



CANNON RESEARCH & PROJECTS



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A NEWSLETTER FOR THOSE WHO ARE WONDERING WHAT IS GOING ON

This virus thing has us tied up in knots with nobody even pretending to know what the future holds.

I have e-mails, SMS, Whats app, 'phone calls and messages in left sticks from CAOSA members wanting to know what will happen and when.

The first thing should be the 2020 AGM which would normally have happened in March, but was postponed for obvious reasons. For this to happen we need the venue to be functional again and I am pretty sure that they are also very keen on opening and exploring the "new normal".

I do know that Martin Venter has indicated his willingness and availability to serve as Chairman again and that Nadine is available if required for the post of secretary. Tony Nunn has indicated his willingness to serve on the committee.

I am sure that the wise ones will soon advise us on their intentions and that CAOSA can only go from strength to strength under the new enthusiastic guidance.

RARING TO GO

The interruption of normal gunnery and associated activities seems to have been affecting individuals in strange ways. Erick Kellerman declared war on his neighbours and was seen firing a baby Finbanker at them. Louise Farrell (Friends of Lion's Head) has taken to studying the crests of English Kings in order to better understand their two guns. Paul Brandt in Pretoria has asked me to visit his bronze Dutch gun and to reassure it that it has not been forgotten and Peter Sachs in Canada wants me to do the same for his four guns. It is not a case of robbing Peter to pay Paul, rather a case of being paid by both.

FAWCETT & PRESTON GUNS

There are ten gunades of various calibres in SA which were cast by Fawcett Preston & Co in Liverpool in the UK. Their guns were marked with an "F" with serifs on one trunnion end, which must not be confused with the simple "F" of the Finspang foundry in Sweden. Most Fawcett guns had the word "SOLID" on the other trunnion end. One of these Gunades in Uitenhage was bought from the salvaged cargo of the ship AMSTERDAM which ran aground near Port Elizabeth in 1817.

Most of the ten guns are still in the Eastern Cape and others were transported inland from that area. The question on my mind is "Did they all originate from the cargo of the AMSTERDAM?"

I have addressed that question to the person who wrote her thesis on that wreck and the aftermath. Now we wait!

PETER GIBB (Not forgotten)

One of the first qualified gunners, before CAOSA was formed, was Peter Gibb, a resident of Hout Bay and a dedicated gunner. Peter poured his heart and soul into the Hout Bay battery which he continued developing while training his band of local gunners. Several dignitaries were honoured at heritage events at the battery when they fired the gun under the guidance of Peter. On separate occasions there was a National Cabinet Minister, the Consuls General of the Netherlands, France and Great Britain and the Head of the Indian High Commission in Cape Town. Peter transformed a piece of bush with cannons laying in it into an asset to Hout Bay and his contribution to the preservation of fauna and flora in the area was immense.

In mid November 2002 I received a telephone call informing me that Peter had been killed in a three vehicle motor accident on Suikerbossie Hill near Hout Bay, he was returning home from a trip to Somerset West where he had gone to collect more gunpowder.

THE CASTLE OF GOOD HOPE

The Castle has suffered the same agonising fate as the rest of the tourism industry. Only the army on board, no visitors, tourists, no guides, no maintenance being done and as sure as hell no cannon being fired. The present castle management have never regarded the talks that I gave and the firing of the cannon as an asset or a draw card for the castle. Cannon firing will probably be the last thing that they would try and re-instate and that after everything else is up and running, which is probably about six to ten months from now by which time I expect/hope to be otherwise employed.

COVID 19

It is said that every cloud has a silver lining and Olivia and I are now staunch believers in that sentiment. Since the shut-down and our loss of employment things have been pretty bleak, we have had to cut back on many things and totally surrender others. On the positive side we have found that we have very loyal and supportive friends and family who have supported and assisted us through the hard times. The assistance and support was all the more touching because it was unsolicited, but it was timely and most welcome!

Winston Churchill said “If you are going through hell – don’t stop – just keep going until you get out the other side”.

Sounds good in our situation.

UBIQUE

Gerry de Vries