

THE LIFE AND WORK OF
CHARLES BELL

by Phillida Brooke Simons

Including

THE ART OF CHARLES BELL:
AN APPRAISAL

by Michael Godby





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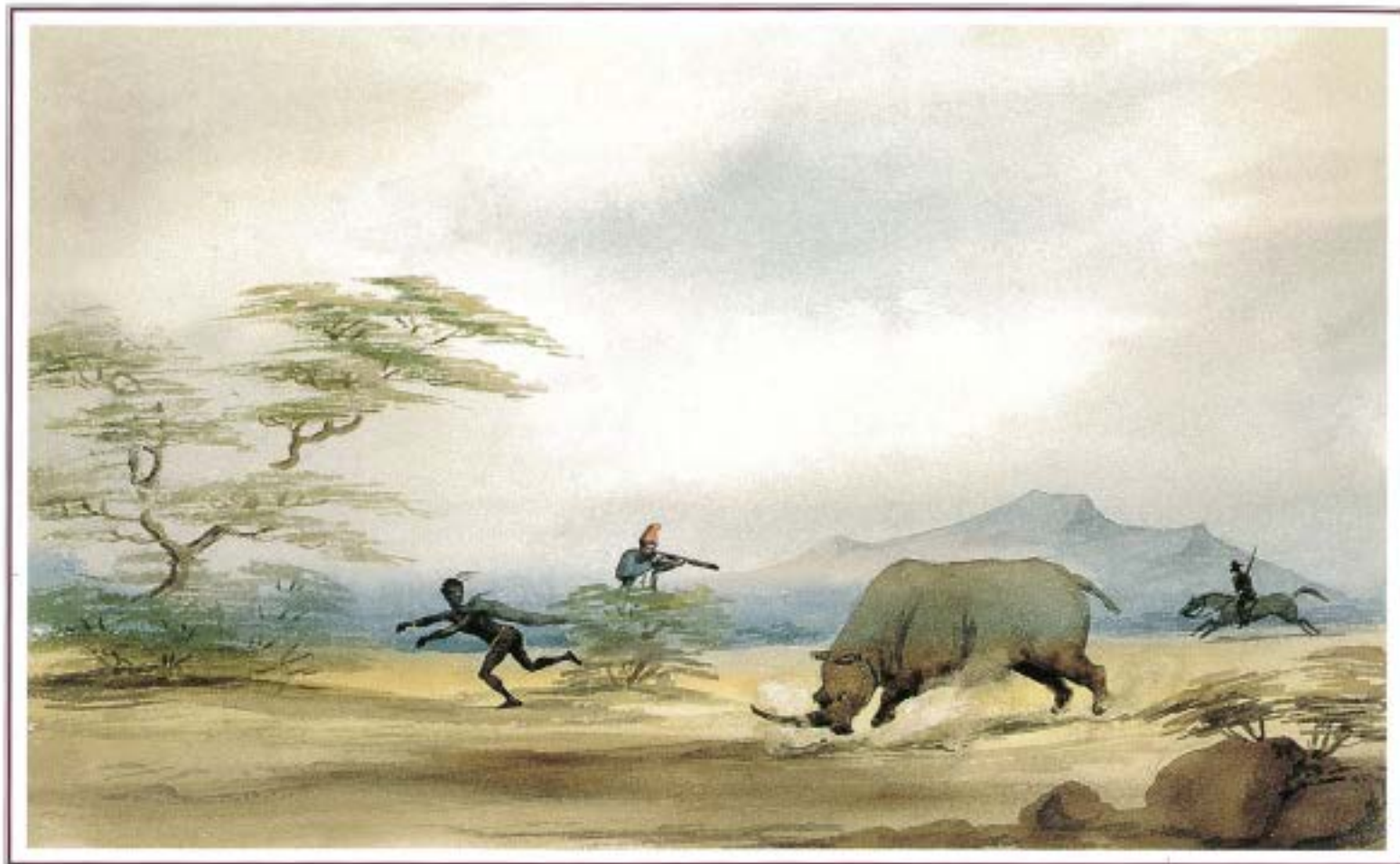
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The assistance of Leonie Twentyman Jones, formerly in charge



Rhinoceros shooting.

Watercolour. 13.5 x 21.5 cm.
Bell Heritage Trust Collection,
UCT



The IMMIGRANT

Charles Davidson Bell, energetic and alert, blessed with an enquiring mind, an ebullient sense of humour and a prodigious artistic talent, was two months short of his seventeenth birthday when he first stepped onto the shores of Table Bay in the spring of 1850. Son of Alexander Bell, a tenant farmer of the parish of Crail in Fifeshire, and his wife, Isabella Davidson, Charles had left his native Scotland earlier in the year, made the long journey southwards to Weymouth and, on 3 June, boarded the barque Lady East, bound for the Cape of Good Hope.' Almost three months of foul weather and fair lay ahead for Charles Bell and his fellow passengers — mostly army personnel of various ranks bound for duty in India — but at last the bazy blue outline of Table Mountain rose on the horizon, signalling that landfall was all but imminent.



figure 1
Table Bay and Cape Town, from the foot of Table Mountain.

Watercolour. 13 x 21 cm.
Bell Heritage Trust Collection, UCT

This scene, showing Cape Town and Table Bay beyond, was painted by Charles Bell from a vantage point on the lower slopes of Table Mountain.

figure 2
Table Mountain etc from the beach of Table Bay.

Watercolour. 14 x 22 cm.
Bell Heritage Trust Collection, UCT

The wide sweep of Table Bay, as Bell would have seen it on his arrival at the Cape. In the absence of a harbour, sailing vessels plying the sea route between east and west are obliged to lie at anchor in the roadstead. On the beach a stranded vessel attracts the interest of 'Malay' fishermen.

To many a prospective settler at this time, the sight of Africa's southern extremity would have aroused certain pangs of apprehension, but for the youthful Bell there was no need for any such sense of alarm. In Cape Town to welcome him was his uncle, Colonel John Bell, who for the past four years had held the office of colonial secretary and was thus second only in importance to the governor, Sir Lowry Cole. Moreover, there must have been an added sense of confidence in the knowledge that Colonel Bell's wife, Lady Catherine, was the elder sister of Lady Frances Cole, chatelaine of Government House. Shortcomings and discomforts there would undoubtedly be in a colonial town so far removed from the sophistication of London and Edinburgh, but Charles was little acquainted with the pleasures of these great cities and at the Cape, in the company of his uncle and aunt, he would undoubtedly have the opportunity to enjoy whatever entertainments were available. Besides, to a young man of adventurous spirit there was always the thrilling possibility of an excursion into the exciting, mysterious and largely unexplored interior.

Cape Town boasted no harbour in those days. Ships lay at anchor out in the bay and passengers, transported by rowing boat across the lurching waves, clambered ashore by means of the rickety jetty close to the grey bulk of the Castle of Good Hope. A sprawling slate structure, with five 'points' or bastions named after the titles of the Prince of Orange, the Castle had been erected in the mid-seventeenth century by the Dutch East India Company to protect its small but strategic refreshment station at the Cape from rivals intent on grasping for themselves its precious trade with the 'gorgeous East'.² Yet, martial though the Castle's function might have been, never a hostile cannonball had been fired from those bastions, not even on the two occasions – 1795 and 1806 – when the British took possession of the Cape to forestall any attempts the French might make to get there first.

The Castle, then, would have been the first building at the Cape observed by Charles Bell, though he would have recognised that it was the curve of three mountains – Devil's Peak to the east, Lion's Head to the west and, linking them, Table



Figure 3 Charles Bell as a young man. 1833.
Pencil. 12.8 x 10 cm. Coll: MuseumAfrica

This sketch of Charles Bell as a young man was executed by Sir Charles D'Oyly, an official in the Indian civil service who spent part of 1832 and 1833 at the Cape on sick leave. Bell and D'Oyly would have met at Government House and it is possible that they went sketching together on the Cape Peninsula. Bell, according to his friend Piazza Smyth, was at this stage, 'a handsome-looking fellow ... not very tall, but broad-built and muscular'.



Mountain itself – that dominated the little town. The carriage bearing Colonel Bell and his young nephew homeward would have swept them past the Grand Parade with its marching red-coated soldiers and its fluttering Union Jack; past the massive, tumble-down Great Barracks occupied by the British garrison; past the Keizersgracht's elegant, tree-shaded private houses; and, with a clatter of hooves, into the town's main thoroughfare. It was grandly known as the Heerengracht, or gentleman's walk, though there was little that was gentlemanly about the filthy, evil-smelling canal that ran its length, carrying Cape Town's rubbish and effluent northwards to the sea. But at the street's southern end, the canal was left behind and the carriage, horses stepping nimbly now, would have entered the Government Avenue roofed by the dappled leafiness of Cape Town's oaks in their first flush of spring green. To the left there was Government House, hardly an impressive residence for such an important official as the governor, and certainly not to be compared with edifices fulfilling a similar function in other, more significant, British colonies. On the right stretched the

Government Gardens, planted by the Dutch East India Company almost two centuries earlier with vegetables and fruit for the succour of passing sailors but now, shady with exotic trees and shrubs, the casual meeting place of Cape Town's high society on fine Sunday mornings.

At the very top of Government Avenue, on its east side and almost a mile from the town, stood Hope Mill,³ a long, low house, so named because of an adjoining watermill, its wheel driven by a mountain stream. Surrounded by an extensive garden which included 'a vineyard full of fine grapes',⁴ Hope Mill was to be Charles Bell's new home for it was here, in the fashionable quarter of the town, that Colonel Bell and Lady Catherine had made their home. Very agreeable and convenient it was, too, with Sir Lowry and Lady Frances Cole a mere stone's throw away at Government House. The two titled ladies were daughters of the first Earl of Malmesbury,⁵ whose name had recently been granted to a town newly founded in the wheat-growing Swartland northeast of Cape Town. Originally plain James

Harris, the Earl had been raised to the peerage in recognition of the successful diplomatic negotiations he had conducted on behalf of Great Britain while serving as ambassador in various European capitals. In fact, he had named his eldest daughter, born in St Petersburg, after Russia's empress, Catherine the Great, whose goddaughter she was.

In June 1821, Lady Catherine Harris, then approaching middle age, had married Major John Bell, at thirty-nine her junior by a year or two and a distinguished and much decorated veteran of the Peninsular War. Son of David Bell, a farmer of Bonnytown north of Dundee, John Bell had joined an uncle's ship-owning and mercantile business on leaving school, but in 1805, at the age of twenty-three, had abandoned the commercial world to enlist in the 52nd Regiment of Foot as an ensign. It was Bell's bad luck to be in America at the time of the Battle of Waterloo on 18 June 1815, but two months later he joined Wellington's army in Europe where he continued to perform his duties with distinction. Undoubtedly, John Bell was not only a brave and handsome soldier, but also a polished and cultivated gentleman, an accomplished artist and an entertaining *raconteur*. His family may not have been a noble one, but the Bells could proudly trace their ancestry back to Andrew Bell, laird of Sandihills and Kilduncan, whose descendant Thomas, born in 1687, was last chief of the clan before it broke up.⁶

John and Catherine had been married only a year when, in 1822, Colonel Bell (as he now was) took office as deputy quartermaster of the forces at the Cape. He soon began to make an important contribution to the affairs and society of the town and was rewarded six years later with his appointment as colonial secretary. The Cape, British since it had been captured from the Dutch twenty-two years earlier, was ruled by a governor whose autocratic powers were curtailed by a council of advice established in 1814. Colonel Bell served on this body and during the nineteen years that he was to live and work at the Cape, no fewer than five governors or their deputies came to rely upon him for his unquestionable integrity, his wisdom and his experience. Now, as brother-in-law of Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole, governor since September 1828, he was entirely within the gubernatorial circle. Lady Catherine, outspoken in opinion and enterprising in action, proved an able but certainly not submissive helpmeet to him, leaving her mark on Cape Society by, among other things, founding one of the first so-called 'mission schools' in the Peninsula.⁷

Not surprisingly at their age, the Bells had no children and it may have been because of this that they so readily made the Colonel's young nephew at home with them in Africa. Their influence was to be profound: it was probably through John Bell's guidance that the youthful Charles, so far untutored as an

artist, rapidly improved his technique as a draughtsman. At the same time, the high level of conversation and debate to which the young man was exposed in the company of his uncle's friends and colleagues must have proved an exciting stimulus to his impressionable mind.

The Cape, both socially and topographically, was so different from the Scotland that Charles had been familiar with since he was born on 22 October 1813. The Royal Burgh of Crail, most easterly of the fishing villages strung along the rocky coast of the East Neuk of Fife, was – and still is – a quaintly picturesque town where seventeenth- and eighteenth-century cottages, their roofs crows-stepped and red pantiled, huddle round the old harbour. Narrow, winding lanes lead upwards from it to Marketgate, broad and tree-lined, while from the lofty stone tower of the parish church of St Mary, founded in the twelfth century, there is a splendid view across the Firth of Forth to the coast of Lothian. When Charles Bell was a boy, herring fishing provided Crail with its main livelihood, and a very satisfactory one it was at that time, though farming on the good soil inland proved almost as profitable.

About four miles north of Crail itself lay East Newhall, farmed and occupied by Alexander Bell at the time of Charles's birth, while a two hours' coach journey to the northeast would bring the traveller to St Andrews, once the ecclesiastical capital of Scotland and the site of its most ancient university. Charles probably attended the school at Kingsbarns,⁸ a village a mile or thereabouts beyond East Newhall, and later studied at St Andrews University⁹ where, according to family tradition, he read physics and chemistry, mathematics and advanced Latin – subjects that provided an excellent background to his later studies. To the south of Crail, across the Firth of Forth, was Edinburgh, Scotland's vibrant social, legal, cultural and scientific centre, and something of these two renowned seats of learning must have rubbed off on Crail, geographically remote as it certainly was.

If Charles Bell's birthplace had anything at all in common with the Cape it was in the fierce winds that battered their coastlines, for not for nothing was the Cape Peninsula known to mariners the world over as 'the Cape of Storms'. As for Crail – 'Round it the wild storms of winter raged,' wrote an old-timer a century after Charles Bell left home for Africa. 'The briny winds blew through its venerable Market Gait and Nether Gait; the sea haar enveloped it for days together.'¹⁰ Besides, according to this



figure 4
Lt Gen Sir John Bell, KCB.
 Mezzotint. 41.7 x 32.7 cm.
 Bell Heritage Trust Collection,
 UCT

Sir John Bell, seen here in the uniform of a lieutenant general some years after he gave up the office of colonial secretary at the Cape in 1841. A witty raconteur and gifted artist and draughtsman, John Bell undoubtedly had a powerful and stimulating influence on his young nephew, Charles. Painted by John Lucas and engraved by Henry Cousins, this portrait was commissioned by the States of the Island of Guernsey of which John Bell was governor.

learned chronicler, 'whales and other wonders of the deep' were as familiar to the town's inhabitants as sheep and cattle were to crofters inland. Young Charles could well have been reminded of such tales when, for the first time, he witnessed spouting southern right whales cavorting in the waters washing the coast of the Cape Peninsula.

He was an immediate success with his new family. 'John finds him but little altered from what he was as a child,' wrote Lady Catherine to her father-in-law, David Bell, on 24 August 1830, the day after Charles's arrival. She declared that he had 'already made a most favourable impression on us both – I trust he will be as happy & comfortable under our roof as it is my warmest wish to make him – & I feel too much for a young person first leaving a kind home not to try to make this his second home as much as I can'. Colonel Bell was equally charmed by Charles: 'I have not seen him more really happy and delighted than in the company of his nephew,' ran Lady Catherine's letter, '& hearing a good account of you all.'¹¹

Charles himself, according to his aunt, was busily engaged in writing home at the same time and it is disappointing that this letter – like most of those that he subsequently wrote to his family – has not survived to place on record his impressions of Cape Town and its extraordinary diversity of people. Nevertheless, he was soon busy with pencil and brush and from his lively sketches it is not difficult to assess his reaction to what one nineteenth-century visitor called 'the most motley crew in the world'.¹² For, in addition to the Dutch, well settled after almost two centuries, Bell would have soon seen about him slaves (for slavery at the Cape did not end until December 1834), whose roots were in both West Africa and the East, 'Free Blacks', as well as 'Cape Malays' in their colourful dress. Running errands and performing the most menial of tasks were the few remaining Hottentots,¹³ while mostly at the other end of the social scale there lived an assortment of people of European stock.

They all appeared in Bell's sketches, from which one can see that he must have supported the opinion of another contemporary traveller who described Cape Town as 'this half-way house,



figure 5 Lady Catherine Bell.

Pencil. 26.5 x 18.5 cm. Bell Heritage Trust Collection, UCT

Lady Catherine Bell, as sketched by her nephew by marriage, Charles Bell, to whom she was hostess during his early years in Cape Town. The elder daughter of the first Earl of Malmesbury and the goddaughter of Catherine the Great of Russia, Lady Catherine was born in St Petersburg while her father was British ambassador in that city. As the wife of the colonial secretary at the Cape, she was dedicated to 'good works' and was respected for her forthright personality.



es show that, to him, Coloured women were perpetually embroiled in fights with one another while the men were invariably drunk. He observed people at work – washerwomen, knee-deep in a stream; convicts chopping wood; vegetable vendors hawking their wares through the town; 'Malay' fishermen in their *toerings* and pointed sandals – nothing escaped the notice of this observant young man or the piquancy of his pen.

While Bell drew others as they appeared to him, he, in turn, was sketched as an attractive young man with firm features and tousled hair. The artist was the visiting Indian civil servant, Charles D'Oyly – 'one of the most elegant, gentlemanlike, handsome and accomplished men of his day'¹⁴ – to whom, almost certainly, Bell had been introduced by the Coles. Many years later, his friend Charles Piazzi Smyth, describing Bell as he was in his youth, wrote: 'He was a handsome-looking young fellow . . . not very tall, but broad-built and muscular, with a rather brown complexion, regular features of a refined and sculpturesque character, piercing black eyes, and dark lank hair.'¹⁵

where the vices and follies of the East meet, and shake hands with, those of Europe'.¹⁶ Certainly, the amalgam of human types of which the Peninsula's population was composed must have been bewildering to a young man accustomed to the Anglo-Saxon uniformity of society in semi-rural Scotland. But Charles Bell had a keen – if somewhat mordant – sense of the comic as well as, no doubt, an unquestioning acceptance of the superiority of Great Britain and her people over the rest of the world. It is these two qualities that give a particular stamp to

the personalities and events that he illustrated during his early days at the Cape. Local people of Dutch descent, as depicted by Bell on a page headed 'The Boer', were seen as uncouth, greedy and dirty. On the other hand, dark-skinned slaves struck him as having a great capacity for merriment and a delight in music and dancing – despite their bare feet. And the town's élite, dressed in their colonial best at a race meeting at Green Point, were victims of Bell's ridicule when he sketched their carriage (with its passengers) overturning in the mud.

At this stage in his life Bell was not above creating 'types': his sketch-

How Charles Bell occupied his time when he was first at the Cape – other than by committing what he saw about him to paper – is uncertain, although Piazza Smyth records that he spent 'a period of service' working for his uncle in the colonial secretary's office. This was situated in the government building,¹⁷ formerly the slave lodge, which stood at the southern head of the Heerengracht and was thus in pleasant walking distance from Hope Mill. Interesting men came and went through the doors of those offices when Charles Bell started working there – fellow-Scotsman John Fairbairn, editor of the *South African Commercial Advertiser*, the Cape's first independent newspaper; Chief Justice Sir John Wylde, admired for the objectiveness of his judgments but censured for his scandalous private life – especially when it was rumoured that he had fathered a child by his own daughter.¹⁸ Hard at work in the same building was Major Charles Cornwallis Michell, surveyor-general and artist, builder of bridges and designer of mountain passes, while the Rev. Abraham Faure, controversial but much respected minister of the Groote Kerk, had his office across the street. Altogether Cape Town had much to offer any young man of Charles Bell's calibre. Under the English the Colony remained a bastion of European culture and a centre of commerce, with such prosperous merchants as John

Bardwell Ebdon¹⁹ and Hamilton Ross²⁰ making their mark in every facet of the town's existence. In addition to a vibrant Commercial Exchange, meeting place of anyone of status in the town, it had, by 1830, spawned a free press, a public library, literary, philanthropic and medical societies, a natural history museum and a scientific institution.²¹ In 1828 Sir Lowry Cole had officially opened the new Royal Observatory, and in October 1829 a group of dedicated citizens founded what was to become one of the country's most renowned educational institutions, the South African College.²² For the physically active, there was hunting with horse and hounds on the Cape Flats – though in the absence of genuine foxes a luckless jackal had to suffice. And, from time to time, there were balls and receptions both at Government House and the Commercial Exchange with all the glitter and glamour that the Colony could muster. All in all, for an active and intelligent young man, it was a stimulating – albeit microcosmic – society in which to find oneself.

But of all the Cape Peninsula's many attractions, the magnificence of its natural surroundings has always appealed most strongly to anyone with an eye for beauty and the artistic skill with which to depict it. This was certainly true in 1832 when, it appears, eighteen-year-old Charles Bell set off, probably on



figure 6

At the races.

Ink and wash. 7.2 x 23.8 cm.

Coll: The Brenthurst Library

At the races: punters involved in minor but mortifying calamities as depicted by the lively pen of Charles Bell. Introduced by the British soon after their arrival at the Cape in 1795, horse racing provided entertainment for people of all walks of life and meetings were regarded as gala occasions. Unfortunately, the horses, both on the track and off it, were somewhat unreliable and Green Point Common, which provided the venue, became a veritable mud bath when it rained.

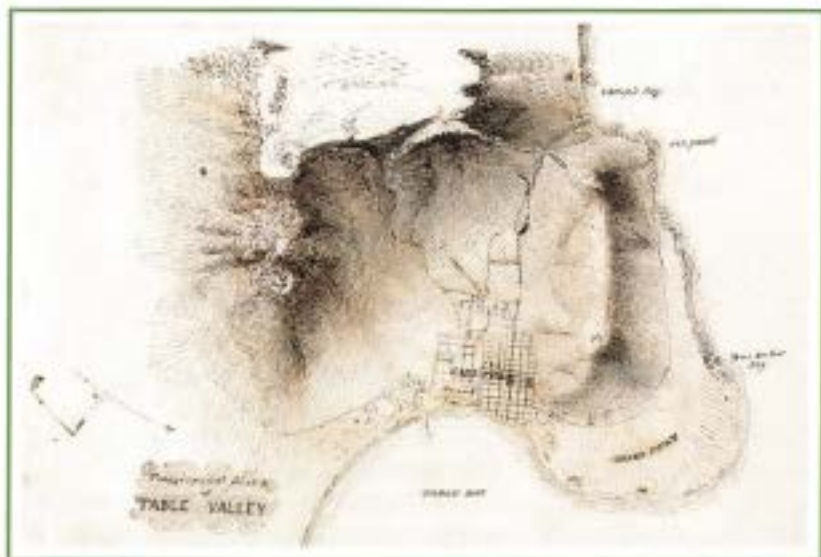


figure 7
Topographical sketch of Table Valley.

Pen and wash. 16.5 x 23.8 cm.
 Bell Heritage Trust Collection,
 UCT

Early on in his life at the Cape, Charles Bell showed an interest in topography which was to reach fulfilment in his profession as a land surveyor. His sketch of Table Valley shows Cape Town, designed on the orderly grid system, with Devil's Peak, Table Mountain and Lion's Head forming an arc behind it. Table Bay lies at its northern boundary and the farmlands of lower Table Mountain are to its south. Green Point Common lies to the west of the town.

horseback, on an extended journey from Table Bay to Cape Point, and recorded what he saw in a sort of visual diary in the form of an album. Inscribed 'Cape Sketches' on the title page, the volume contains the earliest dated pictures by Charles Bell in the Bell Heritage Trust Collection and, by following them in sequence, it is possible to trace his movements as he travelled from place to place. Bell's chosen medium was pen and ink, and on some of the sketches he made notes regarding the topographical features of the landscape he depicted. Sometimes he gave details of colour and to several pictures he added small arrows, possibly to indicate wind direction.

It was at this time – and on the sketches in the Cape album – that Bell began to sign his works with a 'squiggle' that for almost 150 years remained an indecipherable mystery. It was only in the late 1970s that this signature, seen on a collection of sketches of unknown authorship acquired by the Brenthurst Library, began to puzzle and fascinate the well-known Johannesburg antiquary, Robin Fryde. By a fortunate coincidence, at about the same time, Fryde was visited by Father (now Monsignor) Donald de Beer of St Mary's Cathedral, Cape Town, who happened to be an enthusiastic student of early systems of shorthand. After careful study, Father de Beer identified the signature on the Brenthurst sketches as being written in a system of shorthand devised by a certain Samuel Taylor in the early nineteenth century.²³ In this system there were no vowel signs, but De Beer read the outlines as 'KRLS BL' or possibly 'CHRLS BL', a solution that indicated that the author of the Brenthurst sketches was Charles Bell. Even then he was well known to art historians, although most of his works were still in England. Also appearing on this collection was a longer inscription in which it seemed Taylor's shorthand was also

used. This Robin Fryde submitted to Geoffrey W. Bonsall, director of the Hong Kong Press and also an authority on old shorthand systems. He deciphered the outlines as reading 'FR LDY FRNSS KL', interpreted by Fryde as 'For Lady Frances Cole' – a solution that made sense in view of Charles Bell's relationship by marriage to the governor's wife. On the strength of information received from both Father de Beer and Geoffrey Bonsall, Robin Fryde was thus able to recognise the signature and to decipher other legends in Taylor's shorthand that appeared on the 'Cape Sketches'. All in all, the unravelling of the mysterious signature was an exciting discovery.

Charles began his pictorial journey on the eastern shores of Table Bay from which he sketched the town cradled by the three mountains. Then he travelled westwards along the shore to depict the Chavonnes defence battery built in the early eighteenth century and named after the governor of the time. He turned inland to Table Valley where Leeuwenhof²⁴ and Hope Mill proved subjects worthy of sketching; then he travelled along the Atlantic seaboard, depicting more houses, as well as views and seascapes, until he reached Hout Bay. Over Constantia Nek rode Charles, when the balmy autumn weather was at its best, and down into what are now Cape Town's southern suburbs, obviously to stay at – and sketch – Protea,²⁵ then the country house of Sir Lowry and Lady Frances Cole. Here, for the first time, he wrote the date, Monday 9th April 1832, on one of his pictures – an interesting detail for only a few days earlier Charles D'Oyly, who was also to sketch Protea on numerous occasions, arrived on a prolonged visit to the Cape. By 17 April Charles Bell had struggled through some forty kilometres of fynbos and crossed rocky mountains to reach Cape Point. On what appears to have been a calm day, he took to a boat, the *Curlaw*, from which he sketched the glassy smooth sea and a scattering of houses along the coastline. Turning his back on the Peninsula's southernmost point, and possibly travelling by sea, Bell headed for Slangkop on the west coast and the great, silver sweep of Noordhoek beach which he reached, and sketched, on 19 April. Three days later – Sunday, 22nd – he was drawing the elegant homestead on the historic Constantia wine farm, Alphen, and then, dropping in on Protea and sketching it on the way, he headed back to his home at Hope Mill in the Gardens. There is no way of knowing whether Charles had any companions on his excursion, nor of precisely how long it lasted. However, in approximately a month he had recorded seascapes, landscapes and houses in 31 sketches which reveal him to be an acutely observant young man with an interest in geology and topography and a strong sense of form.²⁶ In the course of his travels he had covered the full length of the Cape Peninsula and, like so many others before and since, he became totally captivated by it for the rest of his life.



figure 8

**The merchant's store,
Cape Town. 1839.**
Pen and ink. 20.5 x 30 cm.
Coll: MuseumAfrica

Many of the merchants of Cape Town, including such well-known personalities as John Bardwell Ebdon and Hamilton Ross, made fortunes and were therefore regarded as the 'aristocracy' of the Colony. They were welcome members of the society which met at Government House and among whom the Bells would have mixed. The top-hatted merchant whose store is depicted here clearly dealt in Cape wines and employed a 'Malay', complete with tooring hat, as his driver.

figure 10

**Hottentots dancing -
Grahamstown. 1843.**
Pencil. 18.5 x 23 cm.
Coll: MuseumAfrica

Once again Bell conveys, with a few deft strokes of his pencil, the inborn jauntiness of the Khoikhoi people and their love of merry-making. Despite their poverty, their ragged clothes and their clumsy physique, the women dancers, as seen by Bell, are both graceful and joyful.

figure 9

Hottentot.
Watercolour. 16.5 x 10.5 cm.
Bell Heritage Trust Collection,
UCT

'Hottentot' is Charles Bell's simple caption for this painting of a drunken Khoikhoi, bottle in hand. Judging from his numerous depictions of these indigenous people, he saw them as being almost perpetually inebriated - cheap Cape wine being responsible for this condition. Nevertheless, by means of the rakish, feathered hat and the angle of foot and hand, he conveys the irrepressible, homespun humour which never fails to characterise the Cape Coloured people, no matter how ragged or oppressed they might be.



TOWARDS CAPRICORN

The Cape civil service, during the nineteenth century, was an excellent training school for a young man intent on rising to a position of responsibility and status in the community. Loyalty and absolute integrity were required of him, and all official business had to be dealt with both quickly and efficiently so that no arrears could gather dust in silent pigeonholes. The yearly issues of the Cape Almanac reflect the steady rise of many a young man destined to make his name in the Colony and Charles Bell was no exception.

In November 1852 he was transferred from his uncle's office to that of the Master of the Supreme Court and a year later was moved to the Colonial Audit Office where, as second clerk, he earned an annual salary of £100.

*He became 'a favourite everywhere,' wrote his contemporary, the astronomer, Charles Piazz Smyth, 'until it seemed as if his friends intended the young man for a future of nothing but a quiet, resident, jog-trot official life in Cape Town itself, and no further'.*¹



Charles Bell, however, thought otherwise and there were times when his musings ranged far beyond the cramped confines of the Cape's government offices and into an exciting world of discovery and high adventure. Travellers to the interior brought back tales of breathtaking experiences and marvellous sights, but there seemed little likelihood, at first, that Charles Bell would have an opportunity to see all these wonders for himself. At last, in June 1833, when he had been at the Cape for almost three years, there was talk of official plans for a journey of exploration into Central Africa on a grander scale than anything so far attempted. This was just the sort of enterprise guaranteed to capture Charles's imagination and as soon as he learnt of it (according to Piazz Smyth) 'the internal fires of [his] spirit broke forth' and instantly he determined that he would be among the selected few destined to penetrate 'the great unknown'.²

It had all begun on 5 June 1833 when, at a meeting of the South African Literary and Scientific Institution, a paper was read describing a recent trading excursion that had penetrated the interior as far as the Tropic of Capricorn. The leaders of the party, two traders named Hume and Millen, had brought back to the Cape the first reliable account of the region where the vast and enigmatic Lake Ngami could be located and where the Matabele (Ndebele) warrior king, Mzilikazi, a fugitive from Shaka's bloody offensives, had established a realm of his own. The paper aroused such interest among the audience that an official and scientific expedition into the areas described by Hume was

immediately proposed and unanimously accepted. Within days, the Cape of Good Hope Association for Exploring Central Africa had been established, its objective to expand geographical knowledge; to 'obtain Scientific Information, especially as regards Meteorology, Geology and Magnetism; to collect Botanical Specimens and those of Natural History; and to ascertain what prospects the productions of the Country and the disposition the Native Tribes [held] out to Commercial Enterprise'.³ To these official objectives, Sir Lowry Cole personally added a mandate that the expedition should 'confer with the chiefs of the principal tribes in order to induce them to give up their barbarous practices, to accord a more favourable reception to traders, and protection to Christian missionaries'.⁴ Needless to say, there was one serious stumbling block – 'inadequacy of the pecuniary means of the Institution available for such an undertaking'.⁵ The solution was one commonly resorted to at the Cape: the project would 'go public' and make shares at £3 each available to interested parties. By February 1834, when the required target of £1000 was reached and plans could go ahead,⁶ Sir Lowry Cole had been succeeded as governor by Sir Benjamin D'Urban. His immediate task was to establish the Cape's first legislative council, but he also found time to give the expedition his unqualified support.

Ever since the latter years of the fifteenth century, when Africa was first rounded by Portuguese mariners bent on discovering a sea route to the East, the subcontinent's mysterious southern interior had presented an irresistible challenge to men in search of

adventure. Undaunted by its rugged mountains, its rivers and deserts and its seemingly impenetrable bush, they had set forth cheerfully for the unknown – the hunters and the missionaries, the botanists, the traders, the prospectors for gold and the seekers after the elusive empire of Monomotapa. Some had returned sick, weary and crestfallen; others had come back laden with precious ivory or rare plants. And there were those, of course, who had disappeared without trace. Any further disasters of this kind should be avoided at all costs, declared the organisers of the expedition, and to ensure its success it was vitally important to select a suitable leader. Fortunately the choice was an obvious one, for



nobody doubted that a dynamic and enterprising Scotsman named Dr Andrew Smith would be the right man. Born in 1797 and son of a shepherd turned market gardener, Smith's high intelligence had secured him a place at Edinburgh University where he qualified in medicine before joining the British Army. In 1820 he was ordered to the Eastern Cape to serve the needs of newly arrived British Settlers – a fortunate move for him, since it gave him the opportunity to develop his interest not only in the natural history of southern Africa, but also in the culture of the local indigenous people. Indeed, Governor Lord Charles Somerset was so inspired by Smith's enthusiasm for his



figure 1
Sir Andrew Smith.
South African Museum

Dr Andrew Smith (1797–1872), destined to be knighted by Queen Victoria for his achievements as an army surgeon, dedicated naturalist, explorer, government emissary and author, was leader of the expedition to Capricorn. The original portrait, probably painted by Bell during the expedition, has not been traced and may be in the possession of Smith's descendants in Scotland.

figure 2
The outspan.
Watercolour. 12.5 x 18 cm.
Old Mutual Collection

Dr Andrew Smith (the bearded figure on the left), his party and their horses relax during their journey towards the Tropic of Capricorn in 1834.

hobbies that in 1825 he ordered the establishment of a museum in Cape Town and released the doctor from his military duties so that he could take over as superintendent.

Meanwhile, as 1834 progressed, preparations for the expedition went ahead. Stores had to be assembled; scientific instruments were borrowed or bought; elephant guns and other weapons arrived from England as did beads, mirrors and other

objects intended as gifts for the indigenous tribes they expected to meet. At least five sturdy wagons and 120 oxen had to be acquired – Dr Smith, fortunately, was able to provide his own transport. Then there was the difficult matter of selecting the men who would make up the party, for not only was it essential that they have disparate skills, but it was important that they should prove good companions during a sojourn in the wilderness expected to last almost two years. By the end of June, Smith had chosen his team. It included, among others, Captain William Edie of the 98th Regiment as his deputy; John Burrow, only eighteen years old but entrusted with the considerable responsibilities of astronomer and surveyor; George Ford, a talented draughtsman known to Smith since his childhood, who was to make a pictorial record of the fauna of the region; and, to investigate the possibilities of establishing commerce with the interior, a trader named Benjamin Kift. The more menial tasks were assigned to a handful of rough-and-ready men, both civilian and military, while a number of Khoikhoi were employed to drive the wagons and care for the animals.

From his office in the Heerengracht, Charles Bell watched the hectic activity with keen interest and envy. Now in his twenty-first year, he was a personable young man who had impressed the renowned astronomer, Sir John Herschel, newly arrived from England, as having 'much good information & desire for more – [and] with decided pursuits and industry to make progress in them'.⁷ Herschel was not alone in his opinion of Bell, for his colleague, Thomas Maclear (he had recently been appointed His Majesty's Astronomer at the Cape), wrote of him at much the same time: 'This young man's extraordinary talents added to his energetic courage would secure, I am told, success in any undertaking he might embark in'.⁸ Surely, one would think, Bell was an obvious candidate for such an expedition, but the party was complete and it seemed there was no room for him. However, when plans were all but settled, Andrew Smith decided to include Bell as a second draughtsman, entrusting him with the task of keeping a pictorial diary of the African landscape and of the customs and appearance of the indigenous people encountered in the interior. Only a day or two before the expedition was due to leave, Bell was told of his appointment and was instantly caught up in such a whirligig of euphoria that he mounted his horse and galloped with 'wild excitement through the streets of Cape Town to dash off preparation for an immediate start'.⁹ No matter that his rank in the expedition would be the lowest; to be included at any level was his dearest dream come true. But first, he had to compose himself sufficiently to write to the auditor-general informing him that 'being desirous of accompanying the Expedition for Exploring Central Africa . . . I have to request you will be pleased to assist me in obtaining His Excellency the



Governor's Leave of absence for that purpose'.¹⁰ Sir Benjamin D'Urban was away on the Eastern Frontier but his deputy, Baron de Lorentz, seems to have been perfectly agreeable to the request and the young man got his way.

All Cape Town joined in the expedition's tumultuous send-off. It included a 'sumptuous banquet'¹¹ at which the skirling of bagpipes aroused feelings of nostalgia within every Scottish breast – and there were several present besides those of Andrew Smith and Charles Bell. Some of the heavier ox-wagons, as well as stores and equipment, had been sent ahead to the expedition's official starting point at Graaff-Reinet. On the morning of 3 July, after a substantial breakfast at the Observatory, the explorers themselves set off on the first stage of their journey. Travelling grandly in horse-wagons, they crossed the Hex River Mountains and the fringes of the Great Karoo, arriving at Graaff-Reinet on 18 July. Here several 'passengers' joined the party, among them the surveyor-hunter, Andrew Geddes Bain¹² and three German missionaries.¹³ Inevitably there were problems and delays but at last, on 12 August, the silence of the Karoo dawn was cleft by the crack of whips, and men, horses and oxen, their breath steaming in the wintry air, set off towards the north. The hearts of the youngest of the explorers must have thudded with excitement – none more so than that of Charles Bell.

He had already shown signs of a remarkable desire for knowledge in a variety of disciplines, including astronomy,¹⁴ and now he began to acquire from John Burrow – a high-spirited youth who soon became his boon companion – basic information concerning land surveying. There was plenty of time for the young men to talk as they plodded across the Karoo. Ravaged by drought, it was a dreary sight,¹⁵ but on 22 August there was some relief when the caravan rolled into the newly established village of Colesberg. To the explorers' amazement they discovered themselves in company with what seemed a vast multitude of people and wagons closing on the little town from every direction. This, as it turned out, was the weekend set for the quarterly celebration of *nagmaal*, or Holy Communion. 'Each wagon,' wrote Andrew Smith in his diary, 'disgorged a small tent which was pitched close to the vehicle, and in that the family resided during its stay.'¹⁶ Local shopkeepers hastily capitalised on the occasion by organising a kind of fair,¹⁷ while many of the visitors,



taking advantage of the unexpected presence of a doctor, pestered Andrew Smith with requests for medical treatment.

Nagmaal over and the assemblage scattered, Smith led his party on towards the Orange River, northern limit of the Cape Colony, which they reached on 26 August. Though not as impressive as Smith had expected, the river was 'a noble stream for South Africa in the month of August'.¹⁸ Among the trees on the bank opposite to Smith's camp site, someone spied a somewhat tumble-down Bechuana kraal and, emerging from it, the first real 'natives' Bell and Burrow had ever seen. 'I assure you I stared...' wrote Burrow,¹⁹ 'for they were wrapped in karosses and their faces and bodies were well rubbed with red stone and grease.'

On trundled Smith's wagons and, two days later, the explorers were heartened to see the Union Jack fluttering in welcome as they entered the village of Philippolis. Named after the missionary, John Philip, it had been founded eleven years earlier as a refuge for displaced Griquas under the leadership of Adam Kok II.²⁰ Since then it had become the capital of Griqua territory whose

figure 3

The Orange River near Buffel's Vlei. 1834.

Watercolour (monochrome).
17.3 x 23.5 cm.

Coll: MuseumAfrica

When Smith's party reached this point towards the end of August 1834, they found the river to be (in Smith's words) 'a noble stream'. Bell's depiction of it here shows it to be much as Smith described it in his Journal. 'The beauty of its limpid waters,' wrote Smith, '[was] skirted on both sides by fine verdant foliage, and either gliding in a gentle current over a stony channel or apparently motionless in large pools.'

figure 4
A day's sport with Moshesh. Jacob runs the quagga to a standstill. 1834.

Watercolour (monochrome),
11.5 x 17 cm,
Coll: MuseumAfrica

While Smith and his party were visiting Moshoeshoe, king and founder of the Sotho nation, they joined a quagga hunt. Bell's companion, John Burrow, wrote of it: 'They are the only tribe I ever saw that hunted with horses; and it was a beautiful sight to see them galloping after the Quaggas . . . until they came up alongside the one they had singled out, when they generally brought them down with two or three stabs.'



inhabitants, during the fortnight that the party spent there, Bell had ample opportunity to observe and sketch. At Philippolis the party split up; the German missionaries had decided to remain there for the time being, while Andrew Bain and his party went off to capture live animals for export to America. Later Bain was to dispatch a letter to John Centlivres Chase, secretary of the Literary and Scientific Institution in Cape Town, reporting on the 'order and harmony' that had prevailed throughout the entire period he had travelled with the explorers. 'Dr Smith is the most indefatigable man I ever met with,' ran his letter. 'Nothing comes amiss to him; he sees everything done himself and trusts nothing to others.'²¹ According to Bain, every member of the expedition knew exactly where his responsibilities lay, and both Bell and Ford had already revealed their talents as competent artists. 'The graphic and Cruikshankian labours of Mr Bell,' wrote Bain, 'with the delicate and minute products of Mr Ford's pencil were the subject of daily admiration of all.'

Their wagons repaired and their animals refreshed, Smith's party bade farewell to Philippolis and travelled on towards the southeast. They halted at Verhuil (now Bethulie), a station run by the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society, and then set off hoping to discover the source of the Caledon River. This part of the country, as Bell depicted it, was a seemingly interminable plain covered with waving blond grass interrupted only by flat-topped



figure 5
Sikonyela chief of the Mantatees. 1834.
Watercolour. 22.5 x 14.5 cm.
Coll: MuseumAfrica

Bell described Sikonyela as chief of the 'Mantatees' but, more correctly, he was chief of the Tokwa. Unlike Moshoeshoe, he did not welcome the arrival of Smith's party. In fact, John Burrow describes him as having 'a thorough bad countenance, and every action was so suspicious that we were always expecting the worst'. Bell shows him with his customary kaross thrown over his shoulders, although Andrew Smith was later to present him with a cloak and a medal as tokens of friendship.

hills, their rocky sides scattered with a stubble of small thorny bushes. The travellers soon reached the river and followed its course which, in this area, was fringed with lush green trees rich in birdlife – a temptation to any man with a gun on a fine spring day. Corporal George McKenzie, one of the soldiers in the group, loaded his weapon and fired at a wild duck – but, in attempting to retrieve it, was caught in a tangle of weeds and dragged under the water. His companions were horrified to see him disappear, and for hours Charles Bell, perched on a frail raft, searched frantically for the man's body. All attempts were in vain: the unhappy McKenzie had vanished for ever. 'It is much to be feared that he was ill fitted for so sudden an end,' wrote Andrew Smith in his diary. 'He professed to be a disbeliever of our Saviour, and, poor fellow, he had at last little time to think and get rid of such horrible notions.'

October came and with it the rains. Heading northwards through the long grass, the wagons jolted along the mountain fringes of what had, in recent years, become the realm of King Moshoeshoe, founder of the Sotho nation and its first paramount chief. Somewhere in this region, on 8 October, a male lion materialised from the bush and attacked an unsuspecting Khoikhoi. Fortunately Burrow, with (in Smith's words) 'a coolness and intrepidity extraordinary in a youth eighteen years of age', dispatched the animal with a single shot and rescued its terrified victim literally from the jaws of death.²²

Morija, a mission settlement lying at the foot of the magnificent Thaba Putsoa, or Blue-grey Mountain, was the travellers'

next important stopping-place. The station's director was the Rev. Jean-Eugène Casalis of the Paris Evangelical Mission Society,²³ a man held in such great respect by the local people that their king, on hearing of the arrival of Smith's party, mounted his horse and galloped some thirty kilometres from his isolated mountain stronghold at Thaba Bosiu²⁴ to welcome them to his kingdom. 'We all agreed,' wrote John Burrow, 'that [Moshoeshoe] was the picture of a Chief, although he wore, in honor of us, dirty European clothes and a large broad-brimmed hat.'²⁵

Heartened by Moshoeshoe's friendly approach, Smith decided to return his visit and travel to his hill-top citadel. With Bell and Burrow leading the way, the party started out on 22 October on a daunting mountain climb to Moshoeshoe's palace. Here the king, surrounded by his headmen, greeted them warmly, offering them 'an enormous wooden bowl full of meat cooked in no despicable manner'.²⁶ Smith, in return, presented his host with a medal and a cloak, at the same time obtaining his assurance that

he would continue to encourage the work of Christian missionaries among his people.

Their spirits cheered by their reception by one of the region's great kings, the explorers set off again, travelling through magnificent country which, at this season, was teeming with game of every kind. There were flocks of ostrich, various types of antelope roaming free, herds of zebra and quagga seemingly under no threat from man, as well as an occasional prowling lion. Across the Caledon River at Lishuane – also known as New Boetsap – they stopped for a few days at a Wesleyan mission station run by the Rev. John Edwards before setting off for the country of the Tlokwa. Here they arrived on 7 November but, much to their disappointment, they found the people suspicious both of them and of the gifts they offered. Their chief, Sekonyela, could scarcely be described as hospitable, though, after some persuasion from Smith, he did grudgingly agree to 'abstain from aggression'.²⁷ Perhaps it was a spectacular – and to

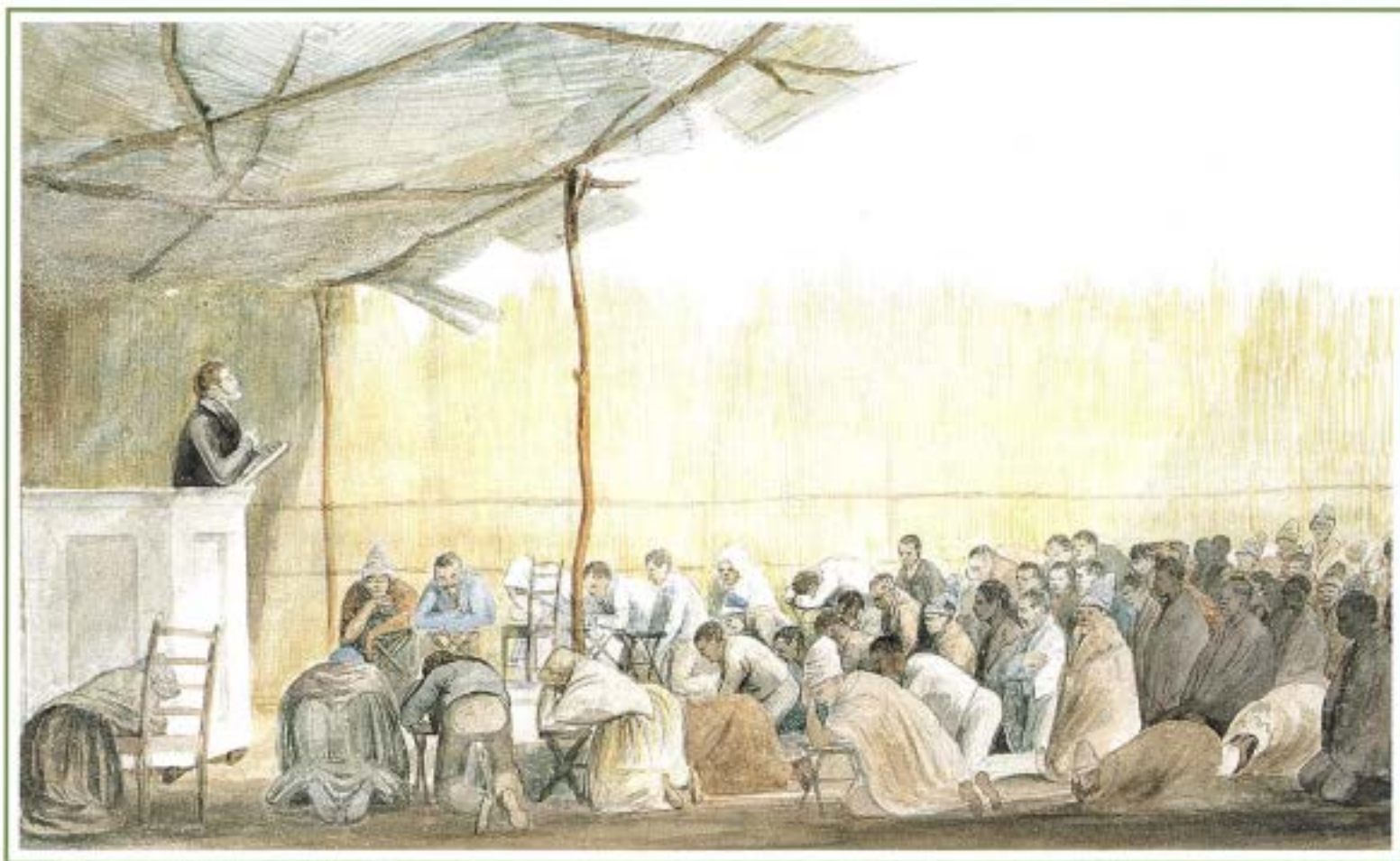


figure 6
Lishuane – Mr Edwards's congregation. 1834.

Watercolour: 14 x 23 cm.
Coll: MuseumAfrica

While visiting the remote mission station at Lishuane, close to the upper reaches of the Caledon River, Smith's party attended a Sunday service held by the Wesleyan missionary, the Rev. John Edwards. In a primitive shelter erected in the absence of a church, Edwards preached to his Griqua congregation with an ardour that seems to have impressed all but the sheep (right foreground).

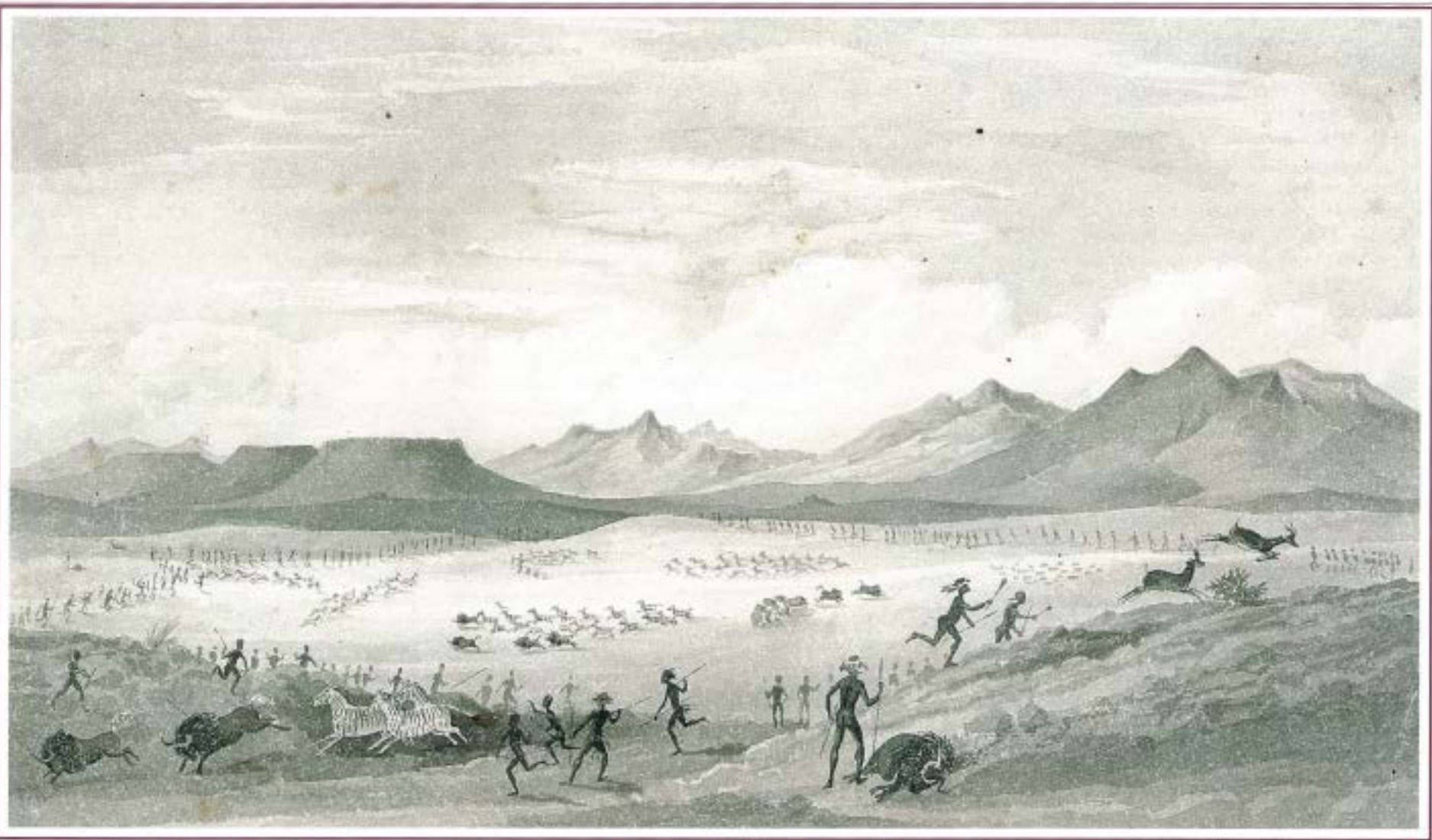


figure 7 **A grand hunt – game driven by the Barolong of Thabe Unchoo. 1834.**
Watercolour (monochrome). 14 x 24 cm. Coll: MuseumAfrica

Bell's impression of a 'grand hunt' which he and his companions were invited to join near Thaba 'Nchu in November 1834. Smith's party never ceased to be amazed by the teeming game that they witnessed roaming over an area of Africa as yet largely unexplored and certainly unspoilt. Nevertheless, John Burrow, for one, was sickened by the gross slaughter that was inflicted on quagga, antelopes of all kinds, wildebeest and other game on this occasion.

him, terrifying – display of fireworks that Smith's men organised that persuaded him that it would be wise to treat his visitors with respect.

Meanwhile, Captain Edie had suffered an unpleasant accident.

This occurred when he woke in his wagon one morning to see three lions ambling along the bank of the river. In his panic and haste to fire at them he somehow mishandled his gun and shot himself in the hand with such force that the ball passed right through it and whizzed past his whiskers.²⁸ Fortunately for him, Smith's immediate and professional attention saved what remained of his hand.

On rolled the cavalcade of wagons until, on 27 November, it reached Thaba 'Nchu – or Black Mountain – site of another Wesleyan mission station. Here Bell was hard at work sketching the Barolong, depicting them both dead (their burial customs were interesting) and engaged in a variety of occupations. The principal excitement of this visit was a hunt organised by the

local chief, Moroka II, for the benefit of his guests. He took them to a wide plain where there were tremendous herds of antelope of various kinds grazing peacefully in the grass. His huntsmen rounded them up by closing in on them until they were closely packed in a circle three-quarters of a mile wide. Then, wrote Burrow, 'We began to chase and kill as much as we could, and all that were driven to the edge were stabbed while endeavouring to break through the ring'.²⁹ Eventually, even Burrow was sickened by the slaughter. 'The amount of what we shot, or rather murdered, I forget,' he wrote, 'but it was enormous.'

Heading southwest, the explorers crossed the Black Modder River where, for the first time, they encountered a group of Bushmen. 'A more miserable group of human beings could scarcely be conceived,' commented Andrew Smith in his *Journal*. 'They were besmeared from head to foot by what *we would call* filth, but which they consider convenient and essential to their comfort.'³⁰ Charles Bell sketched them dancing and hunting and he drew their weapons. He depicted the Modder River in watercolour and the explorers' outspan beside it – but the beauty of the landscape as he portrayed it was deceptive. Burrow records that by day the heat was unbearable and that throughout the night he and his companions were tormented by mosquitoes.³¹ Occasionally, in this remote region, the explorers encountered families of wandering trekboers in their dilapidated wagons; these, too, Bell sketched and painted, conveying with both skill and humour their austere lifestyle.

At last, a few days before Christmas 1834, Smith's wagons, now much travel-stained, arrived back in Philippolis and any weariness the travellers might have been feeling was dispelled by the sight of the pile of letters awaiting them. There was one addressed to Charles Bell from his mother and even though it had been written the previous May, he was overjoyed to receive it. 'You cannot imagine with what pleasure I read over the news from East Nook,' he wrote to his mother the following day in his clear, cursive script, 'for even though valued much in Cape Town [letters] are even ten times more so when rec^d in this far away land & they bring back the thoughts & remembrance of home more strongly when there is nothing to distract the mind & prevent it from dwelling on them.' Bell writes fondly of various members of his family – aunts and uncles, his grandmother, sister Christina and brother David. He mentions, too, his uncle, John Bell, in Cape Town from whom he had received 'a very kind letter letting me know that had he been in Cape Town I would never have come on this pleasure jaunt by his leave & had I thought it possible he would have objected I should never have thought of it for a moment'.³²

To his parents, far away in Scotland where a black face was seldom if ever seen, Charles's reaction to the indigenous people

he had encountered on the expedition must have been both comforting and interesting. 'We have found the Natives civil, hospitable & kind,' he told his mother, '& have met with more assistance from them than we could have got for nothing had we travelled as long in the Land o' Cakes'³³ & yet these are the people of whose cruelties, barbarity, & ferociousness travellers write & traders tell.' Charles assured his parents that he had never before been in better health despite 'heat, cold, sun & rain – night watching & daily fatigue'. He told them that all the members of the party got on 'good-humouredly together' and that Smith was 'an excellent fellow in every way'. Yet why, one wonders, did he not tell them that it was he whom Smith had delegated to take the Sunday services while on trek, even though (Burrow excepted) he was the youngest member of the party?³⁴ And why did he not once allude to the numerous drawings, paintings and sketches that he had made during the course of the journey? However, some shirts Mrs Bell had sent her son were deemed



figure 8
Barolong purification of a warrior who has slain a man in battle. 1834.

Watercolour (monochrome).
26 x 19.5 cm.

Coll: MuseumAfrica

In the detail of this series of drawings showing a Barolong warrior undergoing purification, Bell is obviously mindful of his particular responsibility, as a member of the Expedition into Central Africa, to illustrate the manners and customs of the indigenous people they encountered.

worthy of comment, even though 'at present you could see few symptoms of dandyism about me, for we can take but few clothes to load the wagons ... & then the thorn bushes make sad work of everything but leathers'.

Another letter that reached Charles Bell in Philippolis came from twelve-year-old Christina, and his affectionate reply is another among the few personal letters that have survived.

I rec^d your nice little tidy short letter here a few days ago, having just arrived from far on the other side of 'the back of beyond' ... I think you would have laughed to see your Brother paying visits of ceremony to the Chiefs & supping thick sour milk & cold porridge with them – King Moscheshe (*sic*) of the Basothos took a particular fancy to me & would have made me his son in Law I dare say – he presented me to his daughter who kissed my hand in a sweet gracious manner & brought me corn & Caffre beer – She paid me a visit afterwards at the waggons & I painted her cheeks green & her brow red & I tipped her nose with gold leaf & she told me through the Interpreter that she thought me a very sweet young man. But I had not the least ambition to become the son in law even of the Basuto king for all his cattle & herds & tribes of naked Savages.

Clearly the expedition was living up to all Charles had hoped. He was seeing wild animals in their thousands against their own rugged, African background, besides having the opportunity to enjoy 'excellent shooting & hunting'. The 'Eiland' was the biggest of all the creatures, 'larger than an ox', he told Christina, but none was more appealing than the 'beautiful & graceful Springbuck'. It was all novel, marvellous and exciting, yet he confessed to Christina that sometimes he longed to be sitting in the parlour at home, 'listening to my Father's Fiddle, or telling

Mama and you long stories of what I saw in the Centre of Africa & I assure you I will tell long ones of dreadful dangers & hair-breadth escapes, of savage beasts & more savage men, but whether they are true or not you must never inquire'.²⁶

But, the oxen were being inspanned and it was time for the party to leave Philippolis and continue on its northward journey. Unfortunately Captain Edie's injured hand did not improve and he was obliged to return to Cape Town for more sophisticated treatment than any Smith and his first-aid box could provide. For some distance the captain rode alongside the wagons and then, 'wishing us success,' wrote Burrow, '[he] left us with a heavy heart amidst firing and cheering'. Edie had taken charge of the impressive collection of museum specimens that had been assembled *en route*. Carefully packed for delivery to the Association for Exploring Central Africa were 491 birds, 59 quadrupeds and 188 reptiles, besides quantities of geological specimens and ethnic curios. In addition Edie took with him no fewer than 131 drawings and paintings executed by George Ford and Charles Bell.²⁶

Over four months had passed since Smith's men had left Graaff-Reinet and their objective now was New Latakoo, or Kuruman as it was more properly known. This mission station was a veritable oasis on the arid northern boundary of the Cape Colony and headquarters, since 1824, of Robert Moffat of the London Missionary Society.²⁷ During this lap of the journey it rained almost ceaselessly, forcing the wagons to wait for days on the banks of the overflowing Vaal River. As last the water-level dropped, but even then the explorers had to wade, chin deep, across the torrent while the oxen were forced to swim.²⁸ One of the wagons stuck in the mud; another overturned, washing away 'our small stock of necessaries' (Burrow's words), including a quantity of precious gunpowder.

On 30 January 1835, Smith's wagons, more than a little battered by now, reached 'the long wished-for Latakoo ... the most perfect Station we had yet seen'.²⁸ They found an orderly village dominated by a fine church and with neat stone houses surrounded by beautiful, well-stocked gardens. Smith was greatly impressed by what had been achieved; the mission station served to confirm his belief that 'religion and civilisation go hand in hand with rapid strides'.²⁹ However, the visitors' joy at finding themselves among friends was somewhat subdued when they learnt that Moffat himself was desperately ill with fever, and that his wife, Mary, was at 'the very gates of death' after having given birth to a son.³¹ Smith, whose arrival Moffat later described as 'a dispensation of mercy, ordered by that gracious Providence, without whom a sparrow cannot fall to the ground', immediately attended to his hosts' needs and before long both Robert and Mary were restored to health.

figure 9
Pack oxen crossing the Vaal River. 1835.

Watercolour. 9 x 17.8 cm.
Coll: MuseumAfrica

When Smith's party reached the Vaal River early in January 1835 they found it in flood and were obliged to wait almost two weeks before the water subsided and they dared to make the crossing. The pack oxen were launched into the raging current and eventually landed safely on the other side. According to Smith's Journal, 'the oxen swam for nearly the whole distance, the depth of the water being from five to five feet ten inches'.



One of Smith's most important projects was to survey the uncharted region bordering present-day Botswana, but for this he required permission from the Matabele king, Mzilikazi, in whose territory it lay. Moffat, who was fortunately on excellent terms with the monarch, immediately dispatched a messenger – he was promised the gift of a cow for his labours – to travel to the royal village of Mosega, about a week's journey north of the mission station, and arrange a meeting. While the man was away, Smith, taking Bell, Burrow and some others with him, set off to survey the edge of the Kalahari desert northwest of Kuruman. It proved to be an exhausting expedition. Intense heat alternated with violent, drenching thunderstorms. Smith's horse, his faithful companion since his days in the Eastern Cape, contracted a fatal disease and died in what Burrow described as 'great torture'. On one occasion, Charles Bell and a soldier named Tennant somehow lost touch with the wagons and were forced to spend an entire night clinging precariously to the branches of a thorn tree while rain pelted them from above and lions roared threateningly below. Youthful resilience was on their side, however, and once safely on the ground they managed to rejoin their companions. Together they travelled on until they reached a dry saltpan, today known as Heuningvlei. Game abounded in the vicinity, and it was in this region that the travellers saw giraffe for the first time.

On 10 May 1835, the returning party reached the French mission station at Motito where they met Moffat's messenger on his way back from Mzilikazi's kraal. The king, he said, was prepared to receive the party as long as they had 'clean hearts' – but woe betide them if they dared to lay hands on a single one of his cattle!⁶² Fortunately, they were joined by Robert Moffat himself soon afterwards; he was the ideal person to act as intermediary between Smith and Mzilikazi, for a sincere friendship already existed between the missionary and the monarch.⁶³ Wagons were inspanned immediately and the long-suffering horses were saddled (Bell's had also succumbed to horse disease by this time and Burrow's luckless mount was to die soon afterwards), and once more the explorers were on trek.

This area was untamed Africa. There were no defined roads for the wagons to follow and travellers, struggling over rocky terrain abounding with snakes and other wild creatures, had to make their way from one waterhole to the next. But the scenery was savagely beautiful, and a drawing that Charles Bell made of the explorers' outspan on the banks of the Great Choai saltpan gives a graphic idea of both the landscape and the encampment.

It was at this place that Smith's men had the exciting experience of seeing and hunting down their first rhinoceros – an incident that Bell illustrated, stage by stage. Burrow's diary records that there were two known species of rhino – the black and the white – but 'with ourselves, lies the merit of the discovery of an

entirely new sort ... having two horns of equal length. If this had been the only discovery we made, natural history could not have complained of the Expedition.'⁶⁴

When, at the end of May, the explorers reached the approach to Mosega they were met by one of Mzilikazi's *indunas*, a man named Mklapi, who had been sent to accompany them to the royal village. Their fame, it seems, had gone before them, and hardly had Mklapi arrived at the camp when he begged to see the sketches made by Ford and Bell. At the sight of them, his astonishment was unbounded, for pictorial art, so it seems, was unknown to his people. 'He closely surveyed each drawing,' Andrew Smith wrote in his journal, 'and after having done that he closely inspected the back of the paper expecting to find appearances of the actual objects themselves, but observing them to be perfectly smooth and white, his wonder appeared ten-fold.'⁶⁵ Mklapi was then introduced to the two artists whom he inspected solemnly from head to foot, no doubt seeking some indication of the extraordinary powers they possessed.

Early in June Smith led his men into Mosega – but Mzilikazi was nowhere to be seen! Smallpox was rife in the land and in terror of contracting it, the king had fled to one of his most

figure 10

The Revd Mr Moffat preaching to the Bechuana.
Lithotint. 19 x 25 cm.
Bell Heritage Trust Collection, UCT

When addressing an audience of Bechuana, the Rev. Mr Moffat would have done so in Tswana, a language which he not only spoke fluently, but into which he translated both the catechism and the New Testament. At Kuruman, Andrew Smith and his party established an extremely happy relationship with the renowned missionary, through whose mediation their first meetings with Mzilikazi were arranged. The lithotint seen here would probably have been made during or soon after Bell's visit to Scotland in 1847.

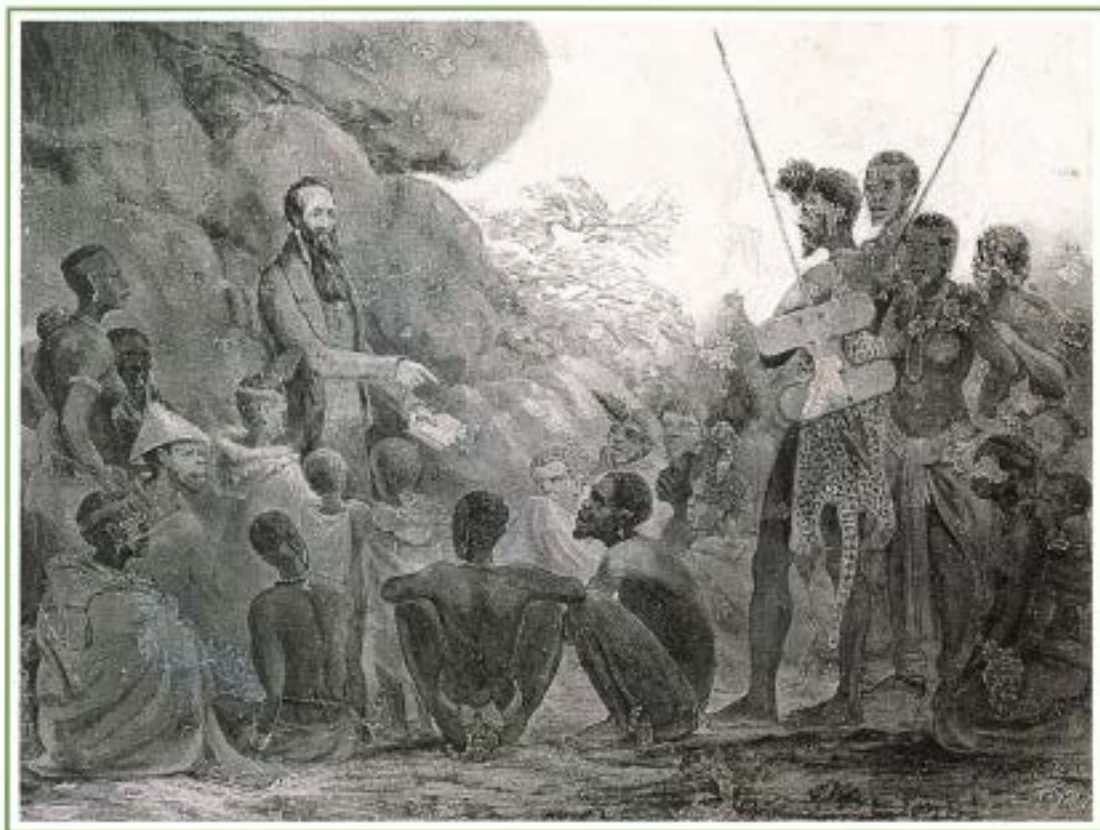




figure 11
**First reception by
 Matzelikazi. 1835.**

Watercolour (monochrome),
 11.5 x 17.8 cm.
 Coll: MuseumAfrica

Bell's record of the first meeting with Mzilikazi, in June 1835. Seated on stools which they had judiciously provided themselves, Smith's party gaze with respect on the founder of the Matabele nation. The meeting was held in a cattle kraal, and there was nothing in the king's appearance, Smith commented in his Journal, 'save his nakedness which was calculated to excite disagreeable impression . . . He is rather low of station,' continued Smith, 'and embonpoint giving every evidence of there being no want of beef or beer where he resides.'

remote kraals. Undaunted, the expedition pressed on, and in a kraal beside the Tolane River they came across the mighty king of the Matabele hidden away in an insignificant hut. Nevertheless, the meeting was a friendly one: Mzilikazi ordered his warriors to honour his guests with war dances and to demonstrate their skills at praise-singing, both of which diversions Bell – judging by his sketches – found extremely entertaining. The explorers, unable to repay the king in like manner, showed Mzilikazi their scientific instruments in which he took considerable interest, as his people did in their clothes and other possessions. Then, after an amicable parting, Smith and his men headed off towards the southeast to explore the Magaliesberg.

Herds of white rhinoceros ranged freely in this area and once more Bell depicted a hunt, this time with almost grisly humour. Here, too, hippopotamus grazed in vast numbers and the explorers, unable to resist such an easy target, immediately fired at the defenceless creatures. Within three hours no fewer than seven had been slaughtered and the river ran red with their blood. 'The whole camp soon became a scene of cooking and eating,' wrote Burrow; the meat had an interesting taste and he, personally, found hippopotamus foot roasted on an ant-heap to be 'a great dainty'.²¹

On went the caravan, heading in an easterly direction, but when the wagons arrived at the confluence of the Magalies and Crocodile rivers the wagons were too wide for the narrow *poort* through which the mingled waters flowed.²² Smith then turned towards the northwest and, travelling along the slopes of the Pilanesberg, reached their former outspan at Tolane at the end of July. Here, they parted with Moffat, who was understandably anxious to return to his wife in Kuruman, and pursued their journey towards the northern limits of Mzilikazi's territory. Charles Bell appears to have revelled in the splendour of the landscape, depicting the bold colours of rock and grass that changed as variously as the patterns in a kaleidoscope. But his paintings were not limited to scenery: among other things, he recorded a variety of brutal punishments meted out by Mzilikazi to people supposed to have committed offences.

Unfortunately, the explorers' brief stop at Tolane was not a peaceful one. Rumbles of discontent among the 'lower orders' turned to open protest when the men learnt that Smith, instead of turning homewards at this point, intended to continue towards the Tropic of Capricorn and so fulfil his pledge to the shareholders. A few fierce words from the director diffused the ugly situation, though one of the mutineers, Andries Botha,

remained stubbornly recalcitrant. This man was reputedly an excellent shot and for this reason Smith had included him in his party, even though it meant obtaining his release from prison where he was serving a sentence for murder.

Now it was the beginning of August and the expedition had been on trek for over a year. Reluctantly, Smith's men once more inspanned their oxen and set off towards the north, making their weary way along the course of the Marico River until it joined the Limpopo. Leaving most of the party and the exhausted oxen at this point, a group consisting of Smith, John Burrow and ten of the men, continued towards the Tropic. Thorn bushes blocked their paths and ripped their clothes; tumbled rocks almost upset their wagon, but they pressed on, even though the river was running dry and there was scarcely any grass. At last, on 6 September, Dr Andrew Smith and his men triumphantly reached the Tropic of Capricorn, surveyed their surroundings with joyous hearts, and set off to rejoin the rest of the party before gratefully turning for home.

The journey back to the Cape took the travellers through Mosega where Mzilikazi again welcomed them warmly and announced that one of his chief *indunas*, a man named Mkumbati, and his suite would accept their invitation and accompany them to Cape Town in order to consolidate the king's relations with the British government. Then, taking leave of their host and loaded with gifts, the explorers continued towards Kuruman and their friends, the Moffats. From there they travelled southwards, on the way fording the flooded and turbulent Orange River on a rickety pontoon. By now the relentless demands of the long journey and the unremitting hostility of the African terrain had become too much for their weary animals. One by one the faithful oxen were overcome by sickness or exhaustion, and the travellers grieved to see them dropping dead beside the track. Then there followed the horrifying experience of the irresponsible (and, according to John Burrow, tipsy) Andries Botha, who was clawed to death by a lion – no doubt fair punishment for having betrayed Smith's trust in him.

At last, the travel-weary explorers reached the borders of the Cape Colony and on 4 January 1836 they staggered into Graaff-Reinet, their mission accomplished and their sponsors' faith in them justified. But still they had to endure a wagon journey to Port Elizabeth and eight days at sea cramped in a small brig before they and their precious cargo – not to mention Mzilikazi's envoys – sailed safely into Table Bay. An enthusiastic crowd of friends and relations greeted them, none more welcoming than Colonel John Bell and his wife. They must have been proud indeed to learn that Charles, who had left nearly two years before as the least important member of the group, had returned as its second in command.¹⁸ Hardly more than a boy when they

last saw him, he had developed into a confident young adult, his skin tanned by the African sun, his intellect sharpened and his emotions matured by all he had experienced. During the excursion he had recorded, in some two hundred sketches and paintings executed with lively and steadily improving skill, sights and scenes of an Africa and its people until then unknown and undreamt of by the rest of the world.

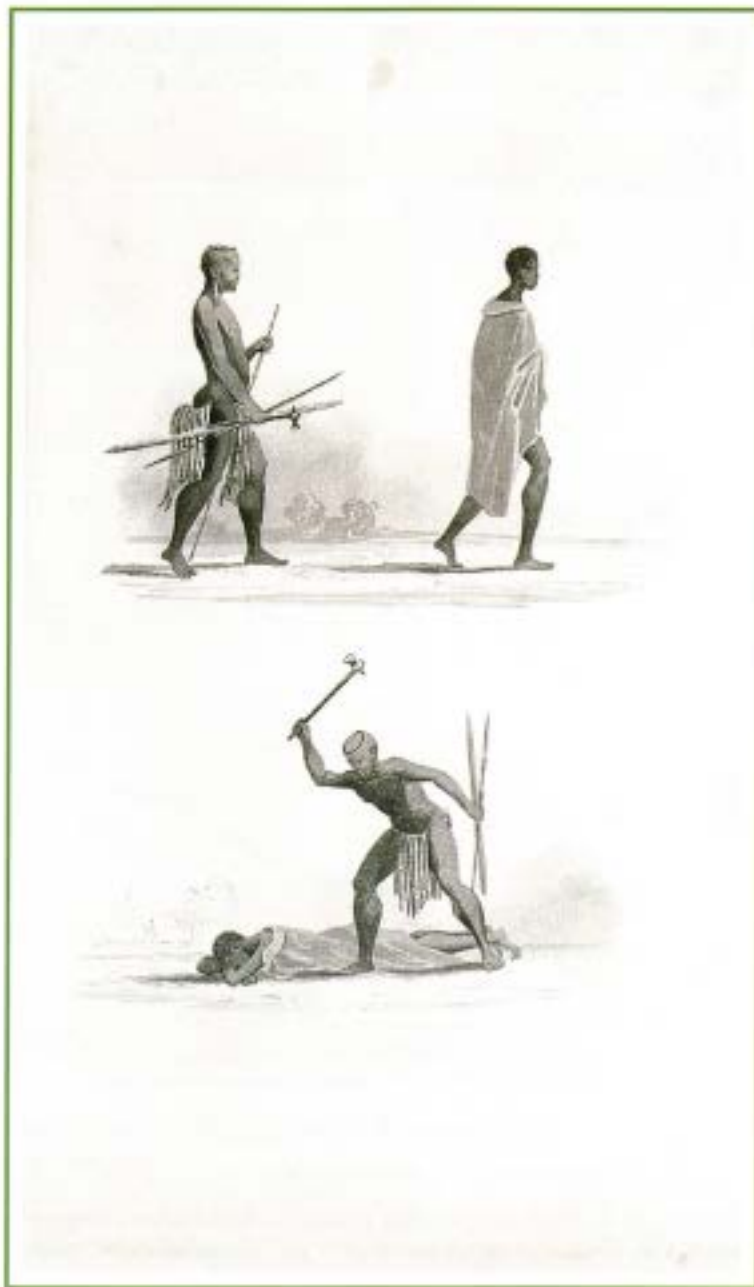


figure 12

Prisoner conducted to execution. The penalty for witchcraft. 1835.

Watercolour (monochrome).

28 x 20.5 cm.

Coll: MuseumAfrica

Anyone suspected of plotting against the life of Mzilikazi could expect a horrible death in retribution, as depicted here by Charles Bell. As many as ten malefactors could be brutally killed in a single day, and on one occasion Mzilikazi sentenced to death two of his brothers whom he accused of using medicines to murder him. According to Smith, the king could not forget that Dingane had killed his brother Shaka to deprive him of the Zulu kingdom.

CIVIL SERVANT

Much of interest had occurred at the Cape since Charles Bell had waved goodbye to his well-wishers at the Observatory on that chilly morning in 1834. Letters reached the travellers only intermittently once they had left Graaff-Reinet, but somewhere on his journey Bell had probably learnt that, at the Cape, the freeing of slaves on 1 December 1834 — according to an Act of Parliament passed some three years earlier — had not been without its problems, that of the lack of adequate compensation being uppermost in the minds of the erstwhile masters. On a more cheering note, there had been the ceremonial opening, in December 1834, of the new English church — later St George's Cathedral — in the presence of Sir Benjamin D'Urban and a host of other dignitaries.¹ It was the first Episcopalian place of worship to be erected in Cape Town itself and the ground plan of the handsome colonnaded building had been designed by none other than the versatile Colonel John Bell.² But with the end of 1834 news ceased to reach the expedition almost entirely for communications were severely affected by the outbreak of war — for the sixth time — on the Eastern Frontier.



Once he was back in Cape Town, Charles would have heard, for the first time, the epic saga of how his uncle's friend, the dashing and popular quartermaster-general, Colonel Harry Smith, had galloped out of Cape Town on New Year's Day 1835 and covered the 600 miles — almost 1000 kilometres — to Grahamstown in less than six days in an attempt to restore order out of the chaos in that area. He was, on the whole, successful but even so, much suffering, pillage and bloodshed had to be endured by both sides before hostilities ended in August 1835. This was followed by the implementation of Sir Benjamin D'Urban's new frontier policy which included the annexation of the land between the Keiskamma and Kei rivers as the province of Queen Adelaide. In the eyes of the white settlers, the scheme had certain virtues but any positive effects were nullified in December 1835 when Lord Glenelg, the philanthropically inclined British colonial secretary, issued a despatch completely at variance with D'Urban's policy. As if this were not enough, the general unrest already prevailing among the Xhosa on the Frontier and beyond the Kei was being steadily exacerbated by pressure from the powerful Zulu nation to their northeast. Remote as the Cape Peninsula certainly was from all this turmoil, the insecurity it caused eventually filtered southwards, and of this Charles must have become aware soon after his return.

Yet, despite all these alarms and disturbances, 1835 had proved a time of prosperity at Cape Town itself. There had been

a considerable import of capital; Government revenue was increasing and, paradoxically, optimism regarding the economic future of the Colony was high among the local merchant class.³ Perhaps it was the sense of permanence engendered by a feeling of financial security that, during 1835, led Colonel Bell to buy a property of considerable size in the leafy suburb of Rondebosch, on the eastern side of Table Mountain, and to build a house on the foundations of the Dutch dwelling that had stood there.⁴

Possibly political events mattered less to Charles Bell, on his return to Cape Town at the end of January 1836, than the revival of old friendships, particularly with two exceedingly interesting families whom he had met at the Cape not long before the expedition set off. First there were Thomas and Mary Maclear who, with their five young daughters, had arrived at the Cape on 6 January 1834 and swiftly established a firm and lasting friendship with the Bells. Thomas Maclear, a medical doctor by profession, had recently been appointed astronomer in charge of the Cape's Royal Observatory, a fine neoclassical-style building erected six years earlier. The easy hurly-burly in which his lively young family lived must have provided Charles with a pleasant relief from his clerical duties in the government offices. At all events, on Thursday 11 February, less than a fortnight after his return to Hope Mill, Charles paid a call on the Maclears and may well have given his hosts a private view of some of the sketches he had made during the expedition. Another frequent visitor to

the Observatory at this time was Bell's friend John Burrow who, according to Mrs Maclear, called on them almost every day.

Then there were the Herschels who, with Sir Benjamin and Lady D'Urban as fellow passengers, had sailed into Table Bay aboard the *Mountstuart-Elphinstone* on 15 January 1834.⁵ Son of Sir William Herschel, reputedly the most celebrated astronomer of the day and from whom he had undoubtedly inherited his skills, Sir John Herschel was visiting the Cape at his own expense to observe the heavenly bodies of the southern skies, and for this purpose had brought with him – in company with his charming and artistic wife, Margaret, their three small children, an assistant and a servant – a mass of impedimenta including a 20-foot telescope. This he set up in the garden of Feldhausen (or The Grove as a previous owner had called it), a rambling house in Claremont where Colonel John Bell, his wife and nephew were to be frequent guests during the four years that the Herschel family lived there.

There were new friends to be made, too, and possibly the most important of these was a young man with whom Charles Bell had much in common.

This was seventeen-year-old Charles Piazzi Smyth whose surprising second name was the one by which he was generally known.⁶ The two young men would have met soon after the return of the expedition, probably at the Royal Observatory where Smyth had been part of the Maclears' ménage since his arrival there on 9 October 1835. He had come from England to take up the post of assistant astronomer, and at the Cape Piazzi Smyth was to remain, loyally labouring under Thomas Maclear, until he was appointed Astronomer Royal for Scotland ten years later. Like Charles Bell, he was a gifted artist and, like Bell's, his sketches often reveal a lighthearted and quirky sense of humour. These two remarkable men were to remain close friends until the death of the elder of the pair – Charles Bell – almost fifty years later.

Meanwhile, Dr Andrew Smith was busily preparing his vast collection – including a hippopotamus and two rhinoceros specimens – for a local exhibition. The mind boggles at the thought of



figure 1 **Sir John Herschel.**
Engraving, University of Cape Town Libraries

Sir John Herschel (1792–1871), a renowned astronomer, arrived at the Cape in 1834 to study the skies of the southern hemisphere. He bought the estate Feldhausen in Claremont and set up his 20-foot reflecting telescope in the garden. His friendship with Colonel Bell brought him into close contact with the young Charles Bell, whose life must have been considerably enriched by his wide interests and enquiring mind.

the logistics and other problems incurred in transporting these great carcasses across the subcontinent and then (as Smith planned) to England, but doubtless the science of taxidermy was included among his many skills. Conscious as he was of the necessity to exhibit the fruits of his labours to the shareholders who had sponsored the expedition, he nevertheless felt that his immediate duty was to Mzilikazi's two visiting envoys. Having entertained them in Cape Town and shown them the sights of the bustling town, on 3 March he invited the Matabele ambassador to sign a treaty he had drawn up with the purpose of ensuring peace and friendship between the colonists and Mzilikazi's people. Both Sir Benjamin D'Urban and Smith appended their signatures to this document, after which it was formally ratified by the addition of the official seal.⁷ The ceremony concluded, the two visitors, lavishly provided with gifts as well as with safe conduct to the border of the Colony, returned to their home territory.

The shareholders did not have to wait long to see the results of Smith's expedition. At a meeting of the Association for Exploring Central Africa opened by Sir

John Herschel on 19 March 1836, they listened attentively as Smith informed them that his party had learnt much about the hitherto unknown tribes of the interior and that friendly relations had been established with their rulers. He was also able to tell them that many new zoological specimens had been discovered and identified and that, for the first time, the precise positions of numerous places and topographical features had been correctly determined and marked on the map. Their hopes of trading with the interior, however, had been disappointed, for the indigenous people had little to offer in exchange for European goods. The sponsors, while regretting that the expedition had failed to provide

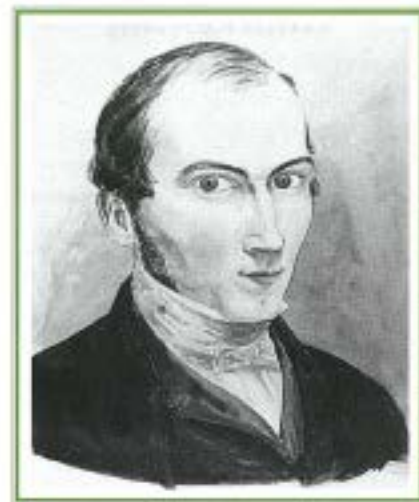


figure 2
Charles Piazzi Smyth (self-portrait), 1847.
Illustration in Warner, B. *Charles Piazzi Smyth*; A.A. Balkema for UCT, Cape Town, 1983. History of Science Museum, Oxford

Charles Piazzi Smyth (1819–1900) was first assistant astronomer at the Cape from 1835 until 1845, when he was appointed Scotland's Astronomer Royal. An eccentric of varied talents, he became a close friend of Charles Bell, with whom he shared many interests and activities both at the Cape and later in Scotland. When Bell died in 1882, Smyth wrote his obituary, a perceptive account of his friend's character and achievements. It was published in the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Scotland, 1886–1887.

figure 3
Shooting hippo in the Marico River. 1835.

Watercolour (monochrome).
 12.7 x 17.8 cm.
 Coll: MuseumAfrica

When they were exhibited in 1836, the sketches and paintings of the Expedition for Exploring Central Africa by Charles Bell and George Ford opened a window on the hinterland for the ordinary citizens of Cape Town. Bell's contribution included a number of hunting scenes, such as this one in which members of the exploration party despatch a hippo. This 'cunning and cautious' creature (as described by Andrew Smith) was highly sought after by indigenous people both for its flesh (for eating) and for its tusks (for commerce).



them with even the hope of financial gain, appreciated its scientific merits and agreed that the most valuable specimens and objects should be sent to London for exhibition without delay. Smith's report was duly published by the Cape Government Gazette and a copy despatched to the Royal Geographical Society, which not only discussed it at a meeting in London on 10 August 1836, but reprinted some sections in its Proceedings.

Meanwhile, in Cape Town Smith's exhibition of zoological specimens had been mounted at the museum in Looyer's Plein (in 1851 to become the site of St Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral), while the drawings made by Charles Bell and George Ford were displayed round the corner at No. 2 Hope Street.⁸ Ford rapidly capitalised on his success as an artist by inserting an advertisement for his services as miniaturist and drawing instructor in the *South African Commercial Advertiser*, strategically placing it alongside a notice announcing the display of his – and Bell's – sketches.

The exhibition created a considerable stir among the people of Cape Town. Even if there were those who could not appreciate the scientific significance of the zoological exhibits, they must have been struck by the singularity of the animals and by the beauty and spectacular colour of the birds' plumage, as well as by the minute detail in which the paintings had been executed. There were also numerous ethnological exhibits on show and these, together with Charles Bell's spirited depictions of the

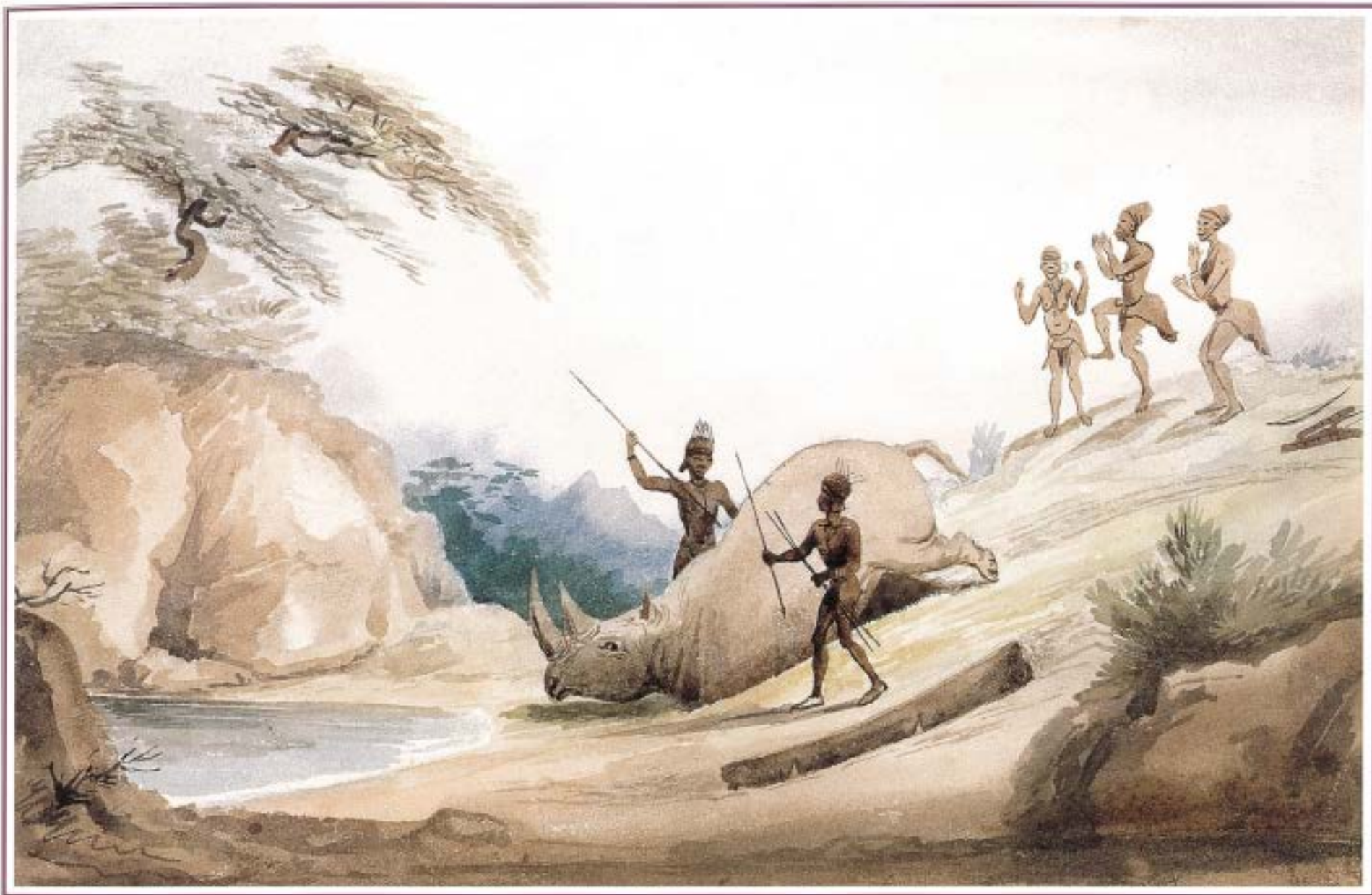
appearance and customs of the indigenous people of the subcontinent, must have opened up a world unknown to ordinary colonists in those days before the Great Trek had got fully under way and before photography was known at the Cape. Certainly not least appreciative of the importance of the expedition was Sir John Herschel, who brought his wife to visit it although she had been confined only three weeks earlier with their fourth child, a boy to be named Alexander. Herschel found the drawings of Ford and Bell to be 'uncommonly beautiful' – a compliment indeed, coming as it did from a man who was no mean artist himself.⁹

Perhaps the visitor most impressed by the exhibition was Piazza Smyth, who described it in a letter written at the time to his mentor, the English lawyer and antiquarian, Dr John Lee.¹⁰ He had found the meeting of the Association for Exploring Central Africa to be 'most interesting from the magnitude & richness of the collections which it brought home', while 'the drawings about 500 in number ranked first, from their truth & exquisite workmanship: the natural history is by Mr Ford a most indefatigable & talented artist'. The landscapes and figures, he wrote, were by Charles Bell, '& are about as well executed in their line as the others in theirs: his pencil has a peculiar twist & he has hit off the manners and customs of the natives to a t.'¹¹ Piazza Smyth never forgot that exhibition. Nearly fifty years later, in an obituary to his friend he wrote, in a torrent of admiration:

Everyone was astonished, delighted and instructed at finding the walls of the room decorated by nearly three hundred of C.D. Bell's drawings . . . There, in those matchless drawings, was the peculiar country the expedition had passed through, in its minuter as well as its larger features; unadulterated, moreover, artistically, by any methods of drawing taught at home on English trees and hedges and shady lanes; for C.D. Bell had taught himself in South Africa on exactly what nature presented to him there. Hence was the great interior's physical geography, geology, and vegetation, too, where there was any, depicted again and again, either in brilliant colour, or *chiaro-scuro* force of black and white, and almost perfect truth of outline; with the very atmosphere also before one to look into, it shimmered and boiled in the vividness of solar light, and over stony surfaces heated to 140° or 150° Fahr. but yet garnished with episodes of the wild animals of the region – generally gigantic animals of South Africa today, but of other parts of the earth only in some past geological age; and with lifelike examples of the natives of every tribe, whose lands the expedition had traversed, depicted in their most characteristic avocations.¹²

What is particularly interesting, though, is that, according to Piazza Smyth, Bell 'drew as much, or more, from memory in the silent watches of the night, as by sketching direct from nature through the day'.¹³

It is not certain when Charles Bell returned to his humdrum



duties in the Audit Office, but he must have worked diligently for before long he was promoted to the lofty post of first clerk which brought with it a salary increase of £30 a year.¹⁴ It seems that the work was tolerable and the company in the old government offices pleasant – despite the prevailing and noxious smells emanating from the canal in the Heerengracht outside.

Any shortcomings in Charles's daily labours would have been more than compensated for by the interest provided by his social life and, in particular, by his expanding circle of friends. On at

figure 4 **Bushman method of catching animals in pitfalls.**
Watercolour. 14 x 21.5 cm. Bell Heritage Trust Collection, UCT

Following his brief as one of the artists for the expedition, Bell depicted, among other things, the different hunting methods of the local people he and his companions encountered. With its tough hide, ferocious nature and sheer bulk, the rhinoceros was clearly no animal to be trifled with. Nevertheless, Andrew Smith, in his Illustrated Zoology of South Africa, not surprisingly disagrees with an early description of the rhinoceros by a missionary who stated that it had a flexible horn which 'when the animal is asleep ... can be curled like the trunk of an elephant, but becomes perfectly firm and hard when the animal is excited, and especially when pursuing an enemy!'

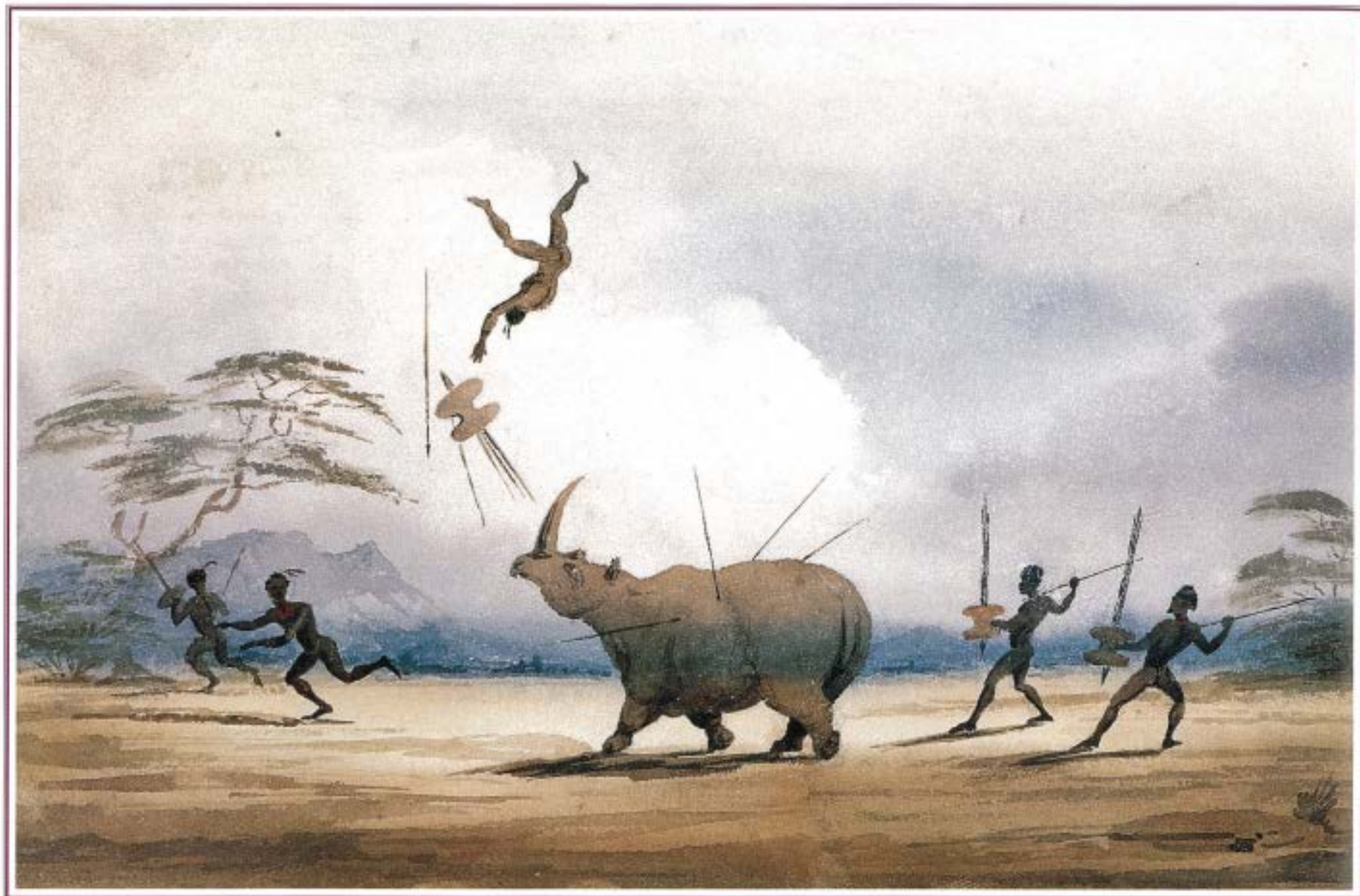


figure 5 **Bechuana attacking a rhinoceros.**
Watercolour. 13.5 x 21.5 cm. Bell Heritage Trust Collection, UCT

Even in tragic moments such as this one, when the hunter is heading for almost certain death, Bell apparently made no effort to restrain his caustic sense of humour. The alarm – even terror – felt by the four companions of the doomed man is conveyed by angle of body and line of limb.

least two occasions during this period he was invited to dinner parties which he was unlikely to forget. The first took place on Saturday 9 April 1836.¹² His host was the wealthy merchant John Bardwell Ebden and, presumably, the venue was Belmont, the splendid house Ebden had built for himself in Rondebosch. It must have proved a stimulating gathering for the guests included the Herschels, Captain Robert Wauchope, captain of the flagship HMS *Thalia*, and his wife, as well as Major and Mrs Charles Cornwallis Michell. The Maclears and Dr Andrew Smith

were there, as well as Colonel Bell and Lady Catherine. Another guest was Baron von Ludwig, apothecary, horticulturist and businessman of German birth who was renowned for the wonderful garden of both exotic and indigenous plants that he had created in Kloof Street. Not recorded, however, is whether Ebden included any of his many progeny, most of them already young adults, in the party. It would indeed be interesting to know whether this was the first occasion on which Charles Bell met the fascinating Martha Antoinetta, fifth of Ebden's six daughters. Be that as it may, the guests must have been somewhat distracted by the outbreak of a fire in Belmont's adjoining vineyard during the evening; fortunately the house, which still stands,¹⁶ escaped the blaze.

The second significant dinner party which Charles Bell attended at this time was given by the Herschels, whose invitation was for 6 o'clock on the evening of Wednesday, 15 June 1836. On this occasion the guests were even more celebrated and the conversation must have been scintillating to say the least. One of those present was Captain James Edward Alexander, soldier and traveller, who had fought in various wars in such far-flung places as Russia, Turkey, Portugal and the Eastern Cape. Later he was to see service in the Crimea, Canada and New Zealand and to go exploring, to some extent in the footsteps of Andrew Smith (of whom he appears to have been unreasonably jealous) in the interior of southern Africa.¹⁷ But even Captain Alexander pales in comparison with the two men who were probably guests of honour on that winter evening – the charming Robert Fitzroy, hydrographer, meteorologist and captain of HMS *Beagle*, at that time lying at anchor in Table Bay;¹⁸ and, with him, the ship's naturalist, a young man named Charles Darwin, destined to become famous for his epoch-making theory of evolution. Of course, no one at that dinner table could have known that some twenty-three years from then he was to publish one of the most notable scientific works the world has ever known, his *magnum opus*, *On the origin of species*. And, when the book did appear in 1859, what, one wonders, was the reaction of that good Presbyterian, Charles Bell? Darwin recorded the occasion in a letter written to John Stevens Henslow, at that time professor of botany at Cambridge University. Of Herschel Darwin wrote: 'He was exceedingly good natured, but his manners at first appeared to me rather awful.'¹⁹ Of Charles Bell, not surprisingly, he made no mention at all.

Stimulating as these events must have been to a young man with a mind as alert as Charles Bell's, there would have been times when he welcomed the opportunity simply to have fun. Such an occasion was the 'fancy ball' – an extremely popular and fashionable form of entertainment at the time – which Sir Benjamin and Lady D'Urban organised at Government House on 19 July 1836. Cape Town's society was there in force, including

several members of the expedition. Naturally, the Maclears were among the guests, and in her diary the observant Mrs Maclear writes that Lady D'Urban wore 'a very rich costume of the time of Queen Mary', and that a prominent medical man, coyly referred to as 'Dr L' but undoubtedly the well-known Dr Louis Liesching, had risked both reputation and dignity to appear disguised as Old Moses.²⁰ This old tatterdemalion, reputedly a discredited army officer turned money lender, with his 'nor-wester hat, chalk pipe, spurs and money-bag', was a familiar sight in Cape Town and the subject of an amusing sketch by Thomas Bowler.

But of all the fancy costumes on view that night, none aroused more amusement than those sported by 'Messrs B and B', as Mrs Maclear referred to them, but undoubtedly none other than Charles Bell and his fellow traveller, John Burrow. These 'two young rips' had rigged themselves up as Mzilikazi and his great wife and, in Mrs Maclear's words, 'were the most remarkable figures in their karosses of leopard skins and fringes. The chief had a curious collar round his neck (to grin through) and bore shield and assegais; his wife had a child at her back.' At all events, the general atmosphere in the ballroom of Government House was one of merriment and the music for the quadrilles, the waltzes, the gallopades and reels was provided with verve and enthusiasm by the bands of the 27th and 98th regiments. As if the impression made by the two 'Messrs B' on this occasion had not been enough, they repeated the performance at 'a Juvenile party' (Sir John Herschel's words) given by Colonel and Lady Catherine Bell only four evenings later to celebrate their nephew's homecoming. Attired in the same garb, they exaggerated their tomfoolery by 'dipping for apples in flour with the hands behind [and] grinning with orange peel teeth'.²¹

By September the exhibits were ready for despatch and a notice was placed in the *Commercial Advertiser*²² calling for tenders for 'a number of Wooden Cases for packing specimens of Natural History for Transmission to England'. There is no knowing whose tender was successful, but the task must have been completed in time for the crates and their precious contents to accompany Andrew Smith when he returned to his military duties in England early in February of the following year. He lost no time in contacting the Royal Geographical Society and in making arrangements for an exhibition at which would be displayed not only the specimens and artifacts brought back from the Expedition into Central Africa, but the artworks of George Ford and Charles Bell too. The exhibition opened at London's Egyptian Hall in July 1837 and, at an entrance price of one shilling per visitor, ran for a year.²³

Smith had every intention of publishing his expedition journal, copiously illustrated by Ford and Bell, as soon as possible –

indeed, a notice announcing its imminent appearance was printed on the back of the catalogue to the exhibition. However, this was not to be, probably because at the time Smith was preoccupied not only with his medical responsibilities and with what Piazza Smyth referred to as 'curiosities in the way of undescribed snakes', but also with anxieties arising from the exhibition's complete failure to pay for its expenses.²⁴ Meanwhile, both Ford and Bell had been obliged to hand over their artworks to their former chief, who, after a lapse of some eight years, did publish what was to prove his masterpiece, the magnificent *Illustrated Zoology of South Africa* in five volumes. The illustrations – hand-coloured lithographs – were almost entirely by George Ford with the exception of one or two which may have been the work of Charles Bell, although the book does not give him credit for them. The fortunate Ford was thus allowed the pleasure of seeing his



figure 6 *Corythax porphyreolopha*.
Watercolour. Illustration in Smith, Andrew. *Illustrated Zoology of South Africa*; Smith, Elder & Co., London, 1849. South African Museum.

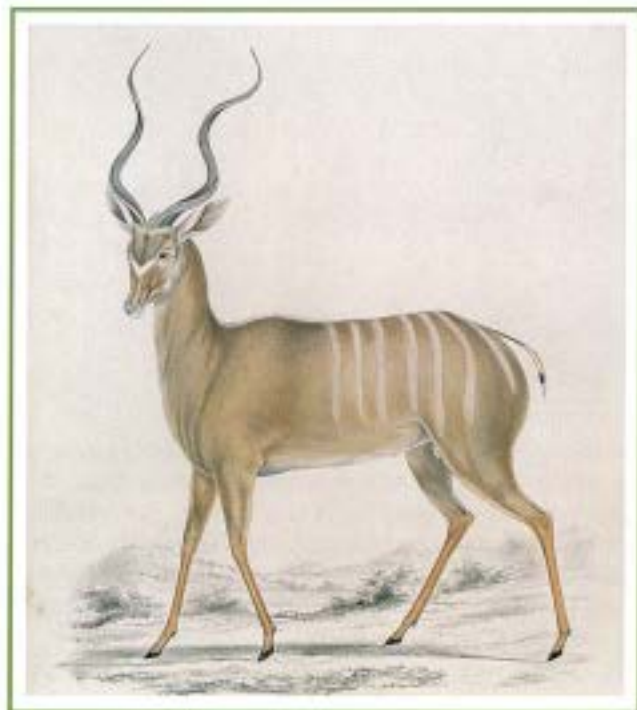
The purple-crested lorie, painted by Charles Bell's fellow artist George Ford, who accompanied the Expedition for Exploring Central Africa specifically to paint the wildlife of the subcontinent. This sensitive painting eventually appeared in the volume entitled Aves (Birds) in Andrew Smith's Illustrated Zoology of South Africa, which was published in London in 1849.



figure 7
Damalis (Strepsiceros) capensis.

Watercolour. Illustration in Smith, Andrew. *Illustrated Zoology of South Africa*; Smith, Elder & Co., London, 1849. South African Museum.

George Ford's painting of a male 'koeboe' captures all the power and dignity of this lord of the antelope. It is an illustration in the volume Mammalia in Andrew Smith's Illustrated Zoology of South Africa.



settled in what Lady Herschel described as 'their pretty new house on the Camp Ground'.²⁵ Conveniently placed about halfway between their friends, the Herschels at Feldhausen and the Maclears at the Royal Observatory, the property had a superb view of Table Mountain's eastern buttresses. Most of the neighbours were prosperous merchants, some of whose spreading estates were still planted with vines and fruit trees established almost two centuries earlier. Colonel Bell had called his new home after Mount Canigou, a wildly beautiful area in the eastern Pyrenees where he had served during the Peninsular War, and had made it into 'an excellent, comfortable & very handsome Gentlemanlike Residence'. So at least wrote Charles Bell in a long letter to his sister, Christina, on 8 November 1837.

He has excellent taste in Building, and planned the house in the Elizabethan manorhouse style and has succeeded completely in building the prettiest house at the Cape. My room is in the Garret – an excellent one with capital light for drawing and I have filled it with all sorts of natural curiosities etc. [I] have generally got a tame snake or two in it and all sorts of drawing, engraving and modelling tools.²⁶

Unfortunately Christina's reply – if she wrote one – has not survived; it would be interesting to know how she felt about 'the tame snake or two'.

Life for the elder Bells must have been pleasant indeed once they had moved to Canigou. 'Lady Catherine is glad to club with

works published within a decade; not so Bell whose 'brilliant collection of pieces of graphical information', according to Piazza Smyth, 'never saw light again until, after twenty years, a few of them straggled out to illustrate later travellers' books'.²⁷ This is only partly true: in 1842 one of Bell's sketches appeared as the frontispiece to Robert Moffat's *Missionary labours and scenes*, and another was used as an illustration in David Livingstone's *Missionary travels and researches*, published in 1857. One of the 'travellers' books' Piazza Smyth was referring to was probably James Chapman's *Travels in the interior of South Africa* which made an appearance in 1868. It was illustrated with a number of engravings based on drawings Bell had made during the expedition.

Back in the Cape Town of 1837, the Bells were by now comfortably



me,' wrote her friend Lady Herschel to her brother Duncan, a doctor stationed in India, ' & we drive & make visits together, or dine with them en famille.' Canigou boasted a splendid garden where both Colonel Bell and Lady Catherine spent many hours working among their plants, though most of their labour appeared to consist of superintending the gardener. 'This is an excellent thing for both of them,' wrote Charles enthusiastically, 'and the consequence is that it counteracts the bad effect of Our Uncle's close attendance at Office & prevents both of them from

figure 8 **Rhinoceros at bay.**

Watercolour. 13,5 x 21 cm. Bell Heritage Trust Collection, UCT

Bell observed and drew every stage of the slaughtering of rhinoceros – a drawn-out process owing to the animal's stamina and extraordinarily tough skin. In his journal Smith wrote: 'To attempt killing rhinoceri or elephants or hippopotami with bullets purely composed of lead is vain. Only those partially made of some harder metal being constituted to injure either of these animals. The bullets, therefore, commonly employed by the South African hunters are composed of one part pewter and two parts lead.'

figure 9

Canigou, Cape of Good Hope, October 1851.

Pen and wash, 19.5 x 28.5 cm.
Bell Heritage Trust Collection,
UCT

Canigou was the country house of Colonel John Bell and his wife, Lady Catherine. Situated in leafy Rondebosch and planned in the Elizabethan manor-house style, it was named after a mountain in the Pyrenees where Colonel Bell had served during the Peninsular War. Charles Bell lived at Canigou while staying with his uncle, and later as its owner. Since 1903 the property has been owned by Rondebosch Boys' High School, but of the old house only the foundations remain.

being much troubled with ill health.' Every day Colonel Bell drove in his carriage from Rondebosch to the government offices in town and it is likely that his nephew accompanied him. For Charles, these six-mile journeys must have been highly entertaining for, as he wrote to Christina, his uncle was 'the most agreeable & amusing companion'. Dinner parties at Canigou, too, were highly diverting with Colonel Bell as host, for not only was he a man possessed of great funds of information, but he kept his guests in a 'constant fit of laughter' by telling funny stories and, according to Charles, 'talking Scotch'. Seldom did Charles see his uncle with what he called 'the ruffled temper', and Lady Catherine was unfailingly kind to him. 'Thus within our own home,' he informed his sister, 'I have a society which it requires some temptation to induce me to quit.'²²

But, of course there comes a time and a situation when a young man must quit the security of his own comfortable home, though such temptation did not come Charles Bell's way for several years. He remained on in the Audit Office even though in September 1838 he was appointed to serve as relief to the clerk of the Legislative Council, a certain K.B. Hamilton, who was away in England on long leave.²³ On 31 January 1839 he wrote to his mother describing his work:

I have now had three months of trial and I like it very much. It is a position of considerable responsibility – and I have plenty of work during the sitting of Council but it is that sort of work that it is a pleasure to do because I feel that it is of some importance. I sit opposite the Governor in Council & note down all the proceedings, publish the Ordinances or Laws & if I do wrong not even the Members of Council can find fault with me except by a formal Complaint to the Governor in Council so that I am completely my own master.

Charles then goes on to give his parents some idea of Colonel John Bell's responsibilities as colonial secretary at the Cape:

My uncle has hard work of it. Everything depends on him, at least in the Civil Service, through this large extent of Country – he receives all communications through his Office to the Government & issues all orders from the Government – his health is wonderfully good. Lady Catherine suffers more from bad health than he do (sic) being very subject to violent Headaches – and a constant severe Cough. Their kindness to me is unchanged.²⁴

Socially, the Bells continued to move in the governor's circle and Charles, in this letter, tells his parents how Sir George Napier, in office for the past year, had 'taken a country house'²⁵ only 300 yards from Canigou. 'Before [Sir George] left England,' wrote Charles, 'he fell in love with a very beautiful widow with £2000 a year and we hear she has sailed in the "Euphrates" to join him here. She is expected every day & our House is in preparation to receive her until her marriage so we'll have a grand wedding soon.' In fact, Sir George Napier – a gallant soldier who had lost his right arm during the Peninsular campaign – married Frances Dorothea Williams Freeman in St George's Church (later Cathedral), Cape Town, on 12 March 1839.

Somehow Charles managed to combine his duties in both departments, at the same time finding himself increasingly interested in land surveying. Experienced as a draughtsman and competent with figures, he had learnt something of what surveying involved from John Burrow during their travels with Andrew Smith. Now he made it his business to study the subject seriously and to qualify in it, taking the examination before the surveyor-general, now Colonel Charles Cornwallis Michell. 'Mr Bell has gone through every part of the examination with the highest credit to himself,' reported Michell, 'evinced throughout such superior ability that I feel it my duty to record the same in recommending him to His Excellency for nomination.'²⁶

Charles Bell, aged twenty-four, was now a qualified land surveyor. He was duly transferred to the office of the surveyor-general and embarked on the profession that was to occupy him, and to which he would be a credit, for the rest of his working life.



NOTES

CHAPTER 1 THE IMMIGRANT

- 1 *Cape Government Gazette*, 27 August 1830.
- 2 See John Milton (1608–1674), *Paradise Lost*, book 2.
- 3 Also occasionally known as Malmaison, Hopemille or Mill Gardens.
- 4 Letter from Lady Catherine to her father-in-law, David Bell, 23 October 1829. Bell Heritage Trust BC 686 (19, no. 18j).
- 5 *Dictionary of South African Biography*, Cape Town, 1976, vol. 1, p. 66.
- 6 The genealogy of the Bell clan is traced in detail in *Memorial of the Clan of the Bells ...* by Charles Davidson Bell; printed by Saul Solomon, Cape Town, 1864.
- 7 R.H. Simons, *History of St Paul's Church, Rondebosch 1834–1947*, unpublished manuscript.
- 8 Bell Heritage Trust BC 686 (19, no. 18f). A passage from a letter, dated 25 December 1834, from Bell to his 12-year-old sister, Christina, reads '... I often think of Newhall, Camboden and Kingsbarns school and many a wish rises in my heart that I saw them again ...'. Cambo Den is a small wooded area near East Newhall.
- 9 See Charles Piazza Smyth, 'Charles Davidson Bell', obituary in *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, vol. 12, 1886–1887, p. 15.
- 10 James Wilkie, *Bygone Fife*, Edinburgh, 1931, p. 309.
- 11 Bell Heritage Trust BC 686 (23, no. 1a).
- 12 Dorothea Fairbridge (ed.), *Letters from the Cape by Lady Duff Gordon*, London, 1927, p. 154.
- 13 The original inhabitants of the Cape, more correctly known as Khoikhol, or 'men of men'.
- 14 W. Cowper Rose, *Four years in southern Africa*, London, 1829, p. 4.
- 15 On this occasion, D'Oyly was at the Cape from 3 April 1832 until the middle of 1833. See A. Gordon Brown, introduction to *The Cape sketchbooks of Sir Charles D'Oyly*, Cape Town, 1968.
- 16 C. Piazza Smyth, 'Charles Davidson Bell', obituary, p. 15.
- 17 Today the South African Cultural History Museum.
- 18 Cape Archives GH 23/10, 1831. Letters from Sir Lowry Cole to Colonel John Bell.
- 19 J.B. Ebdon (1787–1873), a prominent citizen of Cape Town, was, among other things, a founder of the Cape of Good Hope Bank and of the Cape Town Chamber of Commerce. He was also a director of the first railway company and a member of parliament.
- 20 Hamilton Ross (1775–1853) was a lieutenant in the British army which took occupation of the Cape in 1795. He married a local girl and remained at the Cape to become a successful entrepreneur with many interests.
- 21 *Cape Almanac*, 1832.
- 22 From this institution evolved the South African College School (1874) and the University of Cape Town (1918).
- 23 Samuel Taylor (c. 1748–1811) published his 'Universal System of Stenography and Short Hand Writing' in 1786, after which the method was widely used until the middle of the nineteenth century. As in Pitman's shorthand, vowels were indicated by the position of dots. See H. Glatte, *Shorthand systems of the world*, p. 10. Correspondence in the possession of Robin Fryde, between him, Monsignor Donald de Beer and Geoffrey Bonsall, 1979 and 1980.
- 24 Leeuwenhof was built by the fiscal, Johannes Blesius, who was granted the land in 1697. It is now the official residence of the leader of the political party in power in the Western Cape.
- 25 Built on the farm, Boscheuvel, originally granted to Jan van Riebeeck, Protea was acquired by H.C.D. Maynier, *landdrost* of Graaff-Reinet, in 1805 and later leased by him to the Coles. In 1851 Maynier sold the estate of 213 acres to Robert Gray, first Anglican bishop of Cape Town, who changed its name to Bishopscourt.
- 26 Bell Heritage Trust Sketchbook no. 1: *Cape Sketches*.
- 3 *The Cape of Good Hope Literary Gazette*, 1 July 1833, p. 5.
- 4 Alexander Michie, *Memoir of Sir Andrew Smith*, Alnwick, 1877, p. 8.
- 5 Advertising sheet attached to *The Cape of Good Hope Literary Gazette*, 1 July 1833.
- 6 P.R. Kirby (ed.), *The diary of Dr Andrew Smith*, Cape Town, 1940, vol. 1, pp. 27–32.
- 7 David S. Evans et al. (ed.), *Herschel at the Cape*, Cape Town, 1969, p. 58. Sir John Herschel (1792–1871) visited the Cape from Britain between 1834 and 1838 in order to observe the southern skies. This he did while based at the estate 'Feldhausen' (also known as 'The Grove') in Claremont. An obelisk, erected by the people of Cape Town in gratitude for his considerable contribution to local education, was set up on the site of his 20-foot reflecting telescope and is now a focal point in the grounds of the Grove Primary School.
- 8 Cape Archives A 515 Maclear Papers. Letter to Sir Francis Beaufort (1774–1857), inventor of the Beaufort Scale, and at that time hydrographer to the Royal Navy.
- 9 C. Piazza Smyth, 'Charles Davidson Bell', obituary, p. 12.
- 10 Cape Archives CO 426.
- 11 Cape Archives A 515 Maclear Papers, 2 July 1834.
- 12 Andrew Geddes Bain (1797–1864), explorer-trader, pioneer road engineer and geologist, arrived at the Cape from Scotland in 1816. He made several hazardous journeys into the interior and served in the Sixth Frontier War of 1834–1835 before being appointed inspector of Cape roads. He constructed several mountain passes, including Michell's Pass (Ceres) and Bain's Kloof (Wellington) and, as a palaeontologist, he discovered a number of fossils previously unknown. *The geology of South Africa*, published in 1851, brought him world recognition.
- 13 The three German missionaries were D.A. Kraut, August Gebel and Johan Schmidt. Sent to South Africa by the Berlin Missionary Society, they left the party at Philippolis to establish a mission station at Bethany on the Riet River.
- 14 'Shewed him many objects in the 20-feet –

CHAPTER 2 TOWARDS CAPRICORN

- 1 C. Piazza Smyth, 'Charles Davidson Bell', obituary, p. 15.
- 2 *Ibid.*

- South African Archives – D 10, item No. 12479, 31 March 1856, Evans et al. (ed.), *Historical Atlas of Cape*.
- 15 Kirby (ed.), *The days of Dr Andrew Smith*, vol. 1, p. 15.
 - 16 *Ibid.*, p. 51.
 - 17 John Kariwa, *Tribes in the south of Africa*, ed. J.A. Kirby, Cape Town, 1971, p. 15.
 - 18 William E. Lye (ed.), *Andrew Smith's journal of his expedition in Great Texas, 1825*, p. 26.
 - 19 Barrow, *Travels in the north*, p. 26.
 - 20 Adam Kok II (c. 1767–1822) was recognised by the Colonial Government as hereditary chief of 1000 in C. de la Harpe in 1824. The missionary John Pienaar persuaded him to settle at Pimporah where he was ruling over his people when Smith's party reached the area.
 - 21 Margaret Lison (ed.), *Journal of Andrew Geddes Smith*, Cape Town, 1949, pp. 137–138.
 - 22 Lye (ed.), *Andrew Smith's journal*, p. 57.
 - 23 (missionary) Jesuits (1802–1804) formed by the missionaries of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society in South Africa. While stationed at Theemba they became involved in friendly relations with the Khoikhoi and worked on translating the Bible and the catechism into Nama and Sesuto. His wife, Sarah Jane Deke, was the first white woman to enter Bushmanland (now Karoo).
 - 24 (Missionary of the Night), was the instance (missionary) believed that it had supernatural powers during the hours of darkness.
 - 25 Barrow, *Travels in the north*, p. 21.
 - 26 *Ibid.*, p. 22.
 - 27 Lye (ed.), *Andrew Smith's journal*, p. 30.
 - 28 Barrow, *Travels in the north*, p. 22–23.
 - 29 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
 - 30 Lye (ed.), *Andrew Smith's journal*, pp. 161, 166.
 - 31 Barrow, *Travels in the north*, p. 26.
 - 32 Bell Heritage Trust BC 686 (2), no. 187.
 - 33 Scotland, famous for its crocodiles.
 - 34 Kirby (ed.), *The days of Dr Andrew Smith*, passim.
 - 35 Bell Heritage Trust BC 686 (2), no. 187g.
 - 36 *The Days of Great Days*, James Gardner, January 1856, pp. 13–14.
 - 37 Robert Moffat (1795–1855), one of the most important missionaries ever to arrive in southern Africa, began his work for the London Missionary Society in Bechuanaland in 1817. For many years he lived with his wife and family at Kaniabon where he translated the Osethele and the Nosa Testaments into Tswana and had a moral influence far greater than the local people, including the chief, Mankoro.

- 38 Barrow, *Travels in the north*, p. 27.
- 39 *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- 40 *The Days of Great Days*, James Gardner, January 1856, p. 18.
- 41 Kirby (ed.), *The days of Dr Andrew Smith*, vol. 1, Introduction, p. 60. The son born at this time was known as the 'blackie' (1815–1915) who grew up to become a missionary in what was then Matabeleland (now Zimbabwe).
- 42 Barrow, *Travels in the north*, p. 43.
- 43 Kirby (ed.), *Andrew Smith's journal*, vol. 1, no. 100.
- 44 Barrow, *Travels in the north*, p. 21.
- 45 Lye (ed.), *Andrew Smith's journal*, p. 112.
- 46 Barrow, *Travels in the north*, p. 27.
- 47 Harberopers, one of the extensive dam built early in the twentieth century.
- 48 C. Fazzi Smyth, 'Charles Davidson Bell', obituary, p. 16.

CHAPTER 7 CIVIL SERVANT

- 1 *Anti-Apartheid Commission*, 20 December 1994.
- 2 Bell Heritage Trust BC 686 (2), no. 189, letter from Lady Catherine Bell to her father, a day 24 Aug. p. 197.
- 3 See C. G. W. Schumann, *General Affairs and Security Policy in South Africa 1946–1961*, London, 1966, p. 71.
- 4 The property is now owned by Benchose Boye High School. Only the foundations of the bells' base remain.
- 5 Brian Warner (ed.), *Life of Sir John Davies*, part 2, Cape Town, 1981, Cape Town, 1981, p. 23.
- 6 See Brian Warner, *Charles Davidson Bell, the man who saved St George's*, Cape Town, 1983, p. xxii.
- 7 Lye (ed.), *Andrew Smith's journal*, p. 367.
- 8 Kirby (ed.), *The days of Dr Andrew Smith*, vol. 2, pp. 21, 217.
- 9 Evans et al. (ed.), *Historical Atlas of Cape*, p. 227.
- 10 *Ibid.* was also patron of the artist Thomas Rowlandson, who had come to the Cape with Anthonisz as a servant.
- 11 Brian Warner, *Charles Davidson Bell, the man who saved St George's*, Cape Town, 1983, p. 83; letters dated 15 July 1836.
- 12 C. Fazzi Smyth, 'Charles Davidson Bell', obituary, p. 17.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- 14 Bell Heritage Trust BC 686 (2), no. 200.
- 15 Evans et al. (ed.), *Historical Atlas of Cape*, p. 227.
- 16 How St Joseph's (Mons. Broduski) College in Beaufort Road, Randburg.

- 17 Evans et al. (ed.), *Historical Atlas of Cape*, p. 269.
- 18 Warner (ed.), *Life of Sir John Davies*, p. 118.
- 19 Francis Dawson (ed.), *The life and travels of Charles Darwin*, London, 1857, vol. 1, p. 290; letter to US. Hirstlaw, 9 July 1836.
- 20 Kirby (ed.), *The days of Dr Andrew Smith*, vol. 2, pp. 227–228.
- 21 Evans et al. (ed.), *Historical Atlas of Cape*, pp. 247–248.
- 22 26 September, 1836.
- 23 Kirby (ed.), *The days of Dr Andrew Smith*, vol. 2, p. 228.
- 24 The journal was not published until 1928.
- 25 C. Fazzi Smyth, 'Charles Davidson Bell', obituary, p. 17.
- 26 Warner (ed.), *Life of Sir John Davies*, p. 112.
- 27 Bell Heritage Trust BC 686 (2), no. 187.
- 28 *Ibid.*
- 29 *Cape Archives*, 1836, p. 183.
- 30 Bell Heritage Trust BC 686 (2), no. 187.
- 31 *Ibid.* probably refers to the house 'Wendover' (now Gendardel), a nondescript 1.5-storey, two-storey house in which governors escaped to avoid Cape Town's heat and high winds in summer.
- 32 Cape Archives BC 687 (10).

CHAPTER 8 SURVEYOR

- 1 Cape Archives, 1841, p. 276.
- 2 *Development of South African Boy Scouts*, Cape Town, 1946, vol. 1, p. 486.
- 3 Cape Archives BC 201 (1).
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 Cape Archives BC 191 (1).
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 C. Fazzi Smyth, 'Charles Davidson Bell', obituary, p. 18.
- 9 Cape Archives, St George's college records.
- 10 *Chronicle of South African Boy Scouts*, vol. 1, p. 217.
- 11 *Chronicle of South African Boy Scouts*, p. 421.
- 12 Cape Archives BC 201 (1).
- 13 Brian Warner, C. Fazzi Smyth, Charles Davidson Bell, obituary, p. 19.
- 14 Cape Archives BC 201 (1).
- 15 *Ibid.*
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 Fox and Barbara Rowlandson, *Women who save colleges*, 1964, Cape Town, 1994, pp. 15–16.
- 18 Cape Archives, 1836.
- 19 Cape Archives BC 191 (1). Letter from Bell to W. H. H. (c. 14 June 1837).

- 20 Cape Archives SG 1/1/7/1.
- 21 *Cape Almanac*, 1846.
- 22 Cape Archives CO 4922, letter of 16 November 1844.
- 23 Acts 6 & 7 (1836) of William IV, the so-called Cape of Good Hope Punishment Act.
- 24 Karel Schoeman (ed.), *The Townfontein letters of William Porter*, Cape Town, 1992, passim.
- 25 *Ibid.*, pp. 15–19.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

CHAPTER 5 THE MIDDLE YEARS

- 1 Mutual Life Assurance Society of the Cape of Good Hope, Annual Report, 1855.
- 2 Cape Archives SG 1/1/3/11.
- 3 A town situated on the Kat River about 140 kilometres north of East London.
- 4 Brian Aldridge, 'Cape Malays in Action', *Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library*, vol. 27, no. 2, December 1972, pp. 24–26.
- 5 C. Piazzi Smyth, 'Charles Davidson Bell', obituary, p. 20.
- 6 Cape Archives SG 2/1/1/5. Letter of 28 August 1846.
- 7 Cape Archives A 515 Maclear Papers. By 'carbonatje', Bell means a mutton cutlet usually grilled over a fire and eaten in the open.
- 8 Phillida Brooke Simons, *Old Mutual 1845–1995*, Cape Town, 1995, p. 23.
- 9 Cape Archives SG 2/1/1/5. Letter of 6 May 1847.
- 10 *Dictionary of South African Biography*, vol. 4, pp. 586–587.
- 11 Crawford Library, Royal Observatory, Edinburgh, quoted by Brian Warner in 'Lithographs by Charles Davidson Bell', *Africana Notes and News*, vol. 24, no. 6, June 1981, p. 196.
- 12 This volume is now in the possession of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the story of its discovery is told by Professor Brian Warner in an article published in the now discontinued journal, *Africana Notes and News*, vol. 24, no. 6, June 1981.
- 13 Warner, 'Lithographs by Charles Davidson Bell', p. 196.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 197.
- 15 Cape Archives CC 2/17.
- 16 Cape Archives SG 1/1/1/13.
- 17 Mutual Life Assurance Society, Minutes, 6 December 1849.
- 18 Cape Archives CSC 1/1/64, no. 24 of 1850.
- 19 Cape Archives GH 23/10, 24 June 1833.

- 20 Cape Archives A 515 Maclear Papers.
- 21 British civil servants and army officers on furlough from India were generally known locally as 'Indians'.
- 22 William Porter.
- 23 Cape Archives A 515 Maclear Papers.
- 24 Cape Archives CSC 2/1/1/64, no. 24 of 1850.
- 25 The evidence of this is a portrait of a Khoi boy by Bell which he dated 17 October 1850.
- 26 Cape Archives CSC 1/1/64.
- 27 See Simons, *History of St Paul's Church*..., unpublished manuscript.
- 28 Bell Heritage Trust BC 686.
- 29 *Ibid.*
- 30 Cape Archives MOOC 7/1/331.
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 *Dictionary of South African Biography*, vol. 1, p. 65.

CHAPTER 6 DIVERSITY IN MATURITY

- 1 It broke out when a colonial patrol on the Boomah Pass was attacked by Ngqika warriors incensed by the recent deposition, by the British, of their paramount chief Sandile. The following day they went on to destroy three nearby villages settled with British military personnel.
- 2 F.R. Mitchell, 'Sir Harry Smith's medal for gallantry', *Africana Notes and News*, vol. 11, June 1954, pp. 236–242.
- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 *South African Commercial Advertiser*, 19 October 1850.
- 5 *Cape Town Mail*, 5 April 1851.
- 6 Apparently they were never accepted, those of William White, brother of the headmaster, Henry Master White, being selected.
- 7 F.K. Kendall, *A short history of the South African Fine Arts Association*, Cape Town, 1941, pp. 5–7.
- 8 See A.M.L. Robinson, 'Charles Davidson Bell's Bartolomeu Dias painting', *Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library*, vol. 34, no. 2, December 1979.
- 9 *Cape Town Mail*, 5 April 1851, 'Report on the first annual exhibition of fine arts in Cape Town in the year 1851'.
- 10 Kendall, *A short history of the South African Fine Arts Association*, p. 7.
- 11 Cape Archives CO 611, 10 February 1851.
- 12 Cape Archives CO 611, 26 July 1852.
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 *Cape Times*, 18 June 1993.
- 15 *Cape Almanac* 1852, p. 180.
- 16 *Cape Almanac* 1853, p. 338.

- 17 A.H. Smith, 'Charles Davidson Bell – designer of the Cape triangular stamps', *Africana Notes and News*, vol. 11, June 1954, p. 83.
- 18 This may be a reference to Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, Chapter 6, verse 19, which reads '... hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast'.
- 19 J. Allis, *Cape of Good Hope: its postal history and postage stamps*, London, 1930, pp. 21–25.
- 20 Later filed with the Colonial Office papers at the Public Record Office, London.
- 21 Allis, *Cape of Good Hope: its postal history*..., pp. 23–25.
- 22 D. Alan Stevenson, *The triangular stamps of the Cape of Good Hope*, London, 1950, p. 34.
- 23 Information provided by Robert Goldblatt, RDPFA, past president of the Philatelic Federation of Southern Africa.
- 24 *Ibid.*
- 25 Bell's dual achievements as artist and as designer of stamps were commemorated during the 1952 tercentenary celebrations of the arrival in South Africa of Jan van Riebeeck. His well-known painting of this event was used as the design for the one shilling special issue stamp.
- 26 Thos. N. Cranstoun-Day, *The British Lodge No. 334 and English Freemasonry at the Cape of Good Hope 1795–1956*, n.p., n.d.
- 27 *Cape Town Mail*, 20 November 1852.
- 28 *South African Commercial Advertiser*, 5 April 1851.
- 29 *Cape Town Mail*, 21 December 1852.
- 30 Joyce Murray (ed.), *In mid-Victorian Cape Town*, Cape Town, 1953, pp. 26–27.
- 31 Cape Archives CCP 1/2/1/1, Report A. 37, September 1854.
- 32 It was on Robben Island that Nelson Mandela and many other anti-apartheid activists were imprisoned for lengthy periods between 1948 and 1990.
- 33 Simon A. de Villiers, *Robben Island: out of reach, out of mind*, Cape Town, 1971, p. 4E.
- 34 Edmund H. Burrows, *A history of medicine in South Africa*, Cape Town, 1958, p. 307.
- 35 *Ibid.*
- 36 Cape Archives CCP 1/2/1/1, Report A. 37.
- 37 Burrows, *A history of medicine*..., p. 308.
- 38 *Dictionary of South African Biography*, vol. 1, p. 38.

CHAPTER 7 A MAN OF GOOD REPORT

- 1 Ralph Kilpin, *The romance of a colonial parliament*, London, 1930, p. 80.

- 2 Schumann, *Structural changes and evolution*, p. 6, 77.
- 3 R. F. J. van der Merwe, *Atlas of Geographical Names of the Cape Town District of Commisaris*, Cape Town, 1953, p. 146.
- 4 The founder of the Cape Colony was not until the geo-position of Ryk Tulbagh (1721-1771); that Cape Town acquired its name, see F. W. Lantier, *A history of the name Cape Town*, n.d., p. 191.
- 5 John M. Bradbergen, *Aspects of the history of Cape sailing to Amoy and India 1826-1841*, Cape Town, 1975, p. 86.
- 6 1818-1819, the region was also published in various newspapers, including *The South African Commercial Advertiser and Cape Town Advertiser*, 26 August 1854.
- 7 C.B. = 60, p. 87.
- 8 R. W. Murray, *South African commodities*, Cape Town, 1964, p. 17.
- 9 C.B. = 60, pp. 13-14.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 See P. M. L. A. van der Merwe (ed.), *John B. Jacobs' Career, 1850-1870*, Johannesburg, 1986, p. 91.
- 12 C.B. = 58, Appendix 1 B5.
- 13 C.B. = 58, pp. 6-7.
- 14 Unnumbered government report of a select committee to investigate the establishment of regular communication by means of cables wire between this colony and the mother country.
- 15 R. W. Murray, *South African commodities*, p. 16.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Joyce Murray (ed.), *John B. Jacobs Cape Town*, p. 90.
- 18 Chinnappa C. Sarandeni (ed.), *An illustrated history of South Africa*, Sandton, 1994, p. 129.
- 19 See Sir George Grey, *Diary of South Africa*, London, 1918, vol. 4, p. 126.
- 20 Cape Archives CO 506.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Approximately 22 hectares.
- 23 Unnumbered report of a select committee to investigate the abolition of a piece of land called The Camp Ground, proceedings of 16 April-1 May 1857.
- 24 Cape Archives CO 317/181, in the words of the summons served upon Leveck Wilson Stewart on 11 April 1859, in the wrongfully wickedly and unjustly denoted and generally known Maria Antoinette Bell, on 10 January 1859 and at several other times... at the Camp Ground in the District of Wynberg.
- 25 Grey, *Diary of South Africa*, vol. 4, p. 124.

CHAPTER 18 MULTIFASCIOSUS LIFE

- 1 C. Barni Smyth, 'Charles Davidson Bell', unnumbered pp. 26-27.
- 2 Bell Heritage Trust, D. W. Murray unpublished paper, 'Charles Davidson Bell, 1815-1896', 1963.
- 3 See South African yearbook 1732-1921, catalogue, African Museum (now MuseumAfrica).
- 4 Eric Rosenthal, *South Africa 1850-1950*, Cape Town, 1956, pp. 11-12. This well known trust company was absorbed by Sydenh in 1971.
- 5 Cape Archives CO 987, 12 May 1856.
- 6 Cape Archives CO 709, 8 April 1857.
- 7 Captain John B. West made RCH in 1859.
- 8 See Brian Warner, *Charles Davidson Bell*, Cape Town, 1963, pp. 115-120.
- 9 Information from David Elliott, Cape Town.
- 10 Letter from Ms A. Morrison-Low of the History of Science section of the National Museum of Scotland, 26 May 1993, to Ms Lucille Dwyer-Jones, principal librarian of the Manuscripts and Archives Department University of Cape Town Libraries.
- 11 Cape Town became a city upon the consecration of its first bishop Robert Gray in Wynberg Cathedral on 29 June 1847.
- 12 Cape Archives CO 749, 19 April 1859.
- 13 J. Oberholzer, *The transient women of South Africa*, Cape Town, 1972, pp. 10-11.
- 14 Cape Archives CO 749, 28 March 1859.
- 15 Cape Archives CO 749, 28 February 1859.
- 16 Cape Archives CO 749, 31 October 1859.
- 17 Cape Archives CO 4926, vol. 1, case no. 1849.
- 18 Cape Advertiser, 1879.
- 19 See Robert A. Lang of Orléans, 'The Bell-Sydenh story', *African Yearbook News*, vol. 27, no. 1, March 1928, pp. 15-26. The story is in the holdings of MuseumAfrica, Johannesburg.
- 20 W. Bucher, *The history of the South African College 1829-1910*, Cape Town, 1910, vol. 1, pp. 181, 183.
- 21 Among other accomplishments, Pillington was also responsible for the design of the boerland street grid, now a constituent of the Cape Archives.
- 22 C. Barni Smyth, 'Charles Davidson Bell', unnumbered p. 26.
- 23 Cape Archives CO 9423, no. 395.
- 24 Government notice no. 317, 12 November 1861. The state of affairs got worse until 1901 when, following years of confusion between the stations of D. Urban Bell, Cape and

Wynberg in Natal, the name of the former was changed to Bellville.

- 25 The Grey Collection consists of two works personally collected by Sir George Grey and presented by him to the South African Library after his departure from the Cape in 1861. Grey presented as other valuable information to the Public Library in Auckland, New Zealand where he also served as governor.
- 26 Grey Collection, South African Library.
- 27 One of one of the founders of the colony of South Australia, George Francis Angus (1827-1898) was an anti-slavery liberal, anti-anglophobe, between 1848 and 1849, took part in expeditions to the wider parts of both Australia and New Zealand, making sketches as he journeyed. Early in 1847 he embarked on South Africa where he travelled widely for about a year and painted several scenes capturing various ethnic types as well as contemporary scenes. He published several collections of his paintings, one of which, *The English-Aboriginals*, consists of ethnographs of his 50000 African watercolours. Angus later became director of the Australian Museum in Sydney.
- 28 *Dictionary of South African Biography*, vol. 2, p. 17.
- 29 Grey Collection, South African Library. Carl Fuchs, a student of the Berlin Musicology Institute, was also a Korroo anglophobe.
- 30 Grey Collection, South African Library.
- 31 Sir F. Clapperton, *Clapperton's Journals*, The South African Library, 1919, introduction, p. xxx.

CHAPTER 5 YEARS OF RESPONSIBILITY

- 1 Louis Laffodis, described as a silversmith and jeweller in numerous newspaper notices in the Cape Advertiser since 1860 onwards. His true name is addressed is given as No. 3 Darling Street but nothing else has been ascertained about him.
- 2 See Carl Skottner (ed.), *Die Kunst der Goldschmiederei* 1815-1880, in *Die Kunst der Goldschmiederei*, privately published by the John and Charles Bell Heritage Trust, Cape Town, 1984.
- 3 *The progress of Cape Africa*, p. 12.
- 4 R. C. Hyde, *Africana books and publishers*, *Clarendon Press*, London, 1974, p. 11, 123.
- 5 See article in *responsibility* by C. Barni, *Standard newspaper of Stellenbosch*, Cape Town, 1972, no. 5, pp. 486-487.
- 6 Marshal Murray, *Underworld of Cape Town*, 1964, p. 33.

- 7 Cape Archives MOOC 6/9/107.
- 8 The children of Charles and Helena Bell were Helena Isabella (born 31 May 1860), Alexander (born 15 September 1861) and Anthony (born 9 February 1863), all of whom survived to adulthood. David Dupcan Traill was born on 21 April 1864 and died on 14 December 1865; and Catherine Susan was born on 11 May 1865 and died on 13 September 1865.
- 9 See C. Pama, 'Die Bell-Krynauw-versameling' in C. Pama (ed.), *The South African Library: its history, collections and librarians 1818-1968*, Cape Town, 1968, pp. 166-168.
- 10 *Memoir of the Clan of the Bells*..., p. 47.
- 11 C. Piazzi Smyth, 'Charles Davidson Bell', obituary, p. 21.
- 12 Cape Archives A 515 Maclear Papers.
- 13 Commission into the Law of Inheritance in the Western District, April 1866. G.15 - '65.
- 14 Bell Heritage Trust BC 686 (28, no. 1).
- 15 It closed in 1882 at a time when there was a general failure of banks at the Cape.
- 16 The correct identity of this Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr has not been discovered. Like eight other men of this name known to be alive in the mid-1860s, he was almost certainly named after the family's South African progenitor, Johannes Heinrich Hofmeyr (1721-1805).
- 17 *Correspondence between J.H. Hofmeyr Esq., and C. Bell*, privately printed by the latter for the information of the shareholders of the Cape Commercial Bank, and of the Umzimto, and the members of the Mutual Life Assurance Society, Cape Town, parts 1 and 2, Cape Standard, Cape Town, 1866.
- 18 In 1872, after having been widowed three years earlier, Richard Southey (1808-1901) married Bell's sister-in-law, Susanna Maria Hendrika Krynauw. He was knighted in 1891.
- 19 Cape Archives CO 864.
- 20 Cape Archives SG 1/1/3/1/2, 16 August 1866.
- 21 See article by A.C.G. Lloyd in *The South African Quarterly*, September-November 1915; also F.R. Bradlow, 'Sixty-seven years later in Africana', *Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library*, vol. 37, no. 2, p. 204.
- 22 Kendall, *A short history of the South African Fine Arts Association*, p. 10.
- 23 *South African Advertiser and Mail*, 3 November 1866.
- 24 The 'Eureka', 21½ carats, discovered on the farm 'De Kalk' near Hopetown.
- 25 C. Piazzi Smyth, 'Charles Davidson Bell', obituary, p. 21.
- 26 Cape Archives CO 881, 27 July 1867.

- 27 See Marjorie Bull, *Abraham de Smith 1829-1908*, Cape Town, 1981, pp. 58-61.
- 28 Kendall, *A short history of the South African Fine Arts Association*, p. 11.
- 29 See G.W. Eybers, *Select constitutional documents illustrating South African history 1795-1910*, London, 1918, pp. 63-64.
- 30 Molteno's strong personality combined with the fortune he had made from sheep farms in the district of Beaufort, now known as Beaufort West, gave rise to this sobriquet.
- 31 Cape Archives SG 1/1/3/50, 29 November 1872.

CHAPTER 10 RETURN TO SCOTLAND

- 1 Bell Heritage Trust BC (24, no. 10a).
- 2 *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 4, p. 170.
- 3 B.H. Strahan, 'Charles Bell in Scotland', *Africana Notes and News*, vol. 25, March 1962, pp. 96-97.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 96. To this day, the ancient stone may still be seen in Craik kirk.
- 5 C. Piazzi Smyth, 'Charles Davidson Bell', obituary, p. 21.
- 6 See a long and learned paper by Charles Bell, published in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 13 December 1880.
- 7 Piazzi Smyth, in his obituary to Bell, erroneously claimed that the second harp had belonged to Brian Boru, king of Ireland, who defeated the Danes at the battle of Clontarf in AD 1014. Bell knew of the existence of Brian Boru's harp and that it was preserved in the library of Trinity College, Dublin.
- 8 Minutes of the South African Fine Arts Association, 19 February 1879.
- 9 Bell Heritage Trust BC 686 (28 no. 3; 28 no. 4). Letters from Charles Bell to Margaret Bell, 30 April 1879 and 8 March 1882.
- 10 Bull, *Abraham de Smith*..., p. 80.
- 11 Cape Archives MOOC 6/9/166.
- 12 Charles Bell sold Canigou on his return from Scotland in 1865. After it had changed hands several times, it was bought in 1900 by Robert Ramage, first headmaster of Rondebosch Boys' High School, and completely reconstructed as a hostel. The fate of the decorated ceilings and doors, as well as of the stained glass windows, has not been discovered.

THE ART OF CHARLES BELL: AN APPRAISAL

- 1 F.R. Bradlow, 'The John and Charles Bell

- Heritage Trust', *Jagger Journal*, 2, December 1981, pp. 16-29. In writing this appraisal, I have drawn on three main sources for the life of Charles Bell: Charles Piazzi Smyth, 'Obituary: Charles Davidson Bell', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, vol. 12, 1886-1887, pp. 14-22; Michael Lipschitz, *The Charles Davidson Bell Heritage Trust Collection: a catalogue and critical study*, unpublished MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1992; and Phillida Brooke Simons' biography in this volume. My thanks to Sandra Klopper for comments on a draft of this essay.
- 2 See Brian Warner, *Charles Piazzi Smyth, astronomer-artist: his Cape years*, Cape Town, 1983.
- 3 Edna Bradlow and Frank Bradlow, *Thomas Bowler of the Cape of Good Hope*, Cape Town, 1955, pp. 26-31.
- 4 Bell Heritage Trust BC 686.
- 5 William F. Lye (ed.), *Andrew Smith's journal*..., Cape Town, 1975, pp. 5-10.
- 6 C. Piazzi Smyth, 'Charles Davidson Bell', obituary, p. 15.
- 7 Bradlow, *Thomas Bowler*..., p. 38.
- 8 Lye (ed.), *Andrew Smith's journal*..., p. 212.
- 9 Bell Heritage Trust BC 686 (19).
- 10 Warner, *Charles Piazzi Smyth*..., p. 82.
- 11 Margaret Lister (ed.), *Journals of Andrew Geddes Bain*, Cape Town, 1949, p. 134.
- 12 A. Gordon-Brown, *Pictorial Africana*, Cape Town, 1975, p. 153.
- 13 Gordon-Brown, *Pictorial Africana*, pp. 86-89.
- 14 Cape Archives, SG 2/1/1/5; in Lipschitz, *The Charles Davidson Bell Heritage Trust Collection*, p. 15.
- 15 Frank Bradlow (ed.), *George French Angas: The Kafirs illustrated*, Cape Town, 1975, p. 5.
- 16 For nineteenth-century census reports, see Rosemary Ridd, 'Creating Ethnicity in the British Colonial Cape: Coloured and Malay Contrasted', unpublished seminar, University of Cape Town, Centre for African Studies, 31 March 1993.
- 17 R.F. Kennedy (ed.), *Thomas Baines, journal of residence in Africa, 1842-1853*, Cape Town, 1961, vol. 1, p. 9.
- 18 Brian Warner, 'Lithography by Charles Davidson Bell', *Africana Notes and News*, vol. 24, no. 6, June 1981, pp. 195-199.
- 19 Cape Archives, A 515 Maclear Papers: in Lipschitz, *The Charles Davidson Bell Heritage Trust Collection*, p. 66.
- 20 R.R. Langham-Carter, 'Dr Henry Ebdens's Album', *Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library*, vol. 31, no. 3, March 1977, pp. 60-69.

- 21 Cape Archives, A 512 36-1-10, Report of Simons, J.'s volume, p. 79.
- 22 Cape Archives, CO 697 and 700, in Simons, J.'s volume, p. 111.
- 23 'The catalogues of A, but none of B, in the Art Exhibitions of this period are preserved in the South African Library, SA 67 111, Catalogue of Art and Texts for this reference.
- 24 Tazewell's report in his obituary notice wrote that 'the object of most of these artistic works in the exhibition was to preserve the ethnography, manners, customs, tastes, and traditions of the native races in South Africa' but this seems to be a confused summary of Polak's work. For while he did do a series of lithographs on 'Tribal Types', he is not known to have made any more figures in print.
- 25 It is generally assumed that Bell invented these Van Riebeeck compositions in response to the committee's decision to purchase works in the category of History (although that Polak seems to have been thinking of this subject matter as early as 1847 in Scotland, see the three heads that Paul Smyth described Bell as 'covering rapidly on the margin of his state on which Smyth had already occupied a landscape scene to represent a certain century by area).
- 26 P. J. van der Merwe, *A Short History of the South African Fine Arts Movement*, Cape Town, 1991.
- 27 Rev. F. Gilbert White, *Address delivered at the opening of the first Art Exhibition at Graham's Town, 30, 1859*, Paul Bekkerman, Cape Town, 1999.
- 28 Although a rather different genre, Tazewell's work also includes the art of 'trading' as well as a 'historians' as to present something more perfect than that which is a remarkable scene to give a local name and habitation to them, what art images in place of perfect

scenery which, though it could have been by Carlisle, are never to be seen either in any one of her works, as Warner, *Charles Bell: A Life Sketch*, p. 111.

- 29 *The Cape Argus*, 27 August 1872.
- 30 South African Library, Grey Collection. Although the inscription on the cover gives only the s. elongation, the title Bell's is given that he also designed and carved the terracotta cases.
- 31 Charles Bell, *Essays of the General General Charles Bell on the Cape's Field of Art*, South African Library, Cape Town, 1859.
- 32 South African Library, Grey Collection. *An account of the History and the Customs of the various nations in the Kingdom of the Cape*, Cape Town, 1795, by the Rev. C. G. White and abridged by C. G. Bell.
- 33 South African Library, Grey Collection.



SIGNIFICANT DATES IN CHARLES BELL'S LIFE

1813	22 October	Charles Bell born.			
1830	23 August	Arrives in Cape Town.		April	Promoted to assistant surveyor-general.
1832		Joins the civil service at the Cape.		1847 May	Bell and family depart for 15-month leave in Britain.
	April	Tours the Cape Peninsula.		November	Bell's first attempt at lithography, at Piazza Smyth's home in Edinburgh.
	November	Transferred to office of the Master of the Supreme Court.		1848 July	Bell appointed surveyor-general of the Cape Colony.
1833		Becomes second clerk in the Colonial Audit Office.		August	Bell and family return to Cape Town.
1834	3 July	Leaves Cape Town as second draughtsman on Andrew Smith's Expedition for Exploring Central Africa.		16 December	Daughter Catherine Mariann born at Canigou, Rondebosch.
	12 August	Smith's party sets off from Graaff-Reinet.		1850	Bell appointed a director of Mutual Life Assurance Society.
	August-December	Explores mountains north of Orange River and, in October, meets Chief Moshoeshe on Thaba Bosiu.		1 July	Granted divorce from Martha.
1835	30 January	Arrives Kuruman, where Smith attends to fever-stricken missionary Robert Moffat.		17 October	Martha gives birth to a second daughter, whom Bell refuses to accept as his child.
	February-May	Explores region north of Kuruman.		1851 February-March	Cape Town's First Exhibition of Fine Arts held; Bell awarded gold medal for his oil painting 'Arrival of Van Riebeeck'.
	May-October	Travels northeastward, to explore Magaliesberg and Pilanesberg; in June meets Matabele king Mzilikazi; in September Tropic of Capricorn reached and party turns for home.			Designs medal awarded by Sir Harry Smith for gallantry in the Eighth Frontier War.
1836	January	Smith's Expedition returns to Cape Town. Bell's sketches and paintings from the Expedition exhibited in Cape Town, with those of fellow-draughtsman, George Ford.		1852	Designs Cape triangular stamps.
		Bell promoted to first clerk in the Colonial Audit Office.			Becomes a Justice of the Peace, and a member of the Central Board of Public Roads.
1837	July	London exhibition of Expedition artefacts, specimens and artworks by Bell and Ford.		November	Cape Town's Second Exhibition of Fine Arts opens.
1838		Bell qualifies as land surveyor and joins office of surveyor-general.		1853 December	Bell heads commission of enquiry into conduct of surgeon-superintendent of Robben Island's General Infirmary.
1840	July	Promoted to second assistant surveyor-general.		1854	Designs banknotes for Cape Commercial Bank, of which he is a director.
	November	Undertakes first commission, to survey the Kamiesberg, in Namaqualand.		August	Travels to Namaqualand to report on copper mining in the area and investigate land claims.
1841	March	Completes survey in Namaqualand.		1855 September	Travels to Tsitsikamma region to investigate land claims of Mfengu people.
	3 June	Marries Martha Antoinetta Ebdon.		1856	Travels to Eastern Cape to report on arrival of new settlers of the British German Legion.
1842	April	Bell and Martha depart for Grahamstown; Bell is to investigate land claims on Eastern Frontier.			Appointed chairman of General Estate and Orphan Chamber.
1843	25 January	Their elder son, John Alexander, born in Grahamstown.		1857 May	Leaves Cape Town with his family for extended leave in Scotland.
1844	March	Bell and family return to Cape Town.		1858	Returns to Cape Town towards end of year.
		Bell turns down post of surveyor-general at Port Natal.		October	Cape Town's Third Exhibition of Fine Arts opens.
1845	May	Accompanies Sir Peregrine Maitland's expedition to Touwfontein, Transorangia.		1859 7 July	Bell marries Helena Krynauw.
	1 August	Second son, Charles David Ebdon, born.			Commissioned to design coat of arms for South African College.
	September	Bell takes out his first policy with newly-founded Mutual Life Assurance Society.			Commissioned by Sir George Grey to embellish books from his famous library.
1846	March	Seventh Frontier War (War of Axe) breaks out; Bell executes sketches of war events for <i>Illustrated London News</i> .		1860 31 May	Daughter Helena Isabella born.
					Bell designs silver trigger for inauguration of Table Bay breakwater by Prince Alfred.
					Bell and Helena move into second home, Belton, in Green Point.

1861 14 September
 1863 9 February
 16 July
 1864 21 April
 1865 11 May
 1866
 4 October

Third son, Alexander born
 Second son, Anthony born
 Bell's daughter from his first marriage, Catherine, dies
 Third son, David Douglas Bell, born dies
 14 December 1865
 Daughter, Catherine Susan, born, dies
 18 September 1868
 Bell expounds course of *Natural Life Assurance Society*
 To Sir David Dalrymple at Scotland, without his family
 Cape Town's Fourth Exhibition of Fine Arts opens

1867 1 June
 1871 August
 1872 27 August
 1 December
 1873
 1875
 1876
 1878-1879
 1881 19 September
 1882 7 April

Bell's request to remain as surveyor-general is refused
 South African Fine Arts Association established and its first exhibition held on 4 December
 Bell delivers speech at opening of second exhibition
 Officially named as surveyor-general
 Bell, Helena and their three children leave Cape Town to settle in Scotland
 Bell elected to Society of Antiquaries of Scotland
 Bell's first son, John, dies in England
 Bell and his family at Cape Town
 Thomas Bell dies unexpectedly
 Charles Bell dies in Edinburgh



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