTER 10

St. James Station

The railway reached St. James in March 1883 and two months later the train service opened as far as Kalk Bay. Known as ‘The St. James Church Halt’ trains stopped here ‘on request’ until the halt was upgraded in 1890 and appeared on the Cape Government Railways’ timetables as “St. James’s”. It now was a compulsory ‘stopping place’ and enjoyed the luxury of a raised platform and a shed.

As St. James became more popular so the demand for better station facilities grew. By December 1898 it became imperative that a station master be appointed. This entailed finding suitable accommodation. After a lot of arguing within the Cape Government Railways circles as to whether the station master’s quarters should be rented or built, it was finally resolved to build quarters. It was argued that no suitable station master could be attracted without decent quarters, so the lobby for building won the day. An allocation of £1750 was duly made in the House of Assembly by the Chief Traffic Manager and was included in the Loan Bill before Government.

In April 1898 J. Clewes requested a siding for his quarry on the Kalk Bay side of St. James station. This line would in fact cross the Main Road. The C.G.R. acceded to his request, but stated that he would have to bear the cost of the extension which was £300. Clewes declined to pay this and the proposed siding never materialized.

There was a problem at St. James station during 1898 and this involved the period of time trains stopped at the station. 15-20 seconds was allocated, but this was often insufficient time for parents with children and baggage to alight. An incident involving Mrs Westhofen and her four children brought matters to a head and her husband - the investigating engineer of the Kalk Bay breakwater scheme - raised ‘all hell’ with the Cape Government Railways. After a top-level enquiry all guards were advised to be more careful especially where children were concerned, and the time of stoppage at St. James was extended.

Public impatience at the slow progress in improving facilities at St. James station was expressed in letters to the “Cape Times” in 1910; especially complained about were the poor condition of the station and the condition of the ladies’ waiting room which was often used for storage. (this was strongly repudiated by the C.G.R.). The costs for an
open waiting-shed and a booking office were added to those of the station master’s quarters. In 1901 a building, similar to the one at Plumstead Station, was provided for the station master on the site of the old Catholic Church which was at the south end of the station. The old church boundary walls were not demolished but were used to enclose the new building. The station facilities were also upgraded at the same time. The final cost was £605. This was considerably lower than the original allocation as costs had to be severely contained due to a marked depression during the Anglo-Boer War. The proposed quarters as approved on the Loan Bill of 1899 were going to be to a much grander scale and were to be built similar to the station master’s quarters in Cathcart which included six rooms and a kitchen. Cash restraints prevented this design.

On 31 August 1905 an extension of the railway was made in the form of a loop to allow trains to cross while alongside the platform. This was completed at a cost of £121-9s-11d and was 550 feet long between clearance pegs. The loop allowed for an engine and nine coaches to cross. A seaside-raised platform was then built, known as a ‘high-level platform’ and a post-box was installed in the roadside shelter. On 22 May 1907 an overhead bridge was completed at a cost of £307-8s-1d.

The railway area between the seaward platform and the beach was grassed by the Cape Government Railways and declared a recreational area. A bandstand was erected and various bands from ships in Simon’s Town, as well as local bands, played in the summer months to large crowds. This area was also used for firework displays and was popular with ‘day-trippers’ for games and picnicking.

Construction of the new St. James station, which still operates today, was started in March 1918 and completed by 10 July that year. A lay-by roadway in front of the station with an island pavement was constructed at the same time. The cost of drainage and the construction of this island pavement was £180 which was shared equally by the Railways and the City Council. A second station master’s house on the north side of the original station master’s house and alongside St. James station was built in 1920.

Electrification in 1927 meant the removal of the overhead bridge and the building of the station subway.
St. James "Stopping place" c. 1890

St. James Station. Church demolished but the boundary walls remain around Station Master's house c. 1907
CGR Class 7 locomotive passes Heytor Road c. 1915

St. James Station c. 1920
CHAPTER 11

St. James Common
(between the railway line and the Main Road)

This small stretch of ground from today’s electrical substation to “Hamilton House” No. 99 Main Road has had an interesting history.

Initially, in August 1898 the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality under Mayor J. J. Meyer requested that the municipal land between the Catholic Church and “Hamilton House” be utilized for municipal offices, and that the Catholic Church, then on sale from the Diocese of Cape Town, be purchased and converted into a Magistrate’s Court.

The Council duly advertised for objections. It is doubtful whether in the history of St. James there was ever a more emphatic objection. Messrs J. T. Molteno, Stephan Trill and H. R. Anderson, through their attorneys Tredgold, MacIntyre and Bisset, tabled the strongest possible objection linked to immediate Supreme Court action. Such were the feelings of the objectors and the community that the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality dropped the proposal with immediate effect. Mr Sauer, Minister for Agriculture, issued a further report (see Chapter Two, the first Roman Catholic Church) which sealed the fate of this ground in that it should always be free from buildings.

After acquisition of this ground on 6 December 1902 by the Cape Government Railways from the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality (375 sq.rood and 117 sq.feet) it was leased back to the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality at a nominal fee of one shilling per annum for the purpose of a children’s playground and recreational park. The Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality had tried in 1906 to bend the terms of this lease and use this recreational area as a stacking ground for storage of the sewerage and storm water pipes which were being installed along the Main Road. The Cape Government Railways refused permission outright and the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality was forced to lease another piece of ground from the C.R.G. on the Main Road, this time opposite the St. James Hotel. This lease was at a nominal rate, but the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality had to fence off the area 100foot x 30foot at their own expense.

After unification with the Cape Town Municipality in 1913 the main lease of the ground between the old Catholic Church (now a
station master’s quarters) and “Hamilton House” was cancelled and the ground reverted back to the control of the railways. The St. James Lawn Tennis and Recreational Club leased part of this ground in 1918 from the South African Railways, under the following conditions: Rent of ten shillings per annum. Ground solely for tennis courts and recreation. One month’s notice to cancel. No sub-letting or sub-leasing. No claim for compensation for improvement in event of termination of the lease.

This was duly agreed upon and two tennis courts were built later that year. Mr Antony van Ryneveld of “La Rochelle” was one of the founders of the Lawn Tennis Club and he and his family played an active part in the upkeep of these courts as they were all keen tennis players.

The courts remained in play until the 1970s when one court was changed to a carpark. The other court still operates and has recently been upgraded thanks to a kind donation from Mr Kaplan of Cape Gate and Fence and the concerted efforts of Mr Dennis Evennett.

The children’s playground and park towards “Hamilton House” still exists, albeit in a poor state of maintenance and should be upgraded to its original splendour. It was once a source of great attraction and beauty of which the residents of St. James were proud. The Mayor of Cape Town’s Minutes for the late 1920s and 1930 are self-explanatory.

1926 “The grass lawn and borders have flourished very well indeed and the rockery at the top end of this park is coming into its own. The rock plants, aloes and mesembri-anthemums, have made a fine display over a period of four months. This is gratifying in view of the fact that the park is, practically speaking, on the beach. A retaining wall is being built and a new fence erected in connection with the road-widening.”

1927 “The top part of this park has been laid out as a rockery with stone steps made of crazy paving. All the rock used has been specially selected on the slopes of the mountain near by. Red and yellow stones came from Muizenberg Mountain and grey and white from Kalk Bay Mountain. 350 tons of stone have been collected and transported to the site by our own staff and vehicles. The stone used is weather-beaten and natural, which is so difficult to buy and is essential in the making of the rockery. A rustic summer-house has been erected, also two notice boards. Only South African succulents, such as aloes,
The St. James Common. (later children's playground and park) "Hamilton House" (centre). "La Rochelle" (right) before alterations c. 1900
St. James children's playground and park. Summer-house (left) c. 1930

Main Road. "Arcadia House (right) c. 1910
mesembri-anthemums, crassulas, gasterias, kleinias, etc., are being planted and will be much appreciated. The grass lawns planted last year with Kikuyu grass have grown splendidly even during the dry season of the year.”

1929 “This ground has been levelled and trenches and laid out in two large lawns with grass slopes. Good solid paths have been laid down with stone obtained from the Roman Catholic Church authorities at 1s per load which has made a considerable saving in expenditure. The top portion of the ground has been reserved for swings etc., for the children. Rockeries have been built and planted up with mesembri-anthemums, aloes and other native plants, which are hardy enough to stand the sea air. Water has been laid on and the fences repaired.”

1930 “The wall and fence, which held back the completion of the garden, have been completed, and the plants and grasses are doing very well. A few seats have been provided, and are much appreciated.”
CHAPTER 12

Side-Road Construction

The construction of side-roads off the Main Road at St. James was undertaken in two ways. The first and most popular method of initiating the construction of a side-road was to undertake a petition among the owners who had frontage on the proposed road and, provided they had taken transfer of their property, they were entitled to sign the petition. The total lineal footage of the frontage of the petitioners’ properties had to exceed more than half the length of the proposed road required (Section 10 of Cape Municipal Ordinance 1912). The Council then did an estimate of cost inclusive of drainage. This cost was then divided among the petitioning residents. Each resident paid a pro rata share according to his length of footage which abutted the road.

If the road was defined as a “new street” (Ordinance 10 of 1912) then the Council incurred half the cost and the balance was divided among frontage owners on a pro rata basis.

The second method was for the Council to petition the Cape Administrator for funds to build a road. This was a rare occurrence and seemed to have applied only to the upper portion of Jacobs Ladder from the house “Berg-en-dal” to the new Boyes Drive, and to Moselle Road. Some of the roads that were built by the petition method included:

Rodwell Road.

In 1912 the residents of Rodwell Road petitioned the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality to sanction and construct a suitable “hard road” and steps to their properties. (Moselle Road was only built in the 1930s). This the council duly did at a cost of £750 which had to be paid by the residents in one single payment. The pro rata share of the payment was based on the length of each resident’s property abutting the road. The road was gravelled and in later years almost solely maintained by Oscar Thesen. In 1935, however, he, J. B. Taylor and T. M. Findlay petitioned the Cape Town City Council for the road to be extended to the south side to incorporate J. B. Taylor’s new garages at “Lancelevy”. They further requested that the road be tarred and have suitable drainage. This was done by the Council and completed on 26 June 1935 at a cost of £590 which was shared among the petitioners on the usual “frontage-area” basis.
Lower Sandhurst Road to the steps.
This was completed 8 October 1927, at a cost of £1821-5s-8d (of which the Council paid £735 as this was classified as a “new street” under Ordinance 10 of 1912). It included garage access. Petitioners included Capt. Gentry of the St. James Hotel. The work was done by the District Engineer Muizenberg. Previously a temporary “hard-road” (i.e. gravelled) was laid in August 1923 to handle the extensions of the St. James Hotel.

Upper Sandhurst Road.
The steps from the road to Boyes Drive. Petition started by A. Bacon. Completed 1935 at a cost of £315.

Capri Road.
Section Main Road to start of zigzag. Petition 1927 led by Martin Nugent and Georgina Thompson of “Villa Capri”, cost £538-18s-1d. Completed 29 November 1937.
Section zigzag towards Boyes Drive. 8 petitioners. Cost £686-12s-9d plus storm water drainage £102-17s-9d. Completed 1931.
The steps from zigzag to Boyes Drive - 95 steps. Completed cost £45 on request from Mr T.M.C Stevenson.

Hillrise Road.
This is one of the oldest side-roads in St. James and was completed c. 1900 under the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality. In 1909 it was in a poor state of repair and the following year was upgraded on the pro rata frontage basis (then Act 41 of 1899). Six petitioners, including Dr A. Abdurahman (“The Crisis”) and Charles King (“Hillrise House”), signed the petition in November 1909 led by N. J. Parker (“Rushcliffe”).
Hillrise Road was classified by the Cape Town City Council as a “footpath” as it had no vehicular access until it was upgraded in 1930 and again in 1932.
St. James Road.

Main Road to zigzag.

Petitioned in March 1918. Previously a rough road part way up, cobbled and unsuitable for vehicular traffic

Petition signed by

R. S. Plowman 45 foot frontage
Brown 45 foot “
Reihard 90 foot “
T. A. Greenshields 117 foot “

Cost £550-8s-0d.

As it was defined as a “new street” (Ordinance 10 of 1912) half the cost shared by Council, half by frontage owners on a pro rata basis relative to size of frontage.

Zigzag and steps to Boyes Drive.

Commenced 12 January 1926 Completed 13 July 1926

Cost £412-8s-5d


Pentrich Road and steps.

A rough cobbled road to “Pentrich” coachhouse and stables existed, c. 1900 and on 12 April 1916 Council received a petition led by E. H. Bishop and 5 homeowners for upgrading and improvements. Full cost to be borne by owners.

Note: After a petition the City Engineer’s Department always checked that the petition was in order, i.e. that more than half the frontage homeowners had signed it and that they had taken transfer of their property.

Construction was completed in November 1922. Then followed an eight-year lapse before Council requested proportional payment from homeowners. Litigation followed as Cleghorn had sold in the meantime to Muller and he refused to pay, as did Muller. Verdict - Cleghorn must pay.


Ley Road

Lower section. Main Road to steps.

Originally Frederick Mills, c. 1913, had built a paved road at his own expense to his holiday home No. 4 Pentrich Road. Length 135
feet. Used only for his motorcar. A petition in January 1916 signed by Gus Trollip and 11 others requested a road to the bottom of where the footpath (later steps) would start. Strong objection to sharing the costs of this road came from Messrs Frederick Mills and N. K. Prettjohn, who lived at “The Homestead”. F. W. Mills died shortly after the petition and his son agreed to share the costs. The road was also widened at a cost of £70.

**Steps to Boyes Drive.**

The original steps of Ley Road were rugged and uneven and had been constructed by convict labour during the Boyes Drive construction. These steps were then replaced by the Council with proper concrete steps. Started 7 March 1934. Completed 1 September 1934. Work done by Roads and Drainage. Cost £287-19s-4d. Council incurred full expense of the replacement.

The link between the top of Penthinch Road and Ley Road in front of M. Bergh’s home was completed in 1949. Cost £350. Council incurred full expense.

The handrails in Ley Road were installed in March 1957. Cost £220.

**Westray Road** (named after resident Mr Westray Bell). Commonly referred to as Westray Steps.

These steps were built up to Boyes Drive in 1923, the cost of which was shared by Messrs Rose and Phillips in order to gain access to their properties. K. V. Commin, architect, lived in Westray Road.

On 17 March 1935 - at the request of J. S. Phillips these steps were upgraded.

**Leighton Road.**

Mr T. W. Buissinne of “The Moorings” Leighton Road tried in 1921 to have the upper section of Leighton Road at the entrance to Mentone Road closed to vehicular traffic by placing two posts in the middle of the road. This was done specifically to avoid cruelty to animals as the gradient was too deep for a horse and cart and many drivers thrashed their horses as they struggled to climb the upper portion of Leighton Road.

Ethel Harbittel (no access would mean decrease in property value). Mr Cummings (intended to put up motor garage), as did Mr Le Sueur. All objected most strongly - much correspondence. Council
abandoned the idea on 23 April 1921.

During the administration of the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality, Leighton Road was called Buissinne Road after the aforementioned attorney, W. T. Buissinne, who lived on the corner of this road. His influence persuaded the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality to improve this road between his home and “Cloete’s Cottage” on the opposite corner. The original cobbled road has now been turreted over and the name was changed, c. 1920, to Leighton Road.

Mentone Road.

In January 1922 Messrs W. Gilchrist, J. Quail and A. T. Babbs requested the Council to name the unnamed road off Leighton Road ‘Mentone Road’. This Council did. A year later in July 1923 eight petitioners (including the above three) requested the upgrading and kerbing of Mentone Road, stating that its condition was shocking to say the least. Council inspected the road and gave an estimate of £400, but this amount was not authorized, so no progress was made.

In July 1927, four years later, a new petition was sent to Council and a modified design with an estimated cost of £264 was approved. This work was subsequently undertaken by the District Engineer. It was started on 7 July 1928 and completed 17 November 1928 with a final cost of £224-6s-2d.

Castle Road (now Leighton Court Road off Leighton Road).

A petition from Mrs Francis Le Sueur and Captain Gentry on 7 June 1923 requested the Council to take over this road, then known as Castle Lane, and make good. This the Council did and the construction cost inclusive of storm water drainage was £381 which was shared pro rata to frontage by the two petitioners.

D. McNair requested Council on 2 August 1934 to change the name of Castle Road to Leighton Court Road, a name by which it had been known for a number of years. The Council agreed to this in 1935.
Sorrento Road.

On 18 May 1932 John Quail in agreement with Mr Dose and Mrs Hill approached the Council to name the unnamed road off Hillrise Road, Sorrento Road after the name of the home that Sir James Molteno had built. This the Council agreed to.

Jacobs Ladder.

Originally known as "The Steps" it was constructed to the house "Berg-en-dal", some 141 steps up, c. 1890, at the expense and initiative of all the residents who lived up "The Steps". They organized the quarry stone, the building of the steps and a sewerage disposal drain to a large septic tank at the bottom of the steps.

In February 1918 Mr R. van Reenen led a petition of residents to the Council to take over the maintenance of "The Steps" as originally, in 1913 on unification, the Cape Town City Council had treated this as a private "footpath". The Council did an estimate on 26 March 1918 which was Maintenance: £305-10s-0d, Drainage: £39-17s-6d, but followed this with "regret no funds". The residents were 'up in arms' especially as the septic tank had fouled up and was smelling badly. They wanted the sewage transferred to the Main Sewer. Their outcry bore fruit and in 1918 the Council proceeded with eradicating the septic tank (cost £245) and the following year, February 1919, proceeded with improving and upgrading the steps. All encroachments by the frontage owners were remedied.

The upper portion of Jacobs Ladder did not involve a petition. Councillor Brown applied for the Administrator’s sanction (Cape Municipal Ordinance No. 10 of 1912). Plans were drawn and lay open for inspection until 30 July 1927. There were no objections. The Town Clerk advised the Provincial Secretary in the office of the Administrator that the requirements of the Ordinance had been observed and advertised in the press. The cost was £151-16s-11d. The contract commenced on 5 May 1928 and was completed on 11 August 1928. It was charged as a "footpath" and there was no appropriation of costs. The work was carried out by the District Engineer, Muizenberg.
Moselle Road.

This was the only road, other than Jacobs Ladder, that was built on Council’s request to the Administrator. A rough road did exist in the early 1920s, but consent was secured from the Administrator to build a proper road on 7 March 1929. Survey construction plans and reports from Roads and Drainage were submitted to the Town Clerk later that year, but very little happened thereafter due to “lack of funds”.

In a letter to Councillor Dr Abdurahman on 17 July 1934, R. P. Chamberlain complained bitterly about the condition of the road, ‘sand and stone in summer - mud and torrent in winter’. This was followed by further complaints to the Town Clerk in 1935 by Messrs A. G. Toy, S. F. Waterson and G. S. Ronaldson. Against this background Council upgraded and kerbed the road.
CHAPTER 13

Boyes Drive

The idea of a High Level Road from Muizenberg to Kalk Bay (length 4.65km) had been discussed at the council meetings of the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality as early as 1896. A rough plan by Mr Grier of the Public Works Department had also been drawn. Convict labour was proposed to keep costs within the budget. The proposed road was lower than the present Boyes Drive, and was just above the Muizenberg School (now the Police Station). The idea appealed to the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality for within two years a clause was introduced into the sale of municipal land along the proposed route that expropriation could apply within a period of seven years pro rata to the price paid. Progress was, however, considerably delayed as severe financial problems had developed with the laying of the sewage pipes along the Main Road.

By 1913, with the rising popularity of motoring, it soon became apparent to the Cape Town City Council that a scenic route around the Peninsula was most desirable. A survey of the proposed route which included a High Level Road, Muizenberg to Kalk Bay was then undertaken. Previously the only proper route had been the Main Road from Cape Town to Simon's Town and various tracks to Camps Bay, Hout Bay and other outlying areas in the Peninsula.

George Boyes was prominent in the promotion of the Muizenberg - Kalk Bay High Level Road as part of this overall scenic route which was known as the “All Round the Cape Peninsula Road”.

Initial work on the High Level Road commenced on Council owned land at the Muizenberg end at the old Mountain View quarry below a small reservoir which Thomas Stewart had built as part of the piped water scheme from the Silvermine Reservoir.

A work force of 60 men was assembled, being funded from the Provincial Administration’s post-war Relief Works Programme. An initial grant of £400 was made available and by March 1923 a 40-foot wide carriageway 1150 foot long had been cut. The embankment was planted with sour fig as a stabilization measure. A further £478 was granted for the next six-month phase of work through to November 1923.

Full-scale work began in 1924 as a result of the efforts of George
Boyes. By this time the “All Round the Cape Peninsula Road” was nearing completion and the convict labour would be available for work elsewhere. Boyes realized that convicts were the most practical form of labour as they had experience in road building, having been used on other sections of the scenic route around the Peninsula. They were cheap (one shilling per convict per day) and the accommodation at the Slangkop section (now completed) could be moved to the St. James mountainside. This accommodation took the form of the St. James Convict Station and was situated behind the Seahurst Hotel above Kimberley Road. This land was part owned by Miss Minnie Molteno, (daughter of the late Sir Charles and Lady Molteno) with whom a lease was negotiated. The terms of the lease were £7 per month and, on completion, the site was to be levelled behind a retaining wall on the seaward side strong enough to support the building of a house (later the mansion “Petrava”, styled in American Colonial architecture, was built on the site by Admiral Rumble). The St. James Convict Station was purchased by the Council from the Provincial Administration for £400. The expected period of operation was four years.

The convict station housed 200 convicts of which 150 were used on the construction of Boyes Drive and 50 were hired out, with permission of Mr Dyason, the Superintendent of Prisons, to the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Golf Club for the construction of a golf course at Strandfontein (near today’s Sunrise Circle). This was for a period of six months whereafter they were to be used on the High Level Road.

Estimates for the road in 1923 had been set at £32000 for construction and an additional £17000 for kerbs and guttering, tarring the road, and graveling of the pavements. £8000 was allocated for the 1924 phase of work.

Progress from both ends was fast with the rough roads of Clairvaux and Lock (originally Loch) being an advantage at the Kalk Bay end. Detail files of the construction have not yet been located and little is known as to when or where the official opening (if any) took place. The road, however, was open at the end of 1928 and was officially named “Boyes Drive” in honour of the late George Boyes, who had played a leading role in the promotion of its construction.

Council called for tenders on 30 January 1929 for the removal of the convict station and making good the site once the seaward retaining wall had been built as per the lease. The successful tenderer
was City Coal and General Supply Co. which completed the work in
two weeks. Flowering gums above St. James from Ley Road to the old
convict station were planted of which some have survived to this day.

The various side-roads off the Main Road were also extended to
meet up with Boyes Drive.

In May 1947 Boyes Drive (with many other scenic roads around the
Peninsula) was declared a Scenic Drive. This designation placed
restrictions on the height of buildings, walls, fences and gates along
this route in order to protect sea views. At this time, too, the contour
path was constructed as a jeep track primarily for fire control - but it
has never been used in this way. As a walking path it fulfilled the 1904
request by Canon Brooke and others that pedestrian access be provided
onto the mountain.

After the completion of Boyes Drive at the end of 1928 various
schemes were put forward to link the Drive to Tokai in the north and
Fish Hoek in the south. This is still the case today. A small northward
extension of Boyes Drive via the old Westlake Golf Club Road to Main
Road was approved in 1947 and construction took place in 1963. It
cost R330000 and was opened in March 1963. Further extensions both
southwards and northwards are under continuous review.
CHAPTER 14

The Homes of St. James

Many of the homes of St. James have an interesting history not only from an architectural point of view, but also the length of time some of the families have lived in these homes. Although it is beyond the scope of this book to write about the families of St. James it is of note that for long periods many a family lived in the same home. The Wileys lived at “Braeside” for over sixty years, the Orpens at “Melrose” for fifty years, the McLennans at “Coolarty” for over sixty years, the Cochrane at “Cooleen” for over eighty years, and then there are the Williams’ in Sandhurst Road, Keith Macfarlane now in “New Seaford House” and the Mills family at “Pentrich”. Rex Walker lived in Jacobs Ladder for sixty-eight years, while the O’Reillys lived at “Bude” for over sixty years. The Van Ryneveld family lived at “La Rochelle” for near on seventy years and the Findlays lived at “Villa Capri” for over seven generations. Paddy Harrison has lived at “Corriemar” for over sixty-five years while the Gassons have lived in Mentone Road and the Thesens and Felicity Gratton-Cooper (née Pitt) in Rodwell Road for over sixty years. Father Duignam was at the Presbytery for over fifty years, and Abraham Auret lived at his home in St. James Road for over fifty years, as did the Toy family at Seahurst Hotel and “Morning Glory”. These are but a few of the families that spring to mind, no doubt there are many more.

St. James is a good place to live and with the proclamation of no less than ten National Monuments along the Main Road the homes of St. James have received rightful recognition. Many of the homes bear the names of the town from where the owners originated eg. Bude, Ilfracombe, Carisbrooke, Coolarty, Ambleside, Pentrich, Carnoustie, among many others.

A look at a few homes along the Main Road makes interesting reading.

CARISBROOKE No. 2 Main Road

The house “Carisbrooke” was built as a holiday home by Mrs Sophia Jamison in 1879. She was born a Miss Hiddingh in Cape Town in 1822 and was a lady of means (described on her death certificate as a gentlewoman) and she gave generously throughout her life. In 1896 she donated a capital sum of £400 to both the Diocesan College and
"Eastcliffe" No. 16 Main Road c. 1909

Shop at today's No. 20 "Coelnamara" Main Road c. 1905
the South African College for what was to be known at both institutions as the Jamison Prize and the Jamison Cup. This was considered a most generous gift, and by her request the Jamison Prize was to be awarded to the student who excelled best at athletics. This included cricket, rugby and shooting as well as athletics. The Jamison Cup was for the best senior student who achieved the victor ludorum for sport.

She gave generously to the South African College, the forerunner of the University of Cape Town, and her benefactions on the formation of the University of Cape Town in 1918 were mentioned in no less than eleven places.

She was the daughter of Willem Hiddingh and Hiddingh Hall at the top of Government Avenue in the Gardens is named in honour of the family. This was the original seat of the South African College before the formation of the University of Cape Town which in 1929 began moving to Rhodes’ estate above Rondebosch.

She married William Jamison and was a widow at the time of her death. She died on 29 October 1899 at her home in Grave Street (now Parliament Street), Cape Town, aged 77 years and 6 months. She had no children and her estate was valued at £60000 - a considerable amount in those days.

She spent many a holiday at “Carisbrooke” from 1879 until 1893 when she sold the property to William Pocock on 13 December 1893 (D.T. 7140). Pocock was a well-known resident of St. James (see Personalities, Chapter 15) and did extensive alterations to “Carisbrooke.”

On 1 July 1918 Pocock sold his estate which was divided up into 4 lots. Lot 1 was the main house “Carisbrooke”, Lot 2 a vacant piece of ground behind “Carisbrooke”, Lot 3 a vacant piece of north facing ground and Lot 4 - the cottages “Trevonne No. 1 and No. 2”. Everard Digby bought Lot 1, the main house (D.T. 6218), as well as the two vacant plots (Lots 2 and 3), while Professor Snape (see Personalities, Chapter 15) bought “Trevonne Cottage No. 1”, and Mr G. W. Stephen “Trevonne Cottage No. 2”. Digby sold “Carisbrooke” to John and Hannah Hughes on 28 May 1926 (D.T. 5121) and the vacant north-facing Lot 3 to George William Hall on 24 August 1926 (D.T. 8278). Hall later developed the flats “Carisbrooke Court” on this erf, on what was originally a tennis court.
“Carisbrooke” was subsequently sold to Annie Rebecca Bradlow (born Greenberg) on 13 June 1941 (D.T. 5512) and then to Argo Investments (Pty.) Ltd (The Sonnenberg family) whose offices were in Eloff Building, 41, Sauer Street, Johannesburg. During the Second World War “Carisbrooke” was used as a convalescent home for naval rating personnel.

**CORRIEMAR** No. 4 Main Road National Monument 22 February 1991

Alongside “Carisbrooke” lies “Corriemar”. Built by the same Mrs Sophia Jamison in 1879 this was the coachhouse and stables for “Carisbrooke”. The coachhouse and stables were subdivided and bought from Mrs Jamison by William Searle for £505 in 1893 (D.T. 7142). The plot area was 44 square roods and 118 square feet. William Searle converted the buildings into a home. He employed the services of a local builder, W. Delbridge, who had learnt the art of stone masonry in Cornwall, his country of birth. The outer walls of the house are all dressed quarry stone and were recognized recently by an architect as a fine example of the famed ‘Cornwall cut’, in Delbridge excelled. William Searle (b. 1842 - d. 1914) was born in Devon and suitably named his new home “Devon Cottage”. He went insolvent in 1908 and the executors of his insolvent estate sold the property to neighbour William Pocock in September 1908 for £605. Pocock made considerable improvements to “Devon Cottage” and sold it to George William Forrest in 1919 for £3000 (D.T. 14860). Forrest, a true-blooded Scotsman, changed the name to “Corriemar”. Corrie is a Scottish word for circular ridge (hollow) on a mountainside, which in fact does exist behind the cottage, and mar is the abbreviation for ‘mare’ - the sea.

Forrest died in 1928 and his estate sold the property to Leah Cumes for £3310 (D.T. 4816). Gaisford Harrison bought the cottage in 1936 for £3000 from Leah Cumes (D.T. 12621). He bequeathed it to his daughter, Professor Paddy Harrison in 1953 (see Personalities, Chapter 15) and it remains with her to this day.

In 1930 “Corriemar” was used in the season as an annexe to the Breakers Hotel which was under the proprietorship of Mrs A. Levy.

**EASTCLIFFE** No. 16 Main Road

This property in common with those around the area passed
through the hands of Carel William Langerman, Carel George Langerman, Dr Henry Bickersteth, Ralph Henry Arderne and George Sheen Withinshaw, and it was only when William Philip Schreiner (see Personalities, Chapter 15) bought the land in 1902 that “Eastcliffe” was built. Schreiner bought the erf (No. 88239) on which he was to build his home from Henry Smith (D.T. 7882 of 2 August 1902) and the erf in front of his home (No. 88240) from George Gie (D.T. 7927 of 4 August 1902). Schreiner also bought in 1902 the plot of ground on the Muizenberg side of “Eastcliffe” from Anna Gesina Le Sueur (erven 88236/37) (inclusive of a Deed of Servitude D.T. 6023 of 19 June 1902). Here the home “Lynnton” was constructed by his sister. The original design of this home was the same as “Eastcliffe”. William Schreiner must have built “Eastcliffe” soon after receiving transfer of the land on 29 July 1902 as Eric Walker in his book, “W. P. Schreiner, A South African”, states: “Schreiner went down for Christmas to “Eastcliffe” the family’s new summer quarters at St. James whence he and his younger son, Oliver, set out late in March for a long trek down the Garden Route”. In the next paragraph Walker states, “the jaunt to the Garden Route helped Schreiner for a time until early in September 1903 when his mother died”.

Schreiner died in 1919 and the house passed to his son Advocate W. F. R. ‘Bill’ Schreiner, a rugby administrator and Springbok selector. (see Personalities, Chapter 15) He lived here until his death on 13 April 1957. He was a bachelor and the home was sold out of his deceased estate to his younger brother Oliver Deneys Schreiner on 28 June 1957 (D.T. 15435). The home was finally sold out of the Schreiner family on 28 April 1967 when Edith Dean bought “Eastcliffe” for R12900 (D.T. 8423), thus ending 65 years of Schreiner ownership.

**CEOLNAMARA** No. 20 Main Road National Monument 11 May 1984

Further along the road on the corner of Braemar Road lies “Ceolnamara”. This was once the property of timber and hardware merchant George Sheen Withinshaw, who owned five Main Road properties between No. 8 “Condover” and No. 22 “Colwyn’. A building existed on this property which was used by Withinshaw as a store for builder’s plant and material. This caused the Building Survey Department of the Cape Town City Council considerable concern as
the building was in a near permanent state of dilapidation. It was a single storey building of stone with thatched roof, and is thought to have been the original holiday cottage of Dr Henry Bickersteth in the 1850s. (see Personalities, Chapter 15) The external walls were 18 inches thick. It had no ceiling and the doors and windows were in dire need of repair. The floor at the rear was at least three feet below the existing ground level and the south side had a wood-and-iron closet. It was regarded as very unsightly and prejudicial to the properties in the immediate vicinity.

Withinshaw subsequently sold the property to Mr William Robb who demolished the old building and employed the services of architect C. H. Smith to build the home “Ceolnamara” in 1921. C. H. Smith was a well-respected architect. Similar to Sir Herbert Baker he was very interested in Cape Dutch architecture, as is evident in “Ceolnamara”, but his real forte was in the use of reinforced concrete. Here he was regarded as a pioneer, and he specialized in this field as well as improving fire-proofing materials. He had received his practical training with the Royal Engineers and this gave him a sound grounding in the uses of the toughest building materials. He was the architect for the Fletcher and Cartwright building - a landmark in Adderley Street for many years. Another building he designed was that of the Southern Life Association in St. George’s Street. His offices were in Fletcher Chambers, Darling Street, Cape Town.

**COLWYN** No. 22 Main Road National Monument 11 May 1984

On the opposite side of “Ceolnamara” in Braemar Road is “Colwyn”. The erf (No. 88259) was originally part of the property granted to C. W. Langerman (vide Simon’s Town quitrents, Vol. No. 39). This erf formed part of a large property which Dr Henry Bickersteth owned and which Ralph Henry Arderne bought in 1873. Allan Chase Taylor subdivided Arderne’s property and his deceased estate sold this vacant erf to G. S. Withinshaw, the hardware merchant, on 20 May 1901 (D.T. 3545). Withinshaw died on 26 December 1918 and left the property to his daughter Ethel May who was married to William Duncan Taylor, the owner of drapery stores in Wynberg. Here they built the attractive home “Colwyn”. On Ethel May’s death in 1946 the home passed to her daughter Beth Lomberg (D.T. 3256).
ARDERNE’S COTTAGE No. 26 Main Road

On the St James side of G. S. Withinshaw’s property stood “Arderne’s Cottage” which was built by the successful timber merchant R. H. Arderne, circa 1875. The property consisted of one large erf - the coachhouse and stables set slightly back from the Main Road (today No. 26) and the main house (today No. 28) which lies on the Kalk Bay side of the coachhouse and stables. The property was bought by Alan Chase Taylor in July 1896 from Arderne’s deceased estate for £4200. He subdivided the plot into two erven and on his death his executors sold the property on which the coachhouse and stables stood to William Searle (owner of “Devon Cottage”) on 30 November 1901 for £1320. Searle went insolvent and the Norwich Union Life Assurance Society bought the property with the supposed intention of renovating the premises as a seaside resort for their employees. This did not happen and eventually they sold the property to Frank Rhodes, nephew of Cecil Rhodes, in February 1913 for £1300.

In 1915 Frank Rhodes then built the home “Irisville” which he named after his eldest daughter. (Architects: Black and Fagg). On the plot behind “Irisville”, Rhodes built “Esme Cottage” (No. 24 Main Road) which he named after his younger daughter.

“Esme Cottage”, besides modern day alterations, is more or less as it was when Frank Rhodes built it c. 1918, but “Irisville”, after Frank Rhodes death in 1938, underwent alterations in 1942 when owned by Caroline Mendelsohn. Then in 1948 Arthur G. Barlow, a Parliamentarian, employed the services of architects Hubert Roberts and Partners to undertake major additions. The builders were R. H. Morris (Pty.) Ltd. The name of the house today is “Twee Gevels”.

TAYLOR’S COTTAGE No. 28 Main Road

The executors of Allan Chase Taylor had subdivided the erf and now sold the main house, known as “Taylor’s Cottage” to Thomas Herbert Pegram on 20 May 1901 for £1375. Pegram was a director of Wordon and Pegram (later Schweppes) and in 1916 was a founder subscriber and later director of the Kalk Bay Hotel Co. which built and owned the Majestic Hotel in Kalk Bay.

Pegram sold the property to Anne Ball in April 1904 and she subsequently sold it in May 1905 to Harry Orpen for £1400. Harry Orpen was a prominent member of the St. James community and his
name appears many times in the promotion and welfare of St. James. He was the leader in many petitions. He changed the name of the house to "Melrose" and remained the owner for nigh on 50 years.

In April 1922 "Melrose" was gutted by a mountain fire and the architectural skills of Fred Glennie were employed to rebuild the home. He did a fine job and the cantilevered front balcony was one of the many features. The builders were R. H. Morris (Pty.) Ltd. An interesting point was that Frank Rhodes, the neighbour on the Muizenberg side at "Irisville" objected to the building line of "Melrose" when it was being rebuilt. He claimed that it would interfere with his view across the bay to Simon's Town. He requested Council to set the building line further back, but Council refused.

ROCKLANDS No. 38 Main Road, and BLENCATHRA No. 40 Main Road

These properties passed through the hands of the landowners of the mid 1850s i.e. Langerman, De Necker and Dr Bickersteth. "Blencathra" was built c. 1890 by Jacob Pieter Deneys for the Deed of Transfer No. 427 of 9 February 1891 in favour of. Cornelia Wicht makes mention for the first time of 'Land with Building'. This is substantiated by photographs of the period. Subsequent owners included William Derry (1924), founder of the long established picture framers William Derry & Co. Regrettably Derry died in August 1924, enjoying only two months ownership, whereafter the property passed to John Hewat (D.T. 7752) and Eric Nobbs (D.T. 296) and then to Henry Percy Rudd on 31 December 1928 (D.T. 13560).

"Rocklands" enjoyed a similar route. Henry Beard bought the property in October 1888 from John Jenkinson and his deceased estate sold the house to Henry Percy Rudd on 4 May 1929 (D.T. 5533). Rudd owned both homes until his death in 1963 and it was during his ownership (1929-1963) that the 'new' "Rocklands" (architect W. A. Ritchie-Fallon) was built. Rudd demolished the old home (named "Rocklands" - Juta’s Street Directory 1921) and rebuilt a mansion. He, however, kept the name "Rocklands". Rudd was a wealthy resident of St. James and the South African Who’s Who described him in 1929, the year he moved to St. James, as follows:-

"Rudd, Henry Percy, Director of De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd., and Cape Explosives Col Ltd., South West Africa Co.Ltd., etc. born 1868, at Rondebosch, CC. Educated at Harrow, Oxford, and in
Geneva, Switzerland, with a view to entering the Diplomatic Service. During this period he came out to South Africa on a pleasure trip, and decided to forego the Diplomatic career in favour of the Army. He accordingly joined the Cape Town Highlanders, becoming Adjutant, and after serving a probationary period with regular regiments, finally got his commission in the Army, being gazetted to the 1st Royal Scots, with which regiment he served in Malta and in England until 1896, when owing to ill-health he came out to South Africa on half-pay, and subsequently resigned in 1897. On coming to Kimberley he was alternate to the late Rt. Hon. Cecil J. Rhodes on the Directorate of De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd., and on the latter’s death joined the Board as a Director, which position he has retained ever since. He is the eldest son of the late C. D. Rudd, of Ardnamarsham, Argyll, and in 1893 married Mabel, daughter of late Capt. Blyth C.M.G. Imp. Res. CoMr, Basutoland. Mr Rudd is interested in racing and horse breeding, owns and has owned many successful winners. Fond of big game shooting and sport generally. Is an Executive Steward of Jockey Club of South Africa etc., and is in every sense a very keen sportsman”.

COOLARTY No. 42 Main Road

“Coolarty” was built by Rachel Kerr in 1913 and was inherited by her adopted daughter Georgina McLennan in April 1929. Rachel adopted Georgina at the age of five, after her mother Bertha, (Rachel’s sister) died in childbirth in 1892. Georgina transferred “Coolarty” to her son’s name in June 1946 but under usufruct remained here until her death in 1975, whereafter her son David sold “Coolarty”. The history of the property dates back to the early nineteenth century.

On 15 October 1822 Carel Willem Langerman was granted a large tract of land in quietrein along the seafront at Kalk Bay (area now referred to as St. James) by the Colonial Government. In 1825 his son Carel George Langerman bought part of the grant, an area of 21.5 morgen, from his mother who had been widowed some two years earlier. He paid her 18000 guilders. He then proceeded to divide this land into a number of lots. “Coolarty’s” site was part of Lot 7, and on a further subdivision, formed lots 1-3 (Erf 88312) measuring 104 square roods and 24 square feet or 1479 square metres, which were bought by H. H. Gird in June 1841 from Langerman’s insolvent estate (D.T.1) W. G. Anderson bought this property from Gird in 1852 (D.T.
W. G. Anderson was a shipping merchant and agent. His firm was Anderson and Murison, who among other things, were the first, being the agents, to raise the alarm that the ill-fated “Waratah” had gone missing off the Transkei coast. Anderson was born in Sligo, Ireland, in July 1804. He arrived in South Africa c.1834. After his wife’s death in 1862 he never remarried. He had three children: Sarah, Thomas and William. Anderson Road in Kalk Bay is named after Thomas who was a prominent member of the local community having owned “Dalebrook House” for a number of years (1877 - 1893), and having lived at “Quarterdeck” (No. 4 Main Road, Kalk Bay) until his death in July 1930, aged 85.

W. G. never built on the “Coolarty” property. He owned an extensive piece of ground running from the Main Road between Heytor Road and St. James Road up the mountain near where Boyes Drive was to be built. This property included what is today Moselle and Westray Roads. W. G. Anderson died in 1893 at his home in Rondebosch and his estate sold the property (Erf 88312) on which “Coolarty” was to be built to Annie Catherine Hopley, wife of Judge Hopley on 27 March 1894 (D.T. 1414) for £357. Annie Hopley also bought on 25 June 1898 a smaller lot of Municipal land in front of the main erf. This was Erf 88314 (5 square roods and 50 square feet, or 76 square metres total) for which she paid £40. This erf was originally a small tract of Crown Land which reverted to the Kalk Bay Municipal Council in 1897 under the Kalk Bay Municipal Improvement Act. Known as the “Picnic Bush” it ran, more or less, parallel to the Main Road. It was approximately 2.5 metres wide and extended along the front of the properties of Mrs Annie Hopley, Mr W. M. Farmer and Mr W. G. Anderson Jnr. (Today’s 42 - 52 Main Road). Both Messrs Farmer and Anderson, similar to Mrs. Hopley, purchased their portion of the “Picnic Bush” from the Council. Prescription rights for the public to gain access to the mountain stream on Mr Anderson’s property were, however, imposed.

Annie Hopley sold the property (Erven 88312 and 88314) to Rachel Kenny Kerr on 8 February 1911 for £1475 (D.T. 656) It was she who employed the services of architects Hawke and Mackinlay to design “Coolarty”. They were a well respected firm who had, among other buildings, designed the Law Courts Cape Town, the Training College in Queen Victoria Street, Cape Town, and the new Town Hall in
"Melrose" and "Taylor's Cottage" (later "Twee Gewels") c. 1900 Nos. 26 & 28 Main Road

"Coolarty" No. 42 Main Road c. 1920
Johannesburg.

The name “Coolarty” originates from a small village approximately thirteen miles from Longford in Northern Ireland. Known as a townland it was owned at one time by a wealthy English landlord called Bond. His estate in Coolarty was known as Bond’s estate. There was also a gaol on part of this estate, the ruins still exist.

“Coolarty” remained in the McLennan family and in the 1930s the double-storey back building which consisted of a double garage, an outhouse and ground floor store-rooms was built by contractors K. Mann from Fish Hoek. Previously the front gate on the east boundary wall had been the driveway and later the driveway had come off Heytor Road. These were now closed as the entrance to the double garage was from Rodwell Road.

Georgina and Thomas retired to “Coolarty” from Kimberley in 1940. Sadly Thomas died in 1942 shortly after their arrival and Georgina continued to live at “Coolarty” with her son David. She transferred “Coolarty” into his name on 21 June 1946 (D.T. 9536) under a usufruct which remained until her death in 1975.

**ARCADIA HOUSE  No. 44 Main Road**

This property followed the ownership route of G. J. Langerman, C. G. Langerman and then like “Coolarty”, was owned by Henry Gird who bought it for £32 from the insolvent estate of C. G. Langerman on 1 June 1841 (D.T. 1) Gird sold it to William George Anderson on 22 September 1852 for £75-6s-0d (D.T. 182). Anderson held the property for 42 years and his deceased estate sold it on 27 March 1894 to William Mortimer Farmer of the Maynard family of Wynberg for £500 (D.T. 1415). Until then only land had been transferred and it was during Farmer’s ownership (1894 - 1902) that a home with a distinctive tiled turret, was built.

On Farmer’s death in 1902 his estate sold the property with house to the Albrecht family (D.T. 2258 of 20 March 1902). Photographs of the home substantiate these dates. The family and their descendants (daughter Hilda Albrecht married Walter Williams) owned the home until December 1919 when the Williams family sold the home to the widow Elsie Smuts (born Louw) (D.T. 14237). Elsie Smuts died in 1923 and left the home to her daughter Myra Melck (born Smuts). Myra sadly passed away at a young age in 1934. She left the home to
her three minor children, Martin, Pieter and Moira with the proviso that her husband Marthinus Melck had the usufruct of the home until his death or remarriage. The home was named “Arcadia House” after Elsie Smuts’ husband’s farm in Malmesbury. Here he had run a successful business, Smuts and Koch. They were importers of machinery and farming equipment. It appears that the Melck family rented out the premises for most of their ownership as Juta’s Street Directory lists sundry names as occupants (1925 - Mrs B. C Wilson, 1930 - Sir Herbert Sloley, 1935 - Dr Brodziak, 1940 - Miss Peggy Cowl, 1942 - The Mission Home, which remained here until the sale of “Arcadia House” by the Melck family on 31 January 1946 to Ellie Susman (D.T. 24517)).

Sir Herbert Sloley KCMG. was the most eminent of the tenants. He had distinguished himself on the battlefield and received three medals, the last of which was won for services during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902; after a distinguished military career, he was appointed Resident Commissioner of Basutoland in 1901, retiring in 1916.

Ellie Susman sold “Arcadia House” to Archibald and Grace MacLean on 27 October 1948 (D.T. 24517). They owned the home for nearly 20 years. In 1949 the MacLeans under architect E. J. V. Brustmeyer did major alterations which included removing the tiled turret and building a garage and servants’ quarters behind the house. They changed the name of the home to “Roslin” and in 1966 auctioned the property. The successful bidder was Margaret Porter, wife of the motor dealer, Stanley Porter; she bought the home on 30 June 1966 for R18362 (D.T. 9860). She owned it for 30 years and in 1996 sold the property to Brian and Rita Magennis.

“Carnoustie”, No. 46 Main Road, lies on the opposite corner to this home. The ground which was a subdivision of Rodwell Estate (Lot 8) was bought by Mr George Kinnes from a Mrs Hamilton in 1935. Here he built a home to architect K. V. Commin’s design in 1936. He duly named it “Carnoustie” - another of the many examples of naming one’s home after the place of one’s birth.

LANCELEVY (later Rodwell House) No. 52 Main Road

At the turn of the century this area was covered by a cluster of milkwood trees which was known as the “Picnic Bush”. Here many ‘day-trippers’, who enjoyed special railway excursion tickets,
picnicked under the milkwood trees. So popular did this area become that it appeared regularly in the early minutes of the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality as a recognised picnic spot which had to be attended to and cleaned. The trees ran parallel to the Main Road and extended approximately from today's No. 42 Main Road to No. 52 Main Road. When the properties were developed along this section of Main Road, the famous “Picnic Bush” was removed much to the displeasure of the many ‘day-trippers’ and holidaymakers. The first owners of these Main Road properties were Mrs Hopley, and Messrs Farmer and W. G. Anderson Jnr. Hopley’s property became “Coolarty” (No. 42 Main Road), Farmer’s property became “Arcadia House” (No. 44 Main Road), and Anderson’s became Lot 8 of Rodwell Estate which was subsequently subdivided into three erven.

At the end of 1930 J. B. Taylor bought the original home “Rodwell” on subdivision of Lot 1 of Rodwell Estate. This most attractive home was set well back from the Main Road and had an impressive driveway to the house. In February 1934 he requested permission from the Council, under Section 16 of the Housing Act, that he be allowed to demolish “Rodwell” (a home of some 8 rooms) and build “Lancelevy”, a mansion of some 13 living rooms/bathrooms, etc. Permission was granted on 28 February 1934 and after demolition, construction on “Lancelevy” started. It was completed in September 1935.

James Benjamin Taylor (b. 1860 - d. 1944) was a wealthy mining pioneer from the Transvaal. He was a co-founder of the Witwatersrand Chamber of Mines and for many years a Director of leading mines on the Rand.

BELLEMER FLATS  No. 54 Main Road

The Bellemer Flats were built in 1935 under great protest from the residents of Rodwell Estate and a petition, signed by 18 owners of property around Rodwell and St. James Road, was organized by T. M. Findlay of “Hursley”, Rodwell Road. Council found, however, no reason to uphold the petition as the plans for Bellemer were within the terms of the municipal building regulations.

The flats were built by a company registered as Elembee (Pty.) Ltd. The architect was Brian Mansergh and the handover took place in September 1935. The outcry over the building of the Bellemer Flats, however, continued and in 1940 the Plans Committee of the Cape
Town City Council instructed that the building regulations be amended and that the zoning of the St. James area should be for single dwellings only, with a specific height restriction, and that the erection of flats was to be prohibited in its entirety. An appeal against this ruling was immediately made as five flats with garages had been proposed at the corner of Pentrich and Main Roads.

The Administrator upheld the Council’s decision. Thus some four years later, in 1944, when John Rudolph applied through architect W. Allen to convert the corner shop to double storey flats, it was turned down on same basis.

**THE CORNER SHOPS AND “MATCH BOX” Nos. 56/60 Main Road**

The shops and a stable with loft (later “The Match Box”) at the corner of Main and St. James Road were constructed by Mr Benjamin Hugh Hudson. He bought the property in 1903 from the deceased estate of Abraham Aret who had lived on the opposite corner of the road in “Aret’s Cottage”. The property was divided initially into 3 shops, the south shop, the centre shop and the north shop. The centre shop was used from 1908 as a Periodical Court. It sat once a week on Wednesdays and had moved from Lever Road, Kalk Bay, when the hired premises from Mrs R. Fish proved inadequate. The decision to move the Court to St. James, which was more central for persons living in Muizenberg, raised strong objections from the Kalk Bay residents. A petition led Canon Brooke was presented to the Attorney General, but to no avail. The reasons for refusal were:

1. There was a boarding house on the floor above the Kalk Bay Court Room and the noises were often a nuisance.
2. The drain which passed the door of the Kalk Bay Court Room had been broken for some time and the stench was very bad and dangerous to health. The Resident Magistrate’s request for repairs had repeatedly gone unheard.
3. Since establishing the Kalk Bay Court Room the population of Muizenberg and Lakeside had increased considerably and a more central position was required.”

The rent of the Court Room at St. James was £3-10s-0d per month. B. H. Hudson went insolvent in 1910 and Michiel Hiddingh bought the premises from his insolvent estate on 17 November 1910 (D.T. 8245). He was the owner of many hotels including the Kings Hotel, Kalk Bay.
The properties were then managed by his agents, The Colonial Orphan Chamber and Trust Co., which had to make extensive repairs in August 1916 including installing a new door to the side entrance and, in July 1918, replacing a large plate glass window at the front of the Court Room which had blown out in a storm.

In 1917 payment was made on a quarterly basis and the following year the District Engineer of the PWD granted Mr A. Hemmings, who lived opposite the building in "The Nest", the lease of a backroom of the Court, when it was not sitting, for 30 shillings per month. Mr and Mrs Hemmings operated "The Tea Cosy" in the south shop alongside the Court and needed the room for extra tables when serving their teats and cakes. The "Tea Cosy" subsequently became Mr John Rudolphe's grocery and vegetable shop (1941-77).

The Court Room was also available as an election office in local school board elections where a vote had to be taken in the event of a contest.

The Colonial Orphan Chamber and Trust Co. inherited a problem in the management of these shops and "The Match Box", which was then a domestic dwelling behind the shops. In 1903 plans, for what was later to become "The Match Box", had been approved by the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality for the building of a coach house and a stable with loft. These were later converted to domestic dwellings and called "The Match Box". A problem arose in 1919 when the Council started to upgrade and kerb St. James Road. The overhanging balcony and balustrades of "The Match Box" were an encroachment onto the road, albeit they were 'in the air' on the first floor. This then started a long and tedious series of correspondence between the Council and the Colonial Orphan Chamber and Trust Co. The Colonial Orphan Chamber appeared to be unco-operative in agreeing to the Council requirements re. the encroachment, especially when it was 'in the air' and did not effect Council work on the road. Finally it was resolved that the Colonial Orphan Chamber would construct a series of additional reinforcements to the overhang which would substantially strengthen the structure. This was much to the relief of Council who had threatened legal action.

George Stavropoulos took ownership of all three shops and "The Match Box" in 1930 when he bought the premises from Meyer Friedman (D.T. 1125). Friedman had bought the property from Michiel
Hiddingh’s deceased estate (D.T. 838) in 1928. John Rudolpho owned the premises (D.T. 11828) from 1941 to 1977. He and his family lived in “The Match Box”.

Despite a petition led by Harry Orpen in 1928 and signed by over 50 residents of St. James that no shops other than “The Tea Cosy” be allowed to operate along the Main Road from Stegman’s Rus (The Posthuys) in Muizenberg to Millwood Flats in Kalk Bay, the north shop which abutted Bellemer Flats on the Muizenberg side was used as a shoemaker’s shop (1935 - Bantu Boot and Shoe Repairer, 1940 - B. Kalan Boot Repairer), a tobacconist, a ballet school under dance teacher Miss Gené Masters (1942), and finally as a chemist in the 1950s before it combined with the centre shop as an enlarged tearoom. Today the whole complex is a restaurant.

It is of interest to note that in 1930, prior to the building of Bellemer Flats, the shop on the Muizenberg end carried a large advert on the blank wall facing Muizenberg for “Officer’s Mess Cigarettes”.

This led to a strong objection by J. B. Taylor, owner of “Lancelevy”, that this sign was unsightly and unbefitting to a residential area. Council had to seek legal opinion and overruled J. B.’s objection on the basis that the advertisement “was part of the tobacconist’s business” and was perfectly legal per Regulation 194. This did not help an already strained relationship between J. B. and the tobacconist.

**AURET’S COTTAGE** Nos. 62/64 Main Road

On the other side of the St. James Road opposite the corner shops stood “Auret’s Cottage”, home for some 50 years to the Abraham Auret, a leading fisherman/whaler in the False Bay area and part founder of the Dutch Reformed Church in Kalk Bay. (see Personalities, Chapter 15) He bought the property circa 1840 as a young man, with probable help from his father Jeremias Auret, from the insolvent estate of C. G. Langerman. By the mid 1850s he had built his home in which he was to live until his death on 28 January 1902.

Running parallel to St. James Road was Auret’s stable and loft where he stored his fishing gear. It was in this loft that he hid two Boer escapees from the prisoner-of-war camp in Simon’s Town. The British searched Auret’s premises but were unable to find the men hidden among the fishing nets which were hoisted off the floor. They
Jacob's Ladder, St. James, C. P.

"Bude" No. 82 Main Road and Jacobs Ladder c. 1920

"Villa Capri" No. 86 Main Road c. 1900
continued their escape under the cover of darkness and later joined up with General Smuts' forces in Namaqualand. There they sent a message to Auret simply stating, "The shepherd has found his sheep". The loft, now tiled, still stands alongside St. James Road.

After Auret passed away in 1902, aged 83, Thomas A. Greenshields bought the premises (D.T. 15592 of 19 October 1903) which he owned for over forty years until his death in 1943. Greenshields subdivided the property and after renovations, in which he kept the ambience of the thatched roofs, he rented the building alongside St. James Road, originally Auret's stable and loft, and called "The Nest" (No. 62 Main Road), to Mrs A. Hemmings who was a tenant for many years. In the 1940s Mrs Edie Sands converted "The Nest" into a photographic studio.

The main house which lay on the Sandhurst Road side of the subdivided erf was called "St. James Cottage" (later "The Thatched Cottage"). Here Mrs Nell Green was a tenant and here she operated a tearoom in the 1940s. Teas were served on the lawn and the stoep, and in the dining-room in inclement weather.

BUDE No. 82 Main Road National Monument 23 December 1983

This home was known for many years as "Bude". It stands at the bottom of Jacobs Ladder next to the Presbytery and was originally a whalerman's cottage on the original erven that J. H. Muller owned when he operated a whaling station at "Villa Capri" from 1814 to 1836. His son-in-law Robert Langley, an Englishman who had come from America as a whalerman, ran the whaling station until its closure in 1853.

The whalerman's cottage was bought in 1859 from Langley's deceased estate by Michiel Zeeman (D.T. 444). He owned it for 32 years until he sold it to Johan Bruyns in 1891 (D.T. 2045). Bruyns died within six years of ownership and the new owner James Jarvis Bisset owned it from 1897 (D.T. 7220) until he sold it to Henry Wright in 1904 (D.T. 2345). Wright named the cottage "Bude" after his hometown in North Cornwall and sold it to Gerald James O'Reilly in 1916 (D.T. 3938).

In 1917 shortly after buying the cottage Gerald O'Reilly employed the services of architect John Perry (24 August 1917) to convert the cottage into a double storey building with dormer windows in the
thatched roof. The Council conceded to the use of thatch with a fair
degree of resistance and insisted that it be incombustible. Perry agreed
to torch the thatch on the underside to ensure it became relatively fire
retardant. The upstairs alterations included three new bedrooms.

On Gerald O’Reilly’s death in 1963 the home was transferred to his
sons Francis (‘Ponty’) and Jack and was sold in 1977 after sixty-one
years in the family.

**VILLA CAPRI** No. 86 Main Road - the old whaling station. National
Monument 23 March 1979.

It was only after the Second British Occupation (1806) that whaling
in False Bay became an established commercial enterprise, and ranked
only behind agriculture and wine-making as the most profitable
industry in the Cape Colony.

Initially Seaforth Beach, Simon’s Town, was the site of the early
stations but as the population of Simon’s Town increased so did the
outcry against the stench and smell of boiling blubber. This caused the
industry to relocate. The northern end of Kalk Bay (now St. James)
was chosen as it was away from the small fishing hamlet, and the
sandy beach (Danger Beach) was ideal for hauling up the carcasses.
c.1950 there were still a number of metal rings attached to the rocks of
Danger Beach where whales were secured and cut up at low tide.

It was here that whalerman and entrepreneur Johan Heinrich Muller
set up his whaling operations. Muller had received two large grants of
land in quitrent from the Cape Colonial Government. The first grant
was on 4 April 1814 and on this land he constructed a whaling station
(later “Villa Capri”); the second grant on 15 October 1822 was for
land on the Kalk Bay side of the land first granted and here he built a
second whaling station (later “Pentrich”).

The size of Muller’s grants was considerable and when combined
formed a triangular-shaped plot on the mountain side of the Main
Road. The plot ran from today’s Quarterdeck Road diagonally up the
mountain to the current contour path and vertically down in a straight
line from the apex to the Muizenberg side of what was later to be the
“Star of the Sea Convent”.

Muller was a fisherman and whaler. In 1812 he advertised for eight
“work slaves” for his whale factory (premises unknown) and he built
the ("Villa Capri") whaling station circa 1814 after receiving the quitrent grant. The station was located on level ground directly in front of an underground mountain stream which formed a natural spring. The long cellar under the house could have housed at least two whale boats during the off season. Circa 1920 a pile of whalebones was still evident behind the house. The house ("Nunsacre") opposite "Villa Capri" on the Kalk Bay side was built on the site of the whaling station stables. The original name of this house was "Ramleh" when owned by the Willmott family. Ramleh was a suburb in Cairo where Edward Willmott lived when he worked for the Eastern Telegraphic Co. On the Muizenberg side of the whaling station up what was later known as "The Steps" (now Jacob's Ladder), there were a number of whalers mens' cottages. It was from here that observation points were set up to sight whales in the bay. Thus a small complex of buildings was situated around the central station.

J.H. Muller after consolidating his two grants divided them into various lots. Lot 2 on which the whaling station stood was approximately 1,7 morgen. Muller died in 1841 and his estate sold off the whaling station to F. J. Kotze who owned it for 3 months before selling to James Ellis who in 1844 sold it to Muller's son-in-law Robert Langley for £112. By 1850 there was increased pressure from the residents of Kalk Bay to have the whaling industry moved. The same reasons as previously given by the Simon's Town residents were quoted, namely the stench of the rotting whale carcasses and sickening smell of boiling whale blubber. Muizenberg, east of the Sandvlei estuary, was an acceptable alternative as it was well away from any homes. This caused Robert Langley to cease all whaling operations. He was not prepared to move to a distant uninhabitable area. In 1853 he closed the whaling station, retired and advertised for sale "two copper-fastened whale-boats, harpoons and other equipment, two keel-boats, salting tubs, anchors and other articles."

After Langley's death in 1859 the whaling station, which Langley had converted into a residence, was placed on the market. It is not certain whether Langley ever lived in this residence. It is more likely that, after closing the station in 1853, he converted it into a homestead and then let the premises. The reason for this assumption is that Langley was a wealthy man and lived in Kalk Bay prior to the closing of the whaling station (he certainly would not have lived by choice
next to the whaling station) and his home in Kalk Bay was included in the assets of his deceased estate.

The residence then changed hands a number of times: 1859/60 Johann George Rathfelder (the inn-keeper), 1860/61 L. J. Colyn (he died soon after taking ownership), 1861/62 J.A. Louw, 1862/75 Johan Rathfelder (the butcher), 1875/87 Daniel Cloete, and 1887 (January - November) Anders Ohlsson (founder of the original Ohlssons Brewery and proprietor of Josephine Mill). Most of these families used the residence as a seaside holiday home and it was during this period (1859 - 1887) that it was named “Villa Capri”.

In November 1887, at a cost of £1,250, the first of seven generations of the Findlay family became owners of “Villa Capri”. George James Findlay, son of the founder of Geo. Findlay & Co., took transfer on 21 November from Anders Ohlsson. Geo. Findlay & Co. was an ironmongery business but later specialised in hardware. The business was subsequently owned by no less than five generations of the Findlay family, and when it was sold in 1966 had been in existence for 153 years. It was the oldest business in South Africa which was still functioning at the time of its sale. It operated at the corner of Parliament and Longmarket Streets and its premises was a well-known landmark in Cape Town for well over a century.

In 1887 George James Findlay subdivided the large plot into smaller erven and sold “Villa Capri” to his brother-in-law Stephan Trill (married George’s sister Emily). Stephan in turn subdivided the erven of Jacobs Ladder and Capri Roads into smaller lots.

“Villa Capri” was sold out of the family for a short while (1923-29) when Francis Robert Thompson and later (1927) his widow Georgina were the owners. Thompson was one of the Syndicate, together with Cecil Rhodes and Charles Rudd, which was granted in 1888, the concession in Matabeleland by Lobengula, King of the Matabele.

Florence Trill, Stephan’s eldest daughter, brought “Villa Capri” back into the family when she purchased the property from widow Georgina on 12 February 1929. It was Florence who had the entrance on the Muizenberg side of the house closed and the central steps constructed up to the verandah.

The property from then on passed through a succession of inheritors including Mrs E. M. Findlay who in 1941 tried unsuccessfully to get the home converted into two separate flats. The
final sale out of the Findlay family occurred on October 1966. “Villa Capri” had been in the family for nearly eighty years.

**LA ROCHELLE** No. 92 Main Road National Monument 11 May 1984

The plot, originally Lot 2 of a subdivision transferred to W. J. Langeveld, was owned by Heinrich Pieter Hablutzel in the late 1880s. He owned the home on the opposite side of Ley Road, which was later known as “The Homestead”. His deceased estate sold the ground in July 1902 for £750 to Emanuel Otto Rathfelder (D.T. 7670). Rathfelder owned the farm “Bel Ombre” in Constantia. He was a farmer of considerable means and a descendant of the owners of the famous Rathfelder’s Inn in Diep River. He was married out of community of property and transferred the property in February 1903 to his wife Eveline Blanche (born Tait) (D.T. 2307). Here he built their holiday home which they called “La Rochelle” which she sold to Antony van Ryneveld on 19 July 1913 for £2000 (D.T. 5657).

Van Ryneveld was an attorney and had moved with his family from Sea Point to St. James. He was born in Graaff-Reinet where he qualified, as had his father Daniel Johannes (at one time Mayor of Graaff-Reinet and a director of the Graaff-Reinet Board of Executors). His grandfather Willem Cornelius van Ryneveld was also an attorney. Antony van Ryneveld went to the Diocesan College and on qualifying joined H. J. Dempers, a Parliamentarian in the old Cape Government, to establish the practice of Attorneys Dempers and Van Ryneveld.

He was a keen tennis player, as were most of the Van Ryneveld family, and was a founder member of the St. James Lawn Tennis and Recreational Club which in 1918 built two tennis courts, on ground leased from the railways, alongside the Main Road at the foot of Jacob’s Ladder.

He lived at “La Rochelle” until he passed away on 25 August 1936. Thereafter his wife Gertrude inherited the home and on her death in 1970 the beneficiaries of her estate agreed to sell “La Rochelle” to her eldest daughter the widow Vera West for R16000 (D.T. 5437).

During the 1930s, possibly after Antony’s death, extensive renovations were done at “La Rochelle” and the feature of the cast-iron apron dressings on the verandahs was introduced.

The Van Ryneveld’s association with “La Rochelle” ceased in the mid-1980s when the house was sold out of the family. It had been their family home for over seventy years.
THE HOMESTEAD No. 1 Ley Road Corner of Ley Road and Main Road

Originally the property of Johan Heinrich Muller, the whaler, his estate sold the property to Willem Johannes Langeveld in 1842 (D.T. 218). Langeveld went insolvent and William McDonald then bought the property in 1844 (D.T. 236). Thereafter the property changed hands several times in favour of James Bell (1846), Francis Pocock (1847), Johannes Stukeris (1853), Adriaan Zeederburg (1865), and from his insolvent estate to Heinrich Pieter Hablutzel in 1867 (D.T. 21) who made additions to the existing buildings which had been erected by Francis Pocock and Johannes Stukeris.

According to Arderne Tredgold in her book “Bay between the Mountains”, it was between this house and “Seaforth House”, No. 96 Main Road, which stood on the Kalk Bay side of “The Homestead”, that the “Wall of Hate” was built circa 1890. This occurred after the owner of “Seaforth House” (Mr Farmer) built a home nearer the Main Road than “The Homestead” (despite agreeing not to) and blocked out the view from “The Homestead” across the bay to Simon’s Town. (“The Homestead” is set well back from the Main Road.) In response the owner of “The Homestead” (Mr Hablutzle) built a high wall on the edge of his property closest to “Seaforth House” which cut out part of the view of the False Bay and Hottentots Holland and some early morning sun which “Seaforth House” (Mr Farmer) had enjoyed. A court case ensued where Farmer tried to compel Hablutzle to demolish the wall. Farmer lost the case whereupon Hablutzle raised the wall by another six feet. “Seaforth House” burned down c. 1939 and a new house was built closer to the Main Road, but the “Wall of Hate” still stands. So goes the tale.

John Nicholls had rented “The Homestead” from Hablutzle while on holiday in January 1874 and it was while he was staying there that his two daughters tragically drowned off Danger Beach. Hablutzle owned “The Homestead” for 35 years and his estate sold it to Archbishop William West Jones, first Archbishop of Cape Town, in 1902 (D.T. 7671). (see Personalities, Chapter 15).

Archbishop Jones died in 1908 and his wife Emily inherited “The Homestead”. Thereafter it passed to several owners, Mary Cathcart (1913), Nicholas Prettjohn (1916), George Swart (1920) and on his death in 1934 to his son Arthur and his daughter Mary.

The Roy Garlick Trust Co. owned “The Homestead” in the 1940s.
"The Homestead" No. 1 Ley Road c. 1900

"Pentrich" No. 1 Pentrich Road c. 1950
Early cottages c. 1880 Thomas Watson's cottage (right) demolished to make way for "Hamilton House" No. 99 Main Road

H. M. Ardene's cottage c. 1890 Demolised to make way for "Seahurst" the forerunner of "Seahurst Hotel" now St. James Terrace
and did extensive renovations (Architect: Brian Mansergh. Builder: G. Harpur (Pty.) Ltd). Included in these alterations was a new concrete slab, which replaced the old iron roof, and the construction of a completely new stairway.

SEAFORTH HOUSE  No. 96 Main Road

After Mr Farmer had built "Seaforth House" and Mr Hablutzel of "The Homestead" had returned the compliment by building the "Wall of Hate", the thatched roof home passed through a succession of owners until it was bought by William Fletcher in 1902. He died in 1916 and Mary Emerson Armour (born Smith) a widow acquired "Seaforth House" from his deceased estate on 4 October 1916 (D.T. 7705). She accommodated boy boarders from "Star of the Sea" from 1917 to when she sold the home some five years later for £3500 on 3 December 1921 to Bridget O’Callaghan (D.T. 11378). Bridget’s late husband had been the proprietor and owner of the International Hotel in Mill Street, Cape Town. She changed the name "Seaforth House" to "Kilcreen," presumably the place of her birth in Ireland. Bridget died on 12 May 1928, aged 78. Her immovable assets included the International Hotel (valued at £24252) and "Kilcreen" which her two daughters, Catherine (Kate) Cassidy and Eileen Walsh, both widows, bought out of hand from the deceased estate for £3000 (D.T. 5474 of 4 June 1929). The furniture of "Kilcreen" was auctioned off by Messrs. Peter Zoutendyk on 25 September 1928.

Bridget (née Kilkerry) had married William Thomas O’Callaghan in 1869. They had eleven children of whom four sons and two daughters had predeceased her. Her husband had died in 1919. Catherine, or Kate as she was better known, was the eldest daughter and she and Eileen ran "Kilcreen" as a Residential Hotel between 1935-1937. In 1939 tragedy struck and "Kilcreen" was gutted by fire. The old historic home which once was known as "Seaforth House" was reduced to ashes. Kate, who was now in her 70s, and Eileen sold the property, the house having been demolished, to Sophia Walker of Pretoria for £3250 (D.T. 3280 of 10 April 1940).

Sophia Walker employed architects John Perry and Lightfoot of 17 Church Square, Cape Town, to design a new double storey home on the site (but closer to the Main Road). Working drawings were completed by December 1940 and the home, now called "Mare
Video”, was ready for occupation by early 1942. Sophia Walker was not long resident at “Mare Video” as on 31 January 1944 she sold the home to Marjorie Moxon of the Meikles family in Rhodesia for £9500 (D.T. 895). Marjorie Moxon did further additions in 1952 (architects Lightfoot, Twentyman Jones and Kent).

Subsequent owners were Arthur Rushton-Brown (1959), Dawn Elizabeth Henderson (1969), and Keith Macfarlane (1976) who renamed the house “New Seaforth House” thereby restoring the original historical name of this home.

PENTRICH Nos. 100/102 Main Road (later No. 1 Pentrich Road)

Johan Heinrich Muller received two large grants of quitrent from the Cape Colonial Government. The first grant on 4 April 1814 was to establish a whaling station at “Villa Capri”, No. 86 Main Road, St. James, while the second grant on 15 October 1822 was to build a second whaling station at “Pentrich”, Nos. 100/102 Main Road St. James. This was due to the increase in whaling which by 1830 was the third largest money-earner for the Cape Colony after agriculture and wine. Danger Beach was the ideal sandy shoreline onto which the whale carcasses could be hauled.

Muller died in 1841 and his estate sold off the “Pentrich” whaling station which was already feeling the downturn in whaling, especially as the main source of catch was the Southern Right whale which came to these waters to calve. It was inevitable that culling the cow with calf would re

J. W. Stukeris bought the defunct whaling station which he converted into a home. He held the property for near on ten years whereafter his insolvent estate sold it to William Brading on 19 June 1865 (D.T. 223). After twelve years William Brading sold the property on 7 February 1877 to William Mortimer Farmer (D.T. 99). William Brading did some building on the property, the exact details of which are uncertain, but when William Farmer took ownership there were at least two houses on the property.

William Mortimer Farmer owned many propeties in St. James. He was born in Wynberg on 3 December 1836. He was heir to the Maynard fortune and rose to prominence in the 1870s when he, among others, made a notable contribution to the economic upliftment of Wynberg. He was a successful businessman and was a partner in
W.G. Anderson & Co. who had acquired the agency for the Union-Castle Line. He was also a member of Parliament serving the Wynberg Constituency from 1879 until 1883.

On 14 December 1882 William Farmer transferred the property to his two daughters Enid and Elaine in the form of an inter vivos donation (D.T. 250). They sold the property on 24 August 1888 to Servaas van Breda for £1500 (D.T. 295). Nine years later (7 August 1897) Van Breda sold the property for £3350 to Louisa Trollip (born Aitcheson) (D.T. 6636). This appreciation in the selling price indicated that Van Breda did extensive improvements/additions to the two houses which were built by Messrs Stukeris (c. 1860) and Brading (c. 1870). He may well have been responsible for the joining of these two buildings, forming the “Pentrich” of today. Louise Trollip sold the property to William Fletcher on 7 July 1902 for a mere £150 more than she had paid five years previously £3500 (D.T. 6417). Fletcher, founder of the department store, Fletcher and Cartwright, did further improvements. He introduced bay windows, typical of the late Victorian period of architecture, as well as sash windows and a covered stoep. He also named the house “Pentrich” after his home town in Derbyshire. Later he built a garage for his motor car. He passed away at the end of 1915.

When Frederick William Mills, aged 78, died at his home “Hope Lodge” in Roeland Street on 1 October 1916, the executors of his deceased estate bought “Pentrich” for his widow Mrs Edith Jemima Mills (D.T. 2876 of 30 April 1917). Mrs Edith Mills (née Ball) was born in Waterford, Ireland, in 1848 and lived at “Pentrich” to the age of 87. She lived with her daughter Emily Florence, who after her mother’s death on 3 April 1935 continued to live at their home.

Emily was joined in 1938 by her widowed sister Blanche and her son Willoughby. Emily (nickname ‘Tem’) never married but was a great character and an ardent supporter of the Girl Guides. She hoisted the Union Jack each morning from a specially erected flagpole above the roof of the front stoep. Among her many interests was golf and in 1935 she donated the Mills Trophy to the Ladies Section of Westlake Golf Club. The trophy is still played for today.

The garden path to the old front gate on the Main Road was originally lined with whalebone ribs. A huge cast-iron cauldron, used for boiling blubber, was used by Emily to hold pot plants. This has
since disappeared and only a few whalebones around the swimming pool remind one that this was once a whaling station.

On the death of Mrs E. J. Mills in 1935 “Pentrich” was vested in a company, Pentrich (Pty.) Ltd., and transfer from her deceased estate took place on 26 July 1936 (D.T. 6749). The shareholders were her seven children, four boys (Fred, Spencer, Rupert and Harold) and three girls (Blanche, Emily and Jessica).

After Emily’s death in May 1974 Spencer Willmott, son of the youngest daughter Jessica, took over “Pentrich”. In 1977 Spencer made several alterations, the major one being the removal of the thatched roof of the house and the corrugated iron roof of the stoep. These were replaced by today’s slate roof. He sold the property in 1980 to his cousin Willoughby Cleghorn, son of the eldest daughter Blanche, wife of Bruce Cleghorn. Willoughby lived here until 1999 when his daughter Blanche Stephenson became the owner.

Thus ownership of “Pentrich” by Mrs E. J. Mills, her daughter Emily, her two grandsons Spencer Willmott and Willoughby Cleghorn and finally by her great granddaughter Blanche Stephenson has ensured that the home has remained in the Mills’ family for over 85 years.

Another interesting point is that when either Messrs Stukeris or Brading converted the whaling station into houses they built a coach house and stable behind “Pentrich”.

This coach house and stable formed part of Lot 2 of a portion of “Pentrich” and was bought by Fred Mills, F. W.’s eldest son. He bought it from the deceased estate of William Fletcher in 1917 and converted it into the home “St. Ives”, No. 5 Pentrich Road. This has been considerably altered by the current owners Buck and Di Buchanan.

Sandwiched between “St. Ives” and “Pentrich” lies “Bangaloo”, No. 3 Pentrich Road. This also formed part of Lot 2 of a portion of “Pentrich”. It was the garage built by William Fletcher c. 1910 and was bought by Spencer Mills, F. W.’s second son, from the deceased estate of William Fletcher in September 1917 (D.T. 7818) and converted into the home “Bangaloo”.

Spencer Mills was born at Hope Lodge in 1879. He rose to the rank of Captain in the Cape Town Highlanders and served with them during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). He was also a Major in the Dukes.

The Mills family were, and still are, associated with the firm Daniel Mills & Sons (Pty.) Ltd., which was founded by Frederick Mills’
father, Daniel, in 1845. They were originally millers and are now yeast manufacturers. This is another example of a long heritage involving the Mills family.

**HAMILTON HOUSE**  No. 99 Main Road

The property and the original single-storey cottage on the site of “Hamilton House” was owned by Thomas Watson at the time the Cape Government Railways extended the railway to Kalk Bay. (arrived Kalk Bay, May 1883).

Thomas Watson (1814-1884) was born in England and came to South Africa in 1838 to join his brother Harrison Watson of the firm Thomson, Watson & Co., shipping agents. He was a leading member of the firm. He was a member of the Legislative Assembly for Cape Division (1854-58) and for Cape Town (1862-63) as well as Chairman of the Commercial Exchange (1860) and President of its successor, the Cape Chamber of Commerce (1874-82). He was General Manager of the first railway in South Africa, from Cape Town to Wellington.

He was a wealthy entrepreneur and his cottage at St. James was his holiday retreat. He had bought the property from Sophia Jamison (who lived at “Carisbrooke”) on 4 September 1877 (D.T. 32). His permanent residence was “The Grove” in Claremont which he had bought in 1869. His wife Anne Watson predeceased him in 1872. She had borne him 11 children of which one son, Harrison Fraser Watson was a noted athlete and a stockbroker in Johannesburg.

Portion of Watson’s property was expropriated by the Cape Government Railways c. 1880 to make way for the railway’s extension from Wynberg to Kalk Bay. He was in poor health at the time and sold his holiday cottage and what remained of his property to Henry Hamilton Jones for £1131 on 26 June 1883 (D.T. 542). Watson died the following year on 22 February 1884 in London where he had gone to seek medical help.

Henry Hamilton Jones (1829-1917), demolished Watson’s cottage and built “Hamilton House” c. 1895. He was a successful auctioneer and his business H. Jones and Co. were one of the leading firms of auctioneers at the turn of the century. One of his assignments in Kalk Bay was to conduct the salvage auction of the contents of the remains of the trawler “Rex” which ran aground near Kalk Bay railway station in October 1903.
Jones died on 7 April 1917 aged 88. His wife Emily had predeceased him on 31 December 1914 as had one of two their children, Kenneth Hamilton. Jones' remaining heir was his daughter Ella Mary who inherited his Camp Ground Road home (which she auctioned soon after his death for £1970) and "Hamilton House". Ella Mary had married Frank Molteno (third son of Sir Charles Molteno) in 1888 and her father had c. 1900 built them "The Barnacle" (No. 97) on the north (Muizenberg) side of "Hamilton House". The ground had formed part of his property and he subdivided and transferred the home into Ella Mary's name. (Intervivos donation of 24 February 1902 (D.T. 1681)

Ella Mary endured much tragedy in her life. On 9 January 1899 her eight-year-old son Frank slipped on the rocks while fishing near Dalebrook and drowned. On 26 November 1911 her eldest son Henry, aged 22, who was a student at the Inner Temple, was killed in a motorcycle accident outside Petersfield in Hampshire, and finally on 9 June 1926 her husband, Frank, was killed in the Salt River rail smash. Poignantly, he had left in his Will the sum of £100 for the maintenance of young Frank's grave at St. Paul's in Rondebosch.

After her husband's death Ella Mary moved to "Hamilton House". She sold "The Barnacle" on 31 December 1926 to her eldest daughter Brenda Emily Thomas (married Gordon Victor Thomas) for £2300 (D.T. 13454). Brenda sold the "The Barnacle" on 20 August 1938 to Andries Beyers (D.T. 8700). Ella Mary sold "Hamilton House" to Sophia Schulze (née Rossouw) at the same time. Transfer took place on the same day (20 August 1938 D.T. 8701). Ella Mary then moved to Rondebosch where she died on 6 March 1948, aged 87.

Sophia Schulze was the wife of the respected family doctor and later surgeon Dr W. 'Bill' Schulze who for many years had his consulting rooms in "Hamilton House". Sophia owned the home for close on thirty years until she sold on 22 January 1968 to Elizabeth Randall (D.T. 1102).

MENTONE (later "Craigside" and "Kimberley House") Corner of Kimberley Road and Main Road, St. James

This home stands on the Kalk Bay side of Kimberley Road. Sir John Molteno bought this property with buildings for £415 as a holiday home from Alexander Maderose, a large property owner in
“Main Road towards Seahurst Hotel. "Hamilton House" (left). Sea Spray" No. 105 Main Road (centre left) c. 1920

St. James Main Road c. 1920
Kalk Bay, on 5 April 1876 (D.T. 91). Sir John died on 1 September 1886 and his widow Lady Molteno inherited the home (known as “Mentone”) on 30 May 1890 (D.T. 476). It is of note that the original house showed a building on the northside which was later subdivided off as “Kimberley House”. Lady Molteno sold the two buildings which still stood on one erf to James Alexander Gibson on 28 September 1893 (D.T. 544); he sold it to James Lowrie Williams on 3 November 1897 (D.T. 9261).

The Williams family operated these two buildings as a Boarding House for over 20 years (1897-1920) and during that period they subdivided “Kimberley House” as Erf 88651. The boarding house consisted of no less than 20 rooms, 3 bathrooms and 3 wash closets. It was Mrs Williams who actually ran the premises and it was she who incurred the wrath of the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality Council under Mayor Gourlay after she claimed damages to paintwork from the bedrock blasting of contractor J. V. C Collie when laying the sewerage system along the Main Road outside “Kimberley House”. Her claim was for repainting the complete interior of the building when as on a surprise inspection by Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality, it was found that only paintwork of about three of the bedrooms had been affected.

Rose Taylor bought the two properties then known as “Mentone” and “Kimberley House” (at one time known as “Mentone Cottage”) from the estate of James Williams on 15 September 1920 (D.T. 13110). She applied under Section 16 of the Housing Act No. 35 of 1920 to have these two houses demolished. She complained that the floors lay mainly below ground level, the joints were close to the ground and damp had risen on the walls to a height of six foot above ground level. Permission to demolish was granted on 6 December 1938 and so Sir J. C Molteno’s home and later the long established “Kimberley House” Boarding Establishment was reduced to dust. Rose Taylor rebuilt the premises now known as “Craigside” and “Kimberley Cottage”. The Orr family, of department store fame, owned these two buildings from 1944 - 1969 and sub-let “Kimberley Cottage” for doctor’s rooms.

Queen Victoria’s insignia remains on a closed postbox in the wall outside “Craigside”. The post-box was put in the wall at the request of Sir John Molteno c. 1872, when he was Prime Minister of the Cape Colony.
CHAPTER 15

Personalities of St. James, 1850 - 1950

St. James has had many successful entrepreneurs and businessmen living here over the century. These include household names like Arderne, Withinshaw, Taylor, Orpen, Thesen, Rudd, Molteno, Anderson and a host of others as well as many leading legal men such as Judges Searle, Hopley, and Solomon, and attorneys Tredgold, Trollip, O’Reilly, Buissinne and Van Ryneveld, and not forgetting Professors Gilchrist, Snape, Drennan, Harrison, and Sir Carruthers Beattie, first Principal of the University of Cape Town.

To select personalities out of the vast array of successful men and women is difficult. However, the following personalities played a prominent part in one way or another in bringing recognition to St. James.

Abraham AURET

b.1819 Simon’s Town.
d. 1902 St. James.

Son of Jeremias and Christina (née Roussouw) AURET. Abraham AURET lived at his house “Auret’s Cottage”, corner of Main Road and St. James Road for close on fifty years. He bought the property in the mid 1840s from the insolvent estate of C. G. Langerman, and built his home ten years later.

Auret was a respected whaler and fisherman, and owned a number of properties in Muizenberg. He was a staunch member of the Dutch Reformed Church, and helped finance the building of the Dutch Reformed Church in Kalk Bay with Mr Philip D. Morgenrood. He was a direct descendant of the Huguenot settlers (Aurets of Tarn) and his grandfather had come to the Cape in the service of the Dutch East India Company in 1745.

Abraham Auret headed a petition to the Cape Government in March 1866 to have the name Kalk Bay changed to Ashton Bay to honour Lt. Col. Henry Ashton, who for many years had been “the benefactor, sympathizer, advisor and medicine supplier to the fishermen of Kalk Bay”. The petition was signed by 80 local fishermen which according to the population census must have been nearly every fisherman in Kalk Bay. This indicated the great esteem and deep respect in which
George Boyes (1863-1924)

Sir John Carruthers Beattie (1866 - 1946)
Lt. Col. Ashton was held by the petitioners, who took this course upon learning, much to their distress, that he was returning to England permanently. In fact he delayed his departure until 1871. The petition, needless to say, was unsuccessful.

Abraham Auret was involved in many dramatic rescues during his seafaring and whaling days, including the rescue of 15 crew of the "Johanna Wagner", a Prussian barque, which stranded off Muizenberg on 17 July 1862. She was laden with tobacco, sugar and coffee at the time.

He was a friend of the Governor of the Cape, Sir Harry Smith, who granted him in the late 1840s the fishing and whaling rights, inclusive of erecting fishing huts, from the east of Muizenberg Beach towards Strandfontein. This grant put Abraham Auret in good stead for many years. His successful hiding of two Boer War prisoners from Simon’s Town in the loft of his house, which the British soldiers searched in vain, is one of the many legends attributed to his colourful life.

He died at his home on 28 January 1902 aged 83. His wife Elizabeth (née Geldenhuys) predeceased him in March 1889. They had four sons and a daughter.

Sir John Carruthers Beattie  b. 1866 Dumfriesshire, Scotland.  
d. 1946 Cape Town.

Sir Carruthers and Lady Beattie lived at "Riviera" in Pentrich Road after Sir John’s retirement in 1937. He was born on 21 November 1866 and came to South Africa in 1897. It was shortly thereafter that he married Elizabeth Paton on 23 June 1898. They had three children.

Sir Carruthers was the first Principal of the University of Cape Town and thereby automatically became the first Vice-Chancellor. He held the post of Principal and Vice-Chancellor from 2 April 1918 until his retirement at the end of 1937, whereafter he moved to live in St. James. Sir John played a prominent role in laying the foundation for the establishment and development of the University. He was Professor of Physics and Warden of College House. He had for many years been the chief pilot in the quest for the old South African College to acquire university status, and he will always be best remembered for this achievement which was finally attained in 1918.

His burial took place on Friday 13 September 1946 and university classes were suspended for the day. So respected was he that the Cape
Administrator in terms of a Special Provincial Ordinance authorized the spreading of his ashes on a site on University property. This was one of the few times that this has been granted and the Administrator stressed that it should not be regarded as a precedent.

**Dr Henry Bickersteth**  

b. 1813 Acton, England.  
d. 1862 Cape Town.

Dr Bickersteth arrived in Cape Town in 1832 and succeeded Dr Samuel Bailey in June 1845 as Surgeon-in-Charge of the Somerset Hospital. It was through Dr Bickersteth’s influence that the hospital gained a reputation for providing good medical care based on scientific principles and continuing medical attention. It was also through his initiative that the first moves towards establishing a medical school in South Africa were made. Dr Bickersteth devoted his time not only to patients and teaching, but also to the thankless task of lobbying for a new and better hospital for the people of Cape Town.

Besides his work at Somerset Hospital he had an extensive private practice, acting as doctor to many of the leading families in the Colony and to officers of the English East India Company on sick leave from India. Bishop Robert Gray was a personal friend and patient and described Dr Bickersteth as a kindly, considerate and gentle man. A memorial tablet was set up in the Somerset Hospital upon his death in 1862, and three of his daughters erected a stained-glass window in St. George’s Cathedral where he had been a regular worshipper and a member of the choir since its foundation in 1835.

He married twice, the first marriage was dissolved, but from it he had a son and a daughter. His second marriage in 1842, was to Jane Shuter Boswell. Regrettably, he died of diabetes at his residence in Strand Street, Cape Town, on 8 August 1862 at the young age of 49, leaving his widow with their four young children. He was sadly missed and many fine tributes were paid to him for his outstanding services to the community.

These tributes included the naming of the little beach, at what was later to become St. James Beach, Bickersteth Beach, for it was here that Dr Bickersteth had spent his limited leisure hours. He owned a seaside cottage which is thought to have stood on the grounds of "Ceolnamara", No. 20 Main Road, St. James. It was demolished in the
1920s to make way for Mr W. Robb’s home. The cottage stood on a large plot of ground which Dr Bickersteth had bought from Pieter Adriaan de Necker on 4 May 1850 for £278-2s-6d (D.T. 37) (the area was then still known as Kalk Bay). This mountainside property stretched northwards along the Main Road from today’s Heytor Road to near Carisbrooke Road. It was one of the prime properties of the area.

The name Bickersteth Beach, however, faded with the efflux of time and although Council correspondence as late as the 1920s referred to it as Bickersteth Beach, the name eventually changed to St. James Beach, as it is known today.

**George Boyes**

b. 1863 Cape Town.
d. 1924 St. James.

Son of Major Boyes he was born at the Castle in Cape Town on 15 January 1863. He was educated at the Diocesan College, Rondebosch, and joined the Civil Service as a temporary clerk in 1883. Promotion came in 1892 when, at the early age of 29, he was appointed Chief Commissioner and Resident Magistrate of Mafeking (now Mafikeng).

He took up the appointment as Resident Magistrate, Collector of Customs and Port Captain at Simon’s Town in 1904. It was here that he made his contributions to the road network around the South Peninsula. His first achievement was the extension of the road from Miller’s Point to Smitswinkel Bay, thereafter the old Red Hill Road to Klaasjagersberg, and finally the High Level Road from Muizenberg to Kalk Bay which was named in his honour “Boytes Drive”. This was without doubt his finest contribution to the “All Round the Cape Peninsula Road Project” which, with the increased popularity of motor travel, had been launched by Sir Frederic de Waal, Administrator of the Cape, in 1913.

George Boyes’ responsibility as Resident Magistrate also included ‘officer responsible in case of wrecks’ which resulted in his being largely instrumental in the saving of 75 lives from the wreck of the ss “Clan Monroe” which went ashore at Slangkop in 1905. For this he received a special commendation from the British Admiralty and the Cape Government.

He held a very influential position as the Union Government’s
representative in Simon’s Town, the main naval base of the Royal Navy in the southern hemisphere, and it was here that he developed his interest in the affairs of the South Peninsula. His concern for the plight of the local fishermen of Kalk Bay and Simon’s Town is well recorded as well as his interest in the development of the shoreline from Muizenberg to Simon’s Town.

In January 1916 he left Simon’s Town to become Resident Magistrate in Queenstown, whereafter he returned to Cape Town in 1919 to take up the position of Chief Magistrate, a post he held until his retirement in 1923.

His affection for St. James was such that, on retirement, he initially lived in St. James Road before moving to the home “Oriana” in Ley Road.

George Boyes became a City Councillor, but suddenly took ill in January 1924 and passed away at his home, much to the distress of his many friends who had hoped that, at the relatively young age of sixty-one, he would have continued to serve the area which he so loved.

Father Harold Doran b. 1902 Cape Town.
d. 1971 St. James.

Father Harold Doran was born in Cape Town on 18 February 1902. His early school years were spent at St. Bridget’s Primary School, Cape Town, which was run by the Dominican Sisters. Thereafter he went to Marist Brothers, Cape Town and after his family had moved to Rondebosch he finished his schooling at Marist Brothers, Rondebosch.

Further studies took him to the Propaganda College, Rome where he studied Philosophy for two years and Theology for a further four years. He was ordained in Rome on 23 December 1933.

He was assigned to St. James Catholic Church as assistant priest on the 28 September 1934 and after nine years was appointed Parish Priest of St. James in 1943. He served his entire working life at St. James until his death on 10 July 1971.

Father Doran will be remembered for the many accomplishments he achieved at St. James during his priesthood. On the ‘concrete’ side he was responsible for the alterations and additions to the St. James Catholic Church, the transferring of the St. James Mission School from “Star of the Sea” to the new building at Kalk Bay, and the building of
the new presbytery at St. James. These are lasting memorials to his work, but it was his dedication to all the residents of St. James and Kalk Bay, irrespective of colour, class or religion for which he will be long remembered. His parish extended from Diep River to Kommetjie and the quaint scenes of Father Doran speeding along in full priesthood regalia initially on a his motorcycle, which he once described “as the wettest form of transport other than swimming”, and then finally in his baby Fiat Cub (bought March 1949) are fondly remembered.

He was a believer in expressing his faith with deeds and in April 1947 erected a Catholic sign, one of the earliest Christian emblems, on the mountainside above Boyes Drive. It was a series of white washed stone mounds some two and a half foot high which were shaped in the form of an X superimposed on a P, the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ (XPICTOC). The site was approximately 60 foot (18 metres) along Boyes Drive and 150 foot (45 metres) up to the contour path. This denoted the sign of Christian ownership and the mounds were erected on church property. The Reverend H. A. Jeffree Jones objected most strongly to this and complained of “the defacement of the mountainside at St. James with a certain sign formed by white stones”. He also queried whether additional rates had been paid or indeed raised as a result of this advertisement.

The City Council saw it as an advertisement contravening Regulation No. 194. Father Doran was instructed to remove the stones as a precedent was otherwise set for other persons to advertise in a similar manner. Father Doran refused. Legal advice was sought by the Council and their legal advisor said it was perfectly in order to advertise in this way as it was on church property and was similar to a Cross on a church or a Star of David on a synagogue. Father Doran won the day.

In a letter in the “Cape Argus” soon after his death on 10 July 1971 Elsie Crewe wrote, “There has been a lot of discussion of late about what constitutes a Christian. But Father Doran came close to my conception of a Christian. Cardinal McCann said: ‘He sought to follow in the footsteps of his Divine Master.’ The door of his little church at St. James was always open for anyone to enter and utter a silent prayer. No wretched human being was too abject for his compassion. All who came to him, whatever their creed or colour, he helped unobtrusively with kind and patient words and money. He never failed to keep his word.” Such was Father Doran.
Father John Duignam  b. 1846 Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, Ireland.
   d. 1931 Bonnievale, Cape.

Of all the personalities who left an impression on St. James no one
was more prominent than Father Duignam who gave the community
fifty-one years of service as the Catholic Parish priest.

In early 1874 the Cape Government requested the Right Reverend
John Leonard, Vicar Apostolic of the Catholic Diocese of the Cape of
Good Hope, to appoint a priest on a permanent basis to handle the
religious needs of the Filipino fishing community at Kalk Bay. Father
John Duignam had the ability to speak Spanish, the mother tongue of
the Filipino fishermen. This influenced Bishop Leonard quite
considerably and Fr. Duignam was appointed on 1 June 1874 "to
relieve for a period of 6 months until an alternative permanent priest
could be found". Fr. Duignam stayed for more than fifty years and
retired on 1 December 1925. What he achieved in those fifty years is a
book within itself.

He had been ordained in Rome in 1873 at the age of 27 and was
appointed the following year to St. James. With the enthusiasm and
vigour of a devout 28-year-old Christian, he set about his work with
unbridled energy. He built a presbytery for himself in 1880 on the
opposite side of the road to the original St. James Church and in 1884
built the St. James Mission School alongside the presbytery. Originally
it was at the back of the old church but was transferred to the new site
once the classes increased in number. Here Fr. Duignam taught classes
from 1884 until 1906. Class numbers varied from 50 to 73 and an
inspection report of 14 February 1894 indicated a class of 9 white
pupils and 41 coloured pupils, who were mainly from the fishing
community at Kalk Bay. Fr. Duignam was employed and paid by the
Cape Government Department of Education. After 1906 he still ran
night classes for those children who worked during the day. Classes
extended to Standard Two. Fr. Duignam was present at the sale of the
old church to the Cape Government Railways in 1900 and was
instrumental in the building of the new Church, construction of which
began shortly after the sale. The price of £2000 was allocated to the
building of this church and Fr. Duignam commenced with his usual
enthusiasm and vigour. His ideas and those of architect Ransome
blended into the beautiful building we have today. Fr. Duignam was
the main contractor, the clerk of works and the quantity surveyor, such was his zest. He followed this success with the building of the “Star of the Sea” Convent in 1906 (opened 1908) where once again he assumed full responsibility for the construction.

The two buildings stand as a reminder to all at St. James of Fr. Duignam’s personality and drive.

*if you seek his monument, look around*

On the educational front, stories of Fr. Duignam are still told today of how he educated the poor fisherfolk children in the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. His teaching of the religious doctrine to the children was paramount. Classes were held in church on Sunday afternoons and before evening devotion. It was not uncommon for Fr. Duignam to visit the home of an errant child to find out why he or she had missed Mass and woe betide the child if found guilty of deliberately staying away.

Fr. Duignam served as a Councillor in the first Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality and his work in finding a suitable cemetery for all religions is well recorded. Many a time would he officiate over a burial at the Margate Road Cemetery in Muizenberg. Here he would travel by trap, drawn by his horse Larry (all his horses were named Larry).

In 1918, at the age of 72, he remained a power of strength to all of those affected by the great flu epidemic and was instrumental in turning the St. James Mission School into a hospital, with the nuns acting as nurses.

He was loved and revered by all his parishioners and was held in utmost respect by the sisters of the “Star of the Sea”. In June 1924 a magnificent stained-glass window in the Church behind the high altar commemorated his fifty years of great service to the community. He was their religious leader, teacher, comforter, guardian, architect, master builder, craftsman and instructor - a legend in his own life time.

On 1 December 1925 he retired from St. James at the age of 79 and was assigned to a small Dominican Convent in Bonnievale. Here he died in 1931 aged 85.
Captain John Joseph Gentry  b. 1874 York.  
    d. 1938 St. James.

Known as the “doyen of hotel proprietors” Captain Gentry came to South Africa in 1908 prior to which he had been Chief Steward to the Officers Mess of the 9th Queen’s Royal Lancers, an assignment he held for more than ten years. He came to St. James to take ownership of the Seahurst Hotel, which he bought in April 1910 from Jessie Miller.

He served on the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality as a Councillor from 1911 until the amalgamation with the Cape Town Municipality. After amalgamation he was a City Councillor from 1913 until 1933. His portfolio on the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality Council dealt with Leisure and Entertainment for which he well qualified; while on the Cape Town City Council he worked tirelessly on the Improvements and Parks Committee.

On 16 May 1925 he acquired ownership of the St. James Hotel and sold the Seahurst Hotel, which he had owned since 1910, to Emily Toy. His famous “Dance in the cool sea-breezes” at the St. James Hotel were well patronised for many years especially as he had an arrangement with the driver and conductor on the last steam train whereby he served them coffee with cheese and biscuits while he ushered his lingering guests aboard the train.

Captain Gentry was an opulent Dickensian-like character. He was a large man with a ruddy complexion and a pronounced nose. Always immaculately dressed with tweed waistcoat, and a cap when going out, his friendly ways and extrovert mannerisms made him a favourite with the locals and the overseas visitors. He was as good a cook as he was a hail-fellow-well-met character and his association with the St. James Hotel was renowned. It lasted near on 25 years until his death at the hotel on 27 July 1938.

Professor John Gilchrist  b. 1866 Anstruther Scotland. 
    d. 1926 St. James.

Professor John Dow Fisher Gilchrist was born at Anstruther, Scotland, where his father was a well-respected farmer. He was educated at the Universities of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, but took
his Doctorate in Philosophy at Zurich University. After this he spent some years undertaking marine research at various stations in Great Britain and Europe. His first professional appointment was as Marine Biologist to the Cape Government in 1896. At the time of his appointment he was assistant lecturer in Zoology at the University of Edinburgh. In due course he was appointed Cape Government Biologist.

He was instrumental in persuading the Cape Government’s Department for Agriculture to build a marine research station and he chose a site at St. James as ideal for his work. He also brought out, at the Government’s expense a Scottish trawler, renamed “Pieter Faure”, from which he did valuable research. A major breakthrough was the discovery of a rich population of sole off Mossel Bay. His dream of his own research station was realised when he took up residency on the upper floor of the Marine Aquarium at St. James in 1902. The fish tank and research laboratory were on the ground floor and sea water was pumped to the tanks through a heavy metal pipe held down by pittons embedded in the rocks.

Besides research Gilchrist also undertook editorship of the six volumes of Marine Investigations in South Africa - the first marine science journal in this country. He was also involved in commitments to the Government of Natal and by 1920 survey work took him from Lourenco Marques (Maputo) to Walvis Bay aboard the “Pickle”, a converted whaler, which replaced the “Pieter Faure”. His chief discovery during later years was the rich population of hake off the West Coast.

Gilchrist was appointed in 1905 Professor and Head of the Department of Zoology at the South African College which in 1918 became the University of Cape Town where his position as Head of the Zoology department was confirmed.

He married Elfreda Raubenheimer at the age of 50 in 1916, and they brought up their two children at their home “Sea Spray” (No. 105 Main Road, St. James) until 1924 when he was diagnosed as having tuberculosis. His family moved up-country so they did not contract the disease and Gilchrist, despite a last trip to Europe to seek a cure, died in October 1926 at the age of 60 while still working at the St. James marine research laboratory.

He was held in high esteem by his successors who regarded him as
the Founder of Marine Biological Research in South Africa, especially as he was instrumental in creating what was later to become the Sea Fisheries Research Institute.

**Professor Paddy Harrison**  b. 1920 Cape Town.

Patricia Hilda Harrison, affectionately known as ‘Paddy’, has lived at St. James since 1931 at “Corriemar”, 4 Main Road, originally the home of her father Gaisford Harrison. Paddy was Head Girl of “Star of the Sea” in her matric year (1937) and in 1942 entered a general nursing course at Groote Schuur Hospital. She passed with honours (1945) and was also Head Student in her final year. Paddy subsequently passed midwifery with honours at Queen Victoria Hospital, Wynberg (1946), and in 1947 passed the Infectious Diseases course at City Hospital in Cape Town with honours. In 1954 she was awarded the Royal College of Physicians Scholarship and received a diploma at the Royal College of Nursing, London.

It is therefore not surprising that Paddy was eventually Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department of Nursing at the University of Cape Town, 1974-78. This finally culminated in her promotion to Professor of Nursing in 1982, the first in the history of the University of Cape Town and a chair which was created through the generosity of the Mauerberger Trust. Paddy has in addition served on the Senate of UCT from 1973-1978, and has also been President of the S.A. Nursing Association (1969-1973), as well as serving on the S.A. Nursing Council (1960-1978).

She represented South Africa as a delegate to Congresses of the International Council of Nurses in Rome (1957), Melbourne (1961), Frankfurt (1965), Montreal 1969), and Dublin (1971), and as an observer in Mexico City (1973).

Paddy, despite all these illustrious achievements, has never forgotten her roots with “Star of the Sea” where she has served regularly on the Administrative Board as well as holding the position of Honorary Life President of the Past Pupils Union. A proud record of one of St. James’ most distinguished residents.
Otway Hayes  b. 1919 Cape Town.

Otway Hayes was born on 10 February 1919 and was the son of local dentist Dr John Hayes. He lived with his parents at their home “The Ranger” in Ley Road and it was when living here that he brought great honour to St. James by winning his Springbok golf colours. He was St. James’ first recorded Springbok and the occasion was celebrated with great pride. His return from a successful Springbok tour of England in 1937 culminated in Captain John Gentry organizing a banquet in his honour at the St. James Hotel, which

Otway was living at St. James when he won the prestigious South African Amateur Golf Championship at the Durban Country Club in 1939.

He married “the girl next door” Glenda Boyle, who lived with her parents at “Craigsie” in Pentrich Road, and although they moved away from Cape Town shortly afterwards they regularly visited the Boyle’s home. Here their three sons John, Brian and Dale played holiday golf at Westlake Golf Club. Both John and Dale followed in their father’s footsteps and won Springbok golf colours.

                          d. 1908 Cornwall.

Archbishop Jones bought “The Homestead” from the deceased estate of Heinrich Pieter Hablutzel in 1902. It was his holiday home until his death in May 1908 while attending the Lambeth conference in London. He was buried in Holywell Cemetery, Oxford. He was survived by his wife Emily (née Allen), whom he had married in 1879, and their two sons. He left “The Homestead” to Emily in his Will and she stayed there for some five years until she sold it to Mary Cathcart in 1913.

When Robert Gray, first Anglican bishop in South Africa died in September 1872 there was a considerable delay in finding a successor. This was mainly due to the split within the Church caused by the Bishop Colenso controversy. Jones accepted appointment as Bishop of Cape Town in 1873, was consecrated in 1878 and in 1897 became the first Archbishop of Cape Town. He was a tall, dignified and youthful personality who added much to the concept that St. James was an ideal place to live or have a holiday home. His visits to St. James must have
been most refreshing especially when he was tied up with the problems of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). Here he tried to mediate between the two combatants to secure a lasting peace, and had to endure untrue accusations by the Boers that he was biased towards the British.

Archbishop Jones won a great reputation for pastoral gentleness and was highly respected by the community. His death while in England was a great shock and he was deeply mourned. At the time of his death he was still engaged in raising funds for the completion of St. George’s Cathedral. The north transept of the Cathedral was built in 1909 and dedicated to his memory.

The Molteno family

**Sir John Charles Molteno**  
b. 1814 Westminster London England  
d. 1886 Claremont.

**Sir James Tennant Molteno**  
b. 1865 Claremont.  

Although Sir John Charles Molteno lived on the Kalk Bay side of the border between St. James and Kalk Bay at the corner of Kimberley and Main Roads, two of his sons (Frank and James) settled in St. James and thus for historical purposes Sir John can be ‘adopted’ as a St. James resident. Frank, Sir John’s third son, lived at “The Barnacle” alongside “Hamilton House” on the Main Road and was tragically killed in the Salt River train smash on 9 June 1926, while Sir James lived at “Sorrento”, a home he built in what was later named Sorrento Road off Hillrise Road.

Sir John Charles Molteno was born on 5 June 1814, and came to South Africa as a young man in 1831. He bought the farm “Nelspoort” near Beaufort in 1840, and came to be recognized as one of the early sheep farming pioneers. He married Maria Hewitson in 1843, but she and her child died on 15 July 1846 during childbirth. He was devastated by this tragedy and worked tirelessly on his farm in the Beaufort district. He married Miss Elizabeth Jarvis on 20 October 1851; her father, H.C. Jarvis, was the First Citizen of Cape Town and Chairman of the Cape Town Municipality. Elizabeth bore him fourteen children of which: three girls (Elizabeth, Caroline and Maria) and
seven boys (John, Percy, Frank, James, Victor, William and Vincent), reached adulthood.

Sir John represented Beaufort (an area more than twice the size of Ireland) in the first Parliament of Cape Colony and established the first private bank in Beaufort West. He was the first Premier of Cape Colony when Responsible Government was granted by Westminster in 1872. He was known for his fearless vindication of self-government against Sir Philip Wodehouse’s attacks upon it, and Sir John insisted, at all times, that the Cape Colony was ripe for self-government and had the men to run it.

Sir John was a great debater and an eloquent orator and because of his ‘roar’ when debating or emphasizing a point was known as “The Lion of Beaufort”. Hence he named the cottage he built near Dalebrook “Beaufort Villa” (later “Beaufort Cottage”).

Elizabeth died suddenly on 8 April 1874 soon after the birth of Sophia Maria, who died the following year, and Sir John decided to retire from politics. He was persuaded, however, to stay on, and after he left the Cabinet in June 1882, was knighted by Queen Victoria in August 1882, receiving the KCMG (Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George).

Respected as a statesman, a farmer and a politician Sir John married Sibella Maria Blenkins (later Lady Molteno), in early 1880. She bore him three sons (Edward, Clifford and Henry) and one daughter (Minnie). Sir John died suddenly on 1 September 1886, aged 72. Lady Molteno inherited the home (later known as “Mentone”) on 3 May 1890 (D.T. 476) and sold it in 1893 to James Alexander Gibson (D.T. 544). This home was later owned by the Williams family and operated as a boarding house for over 20 years (1897-1920) (see Chapter 14, The Homes of St. James).

Sir John’s children by his wife Elizabeth included Maria, his third daughter, who married Thomas Johnson Anderson. Known as ‘T. J.’ he lived at “Quarterdeck”, was a prominent politician and businessman, and a respected member of the Kalk Bay community. Anderson Road is named after him.

The best known of Sir John’s sons were Percy and Sir James. Percy (1861-1937) was born in Edinburgh, was a barrister-at-law, a ship-owner and politician. Her married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Donald Currie, Chairman of the Union-Castle Line and lived permanently
overseas. Sir James, however, was born in Claremont on 5 January 1865, was educated at the Diocesan College and graduated with a B.A., LL.B., from Trinity College, Cambridge. He was called to the Bar at the Inner Temple, London, in January 1889 and thereafter returned to Cape Town to practice.

Sir James first entered Parliament in 1891 when he was elected as a Member for Namaqualand, and after the General Election of 1898 he became a Member for Somerset East. He was the last Speaker of the House in the Cape Parliament (1908-10) and the first Speaker of the House in the Union Parliament (1910-15).

He married Clarissa Celia Holland-Pryor on 21 December 1889. She bore him four children (one boy and three girls). Sir James died while in London on 16 September 1936, aged 71. His son Lieut. V. H. Molteno served in the Royal Navy.

Sorrento Road was named after Sir James’ home “Sorrento” which he built in St. James c. 1908.

Descendants of Sir John Molteno’s family still live in St. James and Carol, daughter of John Charles Molteno III M.C. is married to Keith Macfarlane of “New Seaforth House”.

**George Pilkington**

b. 1879 Sea Point.
d. 1958 St. James.

George William Pilkington lived for most of his life at “Oriana”, Ley Road, St. James. His paintings of marine, sea and coastal scenes of St. James, both in oil and watercolour were greatly prized and he did much to spread the beauty of our coastline among art lovers. He was mainly self-taught but studied briefly during the late 1890s under James Ford in Cape Town, and later attended the drawing classes at the Cape Town School of Art under William G. Bevington and Percy Thatcher.

In 1904 he painted a number of humorous cartoons of life in Cape Town which were reproduced on postcards and were very popular. He was working at the time in the Civil Service as a Private Secretary to, among others, J. W. Sauer and Henry Burton.

He nearly lost his life while travelling in 1918 on a wartime mission as secretary to Henry Burton, then Minister of Railways and Harbours. They were returning to South Africa from England on the "Galway
Castle” when the ship was torpedoed and sunk with heavy loss of life. George Pilkington, because of his knowledge of small boats, was put in charge of the captain’s gig. From seven in the morning until four in the afternoon he held the boat in terrific seas until the destroyer “Oriana” came to the rescue. He later named his home in Ley Road “Oriana” to commemorate his rescue.

One of the passengers in his boat was Sir Ernest Oppenheimer, whose job it was to bale with his boot. Every September 12 for many years afterwards, the anniversary of the rescue, George Pilkington would get the same telegram from Sir Ernest: ‘It’s good to be alive’. Sir Ernest was one of the guests at his and his wife’s golden wedding anniversary in their home “Oriana” on 6 January 1954.

In 1924 George Pilkington left the Civil Service and began cotton farming at Douglas, then briefly entered politics before becoming a full time artist in 1925. He was a member of the S.A. Society of Artists and a co-founder of the Royal Cape Yacht Club.

He participated in many group exhibitions in Cape Town and Johannesburg, and in 1941 he undertook under public commission the two murals (Disembarkation at Cape Town 19th Century and Embarkation at Cape Town 20th Century) at the Cape Town General Post Office. He also wrote for publication and his work “Tales from South Africa’s History for Little Ones” was published by Maskew Miller in 1946. It was translated into Afrikaans at the request of General Hertzog.

Pilkington’s marine paintings caused a sensation when shown for the first time in Johannesburg and in 1936 his painting West Towage was hung at Burlington House by the Royal Academy. In 1948 another painting Kalk Bay Harbour was accepted for the same honour. His painting of the arrival in 1947 of the H.M.S. Vanguard with the King and Queen hung for many years in the Mayor’s Parlour in the City Hall, Cape Town. Pilkington was commissioned to paint marine subjects for the World War 2 War Art records. Although Pilkington only turned to professional painting in his middle years, in the three-and-a-half decades which followed he became one of South Africa’s best-known marine artists.

Pilkington painted for many years at his studio in the old Marine Biological Station, St. James. He painted here from c. 1938 until shortly before the Station was demolished in 1955.
His love of sailing, the sea and St. James played a major part in his successful career and his paintings are treasured by those fortunate enough to own them.

**William Frederick Henry Pocock**  
b. 1857 George.  
d. 1922 Rondebosch.

William Pocock was born in George on 16 May 1857 and lived at “Carisbrooke”, No. 2 Main Road St. James from 1894 - 1918. He was a prominent citizen in Cape Town and came from a line of pioneer pharmacists. His uncle J. T. Pocock (b. 1814) emigrated from England to Cape Town in 1830 and by 1837 was a registered Chemist and Druggist.

His uncle founded the business J. T. Pocock and Co., Lewis Greville (William’s father) followed his brother J. T. to South Africa and having passed his exams and registered as an Apothecary, Chemist and Druggist in 1841 set up business in George. It was here in May 1857 that William was born.

William was the third member of the family to enter pharmacy and took charge of the Cape Town business after his uncle had died in January 1876. He retired in 1902 when he sold J. T. Pocock & Co. to Heynes Matthew. Both Messrs Heynes and Matthew began their pharmaceutical careers with J. T. Pocock and Co.

William Pocock was active in Municipal affairs and was Mayor of Rondebosch (1888) and Mayor of the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality on two occasions (1897 and 1910). During his first term as Mayor (1897-98) he was prominent in improving the police force including the construction of a new police station near the Posthuys, while in his second term as Mayor (1910-11) he was heavily involved in the upgrading of the Muizenberg and St. James beachfront. This included the standardization of bathing boxes and the presentation of building plans for the first Muizenberg Pavilion. He gave the final address, in the absence of Mayor Delbridge, of the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality before incorporation into the City of Greater Cape Town.

He had a keen interest in photography taking some of the first X-ray pictures in South Africa with an apparatus he had imported from overseas. He also interested himself in local photography and was one
of the first to perfect the panoramic photograph. The Pocock Collection now forms part of the photographic collection in the Cape Archives. He was also a keen musician and chess player. In 1885 he married Elizabeth Lydia Dacombe of Durban and they had three sons and four daughters. In 1898 he made his home in England but regularly visited ‘Carisbrooke,” where in 1909 he returned to live. In July 1918 he sold “Carisbrooke” to Everard Digby.

He died at his Rondebosch home on 2 July 1922.

**George Ransome**

b. 1854 Selby, Yorkshire.
d. 1910 Cape Town.

George Ransome was the most prominent architect to live in St. James. He owned the home “Hycliffe”, Jacobs Ladder which he bought in December 1897 from John Molteno II and another.

He was born in Selby, Yorkshire, and received his schooling at Westminster. He became an articled pupil in Piccadilly, London under John MacVicar Anderson, a Past President of the Royal Institute of British Architects. Ransome travelled widely in Europe and was impressed by the Renaissance style of architecture. He came to South Africa in 1879 and took an appointment under the Colonial Government where he worked for three and a half years on the new Houses of Parliament, Cape Town.

An Associate of the Association of the Royal Institute of British Architects, he set up his own practice in Cape Town in 1884. His first work was the Sea Point Town Hall. This was followed by the new nave of St. John’s Church Wynberg, Arderne’s Building Longmarket Street, the Colonial Orphan Chambers, and Juta’s in Adderley Street.

His works in the Municipality of Kalk Bay-Muizenberg included “Knights Villa”, Main Road, Muizenberg, which he designed in 1899 for Mr Clifford Knight, a senior partner in the local shipping firm of Thompson, Watson & Co. Ransome also designed the first Muizenberg School. He was the architect of the new Catholic Church, St. James, which he designed in 1900 in discussion with the Right Reverend John Rooney and Father Duignam. He died at his Cape Town residence, 78 Queen Victoria Street, on 26 November 1910.
The Schreiner/Reitz family

William Philip Schreiner  b. 1857 Herschel district, Cape Colony.
                        d. 1919 Llanelir Tower, Central Wales.

William Francis Reitz Schreiner  b. 1886 Claremont.
          Son of William Philip  d. 1957 St. James.

William Philip Schreiner, KC., CMG., of “Eastcliffe”, No. 16 Main
Road, St. James, was born at Wittebergen Reserve near Herschel. He
was the son of Reverend G. Schreiner, a German missionary. His sister
Olive received widespread acclaim for her book “The Story of an
African Farm”.

After studying at London and Cambridge Universities he was
called to the English Bar in 1882, and in the same year was appointed
an Advocate of the Supreme Court of Cape Colony. A friend of Cecil
Rhodes, he was appointed Legal Adviser to the High Commissioner in
1887. He joined Rhodes’ ministry in May 1893 as Attorney General,
soon resigned, but resumed the post in September 1894. He was a
member of the Jameson Raid Committee and gave evidence before the
Commission of Inquiry at the House of Commons in 1897. After the
general election of 1898 he became Premier of Cape Colony. He held
this position until 1900, but was not re-elected to the House of
Assembly in 1903. He had endured considerable criticism during his
premiership for having had a conciliatory attitude to the Boers, which
created a hostile attitude among the English loyalists and this
considerably burdened him. He was elected a Senator in 1910, a
position he held until 1914. (His brother Theophilus Lyndall Schreiner
was nominated a Senator in January 1915, due to his sensitive
understanding of the wants of the coloured races).

William Philip was High Commissioner in London in 1918 where
he contracted a severe bout of flu. This weakened him considerably
and he never fully recovered. He died at the relatively young age of 61
while recuperating in Central Wales on 28 June 1919, the day on which
the Treaty of Versailles was signed - a treaty in which he supported
both Smuts and Botha in requesting the Allies to take a more lenient
approach to the German people; for to crush them indiscriminately
would only cause them to rise once more. Their plea fell on deaf ears,
but proved to be correct.

William Philip married a sister of Mr Reitz, one-time President of the Orange Free State. They had five children, and his son William Francis Reitz (‘Uncle Bill’), born in Claremont 1886, lived at “Eastcliffe” from c. 1916 until his death in 1957.

Both father and son were keen rock fishermen at St. James and William (senior) broke the then record for the Gordon’s Bay coast by landing a huge kabeljauw of 111 pounds. He also led a petition to the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality in 1911 to build a tidal pool at St. James to ensure safe bathing. This the Council did and it marked the start of the development of tidal pools along the coastline. A further two were built at the same time, one at Kalk Bay and one at Woolley’s Pool. Contractor Chas. McGie did all three pools at a cost of £647-2s-6d.

William (Junior) affectionately known by his friends and in the rugby fraternity as ‘Uncle Bill’, followed in his father’s footsteps and became an advocate. He served in East Africa in the First World War and among of claims to fame were that he was a renowned rugby administrator and served as a Springbok selector for forty years (1912-1952) during which period South Africa never lost a test series. He died a bachelor at his seaside home “Eastcliffe” on 13 April 1957, having lived here for more than forty years.

**Deneys Reitz**

b. 1882 Bloemfontein.


Deneys Reitz was the son of F. W. Reitz, former President of the Orange Free State, and related to William Philip Schreiner who had married his aunt. His wife Leila Agnes lived at “Pevensey”, Main Road, St. James (alongside The Breaker’s Hotel) for many years after her husband’s death. She had originally built this home in 1933 to architect A. S. Cruickshank’s design.

Deneys Reitz served as a soldier under General Smuts in Namaqualand during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) and his book “Commando” relating thereto was published in 1929.

He was educated at Grey College, Bloemfontein, and was at the Peace Conference of Vereeniging in 1902. He was Minister of Lands in the Union Cabinet; and was Member of Parliament for Port Elizabeth Central, 1921-29. He later became the Member of
Parliament for Barberton, served in the Cabinet as Minister of Native Affairs, and was appointed Deputy Prime Minister. In 1943 General Smuts appointed him High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa in London, a position he held until his untimely death in London in 1944.

He had married Leila, daughter of Dr Claude Wright, in 1919. She had the distinction of being the first woman to be elected to the Union Parliament, and held the seat of Parktown, Johannesburg, from 1933 to 1943. She lived at St. James for many years and her involvement in politics only added to the prestige of her eminent family, some of whom were prominent residents of St. James.

d. 1926 Salt River.

Malcolm William Searle was the son of Walter Searle, a Cape Town merchant, and his wife Margaret Searle (née McIntyre). He came to South Africa in 1860, was educated at the Diocesan College, Rondebosch; took a B.A. degree and graduated from St. Catherine’s College Cambridge (with an LL. B.) in 1881. He was called to the Bar of the Inner Temple in January 1882 and admitted as an advocate at the Cape Bar in April 1882. He was Legal Advisor to the High Commissioner for South Africa 1893-1900.

It was at about this time that he bought the property “Sea Spray” on the Main Road (No. 105) opposite Buissinne Road (today Leighton Road) St. James. The home had been built by Philip Morgenrood c. 1840 as the transfer to Lewis Lloyd Michell in 1842 shows for the first time a house on the diagram (Vol. 52 No. 5084). Searle bought the home from Michell for £900 on 25 May 1894 (D.T. 2648). He owned “Sea Spray” as a holiday home for near on twenty years until he sold it to Professor John Gilchrist, the marine biologist on 9 March 1912 (D.T. 71605).

The house was damaged in 1905 by the sewerage scheme contractor J.V.C. Collie, who while blasting bedrock along the Main Road opposite “Sea Spray”, failed to take proper precaution which resulted in broken windows, doors and paintwork. Searle threatened to sue the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality for the damage. The Council were inundated with claims as Collie proceeded with this
work, but decided to settle Searle’s claim immediately. The sewerage scheme nearly bankrupted the Council because when they tried to recover the money from these claims for damages from Collie, he declared himself insolvent and left the job unfinished.

In 1889 he had married Emma Jane, daughter of F. Y. St. Leger, first editor of the “Cape Times”. Their address from c. 1906 until the time of Sir Malcolm’s death was “Highlands” Tennant Road, Wynberg. There they raised their family there which consisted of four boys and two girls. His younger daughter, Jean, married Harry Lawrence, a Cabinet Minister under General Smuts. A son Malcolm became a Rear Admiral in the Royal Navy and another, Frederick, a Judge of the Cape Provincial Division (1946-51).

Malcolm Searle was appointed Judge of the Cape Provincial Division of the Supreme Court of South Africa in 1910, a post he held until 1922 whereafter he was elected Judge-President until his untimely death in the Salt River rail smash on 9 June 1926, when he and another St. James resident, Frank Molteno, perished with 17 other persons.

Syfret Godlonton and Low handled the negligence claim of Lady Searle and her children against the South African Railways and Harbours, who agreed to pay the sum of £10000 to the family who had lost their father so tragically.

Alfred Ernest Snape    b. April 1881 Manchester.
                       d. October 1946 Cape Town.

Professor Alfred Snape was born on 25 April 1881, and was appointed Professor of Civil Engineering at the South African College (later the University of Cape Town) on 1 January 1910. As Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and a member of many committees of the Senate he represented the University at many Congresses throughout the world. He was greatly acclaimed as a man who identified himself thoroughly with the interests of the University. He held the Chair of Civil Engineering at UCT from 1918 until his death on 12 October 1946. The Snape Building named in his honour was opened in September 1966. He married Eleanor Hambidge in 1913; they had one son and three daughters.

Professor Snape owned “Trevonne Cottage No. 1” which was one
of a pair of cottages that was built by William Pocock behind his home “Carisbrooke”.

Professor Snape spent many enjoyable years relaxing at this St. James holiday cottage which he often shared with his great friend Professor Matthew (‘Maxie’) Drennan. Professor Drennan (born 22 August 1885) had a similar academic career to that of Professor Snape. He was appointed Professor of Anatomy at the University of Cape Town on 1 April 1919, a post he held until 1955. He was elected an Emeritus Professor in 1956, and died on 27 July 1965.

Emily Toy  
b. 1878 Middlesex England.  
d. 1938 Sea Point.

Emily Toy (née Chapman) was born on 25 June 1877 at the town of Willesden in Middlesex. She was the daughter of Thomas Chapman, a licenced victualler. She married Arthur William Toy (born 16 September 1864) who was the son of William Thomas Toy, a coachman. They were married in Hampstead on 11 August 1898 and lived in New Malden, Surrey. They emigrated to South Africa c. 1904.

Arthur Toy leased the Seahurst Hotel from Captain John Gentry in 1915 and had run the hotel for three years when he suffered a severe stroke which left him paralysed down his right side. He was bedridden and died two years later on 31 August 1920, aged 56. Emily, who had run the hotel during his illness, then took over the full management of the hotel which she eventually bought from Gentry in 1925. She had six children, three boys (Arthur Gordon (‘Doley’) who married Jean Flegg, Winston Albert who married Molly Short and Wilfred Rowan who married May Tanner from Edinburgh) and three girls (Evelyn Shelagh (married Vernon Dickson), Ivy Irene (spinster) and Patricia Olive (married Alan Hargreaves) - all the children grew up at the Seahurst Hotel.

Emily Toy remarried in 1928 in Durban. Her second husband was Mr Charles Osolin. The Great Depression of the early 1930s severely affected the hotel and in 1931 it was auctioned off in the assigned estate of Emily Osolin (formerly Toy). Despite this setback Emily continued with the running of boarding houses.

Charles Osolin died on 24 November 1935 and at the time of his death Emily was running two boarding houses, “Wavecrest”, Beach
Road, Sea Point, and “Rowan Hall” in Cape Town.

Emily died on 4 March 1938 aged 60 at Kings House, Queens Road, Sea Point, and was fondly remembered by many residents of St. James as the lady who ran the Seahurst Hotel from 1918 - 1931.

Her eldest son, ‘Doley’, lived at “Morning Glory”, Moselle Road from 1935 to 1981. His wife Jean died tragically in 1948 and he brought up his two daughters Deborah and Alison at “Morning Glory”.

**Rex Samuelson Walker**

b. 1909 Pietermaritzburg.
d. 1993 St. James.

Rex Walker arrived at St. James in January 1925 when his father, Harold Walker, bought the home “Berg-en-dal” in Jacobs Ladder, and the family, which included his mother Rene and his two brothers, Brian and Jack, took up residence.

He lived at “Berg-en-dal” until he married Daphne Goodson on 31 May 1935, and later that year built their home “Denique” (Architects: H. L. Roberts and L. L. Small) at the top of Jacobs Ladder.

Rex attended the University of Cape Town where he graduated with a B.Com. and after completing his articles with Hands and Shore passed his final Chartered Accountancy exams. He then joined the Cape Town Municipality in 1931 where he rose to the position of Deputy City Treasurer before ‘going north’ with the South African Forces in World War II.

He was on active service in Egypt and North Africa, was promoted to the rank of Captain, and was decorated with the Africa Star and the Africa Service Medal. He was recalled in February 1943 and appointed City Treasurer, succeeding Mr D. W. Pringle who retired on 10 May 1943. Rex, then aged 33, held the position of City Treasurer until his retirement at the age of 60 on 9 June 1969. He was one of the longest serving Heads of Department in the Cape Town Municipality, and had during his term of office raised countless loans and steered the City finances through some troubled waters.

On retirement Rex spent most of his life partaking in his favourite sport, golf. He was President and an Honorary Life Member of the Westlake Golf Club.

Throughout his life he strove to improve the lot of the fisherfolk of Kalk Bay and was a great friend of Father Doran who called upon him
on many occasions to use his influence with job placements in the City Council for the unfortunate folk who had fallen on hard times due to the slump in the fishing industry.

The only favour Rex asked Father Doran in return was to ring the St. James Church bell as a 'wake-up-call' each morning at five to seven. Father Doran obliged and throughout his years as parish priest from 1943-1970 the St. James Church bell was religiously rung each morning at five-to-seven, a tradition which has now sadly ceased.

Both Rex and Father Doran were proud residents of St. James and were especially prominent in the post war years of this seaside suburb.

The Hon. Sidney Frank Waterson  

b.1896 Sydenham, Kent.  
d. 1976 Cape Town.

Sidney Waterson was the elder son of John and Louise Waterson. He came to South Africa as a child and after schooling served with the South African Forces during World War I (1915-18). He became a Member of Parliament for the South Peninsula (1929-1938) and was High Commissioner for the Union in London from September 1939-1942. He held various Cabinet posts in Smuts's Ministry between 1942-1948. He was the Member of Parliament for Claremont (1943-53) and for Constantia (1953-1970).

He lived in the early 1930s at "Sea Spray" No. 105 Main Road St. James but on 15 January 1935 bought the home "Acadie" in Moselle Road from Henry John Barclay (D.T. 1617).

He applied to the Cape Town City Council in February 1935 to remove a bank of rock and boulders at the bottom of Westray Steps in order that he might build a garage for his new home. He changed the name of the house to "Highways" in 1936. It stands on the corner of Westray Steps and Moselle Road. He sold the home to Margaret Tabureau on 11 March 1943 (D.T. 2611).

He married Hilda Maude Markus on 16 April 1924. Known as 'Betty' Waterson she was a nurse with the Anglo-French Red Cross Society and at the outbreak of war in 1939 she was very active in St. James and the South Peninsula in organizing the nursing services. She founded the South African Voluntary Service to care for those in the Armed Forces and to channel gifts from South Africa to Britain. She was also involved in establishing the First Red Cross Voluntary Aid
Rex S. Walker (1909 - 1993)

Sidney Waterson (1896 - 1979)
The Steps - St. James

The Steps - later Jacobs Ladder - c. 1905
"Berg-en-Dal" (top right)
CHAPTER 16

Mountain Fires

Mountain fires were always a problem at St. James and although the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality, and later the Cape Town City Council tried to introduce what were referred to as fire-paths (i.e. fire breaks) it was not until the completion of Boyes Drive in 1928 that an effective fire-break was created. It was effective because it not only halted the progress of the fire down the mountain but also enabled quick access by the Fire Brigade. Boyes Drive was started in earnest in 1924, but had it been constructed two years earlier it might have halted what was, without doubt, the worst fire in the history of St. James.

The following extract from the “Cape Times” of 6 April 1922 is the best way to record the fear and devastation caused by this mountain fire.

Mountainside in Flames
Exciting scenes at St. James
Rhodes Cottage Damaged
Mr Orpen’s house burned down

“An alarming bushfire that was attended with destruction of property, took place yesterday afternoon on the mountain slopes extending from St. James to Muizenberg. It was a fortunate circumstance that the fire took place in daylight which robbed the sight of half the terror, which it would otherwise have had for those who occupied the residences that stood within the fire zone; for if it had occurred at night there would have been an absence of the ready help that was available in keeping back the advances of the flames as they approached the dwelling houses.

Strong Breeze Blowing

Aided by a strong south-westerly breeze and the dry sapless nature of the bush, the fire spread with startling rapidity, and within an hour and a half the mountain side had changed into a black and smouldering ruin, having two villas in flames, one being the historic cottage where Rhodes died, and the other, “Melrose”, (on the St. James Main Road) the property of Mr Harry Orpen. It is significant that both these structures had thatched roofs, which provided ready material for the burning embers that fell in showers.

It was about 3 o’clock in the afternoon when the flames from the fire which had been burning on the top of the mountain for several
days were seen creeping over the edge and setting alight the grass and
bush that had found a foothold on the steep walls of rock that run to
half the mountain height.

**Falling Sparks**

Burning embers began to fall and in very little more time than it
takes to tell, a cascade of fire was falling on the thick bush on the
slopes below. That this was not an ordinary bush fire soon became
apparent as the flames swept down the mountain side so quickly that
in less than half-an-hour the flames were amongst the residences
opposite the station at St. James. The line of fire was clearly defined,
its limit on the Kalk Bay side being the top of the steps above Mr Gus
Trollip’s house in Ley Road.

**Residents Alarm**

Residents of houses near the bush on and above that level at once
began to call for assistance and to remove their furniture to a safer
place, and presently everywhere became enveloped in a thick cloud of
smoke. A telephone message was received at the St. James Railway
Station calling for assistance at the home of Mrs Rossouw near the top
of Jacobs Ladder, and two of the porters with four natives went to her
assistance, some beating out the approaching flames and others
removing the furniture. One of the porters who responded to the call
told the “Cape Times” representative that while he had seen many bush
fires up-country he had never witnessed one so fierce or that had
spread so quickly. The fire reached down to the “Star of the Sea”
convent which, but for the strenuous efforts of the staff and the
schoolgirls, would have become an inferno. Most of the houses which
have recently been erected on the high levels have had their immediate
surroundings denuded of bush, and though this reduced the risk of their
taking fire, there was danger from the intense heat and the shower of
sparks to say nothing of the personal inconvenience caused by the
thick smoke.

**Outhouses destroyed**

Several wood and iron outhouses attached to these dwellings
caught fire and were destroyed. Fanned by the stiff breeze the fire was
not long in reaching the houses built on the first rise after leaving St.
James Station towards Muizenberg. Most of the properties, had been
cleared of scrub, and the occupants had not much to fear beyond the
scorching heat and blinding smoke.
“Melrose”, the villa already mentioned, caught fire, not as a result of being in actual contact with the flames, but owing to the fact that the roof is thatched with reeds which caught alight from the flying sparks. Most of the furniture was removed in time, but the arrival of the Fire Brigade was not sufficiently early to save the building from being gutted. Their service, was, however, invaluable in saving the spread of the fire to the adjoining residences. Further along the road towards Muizenberg the track of the fire was set further back and at the back of Mr Garlick’s house a belt of trees and bush was left untouched. The adjoining residence, “Barkly House”, has a thatched roof and by the same good turn of fortune it escaped the doom that befell the other two villas of similar kinds of roofs.

**Rhodes Cottage Alight**

Not far removed from the spot is the Rhodes Cottage, and in view of the fate of “Melrose”, the caretaker with a willing band of helpers, removed the art treasures, mementos and the old furniture to a place of safety. It was well they did so, for the storm of sparks and embers set fire to the thatched roof. The City Fire Brigade had received a first call from the occupiers of “Melrose”, but they stopped on their way from Muizenberg to save, if possible, the historic place which was, however, damaged by fire and water. At 5.30pm the bush above Sir Abe Bailey’s residence, “Rust-en-Vrede”, was still burning, but the main body of the fire had moved to the shoulder of the mountain, and was just dying out.

Occurring at a time when most of the able-bodied men were in the city, there was naturally a scarcity of fire-beaters, not that it would have been possible to stop the onrush of flames. What the feelings of these inmates of the houses that were threatened were at the non-appearance of menfolk in response to telephone calls for assistance can be readily imagined. Later trolley loads of sailors arrived from Simon’s Town, but too late to take part in the earlier and more serious stages of the fire.”

Few mountain fires have caused damage below Boyes Drive, once it was completed, but the one on Christmas Eve 1945 did ‘jump’ Boyes Drive and cause considerable damage to properties below the drive, although no houses were burnt. The police report indicated that the fire was started by a party of picnickers in the Clovelly Valley who had left their fire unattended. Within a few hours the fire had crossed the saddle
of the mountain and was burning furiously above Kalk Bay, threatening the Fisherman’s Flats. A change of wind sent the blaze along to St. James and many houses below Boyes Drive were threatened. Edited extracts from the “Cape Times” on Christmas Day indicated the severity of the fire: -

“Hundreds of residents in the district stood by to evacuate their homes and so threatening did the fire become that no less than 24 occupants of homes below the Boyes Drive in Kalk Bay and St. James removed their furniture to places of safety. The roar of the fire could be heard along the Main Road, Kalk Bay and clouds of soot, cinders, ash and smoke swept through the streets.”

The fire was finally extinguished some 36 hours later after lorry-loads of naval ratings from “H.M.S. Enterprise”, anchored in Simon’s Town, were sent to assist the weary municipal beaters and fire fighters. It had been a close call, but fortunately there were no homes gutted or persons injured.

Hopefully with more modern fire fighting equipment and better communications the tragedies of mountain fires can be reduced, but who can forget the most fearsome fires that raged throughout the South Peninsula recently during January 2000.

After that experience fires of such proportion must surley be a thing of the past.
CHAPTER 17

From 1950 to 2000

The history of St. James over the past 50 fifty years 1950 - 2000, has been low-key although some developments have occurred.

The Catholic Church, (consecrated by Archbishop Lawrence Henry on 22 July 2001), the Mission School and “Star of the Sea” are all ‘alive and well’. The Mission School continues off Clairvaux Road, Kalk Bay under the principalship of Greg Gordon and “Star of the Sea” under Yvonne Staniforth. Attendance at both these schools is most satisfactory, with “Star of the Sea” having now 16 class-rooms, a computer centre, remedial teaching, after-care facilities, and a music centre. It is a co-ed school and goes up to Standard 7. The numbers have increased from 121 pupils in 1984 to 370 pupils in 2001 with no less than 18 full time teaching staff. Yvonne Staniforth is the school’s first lay principal having taken over from Sister Bernadette in the early 1980s. The school has recently taken on its first male teacher in 93 years of convent education.

The Marine Biological Station was demolished in February 1955.

The public open space between the railway station and the high-water mark is well used by school and summer beach-goers.

The St. James Beach has only 14 bathing boxes. (12 singles and 2 doubles). It is an ‘open’ beach which is packed in the summer months.

Less than two dozen new homes have been built over the past fifty years and all homes have been numbered for mail delivery.

Ten homes along the Main Road have been declared National Monuments. These are:
“Corriemar” No. 4 on 22 February 1991
“Greystones” No. 18 on 27 December 1985
“Ceolnamara” No. 20 on 11 May 1984
“Braeside” No. 3 Braemar Road on 30 May 1985
“Colwyn” No. 22 on 11 May 1984
“Cavamore” No. 32 on 11 May 1984
“Stonehenge” No. 36 on 17 March 1989
“Bude” No. 82 on 23 December 1983 (“name changed to “Sea Fever”)
“Villa Capri” No. 86 on 23 March 1979
“La Rochelle” No. 92 on 11 May 1984.

The Corner Shop still operates, currently as a restaurant called “Sabbatini’s”.

St. James Hotel is now a Senior Citizen’s Retirement Centre with frail care.

Seahurst Hotel, later the Robin Gordon Hotel, has been demolished and has been replaced by St. James Terrace, a complex of double-storey town houses.

The side-roads remain the same except that Capri Road has been extended up the mountain and the zigzag shortened.

Boyces Drive remains the same.

The St. James Station has increased security, but basically remains the same.

A new premises has been built for the housing of the Law Enforcement personnel on St. James common between the station platform and the sea.

One tennis court has been closed and is used for parking, and the other is fully functional after renovations.

Thankfully there have been few disasters other than accidents on the Main Road which is still congested at peak hours as it was 50 years ago.

Personalities have come and gone and the likes of Dr ‘Bill’ Schulze, Dr Karl Sterban, and John Wiley have been ‘called to higher service’, but Paddy Harrison, Keith Macfarlane and Des Cochran are still alive and well. Des still lives at his home “Cooleen” in St. James Road where he was born in October 1922 close on 80 years at St. James, surely a record among our residents.
**CHRONOLOGY**

1850 • Dr Henry Bickersteth buys large plot of ground including cottage from estate P. A. de Necker. Area approximately from today’s Heytor Road to Carisbrooke Road.
• Francis Pocock erects building at corner of Main Road and what was later to become Ley Road. Site of “The Homestead”. (Bought property from James Bell (1846).

1853 • Johannes Stukeris buys the above property with building from Francis Pocock. Adds more buildings.
• Abraham Auret builds his home “Auret’s Cottage” at corner of Main Road and what was later to become St. James Road.
• “Villa Capri” whaling station closed.

1854 • George Ransome born at Selby, Yorkshire.

1855 • “Pentrich” whaling station closed. Johannes Stukeris buys building, converts it to a home.

1857 • William Pocock born at George, Southern Cape.

1858 • Sir George Grey, Governor of the Cape, grants piece of ground for religious purposes only to Bishop Griffith for the building of the first St. James Catholic Church.

1859 • “Villa Capri” whaling station placed on market by estate Robert Langley. Johann George Rathfelder (the inn-keeper) buys.

1861 • Lt. Colonel Henry Ashton buys site on which the St. James Hotel would be built. He builds a cottage known as “Botheration Cottage”. So named because of a huge boulder, which was unable to be moved, and around which cottage is built.

1862 • Abrahan Auret involved in rescue of 15 crew members of “Johanna Wagner.”
• Dr Henry Bickersteth dies, aged 49.

1863 • George Boyes, son of Major Boyes, born at the Castle Cape Town.

1865 • Johannes Stukeris liquidates his property and sells “The Homestead” to Adriaan Johannes Zeederberg and “Pentrich” to William Brading, who builds a second house on the property.

1866 • Professor John Gilchrist born at Anstruther, Scotland.


1874 • Emma and Madeline Nicholls drown off Danger Beach.
Memorial font donated by their father John Nicholls to Holy...
Trinity Church, Kalk Bay.

- Father John Duignam appointed Parish Priest.
- Catholic Mission School, Kalk Bay, moved to backroom of church, St James.
- Captain John Gentry born at York, England.

1875
- R. H. Arderne builds “Arderne's Cottage”, later No. 28 Main Road.
- Hermann Rupert buys “Botheration Cottage”. Establishes a boarding house and changes name to “Botheration House”.
- William Mortimer Farmer buys “Pentrich”.
- “Carisbrooke” with stables and coachhouse (later “Corriemar”), built by Mrs Jamison.
- George Pilkington born at Sea Point.

1883
- Railway reaches St. James. Mountainside platform a halt, becomes known as the St. James Church Halt.

1884
- Hermann Rupert declared insolvent. John W. Wells buys “Botheration House”.
- Father Duignam builds presbytery and new Mission School on mountain side of Main Road opposite St. James Church.

1885
- Submission of first plan for High Level Road.
- W. F. R. ‘Bill’ Schreiner born at Claremont, Cape.

1887
- George Findlay buys “Villa Capri”, now a residence. Remains in family for seven generations.
- Servaas van Breda buys “Pentrich”, does extensive alterations including joining the two houses.

1890
- Jacobs Ladder (known as “The Steps”) built by local residents up to house “Berg-en-dal”, 141 steps.
- Village Management Board established.
- W. Pocock buys “Carisbrooke”, does alterations.

1894
- Erection of first bathing boxes at St. James beach.
- “Carisbrooke” stables and coach house converted by W. Searle into his home “Devon Cottage” No. 4 Main Road (later renamed “Corriemar”).

1895
- First footpath (pavement) by Cape Divisional Council along Main Road.
- Letterbox placed on St. James Station.
- Allan Chase Taylor buys properties (later Nos. 26 and 28 Main Road) from R. H. Arderne’s deceased estate, changes name later from “Arderne’s Cottage” to “Taylor’s Cottage”.

1896
- Professor Gilchrist appointed Marine Biologist to Cape
Government.

- St. James becomes a compulsory stopping place for trains and Cape Government Railways’ timetables refer to it as St. James’s.
- J. W. Attwell buys “Botheration House”. Demolishes same for building of his new home “La Rivage” (architect Black and Fagg).

1897
- Convicts employed to move rocks to form a rough pool and also to clear beach at St. James of rocks.
- Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality acknowledges “Picnic Bush” as a picnic site that must be cleaned by council regularly.

1898
- Allan Chase Taylor, dies at Green Point home.
- Professor Gilchrist’s proposal for Marine Research Station approved.
- PWD submits plans for above.
- Site of Marine Biological Station at chosen.
- Notice board erected on Nicholls Beach (Danger Beach) stating that taking of sand is not permitted. Also “Bathing Dangerous” sign erected.

1899
- Outbreak of 2nd Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). Many homeless refugees arrive.
- Architect George Ransome’s plan for new Catholic Church approved by Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality subject to street line restrictions, which were to be agreed by Father Duignam and Mayor Pocock.
- Cecil Rhodes buys a cottage on Main Road St. James within 200 metres of Carisbrooke Road, the border of St. James. This greatly enhances the belief that the St. James coastline is an ideal health resort.

1900
- Construction starts on “new” St. James Catholic Church as well as improvements to Mission School. ‘Old’ St. James Church demolished by Cape Government Railways.
- Allan Chase Taylor’s executors subdivide the properties he bought from estate R. H. Arderne (Nos. 22 - 28 Main Road). Work completed by Government Surveyor M. E. Smuts with proviso that the width of the side-road (Braemar Road) be 30 foot wide.
- Hillrise “hard road” completed by Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality, no access for vehicular traffic.
Frank Stansfield takes over running of St. James Hotel for widow M. A. Chapman and her young family. Hotel remains in Mrs Chapman’s name.

Father Duignam given permission to take sand free of charge from St. James beach for church construction.

First stage of Marine Biological Station consisting of two ground floor rooms completed by builders Mitchell and Mackine.

Public tap for free supply of water from overflow of municipal reservoir provided on Main Road.

Kerbing and guttering along Main Road commences (completed 1906).

1901

- ‘New’ Catholic Church and Mission School completed.
- First station master’s house built.
- Start of the waterborne sewage scheme along Main Road.
- Outbreak of Bubonic Plague.
- 2nd stage of Marine Biological Station consisting of double storey building and a further single storey completed by builder A. Adams. Professor Gilchrist takes up residence at the Marine Biological Station

1902

- William Fletcher buys “Pentrich”. Does alterations and later builds garage. He names home “Pentrich” after the village in Derbyshire where he was born. Previous name, if any, unknown. Many cottages were, however, known by their owner’s name.
- Abraham Auret dies at his cottage aged 83.
- 2nd Anglo-Boer War hostilities cease.
- Great influx of residents to St. James noted in municipal minutes.
- W. P. Schreiner builds “Eastcliffe”.
- Bandstand erected on St. James Common between railway platform and sea.
- Home “Seahurst”, forerunner to the Seahurst Hotel, built.
- Archbishop William West Jones buys “The Homestead”.
- Planting of manataka and cypress trees by Cape Government Railways commences on railway property St. James to Kalk Bay
- Father Doran born at Cape Town (Parish Priest 1943-71).
- T. A. Greenshields buys “Auret’s Cottage” from Auret’s deceased estate. Remains owner until his death in 1943.
- La Rivage Hotel changes name to St. James Hotel.
- Emanuel Otto Rathfelder of “Belle Ombre” farm Constantia builds holiday home “La Rochelle” corner of Main and Ley Roads.
- Benjamin Hudson builds Corner Shops and stable with loft in
St. James Road (later known as “The Match Box”).

- Building of a safe bathing place at St. James beach under taken by Messrs Albrecht and Brown, two local residents. Council to share costs which are not to exceed £50.
- T. J. Anderson requests immediate erection of signs “Bathing Dangerous” after M. J. Stewart drowns off Danger Beach.

1904
- George Boyes appointed Resident Magistrate of Simon’s Town (stays in office until 1916).

1905
- Harry Orpen buys”Taylor’s Cottage” No. 28 Main Road. Renames home “Melrose”. Resides there until his death in 1954.
- Cape Government Railways build loop (550 feet) at St. James Station so that trains can cross while at station.
- Improvements to Marine Biological Station including new pumps and a new tank-room completed.
- Advocate (later Judge) Searle’s home “Sea Spray” damaged by rock blasting by J.V.C. Collie, contractor for laying sewerage pipe along Main Road. Bedrock at this section of the road near Seahurst Hotel forced the contractor to do blasting which at times, if proper care was not taken, damaged homes. Claims were settled by KalkBay-Muizenberg Municipality with little compensation from contractor who went insolvent soon afterwards.
- First meeting of the St. James and Kalk Bay ratepayers.
- Fr. Duignam granted permission to quarry stone from mountain behind church, free of charge, to build new steps for church and Mission School.
- Seahurst Hotel opens.

1906
- Plans submitted to Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality for building of a convalescent convent for sick nuns. Building to be called “Star of the Sea”.
- Marine Biological Station open to the public to view fish in tanks every day of the week. Previously only one day a week. This proved a great seaside attraction.

1907
- Overhead bridge built at St. James Station (cost £307-8s-1d). Platform widened. Approach to beach to be built close to bridge.
- Electricity supplied from Royal Road power station, Muizenberg to St. James Main Road and the Marine Biological Station (replaced hand-operated pumps).
- Fr. Duignam requests exemption from rates for Church as well as “Star of the Sea” convalescent convent (under construction). Granted.
- Mr Herbert requests to the road to his house be called The Ley”.

122
1908
- S.A. Museum take over the running of the Marine Biological Station.
- “Star of the Sea” opens as a nuns convalescent convent, but almost immediately opens its doors to a small class-room of ten pupils. Later this proved to be the start of what was to develop into a fully fledged convent school from kindergarten to matric.
- Macadamizing of Main Road commences (completed 1913).
- Electricity supplied to St. James Station and gradually to residents as meters became available.

1909
- Hillrise Road upgraded. Two posts on Main Road prevent vehicular traffic. No horses with carts were allowed up Hillrise Road as it was dangerous as well as cruel to the animals. Even after cars were introduced the road remained closed to traffic.

1910
- Periodical Court established in centre shop of the Corner Shops in St. James Road. The Courtroom to be used as a polling station in event of a contest on the School Board.
- Captain John Joseph Gentry buys Seahurst Hotel from Jessie Gertrude Miller.
- First boarder accepted in January at what is now known as the “Star of the Sea” Convent School. Four more follow later in the year.
- Electricity installed at “Star of the Sea”.
- Request for Post Office at St. James refused.
- Notices erected on Main Road: “Drive carefully”, “Drive slowly”.
- New benches placed on Main Road. Marine walk between Muizenberg and Kalk Bay promoted as a tourist attraction.
- Frank Stansfield dies while manager of the St. James Hotel aged 38.
- Benjamin Hudson of Corner Shops declared insolvent. Michiel Hiddingh buys property. Managed by the Colonial Orphan Chamber and Trust Co.
- George Ransome dies at his home in Queen Victoria Street aged 56.

1911
- Thatched roof bungalow at Seahurst Hotel approved by Council. Later known as “Seahurst Cottage” and part formed the tennis court pavilion.
- Petition led by W. P. Schreiner, former Premier of Cape Colony, now resident of St. James, for proper tidal pool at St. James. Council decide to build same as well as two tidal pools at Kalk Bay (Bishop’s Pool and Woolley’s Pool). Chas. McGhie awarded contract for all three pools at £647-2s-6d.
1912
- “Coolarty” No. 42 Main Road, built. Owner Rachel Kerr.
- Rodwell Road and Auret Road built by Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality after petition from residents.
  Cost £750 (to be paid by residents in one single payment).
- “The Steps” renamed Jacobs Ladder.
- Provincial Administration takes over running of Marine Biological Station.
- 10mph speed limit along Main Road introduced.
  Suitable signs erected (later increased to 20mph on completion of macadamizing).
- Many plans submitted to Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality requesting conversion of coachhouses and stables to motor garages.

1913
- Incorporation of Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality into the City of Greater Cape Town.
- Mrs M. A. Chapman of St. James Hotel declared insolvent.
  Ownership passes initially to creditor Pegrams, and then to Spencer Stansfield.
- Van Ryneveld buys “La Rochelle”. Family ownership continues for nearly sixty years.

1914
- World War I starts.
- Pegram’s subsidiary, The Opera House (Grand Parade) Restaurant (Pty.) Ltd., buys the St. James Hotel at public auction of insolvent estate M. A. Chapman.
- “Star of the Sea” now a fully-fledged convent school from Kindergarten to Matric.
- Agreement reached between City Council and Provincial Administration over supply of seawater from Marine Biological Station for street watering.

1915
- Spencer Stansfield buys St. James Hotel from Pegram’s subsidiary.
- 3 additional tanks (including an exhibition tank for public viewing) supplied to Marine Biological Station.
- Frank Rhodes converts/demolishes R. H. Arderne’s coach house and stables to build home “Irisville”. (No. 26 Main Road).

1916
- George Boyes, Resident Magistrate Simon’s Town, transferred to Queenstown.
- Ley Road from Main Road to steps upgraded and tarred.
- Main Road widening commences as macadamizing progresses.
- Frank Rhodes builds “Esme Cottage” No. 24 Main Road.
1917  • Estate F. W. Mills buys “Pentrich” for his widow Edith Mills. Remains in family to this day.
       • Spencer Mills converts W. Fletcher’s garage behind “Pentrich” into home “Bangaloo”, No. 3 Pentrich Road.
       • Fred Mills converts “Pentrich” stables and coach house into home “St. Ives”, No. 5 Pentrich Road.
       • Laundry added at “Star of the Sea” convent.
       • Captain Gentry joins Spencer Stansfield at St. James Hotel. Retains ownership of Seahurst Hotel, which he leases to Arthur William Toy.
       • New St. James Station built, structure same as today.

1918  • World War I ends.
       • St. James Tennis Courts built on property leased from South African Railways.
       • The great flu epidemic. St. James Mission School converted into a hospital with nuns acting as nurses.
       • W. Pocock sells “Carisbrooke”.

1919  • St. James Road upgraded and kerbed.
       • Father Duignam adds Sisters’ Chapel to Catholic Church.
       • Telephone installed at “Star of the Sea” convent for first time.
       • Jacobs Ladder upgraded and all encroachments remedied.
       • G. W. Forrest changes name “Devon Cottage” to “Corriemar” (No.4 Main Road).

1920  • “Star of the Sea” double-storeyed block, consisting of six additional class-rooms, completed.
       • William Arthur Toy dies.
       • William Duncan Taylor builds “Colwyn”.
       • Second station master’s house built.

1921  • Additions to Mission School class-rooms completed.
       • Macadamizing of Main Road completed.
       • Council terminate agreement with Provincial Administration for sea water from Marine Biological Station for street watering.
       • W. Robb builds “Ceolnamara”.

1922  • W. Pocock, twice Mayor of the Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality and past resident of “Carisbrooke”, dies.
       • The Great Mountain Fire (April): “Melrose” plus many outhouses gutted. Rhodes Cottage severely damaged.
       • Pentrich Road upgraded, kerbed and steps built.
       • Steenbras Water Scheme comes on line.

1923  • Construction of Boyes Drive starts at Muizenberg near Mountain View quarry.
- Westray steps built by Messrs. Rose and Phillips.
- Deepend wall of St. James Pool reinforced.
- "Hard road" laid from Main Road up mountainside alongside St. James Hotel. Later named Sandhurst Road.
- Council take over, Castle Lane later named Leighton Court Road.

1924
- Father Duignam Jubilee (1874 - 1924).
- George Boyes dies, aged 61, at "Oriana", Ley Road.
- St. James Convict Station built to house convicts for building of Boyes Drive. House "Petrava" on this site today.
- Construction of Boyes Drive, part of the "All Round the Cape Peninsula Road", begins in earnest.

1925
- CSSM (Children’s Seaside Service Mission) holds first service at St. James under Mr Frank Millard.
- Spencer Stansfield sells St. James Hotel to Captain John Gentry.
- Gentry sells Seahurst Hotel to Emily Toy.
- Father Duignam retires as Parish Priest, moves to Bonnievale.

1926
- St. James Road zigzag and steps to Boyes Drive built.
- Professor Gilchrist dies at Marine Biological Station, aged 60.
- Dr Cecil von Bonde appointed to succeed Professor Gilchrist.
- Frank Molteno of "The Barnacle", and Sir Malcolm Searle killed in Salt River train smash (9 June).

1927
- Lower Sandhurst Road (Main Road to steps), Mentone Road and Capri Road (Main Road to steps) all upgraded.
- Electrification of railway line - overhead bridge removed and subway built.

1928
- Jacobs Ladder extended from "Berg-en-Dal" to Boyes Drive.
- Boyes Drive opened.

1929
- Improvements to laboratory and library added at Marine Biological Station.
- Second phase of Main Road widening commences.
- St. James Convict Station demolished

1930
- Vehicular access to Hillrise Road for first time after upgrading and tarring completed.

1931
- Father Duignam dies, aged 85, at Bonnievale.
- Capri zig-zag and steps to Boyes Drive completed.
- Seahurst Hotel falls under auctioneer’s hammer. Bought by a newly formed company, Seahurst Hotel Co. (Pty.) Ltd.

1932
- Sorrento Road named.

1933
- Toilet block built on St. James common alongside seaside railway platform.

1934
- Castle Road’s name changed to Leighton Court Road.
- “Rodwell” demolished by J. B. Taylor.
- “Lancelevy” built by J. B. Taylor (later named “Rodwell House”).
- Rodwell Road and Moselle Road upgraded and tarred.
- Sandhurst Road steps to Boyes Drive completed.
- Westray Road steps upgraded.
- Department for Commerce and Industry takes over the running of the Marine Biological Station.
- Bellemer Flats built amidst much controversy and objections from residents.
- Electrical substation built near St. James station.

1937
- Celebratory Dinner at St. James Hotel to mark Otway Hayes selection as Springbok golfer.

1938
- Captain John Gentry, owner of the St. James Hotel, dies at hotel aged 61.
- Emily Osolin, (formely Toy), one time owner of the Seahurst Hotel, dies at Sea Point aged 60.

1939
- World War II starts.

1940
- Council embarks on the ongoing project of buying back bathing boxes and renting them out on an annual basis.
- The Colonial Orphan Chamber and Trust Co. buys St. James Hotel from Gentry’s deceased estate.
- Union Government lets rooms at Marine Biological Station to artist George Pilkington for studio.
- St. James Post Office built.
- Council introduces an amendment to the Municipal Building Regulations for St. James that only single dwellings with a height restriction be allowed and that flats are to be excluded in their entirety.
- Council subsequently rejects proposed flats in Pentrich Road, the conversion of Seahurst Hotel to flats and Mrs E.M. Findlay’s application to convert “Villa Capri” into two separate flats. Upheld by Administrator.

1941
- Roy Garlick Trust buys “The Homestead”, does major alterations.
- “Mare Video” No. 96 Main Road built. Later named “New Seaforth House”.

1942
- N. F. Lubynski draws plans for the New Mission School at Kalk Bay.
- Seahurst Hotel taken over by Union Government. Run by the Red Cross, known as the Red Cross Auxiliary Military Hospital.

1943
- Fr. Doran appointed full time Parish Priest (remains until his
death in 1971).
1944  • New south-end class-room block completed at “Star of the Sea”.
       • St. James Hotel Co. (Pty.) Ltd. buys the St. James Hotel.
1945  • World War II ends.
       • Severe mountain fire (Christmas Eve) causes chaos among residents, but no homes burnt. Burns for over 36 hours.
       • S.Ginnes buys Seahurst Hotel.
1947  • Extension of Boyes Drive via old Westlake Golf Club Avenue to Main Road approved (construction started in 1963).
       • Boyes Drive declared a Scenic Drive.
       • St. James Mission School moves to Kalk Bay. The old Mission School at “Star of the Sea” converted into school hall.
1948  • Good Hope Hotels buy Seahurst Hotel. Change name to Robin Gordon Hotel.
       • A. G. Barlow does extensive alterations to “Irisville”.
1949  • Entrance to Catholic Church altered from south facing to east facing (Main Road). Named the War Memorial Entrance Porch.
1950  • Council buys Marine Biological Station from Union Government (demolished February 1955).
References
(note all Source/Volume/References as described below are from the Cape Archives, Roeland Street, Cape Town).

Chapter 2
The first and second Roman Catholic Churches at St. James

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Other: Memories of the Dominican Nuns at "Star of the Sea" (unpublished).

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"Star of the Sea" Convent

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Other: Memories of the Dominican Nuns at the "Star of the Sea" 1908 - 1948 (unpublished)
"Star of the Sea" School Magazines, 1940 - 1950

Chapter 4
St. James Mission School

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Other: Greg Gordon, Principal of the St. James Mission School.

Chapter 5
The St. James Hotel

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3 CT  4/2/1/3/1687  B 3487
3 CT  4/2/1/3/1780  B 2557
3 CT  4/2/1/3/3456  B 2482/56
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3 CT  4/2/1/3/1252  B 720


Chapter 7
The Marine Biological Station

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The Beaches of St. James

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Chapter 9
CSSSM Professor Arthur Harrison (oral history)

Chapter 10
St. James Station

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Chapter 11
St. James Common

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Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality minutes (1895-1913)

Chapter 12
Side-Road Construction

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131
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#### The Homes of St. James

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<td>Lancelevy</td>
<td>3/CT</td>
<td>4/2/5/525</td>
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<td>Melrose</td>
<td>3/CT</td>
<td>4/2/1/3/110</td>
<td>B 5830</td>
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<td>3/CT</td>
<td>4/2/1/3/134</td>
<td>B 7914</td>
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<td>Ceolnamara</td>
<td>3/CT</td>
<td>4/2/1/3/134</td>
<td>B 4038</td>
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<td>3/CT</td>
<td>4/2/1/3/25</td>
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<td>Irisville</td>
<td>3/CT</td>
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<td>B 437</td>
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<td>St. James Cottage</td>
<td>3/CT</td>
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<td>B 376</td>
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<td>Villa Capri</td>
<td>3/CT</td>
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<td>3/CT</td>
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<td>B 389</td>
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<td>3/CT</td>
<td>4/2/1/3/1605</td>
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<td>The Homestead</td>
<td>3/CT</td>
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<td>Seaforth House</td>
<td>3/CT</td>
<td>4/2/1/3/231</td>
<td>B 98</td>
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<td>Oral History</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willoughby Cleghorn &quot;Pentrich&quot;</td>
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<td>Paddy Harrison &quot;Corriemar&quot;</td>
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<td>Antony van Ryneveld &quot;La Rochelle&quot;</td>
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<td>Postmaster Longford &quot;Coolarty&quot;</td>
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<td>KB-MM Minutes &quot;The Picnic Bush&quot;</td>
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<td>Derek Stuart-Findlay &quot;Villa Capri&quot;</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chapter 15
#### Personalities of St. James

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**Chapter 16**

**Mountain Fires at St. James**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Volume</th>
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<td>AGR</td>
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Elfi Tomlinson
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National Art Gallery
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St. James Mission School
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Deeds research
Historical photographs
Research files
Oral history
Research files
Typing
Reproduction and Scanning
Information Centre
Archives
R.C. Archdiocese of Cape Town
CSSM
U.C.T. Archives
S.P.A. Urban and
Environmental Planning
Branch
Proof reading
Index

A
Adams A., Builder, 29.
Anderson Thomas J., 66, 99
“Arcadia House”, No. 44 Main Road, 67, 68.
“Arderne’s Cottage”, 63.
Arderne H.M., 23.
Arderne R.H., 62, 63.
Armour Mary E., 12, 79.
Attwell J.W., 20.
Auret Abraham, 70, 72, 73, 86, 87.
“Auret’s Cottage”, 72, 73, 86.

B
Bailey Sir Abe, 30, 31, 114.
“Bangaloo” No. 3 Pentrich Road, 82.
Barlow A.G., 63.
“Barnacle The”, No. 97 Main Road, 84, 98.
Beattie Sir Carruthers, 87.
Beck & Smit, builders, 34.
Bellemer Flats, 26, 69, 70.
Bickersteth Dr Henry, 35, 62, 88, 89.
Black & Fagg, Architects, 20, 63.
“Blencathra”, No. 40 Main Road, 64.
Boyes George, 55, 56, 89, 90.
Boyle Glenda, 97.
Brooke, Canon, 70.
Brooke-Smith W. Capt., 28.
Brustmeyer E, Architect, 68.
Burton The Hon. Henry, 100.
“Bude” No. 82 Main Road, 73, 74, 117.
Buisssinne W.T., 51, 52.
“Cape Argus”, 91.
Cape Government Railways, 5, 6, 28, 43-45, 92.
Cape Town City Council, 13, 22, 26, 31, 33-40, 44, 46, 48-54, 55, 56, 61, 64,
70-74, 91, 94, 109, 110.
Capri Road, 49.
“Carisbrooke”, No. 2 Main Road, 58-60, 102, 103, 108.
“Carnoustie”, No. 46 Main Road, 68.
Cassidy Catherine (Kate), 79.
Castle Road, 52.
“Cavamore”, No. 32 Main Road, 116.
“Ceolnamara”, No. 20 Main Road, 61, 62, 116.
Chapman Mary Ann, 20, 21.
Children’s Seaside Service Mission (CSSM), 37, 41, 42.
Clews J, 7, 43.
Cochran Des, 117.
Colonial Orphan Chamber and Trust Co., 22, 26, 71.
“Colwyn”, No. 22 Main Road, 62, 116.
Commin K.V. Architect, 27, 51, 68.
“Cooleen” St. James Road, 117.
“Coolarty”, No. 42 Main Road, 65-67.
“Corriemar”, No. 4 Main Road, 60, 96, 116.
Cruickshank A.S. Architect, 105.

D
Danger Beach, 39, 40, 74.
De Necker Pieter Adriaan, 64, 89.
Delbrige William, Builder, 60.
Deneys Pieter Jacob, 64.
“Devon Cottage”, 60, 63.
Derry William, 64.
De Waal Sir Frederic, 31, 89.
Doran Father Harold, 7, 8, 17, 90, 91, 109, 110.
Drennan Professor Matthew, 108.
Duignam Father John, 4, 6-11, 13-16, 92, 93, 103.
Duncan-Taylor, William, 62.

E
“Eastcliffe”, No. 16 Main Road, 60, 61, 104, 105.
“Esme Cottage”, No. 24 Main Road, 63.
F
Farmer William Mortimer, 66-69, 78-81.
Findlay George James, 76.
Fletcher William, 79, 81.
Forrest George William, 60.
Fraser Bright. Architect, 27.

G
Gentry John Joseph Captain, 21-24, 94, 97.
Gilchrist Professor John, 28-32, 94-96.
Ginnes S., 26, 27.
Glennie Fred. Architect, 13, 64.
Good Hope Hotels (Pty.) Ltd., 27.
Gourlay, Mayor, 85.
Gray, Robert, Bishop, 97.
Greenshields T.A., 73.
Grey Sir George, 3, 4.
"Greystones", No. 18 Main Road, 116.
Griffith Right Reverend Patrick R., 3.
Grimley, T. Bishop, 4.

H
Hablutzel Heinrich Pieter, 77-79.
Hall George William, 59.
"Hamilton House", No. 99 Main Road, St. James, 5, 45, 46, 83, 84.
Hawke and Mackinley. Architects, 66.
Hayes Otway, 97.
Harrison Gaisford, 60, 96.
Harrison Professor Paddy, 60, 96, 117.
Henry Archbishop Lawrence, 116.
Hiddingh Michiel, 70.
Hillrise Road, 49.
Holy Trinity Church, 39.
"Homestead, The" No. 1 Ley Road, 78, 79.
Hopley Mrs Annie, 66, 69.
Hudson Benjamin Hugh, 70.
"Hycliffe" Jacobs Ladder, 103.
“Irisville”, 63, 64.

Jackson (Pty.) Ltd. Sir John. Building contractors, 7, 10.
Jamison Sophia, 58-60, 83.
Jones Henry Hamilton, 83, 84.
Jones, William West, Archbishop, 78, 97, 98.

Kalk Bay-Muizenberg Municipality, 4, 7, 9, 22, 28, 31, 33, 35, 45, 49, 52, 69, 93, 94, 102.
Kerr Rachel, 65, 66.
“Kilcreen”, No. 96 Main Road, 79.
“Kimberley House”, 84, 85.
Kinnas George, 68.

“Lancelevy”, No. 52 Main Road, 68, 69.
Langerman Carel George, 19, 61, 65, 67, 72.
Langerman Carel Willem, 19, 61, 62, 65, 67.
Langeveld Willem Johannes, 78.
Langley Robert, 73, 75.
“La Rivage”, 20.
“La Rochelle”, No. 92 Main Road, 77, 117.
Leighton Road, 26, 51, 52.
Leonard Right Reverend John, 4, 5, 15, 92.
Ley Road, 50, 57.
Lightfoot, Twentyman-Jones and Kent., Architects, 80.
Lubynski Norman., Architect, 7, 14, 17.

Macfarlane Keith, 80, 100, 117.
MacLean Archibald and Grace, 68.
Maderose Alex, 84.
Mann K. Builder, 8, 14, 17, 67.
“Mare Video”, No. 96 Main Road, 80.
“Match Box The”, 70-72.
Mauerberger Trust, 96.
McLennan David, 65, 67.
McLennan Georgina, 65, 67.
McGhie Chas. Builder, 35, 105.
Melck Myra, 68.
“Melrose”, No. 28 Main Road, 64, 112, 114.
Mendelsohn Caroline, 63.
“Mentone”, 84, 85, 99.
Mentone Road, 52.
Millard Frank (CSSM), 37, 41, 42.
Mitchell and Mackine Builders, 29.
Mills family see “Pentrich”,
Morgenrood P.D., 87, 106.
Molteno Ella Mary (née Jones), 84.
Molteno Frank, 84, 98, 107.
Molteno Sir James T., 52, 98, 99, 100.
Molteno Sir John and Lady Sibella, 84, 85, 98, 99.
Molteno Miss Minnie, 56.
Molteno Percy, 99, 100.
Moore-Anderson Dr A.P., 37, 41.
“Morning Glory”, Moselle Road, 109.
Morris R.H. (Pty.) Ltd. 63, 64.
Moselle Road, 48, 53, 54, 66, 110.
Moxom Marjorie, 80.
Muller Johan Heinrich, 73-75, 78, 80.

N
“Nest The”, 73.
Nicholls John and daughters, 39, 40, 78.

O
O’Callaghan Bridget, 79.
Oppenheimer Sir Ernest, 101.
O’Reilly Father J., 16.
O’Reilly Gerald James, 73, 74.
“Oriana”, Ley Road, 90, 101.
Orpen Harry, 38, 63, 64, 72, 112.
Orr family, 25, 85.
Osolin Charles, 24, 108.
Osolin Emily (formerly Toy), 25, 108.

P
Pegram Thomas Herbert, 63.
“Pentrich”, 39, 74, 80-82.
Pentrich Road, 26, 50, 81, 82, 87.
“Petrava”, 56.
“Pevenssey”, Main Road St. James, 105.
“Pickle”, 95.
“Pieter Faure”, 28, 95.
Porter Margaret, 68.

R

“Ranger, The” Ley Road, 97.
Ransome George. Architect, 6, 103.
Rathfelder Emanuel Otto, 77.
Reitz Deneys and Leila, 105, 106.
Rhodes Cottage, 114.
Rhodes Frank, 63, 64.
Ritchie-Fallon W.A. Architect, 64.
“Riviera” Pentrich Road, 87.
Robb William, 62, 89.
Roberts and Small. Architects, 63, 109.
Robertson J.D., 9.
Robin Gordon Hotel, 23, 27, 117.
“Rocklands”, No. 38 Main Road, 64.
“Rodwell”, No. 52 Main Road, 69.
Rodwell Estate, 26, 68, 69.
Rodwell Road, 48, 67.
Rooney Right Reverend John, 5, 6, 9, 11, 103.
“Roslin”, No. 44 Main Road, 68.
Rudd H.P., 64, 65.
Rudolphe John, 70, 71, 72.
Rubbi Joseph (Pty.) Ltd. Builders, 14.
Rupert Hermann, 19.

S

Sandhurst Road, 22, 49.
Sauer, The Hon. J.W. Minister for Agriculture, 4, 5, 45, 100.
Schreiner William Francis Reitz, 38, 61, 104, 105.
Schulze Sophia , 84.
Schulze W. ‘Bill’, 84.
Scowen Harry, 10.
“Sea Spray”, No.105 Main Road, 32, 95, 106, 110.
“Seaforth House”, No. 96 Main Road, 79, 80.
Searle William, 60, 63.
Selborne Docks, 7.
Sloley Sir Herbert, 68.
Smith, Sir Harry Governor, 87.
Smuts Elsie, 67.
Smuts, General the Rt. Hon. J.C. 31, 73, 104, 106.
Snape Professor Alfred, 59, 107, 108.
“Sorrento”, 98, 100.
Sorrento Road, 52, 100.
St. Ives” No. 5 Pentrich Road, 82.
“St. James Cottage”, 73.
St. James Road, 50.
St. James Convict Station, 56.
Staniforth Yvonne, 116.
Stansfield Frank, 10, 20.
Stansfield Spencer, 10, 21, 22, 24.
“Steps The”, 53, 75.
Stockman H., 7.
“Stonehenge”, No. 36 Main Road, 117.
Stukeris Johannes Willem, 80.
Susman Ellie, 68.

T
Taylor Allan Chase, 62, 63.
Taylor Rose, 85.
“Taylor’s Cottage”, 63.
Taylor J.B., 48, 69, 72.
Thesen Oscar, 48.
Thompson Francis Robert, 76.

V
Van Reenen R., 38, 53.
Van Ryneveld Antony, 46, 77.
Van Zyl and Buissinne, 5.
“Villa Capri”, No. 86 Main Road, 39, 73-77, 80, 117.
Von Bonde Dr Cecil, 32, 33.

W
Walker Rex S., 14, 109, 110.
Walker Sophia, 79. 80.
Walsh Eileen, 79.
Waterson, The Hon. Frank, and ‘Betty’, 110, 111.
Watson Thomas, 83.
Welch Father Sidney, 17.
Westray Road, 51, 66, 110.
Wicht Cornelia, 64.
Wiley J.B., 38.
Williams, Hilda and Walter, 67.
Williams James, 85.
Withinshaw G.S., 61, 62, 63.
Wright Henry, 73.