

A watercolor illustration of a coastal town. In the foreground, a koala is perched on a tree branch. The background shows a town built on a hillside, featuring a prominent white lighthouse with a red roof. The sky is light blue and green, suggesting a bright, sunny day.

MOSSEL BAY

& SURROUNDS

Historical GUIDE

**WALKING GUIDES
& REFERENCE MAPS
INSIDE**

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GARDEN ROUTE | SOUTH AFRICA

INTRODUCING MOSSEL BAY

WRITTEN BY

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Mossel Bay lies at the Eastern corner of a great triangle of land, suitable for grazing and growing of crops, stretching 300 kilometres from West to East, from Bot River. It is bounded on the North by the Rivier Sonder End, Langeberg and Outeniqua Mountains, and on the South by the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. The region measures about 100 kilometres northwards from Cape Agulhas to Storms Vlei at its widest point. The importance of Mossel Bay lies in the fact, east of George, the mountains draw very close to the coast. As a result many rivers enter the sea directly without confluence, and the gradient is so steep that deep gorges are formed. Until comparatively recently it was impossible for wheeled traffic to follow the coastal belt from George to Humansdorp, so travellers were obliged to cross the Outeniqua mountains and continue their journey East through the Langkloof. To the West there are no practicable harbours between False Bay and Mossel Bay. Mossel Bay was thus the only place where the land trade from the Little and Central Karoo, and the South Cape, could connect with maritime trade routes.

This connection began in the late fifteenth century when the Portuguese seafarers Dias and da Gama obtained sheep and cattle from the Khoi herders in Munro's Bay. For tens of thousands of years the forbears of the Khoisan and the Khoikoi lived in this region. Their legacy is the many beautiful place-names Attaqua, Hessequa, Outeniqua, Karoo, Gwaing, Gourits and many more. The Dutch East India Company's stock traders who fanned out in search of meat for ships, and the later Trekboers, learned to speak the Khoi and San languages, and many place names in the region are direct Nederlands translations of the old Khoi names. The Khoi left no buildings, but the impressive rock fish-traps from Betty's Bay to the Gourits River are lasting memorials to the Strandloper people.

Threatened French and English intrusion led the D.E.I.C. to establish military outposts (buiteposte) at Mossel Bay, George and Plettenberg Bay in 1785, and so the first permanent buildings were erected in Mossel Bay, where the Maritime Museum now stands. An unlikely event supplied the first officer in charge. In 1772 Struensee, the liberal first minister of Denmark, was overthrown in a coup d'état and executed. His private secretary, Hans Abue, fled to Holland and reached the Cape in the service of the Company. He served as Ensign and then Postholder at Mossel Bay for 33 years, dying in 1819 aged 78.

The French and English threat coincided with a wheat shortage. The Company persuaded Southern Cape farmers to plant wheat for shipment to Cape Town. Abue's first task was to superintend the building of the Granary. In 1807 he superintended the replacement of the unsatisfactory flat roof with a pitched roof. This building, the sole remnant of the Company's rule in the region, was demolished in 1955 in an act of official vandalism. It was rebuilt to the original design under supervision of Mr Gawie Fagan in 1988.

By 1730 there was a settled farming community in the district. The fall of The Company freed up economic activity and Mossel Bay achieved its destiny as a harbour handling imports of commodities and the export of agricultural produce. In 1811 the Cradock Pass above George was opened, giving direct access to the Little Karoo. This was replaced by the Montagu Pass in 1848. In 1820 the first buildings were erected in Church Street. English settlers began arriving. The Barrys of Swellendam opened a warehouse in 1827. In 1847 they built a large warehouse, the first dateable stone building, now the Protea Hotel by Marriot. Between 1820 and 1902 importing firms built large stone warehouses in Bland Street and Church Street, of which ten still stand.

Mossel Bay thus acquired its characteristic appearance, the first mainly stone-built town in South Africa. Descendants of the Khoi, the Coloured community, moved into the town. Among other occupations, they worked as masons, carpenters, shoemakers, gardeners, stevedores, tailors, bakers and fishermen. Most lived in the Eastern and Northern parts of the old town. Building in stone went on. Whether it was a rich merchant's house, a church, the town hall, the beach pavilion, a school, a quay, the lighthouse, a warehouse or a labourer's cottage, all were built of stone, and beautifully built. First the creamy-brown stone was used, but after 1900 the lovely pink stone was used for important buildings. The quality of the masonry improved with time until it reached its apogee in the magnificent tower and spire of St Peter's Church.

Mossel Bay flourished in the absence of rail links. Diamonds were discovered in Kimberley in 1870, and Mossel Bay harbour was the nearest link to the sea. In 1885 both Cape Town and Port Elizabeth were connected by rail to the diamond fields, and Mossel Bay's shipping trade began its slow decline. The coming of the railway in 1906, and the rail link to Oudtshoorn in 1915 removed the dependence of the Little Karoo on maritime commerce through Mossel Bay. The late Twentieth Century brought huge changes again, beyond the scope of this paper!

Landscape of Mossel Bay looking west from the harbour precinct. c. 1877



HOW MOSSEL BAY WAS NAMED

Mossel Bay was first named Bahia or Aquada Sao Bras (Watering Place of Saint Blaize) by Vasco da Gama in 1497. Prior Batholomeu Dias in 1488 referred to it as Agra dos Vagueiros, Bay of Herders which he saw in the distance.

Commelin wrote in 1646 that the name Mossel Bay had been given by Paulus van Caerden in 1601. Van Caerden gave the following description in his manifest: "Vonden het een schoon landt, sonder veel geboomte, dan wel herten ende Olyphanten, bequaemen, behalven water, weynigh verversings als mosselen, dies het die naem van Mossel Baey gaven."

"We found it a lovely land, without many trees, but with deer and elephants. Apart from water, we got little refreshment except mussels, and therefore gave it the name of Mossel Bay."

SAINT BLAISE

Blaise of Sebaste was a physician and bishop of Sebastea in historical Armenia (modern Sivas, Turkey) who is venerated as a Christian saint and martyr in the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Oriental Orthodox churches. In the Latin Church, his feast falls on 3 February, in the Eastern Churches on 11 February.

Blaise, who had studied philosophy in his youth, was a doctor in Sebaste who exercised his art with miraculous ability, good-will and piety. When the bishop of the city died, Blaise was chosen to succeed him, with the acclamation of all the people. His holiness was manifest through many

miracles: from all around people came to him to find cures for their spirit and their body; even wild animals came in herds to receive his blessing. In 316, Agricola, the governor of Cappadocia and of Lesser Armenia, having arrived in Sebastia at the order of the emperor Licinius to kill the Christians, arrested the bishop. As he was being led to jail, a mother set her only son, choking to death of a fishbone, at his feet, and the child was immediately saved. Regardless, the governor, unable to make Blaise renounce his faith, beat him with a stick, ripped his flesh with iron combs, and beheaded him.

In many places on the day of his feast the blessing of St. Blaise is given: two candles (sometimes lit), blessed on the feast of the Presentation of the Lord (Candlemas), are held in a crossed position by a priest over the heads of the faithful or the people are touched on the throat with them. At the same time the following blessing is given: "Through the intercession of Saint Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver you from every disease of the throat and from every other illness". Then the priest makes the sign of the cross over the faithful. Saint Blaise is venerated as the patron saint of sufferers of throat diseases and wool combers.



DID YOU KNOW?

MOSSEL BAY IS A TOWN OF MANY "FIRSTS" IN SOUTH AFRICA

The first evidence of modern human behaviour was discovered in Mossel Bay and dates back approximately 162 000 years. (Read the full article on page 4)

1488 The first explorers from Europe on South African soil landed in Mossel Bay (Bartolomeu Dias) at Munro's Bay.

1497 The first commercial transaction took place when Vasco da Gama, traded with Khoi herders, bartering a red sailor's cap and bracelets for an ox.

1501 A letter by Pedro D'Ataïda placed in a sailor's shoe, and hung in a Milkwood Tree, has Mossel Bay as the home of the 'first post office'. More information on page 16.

1501 The first place of Christian Worship in Southern Africa, an 'Ermina', was erected by Admiral João da Nova of the fourth Portuguese Fleet, in thanksgiving on his safe return journey from India. Admiral Da Nova had found the letter left by D'Ataïda warning of antagonism in Calcutta and had instead successfully sailed to Malakat.



THIS HERITAGE GUIDE IS PRODUCED AND PRINTED BY MOSSEL BAY TOURISM

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WALKING MAP | GREAT BRAK RIVER
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MAP REFERENCES | MOSSEL BAY
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MAP REFERENCES | GREAT BRAK RIVER
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MOSSEL BAY, THE HEART OF MIDDLE STONE AGE ARCHAEOLOGY

Mossel Bay is at the centre of some of the most significant archaeological discoveries ever made regarding the origins of modern humans and has a strong archaeological tourism product to support it.

Unlike other sites that can be remote, dry and downright inhospitable, the archaeological findings in Mossel Bay are set against a stunning backdrop of seaside caves so cosy that generations of families sought shelter in them when almost everywhere else on earth was most likely uninhabitable. Furthermore, as the sites you can visit in Mossel Bay form part of on-going excavations and advanced research projects, discoveries are taking place all the time, and since one of the discoverers of the first site at Pinnacle Point in 1997 is a local archaeological tour guide, visitors may hear about them from the person that discovered them.

The latest news (in March 2018) from the Mossel Bay sites is the discovery of microscopic shards of volcanic glass from a super-volcano eruption on Sumatra about 74 000 years ago, about 9000km away. While the event is believed to have devastated Stone Age human populations around the world, indications at Pinnacle suggest the existence of a thriving community sheltered from the devastation.

Archaeologist, Dr. Peter Nilssen and Jonathon Kaplan, Director for Cultural Resource Management in Mossel Bay, first identified Pinnacle Point's historic significance during an environmental impact assessment in 1997, ahead of the construction of the Pinnacle Point golf estate and adjacent Garden Route Casino. Investigating seaside cliffs below the estate, the archaeologist immediately recognised the value of the fossilised sediment piled high against the cave wall, which was later shown to contain a wealth of archaeological evidence, including the remains of stone artefacts, pieces of shell, charcoal from fires, shards of bone and debris from the manufacture of tools.

The original cave is one of 54 archaeological sites ranging from open air shell middens to geological and cave sites, and represents one of the densest concentrations of Stone Age sites in the world. They were declared a Western Cape Provincial Heritage Site in 2012, an initial step in a bid towards gaining recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Pinnacle Point caves have been the focus of intense scientific research by a multi-disciplinary team of more than 40 scientists from around the world, led by palaeoanthropologist Prof. Curtis Marean of the Arizona State University's Institute of Human Origins and Nelson Mandela University's Centre for Coastal Palaeoscience in SA.

Known as the SACP4 Project – South African Coast Palaeoclimate, Palaeoenvironment, Palaeoecology and Palaeoanthropology Project – it is the largest scientific undertaking of its kind in the world, having so far received more than US\$10 million in funding from the United States' National Science Foundation and the Hyde Family Trust.

Research has resulted in publication in a prestigious international scientific journals such as Nature and Science. Current research focuses on caves 5 and 6, which show evidence of occupation from 90 000 to 50 000 years ago.

The Pinnacle Point sites are at the centre of the archaeologically rich Cape south coast, a 600km stretch of coast from Langebaan (west of Cape Town) to Robberg (Plettenberg Bay), and are archaeologically important for at least two significant reasons; they changed the way scientists contemplated the origins of 'modern' humans (homo sapiens) and they hold a unique record of the climate from about 400 000 to 30 000 years ago.

Until very recently it was believed 'modern human behaviour', such as the making of composite tools with intricate stone blades and points, which represent a major development in mental capacity first appeared in Europe about 50 000 years ago. Evidence at Pinnacle proves such behaviour dates back as far as 160 000 years.

There is also evidence from art and jewellery, stone tool heat treatment, microlithic technology (sharpened stones for bows and spears) and the first systematic use of seafood in the human diet.

Also, inferences on the palaeoclimate and palaeolandscape suggest a unique set of environmental circumstances – including ocean currents, a broad continental shelf and sweeping plain, and vegetation supported by the geological substrate – that may have been conducive to the survival of coastal Pleistocene (Ice Age) hominin communities.

As an archaeological tourism destination, Mossel Bay is everything a serious archaeotourist wants: it is archaeologically very significant; it is set against spectacular scenery; has year-round good weather; is easily accessible; and is situated in one of South Africa's most popular tourist areas, the Garden Route.

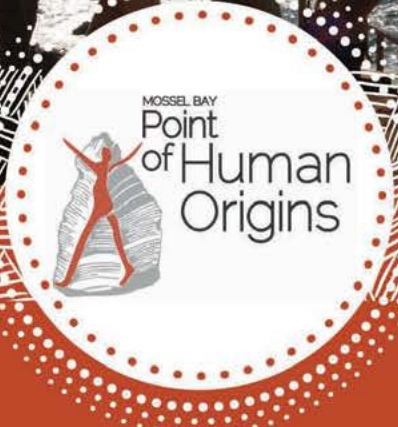
Archaeological tourism products include:

Point of Human Origins Experience at Pinnacle Point
This four-hour tour with one of the Pinnacle Point discoverers, archaeologist Dr Peter Nilssen, includes an absorbing lecture and concludes with a guided tour down a series of steep wooden stairs and boardwalks to the Cave PP13B where it all began.

WWW.HUMANORIGIN.CO.ZA

Cradle of Human Culture
The Cradle of Human Culture includes several archaeological and palaeontological sites in the Western Cape. The three major ones are Diepkloof Rock Shelter in the Cape West Coast (Weskus), Blombos Cave and Pinnacle Point in Mossel Bay. However, a trip to the Cradle of Human Culture includes more than these three sites and the development and expression of human culture can be traced across all sites.

WWW.CRADLEOFHUMANCULTURE.CO.ZA



VISIT WORLD RENOWNED ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

Mossel Bay, South Africa

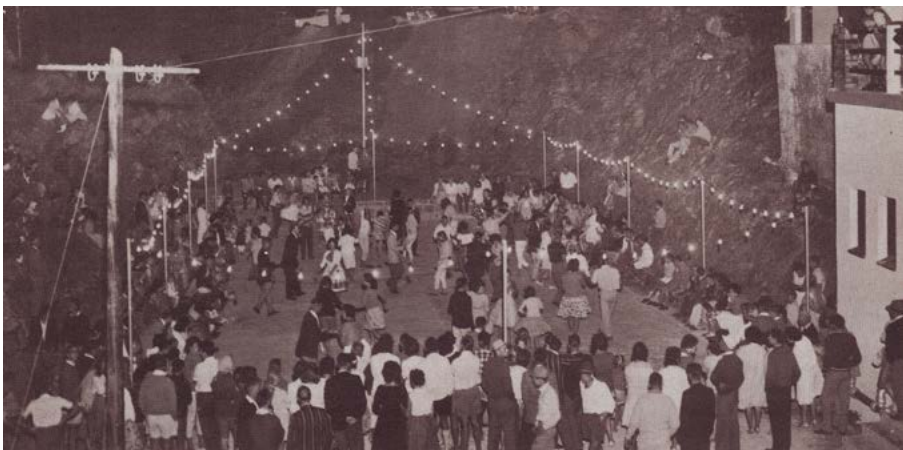
A dual journey: one in space and time,
and one within.



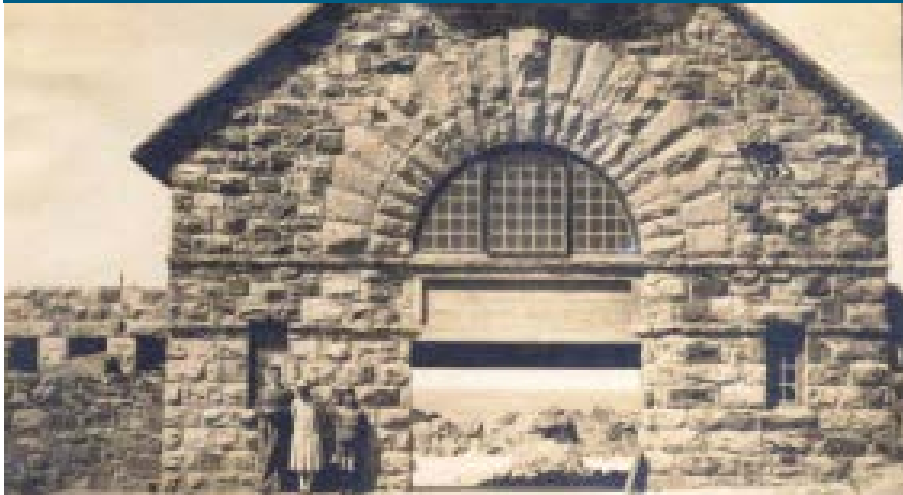
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Above: The town's youth dancing outdoors at The Point in the 1960's. These events showcased Mossel Bay's bands throughout the summer season. Holiday makers were in for a treat when visiting during the holidays.



Above: The entrance to Die Poort with a tearoom, and cloakrooms in 1926. Below: The War Memorial at The Point, c. 1924, on the Commanage.

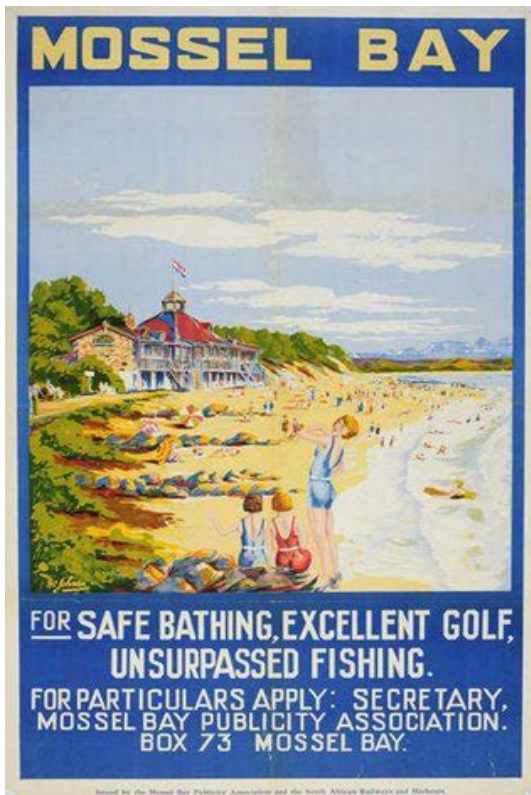


THE POINT

The Point is situated at the tip of the Peninsula that shapes the bay of Mossel Bay. The Poort (The Gateway), situated at The Point is possibly the finest natural bathing (tidal) pool of its kind in the world and is formed by two large reefs set wide apart, forming a long inlet. Seldom is such breath-taking scenic beauty encountered as at this world-famous natural tidal bath. For generations, the town's children learnt to swim in this tidal pool where chains and ropes have been secured to assist swimmers when the surging high tides cause strong currents to wash down the alley. The pool has a smooth sandy bottom and the water of the Indian Ocean is mild, perfect for almost year-round bathing. It is deep enough for diving except at low tide. Swimming in the Poort's live waters protected from the open ocean by the walls of rock, with breakers thundering a stone's throw away and showers of spray leaping in the air within sight, is a rare sensation only to be experienced on a holiday in Mossel Bay.

The Point Commonage was a bequest to the town for use by its people. Casual camping prevailed from the 1930's onwards. More formal camping on the site took place from the 1950's. Seasonal campers would turn up with tents, a bed or a cupboard on the back of a truck and even a few chicken. Open air dances as well as swimming and diving competitions were part of the social calendar of the town.

In the immediate vicinity of Die Poort you will find the War Memorial, the St Blaize Cave, the Cape St Blaize Light House, adventure activities, many restaurants, a camping site, a variety of accommodation options as well as a shallow, child-friendly tidal pool. The Point is a hive of activity over the holiday season and visitors love to stroll along the promenade or to sit and watch the surfers, waves crashing, anglers and marine wildlife.



“ DID YOU KNOW? ”

From early on, Mossel Bay was visited by people for holidaying, recreation and health reasons. At a national exhibition held in Kimberley in 1892, the town was cleverly promoted as a "health resort". Until today Mossel Bay remains one of South Africa's favourite holiday towns for the same reason.

Pictured on the right is an advertisement from the Mossel Bay Publicity Association. c. 1930

CAPE ST. BLAIZE LIGHTHOUSE

The Cape St. Blaize Lighthouse on the headland is one of Mossel Bay's best-known landmarks, and dates back to 1864.

In 1860, neither the British nor the Colonial government were prepared to fund the construction of a much-needed lighthouse. The Harbour Authority at the time raised a harbour tax to collect the required funds to erect the Lighthouse. It was commissioned on 15 March 1864. It was designed and built by civil engineer F. Molesworth Pfeil, and the construction contract was awarded to John Goodman.

The Lighthouse, with a tower of 20.5 m was built of stone of excellent quality found in the quarry on-site during 1863. The stationary light commissioned in March 1864 was visible for 15 seas miles. In 1897 a revolving light, visible for 22 sea miles, was installed and remains in use to this day. Cape St Blaize Lighthouse was the last manned lighthouse along the South African coast. Until the late 1970s, a clockwork system was used to turn the lens and it required a lightkeeper to climb up the tower and wind it up every three hours. All the navigational aids and joining plant are fully automated now. A constant radio watch is kept and regular meteorological duties are also undertaken.



THE QUARRY *At The Point* WAR MEMORIAL

Mossel Bay is known for its many historical sandstone buildings built mainly in the late 1800s to early 1900s. Fine examples are the four churches in central town, the Klipkerk 1880, St. Peter's Church 1879, the Methodist Church 1906, St. Thomas Church 1885 and the old Point High School of 1909, now the Milkwood School, also in Marsh Street.

c. 1900. The stone quarried on this site pictured below was used to build the harbour wall and quays. Note the 'derrick' hoist used to lift the stone and the cocopan used to transport the stones along a rail track to the harbour.

Over some years in the latter 1800s, a large part at the front of Cape St Blaize, including another cave, had been blasted to quarry stone. Fears that the continued blasting by the harbour works contractors might disfigure the face of the Cave or damage the Lighthouse ran high. At a public meeting in 1898, a proposal by one businessman and supported by another that, 'natural beauty should not stand in the way of advancement and development, even if St. Blaize has to be blown down', was met with fierce opposition by the townsfolk. Caution fortunately prevailed.



Mossel Bay holds the record for the percentage of recruits who went to the Great War and the townsfolk were particularly anxious that a worthy memorial should be erected to the memory of the 21 townsmen who fell in the war, of the 350 who had enlisted.

This impressive memorial, built of stone obtained from the site, was designed by the architect Mr W J Delbridge A.R.I.B.A, born in Mossel Bay. The site was chosen because of the dominating position of the rock outcrop known as 'Frog Rock' occupied, overlooking the recreation ground and the Poort.

Of significance is the cenotaph form of the memorial that is so arranged that the earliest beams of the rising sun and the last rays of the setting sun illuminate the memorial, and thus the names of the fallen are never in the shadow. The cruciform panel with the names of the fallen, at the crossing, holds the town's coat of arms, with the motto, By Right and Justice we Prevail, and is surmounted by the inscription 'Our Gallant Dead'. A mosaic map of Africa and a portion of Europe, have a thin line marking the path from birth, Mossel Bay to death, Delville Wood. So too, is the entrance of the space upon an axis which marks the line of direction from Mossel Bay to Delville Wood.

The Memorial was unveiled by Maj. Gen. Sir H. T. Lukin, Commander at Delville Wood on 28 September 1924.

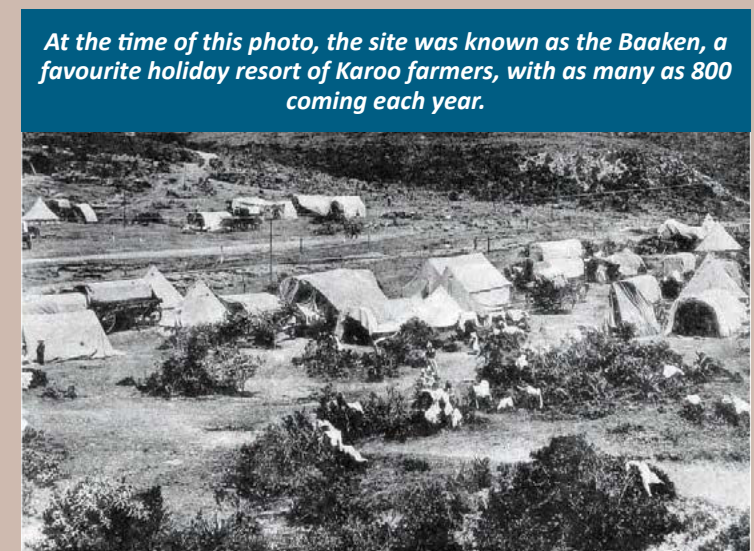
On completion, the Memorial was described as: *'A thing of rugged beauty and intense mental delight'* and as *'one of the most remarkable and beautiful memorials of the Great War'*.
Mr. H.J. Brownlee, A.R.I.B.A. Architect, Builder & Engineer, October 1924



A TIMELINE MOSSEL BAY'S HISTORY

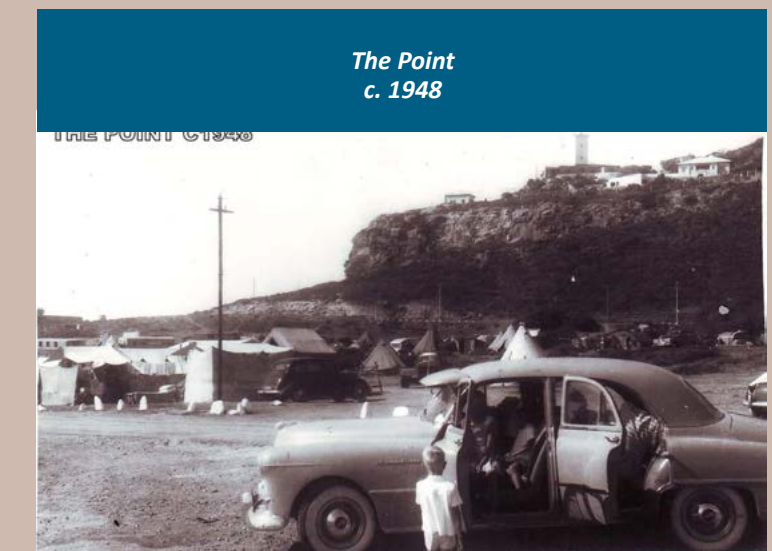
- 1488 3 February, Bartolomeu Dias lands on the name day of Saint Blaize. This marks the first foreigners from Europe to set foot on Southern Africa.
- 1497 Vasco Da Gama arrived on 25 November, as their second Portuguese expedition to the East. They encountered friendly Khoi, traded an ox for a red cap and some bracelets. This was the first trading transaction on Southern African soil in which explorers took part. The First People entertained these visitors with music from their reed flutes, and the sailors danced. These reed instruments had 3 notes only, and the tune was carefully recorded by Da Gama. Vasco Da Gama set up a padrao/stone cross and a wooden cross on the 'high southernmost point' which unfortunately were destroyed by the Khoi immediately afterwards. The cross that is presently there is a replica erected in 1969. Similar crosses were erected at Kwaaihoek and Namibia.
- 1501 Pedro d'Ataïda leaves a warning letter in a shoe. Found by Admiral Jo da Nova.
- 1506 Coast mapped by C. Barbudo. The Bay shown as Sao Bras
- 1601 Named Mosselbaai by Admiral P. van Caerden. He found only Mussels to eat.
- 1652 Jan van Riebeeck arrived at the Table Bay to establish a garrison for the VOC.
- 1729 The first "Leenplaas" (Hagelkraal) was awarded. From this time onwards more farming communities settled in the district.
- 1785 The Dutch East India Company established a 'Buitepost' (outpost), in Mossel Bay. The Garrison consisted of an officer and six soldiers and they were tasked to prevent the French from claiming the land. In 1772 Struensee, the liberal first minister of Denmark was overthrown in a coup d'etat and executed. His private secretary, Hans Abue (the officer), fled to Holland and reached the Cape in the service of the Company. He served as Ensign and then Postholder at Mossel Bay for 33 years, dying in 1819 aged 78.
- 1786/7 The Granery erected. See story on page 12.
- 1811 Mossel Bay fell under the jurisdiction of George. Formerly the area fell under Swellendam.
- 1818 The farm Boplaas was given to the town as commonage.
- 1820 The land was surveyed in 1816 and plots were set out. Pohl bought stands 1, 2, 3. (Church Street).
- 1830 Alexander Munro obtains a permit to cull seals on the Island. He was also the very first person to have a tavern in the community.
- 1845 First Dutch Reformed was built. The Pastorie was built the next year, in 1846.
- 1848 Mossel Bay was declared a town and magistrate's district, known

- 1851 as Aliwal (Mossel Bay). A horse racing track, apparently of the first, if not first in SA was established in the farm Boplaas.
- 1852 The town was declared a Municipality in July.
- 1854 In 1854 Bland build a wooden quay and a short breakwater.
- 1858 The first Municipal Building was build known as Market House. Read story on page 19.
- 1862 First Public Works in Mossel Bay. A new jetty, starting in Bland street, 122m long was built and financed by public subscription.
- 1864 St Blaize Lighthouse. Read story on page 7.
- 1867 Diamonds were discovered in Hope Town. Most of the mining equipment and stores were imported from Brittan and Germany through Mossel Bay harbour. There was a direct route to the Diamond fields and closer than to Cape Town.
- 1869 Robinson Pass opened, allowing easier access to the Karoo.
- 1871 1st edition of the Mossel Bay Advertiser was published on 4 January.
- 1872 The first boys public school was opened as a non-denominational public school, later known as Jongeskool.
- 1873 The Town decided to only be known as Mossel Bay.
- 1874 Queens Warehouse was build and housed the Customs offices.
- 1879 Second Municipal Building was built. Read the story on page 19.
- 1880 First Post Office was in Powrie's Chemist Shop. The telegraph service started around the same time.
- 1881 Kleinbosch Water Scheme commenced. Up until then the town relied on two boreholes and a stream which were quite inadequate for the growing community. Droughts and water shortages were common and earlier pictures depict people queuing for water. By 1885 26 miles of pipes were laid but there was no adequate reservoir to take the water.
- 1886 Schermbrucker Reservoir was commissioned.
- 1887 Victoria Park was laid out in honour of Queen Victoria. Read the story on page 18.
- 1892 First public clock was installed in the Klipkerk on 12 November. This followed 26 years of discussions and efforts to fill the need



At the time of this photo, the site was known as the Baaken, a favourite holiday resort of Karoo farmers, with as many as 800 coming each year.

- for a Town Clock. This mechanism has since been transferred to the new church built in 1951.
- In the 1890s the residents considered themselves to be the most burdened under taxes and debt - this in relation to its size and valuations.
- 1894 Herbert Baker Library built. In July 1888 there were 3771 books and 51 members in the old library housed in the first Municipal building. Our earlier city fathers were keen readers. The service was paid for by subscription and twice a year, books were ordered from England. Up to 1870 only English books available. The librarians were the recorders and custodians of Mossel Bay social records, and artefacts.
- 1895 Curved Harbour wall was build.
- 1897 Mossel Bay Boating Co. was founded. They took over from Captain Harries and managed the harbour operations.
- 1903 Mossel Bay received a telephone service. This service only became automatic in 1971. Mossel Bay had telephones before it had electricity.
- 1906 Rail line extended from Worcester to Mossel Bay by Cape Central railways and it reached Voorbaai on 22 January when the first train arrived!
- 1916 Santos Pavillion was built. It was quite a popular venue for social events. Visiting Royalty and travellers were treated there often.
- 1920 First prison built.
- 1922 Power Station built above Santos Beach. Electricity had arrived.
- 1925 The Poort tearoom and change rooms was built.
- 1959 The Provincial Hospital on Linkside was opened, replacing the Cottage Hospital of 1910.
- 1960 1 May. Oil discharge terminal in sea commissioned, enabling tankers to discharge oil and gas at said terminal, connected to the Tank Farm. This had been located at the Point.
- 1962 The Post Office Tree declared a National Monument.
- 1963 'Shoe' Post Box at the Post Office Tree erected.
- 1969 Padrao (Vasco da Gama replica) was erected above Munro's Bay.
- 1987 Mossel Bay Gas to Liquid (GTL) project initiated.



The Point c. 1948

- 1988 500 year celebration of the arrival of the first Portuguese explorers. Replica Caravel constructed and sailed from Portugal to re-enact the event.
- 1989 GTL Plant Refinery construction commenced in Mossel Bay. Major influx of skilled personnel and migrant workers.
- 1989 3 February. Official opening of Dias Museum, housing the Caravel, and the Statue.
- 1992 Mossel Bay GTL Refinery Commissioned, at the time the largest of its kind in the world. Presently third largest. In 2019 it was forecast that gass resources will run out end of 2020. The establishment of the GTL plant brought about substantial growth in economic development, population, and especially influx of informal settlers.
- 2019 Brul Padda field owned by Total & partners, announces major gas finds.



c. 1920s Looking east from Church Street intersection. The big stone building to left on horizon is still there.



“ DID YOU KNOW? ”

OYSTERS

So bountiful were oysters in the earlier years that in 1940, a Mr. F.W. Burton claimed a record by collecting no fewer than 2185 in four hours from a bed, exposed during an exceptionally low tide. They were so big that he could only fit 300 in a 200lb (90,7kg) bag. Wild oysters are still harvested in Mossel Bay by permit holders, and many claim they are the best available.

WALKING MAP

REFERENCES

1. Post Office Tree and the Navigator’s Boot. Pedro D’Ataide, a commander of one of the ships in Cabral’s fleet, followed Da Gama and Dias in 1501. According to legend, D’Ataide left a letter in a navigator’s boot which he had hung in a milkwood tree. This contained a report of a disastrous storm that had hit its fleet and of the opposition to the Portuguese in Calicut, advising them to go to Malakat. Hence the name ‘Post Office Tree’. Letters posted in the Letterbox in the shape of a navigators boot, are given a special stamp. Messages carved on a stone were also left at the tree. A cast of the famous Mossel Bay stone, which was discovered in 1850, is on display at the museum; the original may be found in the Cape Town Museum. The Padrao near the Post Tree was erected in 1969. It is a replica of the cross erected by Vasco Da Gama at Mossel Bay before he departed on 6 December, 1497. The original “Padrao”, as well as a wooden cross, erected on the “high southern-most point” were destroyed by the Khoi. A few yards farther down the slope from the Post Office Tree, just before you come to Munro’s Beach, is another link with history. The water fountain is fed by the stream that supplied those thirsty seamen under Bartholomeu Dias with fresh water in the year 1488, and the many other explorers that followed over the years.

2. Dias’ Landing: On the 3 February 1488, Bartolomeu Dias, searching for a way to India, without crossing Arabia, landed at the cove now known as Munro’s Bay. They replenished their water from the fountain before continuing their journey as far as Kwaaihoek. The Khoi people were not welcoming to the visitors, whilst Dias tried to pacify them with gifts, a skirmish ensued and a shot from a cross-bow killed a person.

3. Munro Cottage: An ex-soldier, Alexander Munro, who was also a shoemaker, from “Georgetown”, moved to Mossel Bay in 1830. In February 1831 he obtained the concession to cull seals on the island in the Bay for seven years. He built a house on ground hired from the government. On the area between the house and the shore he processed the seal carcasses and fried fish. Having a wife and eight children to support, he supplemented his income by running a tavern in his home. It was one of the first two in the settlement. Things went with such a swing that his liquor license was withdrawn from time to time. In 1841 he bought “Munro’s Hoek” from the government. Sixteen years later the land was subdivided and his son Willem Petrus Johannes acquired the ground on which the restored cottage stands. He also ran a tavern until 1867 when he became insolvent, and his share of the land was sold. The rear sections of Munro’s Hoek remained in the possession of the family until the turn of the century. Restored in 1984.

4. Maritime Museum: Built in 1901 as a mill for wheat and a sawmill (Molen en Zaag Molen) by a progressive farmer, E.J. Meyer from Geelbeksvlei. The builder was C. Wilson, the carpenter was F. Riley. The mill was erected on this site to be near the coastline and the Mossel Bay – Oudtshoorn railway line which was then being constructed.

The mill was converted to a museum by Architect Gawie Fagan in 1985/1987, to house the Caravel built in Portugal and sailed to Mossel Bay to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Dias landing in 1988.

5. Shell Museum: Also known as Shirley’s Building. Built c.1902 as a grain store and warehouse for the roller mill complex. The unusual angled corner is also a feature of the mill building. Grain was raised by a crane to the top floor for storage. Converted to a museum by Architect G. Fagan.

6. Granary: The original Granary was built in 1786/87 by the then VOC Governor Cornelius Jacob van der Graaff to store grain cultivated by farmers in the district and hinterland, until it was enough for a shipload. This saved a 2-3 month trip by ox-wagon to Cape Town. The first shipload of grain shipped to Batavia on the Johanna Jacoba in July 1788. This was the start of formal shipping activities of Mossel Bay. The Granary was demolished in 1951. It was reconstructed in 1987, on exact footprint, from original plans found in the Archives in the Castle in Cape Town.

7. Barry Building: This is one of the oldest business premises in the Southern Cape and was erected 1847 as a warehouse and trading station by the wholesale firm Barry & Nephews of Swellendam. The firm’s coasters conveyed goods between Cape Town, Port Beaufort, Malgas and Mossel Bay. The building was situated in a dominant position overlooking the market square and jetty. Its stone walls were originally un-plastered and the windows have quoin surrounds. The original roof was of slate and the windows timber sashed. Originally 5 bays enlarged to 9 bays by 1865.

The building was later bought by Hudson Vreede & Co, and was enlarged in 1900. In 1941 it was purchased by the Golden Ochre Company. This firm mined ochre clay in the Albertina district and railed it in to Mossel Bay where it was milled in the factory until c1964. The ochre was exported to England for use in the manufacture of paint. A watercolour of the building, dated 1856, by Bowler, may be seen in the Cape Town Parliamentary Library.

8. Town House - First Municipal building: This small white building with its distinctive Karoo style architecture faces north and is best viewed from the sea side. This was the town’s first municipal and community centre. It was later used as a library, telegraph office and dance hall. The mail coach also stopped here. The Plastered quoins round the front door and windows and at the corners are typical of the period.

9. Market House - Second Municipal building: Built 1879 by Messrs. Weymouth & Pickard when the first building became too small. The carved keystones above the windows and the doorway in stone depict the main agricultural activities of the district (wheat, sheep, oxen, ostrich and grapes) at the time. The high stoep at the back of the building was used for loading wagons. Used as the Town Cultural Museum, 1975 until 2001.

10. 10 Church Street: Built c.1857 for Meyer & Co. Bought by Hawes & Co. in 1861. Used as business premises and the Victoria Hotel. It had a room protected against fire and theft, and underground water tanks and pumps in case of fire. Bought in 1873 by Fleming & Mudie (import & export). Bought by Matare & Bruns in 1891. Note hoist used to lift goods to the first floor warehouse, and main entrance in splayed corner. Later used by Mossel Bay Advertiser 1931-1988. Restored in 1989 for attorneys Rauch Gertenbach.

11. Old Standard Bank: This imposing building was erected in 1902 on the same site as that on which a previous Standard Band Building had stood since 1860. The architects were Milne & Sladdin of Cape Town. The builders were Cherry & Cochran, well known, for their sandstone work. A beautiful porch with its pediment was removed when Church street was widened. In her book “Victorian Buildings in South Africa”, Desiree Picton-Seymour describes the building thus: *“An interesting, fortress-like building which combines the dignity and stability of a big bank in small scale”*. Since 1988 it is home to the Mossel Bay Advertiser editorial office.

12. “Urk House”: Built 1904, to accommodate offices for C.W. Black whose business was next door on the corner of Bland Street. Oldest 3-storey building and probably one of the most picturesque buildings in Mossel Bay. The vertical architectural style and gable are reminiscent of houses found in Urk, Holland. The sandstone work is particularly attractive; especially note the cornice above each window, cut in one piece with the lintel.

13. Vintcent Building: The original buildings in the Prince, Vintcent complex were erected between 1820 and 1824 by Mr C.F. Pohl, who bought the first three lots surveyed by the government. He built a house on lot 1 (corner of Marsh and Church streets) and a single storey shop on lot 3. Between the two was a garden. Pohl sold the property to H.O. Acker, who was the second warden of the “Post” in Mossel Bay. Later H.R. Harris became the owner until he went insolvent in 1850, when the property was acquired by Prince, Collison & Co., with whom J. Vintcent traded. The shop building was later extended and another floor was added. The original walls still form part of the lower storey, and are probably the oldest masonry in Mossel Bay. The building has been sadly defaced by road widening and a corner splay, loosing two bays of the original building

14. Prince, Vintcent & Co: The discovery of diamonds at Hopetown in 1867 and Kimberly 1870 and the fact that the most convenient harbour to the diamond fields were Mossel Bay, brought immense wealth to this importing company and more space was required. This building, designed by Mr. Simpkin was built by Mr. C. Wilson in 1901 & 1903 as an extension to the Vintcent building (but much more ornate). The large arch allowed ox-wagons to enter the building to load goods for transportation all over the Southern Cape and over the mountains to Kimberly The courtyard behind the building was recently upgraded to include small shops, eateries and public spaces.

15. Errol’s: Built by T.F.W. Barry c. 1877, as an elegant office building, housing the ABC Bank with accommodation upstairs. The original bank vault and wooden service counter remains.

16. Andersens: Erected in 1881 for R. Transfeldt as a general dealer’s shop. Subsequently it belonged to S.J. Wiggett, a shipping agent and former Mayor of Mossel Bay. In 1910, Norman Andersen acquired the property for a liquor store. Two interesting features of the old building were firstly, the Cuff Street window sill, hollowed out by fishermen who over the years have sharpened their knives there.; secondly, the post which were let into the wall at the bottom of Cuff Street and used to fasten a gate across the end of the street to affirm the fact that it remained the private property of Joseph Cuff.

17. Jongensskool: Erected in 1872, to accommodate the First Class Boys’ Public School’. Later called Jongensskool. This building was erected with subscriptions from all, including the Churches to serve as a Boy’s School. Instruction in English. The boys ate their sandwiches under the old rubber tree on the square, which at the time was situated in a beautiful garden. Circa 1930-40’s the building was used as a Synagogue.

18. De Marillac Building: Built 1875 by well-known businessman, E.A.M. de Marillac as a warehouse. Extensively modernised in recent years. The two stone warehouses were built by Coote, Noble & C Ltd in 1903. The workshops behind the building are mostly in an unchanged condition. Early in the twentieth century the firm of Kahn, Reimers & Co traded there as general dealers. They exported products such as wool. Ostrich feathers, skins and aloes. They were also agents for Thesen’s freighting & The Commercial Union Insurance Company. For many years housed the business of Kenner & Co.

19. Former Marine Hotel: In 1858, The Standard Hotel, relocated from Marsh to the site, so to be closer to the harbour and the sea. It had a single storey with thatch roof, initially called Marine Hotel. In 1864 John Strang changed the name to ‘Standard Family Hotel’. Double storey added in 1877, the Widow Strang, ran the hotel for 40 years until 1920. Name of Marine Hotel again adopted, converted to commercial in 2000.

20. Lager House: c.1877 without the front wing. Used as a Boys hostel by School Board to accommodate scholars attending the Jongensskool. During the 2nd World War used to accommodate the coast guard.

21. Searle’s Manor: Built in 1902 and used as a warehouse for Searle & Co. of

Great Brak River and later used by a succession of traders. Raised stoep used as a loading platform. Beautifully restored c. 2005/6 to apartments, offices, and an atrium for exhibitions. Wrought iron railings, lamps, gates, added.

22. Searle’s Terrace: Built 1878 as three duplex apartments. Restored in 2004.

23. Customs House – Queens Warehouse: Built in 1874 as a single storey with 5 bays. Extended in 1882. The veranda and balcony were added in 1892. Note date on the wall and the “wagon stone” on the south corner to protect the corner of the building from damage by wagon axles.

24. Mossel Bay Boating Company Offices (MBBC): Built 1901/2 as offices by the MBBC who owned and ran the harbour. The clock tower was used to time how long it took to offload a lighter. Fanlights above the windows on south elevations depict scenes on Thames River in London.

25. Goods Shed: 1900. The premises were used to store cargo from and to ships and rail transport. The roof covers about 90m x 15m with no obstruction. On the northern side, the raised platform enabled rails carriages to be loaded without lifting. The south side platform was used to load horse-drawn wagons. Since the collapse of the rail transport system, the Goods Shed is used to house a popular flea-market.

26. Alex Comay: Built by businessman M. Bruns as warehouse c. 1888. During the 1918 flu epidemic, used as an isolation hospital. For many years the premises of Messrs Alex Comay and Sons, builders suppliers.

27. Comay’s: The warehouse behind the main building built c.1900 was carefully restored in 2009.

28. Gys Smalberger Street: The houses and cottages were built 1880-1900. Many renovated by an entrepreneur who changed the street name from Lower Cross to his.

29. Old Cemeteries: In 1857 the Anglican and Dutch churches were given erven to establish cemeteries for their parishioners. In 1875 the Catholics also received an erf, later shared with the Methodists. In 1882 the Lutheran Berlin Mission was given an Erf. 1891, the congregants of the Berlin Mission personally built a stone wall around three sides of their cemetery. The lane between the two cemeteries, lead down to the signal mast on the shore. Later, the Dutch and English also built stone walls.

30. Point High School: (Now Milkwood Primary), built in 1909 as a Boys School. Note the pink stone used, contrasted with the sandstone quoins around windows and on the corners. Designed by Hoggard, the builder was Keating & Co. The stone was transported on cocopans on rails from the quarry on the hill above.

31. Elgin House: Built c. 1915 by a magnate from Oudtshoorn. It is the only known house in the “Klein Karoo” style in Mossel Bay (note the wooden shutters etc.) and it is said that he brought his stonemasons from Oudtshoorn. The stone is dressed differently from Mossel Bay masonry.

32. St. Blaize Terrace: Built 1909 (rumoured from the “left over” stone from the The Point build) and renovated in 1986.

33. St. Blaize Lighthouse. Read story on Page 7.

34. Cape St. Blaize Cave: The Cape was in 1497 named by Vasco da Gama, after Saint Blaize, as Dias had arrived on his Feast Day, 3 February 1488. Heinrich Lichtenstein, an early visitor in 1803, wrote in 1810 that the cave had been inhabited by hunter-gatherers who ate mostly shellfish. It was only in 1888 that Sir George Leith excavated and found conclusively that the middens had been left by early inhabitants.

WALKING DISTANCE

CIRCULAR WALKING ROUTE FROM MOSSEL BAY TOURISM VIA BLAND STREET, PAST THE ST BLAIZE CAVE AND BACK VIA MARSH STR.

- APROX. 4 KILOMETERS -

TOURISM INFORMATION OFFICE

CORNER OF CHURCH & MARKET STREETS



WALKING MAP



There was evidence of Middle Stone Age occupation below the middens. Recent excavations at other sites in the vicinity by Prof. Marean of the Institute of Human Origins at the University of Arizona, found evidence going back 162 000 years. The Cave with its rugged edge, silhouetted against the sky, taking on the aspect of a grimly noble profile. It was named Gladstone Profile after the Grand Old Man of Victorian politics.

35. War Memorial. Read story on page 7.

36. Cyprus Cottage: c.1900. A typical dwelling of the time. A pitched roof over the main part of the house, a veranda in front and the kitchen under a lean-to roof. If the kitchen was under the main roof, the flames would follow the rafters and the whole house would be lost. Unfortunately, the diamond-shaped windows were bricked up. The stone garden wall is interesting.

37. The Ark: c. 1910 As a single storey with a loft, the floor of which has a yellow wood floor with planks 12 inches wide. The owner, Piery O'Reilly went by train to Knysna, bought a whole yellowwood tree, brought it back by train, and sawed by hand the foot-wide planks for the floors. Note the windows in the gables. Porches were added in 1950.

38. Villa Point: c.1900. Private home converted to commercial use 2000.

39. 18 Marsh Street: A row of 3 terrace houses, very typical of the turn of the century. The veranda has the diamond windows typical of this area.

40. Linley Hof: Built in 1905 by R. Peda of Oudtshoorn. The Town Clerk, Mr. Harvey lived here in 1913.

41. St Thomas Hall and School: Built 1907 extended in 1911, School and hall. Prior to that the three Nuns of the Order of the Holy Cross taught in the Church House and slept in the garret. The Convent School closed in 1968.

42. St. Thomas Catholic Church and Convent House: Convent House 1867. From 1868, the building served as the first Catholic Chapel and Presbytery. Up to 1968 Convent of the Order of the Holy Cross. The stone Cross at the entrance gate erected to celebrate the Jubilee of Leo XIII, 1877. St Thomas Church built in 1885, was first used as a school till 1905 after when it was enlarged with a Sanctuary and a Sacristy and became the church. The Church was again enlarged in 1935 when twin towers were added. Marsh Street was constructed only in 1887 and was well below the church grounds, necessitating a retaining wall with steps, to be built.

43. Old Catholic Presbytery: Before 1877, the home of Mrs. Lynch, whom bequeathed it to Church, and from 1905, served as the Presbytery of the Catholic Church. Became a commercial property in 1970's. Conservatory added in 2005 by Fynbos shop.

44. Masonic Temple: Built in 1884 for the St. Blaize Lodge founded in 1881 under the English Chapter. The second plaque that the St. Blaize lodge was founded in 1874, refers to first Lodge under the Dutch chapter that was situated in Bland Street. It has no external windows but skylights give light.

45. St. Peter's Rectory and Parish Hall: Built 1856/57. The Rectory was a single storey, with a Chapel School Room (1855). The Rectory was extended in 1877 and a second storey and upstairs balcony was added in 1896. The balcony was removed in 1950. The street front stone wall was built in 1888. Until 1879, Church services were held in the Chapel School Room, and school lessons were held on weekdays.

46. Green Door Guest House: Built c. 1900 as a dwelling with wrought iron veranda and railings. Later served as a boarding house. Sold in the 1980s and the wrought iron was removed. This was allegedly sold for more than the purchase price of the property.

47. 38 Marsh Street: c.1900 Home of C.W. Matthews. The end of the balcony was usually glassed-in against rain. The building, a family home for years, became a boarding house and more recently a restaurant.

48. Methodist Church: A property was bought (called "Queens Villa") comprising a "fine dwelling house", stables, coach houses, and even a Blacksmith's shop in 1905 for 860 pounds. The house became a Manse. The Church was built by J. Weymouth. In 1906 four cornerstones were laid for the Church by the Mayor, the Member of the Legislative Assembly and other dignitaries.

49. St. Peter's Anglican Church: The Nave consecrated 14 October 1879 was built on land that had been donated by Mr. J. F. Hudson. The architect was John Welchman, the builder was Mr. Weymouth. Anglican stonemasons were imported from Cornwall, for the construction of the Bell Tower and Chancel in 1906. The Steeple is believed to be the tallest built entirely of stone in South Africa. The plan and each of the structure and ornament follows the Early English style. Note the different sandstone used and the pointing treatment of the stone by the different contractors.

50. Lennon's Ltd: Built 1868 for chemist Ebenezer Powrie (who was also the Post Master for 51 years) 1906 sold to Heynes, Matthew & Co. Later Lennon's ran a pharmacy and photographic store. The double colonnade (on both sides of the street) is the last remaining in town. The veranda protected pedestrians from rain and goods displayed from the sun. Most of the commercial part of the main street usually had a double colonnade.

51. M. Braude & Co.: c.1920 One of the very few in Art Deco style buildings surviving.

52. Cornwall House: pre 1890, home of the Richard James family until 1931. Then sold and converted the ground floor to shops for Cuthberts and a Fernie's Pharmacy.

53. Klipkerk: The second Dutch Reformed Church built in Mossel Bay. The first church, built of mud bricks, with a reed roof was demolished in 1971. The new church, designed by architects C.O. Hager and W.B. Hayes and built by the contractors Michie & McGregor had the cornerstone laid in 1878 and was consecrated in February 1880. The original steeple could not carry the weight of the bell and started cracking. It had to be rebuilt with strengthening pillars and a roof structure to spread the weight. The new tower was inaugurated in November 1898. The first public clock in town was installed in the Tower. The clock mechanism was transferred and installed in the tower of the new church when built in 1951.

St Thomas` Church and Convent House



54. Park Gates: Donated by Messrs. Matare and Bruns in 1903 to front onto the end of the main street. Beyond this point the hill became too steep for animal-drawn vehicles. When motorized vehicles appeared, the gates were relocated and Marsh street was extended up the hill.

55. Harry Giddey Park. Read story on page 18.

56. Park House: c.1879 by a Mr. Martienssen. Bought by Aalwyn Muller (who farmed at Patryfontein) in 1889 as a family 'dorpshuis'. Extensive addition at the back to accommodate the present 'backpackers'.

57. Norman Webb's: Built c.1890. When Norman Webb bought the house it was in a poor state of repair. Being a carpenter by trade, he set about restoring the house and especially the intricate woodwork. Norman, known for the silver tones of his trumpet, discovered that the original owner had also been a carpenter and the town trumpeter.

58. Concordia 102 Montagu street: c.1886. Note the different coloured sandstone. The boundary walls are of three distinctly different styles of masonry.

59. Carpenter's shop: Built 1898 by W.J. Swart and his two sons. They quarried and dressed the stone themselves for an office (street level) and a basement workshop (hence the extra-wide door below, to remove roof trusses made indoors in rainy weather). A bridge led from the office to the kitchen of his double-storey house behind. The plans (including the gable stone) were found in the archives of Herbert Baker.

60. Sandstone Manor: Built c.1891 for J. Oosterhuizen as two semi-detached homes. In 1992 the building was restored and converted to a guest house.

61. Montagu House: Built in 1920 by G. Taylor and occupied for several generations of the family. The architect was Mr. Riley and the builders, the Pamplin brothers. PetroSA bought it in 1985 and converted it to a guest house for their Directors and VIP guests. Outbuildings were converted to suites and entertainment areas.

62. Lutheran Church Parsonage: Built in 1879 as a parsonage with the top floor, accessible from High Street, initially used as a Church and School. Later a school was built next door in High Street, and in 1907 a Church was built alongside in Montagu Street.

63. 60 Montagu Street: Built c.1905 by George Bendle as a General Dealer's shop for J.C. Bayman. Taken over by L.B. Marx that traded in the shop till 1978.

64. Cuff House: Pair of semi-detached cottages, stepped to solve the problems set by the steep slope. Gable detail suggests that it was built about the same time as Glan-Y-Mor across the street. Note that the stone used for the quoins around the windows and on the corners is of a lighter colour.

65. Glan-Y-Mor: Date on gable is 1897. Built by a Mr. Lourens, from 1902 the Matfield family home. The property comprised half the city block with an outbuilding used as stable and coach house and a gazebo (now demolished) in the garden.

66. Railway Station: Rail transport arrived in Mossel Bay in 1906. The original corrugated offices were replaced in about 1930. Rail services, goods and passenger, were integral to the shipping and commercial development of the town and transport of goods to the Karoo, Cape, and Transvaal.

67. Sea wall: Built 1895 to create protection for the developing harbour activities on land.

69. Port House: This Edwardian house was built about 1905 as the Harbour Master's house with a magnificent view over his domain.

70. Die Poort. Read story on page 6.

THE MOSSEL BAY ADVERTISER 4 JANUARY 1871

The Mossel Bay Advertiser. [No. 1.] MOSSEL BAY, CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 1871.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES.
(PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY.)
**DIVISIONAL COUNCIL,
MOSSEL BAY.**
NOTICE OF POUND SALES.
NOTICE is hereby given, in terms of Section 25, of Ordinance 14 of 1867, that the sales of Impounded Cattle for the ensuing half-year, ending the 31st June, 1871, will be held on the following places, viz. At Mangen, Grootvlei, and Klapvlei, on 19th June, at the following dates, viz. 25th January, 3rd March, 10th April, and 21st May, 1871.
E. C. CHICKRETT,
Civil Commissioner.
Mossel Bay, 25th December, 1870.

NOTICE.
**DIVISIONAL COUNCIL,
GEORGE.**
ELECTION OF AUDITORS.
As directed by Section 73 of Act No. 4, of 1864, a Public Meeting of Persons entitled to vote for Members of the Municipal Council, for the purpose of electing two Auditors, will be held at the Court room here at 11 o'clock on Wednesday, the 11th of January next, and the names of persons desiring to offer themselves as Candidates to represent the said District, in the Outdoors (Divisional Council),

NOTICE.
**DIVISIONAL COUNCIL,
OUDTSHOORN.**
ASSESSMENT OF RATES FOR THE YEAR 1871.
NOTICE is hereby given, that, in terms of the 25th Section of Act No. 4, of 1864, the Divisional Council of Oudtshoorn has this day assessed and imposed a rate of One Penny in the Pound upon all the Immovable Property in the Division, for the Year 1871, and the same will become due and payable on Friday, the 10th of February, 1871, at the Office of the Secretary.

IRON TANKS.
THE Undersigned have for Sale (Cheap) Three IRON TANKS of 600 Gallons capacity, each, quite New, and in First rate Order. Very suitable for holding Water for Road washing purposes.
FLEMING & MUDIE.

Agency Business
FLEMING & MUDIE.
WILL undertake all kinds of Commission Agency Goods forwarded to any part of the World, or received and stored, whether from Abroad or from Colonial Ports.

FLEMING & MUDIE.
Agents for the Danville American and Trust Company of Fort Elizabeth, Mauritz and Fort Lourenco Banks since 1st July.

STATEMENT OF THE ASSETS AND LIABILITIES OF THE MOSSEL BAY BRANCH OF THE Standard Bank of British South Africa, (LIMITED,) On the 31st DECEMBER, 1870.

LIABILITIES		ASSETS	
To Credit, viz. Note Overdraft	100 0 0	To Cash in the Bank	200 0 0
To Full Bills	200 0 0	To Bills on hand of other Banks	100 0 0
To Deposits, viz. 1000 0 0	1000 0 0	By Cheques and Bills of Exchange on hand	100 0 0
To Deposits in other Banks	1000 0 0	By Balances in other Banks	100 0 0
To Bills and Note under Discount, and not paid	1000 0 0	By Bills and Note under Discount, and not paid	100 0 0
To Bills and Note under and retained	600 0 0	By Bills and Note under and retained	100 0 0
To Amounts Overdue	100 0 0	By Amounts Overdue (partly assumed)	100 0 0
To Interest, Tenants, & Storage	100 0 0		100 0 0
	2000 0 0		2000 0 0

We certify that we have examined the above Statement, and that it is true and correct.
Respected Bank of British South Africa (Limited)
Mossel Bay Branch, 25th December, 1870.
H. W. B. DE WET, Manager.
WALTER J. GATER, Accountant.

DIVISIONAL COUNCIL, OUDTSHOORN.
PUBLIC SALE.
In the Immovable Estate of JACQUES VAN BUITER, of Witte Drift, District of Ficksburg.
On MONDAY, 30th January, 1871, AT THE PLACE "WITTE DRIEF," APPROVED OF THE FOLLOWING LANCED PROPERTY. TO WIT:—
First—One-ninth (1/9th) Part or Share in the Perpetual Quitrent Place called WITTE DRIEF, in extent 3 1/2 Morgen.
Second—One-ninth (1/9th) Part or Share in the Perpetual Quitrent Place called BOSCH FONTein, in extent 27 1/2 Morgen.
Third—One-ninth (1/9th) Part or Share in the Perpetual Quitrent Place called LEFEMAN'S DRIEF, in extent 1 1/2 Morgen.
Which said Properties adjoin each other, and are known to be the most Fertile Farms in the Field-cornery of Plethenberg's Bay, District of Ficksburg, being well-supplied with Water the whole year through, besides being well-known as a Sheep and Cattle Farm, and are well worthy the attention of Farmers and Speculators.

SALE TO COMMENCE AT 10 O'CLOCK, A.M.
JOHN CAINCROSS, Sale Trustee.
Mossel Bay, 25th December, 1871.

Wanted to Purchase.
THE Undersigned wish to PURCHASE for CASH all kinds of FINE Colonial Produce, including BRANDY, WHISKY, PORT, &c. &c. OFFICE FURNITURE, WOOD SKINS, GRAIN, &c., for which the highest Market Rates will be given.
FLEMING & MUDIE.
Mossel Bay, 25th Dec 1871.

Mr. T.B. Adlard, was the first editor and publisher of the Mossel Bay Advertiser. The paper was widely circulated and published the latest telegraphs from throughout the Colony, local news, shipping and business news, market prices. The Advertiser was soon so popular that it also became the Official Gazette for the surrounding districts as far as Swellendam. News was of such interest in the town that a flag was hoisted alerting to the latest news received by telegraph. Joseph Powrie bought the Advertiser and printing works in 1874, and was the editor and publisher until 1897.

SOUTH AFRICA'S FIRST POST OFFICE

In 1500 Pedro Alvares Cabral (32 years old at the time) was commissioned to follow up the good work of Vasco Da Gama. His large fleet of 13 vessels was scattered by a tornado. Only a few vessels remained. Cabral passed Mossel Bay again on their return journey and were once again hit by a storm. Only six of the original thirteen vessels remained in the fleet.

One of Cabral's Commanders, a certain Pedro d'Ataide, disembarked at Mossel Bay and placed a message and a report of their misfortune and voyage in a sailors' boot in the large old milkwood tree.

On 7 July 1501, Joao da Nova found the letter left by Pedro D'Ataide, in the sailors boot in the tree near the fresh water spring. Thus, more than 500 years ago, this large tree became the first post office in Southern Africa.

We know the large old "Post Office Tree" to be an indigenous milkwood variety (*Siderolxylon Interme*) growing along the coast. These trees are slow growing and it follows that if this particular tree was conspicuous in 1501, it must be well over 500 years old. It has already been declared a National Monument.



SANTOS PAVILLION

Built in 1916 by Mr. W. Swart and designed by architect Mr. Harry Davidge-Pitts. It's design is based on architecture in Brighton, England. Originally used as a bathing pavillion and tea room. It was also a popular venue for concerts and other social gatherings. It is unique and one of its kind in South Africa. The building was badly damaged by a fire in 1979 and it was re-built from original plans for use as a restaurant and accommodation.



Santos Beach & Pavilion in the late 1950's

THE SCHOONER 'SANTOS'

... and origin of
the name of
Santos Beach

The 'Santos' was a small German Schooner which was at anchor in the Bay on a fine day in July 1874 when a heavy swell set in from the South East. The master was on-shore and the mate was ill. Soon the 'Santos' was dragging her anchor and moving to the head of the Bay. Distress signals were seen and the Captain offered a large sum of money to anyone who would row him out to his ship but no one was prepared to risk his life. Then the anchor chain parted and the crew of the 'Santos' made sail in an effort to beat out of the Bay. Too late. The ship would not answer her helm, and she grounded between two reefs. (Danger Point).

The rocket apparatus failed to reach her, but a rope was floated ashore and the crew reached safety by means of a 'traveller'. Mr. A.B. Munro bought the wreck for one hundred pounds. Cargo and tackle fetched another three hundred pounds.

Ref. SA Shipping News, Marine Casualties. Lawrence Green, Harbours of Memory.

Painting: Schooner in a Stormy Sea by James E. Buttersworth



The Harbour of Mossel Bay is situated in 'Pigs Bay' (Varkensbaai). This Bay was named by the early seafarers, possibly because of the many dolphin pods in the bay, or as called by locals, Boer-en-die-Vark.

The Bay of Mossel Bay is one of the few natural harbours along the East coast and to this day serves the important function of providing shelter to vessels during western storms, as it also did for the earlier sailing ships, and where their leaky wooden vessels could be repaired.

The first shipment of wheat from the Granary, left on the Johanna Jacoba in July 1788, and by 1818 commercial shipping was taking off. At the time it was quicker to sail from the Bay to Cape Town than go along the wagon route. As formal landing space became more critical to meet business demands, a Board of Commissioners for improving the Port and Harbour was appointed in 1854, and the first of several jetties to be built, was erected in Pigs Bay.

The Harbour and later the Railways were integral to the development of the town and the biggest employer. The shipping capacity the harbour offered, was key to the business development. The harbour was also one of the most important topics on the agenda of town meetings during the early years!

Immigrants arriving by ship initially were disembarked into a small rowing boat and landed at Munro's Bay. In the late 19th and up to mid 20th century, several passenger liners called regularly at Mossel Bay. A basket, hoisted from the tug, was used to embark or off-load passengers. Until Quay 4 was built, bigger cargo-carrying ships, anchored in the Bay and had their goods offloaded onto lighters, a fleet of which on anchor, was a permanent sight in the Bay. Many well-known tugs operated in the harbour, The Bounty, The Kingfisher, Udine and The Mary. The last steam tug the Alwyn Vincent, is in the museum of the Villiersdorp Tractor and Engine Club.

From the outset, fishing was key to the survival of the early settlers; as nutrition and as a means of entrepreneurial employment. The fishing fleet, day boats, and the commercial trawlers, with skippers that many a story is told of, have also had their home in 'Pigs Bay'. The Harbour has extensively been upgraded in recent years with the extension of the Breakwater and the building of the Vincent Jetty. Today, increased and ongoing traffic of large service vessels for the Oil Platform off the coast at the Agulhas bank often dominate the Bay.



The Harbour c 1908, first railway station in foreground. Pilkington's Jetty (nearest, 1862) & the Black Jetty (in the distance, 1902)

An informal settlement, New Rush, of the late 1800s became known as Tarka by 1902. There is a strong sense of community within Tarka which is rooted in family ties and the fact that many of the residents can trace back their historical association with the settlement, five or six generations. Tarka is of historic significance due to its special character. The community built their houses of sandstone which was cut from nearby outcrops. Their skills as stonemasons played a role in the construction of many of the stone buildings of Mossel Bay.

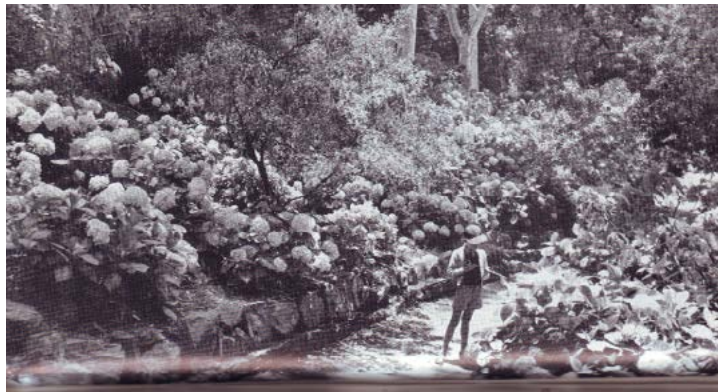
TARKA

The settlement developed as rows of houses separated by narrow gravel streets, divided into different areas known as 'Bo-Kralletjie' and 'Onder-Kralletjie'. Bo-Kralletjie was again divided into 'Mossieness', 'The Kill' and 'Pisklofie'. Over the years a police station, library, 'Rent Office' (Mr van der Sandt) and shops such as Willie Boy, Master, and John Duthie's Cafe, Van Mersch were established. As was a 'Blik Skootjie'. Landmarks were the 'Lykshuis', and the 'Washuis' where the women washed their laundry and that of clients in town. A bioscope 'Bies' against the walls of the house of Oom Boeta du Plessis provided entertainment.

Historically living conditions were difficult. The livelihood of the community of Tarka was predominantly derived from the building and fishing industries. Their skill's in tailoring, shoe repairs, and mattress making were in demand in the town.

When the Group Areas Act was introduced in the 1950s the top houses were demolished to create a buffer strip between Da Nova and Tarka. Residents clearly remember the red crosses painted on the walls of those houses to be demolished.

Originally the churches that served the Coloured Community were in the centre of town. Sunday morning the Brass Bands and the Brigades of the Anglican and Lutheran Churches were a colourful sight as they marched down to town. St Mary's Church was the first chapel in Tarka. Tarka produced many sportsmen, especially rugby players, such as David Smit and Neels du Plessis. Other sports clubs such as the Lilly Whites, Marlins, Athletics and Spring Roses were well supported. Music was part of the fabric of the people, The Guiding Stars Christmas Choir, the Klopse as was the acclaimed and popular Bay Jazz Band that played at the dances in town.



HARRY GIDDEY PARK

“Victoria Park” was proclaimed on the Queen’s Golden Jubilee on 21 June 1887. At the time it more or less covered the area from below Cape Road to Parkside West. The climate at the time was arid and the two fountains and rainwater collected was barely enough for domestic use, so there were no gardens. The first water scheme, the Kleinbosch pipeline built by Delbridge from 26 miles away and the completion of the Schermbrucker reservoir in 1886, made a park possible. The park was maintained by the Municipality and was well supported and was a popular venue for concerts - formal or impromptu - there was a band stand, more than one gazebo and a fish pond with ornamental wrought iron surround.

THE PARK GATES | 1903

The ornamental cast iron gates were donated in 1903 by Messrs. C. Bruns and F.W. Matare to commemorate 25 years of successful trading. At this time the gates were across the western end of Marsh street. Beyond this point the hill was too steep for animal drawn transport. All wheeled traffic used the Cape Road. Once motorised vehicle appeared and Marsh Street was extended up the hill, Parkside West, the gates were relocated to the present entrance.

MR. HARRY GIDDEY | 1940

The park was a labour of love to Mr. Giddey, a businessman in town. He upgraded the park, donated new gates for the southern entrance in Montagu Street, stocked the zoo and aviaries with peacocks, cranes, tortoises, monkeys and buck. Mr. Giddey created a playground for children, built benches and repaired the Bandstand and Gazebo. Many of the features and the stonework as it exist today was built under his direction by Dial Valentyn. The park was justly named after its benefactor, Harry Giddey, in 1959.

Legendary in the park was Mr. Jan Kriek, for many years the parkkeeper. Under his watchful eye, the park flourished and his famous whistle kept many young park visitors in line.

TREASURE IN THE PARK

Dial Valentyn was the master stonemason who built the much admired stone terraces in the park for Mr Giddey. In May 1951, Dial whilst digging, unearthed an old tin, with a treasure of 13 gold coins; British, Prussian, Dutch, Belgian silver and copper pieces dating from 1700-1877. Including burnt paper money. The treasure trove was handed in, and later sold £60, half of which was given to Dial.

WATER STREAM

Important to note that the stream that provided fresh water to early explorers, and the town for many years, flows through the Park and wells up in the lower part of the park.

**THE MORE YOU KNOW ABOUT THE PAST THE
BETTER PREPARED YOU ARE FOR THE FUTURE**

Theodore Roosevelt

MARKET SQUARE

and its buildings

C. 1845

Requests from farmers for a market place in Mossel Bay where they could directly sell their produce were eventually granted when regulations for a town market were published and proclaimed in the Government Gazette in August 1845.

One morgen of Crown Land on which the shipping beacon was positioned was declared the Market Square. A wooden house for the use of the Market Master was erected. Markets were held early mornings, Monday to Saturday. A bell, that could be heard loudly, announced each event.

FIRST MUNICIPAL BUILDING

Six years after the establishment of the Municipality in 1852 and erected at the cost of the shareholders, the building known as Market House was officially opened on 20 October 1858. The Civil Commissioners of the Town, the early municipal council, used it for Meetings, a Library and a Reading Room. Socials were held in the library. Later it served as the telegraph office, and the mail coach stopped here.

The Karoo style building faces north, towards the sea, as the town fathers wished for the town to look attractive from the ships at anchor. The building was declared a National Monument in 1977.

SECOND MUNICIPAL BUILDING

On 14 August 1879, the Town Hall was opened by the Town Clerk, Mr. Charles Lascelles. It housed the Municipal offices, a Council Chamber and an office for the Market Master. The building provided space for an ostrich feather market and storage of up to 600 bales of wool. Products sold included, skins, horns, grain produce, brandy tobacco and vegetables.

The exclusive wool markets which took place in the last quarter of the year became of the important occasions in the Town. As many as 50 fully laden wagons could fill the square and surrounding streets. Wool was originally sold off the wagons. Buyers for export came from as far as Cape Town and Port Elizabeth.

The keystones above the windows of the building reflect the produce of the district at the time of the construction, ostrich, sheep, grapes, oxen and wheat. In 1898 a central porch was added on the front, and in 1950, the double-storey rear addition was built.

Our town was managed from this building until the relocation of the Municipal offices to larger premises on its present site. From 1975 to 2001 the building housed the Town Museum, and more recently the Arts and Crafts Centre.



Above: "The Outspan" in front of the Barry building now known as the Protea Hotel by Marriot Mossel Bay



Above: The first jetty opened in 1862



Above: The second municipal building in the 1930's

Market House ON MARKET SQUARE

Support Mossel Bay's local artists and crafters on display at the Market House, next to the Tourism Office in Market Str. Souvenirs, art, crafts, trinkets and gifts for sale.

Also visit:

**THE GOODS SHED
BLAND STR. MOSSEL BAY**

INTRODUCING GREAT BRAK RIVER

WRITTEN BY

Rene de Kock

Whilst Great Brak River and Mossel Bay grew up together, often challenging one another at different sports, they have very different histories. The first known reference to the Great Brak River was made in 1730 when its banks were reached by the pioneering trek farmers. In 1745 the river became the eastern boundary of the Cape Colony in an area known as 'De Verre Afgeleegene Districten'. The eastern part of the Colony, between the Breede and Great Brak Rivers, fell under the jurisdiction of the Drosty (magistracy) at Swellendam.

Francois le Vaillant described the area in 1782: "We crossed a plain, encircled with hills, beautifully covered with trees and bushes, about five miles in circumference. I found there thousands of pelicans and flamingos ... When we left the river, we had to climb a difficult and very steep mountain. With patience and hard work, the top was reached (Great Brak Heights). The scenery which now appeared to the eye richly rewarded our trouble. We were admiring the most beautiful country on earth. This land bears the name of Outeniqua, meaning in Khoi-Khoi 'man laden with honey'".

As the Cape Colony expanded northwards and eastwards during the nineteenth century, Great Brak River became a well-used outspan en route to George and further east. Georgetown was established in 1811. Mossel Bay was the only port; thus, the access road was improved during the 1840s. In 1850 a causeway was built over the Great Brak River. This consisted of thirteen stone piers still in use today. This crossing became a toll in 1852.

The river often came down in flood bringing debris in contact with the causeway, which caused both damage and hindrance to the crossing traffic, which in the early days were mainly farmers and their farm animals and wool for export from Mossel Bay. In addition, the river mouth was often blocked allowing the estuary water level to build up and again preventing easy access across the river.

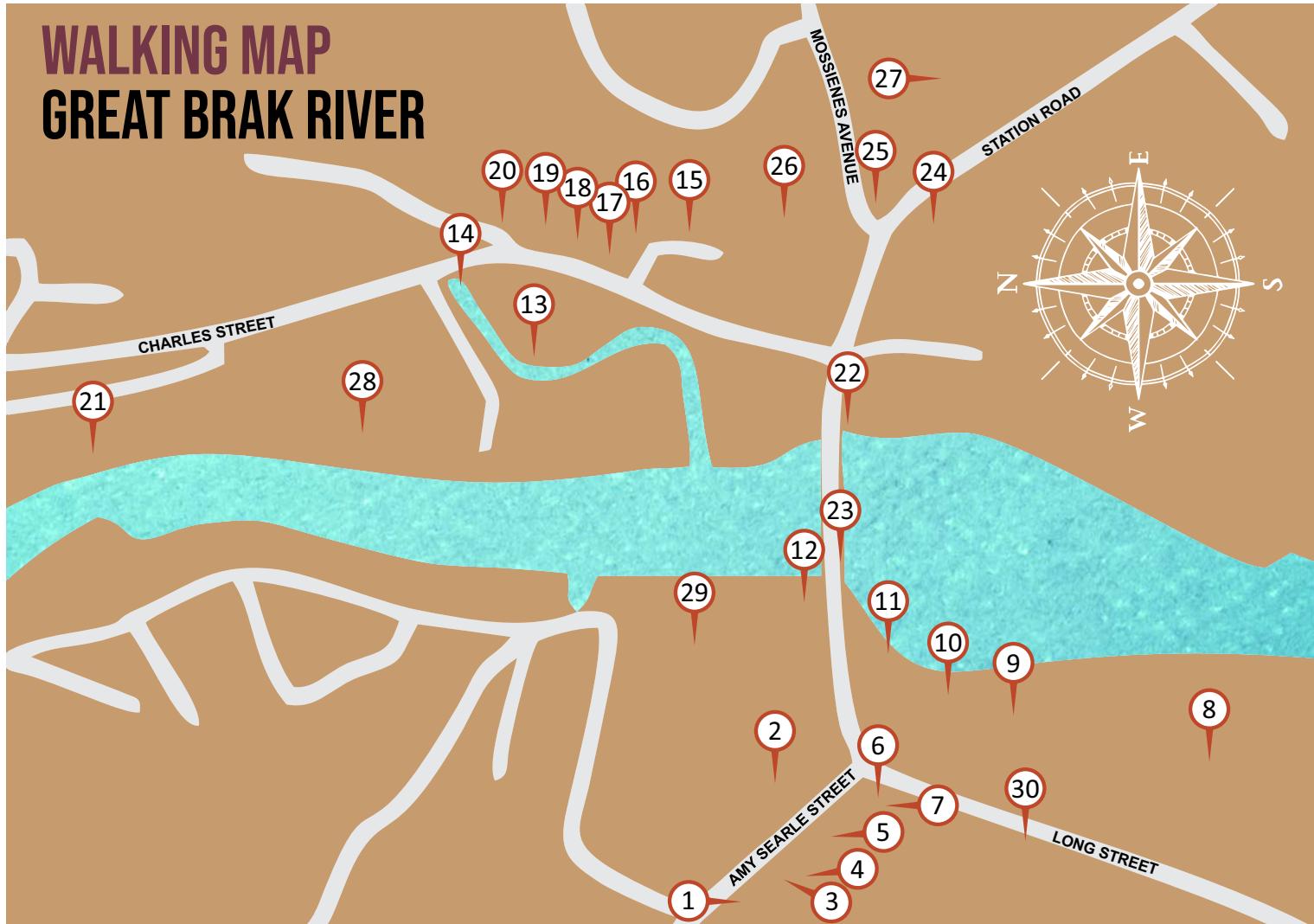
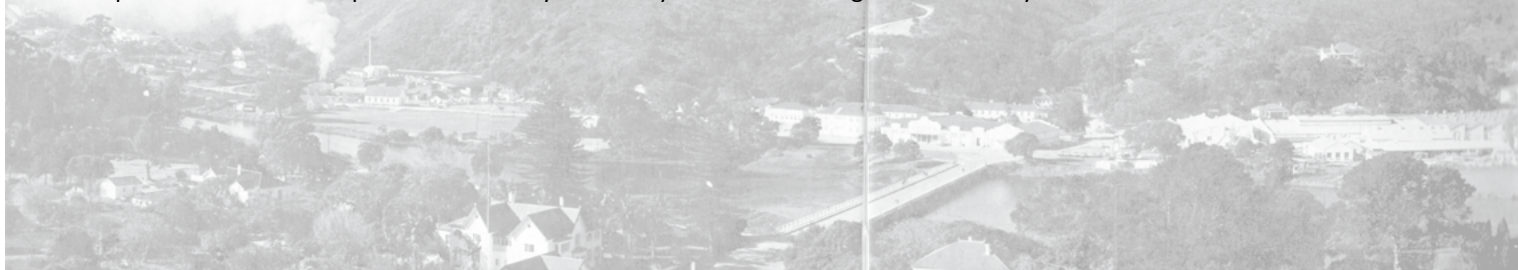
The village of Great Brak River was started in 1859 when Charles Searle brought his family to the then virtually unknown rural settlement alongside the flood prone river to operate and collect the toll which provided for his wellbeing and for the cost of maintaining the crossing. Travellers often needed their shoes (veldskoens) repaired. Charles Searle saw an opportunity and in 1886, with two of his sons, established a small boot and shoe factory and in 1887 a tannery which eventually became one of South Africa's leading dynamic industries allowing the village to grow extensively.

From its beginning in 1859 Great Brak River was a little back road village started by an unknown family with little experience of business. It had a number of strong advantages. It was located on the banks of an unpredictable coastal river subject to flooding which was essential to cross when travelling east. It also had a good bridge, crossable on most days of the year and it was in a country area far from the many major historic 'events' that subsequently took place.

Charles Searle senior had been convinced that it was Great Brak River and not the operating of the toll that would lead their family to success. This and subsequent war rumblings must have been in their minds when they fashioned their leather works domain. They soon started expanding into retail and the Searles outlets opened in Knysna, George, Mossel Bay, Riversdale and Oudtshoorn. Although concentrating on Boots and Veldskoens, they provided leather of all descriptions for harnesses and other related products. During 1899, fearing attack from the Boer armies, many local guard units were formed and these required good quality boots, saddles and outfits.

The First Boer War was a war fought from 16 December 1880 until 23 March 1881 between the United Kingdom and Boers of the Transvaal (as the South African Republic was known while under British administration). The second Boer war took place from 1899 to 1902 which coincided with the rapid growth of the Searle factory which in the early days manufactured not only boots and shoes but were tanners and curriers (a currier is a specialist in the leather processing industry). During 1914, World War one started and in the early war years, there were no tractors to pull the cannons or to position the large guns and this was left to the men and their horses. Both men and horse required suitable gear and leather was top of the list especially in bad weather. From the 1890s to 1920, C. Searle and Company was the leading leather works factory in South Africa.

In 1905 a waterwheel was installed on a freshwater furrow built by Charles Searle in 1874. This produced the first electricity which fed the factories machines. To keep up the rapidly rising demand for power the plant was enlarged and later an extensive hydroelectric plant (still in working order) was installed, fed with water carried by a new water furrow 19 kilometres long. The village of Great Brak River was in a fortunate position to be able to produce electricity some 15 years before George or Mossel Bay.



MAP REFERENCES

1. Museum and Information Office; 1902
2. Wolwedans Farmhouse; was bought in 1827 before the the arrival of Charles Searle and in the 1840s was used as a posting house when owned by Hercules Terblans.
3. Original Stables; 1830
4. Corrugated Iron Cottage; 1900
5. Searle Memorial Church Hall; 1900
6. Searle Memorial Church. Built 1930 and the architect was Gordon Leith in a Spanish architectural style. The pulpit was designed with timber bought by the London Missionary Society in appreciation of the Searle's service to religion.
7. Prospect House; built in 1915 as a wedding gift from Thomas & Jemima Searle for their eldest son Allan Murray Searle and Amy Mary Leith.
8. Chauffeur's Cottage; 1920
9. Fairholm; was given as a wedding present to Thomas Searle's daughter Emily, who fell in love with Claude Dugmore. The house was built in 1916.
10. Searle Family Cemetery; 1881
11. The original house, Riversyde was built in 1898 for Thomas Searle and his wife Jemima. He was the youngest son of Charles senior and Pamela Searle.
12. West Bank was built in 1896 for Charles Searle junior and his wife Mary nee' Murray. The house had large gardens tended by English gardeners and in 1915 was famous for its orchid collection.
13. Pic n Pay (Shoe Factory & Retail Store); 1903
14. Searle's Head Office This building was built in 1920 as the Searle's Ltd. Head Office. At the time, the post office was incorporated into the building. Bolton took over the company and building in 1989.
15. Belhambra House. In 1880 Charles Searle senior & his wife Pamela built a new home known as Belhambra House. The other half of the building housed the Searle's Store. Extended in length 1899.
16. Bioscope Hall (Traders Auctioneers); 1924
17. Boarding House; 1920
18. Boarding House, Le Art; 1920
19. St John the Evangelist Church; 1930
20. Mission Hall (New Apostolic Church); 1894
21. Old Factory Pensioners Houses; 1867
22. Position of Original Toll House; 1850
23. Original Causeway, now Bridge; 1850
24. Searle Shoe Factory; 1917-18
25. Pepper Tree; 1884
26. Double Story Flats; 1900
27. Sunnybrae House, erected in 1913 for Willie & Edith Searle. It was a house of music & laughter as Edith & her three daughters were generous in imparting their musical talents with the villagers.
28. Site of 'House of Accommodation'; 1856
29. Glencairn; 1903
30. Workers Cottages; 1900

ROBINSON PASS



Robinson Pass on the R328 route between Mossel Bay and Oudtshoorn is a lifeline between the coast and the Little Karoo. The Pass boasts sweeping curves and superb views around every corner. It was officially opened on 4 June 1869 and named after Mr. M.R. Robinson, an Inspector General of Roads in the Cape Colony.

The first pass over the Outeniqua mountains to the Karoo was the Montagu Pass (1848) at George. The growing coastal port of Mossel Bay residents became quite demanding about the long detour via George they had to travel to get to Oudtshoorn, which at that time was a busy and booming town with the ostrich feather industry in full swing.

The old Attequas Pass, which was the first road to the North, was still the main access road from the coast into the Karoo and a smaller more torturous track that cut through the Ruitersbos Valley in the lower reaches of the mountain slopes. The roads authorities contacted the renowned Thomas Bain, who had at the time just completed the magnificent Prince Alfred's Pass north of Knysna, to cast his experienced eye over the rugged terrain. Bain made use of both the old roads mentioned above, plus some new sections, to build the first constructed version of what was to become the Robinson Pass.

In 1858 the Council of Mossel Bay asked the residents of Oudtshoorn to contribute to the estimated £10 000 that it would cost to develop the Ruitersbosch road. Oudtshoorn declined as they had no funds and in 1860 the Colonial Office pledged £2000 if Mossel Bay and Oudtshoorn would pay the balance in equal amounts. To ensure that the Pass was built, Mossel Bay contributed the balance in full.

Nearly 60 years ago (4 March 1961) the tarred pass was opened by Dr. Nico Malan, the then Administrator of the Cape. Names that depict interesting places along the pass include Haarnaalddraai

(Hair Pin corner), Outol (where the old toll house stood and which was a very popular picnic spot), Bronsedraai, Groenpunt, Swartdraai, Karoonek, and Die Stasie.

Several legends are associated with the Pass. One of them Oom Tolletjie, Hendrik (Hennie) Boshoff (1916-1917), whom was a shoemaker and had to tender to get the position as the toll collector. He was the grandfather of Elsie Rademeyer and Helgard Muller, who still reside in the area today.

A previous councilor of the Mossel Bay Council, Mr. Jim van der Merwe was 15-year-old when the tarred road was opened. He did not attend the inauguration, but he remembers the old gravel road, which he describes as extremely dangerous. The road was very narrow and thick mist is still today a character of the Pass. The festivities 150 years ago started the day before when the bulk of the Mossel Bay residents hit the wagons and horses to make the trip to the Pass. They organised a stay over on the farms in the area and at 08:00 on 4 June a gigantic festival parade formed as riders and wagons from all over accumulated and took part in the festivities.

Under a huge arch (with the words "A good name shine forever!") over the newly built Robinson Pass road, previously known as the Ruitersbosch road, Mrs. Wyldie Helm, the master of ceremonies and wife of the Civil Commissioner, announced that she was not impressed that an important occasion such as the opening of the gateway from Mossel Bay to the North, was not celebrated with a ball. Not even the sponsored champagne could help her feel better.

Over the years the Pass has been rebuilt and realigned to better lines to form the beautiful and comfortable pass we drive on today. It has

FRANSMANS HOEK



The history of Fransmanshoek is associated with the stranding of a warship during the 18th century. Fransmanshoek gets its name from the wreck of the French man o' war, La Fortune, which sank here on the 11th of September 1763 ("French man" translated into Afrikaans is "Fransman"). She'd anchored just offshore to load fresh water from the spring – which still runs today – but an easterly gale drove her onto the rocks, and she couldn't be saved. Fortunately, all 441 of the soldiers and sailors onboard made it safely to shore, and all valuables on board were removed at the time, except for 56 canons.

Originally, the Punt Huisie was a simple fishing cabin built many decades ago. Since then it has been restored and converted into an information centre for the Fransmanshoek Conservancy with information and lots of examples of the fauna and flora of the area. The Conservancy is responsible for the conservation and management of the peninsula.

Picture and information courtesy of www.vleesbaai.co.za

FRIEMERSHEIM 150 YEARS

Friemersheim, a tiny village in a remote area of the Garden Route, has a very special story to tell. Today it serves as a memorial to Johann Kretzen, a German who arrived at the Cape in December 1838 as a carpenter - but also with the burning desire to become a missionary. Thirty two years later (in December 1870) he realized another dream when he bought land to start a mission station which he named after his place of birth in Germany.

One of the first missionaries of the Dutch Reformed Church, Johann Kretzen worked until age 85 - many years also as teacher. Based in George for almost half a century, he is still remembered not only for his service to the Church, but also for the huge role he had played to improve education for especially Coloured people. In his lifetime he founded seven schools and sent Coloured men to the Moravian mission station Genadendal to be trained as teachers. Not that long ago (in 2006 at Geelhoutboom Primary, then 150 years old and in 2012 at Kretzenhoop Primary, then 120 years old) special ceremonies were held to commemorate the legacy he left behind.

When Johann Kretzen arrived in the George and Friemersheim areas in 1854 abundant indigenous forests were part of the landscape. As trained carpenter he made another very valuable contribution: he taught his trade to members of his congregation and to his students. In Friemersheim, where Volkwyns had been living since 1806, more than one generation of this extended wood-working family benefitted from his teachings. Friemersheim is in fact recorded as the birthplace of the Volkwyn chair, named after the three brothers Jan, Alec and Isak (born in Friemersheim) who created this popular chair - today a collector's item.

In 1950 the Group Areas Act had a severe impact on their thriving businesses in George. Members of the family living in Friemersheim were less affected since this was declared a Coloured area. In 2016 Ravel Nortjé (his grandmother was a sister of these Volkwyn brothers) was still making Volkwyn chairs in Friemersheim. Today a chair made by him is on display at the Shweshwe Stop, just down the road from where he used to work and live. His death in 2018 brought an end to this furniture manufacturing Volkwyn tradition in Friemersheim.

During the past few years the once remote Friemersheim, now situated close to many tourist attractions, has been rediscovered.

THE FRAGRANCE ROUTE

This circular route of about 40 km can be reached from Great Brak River, Little Brak River or Reebok/Tergniet and Leeukloof, and is very popular amongst local cyclists. These scenic back roads with vistas of fynbos covered countryside and majestic mountains make this area ideal for mountain biking, off road bike enthusiasts and birding.

Here you will find several "hidden gems" – sparkling examples of the true local flavour, authentic and unique. For more information visit www.proemb.co.za

THE VOLKWYN CHAIR

The Volkwyn chair is a late variant of the Regency chair that came into being in the Southern Cape. It is named after the Volkwyn family, who lived and worked in the George/Groot Brakrivier area at the beginning of the 20th century and developed this variant of the Regency chair. Theodore or Tak Volkwyn, probably the best known of them, worked for more than four decades in the cabinetmaking industry in George. Hendrik and Isak Volkwyn from Gonnakraal, Friemersheim, were the other members of this family in the business.

The chair has so many variations that it is difficult to say what a typical Volkwyn chair looks like. The chair in the image is found in the George Museum and may be regarded as giving the best indication of the various Volkwyn characteristics. The features that it shares with the typical Regency side chair are the inserted upper back rail, the curved back stiles, the broad and flat seat edge and the Regency turned legs. Additional features are the back rest that is higher than that of the average Regency chair, an additional turned spindle upper back rail above the usual broad, inserted upper rail, an additional back rail below the normal lower back rail, and three turned spindle-shaped rails on the front and sides of the underframe. The bottom of the broad back rail – now second from the top – has been shaped in an arcade. Between the two thin back rails there are four bobbin shapes, corresponding exactly with the bobbin-type rail of the Regency chair. (Courtesy www.proemb.co.za)



Ravel Nortjé (now deceased) busy in his workshop in Friemersheim. His grandmother was a Volkwyn, and family of the four brothers who manufactured Volkwyn chairs and other furniture in Friemersheim at the beginning of the 20th century. A replica of the Friemersheim Volkwyn chair made by him is on permanent display at the historic Friemersheim church.

VISIT OUR MUSEUMS

BARTOLOMEU DIAS MUSEUM COMPLEX

1 Market Street, Mossel Bay
www.diasmuseum.co.za
044 691 1067

ATKV MUSEUM | HARTENBOS

Majuba Street
Hartenbos
044 601 7238

JANINE WASHING & IRONING MUSEUM | HARTENBOS

Cnr. Kompanje Ave. & Kaap De Goede Hoop Ave., Hartenbos. The entrance is under Wimpy, from the Engen Garage side.
079 287 5434

GREAT BRAK RIVER MUSEUM

2 Amy Searle Street
Great Brakriver
044 620 3338

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TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICE

Mossel Bay Tourism
Cnr. Market & Church Streets
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www.visitmosselbay.co.za

Mossel Bay Tourism thank the Mossel Bay Heritage Society for preparing the information in this guide.

Thank You



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MOSSEL BAY • MOSSELBAAI • eMOSSEL BAY

Cover Art

The cover image as well as the image on page 7 is the work of local artist Fanus Buys.