



CANNON RESEARCH & PROJECTS

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A free service to the muzzle loading enthusiast

Those of you who were around before CAOSA was formed may remember the above letter head for the newsletter which was used between November 2001 and September 2005, a period which spanned the first 15 newsletters. I immersed myself in nostalgia by reading those news items again.

In those letters I read about the excavation of Chavonne's Battery and our successful efforts to rescue and store the guns which were unearthed. I read about our lobbying with the City Council and our persuading the Navy to open Lion Battery and the Noon Gun to the public. I read about Alf and my great achievement in firing twice in a minute and a half the first restored 18 pdr gun in Hout Bay. I read about Martin Crawford and his family who went to the island of St Helena and recorded their 40 odd guns which we identified, listed and presented the info to the museum on the island. There were many more notable deeds and moments of which the memories still give pleasure.

In those days we were a small band of **friends** who were interested in muzzle loading cannon. Everybody helped and encouraged each other. Then CAOSA was formed.

Jonathan Hall and I realised that the firing of cannon could become something of social benefit to its local community and would do wonders for the gun's preservation as a valued item. CAOSA was formed by 15 members in 2005 and the newsletter migrated from CR&P to CAOSA. For the first couple of years CAOSA flourished under the Chairmanship of Ian van Oordt and Jacobus van Niekerk. Then things started going off the rails when inflated egos, over ambition, jealousy and every other unwanted personal trait (*not all of which were mine*) emerged and began to dominate.

Realising that the firing of cannon and the Gunner's Board were dominating CAOSA agendas, minutes, planning and events to the detriment of any social gatherings, cannon talks or activities for the non-gunners, I suggested (firmly) that the gunnery and social committees should be separated to ensure more even handedness; this got me fired as Chairman.

Now, 15 years down the line, CAOSA should have been an established entity and running smoothly on long used and familiar routines, instead I am again going through the umpteenth discussion on "What are we?", "Let's redesign the website", "What about the letterhead?" Etc. Etc.

My restraint in not using a string of four letter words when I quit the meeting and resigned from the committee still amazes me - quite out of character!

The newsletter has migrated back to Cannon Research and Projects CR&P (Yes Jonathan had a sense of humour similar to mine). CR&P and I will continue to support CAOSA in every way possible but I do not envy the chairman's job in controlling the uncontrollable. Perhaps one day the members will actually get to meet and chat to members of the committee, because at present nobody would recognise any of the committee.

CR&P is a small band of **friends** who are interested in muzzle loading cannon and you are one of them. Everybody helps and encourages each other – yes we are back in 2005 and better off for it.

CAOSA needs to realise and accept that it is not a management or control system, but it is a communication system which links organisations like SABRE, OVSAC, NITIDA, CR&P and many individuals into a matrix of knowledge, expertise and experience. Only then will CAOSA become relevant. When the Gunners Board matures they will realise that they are not a national authority, just a local guiding and advisory board and a link to the SAPS.

UBIQUE,

Gerry de Vries: Ex Secretary, Ex Chairman, Ex Treasurer, Ex Master Gunner, Ex spare member etc, etc, etc.