Simon's Town Historical Timeline

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SIMON'S TOWN MUSEUM

HARBOUR BAY VILLAGE

1600 — 1700 — 1800 — 1900 — 2000

Pre Colonial Period

1687 to the end of the Dutch period: Simon's Town bay was known as Simonsbaai and the town as Simonsvlek(ie)

1652: Dutch

1795: The name, Simon's Town, was first used by Major General James H. Craig.

The British also called it Seaman's Bay

1795: British
First British Occupation (1795-1803)

1803: Batavian Republic

1806: British
Second British Occupation (1806-1957)

1910: Union of South Africa

1922: South African government

1961: Republic of South Africa

1994:Republic of South Africa

Events that changed Simon's Town history

Simon van der Stel chooses Simon's Bay as a winter anchorage in 1687.

The Dutch East India Company paid its last dividend in 1782, thus showing its decline, the effects being only essential developments at Simon's Bay were undertaken.

The War Between Britain and the Dutch culminating in the defeat of the Dutch at the Battle of Muizenberg in 1795.

Second British Occupation is decided at the Battle of Blaauwberg in 1806

The Second Anglo Boer War 1899 – 1902

First World War 1914 – 1918

Second World War 1939 – 1945

1901: Mayor of Simon's Town, Mr William Runciman

1996: Simon's Town Municipality is dissolved and becomes part of the city of Cape Town.

1996-2003

2003-2014

2014-

Direct administration of Simon's Town

Before Simon van der Stel, Simon's Town had been viewed from the sea but no Cape leader had taken direct interest in this bay. This list will cover the direct administration at Simon's Town be it Commander, Admiral, postholder or Mayor.

Jan van Riebeeck: 1652 – 1662
Zacharias Wagenaer: Commander: 1662 – 1666
Van Quaeberg: Commander: 1666 – 1668
Jacob Borghorst: Commander: 1668 – 1670
Pieter Hackius: Commander: 1670 – 1671
Poblaize Ruaal: Acting: 1671 – 1672
Albert van Breugel: Commander (acting): 1672
Isbrand Goske: Commander: 1672 – 1676
Johan Bax van Herenthals: Commander: 1676 – 1678
Hendrik Crudop: Commander (acting): 1678 – 1679
Simon van der Stel: Commander: 1679 – 1691

Willem Adriaan van der Stel: Governor: 1699 – 1707
Johannes Cornelis d'Ableing: Governor (acting): 1707 – 1708
Louis van Assenburg: Governor: 1708 – 1711
Willem Helot: Governor: 1711 – 1714
Maurits Pasques de Chavonnes: Governor: 1714 – 1724
Jean de la Fontaine: Governor (acting): 1724 – 1727
Pieter Gijsbert Noodt: Governor: 1727 – 1729
Jean de la Fontaine: Governor (acting): 1729 – 1737
Adriaan van Kervel: Governor: Died 3 weeks in office
Daniel van den Henghel: Governor (acting): 1737 – 1739
Hendrik Swellengrebel: Governor: 1739 – 1751

1743: Sergeant Justinus Blas becomes the first postholder of Simon's Town, thus Simon's Town is officially born.

1751: Adriaan de Neys becomes postholder. His full title was Onder-Cooman en Hooft van de Baay Falx.

1774: Christoffel Brand: postholder

1786: Christoffel Brand: postholder & magistrate

1814: Simon's Town becomes a separate district from Cape Town with its own magistrate, Johannes Hendricus Brand

1901: Mayor of Simon's Town, Mr William Runciman

1996: Simon's Town Municipality is dissolved and becomes part of the city of Cape Town.

560 m years ago
Simon's Town was still silt at the bottom of the ancient Adamastor sea.

540 m years ago
The Malmesbury Group was intruded by molten magma which, over millions of years, cooled down slowly and, at a depth of 6km below todays ground level, formed into granite. After millions of years and 6km of erosion, the granite is exposed to our surface today.

540m years ago
Younger and faster cooling granite forced its way through cracks in the older granite forming Aplites which, in the case of Froggy Pond, resembles low walls.

490-410m years ago
The sandstone formation behind Simon's Town is formed. Around 300 million years ago, uplifting, folding and buckling during the Supercontinent Gondwana, started shaping the mountain as we see it today.

200-300 m years ago
The Admiral's Kloof Thrust Fault is formed when South America and Africa collided.

130 m years ago
A dolerite dyke (like volcanic rock) intrudes into the much older (540 million years) granite at Froggy Pond.

5m years ago
Simon's Town was under water when the world was experiencing a glacial low period. This occurred again 1.5 million years ago.

200 000 years ago
Early man makes the area around Simon's Town home.

20 000 years ago
Simon's Town and False Bay find themselves high and dry with 20km of dry land to the nearest beach during a Glacial Maximum.

20 000 years ago
The San inhabited the Southern Peninsula.

+-2000 years ago
The khoi (Khoi-na) join the San at the Southern Peninsula.

1652
The Dutch East India Company established a refreshment station at the place.

1671
The ship Ysseltejn anchored in Simon's Bay which was unnamed at the time. Batavia ordered the VOC officials at the Cape to incorporate this area into the colony.

1687
Simon van der Stel surveyed False Bay aboard the galiot (a small galley boat), "Noordt", which he boarded in Kalk Bay. He recommended Simon's Bay as the new winter anchorage.

1687-1743
The bay was known as Ysseltejn/Simon's Bay but the tiny seasonal settlement was called Simonsvlek (ie) until the establishment of the Royal Navy base in 1813, which is when it became known as Simon's Town.

1699
Simon van der Stel gains grazing rights rights from Constantia to the Cape Point including future Simon's Town on his retirement. His son, Willem Adriaan van der Stel, already had the fishing rights to False Bay.

1698
Willem Adriaan van der Stel tried to repeat his father's 1687 expedition to Simon's Town but gave up at Kalk Bay.

1724
Antoni Visser acquired a loan place in Simon's Town where he grazed cattle.

1729
An expedition is sent to False Bay including Simon's Town to make a detailed report and chart. The party consisted of Jacobus Müller, Jan de Heere and a cartographer, Isaak van Es.

1737
The ship Pallas takes refuge in Simon's Town after a major storm. Antoni Visser takes charge and helps the crew before government help.

1740
Antoni Visser builds a house more or less on the site of today's Admiralty House, which is incorporated into a house later.

1742
Simon's Town was first used as an official anchorage.

1743
Baron G. W. van Imhoff, Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, chose a site for a magazine, hospital and barracks at Simon's Town. A small garrison was stationed there.

Sergeant Justinus Blas becomes the first postholder of Simon's Town thus, officially, Simon's Town is born.

Antoni Visser is granted 585.1/2 roods of freehold land in Simon's Town. He dies two years later.

1743
Groot Tuin and Klein Tuin are established.

1745
Goede Gift was granted to Christina Cloener by Baron von Imhoff, along with Imhoff's Gift for producing vegetables for the VOC fleet.

1760
A start was made to build a hospital under Governor Ryk Tulbagh.

1761
The second postholder, De Neys, dies and is buried at Simon's Town.

1768
A stone pier was constructed. A bakery, a slaughterhouse, a carpenter's shop and a smithy were erected, as well as a residence for the Governor (who always spent a few days there when the fleet arrived).

1772
Simon's Town is visited by Capt. Cook who voyaged around the world. He visited again in 1775 on the Resolution.

1772
Anders Sparrman, a famous Swedish botanist, visited the Cape. While here he became the tutor to J.F. Kirsten's children before joining Capt. Cook in 1772 on his voyage . In 1775, he was back in Simon's Town again with Capt. Cook.

1773
Carl Peter Thunberg, a Swedish botanist, visits Simon's Town. With his extensive work at the Cape, he gained the title as the father of South African botany.

1774 & 1776
Vice Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson, then a midshipman, arrives in Simon's Town aboard the Seahorse and he returns again two years later on the Dolphin and stays for a month. He makes his name famous at a later date in The Battle of Trafalgar (1805) which established British naval supremacy for more than 100 years.

1777
The Residency is built by VOC governor, Joachim van Plettenberg, as his winter residence. It has also served as the magistrate's residence (1814-1879) and today as the Simon's Town Museum.

1778
The first news of the Colebrooke disaster where they ran aground at Kogel Bay (other side of False Bay) was from a team from the Colebrooke who rowed across False Bay in 10 hours to Simon's Town to raise the alarm.

1780
Francois Le Vaillant, the renowned ornithologist, naturalist and explorer, visits Simon's Town on his visit to the Cape (1780-1784). He describes it as 'dreary'. He uses the small hamlet as a base to explore Cape Point which he describes as the stuff of dreams.

1781-83
Simon's Town and Cape Town become known as 'Little Paris' when the French Pondicherry Regiment and a company of artillery take up residence there. Their presence was to protect their allies interests from the British during the American War of Independence. The result of their presence in Simon's Town was described as an economic and social boom.

1786
A shipwrecked crew of the La Rozette found their way to Simon's Town after running aground at False Bay. After sympathy and then suspicion, it was found that they had murdered their officers and other seamen and staged the whole shipwreck.

1793
Around this time, it was more cost effective to have supplies for Simon's Town brought in by boat from Kalk Bay than to travel the last few miles along the unforgiving coastal road route.

1793
The prendecessor of Lower North Battery, Gulman Battery, was built on the orders of Commissioner-General A. J. Skyalen by Captain Louis Michel Thibault. The battery was armed with four 24-pounder guns. On 1 July 1795, the Dutch garrison at Simon's Town spiked their guns and withdrew to Muizenberg during the First British Occupation.

1794
With war breaking out between Holland and France, Commissioner Abraham Josias Sluysken builds two batteries at Simon's Town, the Boetselaar (south point) and Zoutman (present lower North Battery). At the same time, he establishes batteries at Houd Bay and Camps Bay. Later, more cannons are added at Elsjé's Bay, Fish Hoek and Kalk Bay.

1795
The beginning of the First British Occupation of the Cape. When the British arrived in Simon's Town, the Dutch garrison was too small to resist, so they withdrew.

The bulk of the negotiations with the British preceding the Battle of Muizenberg were conducted by the resident, Christoffel Brand.

1796
The Martello Tower is built, the first building erected after the British occupation and possibly the oldest British structure of its kind in the world.

1797
Mutiny aboard several Royal navy ships in Simon's Town is put down. Twenty two men surrended and were tried, resulting in five of them being hanged from the yard-arm.

1797
J.F Kirsten built the Wine-House which is probably the oldest existing Wine-House still standing in South Africa today.

1800
The horticulturist, Mr William Duckitt (of Darling, West Coast fame), arrives at Simon's Town and resurrects the neglected Groot and Klein gardens. He is housed at Dallands during his short stay.

1807
British parliament abolished the slave trade. It was from Simon's Town that many anti-slave trade patrols set off for the East African coast to unsettle the Arab slave-trade based at Zanzibar. These patrols lasted till 1873.

1813
Simon's Town was turned into a naval establishment and a harbour was constructed, which became the sole base of the South Atlantic squadron of the Royal Navy in the Cape.

Mr T Gardner is appointed as the harbour master.

St George's becomes the first English church at the Cape. Within 5 years, the congregation temporarily moves into the sail loft of the naval yard house.

1814
L.M. Thibault, famous for his architecture in the Cape such as Groot Constantia wine-cellar, Koopmans-de Wet House and the Facade of Tokai, lays out the first townplan for Simon's Town.

1814
A bridge is built over the river at Admiralty House, making it the oldest existing bridge in South Africa.

1815
Simon's Town gets its first English-speaking school for whites and coloureds.

1821
The news of Napoleon Bonaparte's death on the island of St Helena was received at Simon's Town before any major centre in the world, including England, that heard the news three months later. Simon's Town, the main supplier to Helena, lose important business to the island which dented its importance and finances.

1828
The Wesleyan Chapel was built but major alterations in 1905 changed the original look and feel. This chapel is the oldest Methodist Church in South Africa.

1832
Simon's Town became a free port.

1834
Abolition of Slavery.

1836
Charles Darwin arrives in Simon's Town on the HMS Beagle as part of an exploratory voyage around the world.The Beagle stayed in port for 18 days – longer than at any other port during their circumnavigation.

1849
282 convicts aboard the Neptune find themselves blockaded in Simon's Town Bay by everyone at the Cape. The convicts were meant to be offloaded at the Cape to start a penal colony. The outcome was a victory for the Anti-Convict campaign at the Cape, as the Neptune left for Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) and Australia.

1855
The Dutch Reformed Church is established in Simon's Town and, later that year, the cornerstone of the church is laid. In 1941, the congregations of Simon's Town and Kalk Bay amalgamated and moved to Fish Hoek. The church is still used by the navy and civilians.

1856
The Simon's Bay Dock or Patent Slip Company is formed. The foundation stone of the first patent slipway in the colony was laid in 1859 and officially opened in 1860 with much fanfair.

1860
Prince Alfred, second son of Queen Victoria, arrives at Simon's Town on the HMS Euryalus for his first visit to South Africa. This was the first member of royal family to set foot at the Cape. He returns to Simon's Town seven years later but this time as Duke of Edinburgh.

1860
Simon's Town gets the electric telegraph.

1863
Capt Raphael Semmes arrived in Simon's Town with his ship the Confederate raider, CSS Alabama. He and his officers are entertained at Admiralty House.

1865
A bridge over the Elsjé's River at Glencairn is built.

1872
For the first time in South Africa, Lord Hister's antiseptic method was used at the old Ferrace Hospital in Simon's Town, during the amputation of a leg of a sailor and the arm of another. Both healed successfully.

1875
The first 'hard road' was built from Fish Hoek to Simon's Town.

1879
Louis Napoleon, Prince Imperial of France, arrives in Simon's Town. A royal salute of 21 guns is fired in his honour. Within months, he is killed by Zulu warriors during the second British invasion of Zululand. His early death sent shockwaves throughout Europe.

1883
Simon's Town has its own municipality, making it the oldest independent municipality in the Cape Peninsula.

1885
The Royal Navy takes over the Patent Slip from civilian use and, as a result, in 1886, the town jetty is built.

1886
The first public jetty is constructed using light timber. In 1905, this jetty is replaced using heavier jarrah timber and, in 1921, reinforced concrete is used as a replacement. This jetty is one of the oldest structures of its type still in use today.

1886
"Betsy", the 9 inch rifled muzzle-loading (RML) gun found its home on the Middle North Battery in Simon's Town after serving in three different places around the world. Only 190 were made worldwide.

1890
The stone terraced Luyolo Village is started above Long Beach to accommodate the workers for the construction of the railway line which was being built and later for the workers constructing the East Dockyard and Royal Naval Base. With the advent of the Group Areas Act, the approximately 1500 residents were removed to Gugulethu in 1965.

1896
A new school was built on navy-owned land where free slaves had been housed (Black Town). This school was replaced in 1953 and the building became a municipal centre.

1888
The original Simon's Town Mosque was established with a madrasa. The building we see today was rebuilt in late 1926.

1895
Simon's Town was ceded to the British Admiralty as a naval station.

1896
Black Town was built by the Royal Navy to house "freed" slaves who were then "apprenticed" to white business owners.

1899
Extensive alterations were begun in Simon's Town.

1899
The Second Anglo Boer War, which broke out that year, enormously increased the importance of Simon's Town and work went ahead rapidly on the Selborne Dock, as well as a dry-dock and engineering and construction workshops. The East Dockyard was built between 1900-1910 including the Selborne Graving Dock (dry dock).

1899
Boer POWs were held on prison ships in Simon's Bay.

1900
Edgar Wallace served as a medical orderly in the military hospital behind Palace Barracks.

1900
Boer POWs were interned at the present-day South African Navy sportfield at Seafort.

1900
The Palace Barracks (built pre 1785) were converted to a hospital for the Boer War prisoners who were dying from enteric fever. They were mainly the men from Cronje's force which surrended at Paardeberg. This is where Mary Kingsley wrote herself into the history books and hearts of Simon's Town with her devotion and tireless work with the sick and dying prisoners. She succumbed to the fever after 10 weeks. She was buried at sea with full military honours.

1901
A much larger POW camp was built at Bellevue/Boulders (today's Simon's Town golf course).

1901
A new naval hospital was built on the slopes above Cornwall Street which was immediately filled with patients suffering from a typhoid epidemic that broke out in Simon's Town, affecting both British forces and Boer POWs.

1901
The first recorded shark attack in South Africa took place at Windmill Beach when a Boer POW was attacked while bathing.

1901
The Duke and Duchess of Cornwall (later King George V and Queen Mary) embark on a world tour landing at Simon's Town, to much fanfare but they decided to stay at Government House in Cape Town.

1901
Sir John Jackson Ltd is awarded the contract to build the extentions to the dockyard and build a graving dock. Workers are brought in from the four corners of the globe such as England, Italy, Holland, Sweden, Ireland and India. The foundation stone for the dockyard is laid by Earl Selborne in 1906.

This quarry above Simon's Town was mined for sandstone for the construction of the Simon's Town dockyard. Sir John Jackson imported Italian workmen who cut out close to 2000 tons of stone a day.

1902
Simon's Town became the transit camp for hundreds of Boer POWs brought back from St Helena, Ceylon and other places.

1902
The population of Simon's Town was 4684, of which White numbered 3209 and Coloured people 1575. There were 450 dwellings.

1902
The entire water supply of water to Simon's Town was a concrete reservoir containing 13112 million litres, an Admiralty reservoir containing 836m litres, and springs yielding 68 000 litres a day.

1904
An aerial ropeway is built to service a convalescent home 300 m above Simon's Town at Klaver Valley. In 1905, the navy decided to take over this valley to make a firing range. This displaced many farmers and small-holders and they had to build new homes elsewhere.

1905
The Cottage Hospital was built and renamed False Bay Hospital in 1930. In 1964, it was moved to Fish Hoek.

1905
This year marks the end of whaling on a commercial basis in False Bay.

1905
The Simon's Town municipal council assumed a coat of arms, designed by Adolphus Borin. It was granted by the College of Arms on 27 September 1957. The design was mistakenly based on Simon van der Stel's coat of arms and not the intended coat of arms of Simon van der Stel.

1908
The Union Castle lines ran a day trip sea voyage from Cape Town to Simon's Town where visitors, after exploring the town, travelled back to Cape Town by train. This venture ran for a number of years.

1910
Scott's ship, the Terra Nova, puts in at Simon's Town for replenishments, refitting and scientific instrument calibration which took place on the lawn of Admiralty House. Scott then sailed to Australia and on to Antarctica where his ill-fated expedition to reach the South Pole ended up as one of the great adventure stories of the 20th century. Scott had visited Simon's Town before as a 15 year old midshipman and, again, in 1901, when he sailed south in the South Pole with Edward Wilson and Ernest Shackleton.

1914
During the First World War, with the Suez Canal closed, Simon's Town rendered important service as a British naval base.

During the war years,Simon's Town is just under martial law and a guard is placed at Glencairn road – everyone needed a permit to enter.

1914
The SS Clan Stuart ran aground after dragging its anchor in a south east gale on 21 November.

1915
The Cape Coloured Corps was formed on the site of the old Boer POW camp (Bellevue) in Simon's Town.

1918
The influenza epidemic (Spanish flu), which killed more than 50 million people worldwide, reaches Simon's Town and puts the little town into a disorganised and over-trained state with the loss of many lives.

1919
First electric street lights were installed at Gordela Gift, Simon's Town.

1920
A motor road was built up Red Hill.

1921
The music by Ds ML de Villiers is composed in Simon's Town at the Dutch Reformed Church pastorate for the "The Stem van Suid-Afrika" (South African national anthem). This he did by winning a national competition to find the right music to back CJ Langenhoven's words.

1922
The training ship, General Botha, is christened by Jan Smuts and becomes the base for naval cadets in Simon's Town. Here they could get ordinary schooling and specialised mercantile marine training. The cadets would become known as the Botha Boys. During WWII, the cadets were moved to 'Botha Camp' on Redhill opposite today's Pinehaven. After WWII, the training centre was moved to Gordon's Bay and named the South African Merchant Navy Training Academy.

1933
Without fanfare, Prince Phillip's nanny, Emily Roose, died at Simon's Town and is buried in the Dido Valley Naval Cemetery. She also delivered Prince Phil near Simon's Town, next to the lower North Battery lip on a dining room table back in Greece in 1921.

1934
A golf course is founded at Simon's Town. It began as the Simon's Town Links until 1935, where its name was changed to the Simon's Town Municipal Golf Links. From 1935 to1960, it was called Simon's Town Golf Club, after which the name changed again to Simon's Town Country Club.

1939
During the Second World War, it again became a key point. The dockyard staff then rose to 5000, and some 170 warships and 60 damaged merchant vessels were repaired there.

1939
Just Nuisance was the only dog ever to be officially enlisted in the Royal Navy. He was a Great Dane which, between 1939 and 1944, served at HMS Afrikander, a Royal Navy shore establishment in Simon's Town. He died in 1944 at the age of seven years and was buried with full military honours.

1943
The Marine Oil Refinery in Dido Valley is established.

WW II (1939-45)
Three 9.2 inch guns are installed as part of the Scala Battery but were only ever used for training purposes and, in 1947, they were also used to to scuttle the SAS General Botha (formerly HMS Thames) which was moored some 9 nautical miles out in the middle of False Bay.

1947
The Royal Tour of 1947 - King George VI, Queen Elizabeth (Queen Mum), Princess Elizabeth (now Queen Elizabeth II) and Princess Margaret visit Simon's Town.

1947
Field Marshal Montgomery visits Simon's Town.

1952
In addition to the Neptune and Prince George reservoirs, with a joint capacity of 68m litres, the Lewis Gay Dam opened holding 886m litres.

1953
Simon's Town High School is built at Seafort and the Simon's Town municipality/ municipal offices moved into the old building opposite the police station.

1965
Luyolo Village was demolished.

1957
The naval base was transferred to South Africa by Britain under an agreement guaranteeing Britain the use of the naval facilities in peace and in war.

1967
Simon's Town was declared a White Group Area on 1 September and, subsequently, people of colour were forcibly removed out of the area. Regardless of the resistance by the Town Council, the navy and community, Simon's Town lost half its population (7000 residents) by 1973.

1967
The Klamplaas Dam is built which holds 500m kilolitres.

Late 1967 - 1973
The Redhill coloured community of 70 families are forced to leave the area given the excuse of a construction of a new dam. The dam never happened.

1970
The Scratch Patch and Mineral World open their doors in Dido Valley.

1972
The Martello Tower is declared a national monument and restored by the Simon's Town Historical Society.

1974
The historical house at Groot Tuin was razed to the ground by a runaway fire. The navy bought what was left, using 150 year old plans, and restored the building to its former glory.

1974
The final link with the Royal Navy was severed when the British government cancelled the Simon's Town agreement.

1975
Extensions to the Dockyard were started when a large area of land was reclaimed at Jaffer's Beach and the harbour walls were extended further to sea to form a new and larger Tidal Basin.

1977
The Simon's Town Museum is established.

1982
The SAS President Kruger is lost at sea, affecting the lives of many Simon's Town families.

1983
The Simons Town Museum moves into the Residency after a year-long renovation project by volunteers.

1983
A pair of African penguins made their home at Foxy Beach next to Boulders. In 1985, they began to lay. Since then, the colony has grown rapidly, increasing initially at about 60% year. One of the reasons for this growth was the result of immigration, particularly from Dyer Island.

1985
Just Nuisance is immortalised in bronze by Jean Doyle and is erected on Jubilee Square.

1986
Jubilee Square, which was known as Market Square before 1880 and renamed after the Silver Jubilee of George V, (1935) undergoes a major facelift.

1993
The permanent SA Naval Museum based at Simon's Town was opened by Chief of the Navy, Vice Admiral Robert Simpson-Anderson, on 1 April. The location was the former Royal Navy Mast and Sail House and then St. George's Dockyard Church that dates back to 1815 and the adjacent Dutch Store House that dates back to 1743.

1993
Bertha's Restaurant was started in the old Simon's Town Post Office Building. It then moved to its present location below the Quayside Centre in Wharf Road.

1996
The Simon's Town municipality was dissolved. The council placed its regalia, including the letters patent from the College of Arms, in the custody of the Simon's Town Historical Society.The society registered the arms in its own name at the Bureau of Heraldry in October 1999.

1996
The Simon's Town Museum initiated Project Phoenix to gather and record the history of Simon's Town's disposessed people by Forced Removals starting in 1967 and ending in 1973.

1997
The Simon's Town Waterfront is developed to include Quayside Lodge.

1999
The Boulders Penguin Colony Visitors Centre is established.

2003
A memorandum agreement transfers the Axel Dockyard from the South African Navy to Armscor.

2010
SAS Assegaai, a French Daphne-class submarine which was one of three that served the South African Navy, is turned into a museum. The museum saw over 60 000 visitors before it was shut down in 2015 for safety and preservation reasons.

2014
Simon's Town's most famous artist, author and poet, Dr Peter Clarke, passed away. He was born in Simon's Town and started his working life as a dock worker in the Simon's Town dockyards before he became a full-time poet in 1956. Due to the Group Areas Act he was forcibly removed to Ocean View in 1973.

2017
The start of construction of a new 14 800m² mixed use development called Harbour Bay Mall began on the site of the old Marine Oil Refinery in Dido Valley. It was officially opened for business in June 2018.

2019
A grave site was unearthed in Simon's Town during the construction of a new block of flats. This led to the discovery of human remains of over 165 individuals who are believed to be close to 300 years old. The area where the bones were found is believed to be associated with the Dutch East India Company hospital nearby, during the time of the Dutch colony at the Cape.

2019
The bronze naval RN sailor's cap and replica collar were stolen from the statue of Just Nuisance on Jubilee Square in May. They were replaced in September by the original artist, Jean Doyle, and a team. A dog food company called JOCK commissioned the replacement.

2020
The Coronavirus national lockdown from 26 March affects all South African communities including Simon's Town.

Buildings of Simon's Town

Some of the significant buildings and construction works of Simon's Town.

1743
The Storehouse (Pakhuis) was started during the VOC period and has undergone many stages of renovations and remodelling.

1760
Admiralty House: This site was built on by Antoni Visser from 1740. By 1760, the rough layout of the house was in place. Alterations occurred in 1853 and 1875. It was the the residence of the Royal Navy's Commander-in-Chief from 1814 to 1957.

1772
The Residency was built for the VOC governor but, due to financial constraints, it moved into private hands in 1791. The Royal Navy bought it in 1798 as a hospital. After a short period, it went back into the private sector and then back to the Colonial Authorities in 1814.

1777
The Martello Tower is built. This was the first building erected after the Tot British occupation.

1796
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1797
J.F Kirsten built the Wine-House which is probably the oldest existing Wine-House still standing in South Africa today.

1815
St. George's Dockyard Church was originally built by the British as a mast-house, and sail loft. The sail loft was used by the Anglican Church until 1993, when it was incorporated into the South African Navy Museum. It is still used for weddings and funerals.

1837
In 1837, St Francis Church, which had a rocky start, initially opens its doors. The church is named as a compliment to Lady Frances Cole (Governor's wife of the Cape colony) for her commitment and fund raising.

1857-1867
The Roman Rock Lighthouse was built. Granite blocks were cut out from the rocks on Seaforth Beach for the base of the cast iron segmented upper structure. In 1867, it was stated to be the only lighthouse in the southern hemisphere to be built on a rock.

1885
The Roman Catholic Church foundation stone was laid in 1885. The original chapel was built in 1850 but later became a classroom for the church school. The church bell was cast in 1871 in the Dockyard.

1888
The Nozval Islamic Mosque in Thomas Street was originally a private house used as a place for prayer. In 1904, a wooden minaret was added to the house. In 1911, the Moslem community bought the house. The old building was replaced in 1924 and opened in 1926.

1890
The station was built before the railway line reached Simon's Town and was opened by the Premier of the Cape, Hon. Cecil Rhodes.

1900
The tender for the construction of the Selborne Graving Dock was awarded to Sir John Jackson Ltd. The foundation stone was laid in 1906 and the dry dock was opened in1910. The Dockyard was handed to South Africa in 1957.

1901
The Royal Naval Hospital on Upper Mount Pleasant was a replacement hospital for the older one on the Main Road. The hospital was closed in 1957.

1904
The first Aerial Ropeway was built to assist in the construction of the sanatorium. This wooden ropeway replaced tiny structures in 1913. It ceased operating in 1927.

1915
The sanatorium was built at Klaver Valley overlooking Simon's Town. It made extensive use of the Aerial Ropeway during construction. It was also closed in 1957.

1977
East Dockyard extention was built. A large area of land was reclaimed at Jaffa's Beach and the harbour walls were extended further to form a new and larger Tidal Basin.

1997
The Simon's Town Waterfront is developed to include Quayside Lodge.

1995
The Lawhill Maritime Centre is opened which enables hundreds of young South Africans (Grades 10 to 12) to embark on successful careers in the maritime and other related industries in the future.

2003
Sanma Academy, which houses Africa's first state-of-the-art maritime simulation equipment, is housed in a new two-storey building overlooking Simon's Town Naval harbour.

2018
The first shopping mall with mixed residential living, medical centre and retail is built in Simon's town on the site of the old Marine Oil Refinery in Dido Valley.

South African Navy

Some of the most prominent ships that served in the South African Navy based at Simon's Town.

-1946

1941
SAS Somerset was a Bar-class boom defence vessel of the South African Navy. She was originally built in Blyth, Northumberland, by Blyth Shipbuilding Company and commissioned as HMS Barcross in 1941. She is now preserved as a museum ship in Cape Town V&A.

1941
Admiralty House: This site was built on by