

**“Snug Little Coteries”: A History of  
Scientific Societies in Early Nineteenth  
Century Cape Town, 1824-1835**

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# Abstract

This thesis provides an account of four scientific societies in Cape Town in the early nineteenth century. The societies are the 'first' South African Literary Society (proposed and suppressed in 1824), the 'second' South African Literary Society (established in 1829), South African Institution (also established in 1829) and the South African Literary and Scientific Institution (formed from a merger of the previous two organisations in 1832). Before 1824, there had been no scientific societies in the Cape. After the decline of the Literary and Scientific Institution in the late 1830s, the colony did not support another general scientific society until the 1870s. This study links the establishment of scientific societies to the temporary ascendancy of British liberal humanitarianism in the late 1820s and early 1830s in the Cape and to changes in the organisational and structure of British science. The two Literary Societies and the two Institutions represented different scientific traditions in the colony. The Literary Societies were established by the radical Scottish newspaper editor John Fairbairn as part of an attempt to create a liberal political movement in the colony. They represented the interests of Cape Town's emerging middle class and were led by the city's professionals. The two Institutions emerged from the activities of the Scottish Army surgeon and naturalist Dr. Andrew Smith. He established several organisations at the Cape to further his career within the British Army's Medical Service. The city's official and Army elite were closely affiliated with the Institutions. Whereas Fairbairn was largely reacting to domestic political changes, Smith was reacting to the changing structure and opportunities of British science. This study reveals that science served diverse technical, professional and ideological ends at the Cape and that as a result it enjoyed widespread interest.

# Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	2
<b>Table of Contents</b>	3
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	5
<b>List of Abbreviations</b>	6
<b>List of Tables</b>	7
<b>Lists of Charts</b>	8
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	
The Institutionalisation of Science in Cape Town, 1824-1835	10
<b>Chapter 2: The First South African Literary Society, 1824</b>	
2.1 Introduction	33
2.2 Previous Accounts of the First South African Literary Society	34
2.3 The Background to the Events of 1824	39
2.4 The Arrival of Pringle and Fairbairn	42
2.5 The Free Press Debate	45
2.6 The Attempted Establishment of the First South African Literary Society	49
2.7 Fairbairn's Conception of Science	58
2.8 Membership of the First South African Literary Society	62
2.9 Conclusion	66
<b>Chapter 3: The Second South African Literary Society, 1829-1832</b>	
3.1 Introduction	68
3.2 The Colony Between 1824 and 1829	69
3.3 The Establishment of the Second South African Literary Society	76
3.4 The Second South African Literary Society as a Challenge to the Government's Monopoly on Science	80
3.5 Knowledge, Freedom and the 1800 Proclamation Respecting Clubs and Societies	83
3.6 The Second South African Literary Society and the Creation of a Middle Class Political Movement	90
3.7 The Activities of the Second South African Literary Society	94
3.8 The Membership of the Second South African Literary Society	104
3.9 Conclusion	113
<b>Chapter 4: The South African Institution, 1829-1832</b>	
4.1 Introduction	116
4.2 Dr. Andrew Smith	118
4.3 Smith in Cape Town and the Museum and Library, 1825-1828	121
4.4. Smith and Scientific Societies in Cape Town, 1825-1828	128
4.5 Smith's Other Men of Science in Cape Town	133
4.6 The Immediate Background to the Establishment of the South African Institution, Early to Mid-1829	140
4.7 The Establishment of the South African Institution, Mid-1829	142
4.8 The Monthly Meetings of the South African Institution and the Establishment of the <i>South African Quarterly Journal</i>	145



4.9 Using the South African Institution for Personal Ends	151
4.10 Miscellaneous Activities of the South African Institution	155
4.11 The South African Institution and its Conception of Science	154
4.12 The Membership of the South African Institution	161
4.13 Conclusion	166
<b>Chapter 5: The South African Literary and Scientific Institution, 1832-1835</b>	
5.1 Introduction	169
5.2 Locating the South African Literary and Scientific Institution in Cape Society	171
5.3 The Gradual Collapse of the Second South African Literary Society and South African Institution, 1831-1832	176
5.4 The Merger of the Second South African Literary Society and the South African Institution	180
5.5 More of the Same: The Activities of the South African Literary and Scientific Institution, 1832-1835	185
5.6 The Most Important Venture: Launching the Association for the Exploration of Southern Africa	190
5.7 Something new: Sir John Herschel and the South African Literary and Scientific Institution	202
5.8 The Membership of the South African Literary and Scientific Institution	216
5.9 Conclusion	220
<b>Chapter 6: Conclusion</b>	
6.1 The Institutionalisation of Science After 1835	224
6.2 Science in Cape Town, 1824-1835	230
<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix A Methodological Aspects of the Prosopographical Study	244
Appendix B Tables	246
Appendix C Charts	258
Appendix D Membership of the First South African Literary Society	281
Appendix E Membership of the Second South African Literary Society	283
Appendix F Membership of the South African Institution	287
Appendix G Membership of the South African Literary and Scientific Institution	290
<b>Bibliography</b>	284

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# List of Abbreviations

## Organisations

1 <sup>st</sup> SALS	the first South African Literary Society
2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS	the second South African Literary Society
SAI	the South African Institution
LSI	the South African Literary and Scientific Institution
SAMS	the South African Medical Society

## Sources

C.O.	Colonial Office, South African National Archives (Cape Town)
DNB	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
DSAB	<i>Dictionary of South African Biography</i>
NLSA	National Library of South Africa (Cape Town)
<i>Advertiser</i>	<i>South African Commercial Advertiser</i>
<i>Cape Almanac</i>	<i>African Calendar and Directory</i>
<i>Chronicle</i>	<i>South African Chronicle and Mercantile Advertiser</i>
<i>Cape Town Gazette</i>	<i>Cape Town Gazette and Commercial Advertiser</i>
<i>Literary Gazette</i>	<i>Cape of Good Hope Literary Gazette</i>
<i>Journal</i>	<i>South African Journal</i>
<i>Quarterly Journal</i>	<i>South African Quarterly Journal</i>

## List of Tables

Table 3.1	Initial, February 1829, Committee of the Second South African Literary Society	246
Table 3.2	Members of the Second South African Literary Society with Known Scientific and Literary Interests	247
Table 4.1	The Committee of the South African Public Library In mid-1824	248
Table 4.2	The Committee of the South African Public Library in at the end of 1825	249
Table 4.3	Signatories to the 22 <sup>nd</sup> of July, 1825, Proposal for a Cape of Good Hope Literary and Philosophical Society	250
Table 4.4	The Committee of the Cape of Good Hope Horticultural Society for 1828	251
Table 4.5	The Committee of the South African Public Library in 1829	252
Table 4.6	The first Committee of the South African Institution, August 1829	253
Table 4.7	Members of the South African Institution with known Scientific and Literary Interests	254
Table 5.1	The first Committee of the South African Literary and Scientific Institution, elected in July 1832	255
Table 5.2	The Committee of the Association for the Exploration of Central Africa, June, 1833	256
Table 5.3	Members of the South African Literary and Scientific Institution with known Scientific and Literary Interests	257

## List of Charts

Chart 1.1	Scientific Societies in Cape Town, 1823-1836	258
Chart 2.1	Breakdown of 1 <sup>st</sup> SALS Membership by Occupation	259
Chart 2.2	Breakdown of 1 <sup>st</sup> SALS Membership by Occupational Category	260
Chart 2.3	Breakdown of 1 <sup>st</sup> SALS Membership by National Origin, where known	261
Chart 2.4	Breakdown of 1 <sup>st</sup> SALS Membership by National Origin, complete data	262
Chart 3.1	Breakdown of 2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS Membership by National Origin, where known	263
Chart 3.2	Breakdown of 2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS Membership by National Origin, complete data	264
Chart 3.3	Breakdown of Signatories to the 29 <sup>th</sup> of May 1829 Application for a License for the 2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS by National Origin, complete data	265
Chart 3.4	Breakdown of 2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS Membership by Occupation	266
Chart 3.5	Comparison of the 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS Membership Broken Down by Occupational Category	267
Chart 3.6	Comparison of 2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS Leadership and Membership Broken Down by Occupational Category	268
Chart 4.1	Breakdown of SAI Membership by National Origin, where known	269
Chart 4.2	Breakdown of SAI Membership by National Origin, Complete data	270
Chart 4.3	Breakdown of SAI Membership by Occupation	271
Chart 4.4	Comparison of 2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS and SAI Membership Broken Down by Occupational Category	272
Chart 4.5	Comparison of 2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS and SAI Leadership Broken Down by Occupational Category	273
Chart 5.1	Previous Affiliations of LSI Membership and Leadership	274

Chart 5.2	Breakdown of LSI Membership by National Origin, where known	275
Chart 5.3	Breakdown of LSI Membership by National Origin, Complete data	276
Chart 5.4	Comparison of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS, the SAI and the LSI Memberships by National Origin, complete data	277
Chart 5.5	Breakdown of LSI Membership by Occupation	278
Chart 5.6	Comparison of LSI Membership and Leadership by Occupational Category	279
Chart 5.7	Comparison of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS, the SAI and the LSI Leaderships by Occupational Category	280

# 1

## Introduction

### The Institutionalisation of Science In Cape Town, 1824-1835

This thesis examines the origins, establishment, activities and membership of four scientific societies in early nineteenth century Cape Town. The organisations are the first South African Literary Society (the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, proposed in 1824), the second South African Literary Society (the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, established in 1829), the South African Institution (the SAI, established in 1829) and the South African Literary and Scientific Institution (the LSI, formed from a merger of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and SAI in 1832). The account is intended primarily as a study of the institutionalisation of science in the early nineteenth century Cape colony and provides a partial analysis of the social, political and professional organisation of science in Cape Town. I argue that the institutionalisation of science was mostly driven by two developments: first, the conflicts in Cape Town between the city's emerging middle classes and its official elite, and, secondly, developments in the organisation of British science.<sup>1</sup> In the rest of this *Section* I introduce the institutionalisation of science in the early nineteenth century Cape Town as a topic for historical investigation and outline some of my substantive findings. This section also provides an overview of the key literature on which I draw.

Between 1824 and 1833, eleven societies, institutions and associations, in some way devoted to the pursuit of science, were proposed or established in Cape Town.<sup>2</sup> Previously there had been none. In addition to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the SAI

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<sup>1</sup> The term "British science" is used inclusively in this thesis, along with the term "British", to refer to the science of both England and Scotland, and their respective political and scientific cultures. This 'view from the Cape', which glosses important differences between English and Scottish traditions, was typical in early nineteenth century Cape Town and has continued in later South African historiography.

<sup>2</sup> The scientific societies in early nineteenth century Cape Town were involved in a wide variety of activities including agricultural improvement, natural history, exploration and geography and meteorology. The term science was used to cover all of these activities. As a result I use the term science inclusively to encompass all topics that we today might think of as science, such as

and the LSI, there were the Cape Town Minor Institute for Literary Purposes (proposed in 1824), the Cape of Good Hope Literary and Philosophical Society (proposed in 1825), the Cape of Good Hope Horticultural Society (operating between 1826 and 1828), the South African Medical Society (established in 1827), the South African Mechanics Institute (established in 1828), the Cape of Good Hope Agricultural Society (established in 1831) and the Association for the Exploration of Central Africa (the AECA, established in 1833). A timeline showing these organisations can be seen in *Chart 1.1*, in *Appendix C*. While the LSI and AECA were listed in colonial almanacs into the 1850s, they appear to have ceased to function in all but name by the late 1830s. The LSI, for instance, published its last Annual Report in 1835 and the last copy of its journal in 1836. Only the Medical and Agricultural Societies continued to function into the 1840s and after, but neither was a general scientific society along the lines of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the SAI or the LSI. While significant scientific activity, such as surveying, natural history and astronomy, in addition to medicine and agriculture continued in the Cape, it was only in 1877, with the establishment of the South African Philosophical Society, that the Colony again supported a general scientific society. The dramatic institutionalisation of science in the 1820s and 1830s stands as an important, but relatively short lived, event in the city's and colony's scientific and civic history.

Scientific societies were only one form of organised science in early nineteenth century Cape Town. There were several other scientific organisations, although these are discussed in the thesis only in as far as they impact on my discussion of the scientific societies. First, since the late seventeenth century, the city had had a botanic garden and associated menagerie run by the Dutch East India Company (Karsten, 1951). These were largely allowed to slip into disrepair after the British first arrived at the Cape in 1795, although according to Laidler (1926) the menagerie, at least, remained in existence until around 1820.<sup>3</sup> In addition,

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physics, botany and anthropology, as well as medicine, engineering and agricultural improvement. In the context of the early nineteenth century, science would have included natural philosophy, mechanics, statistics, phrenology and surveying. Science in the early nineteenth century was a broad, if highly contested, church and is treated as such in this thesis.

<sup>3</sup> Other evidence suggests that it survived even longer. In 1826 the Government issued a tender for food for the "Wild Beasts in the Government Menagerie" (*Cape Town Gazette* XXI 1044, January 13, 1826). The Garden remained a topic of public concern in the 1820s, when funding cuts threatened to completely close it down (McCracken and McCracken, 1988). By this period,



an observatory was founded at the Cape in 1820 and the first official astronomer, the Rev. Fearon Fallows, arrived in 1821. The Observatory was still under construction in 1824 and would not begin functioning until the late 1820s (Warner, 1995). There was also a Public Library, established under the Government in 1818. It was intended to serve as a venue for scientific lectures and contained a scientific laboratory. It opened in 1822, but the first recorded scientific lecture in the colony was only in 1825 (Tyrrell-Glynn, 1972). Finally, in 1825 Dr. Andrew Smith established the South African Museum (Summers, 1975) and in 1829 C. F. H. von Ludwig founded his private botanic garden (Bradlow, 1965). Of these organisations the Library, Observatory and von Ludwig's Garden survived into the 1840s and beyond. Science at the Cape went through a general period of expansion from the 1820s onwards, but it was only in between the mid-1820s and mid-1830s that it was organised around scientific societies.

The four scientific societies have received very little explicit attention, as has the more general institutionalisation of science in Cape Town in the early nineteenth century. The most significant account of the scientific societies is Crawford's brief (1934) paper published for the centenary of Sir John Herschel's visit to the Cape. While providing the first outline of the history of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the SAI and LSI, his account reveals no interest in the reasons for their establishment. The only other significant account is Dubow (1999), a survey of nineteenth century Cape literary and scientific institutions, including schools, newspapers, magazines, libraries and societies. The scope of Dubow's study is far larger than mine is. While he adds little to our specific knowledge of the scientific societies in Cape Town in the 1820s and 1830s *per se*, he shows that the institutionalisation of science was part of a larger process that saw the emergence of an increasingly vibrant civic culture in the city. For Dubow the institutionalisation of science was part of a wider and longer lasting process of the establishment of British culture at the Cape.

The institutionalisation of science in the early nineteenth century was, however, not peculiar to the Cape and drew on international developments. The early nineteenth century saw the establishment of scientific societies throughout the

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though, it appears to have become entirely a social space and it no longer served any horticultural ends.

English-speaking world, including London, Bristol, Edinburgh, Boston, New York, Montreal, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Sydney, and Hobart Town. In addition to scientific societies, museums, botanic gardens and other public bodies were established in major cities in both the English-speaking world and beyond, with similar organisations appearing in the metropolitan and colonial cities of Europe's other powers. The institutionalisation of science at the Cape cannot, therefore, be seen *sui generis*, but needs to be located in an global context in which scientific societies were playing an increasingly important role in organising scientific activity. While there is little literature on the establishment of scientific societies at the Cape, scientific societies and other scientific institutions elsewhere have been the subject of significant attention.

The study of scientific institutions has proven to be a wonderful probe into the structure of science. Since Thackray (1974) showed that many late eighteenth and early nineteenth century provincial English literary and scientific societies served to assert the cultural authority of the emerging industrial middle classes, numerous studies have connected scientific societies, whether formally or informally organised, to wider social and political concerns. Anne Secord (1994 and 1996), for instance, shows that the social value of science was not limited to the middle classes and that artisan botanists meeting in nineteenth century Lancastrian pubs sought analogous legitimacy from their science. Not all provincial scientific organisations in late eighteenth or early nineteenth century Britain served such aspirational ends. Shapin and Barnes (1977) have argued that the Mechanics Institutes, so common in Britain and the English speaking Diaspora, were less an expression of artisanal interests than an exercise in social control by the improving middle classes concerned about the growing radicalisation of skilled workers in the early nineteenth century. Neve (1983) argues, in a related manner, that the conservative Bristol Institution for the Advancement of Science, Literature and the Arts, established in 1823, served to buttress the rights and privileges of the city's already established elites. The politicisation of science, rather than just scientific societies, has also been revealed by Desmond (1989), in a study of secular and radical Medical schools in London. He has shown that in 1830s London, evolutionary thought and new biological sciences from France were utilised by nonconformist doctors and radicals in their struggles for political and social recognition.

The study of scientific societies has also proven to be a powerful tool with which to investigate the changing nature and organisation of science itself. The organisation of British science underwent several changes in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, one of the most important being the growing role of scientific societies in facilitating the emergence of science first as an expert vocation and then as a career. One obvious sign of this was the establishment in London of a large number of specialised scientific societies. These included, amongst others, the Linnean Society, established in 1788, Royal Institution, in 1799, the Geological Society, in 1806, the Astronomical Society, in 1820, the Zoological Society, in 1826, and the Geographical Society, in 1830. Berman (1978) and Rudwick (1985) have claimed that the establishment of these scientific societies was related to the increasingly specialised nature of science and a gradual reduction in the influence of aristocrats. Local societies, museums and libraries were also established in the provinces to serve the interests of scientific specialists outside London (Alberti, 2002). In 1822, for instance, The Yorkshire Philosophical Society was founded to support the scientific, and particularly geological and archaeological work, of a small group of men in and around York. Unlike the earlier provincial literary and philosophical societies, this new organisation was entirely focussed on scientific and industrial research to the exclusion of literary and other interests (Orange, 1981).

The very notion of "scientist", a term coined in 1833 for a specialised practitioner of science, has been seen, in Britain at least, as emerging from this new institutional matrix. Morrell and Thackray (1981) have interpreted the establishment of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (the BAAS) in 1830 as an attempt, in part, to ensure the scientific authority and social legitimacy of these new scientific specialists. The ensuing and, for some, surprising success of the BAAS was because it was able to provide some access to the necessary sources of "patronage, jobs and rewards" (Morrell and Thackray, 1981: 425) desired by this generation of scientific men. James Secord (1986), in a discussion of the Geological Survey of Great Britain between 1839 and 1855, makes a number of related claims about the development and professionalisation of science in nineteenth century Britain. Science was no longer to be an individualistic and amateur occupation. In the case of its director, Henry De la Beche, the Geological Survey offered the opportunity to pursue a form of science only possible "through a collaborative, centrally directed enterprise undertaken with state support" (Secord, 1986:224). The state

supported Geological Survey was perhaps the exception to the rule and the scientific men of early nineteenth century Britain mostly turned to scientific societies, as well as the museums and the Royal Colleges, to serve their growing professional, technical and organisational needs.<sup>4</sup>

The British (or more precisely, English) scientific institutions so far discussed were particularly important to events at the Cape. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS explicitly drew on British models, while the SAI and LSI drew on more general British developments. Nevertheless, Cape Town presented a rather different set of conditions for the establishment of scientific societies to those presented by any British city. The institutionalisation of science outside Europe has also been well examined. For the early nineteenth century English speaking world, accounts include Hoare (1969), who has written on scientific societies in 1840s Tasmania, Kohlstedt (1976a and 1979) on the Boston Natural History Society and (1976b and 1999) on the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Kumar (1990) on the organisation of science in India under the East India Company, Baatz (1990) on the New York Academy of Sciences and specifically its precursor the New York Lyceum of Natural History, and Finney (1993) on natural history societies in the Australian Colonies. All of these accounts have, to a greater or lesser extent, exposed the role of scientific societies in facilitating changing patterns of scientific organisation as well as the social and political entanglements of science.

Scientific organisations, inside and outside of Europe, have also been seen as playing an important role in facilitating European imperialism and the making and sustaining of Europe's colonial empires. Brockway (1979) has argued that botanical activities of Kew Gardens and its affiliated colonial gardens served to facilitate the economic sustainability and profitability of the British Empire. Similarly, Osborne (1994), in his study of the French Société Zoologique d'Acclimatation, and Drayton (2000), in his study of British botany and agriculture, have shown how science was mobilised to support the French and British imperial missions. On the other hand, scientific organisations have also sometimes helped developing nations secure intellectual independence. Lopes

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<sup>4</sup> The Universities, and particularly Edinburgh and London, were also important to the development of British science in the early nineteenth century (see Desmond, 1989), but they only became a prominent feature of the organisation, and professionalisation, of British science in the second half of the century.

and Podgorny (2001), in a study of scientific museums in post-1850 Brazil and Argentina, have claimed that these organisations helped foster a distinctively Latin American scientific identity. Similarly, Kohlstedt (1976b and 1999), in her studies of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, has seen the establishment of the organisation as part of an assertion of the status and value of American science and scientists. Scientific societies, and other organisations, have shown themselves to be remarkably versatile vehicles, available to serve a diversity of social, political and organisational ends.

Of all the contemporary colonial settings, the Australian colonies probably offer the best studied comparative cases to the events in Cape Town. Recently, Finney (1993) has shown that the Australian colonies experienced a process of boom and bust in the institutionalisation of science in the early nineteenth century. In 1821 the Philosophical Society of Australia, for example, was established in New South Wales, but it was soon torn apart by political infighting. Finney argues that this was closely related to a wider power struggle in New South Wales. On his account the scientific societies are seen as reflecting wider conflicts. He does not claim, as I do for some of the scientific societies at the Cape, that they were key locations for players in the debates themselves. Finney also argues that the institutionalisation of science was critically dependent on the existence of a cohesive and well connected group of men with significant scientific interests. Scientific societies, in Australia at least, required far more than mere passing interest from amongst their core members. Finney, along with Jack (1998), also notes that in such a relatively small and isolated community, the support of the Governor was essential to ensure the survival of a scientific society. I claim that these observations also hold true of the Cape. Structurally the struggles for social and political authority in the Australian colonies identified by Finney as important in the institutionalisation of science are in many ways analogous to the struggles I identify as playing an important role in the establishment of scientific societies at the Cape. The success of the SAI and LSI can also, in part, be attributed to the existence of an active core group of members and their support by the Governor. There are, however, important differences between the Cape and Australia. Most importantly, the British residents at the Cape in the 1820s and 1830s were only a small minority in an overwhelmingly foreign culture. Similarly, the Cape differs from India, where the British residents may have been even more in the minority, but where the majority was not white. Possible, largely unstudied, equivalents to the Cape

would be Ceylon, also a former Dutch colony, or Mauritius, a former French colony. Interestingly, there appear to have been contacts between the SAI and LSI and scientific societies in Ceylon and Mauritius.<sup>5</sup>

The domestic and international changes that were to affect the institutionalisation of science in Cape Town only began to make themselves felt in the colony in the early 1820s. Before 1826, with one exception, all organised scientific activity that existed in Cape Town was controlled initially by the Dutch and later the British colonial Governments.<sup>6</sup> In 1824 Cape Town was a colonial city with a population of about twenty thousand, of whom about eight thousand were white. Until 1806 the Cape had been a Dutch colony, although the British had invaded in 1795 and returned it to the Dutch in 1803. The post-1806 British administration maintained the Dutch East India Company's restrictive social, administrative and political order and retained legal control over all forms of organised social and cultural activity (Freund, 1989). After 1806, Cape Town may have been the capital of a growing British colony, but its white population was almost entirely Dutch and German in ethnic origin. In 1820, 90% of the city's free whites, excluding the substantial Army garrison, were Cape-Dutch and they looked back to the Netherlands and Germany rather than Britain for their intellectual and cultural identity (Trapido 1993; Bank, 1995; and Worden *et.al.*, 1998). Yet in 1824, when the institutionalisation of science began it occurred outside of the control of Government in the arena of civil society and was led by British residents. The institutionalisation of science in the late 1820s in Cape Town involved claims to cultural authority as well as, in part, the largely unsuccessful assertion of British political liberalism in the Cape.<sup>7</sup> The dynamic was to change in the 1830s with the emergence of different political fault lines.

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<sup>5</sup> Storey (1997) has identified several features of science in early nineteenth century Mauritius that are comparable to those at the Cape. These include an international, cosmopolitan scientific community and the politicisation of science.

<sup>6</sup> There existed a large and organised natural history trade in the colony. By 1810, C. M. Villet for instance, ran a well-known menagerie and natural history business in Cape Town (Latrobe, 1818; and Burchell, 1822). Outside of this trade (which the Government controlled indirectly through licensing) the state held total control over all organised scientific activity.

<sup>7</sup> In the 1830s this assertion of British cultural authority would generate a backlash amongst the Cape-Dutch majority (Trapido, 1993 and 1994). A study of the memberships of the scientific societies shows that while they were founded by British residents and based on British models, they were not entirely British in membership. Thirty percent of those who supported the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS and forty percent of the members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, SAI and LSI were not of British origin. At the

The 1820s and 1830s have long been seen as a crucial period in South African political, social and medical history and recent histories of the Cape, such as Elbourne (1992), Bank (1995) and Keegan (1996), have argued that the 1820s saw the ascendancy of a largely British led coalition of mercantile and humanitarian interests in the colony.<sup>8</sup> In 1820 the first large numbers of British settlers began to arrive at the Cape and, although intended as farmers for the eastern districts of the colony, they soon began to drift towards the major towns and the capital. These settlers brought with them early nineteenth century British political, economic and social expectations that can in retrospect be seen as incompatible with the existing Cape-Dutch order. One of the leading members of this group was the radical Scottish newspaperman John Fairbairn. He arrived in 1823 and over the next forty years led an assault on the colony's political authorities in pursuit of a free press, more liberal administration and, ultimately, representative government (Botha, 1984). McKenzie (1993) has argued that in the mid to late 1820s Fairbairn used the newspaper he edited, the *South African Commercial Advertiser* (the *Advertiser*), to construct a group with the necessary liberal middle class identity he required for this political program. I claim that Fairbairn's attempted establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, in 1824, and his establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, in 1829, was part of the same program to construct the liberal civic and political culture of Britain in Cape Town. One result of this was that both Literary Societies, but especially the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, were overtly politicised. The politicisation of Fairbairn's Literary Societies was widely recognised at the time and this led to the satirical description of one society, almost most certainly the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, as a "Snug little coterie, for literary,

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time of its establishment the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was actually almost 60% Cape-Dutch, but this majority declined within the first year. (This ethnic origin data should be treated with care. Please see *Appendix A* for a discussion of its sources.)

<sup>8</sup> The early nineteenth century has been recognised as a vital period in the Cape's history since at least the 1920s. Macmillan (1929) saw the 1820s and 1830s as laying the foundations of South Africa's later racial order while Walker described 1828 as the colony's "*annus mirabilis*" (Walker, 1935:169), marking its political and administrative emergence as a modern British colony. More recently, Keegan (1996) and Crais (1992) have again located the origins of South Africa's later racial order in the 1820s and 1830s. Historians of medicine have also recognised the importance of the early nineteenth century. Burrows (1958) claims that the late 1820s and the 1830s represented a 'golden age' of grand reform and modernisation within the Cape's medical community. More recently, Deacon (H., 1997) has argued that the reforms to the city's medical profession were not as simple and coherent as Burrows suggested.

philosophical, and polemical discussion (without Act of Parliament)" (*Literary Gazette* 11, March 30, 1831). The title of my thesis is derived from this description. Fairbairn's increasing recognition in the early 1830s that his liberal and democratic program was unattainable was possibly one of the reasons he turned away from further involvement in the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS in 1832.

The idea of civil society is particularly useful in developing an understanding of Fairbairn's desire to establish scientific societies. The usefulness of the idea to the study of the history of science has recently been recognised, most obviously by the publication of Nyhart and Broman's (2002) *Science and Civil Society* (OSIRIS 17). As Broman notes, "[t]he doctrine of civil society permits historians to enquire into how science legitimates or undermines political authority. Most importantly, civil society permits an analysis of the basis of science's public authority" (Broman, 2002:1). Civil society describes those looser forms of social organisation that lie between the intimate ties of family and the coercive demands of the state. It includes the likes of missionary organisations, literary societies, newspapers, coffee houses, discussion groups and sports clubs. These social spaces provide locations for the development of alternative individual and collective identities and ambitions to those demanded by the family or state. The existence of a large number of societies, scientific or otherwise, has often been interpreted as being equivalent to the existence of a civil society (Gellner, 1994). While this conflates the existence of civil society with one of its manifestations, the connection is understandable. This is especially true of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Britain, where, as Clark (2000) notes, clubs and societies were one of the most distinctive forms of social and cultural organisation.

Civil society is a rich concept and can be developed in numerous different ways: including as a description of a particular state of affairs, a political philosophy or as an analytic tool. Habermas (1989), for instance, has shown that civil society, which he terms the 'rational public sphere', was the typical expression of capitalist bourgeois culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He links the emergence of civil society to the development of capitalism. Gellner (1994) argues that civil society is, more narrowly, typical of liberal democracy. Both, however, use the term 'civil society' to indicate a particular socio-economic or socio-political order. In this sense civil society can be said to emerge at the Cape in the mid- to late 1820s and be consolidated in the 1830s. Civil society



can also be seen as part of a political philosophy:- in particular liberalism, to which it was explicitly theoretically linked in late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (Porter, 2000). In the liberal tradition civil society precedes and serves to legitimise the state (Trentmann, 2000). In this tradition, one of civil society's original functions was as a solution to the serious religious conflicts in seventeenth century Britain. Civil society offered ways of managing conflict without requiring the state intervention. This was probably an important function of the newly constructed civil society at the Cape in the politically tense 1830s.

More importantly than serving as a description of a state of affairs or as an element of political liberalism, civil society is also a powerful analytic concept allowing the investigation of the relation of civil organisations to changing social-political and colonial orders. The emergence of an increasingly vibrant civil society, recognised by Dubow (1999) and acknowledged in this thesis, did not simply flow from the rise of a Cape middle class. The rise of a self consciously liberal middle class also depended, in part, in the painstaking construction of an independent political identity. The emerging liberal middle classes and civil society (particularly the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS) were involved in the co-construction and institutionalisation of a liberal political order in the Cape. The establishment of the Literary Societies was probably seen by Fairbairn as an important aspect of the construction of civil society and a stepping stone to the creation of a liberal political system. The widespread establishment of clubs and societies was seen in this way by members of the conservative Cape-Dutch who objected to Fairbairn's liberal political program (*De Zuid Afrikaan* II (88), December 9, 1831). Civil society can, therefore, serve as a useful analytic tool for understanding and interpreting Fairbairn's activities. Civil society can also provide a useful way of thinking about the construction of the more general colonial order and this is dealt with towards the end in this *Chapter*.

While Fairbairn was partially responsible for creating the necessary political and social conditions for the development of scientific societies, he was only involved in establishing the Literary Societies. More important was the role of the Scottish Army surgeon, naturalist and explorer Dr. Andrew Smith, who was in the Cape between 1821 and 1837. His position within the British Army placed him amongst the colony's ruling elite and he assiduously cultivated the links within this elite necessary to further his scientific ambitions, both institutional and personal. Smith, I argue, was responsible for four of the eleven scientific

societies in Cape Town between 1824 and 1833. These were the South African Literary and Philosophical Society, the Cape of Good Hope Horticultural Society, the SAI and the AECA. Although he was not responsible for the 1832 merger of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and SAI to form the LSI, this merger saw the almost unaltered continuation of the SAI. If not in body, Smith was responsible for the LSI in spirit. In addition, Smith was behind the establishment of the South African Museum, in 1825, which was absorbed into the SAI in 1829. His departure from the Cape in 1837 brought this institutional activity to an end. To explain why Smith should have been so prolific, it is necessary to recognise that the organisation of British science in the early nineteenth century was changing. It was increasingly moving away from purely individual work to collective organisation through societies, museums and other institutions. As important, the relation between science and the British state was undergoing important shifts.

The early nineteenth century has been seen as a period when the British state's support for science was being reduced. The late eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century in Britain saw the rapid growth in the links between science and state. Led in part by Joseph Banks, president of the Royal Society, director of Kew Gardens and confidant of the King, and motivated by competition with the French, Britain mounted important scientific and collecting expeditions around the globe (Brockway, 1979; Gascoigne, 1994 and 1998; Desmond, 1995; and Drayton, 2000). Later, in the second half of the nineteenth century, science was increasingly incorporated into the colonial state to consolidate its authority and power (Worboys, 1979; Kumar, 1995; Nell, 2000) and the imperial impulse again played an important role in motivating state support for scientific exploration (Livingstone, 1992; and Stafford, 1999). Between these two periods Stafford (1999) and Drayton (2000) have observed that official support for science and exploration was largely withdrawn and their pursuit was left to private individuals. This reduced support was largely driven by the financial retrenchment that followed the ending of the Napoleonic wars, but was also related to the death, in 1820, of Joseph Banks (Finney, 1993; and Drayton, 2000).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> McCracken (1997) provides an alternative perspective. He notes that under Banks, the British state essentially pursued a mercantilist approach to science, seeing science as a way of maximising the profitability of Empire. This approach largely disappeared after his death, only to re-emerge again in the 1880s.

While the British state reduced its open support for science, the links between the British Army and Royal Navy and science grew and these were extensively directed at imperial activities such as mapping and surveying (Deacon M, 1997; Friendly, 1977; Browne, 1996; Flemming, 1998; Ashworth, 1998; and Stafford, 1999). The importance of the military to the development of science was indirectly extended by the fact that the post-Napoleonic retrenchment reduced opportunities for conventional promotion within the services. Increasingly the pursuit of science, and especially natural history, medicine and other observational sciences such as geography, astronomy and surveying, became an alternative route to advancement within the Army and Navy, especially amongst medical personnel (Browne, 1996; and Ashworth, 1998). Finney (1993) also notes another feature driving military involvement in science: the role of officers on half-pay seeking to supplement their incomes through civil service in the colonies. It is not known to what extent this was a factor in the Cape, although several such half-pay officers in colonial service were members of the SAI and LSI.

These apparently distant changes in the organisation of British science are important for understanding the developments in Cape Town. I claim that on the one hand the Army's growing involvement in science was what brought Smith to the Cape and allowed him to pursue his scientific interests. On the other hand, British retrenchment denied Smith the state's full organisational and financial support.<sup>10</sup> These opportunities and limitations provided Smith with the necessary incentives to establish scientific organisations at the Cape to support his activities in a similar way to which scientific men in Britain were establishing scientific organisations to support their work. While Smith did not receive significant financial or organisational support from the state, he did receive moral and social support from the Cape's Governors. This support was central to his institutional success. Furthermore, Smith's organisations may well have played an important role in articulating a version of civil society useful for preserving the cohesion of the colony's elites.

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<sup>10</sup> The relative lack of support for Smith's science by the British and Cape Governments can be compared to the important role taken by both the French and French colonial Governments in late eighteenth century Saint Domingue in the establishment of the Cercle de Philadelphes (McClellan, 1992).

Fairbairn also drew on developments in the organisation of British science. Whereas Smith was reacting to contemporary changes in the general organisation of British science, Fairbairn drew on his specific experiences of the Newcastle upon Tyne Scientific and Literary Society where he had been a member before arriving in the Cape. The Newcastle Society had been established in 1793 and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were explicitly modelled on this radical provincial British scientific society (Orange, 1983; and Botha, 1984). Thackray (1974) has argued that the Manchester Literary and Philosophical and other provincial societies, such as the Newcastle Society, saw science as a means to secure the social and political legitimacy of their members. Socially and politically excluded by the landed aristocracy, the emerging middle classes of England's industrial cities were opposed to the existing *status quo* and used science as part of their attempt to reconstruct the social order in their favour. They adopted science as their chosen form of cultural expression and a central feature of their cultural and intellectual identity. These provincial societies were not learned academies, but were usually focussed on local industrial and engineering concerns and this utilitarian focus, I claim, was also apparent in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS (Inkster, 1983; and Orange, 1983).

Between them, Smith and Fairbairn were directly or indirectly responsible for the establishment of seven of the eleven scientific and related societies established in early nineteenth century Cape Town. The four other scientific and related societies established in the 1820s were the Cape Town Minor Institute, the South African Mechanics Institute, the Medical Society and the Cape of Good Hope Agricultural Society. The Minor Institute appears to have been established under the auspices of the Library<sup>11</sup> while the Mechanics Institute was founded by

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<sup>11</sup> The Cape Town Minor Institute for Literary Purposes was established in August 1824 at the same time as the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS (*Chronicle* 1(1), August 18, 1824). Nothing further is heard of the Minor Institute until July 1833 (*Literary Gazette* III (7), July 1, 1833). The Minor Institute had an interest in "scientific information", but there is no record of its activities. A. J. Jardine was the organisation's secretary (Lewin-Robinson, 1962) and, as in 1824 he had just taken over as librarian at the Public Library, it is possible the Minor Institute was run under the auspices of the Library. Somerset may have outlawed the Minor Institute at the time of its establishment, at the same time as he suppressed the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, but Lewin-Robinson (1962) suggests that it survived Somerset's autocratic rule by maintaining a very low profile and being very exclusive in its membership. The Minor Institute was probably aborted either due to the political situation or to a more general lack of support.

British artisans in the colony.<sup>12</sup> The Medical Society was probably established by civilian doctors to defend their professional interests in the colony and, as argued in *Chapters 2 and 3*, was closely affiliated in membership with the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The establishment of the Agricultural Society in November 1831 was not obviously related to the establishment of any of the other scientific societies. At least initially it may have articulated an alternative civic tradition to the other scientific organisations at the Cape, drawing its support at first almost exclusively from the Cape-Dutch. As argued in *Chapter 3*, agricultural improvement was an important, if not the most important, project of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. At much the same time that the Agricultural Society was established, the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS merged with the SAI and the resulting LSI demonstrated no interest in agricultural improvement. Importantly, Fairbairn became a member of the Agricultural Society in 1832, soon after it was established. Although he sat on its committee, it is not clear whether he played an important role in shaping its activities. Except where they interact with the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the SAI and LSI, none of these four organisations are examined in this thesis.

While Fairbairn and Smith were the two leading figures in the institutionalisation of science in Cape Town, it would be misleading to tell the history of the scientific societies only from their perspectives. Sixty-three men signed up for the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, one hundred and four became full members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, sixty-nine became full members of the SAI, and one hundred and fourteen became full members or subscribers of the LSI. Over two hundred and ten men in Cape Town and its surrounding regions belonged to one or more of these four scientific societies, and the details of their memberships can be seen in the *Appendices*.<sup>13</sup> These are substantial numbers when one considers that in 1902

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<sup>12</sup> The Mechanics Institute was proposed in December 1827, but only established in November 1828 (Tyrrell-Glynn, 1972). According to Dubow (1999) it only survived for one year. The membership of the Mechanics Institute is unknown and the only members that can be identified are its office bearers and committee, as given in the *Cape Almanacs*. The Institute's leadership appears to have been entirely of British origin and the committee was made up of craftsmen, including watchmakers, goldsmiths and carpenters (*Cape Almanac*, 1829). Dubow (1999) observes that unlike in other colonies, such as Canada and Australia, the mechanics institutes were not successful transplants in the Cape.

<sup>13</sup> It is not clear that all those who signed up for the scientific societies actually participated in them. In the case of the Literary Societies, but only less so for the Institutions, many members may have signed up more as a sign of social allegiance or membership of a particular socio-political group.

the Royal Society of South Africa could only muster two hundred and three members (Hall, 1977). This pattern of membership can only in part be explained by the presence of large numbers of men with scientific or more general literary interests. As is noted in *Chapters 4 and 5*, the SAI and the LSI had the largest number of men with known scientific and literary interests and these made up less than a quarter of their memberships. In addition, a number of scientifically interested men in the colony did not belong to any of these four scientific societies.<sup>14</sup> Significant scientific activity in the colony therefore may have occurred outside the scientific organisations and been conducted by non-members. Further analysis of such activity outside the scientific societies lies beyond the scope of this study.

I suggest that the pattern of membership of the four chosen scientific organisations in Cape Town can be explained largely in social terms. As already noted, scientific societies were a popular and flexible instrument in Britain for the pursuit of social interests and the memberships of the scientific societies in early nineteenth century Cape Town reflect similar important social patterns. As discussed in *Chapters 2 and 3*, those men who signed up for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were mostly members of the city's business and professional elite and it is from the latter group that the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS drew its leadership. These businessmen and professionals formed the vanguard of the liberal and humanitarian group that became increasingly powerful in the 1820s and which challenged the colonial Government for political authority (Keegan, 1996). The members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were mostly supporters of Fairbairn or in some way sympathetic with his anti-Government political program. The members seemingly never adopted science as an important way of asserting their cultural and intellectual authority, as Thackray (1974) and Cooter (1984) have both suggested was common amongst the early nineteenth century British middle classes. Nevertheless, the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS did serve as a vehicle for the attempted creation of a liberal and humanitarian middle class identity. Fairbairn's anti-Government rhetoric probably alienated members of the colonial elite and one consequence of this was that few senior colonial officials and military officers joined the two Literary Societies. As is examined in *Chapter 4*, the colonial officials and military men

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<sup>14</sup> Comparing a list of men with known botanical interests (Gunn and Codd, 1981) with the membership lists for the four societies shows that of those men with scientific (botanical) interests who stayed in the colony for a few or more years between 1824 and 1835, just over a half were affiliated with one or more of the scientific societies.

were much more closely aligned with the organisations established by Smith. Smith was already a member of the colonial elite and his SAI enjoyed the patronage of the Governor. The social and political pressures that kept the memberships of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and SAI apart in the late 1820s had become less important by the early 1830s, and the middle class 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS merged with the elite SAI in 1832. As described in *Chapter 5*, this involved the absorption of the middle class members into an elite society, marking not the success of the middle class program but the reality of significant social mobility at the Cape and the willingness of the elite to accept new members.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the establishment of the LSI may have allowed for the articulation of a new elite identity in the face of increasing political tensions over emancipation which were threatening to tear the colony apart.

The many important differences in motivation, purpose and membership between Fairbairn's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and Smith's SAI and LSI are also apparent in the different forms of science the organisations embodied.<sup>16</sup> The two Literary Societies pursued a narrowly domestic and utilitarian conception of science focussing on agricultural improvement in the Cape and the diffusion of useful knowledge rather than original research. The more limited documentation available for the SAI, on the other hand, indicates that it was more interested in original scientific research, mostly in natural history. It played down immediate utilitarian advantage and saw science as an international enterprise. The differences in these conceptions of science were, I suggest, closely related to the different reasons Fairbairn and Smith pursued science. For Fairbairn, science was a way of mobilising support and asserting the authority, legitimacy and maturity of Cape Town's liberal middle class. For Smith, science was a route to promotion within the British Army's Medical Service. Where Fairbairn's science looked inward to the Colony, Smith's looked outward to Britain. This is not to say that Smith's science did not play an important role in the colonial project, which it certainly did. Rather it is a claim about the role of science in Smith's personal career ambitions. My claim that Smith and Fairbairn understood science in such different ways supports sociological approaches to

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<sup>15</sup> Dubow (1999) observes in the context of the failure of Mechanics Institutes to establish themselves at the Cape that the relatively rapid upward social mobility of skilled artisans in the Colony made it difficult to establish a cohesive and self-conscious working class identity.

<sup>16</sup> Smith was not actively involved in the establishment of the LSI, but the new organisation initially retained SAI's elite social form and scientific project.

the history of science that reveal how the social and political values and assumptions of the practitioners of science come to be embodied in the very epistemology and practices of their science (Shapin and Schaffer, 1985; and Golinsky, 1998). These different conceptions of science are also one of the reasons for keeping an open mind about what constitutes the appropriate subject for the history of science and for adopting the inclusive approach taken in this thesis.

As already noted, my account of the institutionalisation of science in early nineteenth century Cape Town is primarily intended as a contribution to the historiography of scientific institutions. Nevertheless, it locates the organisations at the Cape in the context of the colony's social, political, intellectual and cultural history in the early nineteenth century and amongst the conflicts between the military and official elite and the emerging middle classes. Little attention has been given either to the social organisation of science in early nineteenth century Cape Town or to the relation of science to wider social and political developments in the colony. The only existing accounts that do so systematically are Bank's (1995 and 1996) discussions of the introduction and reception of Phrenology in the 1830s and 1840s and Dubow's (1999) survey of scientific and literary institutions. This lack of interest in the social and cultural history of science at the Cape is only partly because, as Dubow (2000) notes, the historiography of science in South Africa is generally underdeveloped. There is, in fact, an established literature on science at the Cape in the early nineteenth century.

Aside from Dubow (1999) and Crawford (1934), a number of other accounts have examined science in the early nineteenth century Cape. Sir John Herschel's residence in Cape Town between 1834 and 1838 has been a topic of particular interest. Warner (1992) explored Herschel's astronomical activities at the Cape, Warner and Rourke (1996) his botanical activities, Musselman (1998) investigated the influence of his residency at the Cape on his science and Ashworth (1998) examined his role in assisting the British Imperial project through the creation of information gathering networks, or, what he terms "the Roving Eye of the State". Aside from the attention given to Herschel, there have been biographies of other important men of science in the period. These include: Bradlow (1965), on the German botanist and horticulturist Baron C. F. H. von Ludwig; Kirby (1965), on Dr. Andrew Smith; Ffoliot and Liverside (1971), on the



German naturalist Ludwig Krebs; and Warner (1979) on the astronomers at the Royal Observatory. Warner (1995) has also written on the establishment of the Royal Observatory in the 1820s, Summers (1975) on the South African Museum, and Tyrrell-Glynn (1972 and 1983) on the South African Public Library. Some of these studies, notably Musselman (1998) and Ashworth (1998), concern themselves with historiographic issues largely divorced from the main themes of this thesis. Most other accounts, with the exception of Dubow (1999) and with the partial exception of Warner (1995), pay little attention to the wider social, political and cultural contexts and 'entanglements' of science in the early nineteenth century Cape.<sup>17</sup>

Importantly, existing accounts of science in the Cape show that there was significant scientific activity both before the 1820s and after the 1830s in the colony. This was particularly apparent in the natural historical sciences, such as zoology, botany and geology. Gunn and Codd (1981) have provided a biographical history of botanists at the Cape, for the period from the seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries. McCracken and McCracken (1988) offer an account of Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, tracing it back, in part, to the botanic garden established by the Dutch in the seventeenth century. This earlier Dutch garden has been more extensively described by Karsten (1951). Cohen (2000) has described palaeontological research in the Cape in the mid-nineteenth century and Rookmaker (1989) has surveyed zoological exploration in the seventeenth century Cape. My claim in this thesis is not primarily that science at the Cape *per se* went through a period of change in the early nineteenth century, but that the organisation of science at the Cape went through a period of change. Needless to say, these changes in organisation understandably influenced the practice of science, but the exploration of that influence lies beyond the scope of this thesis.

Arguably, the most important reason why there exist so few studies of science in Cape society and culture is the absence of a significant tradition of social and cultural history of science in South Africa. Dubow (2000) claims that to the extent that there is a historiography of science in South Africa it has dealt almost

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<sup>17</sup> This is especially true of Brown's (1977) *A History of Scientific Endeavour in South Africa*, a collected edition of papers prepared for the centenary of the Royal Society of South Africa. Although an invaluable resource it is internalist and dated.

exclusively with the relation between scientific knowledge and the exercise, legitimisation and construction of the state's political and economic authority. Dubow's (2000) *Science and Society in Southern Africa*, a collection of essays edited by him, pursues this theme mostly in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Little attention has, however, been given to the uses of science by groups other than the state, to the civic functions of science, its use in undermining authority, or its relation to social, cultural, intellectual and political identity. The approach that I take in this thesis is therefore novel in the context of the historiography of science in South Africa.

In this thesis I examine the institutionalisation of science at the Cape, primarily in the context of the Cape itself. Nevertheless, the relation between science at the Cape and elsewhere, specifically Britain, demands analysis. My account follows recent scholarship in rejecting the "centre-periphery" model of colonial science according to which "real" science was conducted in Europe and people in the colonies performed some lesser activity (Cohen, 1959; Flemming, 1962; and Basalla, 1967). Science in colonial settings has been increasingly exposed as rich and complex, with important connections to other areas of colonial and imperial historiography (See Macleod, 2001; and Chambers and Gillespie, 2001). While the influence of European science on Cape science was undeniable, it took different forms in the case of different men and organisations. Fairbairn, for instance, was largely uninterested in the British scientific community while Smith aspired to be a member. My account suggests that relation between colonial and metropolitan science is, therefore, unlikely to be reducible to any single model. I discuss the implications of this complexity for our understanding of colonial science more fully in the *Conclusion*.

While primarily a contribution to the historiography of scientific institutions, the account that I offer here will perhaps be of interest to the growing number of historians concerned with the social, cultural and intellectual history of the Cape more generally. First, it suggests that science was not an esoteric pursuit divorced from the rest of Cape life. Rather science was an important intellectual, cultural and political activity for significant numbers of Cape Town's middle classes and elite, both British and Cape-Dutch. Scientific organisations played a larger role in the city than has previously been acknowledged. This provides an important corrective to an existing image of Cape Town which has not so much downplayed the role and presence of science, as entirely ignored it, subsuming

it into more general allusions to the development of, usually British, cultural and literary interests. This observation will be of particular interest to those involved in the study of the middle class culture and intellectual history of the early nineteenth century Cape. More importantly my account points to the way political differences manifested themselves in social organisations and the way social organisation was used to pursue political ends. Most obviously, Fairbairn used the two Literary Societies to pursue his liberal and, sometimes, humanitarian political program.

It is, however, the very absence of recorded involvement of the SAI and especially the LSI, as institutions, in the broader political issues of the day that links my institutional study most interestingly to much existing South African and colonial historiography. Central to English language South African historiography is the question of race and the relations between settlers and indigenous inhabitants. Yet, as institutions, these organisations had little explicit to say about either of these related issues. Yet, as I discuss in *Chapter 5*, this apparent absence was merely at the institutional level. As individuals many members were intimately involved in the construction of racial ideas, debates about slavery, legitimating of settler aspirations and the pursuit<sup>of</sup> colonial expansion – none more so than Andrew Smith. What the apparent absence of such concerns at the institutional level suggests is not the unimportance of such ideas, but rather that there were enormous conflicts surrounding them. The LSI in particular may have played a role in preventing political and social strains, most importantly concerning emancipation, tearing the colony's elites apart. By providing a space from which politics (i.e. slavery and emancipation) was deliberately excluded, the Institutions could play the even more important political role of preventing the colony's descent into conflict. This was one of the original functions proposed for civil society in liberal political philosophy (Porter, 2000) and my study therefore draws attention to the possible political usefulness of science in helping reduce political tensions in the colony. The reduction in tension was achieved not by resolving the underlying issues but by providing an topic of commonality that would allow competing elites to function socially. While I deal in this thesis exclusively with scientific societies, this points to the more general usefulness of the idea of civil society for thinking about the construction and consolidation of a liberal Cape colonial order in the 1830s.

While the four scientific societies that form the core of this thesis appear to have largely avoided the contentious issues of slavery and the nature of race, more general anthropological work was pursued by the SAI and LSI, most obviously by Smith. Yet, as just noted, the activities of neither of these Institutions, nor the two Literary Societies, speak obviously to existing historiographical concerns with race or colonial expansion. The more obvious institutional link to these topics is through the AECA. The Association was founded by Smith largely to forward his own career, but simultaneously served to forward Cape mercantile interests in colonial expansion. Smith had been an enthusiastic supporter of the colonisation of Natal ever since his expedition there in 1832 and this seems to have fed through to a more general interest in expansion. He was closely supported in his expedition to the North by J. C. Chase, an even stronger proponent of expansion. In addition Smith almost certainly helped to both spread and develop notions of race that would later be used to bolster the expansionist demands of settlers on the Cape's east frontier. The AECA provides further evidence of the ways in which science, commerce and imperialism (or, more precisely, colonial expansion) were so often intimately related in the early nineteenth century.

This thesis is structured around five further chapters. *Chapter 2* deals with the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS and *Chapter 3* explores the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, established in 1829. While there were continuities between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, they were established in very different social and political contexts. Whereas the Cape was in a state of political turmoil in 1824, by 1829 many of the political tensions had subsided and the legal, administrative and economic structure of the Colony had been liberalised. *Chapter 4* explores the establishment of the SAI in 1829, tracing its institutional forerunners back to the Literary and Philosophical Society, the Horticultural Society and the management committee of the Public Library. *Chapter 5* examines the merger of the SAI and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS to form the LSI in 1832. This was not a merger of equals, but involved the continuation of the SAI's social and scientific programs and the absorption of the larger 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS by the smaller SAI. Importantly, Smith used the LSI to launch the AECA in 1833 – which organised the expedition that established his scientific reputation. *Chapter 5* also examines the role of Sir John Herschel in the LSI. The *Conclusion* presents a brief analysis of how the institutionalisation of science in Cape Town changed in the late 1830s and notes some of the more general implications for our understanding of science in the early nineteenth century Cape.

I draw on several sets of sources. The newspapers and magazines in the Cape in the 1820s and 1830s provide significant information on the affairs of the scientific societies. In the case of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the newspapers and magazines provide some of the most important insights into the ambitions and politics of the leaders and members of the societies. The minute books and correspondence of most of the scientific societies are no longer available. The published annual reports of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, SAI and LSI provide a crucial record of these organisations' activities. These sources are discussed in the text where they are introduced and are for the most part held in the National Library of South Africa (Cape Town), itself the successor to the Public Library founded in Cape Town in 1818. The final important set of information is derived from a prosopographical study of those involved in the scientific societies. I carried out prosopographies for all signatories to the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS's various applications to the colonial Government and for all full members and subscribers to the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, SAI and LSI. The study excludes honorary and corresponding members. The methodological details involved in the prosopography are discussed in *Appendix A* and the basic results of the prosopographies can be found in *Appendices D* through *G*.

# 2

## The First South African Literary Society, 1824

### 2.1 Introduction

In 1824 two politically radical Scottish newspaper editors, John Fairbairn and Thomas Pringle, attempted to establish a literary society in Cape Town. The society was to be devoted to colonial improvement and the pursuit of science, especially natural history. It would have been the first organisation of its kind in the Cape. The proposed 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, so called here to distinguish it from the later 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS established in 1829, was almost immediately suppressed by the Governor of the Colony, Lord Charles Somerset. Responsibility for the suppression of the society has in the past been assigned to Somerset and explained in terms of his inconsistent and reactionary policies. In this *Chapter* I challenge this interpretation. John Fairbairn and Thomas Pringle sought political advantage from the establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. The Society was intended to further their ambitions to create a middle class political movement in the Colony. This program not only directly challenged Somerset's political beliefs, but also his authority as governor. The establishment and suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was part of an ongoing struggle in the Cape colony for political authority and social status between an incipient, mostly British born, middle class and the Colonial authorities.

The analysis I present in this *Chapter* consists of four main claims. First, most existing accounts of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS have implicitly sided with Fairbairn's and Pringle's liberal political program and failed to appreciate the challenge this presented to Somerset. Secondly, an analysis of the Society's supporters and the timing of its establishment show that the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was closely related to the ongoing free press debate in the colony. This had pitted Fairbairn, Pringle and their supporters against the Governor. Not only were Pringle and Fairbairn opposed to the colonial authorities, and particularly the Governor, but this opposition had already emerged into open conflict. These two factors alone can largely explain the timing of the establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS and its suppression. These two points do not, however, exhaust my analysis of the

Society. I also claim in this *Chapter* that the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS drew on British models of radical science and provincial literary and scientific societies and that this radical science directly challenged the aristocratic interests of the Governor. Furthermore, a prospography of the Society's supporters shows them to have been largely drawn from British professionals and businessmen, groups that are both known to have sided with Fairbairn and Pringle in their dissatisfaction with the Colonial Government. The suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was in many ways over determined. In timing, conception and membership the Society presented a direct political challenge to Somerset's authority.

## 2.2 Previous Accounts of the First South African Literary Society

The 1<sup>st</sup> SALS has attracted the most attention of the four societies examined in this thesis. There are three relevant sets of accounts. The first are the most recent accounts and have treated the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS as a precursor to later scientific societies. The second set of studies comprises of accounts contemporary with the suppression of the Society, and should be thought of more as primary accounts than historical analyses. Given the relative paucity of later interest in the Society they are still the most complete accounts available. The final set of studies are the most useful, and have been largely devoted to other topics, such as biographies. These have touched on the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS in important ways that help contextualise its establishment and suppression. These three sets of accounts are reviewed, first, to survey the existing studies of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, secondly, to demonstrate the assumptions implicit in the accounts, and, thirdly, to provide a background against which to evaluate the novelty and importance of the account offered in the rest of the *Chapter*.

The most important of the, relatively, more recent accounts is Crawford (1934), a paper on the establishment of the LSI. Crawford only deals with the attempted establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS in 1824 because the later LSI could, in part, be traced back to it. His interest in LSI has largely to do with Herschel's Presidency of the society between 1834 and 1838. Crawford's brief account of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS has to do with its suppression by the Governor and he explains this as a result of Somerset's dislike for the two founders of the Society, Fairbairn and Pringle. He makes no attempt to explain this dislike or link it to the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS itself. A

similar account is Hall (1977), largely derived from Crawford (1934), although his interest in the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS is as a precursor to the Royal Society of South Africa.

One of the problems with later accounts of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS is that they have drawn on a limited and one-sided set of records. The main historical sources for the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS were published either by members of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS or those sympathetic to them and their ambitions. The most important set of records are the *Papers of the South African Literary Society*, the *PSALS* (SALS, 1963), originally published in 1825. These are a record of the papers and correspondence relating to the attempted establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS and were published by those involved in attempting to establish the organisation. These papers shift the responsibility for the failure of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS squarely onto the shoulders of the Governor. There is no explicit suggestion anywhere in the papers, although it is implied in places by the comments in letters from the Government, that the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was anything but an innocent party. The position presented in the *PSALS* is well summarised by the editor of the re-published *Papers* in 1963.

"The very rare contemporary documents dealing with this episode are now re-published after a lapse of 140 years. They are of great historical interest, particularly for the contrast they reveal between the alert-minded members who sought to pursue cultural activities, and the despotic and ultra-conservative Governor" (SALS, 1963:i).

The *PSALS* should be treated with more caution than they have traditionally been. Although there is no suggestion that they are themselves false, they present, at best, a very partial account of the events.

The *PSALS* should be seen as an act of political whitewashing, shifting the responsibility for the suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS onto the Governor, Lord Charles Somerset. In the process Fairbairn, Pringle and the other founders of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS were cleared of any wrongdoing, and even of the possibility of legitimate political activity. The 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was suppressed because Somerset was a reactionary high Tory who *irrationally* suppressed the *cultural* ambitions of those who wished to establish a society. This account has gone largely unquestioned because it conforms to the widespread perception amongst Liberal historians of South Africa that Somerset was in fact an irrational arch-conservative. Unfortunately, this Liberal view can be traced directly back to men like Fairbairn and so must be treated with caution. The publication of the Society's papers immediately after its suppression and their repeated re-publication over the years, was a great propaganda coup for Fairbairn and



Pringle and has ensured that their view of events, Whiggish, radical and middle class, became the received account.

The other major contemporary record is similarly partial and merely reinforces the account offered in the *PSALS*. This is the report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into various accusations made by Thomas Pringle against the Colonial Government. The Commission of Inquiry, led by John Thomas Bigge and Willaim M. G. Colebrooke, had originally been intended for Mauritius and Ceylon. The British Government decided to send it to the Cape as well after receiving complaints about Somerset's Governorship. The Commission, appointed in 1822, was conceived of in a tradition of liberal free trade. It had the authority to investigate all aspects of the Cape administration, and was to make suggestions for the improvement of the colonial Government.<sup>1</sup> Its report was eventually to lead to the recall of Somerset and the establishment of a more liberal government at the Cape. The Commission, in intent and consequence, was totally compatible with the political and social aspirations of those who proposed the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. Its presence also directly challenged the authority and freedom of the Governor.

The Commission, which arrived at the Cape in 1823, was soon drawn into local political matters. Lord Bathurst, Secretary for the Colonies and War, had instructed it to investigate various complaints made by Pringle against Somerset and the Colonial Government. These complaints extended beyond the suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS and had to do with several of Pringle's publishing ventures and the failure of his school. In the case of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, the Commissioners found in favour of Pringle and held that the Governor's suppression of the Society was unjustified. They took a rather sanguine view of the proposal to establish a 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, although noted that the timing was not necessarily perspicuous.

"The apprehension that the Society would lead to political discussion was officially stated by the Governor, but we cannot suppose that a Society which included the names of

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<sup>1</sup> J. T. Bigge's father was High Sheriff of Northumberland (*DSAB*) and President of the Newcastle upon Tyne Literary and Philosophical Society (Orange, 1983). Fairbairn belonged to this organisation during his residence in Newcastle between 1818 and 1823. This common connection with its radical dissenting politics provides a personal connection that might have aligned Fairbairn and the Commissioners more than mere shared liberal views. Bigge was also involved in the institutionalisation of science in the Australian colonies (Finney, 1993).

many leading members of the Community, and amongst others of the President and two Members of the Court of Justice, could have been perverted to the ends of political faction, admitting the disposition of one or two individuals to have so involved it. At the same time we felt, and expressed our apprehension to the parties on their reference to us, that the discussions that had so recently agitated the public mind had rendered the moment unfavourable for such an undertaking, avowedly dependent, as it was admitted to be, on the patronage of the Colonial Government." (Theal, 1904, XXIV: 14)

This account reinforces that presented in the *PSALS*. The central negative claim here is that the Literary *was not* or *could not* have been intended as or become a politically threatening organisation because it had respectable members and because only one or two of the members would have been politically inclined. The Commissioner's account is more valuable than that of the *PSALS* because it suggests that the suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS should be investigated in a wider social and political context.

The wider social and political context of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS is dealt with in the third set of sources. These are not directly concerned with the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, but provide alternative perspectives on the attempted establishment of the organisation and its eventual suppression. An important corrective to uniformly negative accounts of Somerset is his biography by Millar (1965). Millar describes the period between 1823 and 1825 as,

"the most harassing and anxious of [Somerset's] whole life. Not a week seemed to pass without the eruption of some new and disturbing development involving the press, the judiciary, aggrieved settlers or trouble caused by some downright rascals and troublemakers. The whole situation became turbulent and confused with officials of every sort – from the Governor downwards – embroiled in a morass of litigation, prosecutions and banishments." (Millar, 1965:154)

Of specific importance were the strained relations between Somerset and Fairbairn that emerged into open warfare in 1824 over the freedom of the press. This was one of the decisive factors behind Somerset's suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. While this conflict was important to the history of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS as well as the emergence of a free press in the Colony and later South African historiography, it was not necessarily seen that way at the time. According to Millar, Somerset's conflict with Fairbairn, in which the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS occupied but a small place, was not amongst his most important problems in the period. While Millar provides some important background to the suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, his account of the organisation's suppression is perfunctory. He merely points to the poor relations between Fairbairn and Pringle and the Government. Millar's account is more useful as a correction to the received view of Somerset as an

irrational conservative. He should rather be thought of as a deeply embattled conservative facing off numerous challenges both to his personal authority and to the aristocratic values he wished to defend. Further, as Bayly (1989) has observed, high Tory colonial governors were the norm in British Empire in this period.

Botha (1984), a biography of Fairbairn, makes some of the more insightful observations about the origins and suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. He implicitly suggests that the establishment and later suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS should be located in the context of the freedom of the press debate that occurred in the Colony in May 1824. With the suppression of publications edited by Fairbairn and Pringle, these two radicals sought out other methods of forwarding their ambitions.

"The setback ... in no way discouraged them from trying to establish channels of communication among like-minded persons also in other fields. Notwithstanding Somerset's arbitrary action against their undertakings, Fairbairn and Pringle were proponents of the movement to establish a "South African Literary Society"." (Botha, 1984: 27)

Botha does not expand on his understanding of the relation between the freedom of the press debate and the attempted establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. He merely suggests that the Somerset's suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was another illustration of his "arbitrary and inconsistent behaviour" (Botha, 1984: 28). There is no evidence in Botha's account that he interprets the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS as a political challenge to Somerset. He takes at face value the claims by the Society that it would avoid all controversial political or theological topics. Botha, in the end, explains the suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS as an immediate consequence of the personal enmity between Somerset and Pringle and Fairbairn. This enmity had arisen over the previous months as a result of the free press debate.

Probably the single most important set of insights into the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS can be found in McKenzie (1993). This study has nothing directly to do with the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. It is a study of the making of middle class identity in Cape Town in the 1820 and early 1830s. McKenzie argues that in 1824 the *South African Commercial Advertiser*, under the editorship of Fairbairn, was dedicated to,

"the creation of a rational public sphere within the colonial context, out of which a distinctive middle class identity might be formed and which might allow representative government to be established at the Cape." (McKenzie, 1993:4)

The function of the *Advertiser* was to create the necessary conditions for a middle class political movement to be led by Fairbairn. Almost exactly the same can be argued for the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. It would have provided an almost ideal space for the construction of such a middle class political movement. McKenzie's analysis of the *Advertiser* can therefore be applied, with little change to the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. The one crucial difference is that the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS involved actually bringing likeminded men together in an organisation. The 1<sup>st</sup> SALS can usefully be seen as an early attempt to give social form to the political awareness generated by the *Advertiser* and was part of Fairbairn's attempt to foster the development of civil society in the Colony.

## 2.3 The Background to the Events of 1824

The Cape Colony had experienced massive changes in the period leading up to 1824. These changes go some way to explaining why it was in 1824, and not earlier, that the first attempts were made to establish a literary or scientific society. In the eighteenth century, under the Dutch East India Company, the colony was run by an authoritarian Governor who used his powers of patronage for personal and company advantage. The British took permanent control of the Colony in 1806 and the first British Governors retained the Colony's existing social, political and economic order. It was only in the 1820s that this order was successfully challenged. Internally, the city's population and economy had grown and were increasingly able to support middle class social structures. Externally, the Colony was incorporated into British Empire. This led to increased trade opportunities and the oversight of Cape colonial matters by the British parliament. 1820 also saw the arrival of the first large contingent of British settlers. They were largely from Britain's emerging middle classes and brought with them political and economic expectations incompatible with the existing colonial order.

Under the Dutch East India Company, the Cape was run as a monopoly exclusively in the Company's interest. The freeburgers of the Colony were politically powerless and there was no freedom of the press or speech. This powerlessness was challenged by the freeburgers, but apparently to little effect (Schutte, 1989; and Trapido, 1993 and 1994). In 1795, as result of the Napoleonic wars in Europe, the British invaded and took control of the Cape.

This first British occupation, lasting some eight years, saw little change in the Colony. The British, unsure of how long they would retain the Cape, kept the existing administrative and economic structures in place (Freund, 1989). Under the treaty of Amiens the Cape was returned to the Dutch in 1803. In 1806 the British re-took the Colony. Once again, however, they were uncertain as to how long they would retain the Colony and retained the existing Dutch order. They made no substantial changes and being short of money were largely unable to. Their major ambition was to maintain "prosperity and order" (Freund, 1989:327), with the stress probably being on the latter. It was not in the interests of the authoritarian rulers of the Cape to allow a free press and, because the Colony's existing residents had never had a free press, it was not missed.

The administrative and political structure of the Colony remained strongly authoritarian through to the mid-1820s. This should not hide important economic changes. These would eventually play a crucial role in the creation of the city's middle class. Under British rule the economy was progressively opened up and incorporated into the British Imperial trading system. With the elimination of the Dutch East India Company's monopoly system, the Cape-Dutch merchants of the earlier period began to lose influence to British traders. Importantly, the liberalisation of the economy also led to a growing "distance between officials and merchants in this period" (Freund, 1989:328). In 1813 Cape wines exported to Britain received a preferential tariffs and by the early 1820s wine dominated the Colony's exports. British merchants began to strengthen their control of the Colony's trade and in 1817 established the Commercial Exchange to represent their interests (Immelman, 1951; and Worden *et.al.*, 1998).

The population of the Colony also expanded quite considerably in the early nineteenth century. The "Christian" population of the Colony expanded from twenty-two to thirty-seven thousand between 1798 and 1815. This was, however, not reflected in the population of Cape Town, the total population of which remained stable at about fifteen and a half thousand. Of greater relevance to this study is the white population of Cape Town, as this was the only group that joined the scientific organisations. This group grew from around six thousand in 1805 to about seven and a half thousand in 1818 and nine thousand in 1824 (Worden *et.al.*, 1998). With the exception of some merchants, the upper echelons of the Colonial government and the large army garrison the city remained very much a Dutch town. In 1820, 90% of the free white population of

Cape Town was still of Dutch or German extraction, and these groups still overwhelmingly dominated the commercial, administrative and professional classes in the city (Worden *et.al.*, 1998). Until the 1820s the city remained largely un-Anglicised, with the pre-1795 social, legal and administrative structures still in place.

The long-standing status quo began changing in 1814. April of that year saw the arrival of the new Governor, Lord Charles Somerset, and, in August, Britain formally appropriated the Cape as a colony under the London Convention. In the short term, the most important development was simply that the British had accepted long term responsibility for the Colony. Somerset's instructions from the British Government were to change nothing and this no doubt appealed to a man of his conservative inclinations (Peires, 1989). As a result, during Somerset's first period at the Cape, between 1814 and 1820, little changed. Somerset seems to have felt comfortable with the authoritarian and patronage based nature of the Cape political system. He was the second son of the fifth Duke of Beaufort, he had fought in the Peninsula war and appears to have desired little more than a life of Aristocratic privilege, horse racing and hunting (Millar, 1965). He was a high Tory by birth and experience and was dedicated to protecting the rights and privileges of the landed aristocracy. It was his misfortune to live at a time when these rights and privileges were coming under attack from an increasingly powerful and vocal middle class in Britain (see Briggs, 2000). The social and political changes occurring in Britain spread to the Cape colony as it was increasingly incorporated into the British Empire.

The real challenge to the existing status quo began in 1820 with the first large-scale arrival of British settlers. Although the arrival of British settlers did not immediately affect the gross numbers involved in Cape Town itself, they brought with them an explosive mix of assumed rights as British citizens and a middle class urban commercial culture that was at odds with their status in the colony. The 1820 Settlers, as this group is called, were intended to settle as farmers in the Eastern Cape. The plan was sponsored by the Colonial office, with a grant from the Exchequer for £50,000. Unfortunately, from the Colonial Office and the Governor's point of view, most of those to whom land was granted seemed to have had little experience or interest in agricultural matters. By the middle of 1823 less than half the original thousand or so male settlers remained on the farms they had been granted (Peires, 1989). As Peires has observed:

"The majority of the 1820 settlers were not English country gentlemen seeking to replicate their traditional lifestyle, but were themselves products of the new nineteenth-century England, seeking out in a strange land the opportunities which their lack of substantial capital denied them at home." (Peires, 1989:475)

These men on the make brought with them middle class values and traditions that challenged Somerset's authority, and led directly to the free press debate. It was these very same traditions which provided the basis for the attempted establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS.

## 2.4 The Arrival of Pringle and Fairbairn

The 1820 settlers were to cause significant difficulties for Somerset. The two most well known were Thomas Pringle and John Fairbairn. They were Somerset's *bête noires*. Fairbairn especially was the Colony's greatest champion of liberal government or its greatest troublemaker, depending on your point of view. At the level of political practice these amounted to much the same thing. Fairbairn and Pringle were the two chief protagonists in the free press debate of 1824. They were also the men behind the attempted establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. Both men's liberal credentials were as impeccable as Somerset's were conservative. Of the two, Fairbairn was the more important and he drew on his own experiences of emerging middle class culture in Britain in his conflict with Somerset. Two of the most important of these were the radical value of science and legitimising function of literary and scientific societies.

Thomas Pringle came out to the Colony as an 1820 settler. He had been born in Scotland in 1789 and attended Edinburgh University. He was politically radical and would be remembered to history largely as a poet. Having initially settled in the Eastern Cape, he moved to Cape Town in September 1822. He remained there until early 1825. These two and a half years were, on his own account, "by far the busiest, and, to me, the most eventful portion of the six years which I spent in South Africa (Pringle, 1835:188). Soon after arriving in Cape Town he accepted to position of sub-Librarian at the Public Library and decided to start a school to supplement his salary. Importantly, he also decided to start a journal. Initially he seems to have been on good terms with Somerset and the governing elite and his school attracted their support. Pringle used the possibility of the

school and journal to convince his friend from Edinburgh, John Fairbairn, to come to the Cape (Botha, 1984).

John Fairbairn was a fellow Scot, born in 1794. He had met Pringle at Edinburgh in 1812. Fairbairn had come to Edinburgh in 1810 and started medical training in 1812. He seems, however, to have preferred literature to medicine. He never completed his studies and left Edinburgh in 1815. Two features are particularly relevant about this period in Fairbairn's life. First, he and Pringle established a literary society in Edinburgh in 1813 and as Fairbairn's biographer observes, "[t]his interest in 'Literary Societies' was destined to play an important role in Fairbairn's later life" (Botha, 1984:3). Secondly, Fairbairn's medical training provided him with a basic scientific education. This was not just any scientific training. Edinburgh at the time was certainly Britain's leading scientific and intellectual centre, especially in medicine, natural historical and the biological sciences. New ideas were being brought in from the Continent. These ideas challenged not only existing scientific claims, but the very basis of their authority (Desmond, 1989). This scientific training may help explain not only Fairbairn's enthusiasm for science, but also his qualifications for presenting a series of lectures on "Natural science", in the early 1830s. Fairbairn is not known to historians as a man of science, but it would seem that science formed an important part of his political self-consciousness.

Fairbairn left Edinburgh University in 1815 and by 1818 was living in Newcastle upon Tyne. Here he worked as a classics master at a local school. He was also a member of the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society and the Newcastle upon Tyne Antiquarian Society.<sup>2</sup> The Literary and Philosophical Society had been founded in 1793 and was intended as an educational forum to provide for the discussion of "mathematics, physics, natural history, chemistry, literature, commerce, general law and the art" (Botha, 1984:8). Fairbairn was a member of this Society between 1818 and 1823, when he left Newcastle for the Cape. During this period Fairbairn presented three papers. These were:

1. "Principles of Translation" in September 1819,
2. "Observations on the Poetical Works of Wordsworth", January 1821,

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<sup>2</sup> His membership of the Literary and Philosophical Society has been noted before (Botha, 1984). His membership of the Antiquarian Society has, however, gone unrecorded (See his membership certificate, South African National Library (Cape Town): "MSB.193,1(8) Printed Material John Fairbairn")



3. "The Use of the Supernatural in modern Works of Fiction", July 1823.

The three papers reveal Fairbairn's major literary, as opposed to scientific, interests. The Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society and the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS represented similar social groups and embodied similar conceptions of science. The connection between the Newcastle and Cape Town Societies is explored more fully in *Section 2.7*.

Pringle had invited Fairbairn to accompany him and his family to the Cape in 1819, but at the time Fairbairn was settled comfortably in Newcastle and turned down the offer. In late 1822 Pringle wrote to Fairbairn again inviting him to the Cape. This time he had some concrete proposals for Fairbairn, which included the school and the possibility of a journal. In addition, he suggested that these activities would be financially advantageous. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 1823 Fairbairn wrote to Pringle accepting the invitation and announcing his intention to emigrate. Especially revealing is the following:

"Your hint about Magazines and Newspapers pleases me exceedingly. What should hinder us from becoming the Franklins of the *Kaap*? The history of the settlement requires to be brought down by rational men on the spot for a good number of years. Little or nothing has been done in the natural history of South African since Spaarman and Vaillant, and it is a rich region in that respect. There are still unknown kingdoms, or at least provinces, for us to explore.

I have a number of literary schemes in my head, some of which may furnish us with matter for communication. I suppose you have no such thing as public lectures among you on any subject. Yet surely lectures on Chemistry, Geology, botany and other departments of science, might be rendered both acceptable and useful to your new countrymen. Turn your thoughts to this topic till we meet."(quoted in Pringle, 1835:189)

These comments provide one of the most compelling reasons for think that while Fairbairn was a literary man, he intended, in some or other way, to pursue the sciences during his time at the Cape. Four months later, in late June, Fairbairn set sail for the Cape. On the first of December 1823 Pringle and Fairbairn opened their Classical and Commercial Academy, which appears to have been well supported by the Cape Town elites. While their educational project was to be relatively well received, their journalistic enterprises were soon to create severe tensions.

Internationally Fairbairn and Pringle were not unusual in the early nineteenth century with their combination of radical liberalism, interest in science, involvement in the press, participation in civic organisations and Scottish backgrounds. Desmond (1989) has shown this combination was common

amongst Edinburgh trained medical men in London in the 1830s, while Uglow (2002) and Porter (2000) have shown how Scottish trained medical men brought this set of interests together in their construction of Britain's intellectual enlightenment in the later eighteenth century. A similar combination can be found in the activities and interests of the writer and publisher Robert Chambers, author of the (1844) *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (Secord, 1994 and 2000). Aside from sharing a specific scientific and civic culture that was quite different from the English, Scots had a number of commonalities with the Cape-Dutch. They shared the Calvinist faith. Both Cape and Scottish legal systems were based on Roman rather than English common law. Interactions of the English, Scottish and Cape-Dutch at the Cape would have been significantly influenced by these comparisons, but these have yet to be extensively examined by historians of the Cape.

## 2.5 The Free Press Debate

Central to the establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was the free press debate, which began in 1824. It was around Fairbairn and Pringle's publications that an existing but largely inchoate Cape middle class movement first began to openly coalesce. The middle class had been slowly developing for sometime and its conflict with the Government was not new, but they came into the open in 1824. The history of the free press debate has traditionally been told in terms of the leading personalities of Fairbairn, Pringle and Somerset. More recently it has been examined as one of the battles for authority in the Colony between the existing elites and a new anglophone middle class (McKenzie, 1993).<sup>3</sup> The free press debate made apparent existing divisions and allegiances within Cape Town and created new ones. Fairbairn and Pringle later drew on these in establishing the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS.

The free press debate has received extensive attention elsewhere (Botha, 1984; and Lewin-Robinson, 1962) and here it is only briefly reviewed. Somerset's antagonism to a free press was already clear by 1820, when the Government seized a printing press that a group of settlers were attempting to bring into the

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<sup>3</sup> More accurately, according to McKenzie these journals, and especially the *Advertiser*, were part of a broader project to generate a middle class political movement.

colony (Peires, 1989). This continued a long-standing policy in the Colony, going back to at least 1800, when Sir George Young, then the British Governor of the Colony, had seized a press and made printing a Government monopoly. Until 1824 the only publication in the colony was the *Cape Town Gazette and Commercial Advertiser*. It was published on behalf of the Government for the announcement of official proclamations and for commercial advertising. In the first half of 1823 several independent attempts were made to start presses in the colony. The men involved were George Greig, the Rev. Abraham Faure and Thomas Pringle. By early 1824, each was involved with his own publication. The Rev. Faure and Pringle had first applied to the government for permission to publish a joint journal on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 1823. The idea was to publish a monthly journal alternating between English and Dutch, with Faure editing the Dutch version and Pringle the English. Somerset turned down this request.

"I do not doubt the good intentions of the Gentlemen who now propose to conduct a *South African Magazine* but various unlooked for circumstances might arise which might lead to its falling into other Hands – when it might become an active & uncontradicted Engine directed against our Civil and political Establishments & most probably particularly against the Established Church, the rites of which I consider it my first duty to defend. I cannot believe that the Colony possesses the means or a reading population adequate to render this proposition sufficiently profitable."(Somerset, 11 February 1823, quoted in Botha, 1984:15)

In March 1823, George Grieg, a printer, arrived at the Cape. In June he requested permission to start a newspaper, but Somerset also turned this down.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1823 Somerset summoned Pringle and informed him that he could go ahead with his *Journal*. This abrupt about turn was a result of a letter from Bathurst, Secretary for the Colonies and War, approving of Pringle's intention to publish a journal. Somerset's sensitivity to such instructions was probably increased by the presence of the Commissioners of Inquiry, who were investigating various charges of misrule and mismanagement against him. The granting of permission involved such an about face in Somerset's position that it must have been given grudgingly and with the expectation that it would lead to trouble. With this permission, Fairbairn, who had only recently arrived at the Cape, and Pringle began to flesh out their plans for a *South African Journal*, while Faure prepared the Dutch language *Het Nederduitsch Zuid-Afrikaansch Tijdschrift*. Greig put together a prospectus for his *South African Commercial Advertiser*, but his application for permission to go ahead with publication received no response from the government other than a being informed about

an advertising tax. He took this as permission to publish. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of January 1824 the first edition of the *Advertiser* appeared. Greig found it difficult to manage both the printing and editing himself and from the third edition, of 7<sup>th</sup> of February, onwards the editing and much of the writing was contracted out to Fairbairn and Pringle. Fairbairn and Pringle's own *Journal* was first published on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March. By early 1824 the only two English language publications in the Colony were under the control of the same men.<sup>4</sup>

Pringle and Fairbairn did not take long to fulfil Somerset's fears. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of March the *Advertiser* began to carry law reports. These included various accounts of legal matters involving the Governor: including a libel trial with a lawyer, William Edwards, who had accused Somerset of abusing his authority. Similarly, an article in the second, 5<sup>th</sup> of May, edition of the *Journal* accused the Government of mistreating English settlers in the Eastern Cape. The Fiscal,<sup>5</sup> Daniel Dennyssen, summoned Pringle and Fairbairn and accused them of contravening the conditions of their license, which obliged them to avoid all topics of political controversy. Although not censored, Fairbairn and Pringle choose to stop publishing in the face of these limitations and threats. According to the Commissioners of Inquiry, Somerset had not instructed Dennyssen to threaten Pringle and Fairbairn and in fact wished the *Journal* to be continued. Fairbairn and Pringle, however, refused to be constrained by the terms of their prospectus. In the evidence submitted by the Commissioners, Fairbairn is recorded as saying, "I considered the Prospectus as addressed to the subscribers and to the Public, and not as a Law that would make us amenable to the Government or the Court of Justice" (Theal, 1904, XXIV: 41). This attitude was known to Somerset by mid-1824 and played a role in the Governor's suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS.

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<sup>4</sup> Faure also first published his *Tijdschrift* in early 1824, but both he and his journal remained out of the free press debate and played no further role in the events. Their absence is informative. Faure did not sign up for the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, the *Tijdschrift* was not censored and he seems to have maintained good relations with the Government. His political interests and concern were also completely tangential to those of Pringle and Fairbairn and represented no challenge to Somerset's authority.

<sup>5</sup> The Fiscal was a senior judicial officer who was both in charge of financial (treasury) matters and acted as the Prosecutor General. This overlap of roles was open to abuse and was criticised by the Commission of Inquiry. The roles were separated in the administrative and legal changes of the late 1820s

By early May, Pringle and Fairbairn's attempt to establish an English press in the Colony had failed and their relationship with the Government had collapsed. Leaving questions of political rights and wrongs aside, Fairbairn and Pringle's descent from grace was brought on as much by their own intransigence as that of the Government. The autocratic policies of Somerset may have been unacceptable, but from his perspective Fairbairn and Pringle had overstepped the boundaries. His fears had been confirmed. He would not allow the *Advertiser* to resume publication until August of the following year and then only once a large surety for good behaviour had been pledged. Fairbairn and Pringle did not slip into inactivity. Rather they shifted the focus of their activities while keeping the same ultimate political goal of challenging the Government to liberalise the colony's administration.

The free press debate was symptomatic of broader social changes occurring in the colony. The early 1820s had seen the emergence of an increasingly vocal, if not yet politicised, middle class in the Colony. Without support from this group, Fairbairn and Pringle would not have been able to sustain their campaign against the Government. Certain members of this group were of specific importance to Fairbairn and Pringle and provided essential support. These writers, financial contributors, subscribers and other supporters were all necessary. Once the publications had been cancelled, Fairbairn and Pringle drew on this support in their further calls for the freedom of the press and Fairbairn later drew on his supporters for the surety required to restart the *Advertiser* in 1825.

The importance of acknowledging the social dimension of the free speech debate lies less in its explanatory value than that it points to the wider support that Fairbairn and Pringle enjoyed and which they could draw on in their other endeavours. The debate left visible in the record what might be thought of as the membership list of the "Pringle and Fairbairn free speech support group". The key document for this was the May 1824 Petition for a free press, sent to the King with two hundred and ten signatures (Theal, 1904, XXIV). In a period before political parties, what coalesced around the two Scots can be thought of a proto-political party. Given Somerset's autocratic tendencies, he probably objected as much to this as to the critical articles published in the *Advertiser* and *Journal*. It is on this group of supporters that Fairbairn and Pringle leaned most

heavily when they decided two months later to attempt the establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS.

## 2.6 The Attempted Establishment of the First South African Literary Society

Pringle and Fairbairn began their attempt to establish the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS by, at the latest, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 1824. The attempt ended on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September, when Pringle wrote to the supporters of the Society announcing its demise. In this two-month period Fairbairn and Pringle attempted to establish the first literary, scientific or philosophical society in the Colony. Their failure has traditionally been blamed on the antagonism between them and the Governor and on the Governor's reactionary and conservative views. These accounts have merit. But they ignore the timing of the attempted establishment and the deeply political nature of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. Pringle and Fairbairn had only recently decided to withdraw their publications and in establishing the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS they drew on the support of the very same individuals who stood by them in the free press debate. In a time of acute political crisis in the Colony, Pringle and Fairbairn tried to establish an organisation whose membership drew largely on groups highly critical of Government. It is as a political body that the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS can be most usefully be interpreted. As such it represented a challenge to Somerset and this is ultimately why it was suppressed.

The first recorded meeting for the establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 1824 (SALS, 1963). It was held at the home of George Thompson and C. S. Pillans, two business partners. According to a letter written by Pringle on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September, there were eleven men in attendance (Pringle, manuscript II: 103). In this letter Pringle notes that he was invited to act as Secretary and Fairbairn prepared and read an address. A Committee of three persons was appointed to draw up the Society's regulations. It is probably safe to assume Pringle and Fairbairn were on this Committee, while the third might have been W. T. Blair, an East India Company colonial official who signed several of the Society's documents. Given that Fairbairn read a prepared statement, this is unlikely to have been the first meeting concerning the Society. Many of the founding members were already regularly meeting socially, so there would have been many earlier informal opportunities to discuss the possibility of



establishing such an organisation. Bigge and Colebrooke claimed, the following year, that Pringle and Fairbairn were the two men ultimately behind the establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS (Theal, 1904:XXIV), and all the evidence points to this conclusion.

Fairbairn and, to a lesser extent, Pringle had a history of being involved in such literary organisations. In addition to jointly founding a literary society in Edinburgh in 1813, Fairbairn was also involved with the Newcastle upon Tyne Literary and Philosophical and Antiquarian Societies. In addition he had written two articles on scientific societies, which had been published in the *South African Journal*. In the first he had laid out the advantages of such organisations and in the second the rules that should regulate them. He did not, however, explicitly call for their establishment at the Cape. Between the first edition of the *Advertiser* in January and its closure in early May, there was not a single article or letter calling for the establishment of such a scientific or literary society. There is one possible exception, a letter printed in the *Advertiser* on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January, calling for the establishment of an Agricultural Society (*Advertiser*, 3, January 28, 1824). Although published anonymously, it may have been written by Fairbairn. Whether or not he wrote the letter, Fairbairn was at that point already in charge of editing the paper, so the article certainly would have received his approval. Although it is probably correct to assume that Fairbairn was planning at some point to start a literary or scientific society, he had given no obvious sign of actually initiating one before the *Advertiser* and *Journal* were closed in early May.

When Fairbairn did start the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS he drew heavily on supporters from the free press debate. Soon after the closure of the *Advertiser* and *Journal* a Petition calling for the freedom of the press was prepared to be sent to the King. It collected two hundred and ten signatures (Theal, 1904, XXIV). Although dated the 26<sup>th</sup> of May 1824, Somerset only officially saw this Petition in December. He had, however, obtained a copy much sooner and certainly before early July. He sent a letter to Bathurst, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July, in an attempt to head off the criticisms of the petitioners, and claimed that Fairbairn and Pringle were behind the exercise (Botha, 1984). One result of this was that when Pringle and Fairbairn tried to establish the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, Somerset was familiar with the names of many, if not most, of their immediate supporters.

Of the eleven men who were at the first meeting for the 1st SALS on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July, ten can be confidently identified. These ten men are Fairbairn, Pringle, W. T. Blair, C. S. Pillans, George Thompson, H. E. Rutherford, Benjamin Moodie, W L Von Buchenroder, C. T. Thornhill and the Rev. Dr. Philip, director of the London Missionary society in the Cape (Pringle, 1835). All but the last four signed the free press petition to the King. The eleventh man was probably James B. Gray (see Botha 1984). He did not in the end join the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, but he did sign the free press Petition. In addition to the six who signed the free press Petition, Somerset believed the Rev. Dr. Philip to have been involved in preparing the Petition. He viewed Philip, Fairbairn and Pringle as central players in a cabal dedicated to his downfall. As he reported to the Commissioners of Inquiry,

"After I left you on Tuesday I received a great deal of intelligence respecting the Press and perhaps you will not marvel to learn that Dr Philip is the head huntsman and that Mr Fairbum [sic.], Mr Pringle, and Paddy Wright are the whippers in – that they met at dinner once every week when the paragraphs were concocted. The Doctor gave out when he left town that he went out of his way to avoid the constant solicitation made to him to sign a memorial for a free press and wished to take no part – those were matters not within his calling! Villain – Hypocrite! When he himself is the primum mobile." (quoted in Millar, 1965:196)

It was probably out of this social and political dining habit that the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS first emerged – although there is not direct evidence to support this.<sup>6</sup> Out of a total of eleven men at the first meeting, Somerset would have recognised *at least* eight as politically antagonistic to him and his government. In addition to this, Benjamin Moodie, another of the men at the first meeting, is known to have written for the *Advertiser*, although there is no indication that Somerset knew of this.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> McKenzie notes in connection with the annual dinners of the Commercial Exchange that, "These dinners formed part of what might be termed the proto-political activities of Cape Town's middle class, who were otherwise denied a formal role in the Public sphere they were taking such pains to construct" (McKenzie, 1993:206). The weekly dinners of Fairbairn, Pringle and their supporters can be seen in the same light.

<sup>7</sup> Other than Moodie, Pringle and Fairbairn, the following are also known to have written for the *Advertiser*: Herbert Pugh, George Grieg, George Thompson, and W. T. Blair (Botha, 1984). Thompson and Blair were at the first meeting, Grieg had left the Colony to avoid banishment, and Herbert Pugh would later sign up for the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. The links between the *Advertiser* and 1<sup>st</sup> SALS are undeniable.



In his address at the first meeting, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July, Fairbairn laid out his conception the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, placing "Natural Science" squarely at its centre. He noted the widespread existence of Literary and Philosophical Societies, and claimed that such societies were composed largely of the "lovers of natural history"(SALS, 1963:3), an endeavour involving both large numbers of observations and the large-scale co-operation of participants. He identified botany, geography, mineralogy, and human nature as topics of scientific investigation that could be usefully pursued by members of the Society. The focus was to be natural history in its broadest extent. Fairbairn also acknowledged that given the small size of the Cape intellectual community it would be necessary to include other topics to ensure the success of the Society. These other topics included "polite literature, moral philosophy, metaphysics and the principles of society" (SALS, 1963:3). About these additional literary pursuits, however, he said nothing else. He also moved for the establishment of a library, which was to have a broad remit, and a natural history museum. The first meeting of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS saw a group of Fairbairn and Pringle supporters dedicate themselves to the establishment of a scientific organisation.

Fairbairn and Pringle may have chosen to establish a scientifically oriented literary organisation for several related reasons. In an era before open political activity was acceptable it would have provided a forum for the exploration of political and social ideas. This is not to say that the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was necessarily intentionally conceived of as a proto-political organisation. Rather, as McKenzie (1993 and 1997) has argued, organisations such as the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS were an essential part of the middle class culture that Fairbairn was actively trying to recreate in Cape Town. As she explains,

"[t]he rational public sphere which the *Advertiser* sought to establish needed to be based on sites of discourse [such as] ... coffee houses and assembly rooms, supported by subscription, in which the reading or printed material and the discussion of ideas expressed in them were crucial to the construction of a 'civilized' society." (McKenzie, 1993:23)

Seen in this manner, the establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was merely the continuation of the middle class program previously pursued through the *Advertiser*. McKenzie makes no mention of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, but almost everything she claims for the *Advertiser* can be claimed for the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. The Society would have provided a space for rational middle class discourse *par excellence* and it would have been under the direct control of Fairbairn and his supporters. Clubs and societies were not only typical of the early nineteenth century British culture

(Clark, 2000), but were a key element of the civil society Fairbairn wished to create at the Cape. The success of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS would also have buttressed his claims for the value and worthiness of a derided Cape social and intellectual culture. This was a prerequisite for his longer-term political ambition to get a legislative assembly for the Colony.<sup>8</sup>

Having decided to found a literary society, a second meeting of founding members was called on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August. The Society's regulations were discussed and several new applications were made for membership (Pringle, manuscript II: 103, 16/9/1824). The meeting was then adjourned until the 11<sup>th</sup>, so as to allow for the preparation of further rules and regulations and to allow for further membership applications (Pringle, manuscript II: 103, 16/9/1824). A single report of the Committee's findings on both the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> was printed in the *PSALS*. The chief purpose of the society was now further specified as promoting:

"a taste for polite learning; to encourage the study and cultivation of science; and, to excite and cherish the love of research, and zeal for discovery in every department of liberal knowledge." (SALS, 1963:6)

Geology, mineralogy, botany, natural history, as well as agriculture were again identified as suitable topics for investigation, and to this end the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was:

"to hold regular Monthly Meetings throughout the year, for the reception of Original Papers and Communications on Literary and Scientific Subjects; and, also to advance a moderate Annual Subscription for the establishment of a Library and Museum; and for the purchase of philosophical apparatus." (SALS, 1963:6)<sup>9</sup>

The Committee was also anxious that none of these tasks should be too onerous, either financially or on the time and energy of its members and it set the Society comparatively modest goals. This apparent modesty needs to be seen in the light of Fairbairn's ambitious inclusive political program, which aimed to create as large a cultured and literate political class as possible. Too stringent membership requirements would have discouraged membership and weakening its value to Fairbairn as a crèche for his middle class movement.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> McKenzie (1993) does not explore the place of science in Fairbairn's program.

<sup>9</sup> A library already existed in the Colony, and the Governor was to establish a natural history museum the following year.

<sup>10</sup> The movement was to be as inclusive as possible, so as to ensure its strength. It also had to remain carefully exclusive, so as to ensure it maintained its suitably middle class, and polite character.

Paralleling these positive proposals for the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, there was a strong negative proposal that ran through both reports of the Committee. In his paper delivered on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July, Fairbairn explicitly excluded from the Society any topic of contention.

"It has likewise been found a prudent measure, and very conducive to the peace and permanency of such associations, to exclude many topics of great interest and importance, but on which men's opinions are formed, rather from their natural temperament and the accidents of life, than from universally admitted axioms, or indisputable authorities. Under this head we must rank conduct of existing Governments, or what is called the Politics of the day, controversial Theology, and, in Slave-countries, we may add, the subject of Slavery. Subjects, also, which are purely professional, though the professions may be liberal, are not agreeable to the genius of such institutions, the members of which should be considered merely as men of liberal minds, and not as Politicians, Theologians, Lawyers, or Physicians." (SALS, 1963:3)

This was seconded in the report of the Society Committee delivered on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of August, a report probably written by Pringle (SALS, 1963:8). This intention was then formalised in second rule of the Society:

"2. Any subject not involving the politics of the day, or controversial theology, shall be open to discussion at the ordinary meetings, and these excepted topics shall at no time be admitted into the papers or conversations of the Society." (SALS, 1963:10)

This rule was not necessarily intended purely as a response to the events of the free speech debate. Fairbairn had already stressed the importance of excluding controversial matters from societies in his paper on the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society (Fairbairn, 1824b). Such a rule was also typical of almost all scientific, literary and philosophical societies in the period and had been so since at least the establishment of the Royal Society in 1660. The free speech debate was important because it meant that the government no longer trusted Fairbairn to keep his promises. His protestations to the contrary were less than convincing.

Whatever Fairbairn's claimed intentions to exclude political debate from the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, the exclusion would have been interpreted in the light of the recent closure of the *Journal and Advertiser*. Although entirely conventional for the type of organisation that Fairbairn and Pringle wished to establish, the exclusion would have also been intended to soothe the sensitive nerves of Somerset and his Government. In this it failed. A more important consequence of the declared exclusion of politics and other controversial matters would have been to reassure potential members of the propriety of joining the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. This would

certainly explain the membership of several men, such as Sir John Truter,<sup>11</sup> the Chief Justice, who were not obvious supporters of Fairbairn and Pringle. The possible importance of honest intellectual interest in joining the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS should not be ignored, with the significant proviso that there be few social or political impediments to doing so.

Immediately after the second meeting, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August, a technical problem arose. According to Pringle, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August he met with the Commissioners of Inquiry who warned him that the establishment of the Society might be in contravention of some existing law (Pringle, manuscript II: 104, 16/9/1824). They were concerned with the Proclamation of the 19<sup>th</sup> of February 1800 by Sir George Young. This had been issued during the first British occupation of the Cape for the suppression of Jacobin societies. The Commissioners suggested that the Society seek the advice of the Colonial Secretary. Legal advice was also sought from advocate Henry Cloete, who thought it unnecessary to approach the Colonial Secretary. He suggested that a personal application should be made directly to Somerset both for permission and for his patronage. Nevertheless, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August Pringle and Blair approached P. G. Brink, the acting Colonial Secretary, to enquire about any formal requirements needed for the establishment of the Society. According to Pringle, Brink said he knew of no impediment to the establishment of the Society, but suggested that the Society write to request formal permission from the Governor (Pringle, manuscript II: 104, 16/9/1824). At the third meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> of August it was then unanimously agreed that Somerset be requested to become Patron. A deputation of nine members was then authorised to wait on Somerset and request him to become the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS's patron.

Probably in an attempt to deflect Somerset's personal dislike for them, neither Fairbairn nor Pringle were members of the nine-man delegation sent to approach the Governor. These nine members were: Sir John Truter, the Chief

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<sup>11</sup> Sir John Truter is one of the difficult members of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS in that he doesn't fall into any obvious anti-Government category. He was, at this time, Chief Justice of the colony, a supporter of Somerset and, although Cape born and educated at Leiden, strongly pro-British. Somerset forced him to withdraw his membership of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. The only explanatory factor is that he seems to have joined all the literary and scientific societies founded at the Cape in the 1820s and 1830s. He is an interesting exception, but he is an exception to Cape society in so many ways that his membership need not undermine the arguments presented here.

Justice, Dr. P. J. Truter, Member of the Court of Justice, W. T. Blair an East India Company official, Henry Cloete, an advocate, Dr J. Atherstone<sup>12</sup> and Dr R. Heurtley, both civilian surgeons, R. W. Eaton, a merchant and the Chairman of the Commercial Exchange, and Rev. H. Collison and R. Morrieson. The letter they took to the Governor noted that Somerset might have received some bad impressions about the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, but that the Society would very much like to have him as its Patron. Further, to assure him of its probity they provided him with the organisation's rules and regulations and a list of its members.

The delegation was well chosen to be as innocuous as possible. Only two men who signed the free press Petition joined it, Blair and Eaton, and it included two senior colonial officials, the Truters. This could not hide Fairbairn and Pringle's involvement or the fact that Somerset would have recognised a large number of the members of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS as political and personal opponents. An examination of the first membership list shows that of the 61 names, at least fourteen had signed the free press petition. Since Somerset had already seen this he would have recognised the names as political opponents. In addition, he would have recognised the names of several other opponents, including the Rev. Dr. Philip and Charles D'Escury, the last of which had made criminal accusations against him to Lord Bathurst. Of the sixty-three names that eventually appeared on the various Society documents given to Somerset, the Governor was antagonistic to at least sixteen, or 25%, of the men. This includes just those men Somerset is recorded to have disliked or is known to have had a reason to dislike. It probably undercounts the total.

The Government's response was immediate and, given the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS's membership, could not have been unexpected. P. G. Brink replied on behalf of the Governor on the 16<sup>th</sup> expressing Somerset's extreme displeasure. Somerset objected to the way that the Society had been formed by persons "who have wilfully paid so little regard to the Authorities and established regulation of the colony" (SALS, 1963:18). He also noted that Sir John Truter had withdrawn his name from the Society's list. There was a further exchange of letters, as well as

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<sup>12</sup> Throughout the *PSALS* the name is given as "T. Atherstone". This is very likely to have been a systematic typographical error. John Nottingham Atherstone was an English Surgeon, who had immigrated to the Cape in 1820. He was involved in education and public affairs and in 1825 gave the Colony's first public lectures of natural history (*DSAB*). There is no record of a "T. Atherstone" at the Cape in this period.

various shifts in government policy (Pringle, manuscript II: 109, 16/9/1824) and then on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September another memorial was sent to Somerset. This time Pringle signed the cover letter to the memorial himself. The memorial reads:

"your Memorialists have made considerable progress in organizing in Cape Town, a Literary and Scientific Society, for the purpose of promoting the study of polite learning, of encouraging researches in natural science, and of affording a ready means of correcting observations, and of making public for the common good such discoveries in any of the above-mentioned branches of knowledge, as the learned or diligent friends of improvement may be pleased to communicate.

In requesting your Excellency's sanction to such a Society, and permission to hold its meetings in Cape Town, for the attainment of the objects which have been named, your Memorialists beg leave to assure your Excellency, that they are actuated solely by a desire of securing for themselves, their fellow Colonists, and such Strangers as may from time to time visit the Cape, an addition to the facilities already afforded by the South African Library, for the attainment of literary information and rational amusement; and that they have made provision rigidly to exclude from all their papers and conversations, politics, controversial theology, and every subject not connected with the primary objects of the institution." (SALS, 1963:19-20)

The reply came from Brink the next day, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September. It reiterated Somerset's refusal, this time, however, including a reason.

"it would be inconsistent with his duty to permit the establishment which might have a tendency to produce political discussion." (SALS, 1963:23)

Given the repeated protestations of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS that it would actively exclude all political discussion, the Government's reason for preventing its establishment was given immediately in Brink's letter.

"His Excellency is aware that the proposed Society professes to abstain from the introduction of such topics; at the same time His Excellency feels assured that he only has to call your attention in this respect, to the disappointment he has recently experienced under similar assurance, to justify his declining to accede to the establishment of the Society as presently constituted." (SALS, 1963:23)

This was a reference to Fairbairn and Pringle's failure to abide by their prospectus and steer clear of contentious political matters in the *Advertiser* and *Journal*. It did not help that the acceptance of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS depended crucially on Somerset's belief that things would be different and that this time they would abide by their own rules and regulations. Quite reasonably, he thought this unlikely. As a result, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September Pringle wrote to those who had signed up for the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS officially announcing its closure.

The account offered identifies four related reasons for Somerset's suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. The first is that Somerset came to intensely dislike Fairbairn and Pringle at a personal level. This is related to the second factor, the political

animosity between them brought out into the open by the free press debate. This, in turn, relates to the third factor, in addition to Pringle and Fairbairn, many of those who signed up for the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS were opposed to Somerset. In the case of at least a quarter of the membership, Somerset knew of this hostility. The fourth factor brings these three factors together. The 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was a political grouping of opponents to the Colonial *status quo*. They were aligned around Fairbairn and Pringle and presented a direct challenge to Somerset. Somerset had no objection to science or literary pursuits, according to Millar (1965), and may have had no objection to a 1<sup>st</sup> SALS in the abstract, according to Botha (1984). What he did object to was an organisation operating outside of the Government's control, especially an organisation dominated by his opponents. His invocation of the 1800 anti Jacobin Proclamation was entirely appropriate. The original law was intended to provide the Colonial administration with direct control over the existence and nature of radical societies and clubs.

## 2.7 Fairbairn's Conception of Science

The 1<sup>st</sup> SALS embodied a conception of science that directly challenged Somerset's aristocratic authority. Science offered Fairbairn a way to attack the vested interests of Cape Town's elite and secure the social legitimacy of the city's middle classes. In doing this Fairbairn drew on a British tradition of radical science that was closely associated with dissenting and liberal political views. His conception of science was public, educational and overtly utilitarian. Thackray (1974) and Desmond (1989), amongst others, have argued that in the late eighteenth and early to mid-nineteenth centuries, excluded non-conformists and the emerging middle classes saw in science the possibility not only of social legitimacy, but also cultural authority. Middle class men used science to justify their claims to increasing cultural, political and economic influence. It was to legitimate their assault on the authority and privileges of the landed Aristocracy and Established Church. Science was both a signifier of social status and a weapon against the existing establishment. Fairbairn imported this radical conception of science into the colony and attempted to make the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS largely in its image.

Fairbairn drew on his experiences in the Newcastle upon Tyne Literary and Philosophical Society in attempting to establish the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. In an article on

literary and scientific societies in the second and final, 6<sup>th</sup> of May, edition of the *Journal* Fairbairn presented his own experiences of the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society. He discussed its history, rules and regulations and, most importantly, its explicit exclusion of contentious theological and political topics (Fairbairn 1824b). The Newcastle Society was established in 1793 by William Turner, a religious dissenter and Whig. The Society was preoccupied with applied science, technology and education (Orange, 1983). Turner believed that provincial scientific societies should concentrate their attention on local industrial and utilitarian activities. He drew on the chemist Joseph Priestley's views in regard to the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. Fairbairn may have presented papers on literary subjects before the Newcastle Society, but most papers that were presented would have been on technical and scientific subjects. Fairbairn brought this model to the Cape. Although not apparent in the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, the influence of the Newcastle Society is apparent in the activities of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, established in 1829. Importantly, the Newcastle Society provides a link between the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS and the radical provincial British Literary and Philosophical Societies of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Britain.

Scientific societies in the early nineteenth century have commonly been associated with political radicalism and social marginalism. Thackray (1974) has argued that science was the chosen cultural form for the transformation of the social order in the favour of otherwise excluded or marginal middle class men. He argues for the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society that,

"an adequate understanding of the society hinges on the question of the social legitimization of marginal men, [and] on the adoption of science as the mode of cultural self expression by a new social class ... It turns out that the legitimization, the institutionalization, and the growth of science itself was more nearly a by product of the society than the reason for it." (Thackray, 1974:678)

On Thackray's model, the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society was not so much an expression of members' desires to join the elite as to make themselves the new elite. This analysis does not apply to all literary and scientific societies in Britain at the time or to all literary and scientific societies in Cape Town. It is, however, compatible with both the 1<sup>st</sup> and the later 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The Manchester Society drew on the support of the city's middle classes.<sup>13</sup> This

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<sup>13</sup> An important dimension of Thackray's (1974) account is the role played by religious dissenters and especially Unitarians in the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. The role of religion in the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS is difficult to discern. While Somerset was set to defend the rights of the



group was excluded from the elite and threatened from below by the increasing social tensions created by the industrial revolution. A similar situation existed in Cape Town with the city's middle class consciously struggling to assert their authority, caught as they were between the governing elite and the lower social orders (McKenzie, 1997; and Worden *et.al.*, 1998). Further, both Manchester and Cape Town were intellectually isolated, although to differing degrees. Unlike Manchester though, science was never established as "the cultural mode" of Cape Town's elite or middle classes (Thackray, 1974:682). This radical provincial model was indirectly imported to the Cape through Fairbairn and the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society, but it was not to be a successful transplant.

In addition to being socially and politically radical, Fairbairn offered members of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS an epistemically radical conception of science. This was made explicit in his article on the history and importance of literary societies in the first edition of the *Journal* (Fairbairn, 1824a). In this article, Fairbairn claimed that science was a form of intellectual activity incompatible with either social or intellectual despotism. Science required not only civil freedoms, but also freedom from the dogmatic certainties of the past. The literary and scientific societies he supported were contrasted with the conservative and unchanging world of the universities, where the goal was not the acquisition of new knowledge, but the senseless passing on of the old. As he puts it, in reference to the old universities, and especially Oxford and Cambridge:

"Tied by forms and systems, and every restriction, they remained moored to their anchors, in a sort of state between sleeping and waking, in which the images of the past glide softly over the mind, leaving only the pleasing remembrance of a thought which has perished" (Fairbairn, 1824a:52).

He compares this gradual descent into senility of Oxbridge with the vibrancy and increasing importance of the scientific societies he wished to champion. In addition to being conservative in their approach to knowledge, the universities were also bastions of social privilege. Fairbairn's anti-Oxbridge feelings seem

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established Church of England this would have meant something quite different in the Cape than in Britain. The vast majority of the white population at the Cape would have belonged either to the Dutch Reformed or Lutheran Churches. The majority of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, however, was of British origin and as such was not representative of Cape Town's population. The extent to which the members were dissenters is, however, unknown.

not to have just been rhetorical. No Oxbridge graduate ever signed up for either the 1<sup>st</sup> or the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS.<sup>14</sup>

The social exclusiveness of the old universities was a further target for Fairbairn. Against this he favourably compared the openness of the literary and scientific societies.

"On the other hand, the New Societies had exclusively in view discovery invention, and the better application of what was already known, or the recovery of what was lost, or fallen into oblivion. The improvement of the individual, though the necessary consequences, did not form part of the original plan, much less any private interest or party advantage. *Men of talent and of uncommon acquirements, of collected wisdom and enterprising philanthropy alone, had any right or any desire to become members. They were not received as pupils to be led, but fellow travellers, who were to aid and encourage each other in their way through an unknown region. Without any written set of opinions to shackle or exclude, their records were open to men of every nation and tongue and opinion. Talent and principled goodness were the only requisites – but these never failed to obtain a cheerful and honourable admission to a participation of labour and usefulness.* Thus arranged on principles and calculated to excite the energies of all to an enobling [sic] emulation, - and guarding against any chance of rancorous or injurious hostility among themselves, or from another quarter, - a body of literary men was speedily organized [sic] altogether irresistable [sic] in its operation against false theories and unproductive systems." (italics added, Fairbairn, 1824a:52-3)

This openness to anyone with interest and ability is reiterated further on in the essay, where Fairbairn stressed the democratic nature of the kind of science that these societies practised.

"The vulgar, as all men then were called who were not regularly initiated in some mystery or profession, now saw themselves as capable of assisting, and of receiving assistance from the learned. The man who could not speculate could observe, the indifferent observer could report, and the union of all these was not only effected, but provided for through all classes of society, and through all the civilised countries of the world." (Fairbairn, 1824a, 54)

The 1<sup>st</sup> SALS would provide a perfect training ground for his desired representative government. That the exclusionary privileges of Oxbridge and the aristocracy would infuriate Fairbairn is not surprising, nor is it surprising that Fairbairn's challenges to such privileges would outrage a man of Somerset's beliefs.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> This should be interpreted with care as the number of Oxbridge graduates at the Cape was very small, but those Oxbridge graduates that did join a scientific organisation chose to align themselves with the later SAI.

<sup>15</sup> The close links between Fairbairn's radical politics and his conception of science support the sociological and historiographical thesis of social constructivism. Shapin and Schaffer have argued

Fairbairn thought of science in two related ways. First, he thought of science in a utilitarian manner. Secondly, he saw it as a powerful cultural and political tool to undermine the authority of established interests. These two conceptions are closely related. The utilitarian agenda would have made science attractive to 'practical' middle class men by offering them a return to their investment of time and money. It would also have offered an alternative ideology or conception of science to that of the gentlemanly amateur. In his article on literary and scientific societies, Fairbairn suggested that the establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was conceived of largely as a way of undermining the elite (1824a). A scientific society was for him a way of wresting authority away from the Aristocracy, Somerset and the colonial Government and claiming it for himself and the city's middle classes. Fairbairn was successful in his ultimate political goals in the Cape, but his attempt to actually establish a radical scientific organisation in Cape Town failed in 1824. Fairbairn tried again in 1829 with the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, but although this was more successful, it also eventually failed. The 1<sup>st</sup> SALS embodied a radical conception of science. Somerset may or may not have recognised this, but it is unlikely to itself have been the reason for the suppression of the society. Somerset had so many more immediate reasons for doing so.

## 2.8 Membership of the First South African Literary Society

An analysis of the supporters of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS confirms the claims already made about the politicised nature of the Society and its radical conception of science. The 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was overwhelmingly middle class, supported mostly by British professionals and businessmen. The majority of support appears to have been drawn from groups antagonistic to the Colonial Government. This antagonism was strongly coloured by specific professional and ethnic allegiances and their

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that "SOLUTIONS to the problem of knowledge are solutions to the problem of social order" (Shapin and Schaffer, 1985:332). In their study of experimentation in Restoration England they have shown how debates about the nature, value and practice of scientific experimentation were simultaneously debates about the nature and value of the social order. Similarly Fairbairn's deployment of radical science provides another example of how social and political values are embedded in the epistemic foundations of science.

interaction with Government policy. Understanding the place of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS in Cape Town requires attention to be given to an extended matrix of political, social, economic and professional factors in motivating support for the Society.

The 1<sup>st</sup> SALS drew its membership largely from the professional and business classes. The breakdown on the membership by occupation can be seen in *Chart 2.1* and by occupational category in *Chart 2.2*. The preponderance on middle class members is not surprising. Not only were they probably the men Fairbairn and Pringle knew socially, but they were also the group that Fairbairn proposed to lead to power. It merely supports that claim already made that the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS should be seen as a proto-political middle class organisation. Interestingly colonial officials form the third largest group in the membership. The colonial officials that joined the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS differed in important ways from the rest of the membership, and are examined later. The most important group of professional men in the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was civilian doctors. Medical men, and especially army and naval surgeons, have traditionally been regarded as one of the key sources of scientifically trained men in colonial, and metropolitan, settings (Browne, 1996). Their presence in the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS may therefore appear unproblematic, merely confirming existing accounts. But only one military doctor, Edward O'Reilly, an Army surgeon in the 55<sup>th</sup> Regiment, joined the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS.<sup>16</sup> This is compared to eight civilian doctors. Civilian doctors played a crucial role in the radical British literary and scientific societies on which the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was based. Both the Manchester and the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Societies drew heavily for their support and leadership on civilian medical men (Thackray, 1974; and Orange, 1983). The membership of civilian doctors in the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS had to do with their social alignment with Cape Town's emerging middle class [Deacon H., 1997; and Worden *et.al*, 1998]. The exclusion, possibly self enforced, of Army doctors from the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS may have had to do with both the Army doctors' social alignment with the governing elite and the professional rivalry between the two medical groups. This antagonism is explored more fully in *Chapter 3*.

Those involved in business formed the other important of group of 1<sup>st</sup> SALS members. In 1817 the British merchants in the colony had established the

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<sup>16</sup> O'Reilly may have been an Army surgeon, but unlike all the other Army surgeons involved in scientific societies in early nineteenth century Cape Town he was a regimental surgeon and not part of the Army's Medical Department (*Cape Almanac*, 1825).

Commercial Exchange, and in 1822 erected a large new building to house it (Immelman, 1955). The Exchange represented the interests of the increasingly ascendant British merchants in the Colony. But as with the professional classes, they felt their political powerlessness incompatible with their increasing economic status. Worden *et.al.* note that,

“the Exchange did become the centre in the 1820s and 1830s of a mercantile pressure group which reflected the frustration of many of the wealthier newcomers at their exclusion from local power”. (Worden *et.al.*, 1998:101)

The links between Fairbairn and the Mercantile Exchange were numerous and the leading members of the Exchange provided him with significant support. The President, Treasurer and two other members of the Exchange' six member Committee signed up for the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS.<sup>17</sup>

British born residents of the Cape dominated the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. *Chart 2.3* provides an analysis of national origins for those members of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS where explicit biographical information exists. 59% of those for whom there is this information were born in Britain. There is only firm data for 30, out the 63 members. There is, however, evidence of varying levels of reliability, about the ethnicity of all the other members.<sup>18</sup> This can be seen in *Chart 2.4*. According to these complete, but less certain, results some 69% of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS members were British born. McKenzie (1993) suggests that Fairbairn's ambition in the 1820s was to create a politicised South African middle class community in Cape Town. This was to draw on both the existing German, Dutch and Cape born residents as well as the newer British settlers. The attempted establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS should certainly be seen as part of this project. In this the Society failed. Not only was it suppressed, but the membership was also overwhelmingly British.

The dominance of British born members in the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS is likely to have been a consequence of two related factors. The first was that the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was, in many ways, a distinctly British phenomena. It was based on a British model of the radical provincial literary and philosophical society. Culturally, the British residents at the Cape would have felt at home in the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, in a way the Cape, Dutch, and German residents may not have. The 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was also part of Fairbairn's attempt to foster civil society. As McKenzie (1993 and 1997) notes,

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<sup>17</sup> This is according to the Committee list for Exchange in the *Cape Almanac* (1825).

<sup>18</sup> This complete data set should be treated with care. See Appendix A for a discussion of the methodological concerns.

this also drew on distinctively British middle class notions of culture and politics. Although Fairbairn wished to create a unified middle class political culture in the colony, in which ethnicity played no role, he was unable to do so. As a result he drew his support overwhelmingly from British residents. His failure to overcome the ethnic divide is apparent in the membership of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. He was to have more success in the later 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS.

Breaking down the membership of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS using a combination of the ethnic and occupation data allows the makeup of the Society's membership to be compared with the makeup of Cape Town as a whole. In 1820 the Wardmasters of Cape Town collected occupational and ethnic data for all the residents of the city.<sup>19</sup> Using the Wardmasters records (from Worden *et.al.*, 1998) and the national origin and occupational information about the members of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, the two groups can be compared. The occupational categories differ slightly between the two populations and the counting and completeness of the Wardmaster's data are also not entirely reliable. Furthermore some four years separates the two sets of data, four years that saw an influx of British residents. Nevertheless, the general trends are sufficiently strong to be interesting. For Cape Town as a whole in 1820 non-British residents massively dominated business, the professions and the colonial administration. This was not the case in 1824 in the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. Here British born businessmen and professional massively dominated their non-British born colleagues. It was only in the category of colonial officials that non-British supporters of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS were representative of the city's white population.

Given the antagonistic relationship between Fairbairn and Pringle and the Governor, the presence of colonial officials in the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS may seem surprising. Yet the Dutch, German and Cape born colonial officials had one particular feature in common with the British born middle classes. They both had reasons to dislike the Government. The 1820s saw the start of the Anglicisation of the Colony, a policy which saw the British colonial officials increasingly dominate the civil service and judiciary (see Worden *et.al.*, 1998). This increased marginalisation of non-British colonial officials might explain their alignment with the British born middle classes. It would imply that membership of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS

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<sup>19</sup> Only white residents are included in this study. This group dominated the professional, business and colonial official categories, and so this does not significantly alter the overall results.

was a complex phenomena dependent on a interplay of professional, ethnic, political and social criteria. Attention needs to be given to each of these factors in explaining the membership of different groups.

The membership of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS had few scientific credentials. The most common science pursued in the early nineteenth century Cape was botany. Yet of the nineteen botanists recorded as being resident in the Cape in 1824 (Gunn & Codd, 1981), only three joined the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. These three were P. H. Poleman, W. L. von Buchenroder and C. F. H. von Ludwig. In addition to these three men, Dr. John Atherstone, a medical doctor and Fairbairn are the only other two with known interests in science, both having given lectures on scientific topics. The highest ranking scientific man in the colony, the Astronomer Royal, the Rev. Fearon Fallows, did not sign up. He was far too closely aligned with the colonial establishment, and was an Oxbridge graduate. Neither would have recommended him to Fairbairn.

The analysis of the membership of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS provides further evidence for the politicised, middle class, nature of the Society. It drew its members largely from groups antagonistic in some or other way with the colonial government. Most of these groups were dominated by British residents, who were a minority amongst the city's white population. It was only from amongst the increasingly alienated Cape-Dutch colonial officials that the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS drew significant non-British support. As with the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS's conception of science, it is unlikely that the Society was primarily suppressed because of its middle class membership *per se*. Rather it was suppressed because many members of the Society, particularly Fairbairn and Pringle, had been actively involved in the free press debate and in attacking Somerset.

## 2.9 Conclusion

Existing histories of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS have largely accepted the liberal English account of the establishment and suppression of the Society. This liberal account was propagated by Fairbairn, Pringle and their later supporters. It assigned the responsibility for the suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS to Somerset. The fact that the Society, its members and its view of science presented a radical political challenge to Somerset's authority was conveniently ignored. In this

*Chapter*, I have examined certain of the ways in which the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS presented a challenge to Somerset. First, the Society was established at a time of intense political turmoil, as witnessed most importantly by the on going free press debate in the Cape. The Society, I have argued, was intended by Fairbairn and Pringle to continue their middle class political program after the suppression of their *Journal* and the *Advertiser*. Secondly, the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS embodied a radical conception of science opposed to the established interests of the aristocracy and Church. Finally, the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS drew its membership from the city's incipient British born middle class, which was antagonistic to the unreconstructed conservatism of the Cape's authorities.

The suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS in late 1824 ended the first attempt to establish such an organisation at the Cape. This attempt to establish the Society was not merely the result of the increased wealth and population of the Colony or of some simple improvement or advance in Cape Town. It was the consequence of an underlying social and political shift in the city, marking the growth in power and importance of the middle classes. The suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was a consequence of the incompatibility of this growing power with the conservative views of the Governor. While the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was founded and suppressed at a moment of acute political crisis in the Colony, this crisis would soon pass. In 1826 Somerset left the Colony and the recommendations of the Commissioners of Inquiry were implemented. This led to a more liberal system of administration and governance. Fairbairn continued to push for the freedom of the press and agitate for representative government. In 1829 he established a new and more successful literary society, the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. This Society forms the subject of the next *Chapter*.



# 3

## The Second South African Literary Society, 1829 - 1832

### 3.1 Introduction

In early 1829 Fairbairn again attempted to establish a literary society. The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS shared that same middle class, liberal socio-political program as the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, but unlike the first Society it was not suppressed. It initially flourished, eventually gaining one hundred and four full members. By 1832, however, it had become moribund. In this *Chapter* I examine the establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS in 1829, Fairbairn's apparent intentions for the organisation, the Society's activities and its membership. Central to my interpretation of Fairbairn's ambitions for the Society is the concept of civil society. I interpret Fairbairn's establishment of the Society as part of his program to develop a middle class political consciousness through the creation of a vibrant civil society in Cape Town.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was dedicated to the sciences and particularly the diffusion of useful knowledge for the purposes of colonial improvement, especially in agriculture. Fairbairn's interest in science would seem to have been largely instrumental, for him science offered a rhetoric of improvement that he could use to generate support for the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and, indirectly, for his political ambitions. He used the Society to claim the pursuit of the sciences for his middle class political movement and challenged the Government's *de facto* monopoly on science in the Colony. He also challenged the legal basis for the Government's control of civil society by using the Society to contest the regulations governing the licensing of organisations.

No one has previously found the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS worth commenting on. Crawford (1934), Hall (1977), and Dubow (1999) merely note its establishment and quickly move on to its merger with the SAI in 1832 (as examined in *Chapter 5*). Other sources simply confuse the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, SAI and the LSI (Worden *et.al.*, 1998),

implicitly treating them as the manifestation of a unified pattern of social organisation and behaviour. The account offered here is not so much at odds with the existing historiography as the breaking of new ground. On its own account the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was merely the re-establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. All previous accounts have accepted this at face value. The continuities between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS are undeniable, but, because of crucial differences, the two organisations should be thought of as distinct. The most important difference was the dramatically different political and social context of their respective establishments. By 1829 the Cape's administration and legal system had been liberalised and an increasingly vibrant civil society was emerging. Whereas the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was one of the only civil organisations in the Colony in 1824, the number of such organisations had significantly expanded over the following five years. In addition, whereas the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was dominated by British born residents, the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS initially drew the majority of its support from members of the city's Cape-Dutch community. The terminology of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS is introduced both for nominal reasons and to point to the important differences between the two organisations.

### 3.2 The Colony Between 1824 and 1829

The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS succeeded, where the first had failed, because of the significant changes that had occurred in the intervening four and a half years. The late 1820s have been widely seen as a period in which a mostly British liberal and humanitarian group temporarily attained political ascendancy in the Colony (Elbourne, 1992; Bank, 1995; and Keegan, 1996). Some of the changes introduced during this period are relatively well understood, including a restructured and liberalised administration. Less well understood are the changing status of the British and non-British middle class residents of Cape Town and the emergence of a vibrant civil society between 1824 and 1829. These changes provided the context for Fairbairn's successful attempt to get the freedom of the press granted to the Colony and his establishment, in early 1829, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. While the emergence of this middle classes have been studied in other contexts (see McKenzie, 1993 and 1997), their involvement in science has been largely ignored. This *Section* briefly explores some of the changes in the Cape colony in the mid- to late 1820s and develops the concept of civil society.

The most obvious political difference between 1824 and 1829 was the change both of the Governor and the status and powers of his position. Somerset had been recalled to England and left in early March 1826, still facing accusations of corruption. He was replaced by the far more liberal Sir Richard Bourke. The replacement of a high Tory by a Whig was intentional on the part of the British Under Secretary for the Colonies, R. W. Horton (Peires, 1989). Bourke's appointment was part of the liberalising and reform minded movement that had led to the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry into the affairs of the Colony in 1822. In September 1829 Bourke was, in turn, replaced by Sir Lowry Cole. He was certainly more Tory than Whig, but, as Hunt (1974), has noted his freedom of action was strictly limited. Not only were his powers circumscribed, but he was also required to seek confirmation from London to enact laws and for any expenditure over £200. London did not wish to allow, let alone encourage, rogue governors.

In addition to increasing London's control on the Governor, reforms instituted from 1825 onward began to provide for (very) limited domestic accountability. The first of these reforms involved the establishment of a Council of Advice. The Governor was required to discuss important matters with this body, although it was not a strong constraint on his behaviour. Whether or not it merely acted as a rubber stamp is open to debate (see Hunt, 1974; and Peires, 1989). The Council was comprised of the Governor, the Chief Justice, who in 1828 became Lt.-Col. Wade, the deputy-quartermaster-general, Lt.-Col. J. Bell, the auditor-general, W. Bentink, and the treasurer, J. W. Stoll. In 1827 two Cape born men, Sir John Truter and Andries Stockenström, were added to the Council to represent Colonial opinion. The Council seems to have been held in fairly low opinion by Fairbairn, who felt that it was inadequate and fell far short of his demands for representative government. He also seem to have held Sir Lowry Cole in comparatively low esteem (Hunt, 1974).

The reform of the Legal system, suggested by the 1822 Commission of Inquiry, was the more important administrative change in the Colony. Peires explains the developments as follows:

"A new Supreme Court was to be created for the Cape, headed by a Chief Justice, who would be the third-ranking official in the Colony. This Supreme Court would take over the role previously performed by the Governor as a Court of Final Appeal. Sir John Truter,

the president of the Court of Justice, and David Denysen, the fiscal, were to be retired immediately, and their place taken by a Chief Justice and Attorney General sent out directly from England. All future judges were to be chosen from the British bar, and all future Cape lawyers were required to take their degree in England." (Peires, 1989:496)

This policy of Anglicisation was not simple chauvinism, although this was probably an important factor. Rather, it was motivated by a desire to institute change in the colony in the face of perceived resistance by the Cape-Dutch residents of the Cape, who were seen as Somerset supporters. Whereas Somerset had insinuated himself into the *status quo*, the Commissioners of Inquiry, the new Governors, and the Colonial Office were all, to a greater or lesser extent, in favour of reform. This reform was too radical for many of the Cape-Dutch residents and too limited for Fairbairn and many of the English speaking middle class residents.

1825 saw not only the beginnings of administrative and legal reform, but also the beginnings of a severe economic depression. This had been the result of the removal of preferential tariffs on Cape wine and led to numerous bankruptcies amongst wine farmers (Ross, 1989). This came on top of several poor harvests and the significant reduction of the St. Helena Garrison after the death of Napoleon earlier in the decade (Worden *et.al.*, 1998). On the more positive side, 1825 saw the British Treasury begin the conversion of the local currency, the Rix-dollar, into sterling. This finally halted the long period of inflation, and the fall in the value of the Rix-dollar (Kantor, 1970). In addition, the Commissioners of Inquiry proposed a complete overhaul of the taxation and concession system. This led to a simplified tax code and the abandoning of monopolies (Peires, 1989). While this liberalised the economy, it did so at the expense of established Cape-Dutch commercial interests. The mid- to late 1820s was not a period of easy growth for Cape Town's merchants and economy more generally. It was a period in which, often British born, merchants came increasingly to identify with each other. Not only had they established the Commercial Exchange, but in 1825 the London based Cape of Good Hope Trading Society began petitioning the British government on behalf of Cape Merchants. The economic difficulties appear to have engendered greater political awareness (Keegan, 1996), but significant economic growth would only occur in the 1830s.

Running parallel to the economic, administrative, legal and political changes instituted in Cape Town in the early 1820s was the growth of an increasingly

vocal and important, commercial and professional, middle class. This middle class group was heterogeneous in language, national origin and its politics and might better be thought of as a group of overlapping middle classes. It drew members from the British and Cape-Dutch communities and political liberals and conservatives (which did not divide the community along the same lines as language). With such heterogeneity the middle classes were divided on all the important issues of the day, most importantly slavery. A single coherent middle class identity was not established at the Cape in the period that could encompass all the divergent interests of the members of the group. While at first glance it appears that in the late 1820s a strong middle class identity was forming around Fairbairn, this was torn apart in the early 1830s by the rapid assimilation of many middle class members into the colonial elite and by the trauma, for slave holders, of emancipation. There was not so much 'a' middle class in Cape Town as 'multiple' middle classes with shifting patterns of allegiance.

One expression of the development of these middle class groups was the expansion of civil society in Cape Town, as witnessed by the massive increase in the numbers of civil organisations. By the mid-1820s a socio-economic middle class had been developing for some time and was, in part, already antagonistic toward the ruling elite. What Fairbairn, Pringle and other, mostly British settlers, brought to the Cape in the early 1820s was a positive conception of a possible middle class cultural and political order actively opposed to the existing *status quo*. Put positively, Fairbairn, as a good Whig, wished to see the Government's authority circumscribed and civil society expanded. From a critical point of view, Fairbairn wished to see the Government's authority serve the commercial and social interests of his supporters. A change that involved compromising the interests of others; most notably many members of the established Cape-Dutch and the often overlapping group slaveholders. As such, Fairbairn was advancing a program to create a particular humanitarian liberal middle class political movement that would ultimately undermine itself. The humanitarian order he initially proposed was incompatible with the interests of many of those whose support he needed.

Broman (2002), in a survey of the relation between science and civil society, identifies three important features of the concept of civil society, two of which are

relevant.<sup>1</sup> First, entry into and membership of civil society was entirely voluntary. Secondly, civil society was understood not in hierarchical terms but as a social contract between free and equal participants. More generally, Broman observes that,

“the establishment of “society” as something separate from the government and political authority furnished an exceptionally powerful tool for the understanding of human relations. Characteristically ... neither society nor government constituted or preceded each other. Instead, both came into being simultaneously and necessarily as part of the other's formation. (Broman, 2002:9-10)

The notion of civil society is intimately connected to the legitimacy and self-conception of the liberal and democratic political system. The emergence of civil society was not an automatic consequence of the emergence of a middle class, but part of the intentional reordering of the socio-political system in a particular group's favour. In attempting the establishment of civil society at the Cape, Fairbairn and his supporters were embarking on a highly political program.

The political nature of civil society was recognised at the time by members of the conservative Cape Dutch elite. In December 1831 *De Zuid Afrikaan* carried an editorial highly critical of most of the societies in the city, scientific or otherwise (*De Zuid Afrikaan* II (88), December 9, 1831). *De Zuid Afrikaan* was virulently opposed to the John Fairbairn and his liberal middle class program. It saw the large number of societies established at the Cape since 1820 as a problem, virtually a pathological condition in need of a solution. Although not directed explicitly against Fairbairn, the editorial noted that,

“in many Communities, Societies and Institutions are found, which, encouraged by particular views and self-interest have the most prejudicial tendency, to undermine the social bond of union in all manner of deceitful and artful ways; violently attack and endeavour to overturn the existing order of things, and perhaps exalt the supporters of this disorder, confusions, and violation of the social bond of union, at the expense of the remaining part of the Community, whose greatest and most dangerous enemies they are, and for these reasons hate the peace and order on which the Community exists and must regularly proceed, so long as their members have not made up their minds and wish to return to that *unsocial* or natural state.” (*De Zuid Afrikaan* II(88), 9 December, 1831)

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<sup>1</sup> Broman (2002) identifies a third feature of civil society: civil society firmly distinguished between the social and the home and family. This had the effect of making the role of women in society problematic. This has been explored in the context of early to mid nineteenth century Cape Town by McKenzie (1997). Her account of the gradual exclusion of women from the public domain provides complementary evidence that something like civil society was being created in the period.

The attack on "Societies and Institutions" was general and not directed specifically at scientific or literary societies, with the article mentioning some seventeen organisations. *De Zuid Afrikaan* seems to have rejected them less for their specific actions than because of what they represented: a liberal challenge to a conservative position.

There is an important tension in the idea of civil society. In the context of this thesis the tension exists between using civil society as a concrete description of an actual state of affairs and treating it as a normative political principle (Trentmann, 2000). As has already been done, one can point to Cape Town in the late 1820s and identify the emergence of a vibrant civil society, or rather the founding of increasing numbers of societies and clubs. Seen as a description of a social state of affairs, the possibility of civil society is a prerequisite for the development of scientific societies. Scientific societies, such as the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, function in the space between the private and the state and in the absence of such a space could not exist. This space expanded rapidly between 1824 and 1829. Legislative, administrative and economic changes drew back the intrusiveness of the Colonial Government in social and business affairs.<sup>2</sup> Organisations, some such as the Commercial Exchange founded before 1824, grew in importance and their numbers expanded enormously. All this points to the emergence and growth of civil society. This is the use of civil society as a concrete description of a state of affairs.

While civil society can describe an existing state of affairs it can also describe a socio-political goal: one can want to create civil society precisely because it would involve the redistribution of power and influence in a society. Gellner (1994), in *Conditions of Liberty*, makes this argument for post-Communist eastern Europe, but the same principle can be seen in Fairbairn's activities in the Cape over a century and a half earlier. This involves using civil society in a

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<sup>2</sup> While withdrawing from those social and commercial spaces of interest to the liberal middle class (the ambition of Fairbairn), the state increasingly involved itself in other areas, such as the relation of farmers to their labourers and in ending slavery. The 1820s and 1830s saw the colonial government not so much reduce its involvement in the lives of the colony's residents as shift its focus. This represented not just the relative success of different groups in the colony in pursuing their interests, but also their relative success in mobilising support in Britain for these interests. The Liberal and, in the 1820s, humanitarian movement was not only more adept at pursuing its

normative, rather than descriptive, sense as a desired state of affairs. It directs the analysis to the role of Fairbairn's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS in creating, rather than just representing, civil society. In the case of an autocratic system, such as that under Somerset, civil society was limited. It had to be wrestled from the Government, and the free press debate and suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS were evidence of this. This space was contested both because the Government did not wish to relinquish social control and because the establishment of civil society would raise questions about the legitimacy of the Government. The Colonial Government's concerns were not unfounded. As explored in *Sections 3.4-3.6*, Fairbairn used the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS to attack the Government's authority and legitimacy. Civil society in early nineteenth century Cape Town should not simply be seen as something that emerged as a result of changing social, economic and political factors. Civil society was something actively constructed in the pursuit of a particular middle class liberal political program.

The emergence of civil society in the Colony between 1824 and 1829, and the changing status of Cape Town's middle classes are relatively poorly understood, although important advances have been made by McKenzie (1993 and 1997). She has identified this period as crucial in the emergence of a self-conscious middle class. Drawing on Habermas's closely related notion of the public sphere, McKenzie has examined the period 1828 to 1853. She notes that Cape Town's middle class drew on British models of middle class identity and that these models were also adopted by a significant number of the city's Cape Dutch. More importantly,

"With extremely limited political rights before 1854, middle-class men in Cape Town could assert their stake in the future of the colony through participation in reform agendas which could play a proto-political role in the city. Associations for social improvement allowed middle-class men a formal role in the public sphere, which ... the colonists were at pains to construct. They therefore gained public confidence in preparation for the real power which representative power would give. ... As the *Advertiser* claimed, mutual associations were a training ground for Cape men – instructing them in their proper behaviour in the public sphere." (McKenzie, 1997:126-127)

Although she makes no mention of the scientific societies, her account points to the virtual explosion of civic organisations in the period, including the Temperance Society and Philanthropic Society. The scientific societies that form

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claims within the colony, but could tap into increasingly liberal and humanitarian sentiment in Britain.



the subject of this thesis were only few amongst a much larger number of other organisations to be established in Cape Town in the period.

### 3.3 The Establishment of the Second South African Literary Society

The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS had two birth dates. It was established in January/February 1829 and received official sanction in May/June 1829. This section provides a chronology for the establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The details of the establishment of the Society beg a number of questions regarding intent, timing and conception. These are dealt with fully in the following *Sections* on Fairbairn's uses and hopes for the Society. Fairbairn and the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were intimately intertwined, but for analytical purposes it is useful to keep them distinct. By June 1829 the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was holding its meetings legally. With nearly fifty supporters it had succeeded where the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS had failed.

The first public call for the re-establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS appeared in the *Advertiser* on the 17<sup>th</sup> of January, 1829 (*Advertiser* IV: 167, January 17, 1829). Several weeks later, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February, a notice appeared in the *Advertiser* announcing the establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, or, more accurately, the re-establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. This notice was unsigned, but was probably written by Fairbairn. The notice is of great interest because it provides the names of some of the earliest important members of the new Society.

"Some weeks ago we suggested to the Public the general principles on which a useful Literary Society might be established in Cape Town, and our readers are now informed that such a society has since been constituted with every prospect of proving highly beneficial, not only to the inhabitants of Cape Town, but to the whole population of the Colony. On Saturday last the Members of the "South African Literary Society," the progress of which was interrupted in 1824, met at the Society House, and after a few preliminary explanations proceeded to organize that Institution on the basis which had been laid down at the previous meetings in that year. The office bearers of the Society were then elected by ballot, Sir John Truter and Captain Stockenström were returned as presidents; the Rev. W. Wright and Mr. Fairbairn as Secretaries; Mr. Venning, Treasurer; and the Rev. Adamson, Dr. Liesching, Dr. Fairbridge, Mr. Cloete, Mr. de Wet, Mr. W. Robertson, Mr. Rutherford, and Mr. W. Liesching as Members of the General Committee for the ensuing year, commencing on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February, 1829. It was also resolved that as the Society is now regularly and fully constituted, all candidates for admission shall be proposed and balloted for in the manner laid down in Articles 5 and 6 of the General Rules." (*Advertiser* IV: 174, February 11, 1829)

Aside from the Committee members, it is interesting that the new Society was repeatedly and explicitly linked to the older 1824 Society. Fairbairn also made this link in his editorial of the 17<sup>th</sup> of January, where he called for the re-establishment of the earlier organisation, and, again, when he reprinted the Rules and Regulations and membership lists of the 1824 SALS in the *Advertiser*, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January. This connection to the past was repeated on the front page of the first annual report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, published as part of the Rules and Regulations of the Society in 1830 (SALS, 1830). It is not clear why Fairbairn repeatedly made this link, but it may have served to stress his continuity of purpose and establish more firmly his rights to the leadership of the Society.

The initial Committee members are listed below in *Table 3.1*. Included in the table, is data on occupation, country of birth, and affiliations to the earlier 1<sup>st</sup> SALS and the soon to be founded SAI. Of these thirteen men, eight had signed up, in 1824, for the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. This membership link is one of the important continuities between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Just over half the members of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, thirty-five out of sixty-three, joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. These thirty-five men made up about a third of the membership of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Aside from the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, four members of this initial, February 1829, Committee were also connected to the later SAI. This might at first seem to contradict the thesis that the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI drew their members from different groups in the Colony. It should, however, be noted that three of these four men were of Cape extraction. The only British born member of the initial 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS Committee who went on to join the Institution was the Rev. Dr. Adamson. He appears to have left the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS very soon after it was established. He does not appear on the membership list published in the 1830 Report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS (SALS, 1830). His name also does not appear on a memorial sent to the Governor on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 1829, calling for permission to establish the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS (SALS, 1830). As a result of this absence and his apparently rapid departure from the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, Adamson is not counted as a member or supporter of the Society for the purpose of this analysis.

The 11<sup>th</sup> of February notice in the *Advertiser* also drew attention to the proposed activities and purposes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS.

"The General Meetings of the Society are to be held once a month, on the first Wednesday of each month. The views of the Society are not restricted to any particular

objects. They embrace every useful branch of knowledge, the cultivation of which the Society can in any way influence or promote. The first and perhaps most valuable of its efforts will be directed to the formation of a select and extensive Library and Museum, which will always be open to the members and their families; and the encouragement of improvements in Agriculture, or any of the arts now practised or that may be introduced into the Colony. Such rewards or assistance as it may have in its power to bestow, will always be granted to useful inventions and discoveries ...” (*Advertiser* IV: 174, February 11, 1829)

In form and content the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was conceived of in much the same way as the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, with a Library, Museum and agricultural improvement all proposed for the first Society. The Museum and Library were also the standard accoutrements of the age for a literary and philosophical society.

Various further meetings were called in an attempt to organise the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The election of office bearers for the Society was completed on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March. A notice in the *Advertiser* on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March called for a meeting to complete the election of office bearers (*Advertiser* IV: 181, March 7, 1829). Two further presidents and five Committee members were to be elected. The outcome of this meeting is not known, but the two new presidents can almost certainly be identified. The first of the two new Presidents of the Society was Justice William Westbrook Burton. Burton was a Royal Navy officer called to the Bar after being wounded in action. He came to the colony in 1827 to take up the position of second Puisne Judge in the new Supreme Court (*DSAB*). This position had been created as a result of the changes instituted in the Colony by the report of the Commissioners of Inquiry. He appears to have been a Whiggish humanitarian. Importantly, he was the only British born president of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS.

Another of the four Presidents of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was the Rev. A. Faure. He was the editor of the *Het Nederduitsch Zuid-Afrikaansche Tijdschrift*, which had been started at the same time as Fairbairn’s *South African Journal*. Unlike Fairbairn, though, Faure had avoided antagonising the Government and the overt politicisation of his journal. As a result, the *Tijdschrift* had not been censored and in various guises continued publication until 1843. Faure had also not joined the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, although the reasons for this are not known. It may have been that he was at the time distracted by his organisation of the first Synod of the Dutch Reform Church in the Colony. Given his avoidance of politics in the *Tijdschrift*, it he may simply have wished to avoid the political entanglements that would have

accompanied his signing up for the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. There are two points worth noting about Faure. First, although born in Cape Town, he had received his religious education both in England, at Gosport, and at Utrecht, and secondly, in 1818, he married the daughter of a British army officer. Although Cape Dutch and one of the most senior members of the Dutch Reformed Church he would appear to have been a relatively strong Anglophile in the late 1820s. The same can be said for the other two Cape-born Presidents of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, Stockenstrom and Truter. In the 1830s, however, Faure would be involved in the development of Cape-Dutch intellectual reaction to the British dominance at the Cape (Trapido, 1993 and 1994).

The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was established in early 1829, but it only received its official Government license at the end of May. If one believes the advertisements that appear in the *Advertiser*, and there is no reason not to take these at face value in this regard, the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was running by March or April, 1829. Meetings were called for the 1<sup>st</sup> of April and the 6<sup>th</sup> of May, in accordance with the regulations that required meetings on the first Wednesday of every month. But on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June the following notice appeared in the *Advertiser*,

"SOUTH AFRICAN LITERARY SOCIETY.

His Excellency the Governor having been please to grant the following License for the formation of a Literary Society in this Colony, it was resolved at a Meeting of the Society held this day to print the same.

Cape Town, Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1829.

W. W. BURTON, Chairman

*License for the Formation of a Literary Society*

In consequence of a Memorial dated the 29<sup>th</sup> Instant, and signed by fifty inhabitants of Cape Town and its vicinity, - praying that the Government may be pleased to sanction and approve the formation of a Literary Society in this Colony, upon the basis of certain general rules annexed to the said Memorial,- and to grant them the requisite License to that effect; His Excellency has been pleased to direct that a License be granted for the formation of the said Literary Society, and the same is hereby granted accordingly.

Cape of Good Hope, 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1829.

By Command of His Excellency the Governor,

JOHN BELL, Secretary to Government."

(*Advertiser* IV: 207, June 6, 1829)

The license was applied for at the end of May and granted promptly and without any difficulties. This suggests at a minimum the acquiescence of the Government and Governor. It does not, however, imply the active support of either. Sir Lowry Cole never became patron of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. This needs to be

seen in the context of his patronage of the SAI, founded less than a month later. The timing of the application for the license also suggests that the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS had been running illegally for several months. Why this should have occurred is dealt with in *Section 3.6*.

The official account of the establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, as published in its first Annual Report, white-washed the question of legality. It simply noted that a few men,

"met on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 1829, to take into consideration the expediency of its re-establishment. This having been agreed upon, application for a license was made to His Excellency SIR GALBRAITH LOWRY COLE, which was immediately granted ... Thus this Society, having been legally re-established in June 1829, its Annual meeting for the election of Office-bearers, and receiving the Yearly Report of the Committee, was determined to be held on the first Saturday of the month of February."(SALS, 1830:9)

This account is accurate in as far as it goes. It, however, fails to explain what happened in the months between February and June. It suggests that nothing happened. But, as discussed in the next three *Sections*, this was not a quiet period. Not only did the Society hold several meetings, but Fairbairn also spent the time busily attempting to gain political advantage from the establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and its illegality.

### 3.4 The Second South African Literary Society as a Challenge to the Government's Monopoly of Science

The establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS should, in part, be understood as a challenge to the monopolisation of science by the Government. Until early 1829, with the establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, all scientific organisations in the Cape Colony were either Government owned and funded, such as the Library and Museum, or closely affiliated with the Government, such as with the Horticultural Society. This state of affairs would have presented a challenge to Fairbairn at two levels. First, it implied that the status and authority of science was monopolised by the Government and as a result unavailable to him. Secondly, for Fairbairn, as a political Liberal, the role of the state was strictly circumscribed and scientific and intellectual activity lay outside its remit. These two objections to the state of affairs in the Cape were mutually reinforcing. For Fairbairn science was rightly in the realm of civil society where it could be claimed for the middle class.

The Colonial Government had, by the late 1820s, completely monopolised scientific organisation at the Cape.<sup>3</sup> Before Somerset's departure in 1826, the Government controlled all scientific organisations and afterwards the majority of were closely aligned with the Government. At the beginning of January 1829 every one of the senior scientific organisations in the Colony were either run or affiliated with the Government. The Museum was admittedly temporarily closed in January 1829 and its status undecided. It had, however, been established and funded by the Government and would soon open again under Government friendly control. The Observatory was, strictly speaking, not part of the Colonial Government, but under the control of the Admiralty. Yet it was closely aligned with the Government elite. Similarly, the Horticultural Society was closely aligned with the Government. One of the most striking features of science in the pre-1829 Cape was this degree of Government control. Only the South African Medical Society, established in 1827, and the Mechanics Institute, established in 1828, were not controlled by the Government or members of the colonial elite. Given the Government's general reluctance to relinquish control over the activities of its subjects, as witnessed by the on-going free press debate, this was not, however, surprising.

Given Fairbairn's general aversion to all things Governmental, it is not surprising that he felt that this monopoly was undesirable. He wished to claim back science, as well as other forms of intellectual activity such as education, for civil society. His attack on Government involvement was two pronged: he attacked the failings of Government affiliated organisations and extolled the virtues of civil ones. The most explicit statement of this approach appears in an editorial in the *Advertiser* on 30<sup>th</sup> of May 1829. In this editorial, Fairbairn railed against the "indiscriminate" and "arbitrary" manner in which the Government was disposing of the funds of the Orphan Chamber. He was incensed by a plan to spend some twenty to thirty thousand pounds building a new Government House, and converting the existing one into the new Museum and Library. As he saw it,

"When the Commissioners, therefore, speak of a Public Library and Museum, they mean an Institution formed and supported by the Public Money, levied in every part of the

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<sup>3</sup> It is not known whether this was common in the period. Finney (1993) does not raise this issue for science in Australia in the early nineteenth century. In the Cape at least, the immediate causes for the Government's monopoly can be located in the Governor's autocratic policies. Given that such autocratic government was typical of the early nineteenth century British Empire (Bayly, 1989), this might be expected to be more common.

Settlement, to the benefits arising from which persons residing in or visiting Cape Town, may or may not be admitted, according to the pleasure of those who may be for the time at the head of affairs." (*Advertiser* IV: 205, May 30, 1829)

His complaint was only in part that public funds were being used to support elite organisations available exclusively to the well connected few. Rather it was that organisations such as the museum, library, and literary and scientific organisations more generally *should not* be established under the auspices of the Government. As he went on,

"Some time ago, you may recollect, an Agricultural Society was instituted under the auspices, and, consequently, under the control of the Government. What good did you reap from it, and where is it now? A Botanical Society was constructed on the same model. Do you know where it is to be found? You heard very lately of the Museum. Where is the key? The same fate awaits every Literary or Scientific Institution under the direction of Governments. They depend on their existence, so far as utility is concerned, on the feelings of the People. Governments may raise splendid walls and line them with works of their own selection: they may crowd their rooms with stuffed elephants and bottled vipers; they may parade the stranger through a vast series of shells, beetles, and butterflies, - while the Inhabitants, at whose expense this magnificent trifling is supported, remain contemptuously ignorant, and obstinately indifferent to the display: - because these things have not grown out of their own tastes. However well intended, they prove unsuitable, and are therefore neglected." (*Advertiser*, IV: 205, May 30, 1829)

The Government was incompetent to deliver the advantages that scientific organisations offered, and fundamentally ill equipped to know what the citizenry wanted. Government science was a bad idea and, more interestingly, legitimacy lay with the people, not the state.

Fairbairn's conception of civil science was more positive. Not only would it deliver what people wanted, but the people would identify with its activities.

"Literary and Scientific Institutions originating with the People, and framed on popular principles are, in their progress and end directly opposite to those we have alluded to. Begun on a moderate scale, and steadily advancing with the diffusion and the desire of knowledge, they accommodate themselves to public sentiment as the bark does to the tree. The people love them, because they see their own minds embodied in them." (*Advertiser* IV: 205, May 30, 1829)

In addition to enjoying widespread public support, it would also be cheaper and reduce government influence, if not meddling, in civic affairs.

"The success of these two Institutions without fresh Taxes or new Sinecures, or the enlargement of Government patronage and influence, without swallowing up the funds of public Boards, or affording the pretext for unnecessary buildings, will furnish the best arguments that can be recommended against the extravagant projects of the Commissioners." (*Advertiser* IV: 205, May 30, 1829)

The idea that Government should strictly limit its involvement in society was a core part of liberal credo and one that Fairbairn subscribed to.

Fairbairn objected to the Government's monopoly on science not only on ideological grounds, but also because it provided the Government with a monopoly on the authority of science. Fairbairn wanted this authority for his own causes. His concern was as much to monopolise science for himself as to free it from state control. As is argued below, the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS pursued a survey on the statistics of the colony specifically to set itself up as the ultimate authority or arbitrator concerning what was a 'true' and 'accurate' account of the Colony. In a related manner the Society's interest in agricultural improvement was, at least partially, intended to draw the support of farmers away from government aligned agricultural organisations. In the end Fairbairn failed to de-couple scientific institutions from Government influence. Those men interested in science would eventually find their interests increasingly aligned with those of the Government. Furthermore, in such a small community, the support of the Government was probably crucial to the long term survival of any scientific or literary organisation and Finney (1993) has drawn attention to the importance of Government support in early nineteenth century Australia. The small size of the Colony was always a factor working against Fairbairn's desire to remove science from state control.

### 3.5 Knowledge, Freedom and the 1800 Proclamation Respecting Clubs and Societies

Science and the diffusion of knowledge were closely linked in Fairbairn's mind with political freedom. This was a link he had explicitly made in his 1824 *Journal* article on scientific societies (Fairbairn, 1824a). It was also a message he repeated several times in the *Advertiser*. This provides one of the most important links between Fairbairn's attempt to establish a scientific society and his campaign for the freedom of the press. Both were ultimately about increasing political freedom in the colony, to the benefit of the middle class. The attempted establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was closely linked to the free press debate. In a rather different way, the establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS in 1829 can also be linked the free press debate. Fairbairn used the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS to challenge the legal basis of the State's control of such organisations, in an analogous manner to that in which he used to the *Advertiser* to challenge the legal basis of State



control of the press. In both cases he baited the Government to close the organisation down, so pushing for clarity and change in the legislation. Specifically, he challenged the legitimacy of Sir George Young's 1800 Proclamation respecting Clubs and Societies. This had been the legal basis for the suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS in 1824.

The establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS needs to be seen in the context of Fairbairn's on-going campaign for both a free press in the Colony and self Government. After the suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS in late 1824, Fairbairn began campaigning for the re-establishment of the *Advertiser*. More important than Fairbairn's actions at the Cape were those of the owner of the *Advertiser*, George Greig, in London. Somerset had banished Greig from the Colony in 1824. Greig had fled to England, where he began to campaign against Somerset, his banishment and for the right to continue publishing the *Advertiser*. He was fortunate in that his cause and the anti-Somerset lobby had powerful support in the house of Commons, the British press and the Colonial Office (Botha, 1984). By mid-1825, Lord Bathurst had revoked his banishment and approved of his resuming publication of the *Advertiser*. Greig arrived back in Cape Town in August 1825. Within three weeks of his return, Greig and Fairbairn published the first new edition of the *Advertiser* on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August.

In his pursuit of a free press Fairbairn actively courted Government censure in the hope that this would provide him with further weapons in his criticism of the Colonial Government. Fairbairn's resumption of publication in 1825 did not signal a change in the laws and he continued to push for the freedom of the press. With the new *Advertiser*, Fairbairn tested the limits of the law. He intentionally baited Somerset's far more liberal successor, Richard Bourke, in order to bring the free press issue to a head. He managed to infuriate the governor and in March 1827 the *Advertiser* was once again suspended. Fairbairn immediately made plans to leave for London. In London he campaigned for a free press in the Colony. This was not granted, but he was given permission to resume publication. Fairbairn returned to Cape Town, arriving at the end of September 1828. A prospectus was once again submitted, and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October the *Advertiser* began publication for the third time. This was under the same laws that had already twice led to its suspension. His repeated challenges to the Colonial Government had failed to change the law,

but they had demonstrated the rather confused nature of the legal limits on a free press.

Fairbairn actively linked the suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS to the freedom of press debate. In an editorial on the 26<sup>th</sup> of April 1826, he railed against the “evil days of ARBITRARY POWER” (*Advertiser* II: 17, April 26, 1826), and mentioned both the suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS in 1824 and what he presented as the parallel case of the suppression of the a society for the “spreading of Religious and General Knowledge” in the district of Uitenhage in July 1824 (*Advertiser* II:17, April 26, 1826). Superficially, Fairbairn appears to have seen the freedom of the press and the freedom to form a literary society in much the same light: as the inalienable right of a British subject. There also appears to have been a deeper issue at stake. The limits placed on the press and the formation of organisations allowed the government to suppress dissent by enforcing ignorance. This was a problem at two levels. First, it allowed the Government to continue in its autocratic ways by weakening the effectiveness his criticisms, and, secondly, it retarded the development of the intellectually and politically sophisticated middle class, which Fairbairn wished to see take control of the Colony.

The existence of the link between the status of scientific organisations and nature of Government was not an idea peculiar to Fairbairn. It was implicit in the normative concept of civil society. It was also an idea held by his close supporters. While Fairbairn was in London, in 1827 and 1828, a letter to the editor appear in *The Colonist*,<sup>4</sup> a newspaper that had sprung up in the place of the re-suppressed *Advertiser*. This was probably written by the Rev. Dr. John Philip, an important supporter of Fairbairn, ardent humanitarian and critic of the Government. The letter was signed by “A Colonist”, a pseudonym often used by Philip (Botha, 1984). The content also supports this identification. The letter is a diatribe against the Colonial Government’s inept handling of scientific societies, the closure of the Museum, and its profound lack of support for research in natural history. Philip, although the head of the London Missionary Society, had an interest in the relation of religion and science.

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<sup>4</sup> *The Colonist* was established by William Beddy, in 1827, soon after Fairbairn left the Colony. In many ways anything appearing in this paper should be seen background to the establishment of the later SAI, rather than the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Beddy was more pro-government than Fairbairn and went on to be an early member of the SAI.

"It is impossible not to experience exquisite regret, that while the perfection of science and of art, are shedding their lights on every other land, this country is doomed to remain stationary – nay to retrograde. This indifference cannot be traced to *the people at large*. ... The true state of the case is, that hinderances are thrown in the way by those who bearing authority, limit or interrupt the career of improvement. This may be done not so much by actual opposition, as from a constitutional sluggishness of temper, imbecility of mind, or inability to judge of the importance of public institutions. ...

In making these preliminary remarks, it was foreign to my design to enter upon the thorny road of politics; but just at a moment, when 1828 was to introduce a new order of things, and when we were catching the low breathings of a voice crying unto us, "Awake oh thou that dwellest in the dust," the cloud has darkened upon us, and we have proofs of a coming barbarism. The Public, and the servant of government, have been treated as mere automata. Publicity has been banished from the government proceedings; to command and not to consult, seems to have been the motto of the Colonial Office. A Submissive and not an inquiring people, hath been required; all accordingly is silence and mystery over the public affairs of the colony, totally inimical to the British frankness which had hitherto a name among the nations. Without pursuing reflections on these subjects which have been hastily referred to, we are led on to the contemplation of the public measures which has excommunicated knowledge, and proscribed one of the most popular institutions at the Cape ... the *South African Museum*." (*The Colonist* 16, March 6, 1828) <sup>5</sup>

The key to the criticism is the Government's claimed desire for a "submissive" people. This article should not be read as a criticism of the government's monopoly of science, as explored in the previous section. Rather, it is that the government had failed in its duty to nurture and support science and scientific organisations, and that it has done so, in part at least, intentionally. To have encouraged science would have been to encourage free thought and independent minded citizens. This was claimed not to be in the interests of the either the Colonial Government, or the Colonial Office. Furthermore, Philip wrote in support of natural theology, supporting the claim that scientific discoveries provide evidence for biblical claims (*DSAB*). Given that science provided evidence for the truth of the bible, the spread of scientific knowledge would also have supported his religiously based liberal humanitarianism.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The positive start to 1828, mentioned in this quote, probably refers to Ordinance 50, which greatly increased the rights of free non-whites in the Colony, and removed most of the restrictions on their movements (see Keegan, 1996). This law was very strongly backed by Philip. Its mention here, in such strong terms, provides additional evidence for his authorship of the letter.

<sup>6</sup> Philip was at the centre of the highly political humanitarian movement in Cape Town in the late 1820s. His interest in the relation of science and religion points to a way in which the science and specifically scientific interests and activities of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and LSI could have entered into debates about race. Bank (1995 and 1996) has drawn attention to the introduction of phrenology

The establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS presented Fairbairn with an opportunity to test the legal restrictions on such civic organisations. According to Fairbairn, the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS had been officially suppressed in 1824 because permission had not been requested for its establishment *before* its first meeting. It is surprising, therefore, that the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS only requested a license from the Government at the end of May 1829, some four months after its establishment. This delay was part of a, failed, attempt by Fairbairn to have the legislation controlling such organisations repealed. This attempt would have required the support, or at least complicity, of most of the senior founding members of the Society. The reasons for the suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS were widely known to many of the senior members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Not only were there several senior legal men amongst its first Committee elected on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 1829, but eight members of this Committee had taken part in the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. They would almost certainly have recognised the relevance of starting the new Society without a license.

Fairbairn brought this challenge to legal control into the open in April 1829. He devoted an entire editorial in the *Advertiser*, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 1829, to calling for the repeal of Sir George Young's 1800 Proclamation respecting Clubs and Societies. The core argument in the editorial was that the Young's illiberal Proclamations, on both societies and the press, were now anachronistic and needed to be repealed.

"Since 1806, the number of Clubs and Societies in this Colony has greatly increased; and it has in consequence become a question of some importance how far the members of them have complied or are expected to comply with the existing law; whether there be a dispensing power in the Governor, and how far it is consistent with their security,- not to mention their dignity,- to depend on the good will of an individual. In past times we have seen that Societies, instituted for purposes not only innocent, but most laudable, have not escaped the capricious animadversion of men in power. In 1824, a SALS was suppressed, on the ground that previous to the first meeting no application for permission had been made to the Government; and in the same year a humble application by memorial for such permission, was contemptuously rejected, because,

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into the Cape in the 1830s and its role in constructing scientific conceptions of race. He claims that Drs. Henry Macartney and Andrew Smith were important supporters of a biological conception of race. Bank also notes that Philip's humanitarian movement was one of the chief opponents of this. Interestingly, both Philip and Macartney were members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and Philip and Smith were members of the LSI.

although the Governor approved of the Institution, he disliked the faces of some of the memorialists.

From the present Governor no one can apprehend any vexatious interference or obstruction.- On the contrary some Societies are honored with his patronage, and all look with confidence to his Government for protection at least, if not for encouragement. But as the Law stands any informer or ill-disposed person could carry dismay into almost every Club and Society in the Settlement.- Have the Bible Union, the Horticultural Society, the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, the Society of the Commercial Exchange, the Philanthropic Society, the Ladies' Benevolent Society, the South African Missionary Society, the Mechanics Institution, the Agricultural Society at Graaff Reinet, or the South African Literary Society in Cape Town, taken out a license, or renewed it annually since their establishment? Should a prosecution take place, conviction must follow, nor can Government remit that portion of the fine which goes to the Informer.

The circumstances of the Colony no longer afford any color of expediency to so oppressive a Regulation. The peace and good order of the community are now firmly established, and that too in a great measure by the diffusion of Knowledge and general information, by means of those very Societies which were formally proscribed as objects of jealousy to the Government ...

The recent formation of two or three new Societies in the Colony, which promise to be of great general utility, has brought these licenses under discussion; and a memorial to His Excellency the Governor has been drawn up, and is already most respectfully signed, praying for such relief as Government may deem it expedient to grant. If this Memorial prove unsuccessful the new Societies will sink into oblivion like their predecessors." (*Advertiser* IV: 189, April 4, 1829)

This article called for more than just a repeal of the 1800 Proclamation. Having established the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and openly advertised its existence, he was now baiting the Governor. Technically, the Society was in breach of the law and should have been suppressed. If the Government had chosen to do so it would have given Fairbairn another *cause célèbre* with which to attack the Government. But not to suppress the Society would suggest the enforcement of the law was at the arbitrary whim of the Government, merely confirming Fairbairn's accusations. Moreover, Fairbairn started the editorial by explicitly linking the 1800 Proclamation on Clubs and Societies with the freedom of the press. He had baited the government in his pursuit of the freedom of the press (Botha, 1984) and he did almost exactly the same thing with the establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. This is not to say that this is why he, or others, established the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, merely that this is one of the ends to which he turned it.

In addition to the editorial, a memorial was submitted to the Government on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April calling for the repeal of the 1800 Proclamation on Clubs and

Societies (C.O. 3942, p.42). This memorial was reprinted in the next edition of the *Advertiser*, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April, making the attempt public.

"The Memorial of the undersigned inhabitants of Cape Town and its vicinity, humbly sheweth,— That whereas from time to time, there have been instituted within this Colony several Religious, Charitable, Scientific, and Agricultural Societies, which appear to your Memorialists to be well deserving of the patronage and support both of the Government and Public; but several of such Societies not having received any license to hold meetings in pursuance of the respective objects, apprehensions have arisen in the minds of some persons that such Societies may fall under the prohibitions of certain proclamations heretofore made in within the Colony, particularly a proclamation of his Excellency Sir George Young, dated [the] 19<sup>th</sup> day of February 1800, and that the members of such Societies are liable to certain heavy pains and penalties, extending even to banishment from the Colony, with confiscation of their houses and property, to the great obstruction, hindrance, and alarm of such Societies — Now therefore your Memorialists respectfully solicit that your excellency will be pleased, by an Ordinance of Council, to cause such apprehensions to be removed, or to except from the operation of any prohibitory or restrictive laws such Societies as are or may be hereafter formed within this Colony for such purposes as above mentioned. And your Memorialists, as duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

Cape Town, 2 April, 1829."

(*Advertiser* IV: 189, April 4, 1829)

Of the seventy-three men who signed this memorial, twenty-nine names are illegible. Of the forty-four identifiable men, twenty-nine joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. On the other hand thirteen of the signatories also joined the SAI, although seven of these were members of both organisations. More interestingly, of the first Committees of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and SAI, eight out of thirteen of the former had signed the memorial, while only three out of seventeen of the latter signed it.<sup>7</sup> Nothing seems to have come of this memorial. The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was called to its next meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May with an announcement that "a communication of importance will be made to the Meeting" (*Advertiser* IV: 198, May 6, 1829). This was probably to agree to request a license for the Society. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of May, a memorial requesting a license for the Society was sent to the Government, and it was granted the next day.

Fairbairn saw both the establishment of a scientific society and the establishment of a free press as expressions of essential freedoms and central to the creation of civil society. He held up the absence of a free press and scientific societies as evidence for the despotic and autocratic nature of the

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<sup>7</sup> This analysis draws on the memorial (C.O. 3942, p.42) and the membership lists of the two organisations, as they appear in the Appendices.

Colonial Government. He pursued both in similar ways, actively courting Government displeasure and censure. In the case of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, at least, this would have required the complicity of most of the senior members. The four months between the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS being established and requesting a license might have been explained away as mere bumbling or time wasting, but the active measures Fairbairn took to get the legal requirement for a license repealed suggests that the gap was intentional. A license was required, the senior members of the Society knew it, and they did not apply for it. On the other hand this claim must be moderated by the observation that it is not at all clear that the Government ever really intended to enforce the license requirement or that other organisations ever fulfilled it. The Medical Society, established in 1827, for instance only decided to apply for a license in October 1829 (SAMS, Minutes).

### 3.6 The Second South African Literary Society and the Creation of a Middle Class Political Movement

The role of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS in Fairbairn's more general political program is most apparent in his conception of it as a diffusionist, inclusive organisation focussed on utilitarian knowledge. It was to be dedicated to the diffusion of existing knowledge, rather than original research. To encourage as wide and large a membership as possible it was to be easy to join and undemanding in its membership requirements. Finally, and closely related to the first two ambitions, it was to focus on subjects where there would be an immediate and obvious material return. The diffusion of existing knowledge that could make an immediate difference to people's lives would be the quickest way attract a large membership. This was a decidedly Whiggish triumvirate of ambitions. Each of these was intended to make the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS as effective an agent as possible for the construction of civil society in Cape Town. As with most of Fairbairn's activities, it was designed not only to satisfy his abstract political Liberalism, but also his concrete political ambitions to create and lead a middle class political movement. The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, as with the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, should be seen as part of Fairbairn's program to nurture such a movement. This claim is supported by the fact the Fairbairn explicitly used the (hoped for) success of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS along with that of the recently founded South African College as evidence for the political, cultural and intellectual maturity of Cape Town's middle class. The

ability to successfully run a literary or scientific society was to be training for, and evidence of, the ability to run successfully an entire country.<sup>8</sup>

The characterisation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS as diffusionist, inclusive and utilitarian is derived from the three requirements Fairbairn felt necessary to guarantee the success of the Society. He laid out these requirements in the 17<sup>th</sup> of January 1829 editorial in which he had first called for establishment of the Society. The first of these requirements was that the organisation should focus on the diffusion of existing knowledge and education rather than original research.

"It is obvious, that in this Colony at present, and for many years to come, our own improvement, or the diffusion of useful knowledge among ourselves, should, and must be our principal object – and not the improvement of science. We have much to learn – we have even the art or Machinery of Learning to acquire, before we can hope to instruct. We shall find business enough to collect and appropriate the discoveries of others for a long time, before we can hope to join them in their attempt to penetrate into unknown regions. This is spoken of our fixed population. There are no doubt individuals among us to whom personally it does not apply: but these are few, and not to be taken into the question, except as our future guides and instructors. And our concern in the first place is, how those to be taught and directed are to be brought together and united in the prosecution of some design possessed of universal interest." (*Advertiser* IV: 167, January 17, 1829)

This focus on education and diffusion was intended to increase the utility of the Society, both to its members and to Fairbairn. Education and diffusion were also the ambitions of the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society upon which Fairbairn based both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS (Orange, 1983; and Botha, 1984).

Focussing on improvement through education may have had the consequence, though, of excluding men interested in conducting original research. Fairbairn thought that they were a small group, but there were enough men interested in actual research to allow for the establishment of the significantly more research oriented SAI several months later. Fairbairn appears to have been aware of this, and proposed the existence of special Committees in which original research

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<sup>8</sup> Chambers and Gillespie (2001) make this point in the point for an earlier period for Spain's American Empire, where "science was seen to provide a mechanism for increased colonial autonomy and self-sufficiency" (Chambers and Gillespie, 2001: 226). In an interesting parallel to the accusations against the Cape Colonial Government that it was actively suppressing science in the Colony, Chambers and Gillespie note that Spain actively "sabotaged" science in her remaining Caribbean colonies.



could be pursued, but without impinging on the more general character of the Society.

"By the Original Papers read, and the subjects discussed at the monthly meetings, men of similar acquirements, at present pursuing in secret, and enabled, without farther trouble or expense to form Select Committees for the promotion of their peculiar branch of Science; and their discoveries or proposals would always be acceptable to the General Society, which would be ready on all occasions to afford them every aid in its power toward the furtherance of their views." (*Advertiser* IV: 167, January 17, 1829)

This was, nevertheless, at best a secondary concern. It is not clear that this rejection of research played an important role in the establishment of the SAI, but it was probably an additional factor.

The second and third requirements for the success of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were that it should be inclusive and focussed on utilitarian activities. These were closely related requirements. Fairbairn felt that large numbers were required to guarantee the success of the Society. As a result membership should be as easy, inexpensive and productive as possible. The motto might have been maximum benefit for minimum effort.

"To commence at once with some Association for the improvement of any branch of Science, which required from those who should join it much of their time, any considerable application, previous scientific attainments, or even studious habits in general, would startle and deter, not only the majority of those for whose benefit it was projected, but, we might say, ninety-nine in the hundred of those who wished well to it. Men of business, men of the world, the young, the old, would all find a ready excuse satisfactory enough to their own minds, for not joining in an undertaking for which they had no leisure, no fitness, no immediate inclination, or from which they could not derive some sudden advantage. And let it be considered, that not names and money, but members and minds that constitute a society of the kind we are contemplating; so that the most liberal patronage would be comparatively worthless, without the spirit of sympathy and emulation which can exist only in the voluntary combination numbers, in a simple and popular scheme.

In forming a society, therefore, for the improvement of the public mind, the first thing to be proposed, as a bond of union, should be one in the utility of which all must agree, in the advantages to be derived from which all can share. The expense to individuals should be small, compared to the advantages to be conferred. The Property should belong to none, but to the Society as a Society; and every member should have an equal claim to its use, and an equal right to control its management, and the application of its funds. No involuntary duties should be required – not even attendance at any particular time – so that none should feel his connexion [sic] with it a burthen [sic] or restraint even in the slightest degree, but simply a privilege and a right." (*Advertiser* IV: 167, January 17, 1829)

It is not exactly clear what kind of Society Fairbairn was proposing. There were to be only nominal entrance requirements, and these did not include interest, participation or ability. At times he seems to be proposing more of a gentleman's club than a scientifically oriented literary society. But then this was intentional. For Fairbairn, at least, the literary and scientific parts of the exercise were merely a means to an end.

The political value of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was made completely transparent at the end of May 1829, when Fairbairn called on the Government to withdraw from its involvement in scientific and intellectual life. In this article he identified the hoped for success of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, and other organisations, as key to legitimating his political pretensions for the middle class. These were also the political pretensions of many members of the middle class themselves (see Worden *et.al.*, 1998).

"The inhabitants will thus show that they can provide for their own wants and that they can satisfy their own desires in this respect, at one hundredth of the expense, and ten thousand times more effectively, than the best-meaning government can do for them. And what can prevent their success? We have lately petitioned for a Legislative Assembly. If we have not intellect or steadiness enough to conduct a Subscription Library, or to direct their affairs of a School for Children, without leaning on the arm of Government, with what blushes must we recollect our having prayed for the privileges of Legislating for the Colony? These two undertakings will furnish a test to judge our pretensions." (*Advertiser* IV: 205, May 30, 1829)

This article places the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS in the broader context of Fairbairn's activities in 1829. The Society was just one of the many organisations he was directly and indirectly involved in. His involvement and support seems to have been motivated by a similar complex of political factors that motivated his activities in the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. They were part of his attempt to nurture a cohesive and politically mature middle class political movement. He planned to train the first generation of Cape politicians in the committee rooms of civil society.

This 30<sup>th</sup> of May 1829 editorial was the final important statement Fairbairn made about the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS in the *Advertiser*. The *Advertiser* continued to carry the notices of the Society, but ceased using the Society for polemical purposes once it had received its official Government license. Fairbairn remained one of the secretaries of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS until the Society was incorporated in the LSI in 1832. He was not a member of this new organisation. Fairbairn's lack of involvement in the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS from late 1829 on might be more apparent than real, a result of the

poor record. One possible explanation for the Society's lower profile in the record is that the free press debate came largely to an end. On the orders of the Colonial Office, the Governor promulgated a new press law, Ordinance 60, which came into affect in the middle of May 1829. Although this did not grant complete freedom of the press, as it might have been understood in Britain, it appears to have satisfied Fairbairn.

### 3.7 The Activities of the Second South African Literary Society

The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was involved in several different activities: these included, the reading of papers at monthly meetings, the setting of prize essays and the establishment of a library. The Society also attempted to establish a laboratory and museum, to collect a statistical account of the Colony, and to organise a series of lectures on science, although none of these were successfully pursued. The Society's limited successes were sufficient to guarantee its survival until 1832. The activities pursued show the influence of Fairbairn of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The Society largely followed the plans he had laid out for it. Ultimately, one is struck by how little the Society seems to have achieved in terms of its stated goals. The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was certainly ambitious in its declared aspirations, but appears to have lacked the organisational infrastructure, resources and, most importantly, focus to achieve them.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS met very regularly throughout the period of its existence between early 1829 and mid-1832. Meetings were announced in the *Advertiser* and, according to the advertisements, were held between February 1829 and June 1832 with only a few exceptions. The number of meetings far exceeds the number of recorded papers, which suggests that the Society pursued other activities during its meetings. What these might have been is not known. It is also not known how well attended the meetings of the Society were, although there is evidence that towards the end the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was largely moribund. The absence of minute books means that there is little evidence about the support that it received and its general activities. All that remains are the inevitably partial, in both senses of the word, accounts in the *Advertiser* and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS's two annual reports. An interesting account of the Society's activities can be compiled from these, but much of the detail is lacking. The first external

evidence about the nature and success Society's activities is found in an exchange of letters to the editor of the *Advertiser* in 1832. Here accusations were made about the collapse of the Society and its general inability to achieve its declared goals. This final period of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS is explored as part of the background to the LSI and is dealt with in *Chapter 5*.

The papers read at the monthly meetings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were on widely diverse topics. Unfortunately there is no indication as to the content of the talks. All that remains in the record is a list of titles in the annual reports of the Society and in notices in the *Advertiser* and the *Literary Gazette*. The 1830 annual report (SALS, 1830) contains the following list of talks.

An Essay on the state of this Colony in the year 1804

A Tract on the improvement of Breed of Sheep in this Colony

A Paper on the history of the Hottentots

There is no indication who the authors of these papers were. The same is true for the list of papers given in the 1831 annual report of the Society (SALS, 1831).

On the introduction of Capital and Labour into the Colony

Two Papers on the Medical Statistics of the Colony

Two Papers on the History of Dutch Literature

A succession of papers on the History of the Crusades and their Influence upon Society

The author of the two papers on Medical Statistics can be identified from other sources, and was Dr. J. W. Fairbridge (*Literary Gazette* 11, March 30, 1831:143; and 12, May 4, 1831: 149). Similarly, the papers on the History of Dutch literature were given by the Society's librarian, P. Harmsen (*Literary Gazette* 13, June 1, 1831). The paper on Capital and Labour may have been given by Fairbairn. There is no direct evidence for this, but it was an issue he dealt with regularly in the *Advertiser*. The only other known paper was on agriculture, and was recorded in the *Advertiser* as,

"some Notes and Observations on Rust were communicated to the Society by a Gentleman who made a tour of the Colony in 1820-21" (*Advertiser* V: 252, November 11, 1829)

Again, the author is not recorded. The general impression gained from this list of paper topics and titles is that the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS took its wide remit seriously. Probably, and more accurately, it was simply happy to have members deliver papers, regardless of their subject matter.

Agricultural improvement was the one subject in which the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was particularly interested. Two of the papers delivered at the monthly meetings were on agriculture and the paper on Capital and Labour was almost certainly related to finding more capital and labour for agricultural improvement: the Cape had no other capital or labour intensive industry of significance and the supply of agricultural labour was a perennial social and economic concern (Keegan, 1996; and Giliomee, 2003). While the Society probably had limited control over content of the papers presented at its monthly meetings, it did have complete control over the topics of its prize essays. With the exception of a special prize essay on education set for students of the South African College, these were all on agricultural topics. The first two topics were announced in mid-1830 and the five Guinea prizes were to be awarded for,

"1. ... the best Treatise or Essay on the *Horse-Sickness in this Colony; its cause, the nature of the same, and the remedies for curing it.* – *The Answer to this question may be written either in Latin, French, English, Dutch or German ...*

[similarly]

2. ... *the several diseases of Horned Cattle in this Colony; their causes correctly and minutely described; the nature and remedies for curing the same ...*" (Advertiser V: 311, June 5, 1830)<sup>9</sup>

The following year two further prize essays on agriculture were announced.

"The Society having also resolved at one of its Meetings, to contribute its aid in promoting the Agriculture of the Colony – a branch of industry which has long suffered to an alarming extent, from the prevalence of both animal and vegetable diseases, - your Committee have offered two gold medals, of 5 guineas each, for two Essays which they shall approve, one "on the Diseases incident to Life Stock;" another, "on the improvement of the Breed of Black Cattle and Sheep;" but they are much disappointed in having to observe, that as yet, nothing has been offered on these important topics." (SALS, 1831:7-8)

Nothing seems to have become of these prize essays and it appears that no one even submitted an essay, let alone won the prize, for any of them.

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<sup>9</sup> It is possible to trace events surrounding the question on horse sickness. It followed a questionnaire, printed in the May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1830, edition of the *Advertiser*, concerning horse sickness in the Colony. There had already been a reply to this questionnaire in the May 19<sup>th</sup> edition, signed "V", and there was a further reply in the July 10<sup>th</sup> edition, signed "a friend to science". Interestingly, two essay-length responses were eventually submitted, but not to the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The first, by Thomas Perry, appeared in the July to September 1830 edition of the *Quarterly Journal*, a publication associated to the SAI. Fairbairn printed extracts of this in the *Advertiser* on September the 11<sup>th</sup>. The second was by the botanist James Bowie and was presented at a meeting of the SAI on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1830 (*Literary Gazette* 3, July 21, 1830).

There are two possible immediate explanations for the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS's concern with agriculture. The first possible reason for this interest in agriculture is that Fairbairn, and many other members of the Society, were excluded from existing agricultural organisations at the Cape. This has already been discussed in the section above on the Government's monopoly of scientific organisations. Given Fairbairn's aversion to Government involvement, the Society's interest in agriculture may have been a response to this exclusion. The other possible explanation is that the Society's interest in agriculture can be seen as a way of competing with the Government organisations for the loyalty and membership of farmers, economically and politically by far the most important single group in the Colony. The creation of a viable middle class political movement in the Colony could not be based purely on the residents of Cape Town. This was far too small a community. If Fairbairn was to create a Legislative Assembly in his own image he would have needed the support of the largely non-British farming elite. He might have seen agricultural improvement as a way of appealing to this group and aligning their interests with his. These two explanations are closely related. Both centre on Fairbairn's strong interest in agricultural improvement and ultimately have to do with his political program. Botha (1984) makes no mention of Fairbairn's interest in agriculture in this period, but agricultural improvement is a topic Fairbairn returned to repeatedly in the *Advertiser*. The focus was admittedly on the need for general rather than specific improvements, but the interest is there. In 1832, when the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI merged to form the LSI, Fairbairn was not a member of the new organisation, but he did join the Committee of the recently established Cape of Good Hope Agricultural Society. Fairbairn's interest in Agriculture extended well beyond the limited activities of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and was connected to his general call for the improvement, liberalisation and development of the Colony.

There is a further possible reason Fairbairn's interest in agriculture. It can be seen as an attempt to use the same rhetoric of applied science as radical provincial societies in Britain. But whereas Manchester and Newcastle were industrial cities, the Cape was an agricultural colony. Both the Manchester and Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Societies drew much of their support from the new industrial elites and many of their activities were focussed on industrial and technical concerns. The utilitarian focus of these British societies was as much a response to the economic imperatives of industrialisation as a response to the gentlemanly science of the landed gentry. Similarly, Ritvo (1987) has

shown that opponents of the socially elite breeding societies in nineteenth century Britain adopted the same utilitarian rhetoric. In the Cape agriculture was the dominant industry. It was the obvious object of any utilitarian agenda of improvement. Fairbairn's interest in agricultural improvement and his utilitarian focus provide further evidence that he was drawing on British models of radical science in pursuing his Cape political agenda.

Another activity where Fairbairn took the lead was the preparation of a statistical survey of the Colony. This became one of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS's declared, but unachieved, goals. In the *Advertiser's* editorial, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of June, 1829, Fairbairn argued that nothing could be more useful to the Colony than a statistical survey of the Cape of Good Hope (*Advertiser* IV: 209, June 13, 1829). Two things are worth noting about this. First, statistics, in the sense of data collection, was one of the important sciences in the early nineteenth century and was being adopted by social reformers across Europe, and especially within Britain (Goldman, 1991). Fairbairn's call for a statistical survey was not necessarily original. He himself acknowledged, the Dutch considered mounting one at the beginning of the century. Mounting such a survey was, however, politically radical. Even the earlier call by the Dutch for a survey was during the rule of the reforming Batavian Republic. Calling for a statistical survey involving the political economy of the Colony expressed a desire for reform and improvement (Neill, 2000). It was another great liberal ambition to throw against a Government that was continually criticised for doing nothing. This need-to-know to improve is one of the motivations for the survey that he provides in his editorial.

"It is a work in which every Colonist must feel a lively interest, as it would open up innumerable sources of wealth, and discover means of improvement in every way, which must otherwise despair of being brought to light." (*Advertiser* IV: 209, June 13, 1829)

This was to be a popular, utilitarian endeavour. The exact sort of activity that Fairbairn repeatedly sought out. It must also been seen in the context of the recently proposed, and soon to be established, SAI. This was a Government aligned scientific organisation that had explicitly listed the exploration for resources as one of its main functions.

Fairbairn's second reason for being interesting in a statistical survey was to control the image of the Colony. Fairbairn was very concerned with the image of the Cape presented by numerous travellers. It was often presented as

backward, its citizens as indolent and uncultured and its prospects poor. This image undermined Fairbairn's political program. It generated a lack of confidence in the colonists to run their own affairs both amongst those in Britain who had to decide on the devolution of power and amongst the Colonists themselves. Fairbairn had proposed a Society for Travellers in 1825 (*Advertiser* 29, November 9, 1825). This was probably conceived of as part of an attempt to control travellers in the Colony and ensure that they reported 'accurately', rather than repeating the hearsay of critics. The statistical survey may have been intended in much the same way, this time to provide the necessary 'true' picture that was to be reported. The 13<sup>th</sup> of June 1829 editorial starts with mocking attack on the travellers, and then goes on to note that,

"For a description of a country which may be relied on, of the manner and habits, the views, sentiments, and pursuit of the whole population, we must look to a very different set of men from your mere Traveller." (*Advertiser* IV: 209, June 13, 1829)

Fairbairn's solution to collect information from long time residents, particularly missionaries, and compile the statistical report. This statistical report,

"would also enable strangers to judge with certainty of the actual state and resources of the Colony, on which at present we possess no Authority that may not be questioned or disputed." (*Advertiser* IV: 209, June 13, 1829).

One needs to wonder whether Fairbairn noticed the obvious contradiction here, that, if nobody knows, how can he be sure that he is correct and the offensive travellers wrong. This, however, is unlikely to have been a problem. The importance of the Survey lay in its rhetorical value. Fairbairn could at least claim to be making an attempt to study the colony in the most modern manner.

In this same editorial, Fairbairn suggested that the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS would be the ideal organisation to oversee the production of a survey and called for an extraordinary meeting of the Society to discuss this. This meeting was announced on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June in the *Advertiser*,

"We have been requested by Seven Members of the Literary Society to call an extraordinary meeting of the Society on Wednesday the 21<sup>st</sup> instant, to take into consideration the propriety of choosing a Select Committee from amongst the Members, to superintend the progress and publication of a *Statistical Account of the Cape of Good Hope*, and other matters connected therewith" (*Advertiser* IV: 210, June 17, 1829)

It is interesting that events moved so quickly, but many of the senior members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were close friends and acquaintances of Fairbairn. This made it much easier to move a proposal forward at speed. In the same edition of the *Advertiser*, Fairbairn once again explored the question of a statistical survey. He laid out some ideas for an initial questionnaire; including topics on natural



history, such as entomology, botany, soils, as well as on agriculture, history, anthropology and local conditions and difficulties (*Advertiser* IV: 210, June 17, 1829). The final meeting to choose the Committee to organise the statistical survey occurred on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June (*Advertiser* IV: 210, June 17, 1829). There was no further significant discussion of the statistical survey in the *Advertiser* and Fairbairn seems to have, once again, moved on to his next project.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS failed in its attempt to prepare a statistical account of the Colony. The reasons for this need to be sought in the networks and authority to which the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS had access and in the Society's internal organisation. The desire for a statistical account of the Colony remained alive within the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and is mentioned in both the Society's annual reports. The first report merely recorded the formation of the Committee and promised rapid success (SALS, 1830:11). This hope was to be frustrated. In the following year, little seems to have been achieved. The Society's 1831 annual report noted that, "the Committee regret to state that progress has not been made in maturing the plan and collecting the requisite information" (SALS, 1831:6). This was blamed on the difficulties of communicating with the interior districts and finding suitably capable correspondents. The solution offered was the same as that initially suggested in the editorial of the 17<sup>th</sup> of June 1829, which was to rely on country clergy and missionaries. This was a sensible option given that several senior churchmen were members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The Rev. A. Faure could have spoken on behalf of the Dutch Reformed Church, while The Rev. Dr. John Philip was the superintendent of the London Missionary Society at the Cape. Three LMS missionaries, James Read and the Revs. Robert Moffat and William Wright, were also honorary or corresponding members of the Society. Yet the special Committee of 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS seems to have failed even to collect information for those areas where it would have had adequate information networks, such as for the Cape peninsula itself. This suggests that the problems were partially internal. There is no evidence as to who sat on the special Committee, so little can be said about this. Both the SAI and the later LSI involved themselves in collecting Colonial statistics. Both groups also failed to conduct a successful survey.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS declared its intention to start a Library, Museum and a Laboratory. Fairbairn suggested that the Society put some its funds into these activities in January 1829 (*Advertiser* IV: 167, January 17, 1829). The call for the

establishment of a Library and Museum was repeated in the announcement of the first meeting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February, and this was to be "the first and perhaps most valuable of its efforts" (*Advertiser* IV: 174, February 11, 1829). The desire for a Museum, so typical of literary and scientific societies at the time, appears to have been rapidly abandoned, as it is not mentioned again in any reports of or articles on the Society. The possibility of a Library and Laboratory continued to exercise the Society, and in the second annual report it is noted that the Society hoped,

"from the flourishing state of our funds, soon to realise two of the primary objects of our Association, in the establishment of a Library and the purchase of Philosophical Apparatus." (SALS, 1831:1)

The only record of the Society acquiring any "Philosophical", or laboratory, apparatus, involved the purchase of "a Barometer, with a Thermometer and Hygrometer attached" (SALS, 1831:7-8), for the purpose of collecting meteorological data. In the two most obviously scientific areas of proposed activity, the museum and laboratory, the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS achieved very little.

The intention to form a Library seems to have been more successful than that to form a Museum and Laboratory. There is, however, very little information about the Library. A reading room was established, an official Librarian, P. Harmsen, was appointed, books were purchased and donated and a number of periodicals were subscribed to. A list of the periodicals available in the reading room was provided in the first annual report of the Society. It included English, Dutch, German and French journals (SALS, 1830). The English journals were: *The Quarterly Review*, *The Edinburgh Review*, *The Oriental Herald*, *The New Monthly Magazine*, *Blackwood's Magazine* and the *Westminster Review*. The Dutch journals were: *De Recensent der Recensenten*, *De Letter Oefeninge* and *De Nederlandsche Hermes*. The German journals were: *Det Gelehrte Anzeiger*, *De Allgemeine Anzeiger*, *Die Hallische Litteratur Zeitung* and *Die Jenna Litteratur Zeitung*, while the French journal was *La Revue Encyclopedique*. This extensive pattern of subscription was curtailed in the following year to allow funds to be "more exclusively appropriated to the enlargement of the Library, and the purchase of Philosophical Apparatus" (SALS, 1831:8). Unfortunately the 1831 annual report was the last of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, so there is no record of the additions made to the Library using these extra funds.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Both the 1830 and 1831 annual reports note the purchase and donation of books, and in the second report a list of book donors is given. With the exception of one man, all the donors were

The final set of activities was the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS's involvement in scientific lectures. Fairbairn had expressed an interest in possibly giving "lectures on Chemistry, Geology, botany and other departments of science" when writing to Pringle in 1823 to accept his invitation to come to the Cape (quoted in Pringle, 1835:189). There is no mention of scientific lectures in any of Fairbairn's articles on the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS in 1829, and the Society's first annual report likewise makes no mention of scientific lectures. The first sign of the Society's interest in Lectures occurred in July 1830, when the following advertisement appeared in the *Advertiser*.

"IN consequence of a resolution taken to that effect, - Notice is hereby given, that any Gentleman who may be willing to give occasional Lectures, upon any scientific Subject, according to the Rules of the Society, will meet with encouragement, on application to the Secretaries of this Institution. ... [dated] 14<sup>th</sup> July, 1830" (*Advertiser* V:324, July 21, 1830)

This advertisement was then repeated in the following edition of the *Advertiser* on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July. The immediate reason for the Society's decision to organise a series of lectures may have been the successful series of lectures on "PHYSIOLOGY, PSYCHOLOGY, AND PHRENOLOGY" (*Advertiser* V: 299, April 24, 1830) offered by Dr. H. E. Macartney. The introductory lecture was delivered on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June, and the *Advertiser* carried a brief and in some ways cool report of the talk from "a Correspondent" (*Advertiser* V: 315, June 19, 1830). Reports were also carried on the other lectures. The advertisement for the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS occurred in the middle of this series of lectures.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS failed to organise a lecture series in its second year. The second annual reports notes that,

"your Committee have used every endeavour to engage a competent Lecturer to deliver during the winter season, a course of Lectures on some department of Experimental Science, but they are sorry to state, that they have hitherto failed in effecting any eligible arrangement." (SALS, 1831:7)

The failure of the Society to attract a competent science lecturer was not necessarily because it did not try. The 1832 *Cape Almanac* noted of the South African College in the previous year that, "The Chairs of Natural Philosophy and

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2<sup>nd</sup> SALS members. The exception was the Rev. Fearon Fallows, a man without obvious links to the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. In fact, he was a man with obvious reasons to avoid the Society, being closely involved with the SAI. By the end of 1830 Fallows's health was becoming progressively worse (Warner, 1995). Plans were made to leave the Colony, and possessions were sold. The apparent strangeness of the donation is offset by its unusual context of his death.

Physical Science have no [sic] yet been filled up; owing to various causes" (*Cape Almanac*, 1832:112). There appears to have been a shortage of suitable candidates in the Colony. This may have been related to the conflicting political affiliations of possible candidates and the organisations that were looking for them. In the late 1820s and early 1830s, the South African College and the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were seen as closely affiliated to those opposing the Colonial Government. It was to the SAI that many of the more scientific men in the Colony belonged. Nevertheless, the Society's Committee continued to express its hope that a suitable lecturer would be found, even if from amongst the Society's own membership.

In 1831 a set of lectures was again delivered by Dr. Henry Macartney, now a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Macartney must have only joined the Society in the previous year, as he does not appear in the 1830 membership list. In mid 1831 Macartney embarked on a second set of lectures on "PHYSICS, PHYSIOLOGY, AND THE NATURAL HISTORY OF MAN" (*Advertiser* VII: 414, June 1, 1831). This was announced in June and started in July. There is no evidence that these lectures were conducted under the auspices of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Nevertheless, Macartney seems to have held many of the same political convictions as Fairbairn. The final of his lectures, *On the Subject of Life and Death*, was published in Cape Town. In the introduction Macartney explicitly linked his scientific lectures to representative government.

"And here I beg to state, that in preparing these Lectures, I was solely actuated by a desire to promote the intellectual advancement of the Colony,- as looking to other countries which stand high in the scale of civilisation, it will be found, that public Lectures and Literary productions are the characteristics that stamp the character or mark of their superior advancement. But there is another circumstance that may result from the delivery of this course of Lectures, which is, that it rebuts the ridiculous insinuation in respect of the Inhabitants of this Colony, not being yet sufficiently advanced in Intellect to enjoy Free Institutions. Now, it must be readily conceded, that among a community, where a numerous auditory were found to attend a series of Lectures on Scientific Subjects, there might be also found *some ripe enough* to mend a road, frame a turnpike bill, or take care of their own purse strings." (Macartney, 1831:viii)

In late 1832, Fairbairn himself would embark upon a series of lectures on "Natural Science" (*Advertiser* IX: 566, November 14, 1832). By then the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS has already been incorporated into the LSI, of which Fairbairn was not a member. No record of the content of Fairbairn's lectures exists, but they may have presented a similar argument.

It is interesting to ask if the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, on its own terms, was successful? The one thing the Society cannot be accused of is setting limited goals. Its ambitions included: holding monthly meetings, establishing a laboratory, a museum, and a library, conducting a statistical survey of the Colony, organising public scientific lectures, and playing a part in agricultural improvement. Aside from the monthly meetings and possibly the library, about which almost nothing is known, it succeeded in none of these. This does not appear to have been for want of members. During its existence it was the largest scientific or literary society at the Cape. The reasons for its limited achievements would appear to have been internal and structural. The desire to make the Society as inclusive as possible, and not demand any significant commitment from members, left the running of the Society in the hands of a small group of men who were already busy with many other unrelated activities. The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS also lacked focussed purpose to concentrate the activities of this group of men. Finally, in drawing on the model of radical British scientific society, Fairbairn may have been attempting to impose on Cape Town's middle class an inappropriately structured and conceived organisation.

### 3.8 The Membership of the Second South African Literary Society

The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS drew on Cape Town's middle class for its support and the city's professionals for its leadership. Its membership was diverse in national origin and this provides evidence for a confluence of interests between members of the British and Cape-Dutch middle classes in 1829. This emerging Anglo-Dutch middle class apparent in the Society's membership appears to have been united, at least initially, by their dislike for the Colonial Government and their desire for greater Colonial independence from British interference. These two issues often ran together, as they did in Fairbairn's political program that underpinned the Society. The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS attracted the support of a number of scientific and literary men, but senior British born colonial officials and Army officers and surgeons were largely absent. The dependence of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS on the middle class is especially apparent when compared to the membership of the more elite and government aligned SAI, as is done in the next *Chapter*.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS drew its support widely from different groups in the colony. There is information about the country of birth for forty-seven of the Society's one hundred and four full members. The breakdown of this data can be seen in *Chart 3.1*, which can be seen, along with all the other charts, at the end of the *Chapter*. There are two points that are immediately apparent. First, for those members where confirmed data exists, less than half were born in Britain. If one separates the English and Scots, then the single largest category of men were those born in the Cape. Because of its history, Cape Town had a diverse international community (Worden *et.al.*, 1998), and this is amply demonstrated in the membership of the Society. This diversity, at least at the general level, remains when one analyses the ethnicity of all the members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The ethnic breakdown for the complete membership can be seen in *Chart 4.2*. As noted in *Appendix A*, this complete data should be treated with care. It confirms the general trend evident in *Chart 4.1*, although here the importance of British members is increased. This majority is still marginal, with only 55% of the membership being of British extraction. This compares with the 69% of members of British extraction in the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. On the basis of ethnicity the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were quite different.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS became more British as time went on. In May 1829 the Society applied for a license from the Government (SALS, 1830). This application included a list of 48 names. The ethnic breakdown of this group, using complete data with all the provisos given in *Appendix A*, can be seen in *Chart 3.3*. This early group was predominately non-British, with only 44% of the members being of British extraction. In mid-1831, when the Society printed its last membership list (SALS, 1831), 54% of the membership of the Society was of British origin. This is much the same percentage as that of the previous year, as revealed in the 1830 membership list (SALS, 1830). 1829, and possibly early 1830, saw the increasing Anglicisation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Although a 10% swing in ethnic makeup is not particularly significant, it is indicative of the fact that the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was far more than just a vehicle for the emerging British middle classes in the Colony. The Society appears to witness the emergence of a new Anglo-Dutch middle class.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The existence of an Anglo-Dutch middle class has been noted before, but has typically been seen as emerging later in the 1830s (Worden *et.al.*, 1998; and Dubow, 1999).

The occupational breakdown of the membership of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS reveals a number of similarities with the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS as well as a number of important differences. Occupational data is available for eighty-five, out of the one hundred and four, men who joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The occupational breakdown of the membership can be seen in *Chart 3.4*. Three groups stand out here as being of particular importance to the Society: civilian doctors, businessmen and colonial officials. Although not as significant in terms of the total membership the Lawyer and Other categories are also of importance at the leadership level. There are a number of continuities between the first 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. As can be seen in *Chart 3.5*, the general makeup of the membership of the two Societies is quite similar. With the exception of the unknown category, the differences are mainly between the relative importance of colonial officials and businessmen.

The importance of Businessmen is one of the more significant continuities between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Businessmen, and especially those associated with the Commercial Exchange, were key supporters of John Fairbairn in this period (Worden *et.al.*, 1998). Between 1825/26 and 1831/32, twelve of the twenty-three merchants who joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS also sat on the management Committee of the Commercial Exchange.<sup>12</sup> For all their importance though, the businessmen were almost completely excluded from the leadership of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, as they were from the leadership of the SAI and LSI. The only businessman who was also an office bearer in the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was William Liesching. Given that the businessmen made up some 21% of the second SALS, it is surprising that they made up less than 4%, or one out of twenty three, of those in leadership positions. The lack of influence of businessmen is reinforced by the fact that although always an important category amongst the members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, their percentage of the total membership dropped from 33% in 1829 to 20% in 1831.<sup>13</sup>

The leadership of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS displays a different occupational distribution to the membership of the Society as a whole. Amongst the leadership of the Society the two most important occupational groups were "Legal" and "Other". Five of both were amongst the twenty-three members of the Committee. In

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<sup>12</sup> These numbers come from a comparison of the membership lists of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, with the Committee lists recorded in the *Cape Almanac*, between 1826 and 1832.

<sup>13</sup> This compares the Signatories to the May 1829 application for a license for the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS (SALS, 1830) to the membership list for 1831 (SALS, 1831).

Chart 3.6 the occupational distribution for the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS's leadership is compared to that of the Society's total membership. There are important differences between the two groups. The first is amongst the businessmen, who were, as already noted, significantly underrepresented amongst the leadership. Professionals were over represented, especially religious ministers and lawyers, but not civilian doctors. The category "other" was also over represented.

Lawyers were an important part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS from early on and may have aligned themselves with the Society for professional reasons. Some ten civilian lawyers joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, of which only two, Henry Cloete and J. A. Joubert, also joined the SAI. Along with these two only one other lawyer, P. A. Poupart, joined the SAI. Cape Town's legal fraternity appears to have had a strong preference for the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Even more suggestively, aside from two notaries and one attorney, the legal men in the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were all barristers, or advocates. Not only were advocates in the minority amongst legal men in the Colony, as was to be expected from the structure of the legal profession, but they were also all Cape-Dutch. Of the ten advocates listed in Cape Town in the 1830 *Cape Almanac*, eight were affiliated with the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS.<sup>14</sup> The importance of the lawyers to the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS is emphasised by their presence at the very beginning of the Society. Six advocates and one attorney were amongst the forty-eight men who signed the application for a license for the Society in mid 1829. Yet, none were amongst the first Committee members elected in February 1829. Of the Committee listed in the 1830 annual report, however, four Committee members and one secretary were legal men. Cape Town advocates strongly supported the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, but seem not have been behind the establishment of the Society.

The preference of lawyers and especially advocates for the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was probably motivated by professional concerns. In the late 1820s the implementation of the recommendations of the 1822 Commission of Inquiry had compromised the interests of this group of men. Lawyers in the future had to study in Britain, judges could only be drawn from the British bar and English was to be the language of the courts (Peires, 1989; Trapido, 1993). The advocates may well have felt more comfortable in a Society led by Fairbairn than in the

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<sup>14</sup> Seven were full members at some point, while D. Dennyssen signed the application to the government for a license in mid-1829.



strongly Government aligned SAI. Fairbairn was calling for South African self-rule, for greater independence from Britain and was generally antagonistic to the Government. Yet one should take care in making this point too strongly. One of the very men who was to implement this process of the legal Anglicisation, Justice W. W. Burton, was one of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS's four presidents.

Men in the "Other" category reveal a similar trend in their membership. Because they belong to such a diverse group, however, their membership defies any systematic explanation, and a case by case analysis is required. Examining just those whom sat on the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS's Committee, two men require no introduction: Fairbairn and his partner and printer George Greig. Fairbairn was always one of the secretaries of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, while Greig became a Committee member in the 1830/1831 period. W. L. von Buchenroder, an intellectual and farmer (*DSAB*), was a Committee member in 1829/1830, and briefly joined the SAI in the same period. The following year he was an ordinary member of the Society, but not of the SAI. The final two Committee men in the "Other" category were J. R. Innes and the Rev. J. Pears. They were University of Aberdeen trained teachers who had been brought out to the Colony in the early 1820s as part of Somerset's plans for the Anglicisation of education. In 1830 they had taken up the posts of Mathematics and English professors at the recently formed South African College. They provide one of the important links between the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the South African College.

Many of the senior members of the South African College, established in 1828 and opened in 1829, belonged to the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. In 1829/1830 seven members of the Society held some College office.<sup>15</sup> In addition, all teaching staff at the College were members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. None of them ever joined the SAI. There was one partial exception, the Rev. James Adamson who was a founding member of both the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI. Adamson, however, left the College, in February 1830, after a crisis in the College over religious education (Botha, 1984).<sup>16</sup> Importantly, he left the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS before he helped establish the

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<sup>15</sup> Four Institution members were also College office bearers, but, of these, three were also Literary Society members. Interestingly, the College subscription and donation lists show that the College enjoyed very widespread support amongst the members of both the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI. This does not, however, seem to have translated into positions of influence (Ritchie, 1918).

<sup>16</sup> Adamson returned to teach at the College in 1835, as professor of natural philosophy (*De Zuid Afrikaan* V (264) 20 February, 1835).

SAI. Although he appears as a General Committee member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS in February 1829 (*Advertiser* IV: 174, February 11, 1829), he does not appear on any later membership lists. The 1830 crisis over religious education at the College also led the Governor to the conclusion that the College was under the control of anti-British elements (Botha, 1984). In other words, the College was seen as opposed to the Colonial Government.

The role of colonial officials differed between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was violently antagonistic towards the Government. This made the presence of colonial officials difficult to explain. The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was far less openly antagonistic to the Government and twenty colonial officials joined the Society. It is useful to discuss the judicial officers separately from the other colonial officials. The first reason is that both the judicial officers who joined the Society were Committee members. John Barker, court of Vice-Admiralty, was a Committee member from at least 1830 through to 1832, while Justice W. W. Burton, Second Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court, was a President of the Society from early 1829 until 1832. Both had also signed the May 1829 application for the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS's license. Furthermore, neither man joined the SAI, although Burton's brother, Clerke Burton, sat on the first council of the SAI. Why such senior judicial officers joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS is unclear, given the Society's anti-establishment politics.

The other colonial officials exhibited a different pattern of membership. First, of the remaining eighteen colonial officials who joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, only three were Committee members of the Society. Each of these three was also of Cape Dutch extraction. They were: Capt. Andries Stockenstrom, commissioner general of the eastern Cape, member of the Colony's governing Council of Advice, and a President of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS; Sir John Truter, ex Chief Justice, also member of the Colony's governing Council of Advice, and a President of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS; and F. S. Watermeyer, who acted as the Society's treasurer. Watermeyer and Truter were both University of Leiden trained lawyers, which might have aligned them in some ways with the interests of the other advocates who joined the Society. All three men also joined the SAI, although only Watermeyer held a council position there, also as treasurer. Not all the colonial officials who joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were non-British. Overall only 58%, or eleven out of nineteen, were non-British. This number, however, hides an important temporal difference. Out of the initial six colonial officials who joined the Society and signed the

license application, only J. Bance, the port Captain, was British.<sup>17</sup> By 1831, though, 53%, or eight out of fifteen, colonial official members were British. At least initially, colonial officials and especially British colonial officials were averse to joining the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The early members were mostly non-British. In this, the Society conforms to the model of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. As the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS became more established in the 1830s and possible conflicts of interest diminished in importance, British colonial officials became increasingly willing to join.

The single largest group of professional men in the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were civilian doctors. A total of twelve joined the Society between 1829 and 1831, of which eight were British and four were non-British.<sup>18</sup> Of the non-British doctors, three were German born and one was Cape born. Civilian doctors made up about 12% of the Society's total membership and 9%, or two out of twenty three, of its Committee members. Given the small numbers this was not a significant difference and suggests that the doctors were a well integrated part of the Society. The two Committee members were Dr. J. W. Fairbridge and Dr. Louis, or Lewis, Liesching. Fairbridge was an Aberdeen trained doctor, and had received his M.D. in 1822. His entry in the *DSAB* notes that he "was an independent thinker with radical political views ... and [was] a champion of the freedom of the press. He was [also] a member of ... the London Anthropological Society, to which he sent several Hottentot and Bushmen skulls, and the Society for Meteorological Observations" (*DSAB*). Fairbridge had also signed up for the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, but he never joined the SAI. His politics and intellectual interests combined to make him almost the ideal member for the Fairbairn's societies.

The other civilian doctor on the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS's Committee was Carl Ludwig (Louis) Liesching, son of, arguably, the most senior medical doctor in the Colony, F. L. Liesching.<sup>19</sup> Liesching junior, had studied medicine at Tübingen and Göttingen,

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<sup>17</sup> Bance was a R. N. officer, but it is unclear whether he held his position as Port Captain as a serving officer or a half-pay officer in the colonial service. For occupation he is categorised as a R.N. Officer.

<sup>18</sup> There was a further British doctor who joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS: W. T. Ballantine. He may, however, have been a R. N. Doctor, and is recorded in the 1831 *Cape Almanac* as an assistant surgeon at the Naval Hospital in Cape Town. His is included in the "Navy" category in the *prospography*.

<sup>19</sup> F. L. Liesching had come to the colony as a regimental surgeon to the Württemberg regiment in 1787, and then chose to stay on in the Colony (*DSAB*). He had an interest in natural history and was a keen collector, especially of shells, which he sent to the Duke of Württemberg as a token of his loyalty (Burrows, 1958). In 1824 he had signed up for the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS and in the late 1820s and

and graduated in 1812. Along with Fairbridge he had joined the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, but never the SAI. Both Fairbridge and Liesching were founding members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and were elected to the very first Committee in February 1829. Their presence also points to important links between the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the Medical Society, of which Liesching was the Vice-President in 1829 (*Cape Almanac*, 1829). Of the fifteen men who are known to have been part of the Medical Society between 1829 and 1832, eight joined the second SALS, while only two joined the SAI.<sup>20</sup>

The membership of civilian doctors in a number of different social organisations has in the past been seen as indicative of either their high social standing (Burrows, 1958) or their desire to secure such high standing (Deacon H, 1997). Both accounts are problematic. Burrow's account is anachronistic in assuming the high status of the middle classes. Deacon's more nuanced view suggests that Cape Town doctors followed their British peers in seeking to improve their social standing by joining middle class organisations such as the "Freemasons, the Philanthropic society, the South African Library, and the Agricultural Society" (Deacon H, 1997:46). The same would, no doubt, apply to membership of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, although she does not mention it and does not explore the relation of doctors to these organisations in any detail. It is, however, insufficient to explain the membership of doctors in these organisations simply in terms of their desire to project an aura of genteel respectability. Such an account ignores the politicisation of these middle class organisations. Any explanation of why the doctors, or any other group, joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS also has to explain why they did not join the SAI. In other words it has to place the decision in a comparative social and political context. Civilian doctors, as the best studied professional group in the Colony in the period, allow such an analysis to be made explicit.

Civilian Doctors probably aligned themselves with the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS for two related reasons: their middle class, and sometimes radical, political credentials and their professional antagonism to Army doctors. Civilian doctors in early nineteenth century Cape Town saw themselves as members of the city's middle class and

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early 1830s he was president of the South African Medical Society. He did not, however, join the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. F. L. Liesching's other son, confusingly named Carl Friederich, was an Apothecary in Cape Town. He was a member of both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS.

<sup>20</sup> There is no membership list for the Medical Society. The membership has been compiled by compiling a list of names of participants in the Society's meetings (SAMS, Minute Book)

seem to have shared many of Fairbairn's political aspirations (Worden *et.al.*, 1989). Their pattern of membership in the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS suggests that they were, however, not active supporters of Fairbairn. Almost all only joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS after it had received its licence in mid-1829. This suggests an unwillingness to appear too radical. The preference of civilian doctors for the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS over the SAI was probably a result of poor professional relations between civilian and Army doctors. The SAI was closely aligned with the Army and Army Medical Service. In April 1828 the Medical Society,

"Resolved, on a motion of Dr Liesching junr and seconded by Mr Roberts that no member of the Society when consultation is requested by any patient, propose a military practitioner, as it has generally been observed that the compliment is not returned" (SAMS, Minute Book)

It is important that this motion was led by Dr. L. Liesching. He was an early participant in the establishment of both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. While poor professional relations were not necessarily a problem for all civilian doctors, the issue was significant enough to explain their preference for the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS over the SAI.

Some members may, of course, have joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS out of genuine interest in its proposed literary, agricultural and scientific activities. This was not, however, a prerequisite in a Society dedicated to the diffusion of existing and useful knowledge and designed with few limits on membership. Thirteen members are, however, known to have had literary and scientific interests. The thirteen men's details are given in *Table 3.2*, below. The table includes, if applicable, their positions on the Society's Committee, the areas of interest, other relevant affiliations and their occupations. The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS members most involved in scientific activities were: Atherstone, Ecklon, Fairbridge, von Ludwig, Macartney and Pappe. It is interesting that, with the exception of von Ludwig, none of these men joined the SAI, even though the Institution would have suited their intellectual interests. Atherstone, Fairbridge and Macartney were, however, civilian doctors. In addition, Pappe, who was by this time spending most of his time on botanical collecting, had previously been a civilian doctor. Politically, Fairbridge and Macartney are known to have had radical political views. This group of scientific and literary men were for a number of political and professional reasons more likely to be comfortable in the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS than the SAI.

### 3.9 Conclusion

The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS marked the high point of Fairbairn's and his supporters' attempts to establish a civil alternative to the Government domination of science in the Cape Colony. It was an organisation that represented the interests of the British and Cape-Dutch middle classes and should be seen as part of these groups' political and social program to assert their authority and legitimacy. This was to be done by adopting social forms from both Britain and possibly the Netherlands<sup>21</sup> – especially by developing civil society. The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was the largest scientific organisation in the Colony at the time, but never fulfilled its aspirations. Part of the reason for this may have been the nature of membership of the Society. There were few demands on the members and it seems quite likely that few members actually participated in its activities. Its membership points more to the nature and makeup of the socio-political groups that supported Fairbairn's political program than the existence of a group with scientific or literary interests. Science was probably not an important part of the identity of the city's wider liberal middle class.

The confluence of interests that underpinned the membership of British born and Cape-Dutch residents in the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS Cape probably had to do with a mutual dislike of the colonial Government. Unfortunately, for the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, different groups disliked the colonial Government for different and sometimes incompatible reasons. While most middle class groups objected to Government interference, different groups would have seen this in different ways. This was especially true of such Government regulation as Ordinance 50, promulgated in 1828, which ended a number of legal discriminations against the Khoi, such as pass laws, summary punishment without trial and vagrancy (see Keegan, 1996). While such 'interference' was welcomed by humanitarians and some British residents, it was widely criticised by farmers and many members of the Cape-Dutch community. The success of the humanitarian movement in the 1830s, leading to the abolition of slavery, increased these tensions. At the same time much of Fairbairn's liberal agenda was realised and there was a rapprochement

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<sup>21</sup> There is ample evidence that the Netherlands had an active civil bourgeois culture and that scientific societies played an important role in this (see for instance Roberts, 1999). Many senior members of the Cape-Dutch community had studied in the Netherlands they would certainly have been exposed to this culture and may have imported elements of it to the Cape. This is, however, not obviously apparent in the existing historiography of the Cape.

between many of Fairbairn's supporters and the Colonial elite. These changes made the survival of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS increasingly unlikely

The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were established at different political moments in the Cape's history. As a result, they drew different kinds of support. The first Society was established at a moment of acute political crisis. Its members mostly were drawn from the often intimate supporters of John Fairbairn and Thomas Pringle in the free press debate. Its establishment and membership were obviously tied to its immediate historical context. This is less apparent in the case for the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. There was no obvious event that the second Society was a response to, nor was the membership of the Society so narrowly defined in terms of political allegiance. The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS needs to be seen in the context of an evolving context. It was established near the height of the liberal and humanitarian movement at the Cape, but before a backlash by both conservative Cape-Dutch and expansionist, often British born, settlers. In 1829, the liberal and humanitarian middle class was in many ways still in opposition to the colonial Government and elite and as such could attract the support of other middle class groups with whom it had little in common aside from such opposition. Importantly, while civil society was still in its infancy in 1824, by 1829 it appears to have rapidly achieved legitimacy and support. So much so that when a conservative Cape-Dutch reaction to liberal order emerged in the 1830s it adopted the forms of liberal civil society, pursuing its ambitions through newspapers, magazines, as well as literary and cultural organisations.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, as with the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, drew on a model of the radical provincial British, specifically English, scientific society. Through Fairbairn, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were linked to the Newcastle upon Tyne Literary and Philosophical Society and Antiquarian Society and via these to the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. These provincial societies pursued a radical form of science that emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in the context of Britain's industrialisation. While the development of scientific societies has not been shown to be causally linked to industrialisation (Inkster, 1983), industrialisation created the social and cultural context for the establishment of the societies. Specifically, the scientific societies drew on members of an industrial middle class seeking social and political legitimacy from an entrenched aristocratic elite. Cape Town differed considerably. Here a professional and commercial middle class sought social and political legitimacy from an elite of

Army men and colonial officials. As McKenzie (1997) has argued, this elite should not be thought of as the equivalent of Britain's aristocracy. The use of an industrial model of scientific society in an administrative centre and agricultural entrepot may itself have been one of the reasons for the relative lack of success of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The social and political interests of Cape Town's middle class were not well defined and social mobility continually undermined attempts to construct the middle class as fundamentally opposed to the Colonial elite. This helps to explain why the ultimate fate of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was to be incorporated into the elite's scientific society, the SAI. This alternative, elite tradition of scientific societies is examined in the following two *Chapters*.



# 4

## The South African Institution, 1829 - 1832

### 4.1 Introduction

The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was established in early 1829. In the middle of the same year another scientific society was established in Cape Town, the SAI. The two organisations were quite distinct in both their memberships and conceptions of science. The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was largely supported by Cape Town's Anglo-Dutch middle classes and pursued a strongly utilitarian program directed towards colonial improvement. The SAI, on the other hand, was led by the Colony's emerging Anglo-Dutch official and Army elite and downplayed the utilitarian advantages of science in favour of wider intellectual and moral interests. Several key SAI members also hoped to use their scientific activities in the Cape to achieve recognition in Europe as men of science. This gave the SAI a different flavour compared with the domestically concerned 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. My central claim in this *Chapter* is that the SAI was largely established to further the career of Dr. Andrew Smith, an Army surgeon and naturalist. The SAI was one in a series of attempts by Smith to establish the necessary institutional and social infrastructure of science in Cape Town to aid his work in natural history. His first attempt was in 1825, with the founding of the South African Museum. In the same year he also proposed the establishment of a Cape of Good Hope Literary and Philosophical Society. In 1826 he was involved in setting up the Cape of Good Hope Horticultural Society. By the start of 1829 these organisations were no longer functional, and on his return to Cape Town in April 1829, Smith set about organising the SAI. To do this he drew on his unique access to the Governor and the support of a pre-existing group of the city's official and Army elite. Just as his membership of the Colony's elite shaped the social structure of the SAI, his scientific career interests shaped the non-utilitarian and international conception of science embodied by the organisation.

In this *Chapter* I focus narrowly on the history of the various scientific organisations as institutions. I explore the political and social functions of Smith's organisations more fully in *Chapter 5*, examining both Smith's role in colonial expansion and the possible civic role of the LSI in asserting an elite identity in the face of enormous political tensions. Smith also was involved, as pointed out by Bank (1995 and 1996), in developing biological theories of race during his time at the Cape, and he delivered an anthropological paper to the SAI. Yet a full analysis of the role of the SAI, or the other three organisations, in the construction of racial ideas lies beyond the scope of this thesis. Moreover, as with slavery, race remained highly contentious during the early nineteenth century Cape. Especially in the later LSI, where ardent opposing protagonists on the issue occupied important positions, it required handling with great care. Unlike slavery there are hints that debates about race occurred in the SAI and LSI. The issue of race is examined in the next *Chapter*.

There is little in the existing literature on the SAI. The most useful study is Kirby (1965), a biography of Smith. Unfortunately, while exploring Smith's role in the SAI, it provides little further information on the organisation as such. Crawford (1934) mentions the SAI only briefly. He claims that "it is surprising to learn that in the same month in which the Literary Society was revived a meeting was held and another society [the SAI], on much the same lines, instituted" (Crawford, 1934:315). This claim is problematic. While the SAI and the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were both conceived of as scientific organisations, they represented different groups in the Colony and their apparently simultaneous foundation is in fact neither surprising nor inexplicable. Interestingly, Crawford (1934) makes no mention of the role of Smith. Hall (1977) does mention Smith, but does not identify him as the key figure behind the SAI's establishment. Dubow (1999) takes much the same line as Hall (1977) on Smith's role in the SAI. The SAI has not previously been seen as part of an existing pattern of scientific institutionalisation in the Cape nor has Smith been placed at the centre of this pattern.

The single most important conditioning factor in the relation of Smith, science and the Government was money, or, rather, the lack of it. Retrenchment was the financial reality from the 1820s onwards, with the British state reducing its support for science throughout the Empire (Drayton, 2000). Within the Cape, this became particularly pronounced from the mid-1820s when the Colonial Office in London restricted the Governor's freedom to spend money and support projects,

scientific or otherwise. Sir Lowry Cole, Governor from late-1828, was required to receive permission from London for *any* expenditure over £200 and in 1829 the colony ran a *deficit* of £17,000 (Hunt, 1974). The reality of retrenchment was apparent on a number of occasions. These include the unwillingness of the Colonial office to support Smith as the paid Superintendent of the Museum, although he stayed on in the Colony at the Army's expense. For at least partly financial reasons the government also closed down the Museum and Library in 1827. It privatised the Library in 1828, handed the Museum over to the SAI in 1829, and was unable to establish a botanic garden in 1830. Smith's attempts to establish civil scientific organisations were driven as much by their usefulness as by the inability, or unwillingness, of the government to support his activities directly.

## 4.2 Dr. Andrew Smith

Dr. Andrew Smith cuts a remarkable image. The son of a shepherd, he rose to the head of the British Army's Medical Service and was eventually knighted. Making sense of his fifteen years in the Cape Colony, and especially his eight or so years in Cape Town, requires that this period be put in the broader context of his life. Most of the following account draws on Kirby (1965), the only biography of Smith. Smith's importance to the establishment of Cape scientific organisations has been widely recognised, yet the extent of his activities has not been appreciated. Although remarkable, Smith was in many ways typical of his period. The early nineteenth century saw the British Army and Royal Navy becoming increasingly important sponsors of natural history and scientific exploration and Edinburgh trained surgeons formed a core part of this military scientific enterprise.

Andrew Smith's background is central to understanding his activities in the Cape. He came from an extremely modest background. He was born in Roxburghshire, Scotland, in 1797. His father did increasingly well for himself and apprenticed his son to a local doctor. In 1813 a subscription was raised to send him to Edinburgh University, where he studied medicine for two years. He then joined the Army Medical Service in 1815, after which he returned to Edinburgh to complete his studies. His time at Edinburgh had provided him with a firm grounding not only in medicine and surgery, but also in natural history.

Edinburgh's medical education was, at the time, probably the finest natural history education in Britain and modern French biology was largely introduced to Britain via the University. In the 1820s and 1830s Edinburgh trained doctors and men of science took this new, often radical and materialistic, biology to London (Desmond, 1989). While some were to use it in attacking the medical, religious and social establishment, others, such as Smith, used it as an entrée into the establishment.

Smith's joining the Army was crucial, because he did so less as a surgeon than as a naturalist. He was hired into the Army by Sir James McGrigor, Director-General of the Army's Medical Service. McGrigor was also an Edinburgh trained surgeon. He had become head of the Medical Service in 1815, and only retired from that position in 1851. When McGrigor took over the Medical Service he established a museum of Natural History and Pathological Anatomy at Chatham, where the Army's medical school was located. In March 1826 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. He encouraged his doctors, which included the Army's entire medical service around the globe, to take an active role in collecting natural history specimens for the Museum. In the process he appears to have made natural history a peacetime route to promotion. This had two important implications for Smith's activities in the Cape. First, Smith understood that one of his primary functions was to act as a naturalist and that this would offer him the chance of promotion. Secondly, he could rely to some degree on the support of McGrigor in the pursuit of natural history, even if it interfered with his official medical duties. Kirby (1965) claims that McGrigor was an important behind-the-scenes factor in the establishment of the South African Museum in 1825. Smith's extensive natural history work in the Cape may also have been responsible for his assignment to Chatham on his return to Britain in 1837. This placed Smith at the centre of power and patronage of the Medical Service and provided greater opportunities for advancement than other domestic or colonial postings. This early posting to Chatham probably had much to do with his later rise to eminence. Smith was not a naturalist who just happened to arrive in the Cape and make a name for himself. The Army sent him there, at least partially, to pursue natural history and his future lay in the Army in Britain.

Smith's combination of military service and natural history was relatively common in the early nineteenth century, especially amongst surgeons. Browne (1996) places particular importance on Edinburgh trained Naval and Army

surgeons in her analysis of British travelling naturalists. Specifically, she points to the role of Prof. Robert Jameson in supplying the Royal Navy with surgeon naturalists. Although Kirby (1965) does not record Smith attending Jameson's lectures, it is likely that he did. Either way, Smith later appears to have corresponded with Jameson (Kirby, 1965). Knight (1974) and Allen (1985) further note that the pursuit of science provided important opportunities for rapid promotion within the military. This was especially important for naval surgeons and surveyors in the period following the Napoleonic wars. Sir John Barrow, Second Secretary of the Admiralty from 1803 to 1845, and later Francis Balfour, Chief hydrographer to the British Admiralty between 1829 and 1855, have both been identified as important in encouraging and supporting exploration, natural history and science amongst naval surgeons and officers (Deacon M., 1997; Flemming, 1998; Stafford, 1999; and Friendly, 1977). No previous account appears to have explicitly identified an equivalent in the British Army, although Ashworth (1998) suggests that Thomas Frederick Colby, Director of the British Army's Ordnance Survey between 1820 and 1846, might have played an equivalent role. Sir James McGrigor, head of the Army's Medical Service between 1815 and 1851, is another obvious candidate for a patron and supporter of science in the British Army.

Both Fairbairn and Smith had received their scientific education while studying medicine at Edinburgh. They studied there at exactly the same time, attending many of the same courses. In the 1813-1814 academic year they were both registered for James Homes's course on *Materia Medica*, Pharmacy and Dietetics, and John Barclay's course on Anatomy and surgery. In the following year both attended James Gregory's course on the Practice of Physic (Botha, 1984; and Kirby, 1965). Many of these classes were large with several hundred students. It is nevertheless possible that Smith and Fairbairn at least knew of each other and they must have eventually met in the Cape. Although they shared a common scientific education, each turned science to a different end: Fairbairn to radical politics and Smith to personal advancement in the British Army's Medical Service.

#### 4.3 Smith in Cape Town and the Museum and Library, 1825-1828

Smith was sent to the Cape in 1821 and came over with the newly assigned astronomer for the Royal Observatory at the Cape of Good Hope, the Rev. Fearon Fallows. He spent about two weeks in Cape Town, in August 1821, before being assigned to the Eastern Frontier, where he remained until early 1825. This time in the eastern Cape provided him with extensive opportunities to pursue natural history. At the end of January 1825 Lord Charles Somerset came to visit Grahamstown, where Smith was then based. Smith had become a friend of Somerset's son, Lieutenant Colonel Henry Somerset. The Governor, later joined by the Colonial Secretary, Sir Richard Plasket, was in Grahamstown between the 30<sup>th</sup> of January and the 25<sup>th</sup> of February. It is certain that Smith met with Somerset and it is also probable that he discussed various possibilities with the Governor about returning to Cape Town and starting a museum. Kirby (1965) notes that in March 1825, Thomas Phillips, a close friend of Smith, discussed the establishment of a museum with Plasket. Whatever the case, by about this time, in early 1825, Smith had returned to Cape Town.

Smith returned to Cape Town some time in March or April 1825 and soon set about establishing himself and setting up the necessary scientific infrastructure to pursue his interests. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of June a notice appeared in the *Cape Town Gazette* announcing the establishment of the South African Museum, "for the reception and classification of the various objects of the Animal, Vegetable, and Mineral Kingdoms, which are found in South Africa" (*Cape Town Gazette* XX: 1013, June 11, 1825). It has never been in doubt that Smith was behind the establishment of the South African Museum. Kirby (1942 & 1965) and Summers (1975) have both identified him as the key figure. As would have been normal practice, official responsibility for the establishment of the Museum was, however, assigned to the Governor. The 11<sup>th</sup> of June announcement began: "His excellency the Governor being convinced, from various sources, of the endless diversity and novelty of the natural products of this Colony, is most desirous to make them in future a subject of particular attention" (*Cape Town Gazette* XX: 1013, June 11, 1825). The role of the Governor draws attention to the crucial interaction between the personal advantages sought by Smith and the official support to which he had access. It was also the first time that Smith's personal scientific interests obviously overlapped with the socio-political interests of the

ruling Government and military elite. This was to be a common factor in Smith's activities over the following ten years in the Colony. These two strands need to be explored separately.

Smith gained several advantages from being appointed Superintendent of the Museum. First, it freed him from any potential ambiguity about his primary function in the Colony. Although his salary was still to be paid by the Army, he was officially to concentrate on natural history. His role as Army surgeon no longer competed for his time. In the post-Napoleonic peace, being a surgeon was not a sure avenue to promotion, but within the Army natural history was becoming an increasingly viable path. His position in the Museum brought his activities more into line with the requirements for advancement. Secondly, it provided him with both the legitimacy and authority to request public assistance for his personal projects. As Superintendent of the Museum he could, and regularly did, request help collecting specimens which interested him and ask for information on related topics. The Museum acted as a source of patronage that he could use to further his own interests and secure his own professional advancement. Thirdly, it placed him at the centre of natural history in Cape Town and, by default, the entire Colony. Unsurprisingly, a number of the scientifically minded men collected around him and his Museum. In 1825 the Museum was the *only* purely scientific space in the Colony. The Library was a partial alternative, and interestingly Smith was appointed to its management Committee soon after the establishment of the Museum. The Royal Observatory, under Smith's friend the Rev. Fearon Fallows, was officially in existence, but its foundations were only being completed in mid-1825 and the Observatory would require several more years of work before it was functional (Warner, 1995). This absence of alternatives reinforced the first two advantages the Museum provided to Smith.<sup>1</sup>

The establishment of the Museum was only possible because Smith had the support of the Governor. If Somerset had not supported his intention to found a museum it would never have occurred. Somerset's rejection of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS less than a year before had made that quite clear. Given that Somerset quashed the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS less than a year earlier, why did he support the establishment of the

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<sup>1</sup> The professional advantages of establishing a scientific organisation, be it a museum or society, have been noted by Morrell and Thackray (1981) and Finney (1993).

Museum? There are two sets of answers to this: the first has to do with the advantages that would accrue directly to Somerset and the second relates to Smith's access to Somerset. In the first set there were three advantages to Somerset. First, he could use the Museum to undermine any accusation that he was against science, learning or the advancement of the Colony. Having suppressed the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, he needed something to prove his intellectual credentials. Secondly, this would have served to undermine calls for the establishment of other scientific societies. Somerset could claim that the Colony already had an appropriate organisation. There is evidence that Somerset acted in this politically aware manner in ensuring the political loyalty of the Public Library. Thirdly, and directly related to the first two factors, in appointing Smith as Superintendent of the Museum he was putting it in safe hands. Smith's appointment may also have been helped along by the support of McGrigor (Kirby, 1965), but events at the Cape seem to have been more important.

Smith was a member of the Colonial establishment and ruling elite. As a member of the Army his interests would have been more closely aligned with those of the Colonial Government than with those of the emerging middle classes and their self-appointed leaders, John Fairbairn and Thomas Pringle. McKenzie (1997) and Finney (1993) have noted that Army surgeons and officers belonged to the colonial elite, not just in the Cape, but also in Australia. In this regard, Browne (1996) notes of colonial officials, including military men, that those "colonial officials who travelled or lived overseas almost always subscribed to the social order in their home country, demonstrating how much they approved of and wished to endorse the society that sent them forth" (Browne, 1996:308-9). This identification with the metropolitan establishment was particularly important to those officials and military men who hoped to use their colonial service to improve their professional and social status on their return home. Amongst men of science recognition by the metropolitan scientific establishment was vital. In addition the British Government's support was essential for those who wished to maximise the benefit of their colonial or overseas experiences by publishing their research. To this end Smith was granted £1,800 by the British Government for the publication of *The Illustrations of the Zoology of South Africa* (Kirby, 1965). This was a substantial sum and suggests that he had access to powerful support. It compares rather well to the £1,000 granted in much the same period to Charles Darwin for his *Zoology of the Voyage of the Beagle* and to Joseph Hooker for his *Botany of the Arctic*



*Voyage of H M Discovery Ships Erebus and Terror in the Years 1839-1843*  
(Browne, 1996).

Smith's membership of the elite by virtue of his status as an Army surgeon did not necessarily imply that he was closely aligned with Somerset. Aside from being friendly with his son, there are two further pieces of evidence that Somerset viewed Smith as politically and socially reliable. The first has to do with his proposed appointment to the Colony's recently established Supreme Medical Council in late 1825. His appointment was well in advance of his official status as a mere "assistant surgeon" and caused an outcry from his commanding medical officer. This appointment amounted to an unofficial promotion outside of normal Army channels and suggests that Smith's relationship to Somerset was unusually close. The second piece of evidence for Smith's close alignment with the ruling elite is that in late 1825 he was appointed, along with Fearon Fallows, to the management Committee of the Public Library. This appointment to the Public Library seems to have been largely motivated by political concerns and was also to prefigure the important relation between the Library and the SAI in 1829.

The Public Library was, aside the public gardens and menagerie, the Colony's oldest official scientific organisation. Science was never its *raison d'être*, but it did include a well-equipped chemical and electrical laboratory. Its main meeting room was also intended for scientific lectures. It was, as a result, the first scientific space in the Colony, even if only partially so. The Library was established by proclamation in 1818 under the auspices of the Government and was to be funded by a special wine gauging tax. It only opened its doors to the public at the beginning of 1822, by which time it had an extensive book collection and had already acquired its chemical and electrical laboratory. Little attention has been given to the institutional origins of the Library. The most important existing account of the Library is Tyrrell-Glynn (1972). This gives no attention to the socio-political factors that led to the establishment of the Library in 1818. Tyrrell-Glynn does, however, identify five men who might have been involved in establishing the Library. These were Somerset, the Governor, Lt.-Col. C. C. Bird, the Colonial Secretary, the Rev. George Hough, the senior Anglican chaplain in the colony, John Collison, a merchant, and William Hopley, the wine gauger. The two most important of these men were Bird and Hough, with the latter claiming in 1824 that the Library was originally conceived of by the

two of them. It seems that the Library emerged from within the Colony's British born governing elite. The 1818 Proclamation also legislated the makeup of the Library's Committee. It was to be composed of the Colonial Secretary, the Chief Justice, the Fiscal, and the senior representatives of the Dutch Reformed, Lutheran and Anglican Churches. The Committee was made up of the two most senior colonial officials, the senior judicial officer and the three most senior churchmen.

Science was included in the Library's remit from the very beginning. The Library Committee held its first meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 1818. At this meeting the Colonial Secretary, and President of the Committee, Lt.-Col. C. C. Bird, noted that,

"H. E. has desired me to communicate to you, that an Opportunity having appeared of procuring an Apparatus, such as is considered necessary for establishing a Chamber for Lecturing on Chemistry and Natural Philosophy, H. E. has not hesitated in ordering the same to be purchased on account of the Institution, of which you are the Guardians. H. E. being confident that he will only have anticipated your wishes herein, which time and circumstances did not permit him to ascertain by previous consultation." (C.O. 4840, p.329, 31/7/1818)

This suggests that Somerset was behind the decision to acquire the laboratory apparatus for the Library. Tyrrell-Glynn (1972) notes that the equipment was actually purchased for the Library by the merchant John Collison. It remains unclear what exactly Somerset's "procuring" of the apparatus involved. Collison was only paid by the Government for the equipment some seven years later.

Tyrrell-Glynn (1972) identifies two uses for the Laboratory equipment beyond simple education and teaching. The first possible use was for mineral exploration, although he admits that there is no direct evidence for this. The only explicitly recorded case where the laboratory equipment was used between 1818 and 1829 involved the Medical Committee examining certain mineral waters in 1826. The equipment may have been in more regular use. When the Library's Committee gave permission for the Medical Committee to use the equipment it would not allow the apparatus to be removed from the building, claiming the equipment was in daily use. The most common use of the equipment appears to have been for lectures. Before 1827 the only recorded set of scientific lectures in the Colony were those given by Dr. John Atherstone in 1825. There is no indication where they were held, but an anonymous report carried in the *Advertiser* indicates that he used apparatus from the "collection

belonging to the Government" (*Advertiser* 30, November 16, 1825). This can only be a reference to the Library's laboratory. In the 1830s the apparatus was repeatedly used for lectures and in 1841 the equipment was transferred to the South African College.

The Library's other important scientific dimension was its use for lectures. In the July 1818 of the Library Committee Lt.-Col. Bird also noted that a lecture course was already arranged.

"The advantage which a course of Lectures in these Chambers will afford the rising generation, as well as those who have already acquired some chemical knowledge, need not be expatiated upon; and it is with pleasure that H. E. has learnt that a competent Lecturer is ready and willing to devote his labours to the beneficial purpose." (C.O. 4840, p.329, 31/7/1818)

The Library did, not however, open for another three and a half years, which suggests that this plan was not fulfilled. It is not clear that lectures were actually ever held in the Library before 1827, when it was closed down. It is possible that they were not recorded, but finding and engaging competent science lecturers was a perennial problem in the Colony.

The changing makeup of the Library's Committee reflected important social and political changes in the Colony. These changes were a crucial part of the background to the establishment of the SAI in 1829. The Library's first Committee remained unchanged between its establishment in 1818 and early 1824. As already noted, the initial Committee members had been appointed in terms of their official positions. By 1823, two men had joined the Library as sub-librarians and were responsible for the day to day running of the organisation. The details of the eight men involved in the Library in mid-1824 are given below in *Table 4.1*. The most noticeable feature of this 1824 Committee is that it was completely dominated by men affiliated with the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Truter, Pringle and von Manger signed up for the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. These three in addition to Bird, Denysen and Harmsen were affiliated with the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS.<sup>2</sup> Only Truter signed up for the SAI in 1829.

Over the following year the Library's Committee was completely overhauled. This was directly related to the suppression of the *Advertiser* and the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS in

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<sup>2</sup> Four of these men were full members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, while Denysen signed the May 1829, application for a license for the Society and Pringle was an honorary or corresponding member.

the second half of 1824. Given the challenge presented by both those aligned with the newspaper and the Society, Somerset began to place his own supporters on the Public Library's Committee. In July 1824 Pringle resigned and Somerset ordered four new "permanent Commissioners" to join the Committee. These were P. G. Brink, Assistant Secretary to Government, W. W. Bird, Head of the Department of Customs, George Kekewich, Judge of the Court of Vice Admiralty, and Walter Bentinck, Auditor General and member of the Court of Justice. At more or less the same time it seems that Lt.-Col. C. C. Bird left the Public Library's Committee, where he had previously been president. Bird had fallen out with Somerset over his handling of the political crisis. In 1825 the new Colonial Secretary, Sir Richard Plasket, replaced him as Committee President. Finally in 1825, Dr. Andrew Smith and the Rev. Fearon Fallows were also appointed to the Committee.

By the end of 1825 the Public Library had twelve Committee members and two librarians. These details can be seen in *Table 4.2* below. Several points stand out. First, the Committee had doubled in size. Stripping out the six men required by law to sit on the Committee, five of the new men were colonial officials or Army officers, all closely affiliated to the Government. The only other appointee was Fallows, who was part of the colonial establishment, even if not always on best terms with Somerset.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, of the fourteen men who were involved in running the Library at the end of 1825, only two had taken part in the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, and their positions on the council were mandated. In addition to von Manger and Truter, Denyssen and Harmsen also joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. More importantly, however, was that of the fourteen men, five went on to join the SAI. Four of them only joined the Library between 1824 and 1825. By the end of 1825, the leadership of the Library had changed hands, moving increasingly into the grasp of men who would later form the SAI. These links to the SAI were reinforced over the following four years.

Two reasons have been proposed for Smith's appointment to the Library. First, Tyrrell-Glynn (1972) suggests that it was in part to make up for Somerset's refusal to allow Smith, Fallows and others to go ahead with their proposed Literary and Philosophical Society, as is dealt with in the next *Section*. It was

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<sup>3</sup> As is discussed in *Section 4.5*, Fallows had alienated Somerset soon after his arrival at the Cape in 1821. He was, however, in other ways firmly part of the elite.

also to explore the possibility of a merger of the Library and Museum, a particularly important issue in a time of retrenchment. The other reason for his appointment was to prevent the possibility of further "literary upheavals", with the Library Committee coming out in favour of Fairbairn and Pringle. Smith was one of the reliable men assigned to the Committee between late 1824 and late 1825 to ensure its political loyalty. Tyrrell-Glynn (1972) references Kirby (1965) as his source for this claim. Unfortunately Kirby's reference to "literary upheavals" was in the context of Somerset's refusal to allow the establishment of the proposed Literary and Philosophical Society and not Smith's appointment to the Library Committee. Nevertheless, Tyrrell-Glyn's (1972) extrapolation of this to Smith's appointment to the Library Committee seems justified and it was part of a more general attempt to ensure the Library's political loyalty. It is clear that Smith enjoyed the Governor's confidence and used it to forward his own professional ends.

#### 4.4 Smith and Scientific Societies in Cape Town, 1825-1828

In addition to his involvement at the official Museum and Library, Smith also attempted to set up two scientific societies: the Cape of Good Hope Literary and Philosophical Society in 1825 and the Horticultural Society in 1826. The attempt to set up the Literary and Philosophy Society failed, probably as a result of Somerset's refusal to allow any such civic organisations. The Horticultural Society was more successful and was established at the time of Somerset's departure from the Cape. It survived until 1828 or early 1829. For Smith, these two organisations would have provided some of the scientific infrastructure he required to further his professional ambitions. Many members of the Horticultural Society's Committee went on to become part of the SAI's leadership. A direct line links the Literary and Philosophical Society through the Horticultural Society to the SAI.

Existing accounts of scientific organisations in Cape Town in the early nineteenth century have largely ignored the Literary and Philosophical Society. The only information on the Society is a proposal to the Government on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 1825 calling for its establishment. This proposal has been interpreted in two ways. The first set of accounts has focussed on the origins of the Literary

and Philosophical Society. Crawford (1934) sees the Society as a *continuation* of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS and Hall (1977) repeats this position. Although not as explicit, it would seem that Warner (1995) also understands the Literary and Philosophical Society in this way. This view of the Literary and Philosophical Society is incorrect. The Literary and Philosophical Society was completely independent from the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. The other set of accounts has focussed on the reasons the Literary and Philosophical Society failed to be established. Kirby suggests that it did not find “favour with Sir Charles [Somerset], to whom the very word “Literary” must have been as a red rag to a bull, when one recollects what had happened to the original attempt to found such a Society exactly one year before this” (Kirby, 1965:48). This seems a plausible explanation for the Literary and Philosophical Society’s failure and is repeated almost verbatim by Tyrrell-Glynn (1972). It is, however, incomplete and ignores some close links between those who proposed the Society and the Government.

The Literary and Philosophical Society provides the first glimpse of a second scientific community, counterpart to the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, that was emerging in Cape Town in the early to mid-1820s. This community coalesced around Smith and, to a lesser extent, the Rev. Fearon Fallows. By June 1825 Smith had successfully led the establishment of the Museum and by the beginning of July had already announced the first set of donations. Having started to establish the scientific infrastructure of the city, he turned to the creation of a suitable social space for the pursuit of science. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July, Smith, Fallows and six other men sent a memorial to the Governor proposing the establishment of a Literary and Philosophical Society at the Cape of Good Hope. The eight signatories to the memorial, as well as their occupations, and previous and later affiliations are given below in *Table 4.3*. Later SAI members dominated the Literary and Philosophical Society. Of the eight signatories, only Atherstone was affiliated with both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, while the Rev. Collison was affiliated with only the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. Skirrow would eventually join the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, but not as a founding member, only joining in the 1830/31 period. Future SAI men were far better represented. Aside from the central figures of Smith and Fallows, Crozier, Jardine and Skirrow eventually joined the SAI in its first year. The only unaffiliated figure is H. Cloete junior. This name presents a problem. If it refers to the advocate Henry Cloete, then he was an important figure, who would join both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI. On the other hand, in no other

membership list is he referred to as "junior", which suggests that this is a different man.

Two factors suggest that the Literary and Philosophical Society had little to do with Pringle and Fairbairn's attempt to establish the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS in the previous year. First, none of Pringle and Fairbairn's close supporters in the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS were involved in the Literary and Philosophical Society. The second supporting argument is that Smith and Fallows appear to have played a key role in proposing the Literary and Philosophical Society. Kirby suggests that it was Smith's "determination and tireless energy" that lay behind the Society, while Fallows was the first signatory on both the signed documents (Kirby, 1965).<sup>4</sup> There is also no evidence that these two men were ever involved in any organisation that involved Fairbairn. Smith and Fallows appear to have consciously avoided Fairbairn throughout the 1820s. This provides the strongest evidence for the absence of a connection between the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS and the Literary and Philosophical Society.

The Literary and Philosophical Society was in conception a completely different organisation to the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. In their letter to the Governor, calling for the establishment of the Literary and Philosophical Society, the signatories make the following central observation.

"Of all the requisites for organising and regulating such a society in the first instance none are more indispensably necessary than unanimity and general good feeling. *and in order to insure these to the utmost possible extent the number at first must be very limited*; at least the most flourishing and respected Societies of great Britain have been formed after that plan, examples which will be sufficient to warrant a like proceeding on this occasion. From the supposed necessity of thus limiting the number we have to express our regret at the loss of the valuable assistance and advice which might have been obtained from many of the Inhabitants of this Town, but we trust the liberality of their feelings will induce them to lend their subsequent support to aid an assist in forwarding the views of the Society, should the plan obtain Your Lordships approval" (Italics added, C.O. 235/430 [old 112])

The Literary and Philosophical Society was to be exclusive, strictly limited in its membership.<sup>5</sup> Given the political tensions of mid-1825, this was probably

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<sup>4</sup> The proposal and memorial to the Government, sent on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 1825 comprised of three documents. Of these, the cover letter to the Colonial Secretary and the memorial to the Governor were signed, while the Proposal itself was not.

<sup>5</sup> There is a possibility that the Literary and Philosophical Society was in some way related to the Minor Institute, established in 1824. Lewin-Robinson (1962) notes that the Minor Institute was also

intended to allay the fears of the Governor about the Society becoming a haven for anti-Government sentiment. The two most likely candidates for exclusion would have been Fairbairn and Pringle.

Why did Somerset not allow the Literary and Philosophical Society to be established? Kirby (1965) claims that it was because of Somerset's experience with Pringle and Fairbairn's 1<sup>st</sup> SALS in the previous year. This suggests that Somerset couldn't tell the difference between the two organisations. Somerset's decision certainly had something to do with the events of 1824, but it was not simply his bad experience with the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. Somerset seems to have trusted Fallows and Smith. He appointed them to the Committee of the Public Library in August, only a month after he would have seen the proposal for the Literary and Philosophical Society. Possibly this appointment was in part to make up for not allowing the establishment of the Literary and Philosophical Society, but Tyrrell-Glynn (1972) suggests that for Smith, at least, it was to encourage the merger of the Library and Museum. In either case, Somerset would have known that the proposed Literary and Philosophical Society would have been unlikely to be hijacked by Fairbairn or others openly antagonistic to him. The most likely reason for not allowing the Literary and Philosophical Society was to avoid setting a precedent. If Somerset had allowed the Literary and Philosophical Society to be established, it would have allowed Fairbairn and Pringle to go ahead with the establishment of their own society. It was probably a result of Somerset's concern about precedent and a desire to retain control that prevented the Literary and Philosophical Society from being established.

In 1826, Smith, along with Fallows, again attempted to establish a scientific society, the Cape of Good Hope Horticultural Society. This time they were more successful. It was probably the change of Governor at the Cape that made this possible, with the far more liberal Bourke taking over from Somerset. There is no indication as to the precise timing of the establishment of the Horticultural Society as almost no information on it remains. The only evidence for its existence is its entry in the *Cape Almanac*. It first appears in the 1827 edition, which indicates that it was founded sometime in 1826. The only, and very brief, study of the Horticultural Society is Warner (1988). He traces the origin of the

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an elitist and exclusive organisation. Furthermore, Jardine was the Secretary of the Minor Institute and a signatory to the Proposal for the Literary and Philosophical Society.



Society back to 1824, when the *Advertiser* called for the establishment of an Agricultural Society. This being Fairbairn's newspaper, however, the article is unlikely to have had anything directly to do with an organisation involving Smith and Fallows. In early 1825 a notice appeared in the *Chronicle* reporting that the newspaper's suggestion for an "Agricultural and Horticultural Society has met with the approbation of several gentlemen distinguished alike for their various scientific arguments, and their zeal for promoting similar institutions" (*Chronicle* 1(25), 2 February, 1825). This is more likely to be relevant to the later Horticultural Society. Whatever the case, the only real information that remains about the Society is the make up of its Committee.

An examination of the Committee members of the Horticultural Society suggests that this organisation was a forerunner to the SAI. The names of the President, Vice-President and Secretaries of the Horticultural Society are given in the *Cape Almanacs* for 1827 and 1828. The 1829 *Cape Almanac* contains a list of these positions, as well as the names of the rest of the Committee. These men are listed below in *Table 4.4*, along with their positions on the Committee, their occupations and other affiliations. Of the twelve men, none joined either the 1<sup>st</sup> or the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, while six went on to join the SAI. Of these six men, Bell would become the SAI's first President, Fallows would become one of the first four Vice-Presidents, Smith would become one of the two founding Secretaries and van Breda and Cloete would sit on the SAI's first Committee. Hawkins would become an early ordinary member. The Horticultural Society's Committee was also dominated by colonial officials and Army men. The alignment of the Horticultural Society with the Government was commented on by contemporaries. In 1829 Fairbairn observed that,

"Some time ago, many of you recollect, an Agricultural Society was instituted under the auspices, and, consequently, under the control of the Government ... A Botanical Society was constructed on the same model." (*Advertiser* IV: 205, May 30, 1829)

It is likely that the "Botanical Society" is a reference to the Horticultural Society, although this is based only on the absence of any record of an alternative organisation with a similar subject name.

## 4.5 Smith's Other Men of Science in Cape Town

In addition to drawing on the support of the colonial elite in the establishment of the SAI, Smith also attracted the support of six of the more important men of science living in Cape Town. Not all of these men were members of the city's elite and some were drawn to the SAI for similar professional reasons to Smith. These six were: the Rev. Fearon Fallows, the astronomer at the Royal Observatory, James Adamson, the Colony's senior Presbyterian minister, James Bowie, a botanist, Baron C. F. H. von Ludwig, a botanist and horticulturist, Pierre Jules Verreaux, a French naturalist and collector, and C. M. Villet, a natural history collector and trader. While all these men had important scientific interests, none had both the professional needs and the official contacts to have established the SAI by themselves.

Of all the men of science in the Colony, two stand out as particularly important to Smith's endeavours: the Revs. Fearon Fallows and James Adamson. The first was the Astronomer at the Royal Observatory and the second was the Colony's senior Presbyterian Minister. Fallows arrived in Cape Town in 1821 on the same ship as Smith and as a result of their long standing relationship was probably the more important of the two men. He was involved in all of Smith's scientific organisations in the 1820s, with the exception of the Museum. As a Fellow of the Astronomical Society and the Royal Society he would have complemented Smith's dominance of science in the Colony. He was, however, a poor organiser and it was only in spite of this and other handicaps that he could play any role at all. The following account of Fallows is drawn from the biographical sketch in Warner (1979) and a fuller biographical treatment in Warner (1995). The two accounts treat Fallows in importantly different ways. Fallows's organisational weaknesses and political naiveté make no appearance in the later biographical account. This is possibly because the latter, and fuller account, is primarily about the establishment of the Royal Observatory itself, while the first is specifically about the astronomers.

Fallows was born in 1789 in Cumberland, to only slightly better off parents than Smith. His father was a weaver and later Parish Clerk. He managed to educate his son and send him to the local school. His talent was eventually noted and the local gentry put together a subscription that enabled him to go up to Cambridge in 1809. He read mathematics, and graduated third Wrangler, being

beaten by John Herschel and George Peacock. It was his misfortune to have such formidable colleagues, he might otherwise have graduated first Wrangler. He took his Orders in 1819 and in the following year he became a fellow of both the Astronomical and Royal Societies. In the same year, the Admiralty's Board of Longitude decided to establish an Observatory in the Cape Colony. The Observatory was formally established in October 1820, although this was in name only. Fallows was appointed as the Astronomer in the same year. In April 1821 he, his wife and his assistant set sail for Cape Town, where they arrived in August. The details of the establishment, funding and constructing of the Observatory are largely irrelevant to this account and are dealt with extensively in Warner (1995).

Two aspects of the Observatory are important to account for Fallows' role in the Colony's scientific affairs. The first, and most important, was that it gave him a very secure base in the Colony. His position was almost completely independent of local events. His sources of patronage, influence and status ran to the Admiralty in London and not to the Governor's House in Cape Town. This meant that he was largely beyond the control of Somerset. It also meant that the Observatory was in a unique position. Of all the scientific organisations in the Colony, it was the only one not dependent on local politics. In fact, it is not clear that it should be thought of as a South African, or Cape, scientific organisation at all: it was a very British organisation that happened to be in Cape Town. His official position as Astronomer Royal and his role as acting Chaplain to the Forces would have placed him firmly amongst the Colony's elite. Although there were some initial problems between Fallows and Somerset these appear soon to have been largely resolved.

Fallows may have been part of the Colonial elite and one of the most senior scientific men in the Colony, but he was temperamentally ill suited either to set up the Observatory or other scientific organisations. He was neither politically astute nor was he a capable organiser. As Warner notes,

"It must be remembered that Fallows was not very capable of dealing with people nor experienced in organisation and a less naive person might have succeeded in progressing faster. ... A contemporary added "It is difficult to conceive of a man of such simplicity of character and such absence of knowledge of the world in the nineteenth century."" (Warner, 1979:30)

His political naiveté had important consequences. On his arrival in the Cape in 1821, he had befriended the Acting Governor, Sir Rufane Donkin. When

Somerset returned to the Cape at the end of 1821, he rescinded many of Donkin's actions, some of which had benefited the recently arrived Fallows. Sir Rufane was a Whig and Somerset believed that he had tried to undermine him in his absence. As a result Somerset also attacked those who had aligned themselves with Donkin. Fallows was one of these men. Fallows further alienated the Governor "when he was reported to have paid his respects to Donkin as the latter embarked for England" (Warner, 1979:9). He must have recovered from this, as in 1825 he joined the Library's Committee. When the Library's Committee was disbanded in March 1828, he was appointed as one of the three Trustees, although this was under a different Governor, Sir Richard Bourke. He resigned as a Trustee in August 1828, apparently in response to the Government renting rooms for the Library in the Commercial Exchange. This resignation remains unexplained. His political naiveté and organisational weaknesses explain his interminable problems setting up the Observatory. They also make it unlikely that he was the central figure in setting up any scientific society.

The Observatory put Fallows in a unique position in the Colony by ensuring his professional status. Fallows, Fellow of the Royal Society and astronomer at H. M. Observatory on £600 per annum, was in a secure professional position. As a result he had less urgency than Smith did to provide outlets for his research and to establish his reputation. He did not require the legitimacy and credibility of leadership of a scientific society. While he may not have needed to establish such a society, he was the obvious candidate for inclusion in any proposed scientific organisation in the Colony. His absence from both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was largely for political reasons. Fallows may not always have agreed with Somerset, but he did not fit the profile of a Fairbairn supporter either. His role in the establishment of the Literary and Philosophical Society, the Horticultural Society and the SAI was probably as much a consequence of his scientific and social status as his friendship with Smith (Warner, 1979; and Kirby, 1965).

The second of Smith's important men of science in the Colony was the Rev. James Constantine Adamson. He seems to have played an important role in establishing the SAI and, with Smith, was behind the establishment of the *South African Quarterly Journal*. Unfortunately very little has actually been written about him and the fullest account is his entry in the *DSAB*. He was born in 1797 in Fifeshire, Scotland. Like both Smith and Fairbairn he was educated at

Edinburgh University. He studied theology, but his first published articles were on technical and scientific subjects, including a treatise on friction on railways (Adamson, 1827). He was later known in the Colony as an outstanding mathematician. He only came out to the Cape Colony in November 1827, and became first minister of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Cape Town.<sup>6</sup> From late 1828 onwards he was also heavily involved in the establishment of the South African College. His involvement in both the College and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Literary Society were remarkably short lived and he aligned himself with the ruling elite in the Colony. From the 1830s onwards he gave lectures on scientific matters and, with the changing political structure of the Colony, he returned to the College in 1835 and taught mathematics, classics, English and physics. He was a man of wide interests about whose personal life and political views almost nothing appears to be known. His membership activities, both joining and leaving, in the period 1828 to 1830 place him at the centre of the institutionalisation of science in Cape Town.<sup>7</sup>

Two other well-known men of science were Committee members of the SAI: Baron C. F. H. von Ludwig and James Bowie. The better known of the two men is Carl Ferdinand Heinrich Ludwig. He was born in Württemberg, Germany, in 1784, and was apprenticed as an Apothecary in Amsterdam (Bradlow, 1965). He came out to the Cape in 1805 to serve as an assistant to Dr. F. L. Liesching. Liesching, his sons, and Ludwig were all involved in the attempted establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. In 1817 Ludwig married a wealthy widow and took control of a large property and a successful snuff shop. After this he seems to have dedicated himself largely to the pursuit of natural history. In 1825 he donated a very large collection of natural history items, mostly shells and insects to Smith's Museum (Kirby, 1965). His collections, both donated and merely lent, were a key part of the Museum throughout the period 1825 to 1827. In 1826 he

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<sup>6</sup> St. Andrews was consecrated in May 1829, at almost the exact time the SAI was being formed.

<sup>7</sup> There is a possible link between Adamson and Fairbairn. Not only were both Edinburgh educated Scots, but it seems that before his emigration to Cape Town, Adamson had lived in Newcastle upon Tyne. This is suggested by *DSAB*, which indicates that Adamson may have worked with George Stephenson. George Stephenson, famous for his work on steam engines, was a resident of Newcastle and although not a member had delivered lectures before the Newcastle upon Tyne Literary and Philosophical Society (Orange, 1983). In addition Adamson (1827) was published in Newcastle, but according to the membership lists of the Newcastle upon Tyne Literary and Philosophical Society Adamson was not a member (<http://www.litandphil.org.uk/members.htm> 19/02/2003).

sent a collection of plants, insects and birds to Stuttgart, and was knighted for his efforts by the king of Württemberg. It was as a result of this that he took the title Baron and added 'von' to his name. In 1828 he actually visited Württemberg, and was awarded an honorary Ph.D. by the University of the Tübingen. He is best known to historians of South Africa as a botanist and horticulturist, and especially for the botanic gardens he developed on a private basis in Cape Town after 1830 (Bradlow, 1965).

James Bowie was the only other important naturalist that sat on the SAI's Committee. He was born in London in 1790, and was the son of an Oxford Street seed merchant. He was trained, although it is not known by whom or how, as a gardener and a botanical collector. Eventually, in 1810, he entered Kew Gardens, from where he was sent to Brazil in 1814. He was then ordered to the Cape in 1816 to collect bulbs, seeds and plants. With the retrenchment at Kew after the death of Sir Joseph Banks, he was recalled to England in 1822 (Desmond, 1995). Little is known about his activities in the years 1822-1827. Eventually he returned to Cape Town in a private capacity in April 1827. He hoped to make a career as a plant collector. It is not clear how successful he was in this, but later he ended up working for von Ludwig and published extensively on botany in the early 1830s.

Bowie and von Ludwig differed from Smith, Fallows and Adamson in several crucial respects. Most obviously, neither was university educated. Further, unlike Bowie, von Ludwig rose to wealth and prominence in the Colony. This allowed him to pursue his botany and horticulture as a gentleman amateur and he did not need the levels of support and patronage required by Smith. He never appears to have published and his reputation was built on his botanic garden and his seed and plant collecting and exchanging. Bowie never achieved success, although he did at least publish. He is better identified as one of the growing multitude of small men of science who made their livelihood on the commercial margins of collecting and trading (Allen, 1985). Bowie was probably marginal even in this endeavour, being outclasses by several other members of the SAI. In spite of these impediments, von Ludwig and Bowie were Committee members of the SAI. Von Ludwig was also an early member, and later Committee member, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. A substantial group of men belonged to both the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI. He was, however, the only naturalist who was also a Committee member of both organisations.

Two other important men of science in Cape Town joined the SAI: Jules Pierre Verreaux and C. M. Villet, both of whom were French naturalists. They played very different roles in Cape Town's scientific community. Along with von Ludwig they also point to the international makeup of the scientific community of the Colony. Villet was a natural history collector who made a living by trading specimens and whose shop was a virtual natural history museum. His business and the arrival of popular specimens can be followed through his advertisements in the *Cape Town Gazette* and the *Advertiser*. Very little is known about him. His entry in the *DSAB* is very brief and uninformative, not to mention mistaken on a number of substantive matters. He was born in 1778 in Santa Domingo and came to the Cape in 1803. He made a living as an actor and teacher until 1809, when he started trading natural history specimens, both dead and alive. His natural history business was very successful and he died a wealthy man. Interestingly, he identified with the Dutch speaking community at the Cape and was involved in the establishment of the *Maatschappij ter Uitbreiding van Beschaving en Letterkunde*. If true, this suggests that Villet was a scientifically minded man in the conservative Cape-Dutch culture, a culture widely thought to have entirely rejected science. The involvement of members of the conservative Cape-Dutch community in science is examined in the next *Chapter*.

Even more successful than Villet was Jules Verreaux. Jules Verreaux went on to pursue a highly regarded scientific career, both as collector and writer, establishing himself in Paris, arguably the most important centre of natural history in the period, along with London.<sup>8</sup> As with Smith, he seems to have hoped to parlay his collecting and naturalising activities in South Africa into an international reputation and career. Unfortunately, when returning to France in 1838, his ship sank and, although he escaped, his collections were lost. Verreaux was born in 1807, the son of a Parisian taxidermist and natural history merchant. At the age of twelve he accompanied his uncle Pierre-Antoine Delalande to the Cape, where they collected between 1818 and 1820 (see Varley, 1956). Verreaux returned to Paris and possibly studied at the Paris Muséum. He then decided to return to the Cape and arrived in 1825 (Farber, 2000) or, possibly, December 1826 (*DSAB*). In 1827 Verreaux received a license to hunt specimens in the Colony and went on several collecting

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<sup>8</sup> Verreaux also mounted an important expedition to Australia after his return to Paris.

expeditions. He was clearly on good terms with Smith and stood in as temporary superintendent of the Museum whenever Smith was out of Cape Town. When the Museum was absorbed into the SAI in late 1829, his own collections formed one of its four constituent parts, the other three being the Museum's own collections and those of Smith and von Ludwig. Verreaux made his living at the Cape by sending specimens back the Maison Verreaux, the family's Parisian business and one of the pre-eminent natural history trading establishments in the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> As part of this trading business in the early 1830s he was also joined at various times by two of his brothers, one of who joined the SAI.

Verreaux's career differed in important ways from the other natural history traders in the Colony, Bowie and Villet. He was tied directly into an important international network through his family business. Although this did not provide him with the patronage and influence the Army provided to Smith or the Admiralty to Fallows, it would have provided him with an important degree of security. He also differed from Bowie and Villet in that he seems to have planned to use his time in the Cape as a springboard to an international career. This made him far more similar to Smith. In many ways he was the French analogue of Smith in the Cape. Both men's careers depended on the name they hoped to make for themselves in the Colony. Unlike Smith, though, Verreaux did not play an important institutional role. Possibly as a Frenchman in a British colony he could not have played such a role in the Cape and it would seem he lacked Smith's connections to the Colony's social and political elite.

Seven of the SAI's most scientifically active members were already resident in Cape Town in 1827. These included Smith, Fallows, Adamson, Bowie, von Ludwig, Villet and Verreaux. There are two identifiable reasons that in the end it was Smith, and not one of the other six, who led the establishment of the SAI. First, only Smith and Verreaux seem to have planned on or hoped for international scientific careers, although of admittedly very different kinds. Fallows may have planned on such a career, but he died in 1831, and never had the opportunity to pursue it. On the other hand, he never published in astronomy during his time at the Cape and his aspirations are unknown. Adamson, Bowie, von Ludwig, and Villet appear to have planned to remain in South Africa and

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<sup>9</sup> Miquel Molina, personal communication, 4 November 2002.



make a life for themselves in the Colony. Secondly, the seven men had different access to the Colonial government and other sources of influence and patronage. Fallows traced his to the Admiralty in London, Verreaux to his family business in Paris, and von Ludwig to a limited extent to the King of Württemberg. Smith also traced his authority to England, and the Army medical service, but, uniquely, seems to have had access to the Governors of the Colony.

Only Smith had the necessary complex of interests, access, aspirations and patronage to lead the institutionalisation of science in Cape Town. He had international career ambitions that necessitated the establishment of a scientific infrastructure in the Colony. Verreaux had similar ambitions, but because he was French and lacked access to the Governor he was not in a position to initiate institutional activity. It is also unknown whether he would have wanted to initiate such activity in the first place. Smith's ability to influence the Governors of the Cape was strengthened from 1828 on as he was repeatedly tasked with intelligence and diplomatic missions beyond the borders of the Colony. This demonstrated simultaneously the trust of three successive Governors in his abilities and provided him with unique access to the Governors. Smith's career as an Army surgeon and naturalist gave the SAI its specific character as an outward looking scientific organisation focussed largely on natural history and with a limited utilitarian agenda. His own membership of the Colony's elite meant that the SAI was largely aligned with the interests of the elite and would become an establishment organisation.

#### **4.6 The Immediate Background to the Establishment of the South African Institution, Early to Mid-1829**

By the beginning of 1829 none of Smith's organisations in Cape Town were functioning. The Museum had been put into storage and the Horticultural Society appears to have become moribund. The Library itself had only recently been re-opened. On the other hand, the South African Medical Society was still functioning and the South African College was on its way to becoming a reality. Fairbairn must also have started by the beginning of the year to organise the establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. By the second part of the year the situation had completely changed. The Museum was reopened under the auspices of the SAI.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and SAI had been established and the Colony's first scientific journal was in preparation. The six months between the start and middle of 1829 provide the crucial context to the creation of the SAI. Most importantly, in April 1829 Smith returned to Cape Town after a successful official expedition to the northern Cape.

Between 1825 and 1829, the Public Library lost its source of funding, closed, changed hands and was re-opened. At each step along this path it became increasingly dominated by men who would go on to found the SAI. In June 1825 Somerset rescinded the wine gauge tax. Sir Richard Plasket announced that the intention was to put the Public Library on an equal footing with other Government departments. This move was related to the deteriorating financial position in the Colony resulting from the removal of Britain's preferential trade tariffs on Cape wine. The financial position of the Library rapidly deteriorated and, in late 1827, the building housing the Library was found to be unable to support the weight of the books. As a result the Library was closed and the books were put into storage. In March 1828, the Governor, Richard Bourke, disbanded the Library's Committee and replaced it with a board of three Trustees: A. Oliphant, the Attorney General, and the Revs. Fearon Fallows and A. Faure. All three men would go on to hold leadership positions in SAI, although Faure would also be a President of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. In August 1828, the Governor informed the trustees that he had approved of their intention to rent the north wing of the Commercial Exchange for the Library. It is not clear why, but apparently in response to this Fallows resigned as a trustee the following day. In November the Library re-opened in its new location. At the end of March 1829 the Public Library changed its status. It became a subscription library and elected a new Committee.

The Library's new Committee was completely dominated by men who would within three months establish the SAI. The new Committee can be seen in *Table 4.5* below. Of these seven men, six were elected in March and the other, Jardine, was the Librarian. Bird, who was President of the new Committee, did not join the SAI. He had, however, been a member of the Horticultural Society, which was another of Smith's organisations. Of the other six men Adamson went on to become a founding Secretary of the SAI, and Drs. Dyce and Murray were founding SAI Committee members. Although the Library Committee was not appointed or funded by the Government, three of the six members were colonial

officials and two were Army doctors. The Library's Committee was more closely aligned with the ruling elite after it became independent than before. The virtual annexation of the Library's Committee by the ruling Government and Army elite in the Colony needs to be seen in the context of the recent establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was established in early 1829, although it only requested and received its official license at the end of May.

By early 1829 there already existed two at least partially exclusive groups of men in the Colony with interests in literary and scientific matters. These groups were, on the one side, formed around the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the College and, on the other side, around the recently elected Government aligned Library Committee. These two groups were not well defined, but the establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS may have served to reinforce the Government aligned men's sense of their own identity. This may have made them receptive to the idea of establishing their own scientific society, if they were not already actively pursuing such an option. There is, however, no evidence that there were any serious discussions about this before April 1829.

In April 1829 Andrew Smith returned to Cape Town. Sir Richard Bourke had sent him in early 1828 on an intelligence gathering mission to Namaqualand, just to the North of the Colony. His remit was to visit the tribes living there and to investigate their understanding of the Colonial Government's policies and their attitudes towards these policies. This was to be a secret mission and the trip was mounted under the cover of a natural history expedition. Smith returned to the Colony the following April and would probably soon have met with the new Governor, Sir Lowry Cole, to report his findings. It would seem that they immediately established excellent relations as within a month of Smith's return the two were jointly planning a large-scale expedition into Africa. Cole's support also would have allowed Smith to start the SAI.

#### 4.7 The Establishment of the South African Institution, Mid-1829

The first recorded meeting for the establishment of the SAI was held in the same month that Smith returned to Cape Town. The establishment of the SAI can be traced to three immediate causes. The first is the return of Smith to Cape

Town.<sup>10</sup> He brought the drive and connections necessary to pursue the matter. The second cause has to do with the fact that the Museum and Horticultural Society had closed. The scientific infrastructure that Smith had established between 1825 and 1828 had collapsed. The third set of factors was that the Library had elected, in March, a new Committee dominated by government aligned men. This was probably, in part, a reaction to the establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. By mid-1829 there existed an identifiable group of Government aligned men in Cape Town on whom a new scientific organisation could draw for support. By mid-1829 the personal and socio-political factors were in place for the establishment for the SAI.

The key trigger for the establishment of the SAI was the return of Smith to Cape Town in 1829. Kirby has argued that when Smith returned to Cape Town in April 1829,

"he must have been feeling to some extent depressed by reason of the lack of energy and of enthusiasm for scientific research evinced by his colleagues and fellow citizens, so that he decided to take personal and immediate action in the hope that he might be provided with the opportunity to devote himself wholly to the objects which were dearest to him." (Kirby, 1965:79)

This analysis is accurate in as far as it identifies Smith as a key actor in the establishment of the SAI, but it is misleading as to the context in which Smith found himself. Early 1829 saw a significant amount of organisational activity. Smith may have catalysed the establishment of the SAI and given it its specific form, but the raw material was already mixed. Although his Museum and the Horticultural Society had closed, the new subscription only Public Library had selected a Committee of men that would be closely aligned with Smith's institutional efforts. In addition, in early and mid-1829 there were the closely aligned 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, Medical Society and soon to be opened South African College.

The first public proposal for the Institution occurred on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 1829 when the following notice appeared in the *Advertiser*.

NEW INSTITUTION

THE Undersigned beg to request that all gentlemen feeling interest in the establishment of an Institution to promote general information and encourage Researches into the

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<sup>10</sup> It is crucial that the precise dates of Smith's return and the first meeting are unknown. The implication of this is that Smith may not have been in Cape Town at the time of the meeting. Given everything else this seems unlikely.

Natural History and Resources of Southern Africa, will meet in the Committee room of the Public Library, on Wednesday the 17<sup>th</sup> instant, and Half-past Two o'Clock.

JAMES ADAMSON

J. A. JOUBERT

ANDREW SMITH

CHAS. CORNWALLIS MICHELL

W. F. HERTZOG\* (*Advertiser* IV: 208, June 10, 1829)

The location of the first meeting, the Committee room of the Library, reinforces the claim for a close connection between the Library and the SAI. This group of men represented a variety of interests. Joubert was a Cape born advocate and member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Adamson, the Presbyterian minister, had been a founding Committee member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, but had left the Society. Michell and Hertzog were colonial officials, the Chief and Assistant Surveyor respectively. All five of these men sat on the SAI's first Committee.

Colonial officials and Army men dominated the SAI's first Committee. There is no evidence as to whether the meeting was held on the 17<sup>th</sup> or, if it did, what was discussed. A further meeting was announced for the 27<sup>th</sup> of June (*Advertiser* IV: 213, June 27, 1829). On the 15<sup>th</sup> of August a notice appeared in the *Advertiser*. It announced the new SAI's Committee and four prize essay topics. The details of the men who sat on the first Committee are given below in Table 4.6. Four members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS sat on the SAI's first Committee. Of these four men, von Ludwig and Watermeyer were Committee members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Von Ludwig, Joubert and Hertzog were also amongst the early supporters of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, signing the May 1829 request to the Government requesting a license. For all this overlap, the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and SAI were in opposition in that they were controlled by two different groups of men in Cape Town. Of the seventeen Committee members seven, and possibly eight,<sup>11</sup> were government officials, one was an Army officer and three were Army doctors. The Colonial officials included the three most senior Government officials in the Colony: the Colonial Secretary, the Attorney General and the Accountant General. Of the remaining five Committee members, one was Fallows who was closely aligned with Smith and the establishment. There was only one professional, Joubert. The make up of this Committee is very different to that of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, elected less than six months earlier. Eleven out of seventeen, or 65%, of the SAI's first Committee were colonial officials and Army men, while

only four out of 20, or 20% of the first Committee of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were colonial officials.

The SAI and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were recognised as competing organisations at the time. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 1829 a letter appeared in the *Advertiser* calling for the amalgamation of the SAI, the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the Library. This letter was signed "COLONUS" and is likely to have been written by Fairbairn or a close supporter. The letter's apparent concerns were to husband resources, make membership of scientific organisations as useful and inexpensive as possible and unify Cape society. These were exactly Fairbairn's motivations in his proposal for the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The letter also argued that the Government should be kept out of the new joint organisation, although its patronage and aid to the organisation should be encouraged. The letter must have been written after the very first meeting of the SAI on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July, and before its new Committee or existence was even openly announced. This suggests that it was intended to pre-empt its establishment. Given that the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was up and running and that it was already fairly large, the proposed joint organisation would have involved the simple absorption of the SAI and the Library by the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The Library was openly run by a Government-aligned Committee and the alignment of the SAI was probably apparent during its first meeting. Given the political leanings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the letter in the *Advertiser* was either extremely naive or fairly sophisticated, hoping to ensure the future authority of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS.

#### 4.8 The Monthly Meetings of the South African Institution And the Establishment of the *South African Quarterly Journal*

For Smith and the other key members, such as the Revs. Adamson and Fallows, the SAI provided a social space in which to meet like minded members of Cape Town's elite as well as to establish and discuss their own scientific research. The SAI organised monthly meetings at which members and visitors could read papers and discuss scientific matters. At least initially the SAI was very successful in attracting papers, although the monthly meetings were never as well attended as had been hoped. In addition to the monthly meetings, Smith

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<sup>11</sup> J. W. Mackrill was possibly a colonial official. He is, however, counted as 'Unknown' for the rest of the analysis.

and Adamson established the Colony's first scientific journal, the *South African Quarterly Journal*. The *Quarterly Journal* was established by Smith to further his professional interests, but, because Smith was regularly out of Cape Town for extended periods, it was mostly edited by Adamson. The *Quarterly Journal* was not formally part of the SAI, although it did publish all the papers read before the SAI at its monthly meetings. From late 1831 onwards the monthly meetings appear to have become less frequent and the *Quarterly Journal* ceased publication.

The SAI intended to hold monthly meetings and initially did so. Unlike the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the SAI did not have direct access to a regular newspaper such as the *Advertiser*. As a result the record of its meetings may be less complete. Some notices do appear in the *Advertiser*, although their frequency drops off considerably after early 1830. From early 1830 there are two other important sources of information about the SAI's monthly meetings: the Proceedings of the SAI, as published in the *Quarterly Journal*, and the *Literary Gazette*. Meetings are recorded throughout the later part of 1829. There are no records for the first half of 1830, with the first recorded meeting of the year being in May. The record from then on is irregular. In the SAI's annual report for 1831, it was noted that attendance at the meetings had "been thin and discouraging" and the time of the meetings changed from 8pm to 3pm in the hope of affecting a change (SAI, 1831:3). The Proceedings of the SAI, published in the *Quarterly Journal*, support the claim that the frequency of meetings progressively dropped off and no records exist for meetings in the first half of 1832. Part of the problem of discussing the final year of the SAI's existence, from mid-1831 to mid-1832, is that no annual report was published for that year. Beyond an absence of announcements nothing is known.

The papers presented at the monthly meetings covered a wide variety of topics, although the majority could be loosely identified as natural history. Records exist of twenty-four meetings of the SAI. These are mostly recorded in its Proceedings, published in the *Quarterly Journal*. Three meetings, held in mid-1830, are only recorded in the *Literary Gazette*. According to these records papers were only read at ten of the meetings. Discussions of miscellaneous research and administrative issues occupied several other meetings. The most prominent presenter at the SAI was the botanist James Bowie, who delivered eight papers in late 1829 and 1830. All except one of his talks were on Botany or

Horticulture. The other was on Horse sickness, and was delivered on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1830. The paper on horse sickness was probably related to a prize essay offered by the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and announced in the *Advertiser* on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June. It is interesting that it was submitted to the SAI rather than the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Admittedly Bowie was never a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, but in and of itself this would not necessarily have been a problem. The SAI at least awarded one of its prize essays to a non-member and the essays were intended to widen participation and interest.

Eleven other men also gave papers. Most of these men were SAI members. Five of the men who gave papers were exclusively members of the SAI. They were A. J. Jardine, the Librarian, John Reid, a collector of curiosities, and Drs. Andrew Smith, John Laing and William Gill.<sup>12</sup> Smith read two papers, on anthropology and ornithology, Laing read one on the 1809 Earthquake in the Colony, Jardine presented one on seals along the Colony's coast, Gill read one on anthropology, while Reid read two on Chemistry. Three of the men who presented papers before the SAI were also members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. They were W. L. von Buchenroder, intellectual and farmer, the Rev. M. Borchers, a Dutch Reformed minister, and J. H. Tredgold, an apothecary. Buchenroder delivered a single paper on the 1809 earthquake, Borchers delivered several papers as part of his ongoing History of the Cape Colony, and Tredgold gave a paper on the chemical analysis of a geological sample from the area. There were also papers given by three other men. Two of these men were corresponding members. The first was Webster, who delivered a paper on two newly discovered fishes. The second was the Rev. George Thom, a Dutch Reformed minister and keen geological collector, who spoke twice at the SAI.

The third non-member who presented a paper before the SAI was J. C. Chase. He read an account of an expedition to the interior parts of the country. While Chase never joined the SAI, he did become a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. He must have joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS in 1830/1831, as his name first appears on the Society's membership lists in 1831. He had also only recently moved to Cape Town after his wife's death in 1830. He gave his talk to the SAI in June 1830,

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<sup>12</sup> The presence of two men with the name Reid/Reed is problematic because there are cases where it seems that the spelling is used interchangeably. It is assumed that the names refer to the same person.



possibly before he joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Given that he spoke in front of one organisation, why would he then go and join the other? This is all the more confusing given that he was ardently anti-humanitarian, and for this and other reasons seems to have been ill disposed to Fairbairn (*DSAB*). Even more strangely, he seems to have been on good terms with Smith. He was one of the secretaries of the AECA, which organised Smith's 1834-1836 expedition to the north. On the other hand, he was also a 1820 settler, identified with many of the settlers criticisms of the Colonial Government and was a proponent of Eastern Cape Separatism. He was one of the first historians of the Colony and was important in establishing a historiographic tradition which demonised British and Humanitarian influence as meddlesome and the source of the Colony's many problems (Keegan, 1996). While not a humanitarian he was also strongly opposed to the Government. As a result he may have been less likely to join the SAI.

The monthly meetings also provided an opportunity to present samples, collections and other objects of interest. This drew in a wider group of men than merely those who had the interest, ability and confidence to prepare and present original research. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 1829 Smith and Adamson, the SAI's two secretaries, presented mineral and biological specimens from several other members and non-members. Another outlet was termed "laying on the table" where members, visitors or interested men could leave materials, such as meteorological or other observational records in the SAI's rooms for the examination by members. Some of these findings were reported in the SAI's annual reports.

The SAI's monthly meeting solved one set of problems for Smith and Cape Town's scientific and social elite. It created a venue for them to share and discuss their findings within Cape Town. It did not resolve the larger problem, especially for Smith, of establishing findings, ensuring priority and making his discoveries more widely known. For this Smith required a publishing outlet. Initially he turned to Fairbairn's *Advertiser*. The *Advertiser* did carry some general articles and notices on scientific matters, mostly culled from British and French newspapers and magazines. The original prospectus of the *Advertiser* by George Greig, not Fairbairn or Pringle, expressed an interest in communications about science, although this was couched in terms of agricultural improvement. Smith's first articles on South African zoology were

published in the *Advertiser*. The *Advertiser* was not, however, a learned journal and was not an ideal venue for scientific publication (Lewin-Robinson, 1962).

In 1830 a second important English medium journal was established in Cape Town. It was the *Cape of Good Hope Literary Gazette*, and was published between 1830 and 1835. It was established by J. A. Jardine, librarian at the Public Library and SAI member. It was "devoted exclusively to literature, criticism, science and the advancement of useful knowledge". The *Literary Gazette* was almost entirely derived in form and content from British models such as the *Athenaeum* and the *Edinburgh Literary Gazette* (Lewin-Robinson, 1962). It carried extensive articles on science, including natural history, meteorology, physics and other topics. As with the *Advertiser*, many of these were extracted from British magazines and journals. Other articles appear to have been derived from papers given at the SAI's monthly meetings. Most obviously, the *Literary Gazette* carried extensive articles on botany by James Bowie. The *Literary Gazette* seems to have been his publishing outlet of choice, which leads one to suspect a previously unknown relationship between him and Jardine. This is further suggested by the glowing descriptions of Bowie that appeared in the *Literary Gazette*.

"Sketches of the Botany of South Africa by Mr. J. Bowie, afford another proof (if any such were required) of the unwearied perseverance [sic.] and disinterested surrender of botanical information to the Cape public, which is characteristic of our countryman, Mr. Bowie." (*Literary Gazette* 1, June 16, 1830:4)

This can be compared with the *Literary Gazette*'s less enthusiastic comments on Smith, who was charged with being overly dry and technical.

In late 1829 Smith and Adamson established their own *South African Quarterly Journal*. It was not established in competition with the *Literary Gazette*.<sup>13</sup> Science, for the *Literary Gazette*, was more an attribute of the educated man than a technical discipline. For the *Quarterly Journal*, science was far more a specialised and technical pursuit. Kirby (1965) argues that Smith established the *Quarterly Journal* to establish priority for his discoveries. The *Quarterly Journal* was a part of Smith's larger effort to create the necessary infrastructure to pursue a scientific career in the Cape Colony. Far away from Britain, possibly without direct access to the editors of Britain's scientific journals, not yet a

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<sup>13</sup> Jardine did, however, offer the *Literary Gazette* as an alternative outlet when the *Quarterly Journal* was intermittently not being published (*Literary Gazette* II(12), December 1, 1832).

member of any British learned society and possibly without patrons to ensure his publication, Smith had to publish in Cape Town. While Smith needed a scientific journal to establish his legitimacy and expertise, the natural history and scientific journal was itself becoming increasingly popular in Britain (Sheets-Pyenson, 1981). It was also increasingly common for scientific societies to publish their own transactions (Allen, 1996). Not only did Smith need to publish, but the establishment of the *Quarterly Journal* would have given the SAI further legitimacy.

The *Quarterly Journal* appeared in two series: the first running from January 1830 to October 1831 and comprising five parts, and the second running from December 1833 to December 1836 and comprising 13 somewhat shorter parts. Only the first series is examined here, the second is dealt with in the next *Chapter*. All the papers presented at the monthly meetings of the SAI were reprinted in the *Quarterly Journal*. It was more or less official policy for the *Quarterly Journal* to draw the majority of its material from the SAI, but the two were formally separate.

"It has already been announced in brief terms, that this Journal is intended to be an auxiliary to the *South African Institution* ... It claims to be an auxiliary or instrument, only so far as it will pursue the same general object; and may be under some obligation for a great share of the material it may contain. The Institution is not further implicated in the conduct or management of the Journal, than by conferring this promised favour. All responsibility attached to any paper, as to its style, statements, or purport, must be considered as resting solely with its author." (Adamson, 1830:3)

In addition to drawing on the proceedings of the SAI, the *Quarterly Journal* culled significant material from British and other European journals. This was especially true from 1830 onwards, when it seems that the supply of local material began to dry up. Some of the material had to do with the Cape. For instance, an article by the Army surgeon, Lewis Leslie, on "the Bushmen of the Orange River" was reprinted from the *Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal* for April 1828.

Most of the articles printed in the *Quarterly Journal* were papers delivered at the monthly meetings. Several other papers were also printed. These may have been presented at meetings and simply not recorded. Some were contributed by full SAI members. These included an article on viticulture by Daniel Cloete, Clerk of the Peace, translations of the reports of early Cape explorers by von Buchenroder, a list of plants from von Ludwig, and an additional article on

chemistry from Reid. There was also a paper on botany by C. F. Ecklon, a full member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, but only corresponding member of the SAI. This paper is the only evidence that Ecklon had anything to do with the SAI. Other papers included an article on the Horse Sickness by Thomas Perry, and reports by J. C. Chase on explorations into the interior. Finally, a paper on the Colony's geology by Grisbrook appeared in the *Quarterly Journal*. Interestingly, the notes were also printed in the *Literary Gazette* (*Literary Gazette* 14, June 14, 1831). Similar cases of double publication also occurred with some of Bowie's botanical writings and the Rev. George Thom's geological work.

The monthly meetings became less regular in 1830 and 1831 and the final part of the first edition of the *Quarterly Journal* was published in October 1831. Initially at least the opportunities offered by the SAI's monthly meetings and the *Quarterly Journal* appear to have been welcome to members. Many seem to have been waiting for the opportunity to present their material. Laing and von Buchneroder both presented papers on the 1809 earthquake, an event long passed. Similarly Bowie's extensive contributions must have been largely prepared, or at least based on work completed, in the years before 1829. The same is true of Smith's paper on the "Origin and History of the Bushmen" delivered in August 1829. The establishment of the SAI saw the pouring out of research conducted over the previous decade. In the case of the papers on earthquakes this material may have even been held for two decades. Once this pre-existing material dried up, however, there was a shortage of papers for the monthly meetings. By 1831, the content of the meetings seems to have become administrative and organisational. The original focus on presenting research seems to have declined. This was probably not a consequence of changing interests on the part of the membership, as much as the membership running out of anything to present. By the end of 1830 meetings were being deferred for lack of attendance.

#### 4.9 Using the South African Institution for Personal Ends

The SAI was more than merely an outlet for research. It also provided the opportunity for members to mobilise support for their research activities and interests. Smith took the Museum out of the hands of the Government and into those of the SAI. Smith was, however, the only person to successfully use the

SAI in this manner. Bowie also attempted to mobilise the support of the SAI for personal ends. He wished to establish a botanic garden in Cape Town. The failure of Bowie to achieve this ambition contrasts with Smith's success.

Smith moved to re-establish the Museum as soon as the SAI was up and running. The first evidence for this is a memorial on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 1829 requesting the government to hand over the Museum to the SAI (C.O. 361/57). The memorial noted that the Government had no intentions for the existing collections, which were at this time in storage, and that they would be of far greater public benefit if handed over to the SAI. The memorial was signed by the Army surgeons Murray, Dyce and Smith, and von Ludwig. It is not clear what interest Murray and Dyce had in the Museum, although von Ludwig was to lend a substantial ornithological collection to the new Museum. The Governor acquiesced to this request. Pencilled on the back of the memorial is the following comment: "Instruct Dr Smith to give over the Museum to the Institution." (C.O. 361/57). In real terms this order transferred the Museum from Smith to Smith.

The Museum was to prove a key feature of the SAI. It brought together several important natural history collections in the city and it provided Smith, once again, with many of the resources to establish himself as the pre-eminent naturalist in the Colony. Beyond the narrow advantage the Museum brought to Smith, it also became a focal point for general interest in the SAI and natural history. The Museum as a material fact and focal point for the SAI ensured that even when the SAI's monthly meetings ceased, the organisation continued to exist as a functioning entity, even if just as an appendage to the Museum. The importance of this to the later LSI is explored in the next *Chapter*. Importantly, no member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, aside from von Ludwig, made a donation to the Museum in the period 1829 to 1831 (SAI, 1830 and 1831). The SAI's absorption of the Museum meant that by the end of 1829 Smith had re-created much of the scientific infrastructure he had established on his first return to Cape Town in 1825. This time, however, he attracted larger numbers of men and centralised his influence by concentrating all the resources in one organisation.

Two other men also attempted to use the SAI to support their own organisational efforts: Bowie and von Ludwig. The more generally successful of the two was von Ludwig, although it is not clear to what extent he actually drew on the SAI's

support. In late 1829 he started to lay the foundations of what would become the well-known Ludwig's-burg gardens. Already a successful naturalist by this time, he acquired three acres above the city in Tamboors Kloof at the end of 1829 and applied to the Governor for a grant of an adjoining piece of land. This was granted on the "*express condition of his establishing a Botanical Garden thereon*" (Quoted in Bradlow, 1965:9). The garden became the centre for botanical and horticultural work in Cape Town and von Ludwig became increasingly involved in international botanic networks. His garden was never an official or state sponsored facility, but it fulfilled many of the roles conventionally filled by such organisations. The Colonial Government eventually acquired the garden established by Von Ludwig after his death in 1848. The relationship between von Ludwig, his garden and the SAI, between 1829 and 1832, is unfortunately unknown. While von Ludwig was clearly an active member of the SAI, he appears to have had the financial resources and personal connections to pursue his interest independently.

James Bowie, in contrast, was a botanist of little or no means and desperately required the financial support and patronage of the Government or another sponsor. He tried to use the SAI to achieve this, but failed and ended up working for von Ludwig later in life. In the first annual report of the SAI (SAI, 1830), Bowie's extensive contributions to South African botany were recognised and it was suggested that the SAI expand its support of his activities. It was also proposed that the SAI establish its own botanic garden to further work in botany and horticulture. The SAI then called on the Governor to support their ambitions. The call for a botanic garden was the single longest section in the SAI's first annual report. Later, in 1830, Jardine reprinted a letter by Bowie, sent to the Conductor of the *Gardener's Magazine*. In this Bowie noted that he hoped a "botanic and experimental garden" would soon be established and berated the Colonial Government for its neglect of such activities (*Literary Gazette* 4, September 15, 1830:39). Jardine, as already noted, was a keen supporter of Bowie, regularly printing his botanical work in the *Literary Gazette*. He took up Bowie's cause again in his May 1831 leader.

"it is impossible not to experience exquisite regret, that while the perfection of science and of art are shedding their lights on every other land, this country in *some things* is made to remain stationary – nay, altogether to retrograde. Where is the former glory and grandeur of our *botanic gardens in Cape Town?* – At one time the pride of the Cape, and the praise of the whole earth, what are they *now?* At present, all that remains, is, a few broken jets, neglected trees, and grass-grown parterres ... We had fully expected the

*South African Institution* to have accomplished the act of again furnishing these gardens with the innumerable bounties of nature's stores which are scattered in such splendid variety in this southern part of Africa. With the liberality of the Colonial Government on the one part and the scientific skill of Mr. *James Bowie* on the other, *we have left undone those things which ought to have been done.*" (*Literary Gazette* 12, May 4, 1831, italics in original)

This call to both the Government's and the SAI's consciences did not succeed.<sup>14</sup>

At the second annual general meeting of the SAI, in June 1831, and one month after Jardine's article, the SAI appears to have dashed Bowie's ambitions. The annual report noted that,

"this is an object that the Institution can only aid, without having the prospect, in the present state of its funds and engagements, of carrying on successfully an independent establishment." (SAI, 1831:4)

Without the financial support of the Government, the SAI would not commit itself to helping Bowie establish his own garden. Given the severe limitations placed on Government spending by London, this was almost impossible. Suggestively, Bowie was not a member of the post-1832 LSI. Bowie's election to the SAI's Committee in 1831 seems not to have helped him. Bowie's failure to use the SAI can be contrasted with Smith's success. As already noted, the key difference was probably Smith's access to the Colonial Government and the ruling elite. This would have been exacerbated by the different social standing of Smith, an Army surgeon, and Bowie, a nature history tradesman and gardener. Bowie was probably a member of the SAI solely in virtue of his scientific activities. He was not part of the Colonial elite. It was not that the SAI overtly spurned his ambitions, but that within the structures and limitations of the existing social-political and economic climate only the most well connected and influential could aspire to Government support.

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<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, the botanist C. F. Ecklon, a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and corresponding member of the SAI, approached the Colonial Government for the identical purpose just before his return to the Cape Colony in early 1829. He sent a memorial to the Governor calling for the establishment of a botanical garden, with himself to be appointed as superintendent (C.O. 3942:282, p. 443, 3 February, 1829). The pencilled-in comment at the end of the letter, probably by the Colonial Secretary, noted that the Government would not only "refuse to sanction the establishment of a botanical garden on any land however small, but limited the expenditure of the yearly allowance of £200 to the keeping up of the public walks" (C.O. 3942:282, p.445). Interestingly, the Government did grant von Ludwig land later in the year explicitly for his botanical garden.

#### 4.10 Miscellaneous Activities of the South African Institution

The SAI was also involved in a number of miscellaneous activities. These included the setting of prize essays, organising an agricultural produce competition and attempting to conduct a statistical survey of the Colony. These appear to have served the interests of specific members and each of the three was probably driven and pursued by its own community within the SAI. In certain cases it is possible to suggest who the relevant individuals were. These three activities suggest that the SAI was open both to suggestions of the members and to interested outside parties and was not entirely dominated by Smith.

The first set of activities had to do with the prize essays, which must have been decided on at the time of the establishment of the SAI, because they were announced along with the names of the office bearers on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1829. There were four topics announced, with a purely honorary medal as the award:

- \*1. For best the account of the Character, History, and Geographical distribution of the Hottentot Race.
  2. For the best Mechanical Invention for facilitating the Transport of Goods of any sort, applicable for the circumstances of the Colony, with a description thereof by the Inventor.
  3. For the best Communication on the Effects arising from the Bites of the different Poisonous Snakes of South Africa, and the remedies generally applied.
  4. For the best Communication describing the most approved and economical methods of forming Dams and Tanks for holding Water, suited to the circumstances of the Colony."
- (Advertiser IV: 227, August 15, 1829)

The origin of two of the papers is relatively easy to establish. Given his known interest in reptiles and anthropology, Smith was almost certainly behind the questions on the "Hottentots" and snakebites. They were apparently not submitted as prize essays. The origin of the other two topics is unclear. Both are technological in nature. One tentative option is that they were suggested by Major C. C. Mitchell, a founding council member. He was the Surveyor General and Superintendent of Works. Transport and water storage issues in the Colony were part of his remit. In addition the economic necessity of improving transport in the Colony was a topic of some concern to the SAI's Patron, the Governor Sir Lowry Cole (Hunt, 1974). The improvement of transport infrastructure had become increasingly pressing due to financial problems, with the Colonial Office preventing investment. Finally, Adamson is known to have had an interest in transportation issues in Britain, where he published on railways before coming to



the Cape. The SAI discussed very few technological topics.<sup>15</sup> This was in keeping with its lack of interest in utilitarian concerns.

There was only one response to this call for papers, and the Committee deemed the exercise a failure. The paper was in response to the second question on means of facilitating transportation. At the SAI's Annual General Meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June 1830 a review Committee reported that the submission was not of a sufficient standard to warrant a full award. A half award was granted. The author, a Mr Naude, was not a SAI member. Another half award was given to Bowie for his papers on the "Cultivation of Exotic Vegetables", this was in spite of the fact that no such prize essay had been offered. The half awards were for Rds.100, which was part of the proposed solution to the lack of submissions. It was decided to make the award financial rather than purely honorary.

Another of the SAI's miscellaneous activities was an agricultural produce competition. This was announced in January 1831 (*Advertiser* VII: 279, January 29, 1831). The competition took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February. Only two of the nine awards went to a SAI member, M. Van Breda (*Literary Gazette* 10, March 2, 1831). In addition A. J. Jardine received special notice for his tobacco sample grown in the Library's garden. There are two points worth noting about this competition. First, it was in all likelihood the idea of M. van Breda. He was a wealthy farmer, member of the Cape's elite and senior member of the SAI. Secondly, the SAI was able to attract support and interest from outside of its membership. This was apparent not only in the winners of the agricultural premiums, but also in the submissions to the *Quarterly Journal*, a number of which were not by SAI members. This ability to mobilise general support and interest was probably an important aspect of the SAI's relative success.

The SAI also began work on the preparation of a statistical survey of the Colony, although it was unsuccessful in this. The 1830 Annual Report briefly discussed the interest and usefulness of such a survey, but concentrated largely on its geographical and meteorological aspects of such research (SAI, 1830). At least initially, the survey was not intended as a general account of the natural, political

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<sup>15</sup> A few other minor technological topics were dealt with at a meeting of the SAI on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July and the 31<sup>st</sup> of August, 1831 (*Quarterly Journal* I(4), 1831). These involved the presentation and discussion of model anchors, a description of a new thermometer, and a discussion of paddles for steam ships.

and economic aspects of the Colony, as the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS's parallel survey was. The relation between the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS's and the SAI's survey is not known. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1830 it was resolved to award a medal for Rds. 100 for the best "Minute and Systematic Statistical Account of any one of the Districts of the Colony" (*Literary Gazette* 3, July 21, 1830: 22). According to the 1831 annual report there were no submissions for this prize, although one or two minor set of information were sent in, such as the "Convictions before the local Courts in the District of Albany ... for the year 1829" (SAI, 1831:5). The SAI's efforts to conduct a statistical survey were never on the same scale as those attempted by the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. This was recognised in the LSI. When this later organisation set up a Committee to collect statistical data it was presented as "the revival of the inquiries formally proposed by the Literary Society" (LSI, 1834). While this does not accurately describe the genealogy of the LSI statistical efforts, it captures the relative importance given to the surveys by the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI.

#### 4.11 The South African Institution and Its Conception of Science

The SAI embodied a conservative and explicitly international conception of science. For Smith, science was an avenue to professional advancement and promotion within the Army's Medical Service. Science was a path into the British establishment. This contrasts strongly with the science of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, which was utilitarian, inward looking and focussed entirely on domestic improvement. For Fairbairn, science was a way of mobilising Cape Town's middle classes as part of his political program for greater self-government. For Smith the establishment of the SAI was primarily about professional advantage. As a result the SAI adopted the establishment model of gentlemanly science, with its rhetoric of personal disinterestedness and the value of purely intellectual endeavour. The SAI was to be a learned society and not an organisation for the diffusion of useful knowledge.

The SAI did aim for more than mere intellectual advance. It's official remit included the investigation of natural resources. But this search for commercial advantage differed significantly from the utilitarian focus of Fairbairn and the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The primary function of the more narrow utilitarianism offered by the 2<sup>nd</sup>

SALS was to mobilise the middle classes for the reform of society. The SAI did stress the “practical” advantages to their activities, but, equally important were moral and intellectual gains.

“We trust that we may appeal to the experience of our supporters, that a thirst and search for knowledge may be a blessing, independent of the practical results of science in turning nature’s powers to our use and comfort. We feel that the mind’s gratification with the things we search into, increases with our knowledge of their mysteries. For all science may participate in the lofty aim of extending the mind’s power by multiplying the subjects for its contemplation, and making things known, the augmenting instruments for further acquisitions. We may remark, how few of them who have been eminently successful have been allured on by other motives than the uneasiness of ignorance, and the elevating desire to escape from it; the profit they have looked for, if they aimed at such at all has been that which the mind claims as its right, and recognises as the completion of its purpose and its destiny, in giving purer direction and more commanding range to its faculties; the deepest ardor of inquiry may be directed on these things, into which the senses are the instruments of our search, with the simple and elevating aim, that the mind be enriched with the knowledge of them.” (SAI, 1830:12)

Admittedly this statement was part apology for the failure of the SAI to deliver practical advantages in its first year of activity. The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was equally, if not even more, unsuccessful in delivering advantages in its first year, but its failure was never excused in terms of the stimulating value of science.

This notion of disinterested science was repeated in the 1831 annual report. Here, however, the disinterested conception of science stood on its own as a justification for the SAI’s activities.

“We have now spoken of all the objects of practical utility which have engaged the attention of the Institution during the past year. But the sciences presented for our contemplation, have a nobler aspect than when seen merely as adding a little to the comforts of society. Science may be loved because it presents knowledge to gratify the mind’s desire; they who so pursue it disown and disregard its profit, and trample on the commercial aspect it may wear, when it invites only by the petty consequences of making men fare better or live the more sumptuously. When sought because they exercise and enlighten, the abstrusest may then present an aspect as inviting as the most popular; and to trace the inventor’s skill in a formula, or follow the careful and penetrating research, wherewith his mind has combined and developed its components, or to scan the symmetry of its or the power given by its application, may give an interest as intense as that wherewith the idle devour the productions of the romancer’s genius. The pursuit demands respect or sympathy, as the means of the loftiest gratification to minds of the highest order.” (SAI, 1831:10-11)

To the extent that the sciences had any practical benefits they were entertained as benefits to mankind or civilisation as a whole, as opposed to local or domestic advantage. So, for instance, the “detonating contrivances once offered

as amusement to the tyro chemist are effecting change in the system of national assault or defence" (SAI, 1830:11). This contrasts with the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS's entirely domestic concern with immediately utilitarian research. For the SAI research sowed "seeds" which later generations might pick up and develop.

The SAI differed from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS in two crucial ways. The SAI did not pursue a narrowly utilitarian science and it had an elite social structure. The SAI did not draw on the same models of radical provincial British scientific society as the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Rather it can in part be understood as similar to the conservative provincial scientific societies of towns such as Bath and Bristol. These societies were largely non-utilitarian and were supported by the established elite, rather than striving middle class (Neve, 1983; and Torrens, 1990). Whereas radical science was a way to overthrow the aristocratic elite, conservative science served to reinforce the social and political power of the established elite. The parallels between the SAI and conservative British societies are only tentative and there is no known direct link between these organisations and the SAI.<sup>16</sup>

Smith's interest in establishing the SAI was primarily professional. The model scientific man in the early nineteenth century was the gentlemanly specialist (Rudwick, 1985). While Smith was not a gentleman by birth, he may have hoped to parlay his advance in the Army's Medical Service and scientific experience at the Cape into something approaching the status of gentlemanly specialist. The early nineteenth century saw the establishment in London of a number of specialist scientific societies. These included the Geological (est. 1808), the Astronomical (est. 1820), the Zoological (est. 1826) and the Geographical (est. 1830) Societies. In his discussion of the Geological Society, Rudwick identifies three institutional models that the Society could have adopted. These were the "mineral resource centre", the "scientific dining club" and the "learned society"

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<sup>16</sup> While Fairbairn explicitly drew on the Newcastle upon Tyne Literary and Philosophical Society for his model of radical scientific societies, Smith does not appear to have similarly drawn on his earlier experiences. At least did not do so explicitly. He was elected a member of the Wernerian Natural History Society of Edinburgh in April 1819, but left Britain soon thereafter for his first overseas posting in Canada (Kirby, 1965). The Rev. Fearon Fallows, a close supporter, was a member of the Astronomical and Royal Societies, but he only joined these just before he left for Cape Town. None of the senior members of the SAI had a sustained exposure to a scientific society in the same way that Fairbairn had had.

(Rudwick, 1985:19). The first was the most utilitarian of the three functions, being closely connected to industrial and mining concerns. It was also the model most rapidly abandoned by the Geological Society. The dining club function of the Geological Society continued, but it was as a learned society, with a constitution, regular meetings and a journal, that the Geological Society eventually flourished. Smith seems to have been aspiring to create something similar in Cape Town, focussing on the establishment of a learned society. Just as British men of science were increasingly turning to the establishment of specialist scientific societies to legitimise their activities and mobilise support for their work, Smith tried to establish a similar institutional infrastructure in Cape Town.

The influence of Smith's professional concerns was also apparent in the SAI's attempts to establish international links with other organisations, both in Europe and the colonies. No progress was made in establishing such contacts during its first year (SAI, 1830). Links with European organisations were only made after 1832, when the SAI had already merged with the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. By mid-1831, however, the SAI had entered into a correspondence with the Natural History Society of Mauritius. The 1829-30 annual report of the Mauritius Society was read before the SAI, while, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October 1830, membership privileges were extended to visiting members of the Mauritius Society. The Annual Report and the Proceedings of the Mauritius Society were reprinted in the *Quarterly Journal* of the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1831. There were also attempts to contact other organisations: including the Royal Asiatic Society and the Literary and Agricultural Society of Ceylon (*Quarterly Journal* I(3), June 13, 1831).

The SAI's interest in establishing international contacts revealed the international ambitions of some of its members and the trans-national scope of its science. The official reason for establishing these international contacts was the benefit that the SAI's members could offer to the international scientific community.

"Time has not yet been afforded us for effecting a reciprocal intercourse with similar associations of loftier aspect and greater power in other countries; but we have no reason to imagine that our humble efforts will be overlooked, or that our willing aid will be disregarded in the extensive research they prosecute. They are awake to the advantage of possessing a local and permanent agent in a district so deservingly the object of their attention; and we may anticipate much gratifying and useful direction from the

instructions they communicate, or from the example they set us in their proceedings regarding those matters on which we mutually speculate." (SAI, 1830:4)

The service the SAI wished to offer to the international community was not selfless. By helping the savants of Europe or the better known scientific societies of other colonies, the SAI's members could further their own professional interests. This is a well recognised model of colonial scientific activity. Professional advancement was sought through the service of senior, usually European, experts (see Cohen, 1959; Basalla, 1967; and MacLeod, 1982). It is important to note that in this case agency lay with those in the Cape, and not in Europe. This contrasts with the model of imperial scientific activity offered by Brockway (1979), who suggests in her history of Kew gardens that natural history and scientific data collecting were often done under the orders and control of Metropolitan men of science. This was often true. James Bowie, for instance, had initially been sent to the Cape by Kew to collect for the gardens. In the case of the SAI the process worked in the reverse. Those in the Colony initiated, or at least attempted to initiate, service to Britain because it served their local domestic interests.

The SAI's interest in establishing international ties was probably related to Smith's professional concerns with securing his advance on his return to Britain. In this the SAI differed from the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, which made no attempt to establish international links. This difference can be directly linked to the aspirations of their leading members. Fairbairn's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was about domestic politics. It was about increasing the power, influence and control of the Colony's burgeoning middle class. This control was to be wrestled not so much from the Colonial Office in London, as from the Colonial Government in Cape Town. Smith and possibly some other scientific members of the SAI appear to have desired international careers. Their vision was directed outward, rather than inward.

#### 4.12 The Membership of the South African Institution

The membership of the SAI was strongly aligned with the Government. Of the sixty-nine members between 1829 and 1831, the single biggest group was made up of colonial officials. Many of these officials were very senior and, unlike the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the SAI had a number of members drawn from the Army. These

two groups dominated the SAI's leadership to the almost complete exclusion of professionals. The membership of the SAI was also as diverse in national origin as that of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The Institution also attracted a large number of men with significant scientific and literary interests and almost a quarter of the membership are known to have had an active interest in the sciences.

The membership of the SAI displayed the same diversity of national origin as the membership of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. There is evidence for country of birth for thirty-eight of the sixty-nine members. The breakdown of this data can be seen in *Chart 4.1*, which can be seen with all the other *Charts* referred to here at the end of this *Chapter*. Nineteen, or exactly half, of these men were British born. This diversity undergoes a shift in favour of the British born when one includes the suspected country of birth for all members. This complete data set for all sixty-nine men is divided into only British and non-British categories. This breakdown can be seen in *Chart 4.2*. This shows that overall, about 60% of the members of the SAI were British and 40% non-British, and mostly Cape born. As noted in *Appendix A*, this complete data for national origins should be treated with care.

The occupational breakdown of the SAI shows the importance of its Government aligned status. This breakdown for the members is given in *Chart 4.3*. It is immediately clear that the single most important group were the colonial officials. The other important groups were those involved in business and those categorised as "Other". The "Other" category includes all those men of science discussed in *Section 4.5*, with the exception of Adamson, a minister. It also includes several other men involved directly or indirectly in science, including John Reed, a curiosity collector and Committee member, Captain Ronald, Fallows's assistant at the Observatory, and Eduard Verreaux, Pierre Jules Vereaux's brother who came to the Cape in July 1830 as a collector and ornithologist. In all, seven of the men in the other category made a living directly or indirectly from science and this does not cover all the men of science in the SAI. Of the twelve businessmen in the SAI, seven were also members of the Committee of the Commercial Exchange between 1825/1826 and 1831/1832.<sup>17</sup> This should be compared with the twelve out of twenty-three businessmen who joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS that were also Committee members of the Commercial

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<sup>17</sup> These numbers come from a comparison of the membership lists of the SAI, with the Committee lists recorded in the *Cape Almanac*, between 1826 and 1832.

Exchange in this period. Relatively speaking, the numbers are equivalent. Businessmen were significantly underrepresented in the leadership of the SAI, just as they were in the leadership of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS.

Colonial officials occupied a key position in the membership of the SAI. They formed the single largest category of its membership, although in absolute terms fewer colonial officials joined the SAI than the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The colonial officials that joined the SAI included four of the most senior in the Colony: Lt.-Col. J. Bell, the Colonial Secretary, A. Oliphant, the Attorney General J.W. Stoll, Treasurer and Accountant General, and Lt.-Col. Wade, the Chief Justice. In addition to these four men, Andries Stocknestrom and Sir John Truter also joined the SAI. This meant that five out of the six members of the Council of Advice, the most senior consultative body in the Colony, were members of the SAI. It should also be remembered that the Governor was the SAI's patron. Senior colonial officials formed a far higher percentage of the SAI than the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Colonial officials were also very well represented in the leadership of the SAI. Of the twenty one SAI Committee members between 1829 and 1831, seven were Colonial officials. These seven men included the Colonial Secretary, as SAI President, and Attorney General and Treasurer, as SAI Vice-Presidents.

The most distinctive group of SAI members was drawn from the Army. This was not a large group, comprising just six men, three Army officers and three Army surgeons. The officers were Major A. J. Cloete, Town Major of Cape Town and Anglophile who was eventually to settle in London, Major Dundas, of the Royal Artillery and acting Military Secretary, and Lt.-Col. Holloway, Commander of the Royal Engineers. The Army doctors were Robert Dyce, John Murray and Andrew Smith. These were the three most senior Army medical men in the Colony. Murray was the senior surgeon to the forces, while Smith and Dyce were the next two most senior assistant surgeons. Murray was also the presiding member of the Medical Committee, which oversaw medical activities in the Colony. Both Dyce and L. Liesching, a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Literary Society, sat on this important board. All three Army doctors and Major Cloete were SAI Committee members. In 1830 Dyce became one of the two Secretaries of the SAI, replacing Smith, and Murray became a Vice-President, apparently replacing the deceased Fallows. It is interesting that the key position of Secretary changed hands, but only between Army surgeons. The other secretary, Adamson, remained on in his capacity for the life of the SAI.



Ultimately the colonial officials and Army men occupied eleven of the twenty-one Committee positions. This concentration is especially pronounced in the first year of the SAI. Of the seventeen Committee members elected between 1829 and 1830, eleven, and possibly twelve, were colonial officials or military men, only four of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS's first Committee members were colonial officials.

The Army officers and doctors were the only category of SAI members not to belong to the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. This is arguable the most significant anomaly in the memberships of these two organisations. There are a number of possible explanations for this difference in membership. Army men may have been actively excluded from the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Another possibility is that they did not feel welcome in the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and so chose to exclude themselves. It is also possible that given their status they *had* to appear above politics and that joining the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS would have compromised this. Little is known about the status of the military officers in the Colony or their relations with the general civilian population, so it is difficult to make any positive claims about why they did not join the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. A possible analysis comes from the situation in New Zealand, where Poulter (1980), has described relations between various groups in the Colony in the 1860s as follows: "[b]roadly ... the missionaries favoured the Maories, the settlers disliked them, and the military disliked the settlers" (Poulter, 1980:245). A similar story can be told of the Cape Colony. The humanitarian missionaries were in conflict with the increasingly expansionist demands of British settlers and the Army kept having to restore order and security on a tense frontier. This led in 1835 to the Sixth Frontier War in the eastern Cape (Keegan, 1996). The army may well have had little sympathy for either the missionaries or settlers, both of which were represented in Cape Town in the late 1820s under the broad church of Fairbairn's middle class movement.

The possibly poor civil-military relations in Cape Town may have been an important factor in gaining support for the SAI and ensured its identity as a Government aligned organisation. There were certainly problems between the Army and civilian medical communities. One possible implication of these poor relations was that Smith could not join the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS on his return to Cape Town in April 1829 and, as a result, had to set up his own organisation. This is unconvincing, although it was almost certainly a factor in Smith's decisions. Primarily, Smith seems to have wanted an organisation to further his own ambitions and not someone else's. More importantly, it had to be his

organisation so that he could use it for his own ends and control the opportunities it gave for the distribution of patronage and favours. As has already been noted, the exclusion of the military from the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was not a direct cause for the establishment of the SAI, but rather facilitated its establishment by ensuring the existence of a pre-existing faction ready to lend its support.

There were several important differences between the memberships of the SAI and the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. A breakdown of the membership of the two organisations by occupational category is given in *Chart 4.4* below. The first important difference had to do with the role of professionals in the two organisations. The SAI only had twelve professional members, compared to the thirty-one of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. This difference is largely do to two categories: lawyers and civilian doctors. The possible reasons for these men preferring the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were discussed in the previous *Chapter*. The other important difference between the organisations is in the "Other" category. As already noted the relevant importance of this category in the SAI had to do with the larger number of scientific men included. The main differences between the SAI and the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS can be seen in an analysis of the occupations of their leaderships. A comparison of occupations can be seen in *Chart 4.5*. The difference in the role of professionals in the two organisations is immediately apparent, as is the importance of colonial officials and Army men.

Cape Town's social structure was not rigid in the early nineteenth century and this allowed for significant overlaps in membership between the SAI and the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Of the sixty-nine men that joined the SAI, twenty-one were also members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. There is no overall pattern to this joint membership. With the exclusion of Army men and politically radical members of the middle class there was little preventing men from joining both organisations. For those relatively uninvolved in the Colony's and city's political manoeuvring or involved in issues tangential to those that split the SAI and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, membership of both organisations was possible.

A large number of scientific men joined the SAI. There were a total of seventeen men who are known to have had serious interests in science and literary topics. Their details are given in *Table 4.7* below. This is an extensive list and points to the fact that almost a quarter of the SAI's members is known to have had literary or scientific interests. This compares with less than a tenth for the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS.

Focussing more closely just on those with explicitly scientific interests the difference is even more pronounced, with the SAI having twice as many men of science as the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. This was in an organisation only just over half the size of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS.

A final question arises as to which men of science did not join the SAI. At least one of the scientific members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the botanist C. F. Ecklon, became a corresponding member of the SAI. The Rev. George Thom, a keen geologist, also joined the SAI as a corresponding member. But these were the only known corresponding scientific men. Unlike the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the LSI, the SAI never published a list of honorary or corresponding members. An analysis of Gunn & Codd (1981), shows that of the thirty two botanists or men with botanical interests recorded as being in the Colony between 1829 and 1832, only seven joined or were affiliated with the SAI. This compares with the four who were affiliated with 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, although three of these were also affiliated with the SAI. It is not clear why only these seven men joined the SAI and why the others did not. Many were, no doubt, not based in Cape Town. Their absence might also indicate the existence of previously unidentified divisions within the scientific community in the Colony.

#### 4.13 Conclusion

In this *Chapter*, I have interpreted the SAI largely as the realisation of a long standing plan by Andrew Smith to establish the necessary scientific infrastructure in Cape Town to further his career. This interpretation is premised on three observations. First, Smith was an ambitious man and natural history was his best path for advancement. Second, the timing of Smith's various residencies in Cape Town correlates closely with the timing of the establishment of numerous scientific organisations in the city, and, most importantly, the April 1829 meeting for the establishment of the SAI. The third and arguably most convincing reason for putting Smith at the centre of the SAI's history is that it makes for a coherent narrative. This is a problematic claim, as there is no reason to suppose that the history of the institutionalisation of science has to be coherent. Placing Smith at the centre of the narrative provides a structure to the history that would other wise be lacking and serves to explain a number of

features of the SAI, such as its non-utilitarian and international conception of science.

Smith, unlike Fairbairn, did not draw directly on a particular model of scientific society. Rather, his institutional activities were based on a combination of a need to organise support for his science and inability of the state to provide this. Somerset was willing and able to provide some direct state aid to Smith and the establishment of the Museum occurred under the auspices of the Colonial Government. This itself was only possible because the Army was willing to pay his salary, as the Colonial Office refused to finance Smith as superintendent from its own budget. It was, however, the last of Smith's endeavours to be primarily supported by the state. The post-Napoleonic retrenchment that reduced the British state's financing for science and limited the Colonial Government's freedom of action forced Smith to seek private support. In doing so he set out to create scientific societies to legitimise, organise and help finance his activities. The question of financing would become particularly acute in the early 1830s, when Smith launched the Association for the Exploration of Central Africa to organise his expedition to the north of the Colony. The SAI was not the last in the line of organisations through which Smith sought advantage. As examined in the following *Chapter*, he played an important role in the LSI, formed from a merger of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and SAI in 1832.

Although the SAI was established mainly by Smith to further his career ambitions it was also shaped by its specific historical context. As already explored, the social and political situation in late 1820s Cape Town explains why the SAI attracted such obvious support from the colony's official and Army elite. The memberships of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI not only indicate that they drew support from different social-political groups, but it also seems that the nature of membership differed. Science seems to have played a more central role in the identity of members of the SAI than it did for members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, where membership was more a badge of socio-political affiliation. This certainly helped the SAI survive (as the LSI) beyond the political moment of its creation. The tensions between the many groups in the colony may have driven some of them to develop increasingly self-aware identities. If this was true, however, it is also true that these identities were remarkably flexible. Within only a few years, the opposition Fairbairn had built up fragmented. Some were absorbed into the ruling elite. Others (re)created a Cape-Dutch identity in opposition to the

Liberalism. Still others, such as the humanitarians, became increasingly marginal. This is dealt more fully in the next *Chapter*, where the story involves, in part, the merger of the colonial elite and liberal middle classes and the assertion of an inclusive elite identity in the face of strong centrifugal forces.

# 5

## The South African Literary and Scientific Institution, 1832-1835

### 5.1 Introduction

By early 1832 both the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI had largely ceased functioning. One response to this, apparently initiated by members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, was to propose a merger of the two organisations. This merger went ahead in mid-1832 to form the LSI, but it was not a merger of equals. I argue in this *Chapter* that the LSI should rather be thought of as a re-established SAI incorporating elements of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. This is apparent in the dominance of SAI members amongst the LSI's Committee and office bearers and in the LSI's continuation of the SAI's conception of science. Furthermore, while Fairbairn did not join the new organisation, and may even have been excluded, Smith was an active member. Although Smith was probably not involved in organising the merger itself, he used the LSI to launch the Association for the Exploration of Central Africa. This organisation raised the funds for and organised his career making expedition to the north of the Colony between 1834 and 1836. By 1834 the LSI was becoming increasingly inactive with most members attention being focussed on the AECA. The LSI would probably have become moribund in 1834 if it had not been for the arrival in the Cape of the astronomer Sir John Herschel and his election as President of the LSI in mid-1834. Herschel reinvigorated the LSI and added the interests of British men of science, especially his own, to the LSI's existing scientific concerns. He directed it towards collecting data for British projects in anthropology and the physical sciences such as meteorology and the study of tides. These new research concerns did not replace the LSI's earlier interest in natural history, but ran parallel to them. Importantly, it is not clear that Herschel was able to motivate the majority of members to support his programs and by the late 1830s the LSI was becoming an increasingly marginal locus of scientific activity. Although it formally remained in

existence into the 1850s, the Institution had ceased functioning as a learned society by 1838.

Very little has been written about the LSI. Crawford (1934) is the most complete account, while Hall (1977) and Dubow (1999) merely mention the LSI in passing. Crawford provides no reasons for the merger of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI, but Hall (1977) suggests that it was the result of the Cape Town scientific community being too small to support two independent scientific organisations. Dubow (1999) also sees the small size of the Cape Town scientific community playing a crucial role and identifies the shared membership as an important factor.<sup>1</sup> This analysis is correct, but it provides only a partial explanation. Dubow makes the further claim that the “members of the Institution constituted a ~~role~~ call of Cape Town's great and good ... [who were] representatives of the legal, official, merchant and professional groupings that were comprising Cape Town's emerging Anglo-Dutch middle class” (Dubow, 1999:15). This observation points to key socio-political shifts in the Colony that led to a rapprochement between the middle classes and the military and governing elite and facilitated the merger of the previously socially and politically distinct 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and SAI.

A further possible reason for the establishment of the LSI is suggested by the wide variety of political positions held by its members. The membership was drawn from a number of different groups in the colony, including liberals (often British), humanitarians (mostly British) and conservatives (often Cape-Dutch). Admittedly members of the official and Army elite dominated the Institution's leadership, but its broader membership suggests the existence of a more inclusive colonial establishment. This new establishment embraced official and military members and members of the middle classes (both British and Cape-Dutch). Both groups contained violently antagonistic proponents and opponents of slavery. That such a varied group of men managed to co-exist in the same organisation suggests that the LSI served ends beyond those of science. Specifically, I argue below, the LSI may have served to cement an elite identity and help hold the colony together in the face of the centrifugal forces exerted by debates surrounding emancipation. This

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<sup>1</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI shared fifteen full members between 1829 and 1832. There was also a small overlap amongst corresponding members.

claim draws crucially on the idea of civil society, although in a different way to that already developed in the cases of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. This is developed in the next *Section*.

## 5.2 Locating the South African Literary and Scientific Institution in Cape Society

The LSI is difficult to locate in the shifting socio-political landscape of early to mid-1830s Cape Town. Part of the reasons for this is structural. Unlike the situation in 1829, with both the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI, the LSI was the only scientific society in Cape Town in the mid-1830s. There was no comparative organisation which can be used to tease apart the LSI's particular allegiances and affiliations. The members of the LSI were also silent on the political role they saw their organisation playing, although this silence is itself important, possibly pointing to the serious political tensions in the colony. Fairbairn was not a member of the LSI and there was no vocal equivalent. The earlier liberal middle class program pushing for civil liberties had, in part, been realised under the Governorship of the Sir Lowry Cole in the late 1820s. The resolution of this divisive issue played an important role in facilitating a rapprochement between the middle class and the Army and governing elite in the early 1830s. In addition, the influence and power of the liberal and humanitarian movement, partly led by Fairbairn, had peaked in the late 1820s and by the 1830s was on the wane (Keegan, 1996).

The reduced tensions between the middle class and the ruling elite was almost certainly an important factor in the merger of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI in 1832. The middle classes' ambition for greater self-government, however, was unresolved and remained a divisive issue till at least the mid-century, with the establishment of a Legislative Assembly in 1853 (Keegan, 1996). The demand for self-government was a problem not only between the liberal middle classes and the Government, but also between conservative Cape-Dutch elements and the Government. Along with the ending of slavery it was a central factor behind the 1835 Great Trek, which saw conservative Cape-Dutch farmers leave the Colony. Yet these divisive political issues seem to have left the LSI unaffected, with its members drawn from the



Colonial Government, Army, liberal middle classes and conservative Cape-Dutch elite.

The over all impression of the LSI is that it maintained an active disinterest in socio-political matters. Science was a safe, neutral space from which politics was excluded. The inclusive membership of the LSI means that significant effort must have been expended to prevent it self-destructing as a result of sectional interests. If there was one political issue that is likely to have proved crucial in determining the membership of the LSI it would have been the abolition of slavery. The period leading up to the emancipation of slaves in 1834 saw the increasing hardening of opinion between the liberals and their critics (Keegan, 1996). Yet there is no indication that the slavery issue was an important factor for the LSI. The only mention of slavery in the records of the LSI is in its 1834 annual report. Here the ending of slavery is objectified for statistical enquiry as "an effort of political strength which, for its magnitude and promise of great results, it worthy to consolidate such an Empire" (LSI, 1834:5). This suggests that the LSI was largely anti-slavery, as would befit the merger of two earlier organisations, one pro-Government and the other liberal. Yet, while the LSI had a number of prominent humanitarian members, such as Sir John Herschel and the Rev. Dr. John Philip, it also had many members of the conservative and often pro-slavery Cape-Dutch elite. These included J. J. L. Smuts, C. M. Villet, the Rev. A. Faure, W. F. Hertzog, J. De Wet and C. J. Brand. Keegan observes that,

"By the early 1830s colonial opinion had become sharply polarised between the liberals and their opponents. Nevertheless, while the two parties spat venom at each other through their newspapers, they both in reality continued to agree on the fundamental importance of property rights."(Keegan, 1996:113)

Similarly, the membership of the LSI witnesses the commonality of interests between the liberal middle classes and conservative Cape-Dutch elite rather than the issues that separated them. These included not only property rights, but also the desire for representative government (Botha, 1984; and Giliomee, 2003).

Even one of the most ardently anti-English and anti-liberal Cape writers, the lawyer C. J. Brand, remained a member of the LSI. Brand had been a close supporter of Fairbairn in the 1820s, defending him in his trials against Somerset. In the early 1830s Brand became a key figure in the emergence of a Cape-Dutch intellectual

reaction against the liberal and humanitarian movements (Trapido, 1993; and Keegan, 1996). He contributed extensively to the conservative *De Zuid Afrikaan*, edited by his younger brother P. A. Brand. His earlier membership of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and absence from the SAI can be explained by his alliance with Fairbairn. His membership of the LSI suggests that the organisation was thought of as sufficiently neutral for politicised men of very different orientations to meet with one another. It was also neutral enough for colonial officials and Army officers to meet with such radicals. This has important implications for our understanding of the support for science amongst different groups within the Colony. The conservative Cape-Dutch have been seen as rejecting the intellectual consequences of the Enlightenment (Macmillan, 1929) and this would have included science. This was thought especially true of those Cape-Dutch in rural areas, but the presence of certain members of the conservative Cape-Dutch elite in the LSI complicates this picture and suggests that it may be incorrect, at least for more urban areas.

While the LSI included members of the conservative Cape-Dutch elite, it was more obviously dominated by men with liberal and humanitarian inclinations. Sir John Herschel, President from 1834 to 1838, and Thomas Maclear, President from 1838, held strong humanitarian stances. It is not known to what extent these were public or intruded on the affairs of the LSI. In 1836 Herschel and Maclear fell out with the Governor, Sir Benjamin D'urban, over the conduct of the Sixth Frontier War, being "horrified by the violence and the D'Urban government's impotent response" (Musselman, 1998:428). In January 1836 the two absented themselves from Cape Town rather than attend a dinner celebrating D'Urban's return from the Frontier. D'Urban was at this time the Patron of the LSI. The LSI continued with Herschel as President and D'Urban as Patron, however, and there is no direct evidence that their falling out affected the organisation.<sup>2</sup> This suggests the LSI was actively managed as an apolitical social space. Survival of the Institution in such a highly politicised atmosphere may not otherwise have been possible.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, 1836 was the last year the LSI published a copy of the *Quarterly Journal* and no annual report was published after 1835.

<sup>3</sup> In a similar vein, Finney (1993) notes of the Agricultural Society of New South Wales that it survived the "factionalism that tore the [earlier] Philosophical Society apart. The Agricultural Society could tolerate radically opposed individuals both through its buffer of numerous members and because of the

The use of science to construct politically neutral environments can be understood in a number of ways and had important precedents in the 1830s. Firstly, it is crucial to realise that such neutrality was not a way of avoiding politics *per se*, but rather involved the pursuit of higher order political goals. Porter (2000), in a discussion of the Enlightenment in eighteenth century Britain, argues that in an era riven by political and religious differences, one solution to the threat of conflict was the avoidance of politics and the adoption of new polite modes of behaviour. This involved the prioritisation of cultural and literary style (over political substance) and immersion in conversation and debate on less contentious issues. It was in part this need to exert self-control over the activity in civil society that was a factor in the co-development of both civil society and new forms of polite behaviour, etiquette and honour. These new forms of social interaction not only insured, as Porter (2000) argues, that people could function socially with one another, but served to make the exclusion of divisive issues a social norm.

The creation non-political spaces was nevertheless intensely political – the aim being to avoid open conflict and possible bloodshed. This understanding of civil society can, as already noted, be found in seventeenth century British political thought. Interestingly, this same Restoration period has been identified by Shapin and Schaffer (1985) and Shapin (1994) as crucial to the construction of the 'neutrality' of 'facts'. The creation of neutral facts drew heavily on the notion of the gentleman and polite behaviour and laid many of the normative foundations of modern science. This simultaneous emergence of civil society and modern science at a moment of political turmoil parallels later events at the Cape. Given the passions being aroused in the Cape in the 1830s, especially over slavery, the creation of neutral spaces was necessary for the survival of a liberal political order and possibly to prevent conflict. At least in part the LSI may have played such a role in Cape Town.

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circumscribed agenda of the organization which focussed on improvements in agriculture, a feature that appealed to the supporters of the emancipist and exclusive [the two main factions] alike." (Finney, 1993:25).

The success of “neutral” spaces was not foreordained. There always was a danger of self-destruction if contentious issues emerged into the open. Their success depended on the rigorous self-policing and the enforcement of exclusion. This is a basis for the requirement in the rules of most literary and scientific societies, including the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS but not the SAI, for the avoidance of politics, religion and other conflict-prone topics. This active exclusion of politics was also required to avoid the intrusion of the state into the affairs of civil society. As in the case of the suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS, the state might or might not tolerate civil society in the abstract, but it could ruthlessly suppress perceived threats. Even in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Britain, arguably one of the more politically tolerant states in Europe, there were regulations in place for the control and licensing of lectures and societies (Weindling, 1980). Yet the demands of such self-limitation could be equally destructive, narrowing the possible topics down to a safe but ultimately sterile and uninteresting minimum. As discussed in *Chapter 3*, this was one of the reasons offered in the 1830s for the possible collapse of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS (had the lesson been learnt too well?). What was required was a subject which would simultaneously interest sufficient numbers of relevant men and which could be rhetorically held distant from the main political controversies of the day.

Science could be used to pursue a radical political agenda, as it was used by Fairbairn at the Cape and radical evolutionists in 1830s London (see Desmond, 1989). But it could also be used in a more consensual and constructive way. The early nineteenth century saw science playing precisely such a role in Britain, with the establishment of the BAAS in 1831. In their discussion of its establishment, Morrell and Thackray argue that the Association's leaders constructed science as a “‘neutral’ court of appeal, a well spring of authority and power, an objective and impersonal means to good and desirable ends, [and] a tangible object of public pride” (Morrell and Thackray, 1981:33). The 1820s and 1830s were a period of enormous political change and rising tensions in Britain, as indicated by the first Great Reform act in 1832 (Briggs, 2000). The BAAS drew support from across the social and political system, excluding the working class and those on the political extremes. It was essential that wider political and social interests were prevented from tearing the Association apart. By representing science up as a value- and

politically-neutral pursuit almost everyone could at least find something to talk about and discuss.

### 5.3 The Gradual Collapse of the Second South African Literary Society and the South African Institution, 1831-1832

Activity at both the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI tapered off from late 1831 onwards. Both organisations had trouble maintaining attendance at their monthly meetings and seem to have suffered from a lack of interest. In addition their two leading members, Fairbairn and Smith, were increasingly distracted. Fairbairn was involved both in the newly established Agricultural Society and in pushing for the establishment of a Legislative Assembly, while Smith was involved in preparing for his expedition to Natal to visit Dingaan, the Zulu Chief. By early 1832 the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI were largely moribund. There were, however, important differences between what remained of these organisations. The most important was the continued existence of the Museum, which provided an active core around which members of the SAI could congregate and with which they could identify. The Museum ensured the merger occurred on unequal terms that favoured the SAI over the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS.

The first record of possible trouble at the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS appeared in the *Literary Gazette* for February 1831. A brief note claimed that nothing had been heard of the organisation for some time and requested information about its monthly meetings. This request was satisfied, for from then on the *Literary Gazette* did carry notes of many of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS's meetings. This suggests that initially the problems were more apparent than real, being a consequence of poor advertising. The first indications of real trouble appeared just over a year later in the *Advertiser*. In March 1832 a letter, signed 'an Utilitarian', concerning the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS's apparent failures appeared in the paper.

"Numbered amongst the Institutions of the Colony stands the "South African Literary Society," which has for its object the extension amongst its members of all sorts of useful knowledge, and includes in its acts the formation of a Committee, for the purposes of obtaining that peculiarly interesting information which can be derived from a more accurate account ... of the general Statistics of the Colony. It is an old adage that, where nothing is attempted

nothing can be done. But tell me, Mr. Editor, when everything is attempted and nothing done, what conclusion can the Public come to except to assign to the Projectors an incompetence to the task which they have taken upon themselves. It is a melancholy fact that the S. A. Literary Society has fallen into such a state of mental lethargy or exhaustion that not one of its members can tell what it has done for many months, nor what it intends to do during the ensuing winter; and unless some system of resuscitation be speedily evinced, I trust that the next report of the Committee will contain a declaration – “That the Society having failed in attaining the objects for which it was formed, a meeting should be held to consider the propriety of applying its funds to some more useful purpose.” (Advertiser VIII: 499, March 24, 1832)

The most interesting feature about this open attack on the failure of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS is that it took so long to generate a reply. Given that Fairbairn was the editor of the *Advertiser* and key founder of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, this seems strange. Where Fairbairn felt personally attacked he was always ready to defend himself. The appearance of this letter and the lack of immediate response suggest that by 1832 Fairbairn had lost interest in the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and no longer saw it as central to his activities.

A muted response to the letter eventually appeared in the *Advertiser* on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 1832. It made no attempt to refute the accusations of the March 24<sup>th</sup> letter. The reply was signed “A member of the S. A. Literary Society” and attacked the earlier letter’s author. It accused him of being a member of “some other Society or Institution” (*Advertiser* VIII: 515, May 19, 1832) and challenged him to present information on that organisation. Specifically it requested that he not only discuss the Literary Society, but the other organisations in the Cape. The implication is that the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was not alone in its state of decline. This reply then drew a further response from the original author, which indicated that by this time offence had been taken on both sides. The general point was repeated that,

“for many months nothing has been done, and no plan had been suggested for its improvement. This, I repeat, is a fact which every Member *but one* will be willing to corroborate ...” (italics in original, *Advertiser* VIII: 518, May 30, 1832)

This exchange of letters is the only explicit evidence for the decline of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. It also indicates that the decline was known beyond the confines of the membership of the Society and that it was probably a topic of some interest to Cape Town’s middle classes and elite. Unfortunately it is unclear what specific reasons might have brought on this general decline.

While it is not possible to identify the specific reasons for the collapse of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, two partial reasons can be identified. The first was Fairbairn's increasing involvement in the Agricultural Society, established in December 1831. Fairbairn had a long-standing interest in agricultural improvement and it was one of the major concerns of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. It is not surprising that when an Agricultural Society was eventually established in Cape Town, at the end of 1831, he was a supporter. His support took two forms. First, he provided extensive and positive coverage in the *Advertiser*, with regular articles on the possible benefits of the Agricultural Society from late 1831 onwards. Secondly, although not a member of the Society's first Committee in 1831, by 1832 he had become a Committee member. It is not clear whether or not Fairbairn played an important role in establishing or managing the Agricultural Society. His biographer, Botha (1984), makes no mention of his involvement in the organisation. His involvement was, however, in keeping with his past behaviour. The Agricultural Society was important because it may have served to distract Fairbairn from the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. It may also have provided him with an alternative outlet for his organisational interests after he left the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS when it merged with the SAI.

The second possible reason for slump in enthusiasm at the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS had to do with the nature of the Society. This is suggested by the *Literary Gazette* in December 1832. "We suspect that the *fall* of the *Literary Society* to have arisen from the suicidal nature of one of its own laws" (italics in original, *Literary Gazette*, II (12), December 1, 1832:414). Specifically, the author, probably the editor A. J. Jardine, points to the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS's regulations preventing the discussion of any political or religious topics. He claims that this overly restricted discussion within the Society and led directly to its collapse. It is important to note that the SAI had no equivalent rule in its constitution (SAI, 1830b). The rule preventing discussion of politics and religion was intended to ensure that the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS would offend as few people as possible, importantly including the Colonial administration. The SAI did not have a similar rule probably because its membership was intended to be narrower and was already aligned with the establishment. It had less need to be concerned about giving offence, either to potential members or to the

administration.<sup>4</sup> The criticism of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS Rules and Regulation does, however, point to one of the problems faced by the membership of the Society: the way in which membership was conceived. Both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were designed to be as inclusive as possible and membership as easy as possible so as to ensure the largest possible number of supporters. One possible consequence was that, because little was expected of the members, little was received.

The SAI went through a similar process of decline to the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, with the exception of the important stabilising role played by the Museum. Already at the SAI's 1831 annual meeting it was noted that attendance had declined (SAI, 1831). In an attempt to arrest this decline, meeting times were changed from the evening to the mid-afternoon. This appears to have had limited impact, because the recorded frequency of meetings dropped off sharply in later 1831, with none being recorded in 1832. In spite of this, the SAI continued to function in other ways. Most importantly it had the Museum, which still apparently drew in crowds. This ensured the SAI's continued existence even in the absence of the monthly meetings. The role of the Museum in keeping the SAI going has to be inferred, however, as there is no direct evidence for it.

The Museum had been established in 1825 by Somerset under the control of the Colonial Government. Smith had been behind the establishment of the Museum and was its first Superintendent. It had been closed down in 1827 and then, in 1829, handed over to the SAI, where it reverted to Smith's control. Already in 1825 a group of men had collected around the Museum who were to be associated with the SAI and then the LSI. When the Museum was incorporated into the SAI it continued to unite certain of the organisation's core members, containing the collections of Smith, von Ludwig and Verreaux. Verreaux also acted as the Museum's curator during Smith's frequent and often lengthy absences from Cape Town. The Museum provided the SAI with a core identity around which members

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<sup>4</sup> The absence of such a rule in the SAI is puzzling in that it was conventional for scientific and literary societies to have one. Either it was left out of the rules and regulations intentionally or accidentally. If accidental it might imply that the founders of the SAI had little experience of such societies and were creating their own version of what they thought such a society was like. If the absence of the rule was intentional it was probably directed at Fairbairn's overt politicisation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS.



could collect. The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS lacked this. This meant that although the monthly meetings may have ended, the SAI retained a purpose.<sup>5</sup>

The general decline of the SAI, at least as far as the monthly meetings were concerned, had a number of causes. One was that Smith was distracted, preparing for and then departing on his expedition to Natal. After his successful expedition to Namaqualand in 1828 and early 1829, Sir Lowry Cole had chosen him to lead an diplomatic mission to the Zulus. This occupied Smith from late 1831 onwards and he departed in early January of 1832. The monthly meetings were probably also undermined by a lack of material. In the early days of the SAI the members had many years worth of material to draw on, but once this had been used there was insufficient new material being generated to fill in the schedule of meetings. Evidence for this was presented in the previous *Chapter*. This problem was not resolved by the merger, and continued to plague the new organisation.

#### 5.4 The Merger of the Second South African Literary Society and the South African Institution

The merger of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI occurred in mid-1832. At the time the SAI was in a stronger position than the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and this largely explains the nature of the eventual merger of the two organisations. The membership that emerged from the merger was broadly representative of the existing memberships of the two old organisations, but ex-SAI Committee members disproportionately dominated the leadership. In addition, the rules and regulations of the newly merged LSI were more similar to those of the SAI.<sup>6</sup> Suggestively, Fairbairn was not among the

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<sup>5</sup> This sort of inversion between an organisation and one of its offshoots was not uncommon. The Newcastle upon Tyne Literary and Philosophical Society rapidly became little more than an appendage to its own library, which soon became the Society's *raison d'être* (Orange, 1983). Similarly, the Boston Society of Natural History, established in 1830, later served only to administer its increasingly successful natural history museum (Kohstedt, 1979).

<sup>6</sup> Importantly, the rule against discussing political and religious matters was included in the new Rules and Regulations of the LSI, but it was relegated to a less important position. In the Rules and Regulations of the South African Literary Society (SALS, 1830), it was Rule 2, while in the LSI it was Rule 30, out of a total of 34 (LSI, 1832).

members of the LSI and the resulting organisation remained largely controlled by Army men and colonial officials.

The first sign that something important was happening appeared in the *Advertiser* in April 1832. A when a meeting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was announced for the 14<sup>th</sup> "to take into consideration a Proposal of Vital Importance to the professed object of this Society" (*Advertiser* VIII: 504, April 11, 1832).<sup>7</sup> It is not clear what this meeting was held to discuss, but it was the first announcement for a meeting of the Society for several months. In early May the first explicit announcement of a possible merger appeared in the *Advertiser*,

"SOUTH AFRICAN LITERARY SOCIETY

May 11, 1832

A GENERAL Meeting of the Members of the S. A. Literary Society will be held on WEDNESDAY, the 16<sup>th</sup> instant, to receive the Report of the Committee appointed at the last meeting, – "To meet an equal number of Members of the South African Institution, in order to ascertain upon what terms a Junction of the two Societies might be best effected."

The Meeting will be held in the Society's Rooms, Loop-street, and the Chair will be taken at the usual hour SEVEN O'CLOCK in the evening. A full attendance of Members is urgently requested.

JOHN FAIRBAIRN, Secretary" (*Advertiser* VIII:513, May 12, 1832)

This Committee had probably been appointed at the previous month's meeting. A further meeting was held to hear from the special Committee on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May. None of this is mentioned in the very brief and limited report of the annual meeting of the SAI, held on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June, 1832 (*Literary Gazette* II(7), July 2, 1832).

Early in July the newly merged organisation was officially announced, with the following notice appearing in early June in the *Advertiser*:

"SOUTH AFRICAN LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION,

THE Committee appointed by the *Literary Society* and *South African Institution* to fix a day for the first Meeting of the above-mentioned Association, have determined, that the said Meeting be held in the Institution Rooms, Looyer's-plain at Two o'Clock on SATURDAY, 14<sup>th</sup> instant, for the election of Office Bearers for the ensuing year, and other Business.

Cape Town, 3d July 1832.

(Signed,) A. STOCKENSTROM, Chairman

JAMES ADAMSON, Ch." (*Advertiser* VIII: 529, July 7, 1832)

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<sup>7</sup> This announcement appeared at the same time that the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was being criticised for its inactivity. This was explored in the previous *Section*.

Three points are worth noting about this announcement. First, the rooms of the newly merged organisation were to be the existing rooms of the SAI. Secondly, and more importantly, the notice was not signed by Fairbairn or the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS's other previous secretary, Richard Innes. Neither Innes nor Fairbairn went on to join the LSI in the following years. The notice was rather signed by Andries Stockenström, senior colonial official, previous President of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and member of the SAI. The signatory for the SAI was James Adamson, one of the key members of the SAI. Thirdly, the timing of the meeting is suggestive. It occurred at more or less the conventional time of the annual meeting of the SAI. The 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS met in February.

Fairbairn was not a member of the merged organisation. It has already been suggested that he was distracted by other concerns. There is, however, another possible explanation for his absence: that he was actively excluded from the LSI. In June 1833 *De Zuid Afrikaan*, a virulently anti-Fairbairn newspaper representing the interests of the conservative Cape-Dutch, carried the following accusation:

"What was meant to be conveyed as in proof of Mr. Fairbairn's unpopularity, was, that he had lost in consequence of his shameless insolence and tergiversation [sic.], that influence in the management of certain public Institutions which he had previously possessed. Will this man dare to deny that he was excluded from the Committee of the Philanthropic Society, of which he had been one up to that period, and that in the election of Office Bearers for the United Literary and Scientific Institution, he was cast aside, although he had been for years Secretary to the former?" (*De Zuid Afrikaan* IV (168), June 21, 1833)

According to this claim, many members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were tired of Fairbairn using the Society for political advantage and actively excluded him from the new organisation specifically to prevent such abuse continuing. Fairbairn's response appeared the following day in his *Advertiser*, although not under his own name.<sup>8</sup> He deflected the criticism by claiming that he was not excluded from the LSI, but chose of his own volition not to join.

"He states that Mr. FAIRBAIRN was "cast aside" when the Literary and Scientific Institution was formed by the Union of the two Societies, of one of which he had been secretary. This is false. Mr F. opposed the Union of the Societies. When it was resolved to unite, he was appointed one of a Committee to draw up the Rules for the new Institution. He readily lent his aid, but declared that he *would not become a Member* of the proposed United Institution.

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<sup>8</sup> This response may not have been written by Fairbairn, but rather by a close supporter. Given the tight editorial control Fairbairn exerted over the *Advertiser* this would have made little difference. The response is as good as Fairbairn's own.

When the papers containing the Rules, &c. were completed, he considered that his duties as Secretary to the Literary Society terminated with the existence of that Body, and declined inserting his name in the list of Members composing the new Institution." (*Advertiser* IX: 620, June 22, 1833)

Fairbairn's opposition to the merger of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI in 1832 contrasts with his apparent interest in such a merger in 1829 (*Advertiser* IV: 220, July 22, 1829). The differences between 1829 and 1833 are, however, telling. Whereas in 1829 the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was running successfully and the SAI was just getting started, in 1832 the situation was reversed. In 1829 a merger would have involved the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS taking over the SAI, to Fairbairn's advantage. In 1832 the SAI took over the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, thus depriving Fairbairn of any potential social or political advantages. Shorn of these benefits, membership of a scientific society was not interesting to Fairbairn. For all this, Fairbairn's refusal to join, or his exclusion from, the LSI did not signal the end of his involvement in scientific matters in the Colony.<sup>9</sup> Aside from his involvement in the Agricultural Society, he also organised a series of Lectures on Natural History in November 1832 (*Advertiser* IX: 566, November 4, 1832). Later, in 1848, he was also part of a commission appointed to investigate the possibility of the Government purchasing von Ludwig's botanic garden (McCracken and McCracken, 1988).

Although Fairbairn was not involved in the LSI, Smith was an important figure. Smith played the central role in the establishment of the SAI in 1829, but the same is not true for the merger itself. According to Kirby (1965), Smith only returned to Cape Town sometime in June or July 1832. This was after the first notices concerning the suggested merger had appeared. He may even have returned to the city after the merger had taken place and he was not a member of the first LSI Committee elected on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July 1832 (*Advertiser* VIII: 532, July 18, 1832). Smith only returned as a Secretary of the LSI in the following year (*Advertiser* IX: 637, July 20, 1833). Although he did not play a direct role in organising the merger of the SAI and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, he played a vital background role and gained enormously from the merger. It was his museum that probably conferred the necessary

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<sup>9</sup> Fairbairn's exclusion may have been part of keeping the LSI apolitical. While politicised men were allowed to join the LSI, they had to adhere to implicit rules excluding divisive issues from the organisation. Fairbairn may have been thought unable to adhere to these rules or simply far too politicised.

longevity and stability to SAI to ensure its ascendancy. Smith also used the LSI to launch his most ambitious project to date: a two-year expedition to the north of the Colony.

Smith himself may not have played a key role in the merger, but those closely affiliated to him in the SAI did. Given below in *Table 5.1* is the first Committee of the LSI, elected on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July 1832. Also included are the details of the positions held in the earlier SAI and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS as well as occupations. Of the twenty-two Committee members, nine had been members exclusively of the SAI, four exclusively of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and six had been members of both organisations. The SAI was clearly predominant. More importantly, the occupational makeup of the Committee of the new LSI far more closely approximated that of the Committee of the SAI. Almost 60% were colonial officials or Army men. This compares with the 20% for the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the 55% for the SAI over the three years of each. The merged organisation also retained the social and political structure of the SAI's leadership, maintaining official and Army control rather than the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS's middle class and professional order. Sir Lowry Cole, the Governor, was the Patron of the new organisation, as was his 1833 replacement, Sir Benjamin D'Urban. The importance of ex-SAI members in the Committee of the new organisation was, however, not carried through to its more general membership. Of the one hundred and fourteen men who signed up for the LSI between 1832 and 1834, thirty-nine had been members exclusively of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, twenty-one of the SAI and fifteen of both.

It remains uncertain why the SAI and the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS merged. The merger involved the loss of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS's identity, but the continuity of that of the SAI. It is also apparent that Fairbairn did not support this merger, probably for this precise reason. Little remains in the record relevant to this question. The first public announcements for the exploratory discussions about the merger were made by the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. This suggests that the impetus for the merger may have come from those in the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS who were disappointed in its activities. One possible structural explanation for the willingness of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS to incorporate itself into the SAI is that its model of radical scientific society was unsuited to the socio-political structure of Cape Town. In Manchester and Newcastle the middle classes set out to make themselves the

new elite in the face of an established landed aristocracy. In Cape Town the socio-political structure was more fluid and members of the middle classes could join the elite. There was less need to create a radical middle class alternative in Cape Town. Not only did the nature of the elite differ, but membership was more accessible. Further, the SAI was less rigidly based on any particular British model and may have been better adjusted to local needs. Finally, when the two organisations did merge each brought just over half its old members along. Either the others did not wish to belong to the LSI or used the opportunity of having to sign up again to politely withdraw from activities in which they had little interest.

## 5.5 More of the Same: The Activities of the South African Literary and Scientific Institution, 1832-1835

The LSI's activities were initially entirely a continuation of those of the SAI. The LSI continued the monthly meetings of the SAI, although very haphazardly, until mid-1834. The *Quarterly Journal* was re-established in 1834 to print Andrew Smith's zoological work and the Museum was maintained under the control of Pierre Jules Verreaux. The LSI also continued the SAI's foreign correspondence, establishing links with the London Zoological Society and, possibly, the French Zoological Society. Although Smith was not in Cape Town for much of the period, the LSI continued to embody both his notions of science and professional concerns. This dominance was challenged from mid-1834 onwards. The arrival of Sir John Herschel both invigorated the LSI and introduced new research interests. Smith's conception of science remained a part of the LSI in the period 1832 to 1835, but from 1834 onwards Herschel's concerns were increasingly apparent in the LSI activities. Herschel's influence is examined later, in *Section 5.7*.

The newly merged LSI was entirely focused on scientific matters: including, natural history, anthropology, chemistry, and physics. Whatever its title or heritage from the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the merged organisation was about science, even if science was widely defined to include exploration. This is immediately apparent in a survey of the LSI's annual reports and publications. The only mention of literary material was the Rev. M. Borchers' history of the Cape Colony. Borchers, a member of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>

SALS and the SAI, had been working on this history for several years and had already had excerpts of his work published in the *Quarterly Journal*. He had died in February, 1832, before the merger, but in the first annual report of the LSI the hope was expressed that some other member would continue with the "prosecution of an object so well worthy the attention of the Literary department of this Institution" (LSI, 1833:7). There is no record that this was ever done. This apparent absence of literary pursuits was taken up by A. J. Jardine in the December 1832 edition of his *Literary Gazette*. There he noted that, "Now come we to the *Literary* department. What has been doing here for many a month past? In truth we know not" (*Literary Gazette* II (12), December 1, 1832:415).

In addition to avoiding literary pursuits, the LSI completely avoided all agricultural matters, although it did hold an agricultural produce competition. Agricultural improvement had been an important part of the program of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and might even have been its most important project. At no point did the LSI involve itself in anything even vaguely related to farming or stockbreeding. It also devoted considerably less attention to horticulture than the SAI. The explanation for this break probably has to do with the founding in late 1831 of the Cape of Good Hope Agricultural Society and the possible transfer, soon afterwards, of Fairbairn's institutional interests to this organisation. The interests of the Cape-Dutch majority were represented to a far greater extent in the Agricultural Society than in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the SAI and the LSI. The Agricultural Society did not adopt the rhetoric of science for agricultural improvement as Fairbairn did. It was apparently a practically focussed rather than learned society. It was, however, one of the best supported societies in 1830s Cape Town.<sup>10</sup> The abandonment of agriculture provides further evidence for the dominance of Smith's SAI in the newly merged LSI.

The LSI continued the monthly meetings of its parent organisations. There are few records concerning these meetings and announcements were irregular for the entire period. Meetings were announced in the *Advertiser* for August through December 1832, rarely in 1833 and 1834, but then more regularly from mid-1835

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<sup>10</sup> In 1837 it had one hundred and fifty six members (Cape of Good Hope Agricultural Society, 1837)

onwards. This public record may not be complete, but a remark in the 1834 annual report of the LSI suggests that there were problems in organising meetings.

"The Council has to remark, that during the year now elapsed an attempt was again made to increase the attendance of members at the Monthly Meetings of the Institution, by changing the hour, by that no perceptible advantage has attended it." (LSI, 1834:1)

This problem was not new to the LSI, but had plagued both the SAI and the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The LSI faced very real problems in mobilising interest in certain of its activities, especially the encouragement of original research for the monthly meetings.

When held, the monthly meetings were largely given over to the discussion of general topical scientific matters, rather than the presentation of original research (LSI, 1833:4). It is, however, possible to identify some of the original papers presented before the Society and some of the specific topics of discussion. The 1833 annual report provides information on only one paper read in the previous year: on anthropology from Army surgeon Nathaniel Morgan, and read by Dr. John Murray. The 1834 and 1835 annual reports mention communications by von Ludwig about his horticultural activities and a series of talks on African exploration, given by J. C. Chase. The 1835 report also mentions papers presented by Murray, on vaccination, and Adamson on the "Logic of Elementary Geometry".

The LSI's monthly meetings became more regular from late 1834 onwards. The annual report for 1835 makes no mention of problems with meetings, but nor does it comment on whether the situation had improved. The increasingly regular announcement of meetings in the *Advertiser* may simply have reflected better management of publicity, rather than a change in the meetings themselves. The increase, however, occurred at the same time as the election of Sir John Herschel as President of the LSI and was probably related to his arrival. He appears, at least initially, to have invigorated the monthly meetings, although precise impact is not clear.

While the monthly meetings were not very successful, the LSI was involved in a number of other activities. The Museum continued to play a very visible and successful role in the LSI. At the end of 1832, A. J. Jardine waxed lyrical about the Museum, then under the curatorship of Pierre Jules Verreaux.



"As far as the *Museum* of the Institution is concerned, we believe that nothing can be better managed. Who does not exclaim as he enters it, and beholding the wonderful displays of Creative Goodness – Beautiful! Wonderful! Surprising! And then the taste and skill of Mr. Verreaux, the Superintendent, how excellent!" (*Literary Gazette* II (12), December 1, 1832:415)

Jardine continued to give the Museum his full support through the *Literary Gazette*. In May 1833 he quoted the praise of a visiting Indian to the Museum (*Literary Gazette* III (5), May 1, 1833), while in December 1833 he published a long article complimenting the Museum, and calling on it to also pay attention to domestic and commercial species (*Literary Gazette* III (12), December 2, 1833). In January 1834 he again published a complimentary note (*Literary Gazette* IV (1), January, 1834).

The Museum's acquisition list made up an important part of the three LSI annual reports. In 1833 almost thirty donations were recorded, including a pickled crocodile from Mr Gie, a bound copy of the latest edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica from Sir Lowry Cole and a "Model of a Self-acting Fieldgate" from Jardine (LSI, 1833). Just over half the donations were natural history specimens: including minerals, reptiles, plants and insects. Mostly these specimens were from the Colony, but some were from India, demonstrating the presence and participation, although not membership, of East India Company officials in the LSI. The net value of the LSI's collections in 1833 was estimated at almost £700, of which almost two thirds was accounted for by natural history specimens (LSI, 1833). The 1834 and 1835 annual reports record similar, although fewer, donations. Most of these were from LSI members. Of particular importance to the Museum's collections was the purchase of a large number of bird skins. Verreaux was given one hundred and eighty-eight skins for his own collections on the basis that he would then stuff and mount two hundred and seventy-six birds for the Museum's displays (LSI, 1834). By the following year he had managed to prepare one hundred and three of the specimens.

The Museum was also open to the public. The 1834 annual report observed that in contrast to the poor performance of the monthly meetings,

"The MUSEUM continues its progress of augmentation, both by extensive donations from Members and by the funds at the disposal of the Council; and as far as the Council can ascertain, the number of members frequenting it, or of strangers coming to examine it, is considerable." (LSI 1834:3)

There is other evidence that the Museum received greater prominence from 1832 onwards. In the 1833 edition of the *Cape Almanac* the Museum's existence was merely noted with the brief comment, "A Museum is attached to the Institution" (*Cape Almanac* 1833:138). In 1834 edition this was expanded to, "A Museum is attached to the Institution, filled with excellent specimens of animals and other natural objects indigenous to South Africa" (*Cape Almanac* 1834:175). This expanded even further in the following year to: "The Society's Rooms are situated in Looyers Plein, near Government House, where they have a very beautiful MUSEUM filled with specimens of Animals and other Natural Objects indigenous to South Africa, besides others from various parts of the world, to which Strangers are admitted on paying one shilling each." (*Cape Almanac* 1835:151).

In addition to maintaining the Museum, the LSI re-established the *South African Quarterly Journal*. The first series of the *Quarterly Journal* had run for five volumes from early 1830 to late 1831. The *Quarterly Journal* restarted in late 1833, and ran to thirteen parts. Eleven were published in 1834, one in 1835 and one in 1836. The re-establishment of the *Quarterly Journal* was not inevitable. The 1833 annual report noted that,

"The Council has not felt encouraged from the state of the material in its hands, or the prospect of remuneration, to do more in regard to the Quarterly Journal, than to recommend that a Subscription List be opened for continuing it in a new form." (LSI, 1833:9)

By the following year the annual report was more positive.

"The Council thought it advisable, for a special purpose to be described afterwards, that the S. A. Quarterly Journal should be revived in an altered form, and one year of it has nearly been completed." (LSI, 1834:3)

This special project was the serial publication of Andrew Smith's account of African Zoology. These appeared in the first ten editions of the new *Quarterly Journal* and were the rationale for its re-establishment. All the papers recorded as being given at monthly meetings were also published, with the exception of von Ludwig's plant lists. Morgan's paper on anthropology was reprinted in three parts. Adamson's paper on geometry and Murray's paper on vaccination were printed in the second and third from final parts. J. C. Chase also published a six part series on African exploration ending with the instructions to Smith for his expedition to central Africa. The other articles appearing in the *Quarterly Journal* were either copied from British Journals or were of an administrative nature. The first, 1829 to 1831, and second,

1833 to 1836, series of the *Quarterly Journal* were quite different. Both might have been established primarily to publish Smith's work, but the second series lacked the breadth of material and number of contributors of the first. This reflected the general lack of original research presented before the SAI and the LSI after the initial spurt of enthusiasm in 1829 and 1830.

The LSI continued the SAI's attempts to develop international correspondence links. As was noted in *Chapter 4*, the SAI, unlike the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, had made an effort to establish international ties. This was related to the SAI's conception of science, which was in turn related to Smith's professional interests. The only organisation with which the SAI is known to have established links was the Natural History Society of Mauritius. This correspondence continued under the LSI and is mentioned in the 1833, 1834 and 1835 annual reports. A similar correspondence seems to have begun between the LSI and the Zoological Society of London. This is also recorded in all three annual reports. The contact with the Zoological Society of London was probably established through Smith, but this is uncertain.<sup>11</sup> The LSI also established a corresponding relationship with the Zoological Society of France, but aside from a brief mention, in the 1834 annual report, there is no other information on this correspondence. The 1834 and 1835 annual reports also mention two other European scientific organisations: the Statistical Society of London and the British Association for the Advancement of Science. The history of the LSI's contact with these two organisations is probably quite different to the LSI's contacts with the Zoological and Natural History Societies. These later contacts were part of the changes initiated by Sir John Herschel.

## 5.6 The Most Important Venture: Launching the Association for the Exploration of Southern Africa

While Smith was not involved in the establishment of the LSI, he was centrally involved in the founding of the AECA, in 1833. This Association organised his

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<sup>11</sup> Smith was a Fellow of the Zoological Society of London from 1843, but there are no records in its archives of contact with him or the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, SAI or LSI in the 1830s (Michael Palmer, ZSL archivist, personal communication, 31 January, 2003).

career making expedition to the north of the Colony between 1834 and 1836. The AECA was a separate organisation from the LSI, even if the two shared most of their key members. The AECA was the final and most obvious example of Smith establishing an organisation in Cape Town to further his own personal ambitions. It fits in with a nearly decade long pattern of behaviour that can be traced back to before his return to Cape Town in early 1825. Smith needed to mobilise significant financial, scientific and organisational resources to mount the expedition, but the Colonial Government was in a poor financial position and he was unable to draw on state support. The AECA proved remarkably adept at garnering the necessary support and Smith's career greatly benefited from the successful expedition. This *Section* examines the emergence of the AECA from the LSI and the links between the two in the period between the establishment of the AECA in mid-1833 and Smith's departure on his expedition in mid-1834. It also traces the origins of Smith's plans for an expedition and explores some aspects of the AECA's mobilisation of the necessary resources. The AECA was not, however, merely a vehicle for Smith's career ambitions. It also provided an institutional base for the pursuit of colonial expansion and this *Section* explores Smith's and the AECA's roles in supporting colonial expansion and possible connections between this and Smith's anthropological work.

The AECA has been relatively well investigated, although most of the literature has focussed on the expedition itself. Kirby (1939 & 1940) has edited Smith's expedition diaries and Lye (1975) his journal. Some of the background to the establishment of the AECA is investigated in Kirby's (1965) biography of Smith. Kirby (1965) is largely drawn from the official documents and notices published by the LSI and the AECA in 1833. Following the claims of both the LSI and AECA, Kirby locates the immediate cause for the establishment of the AECA in the election of the Governor, Sir Lowry Cole, as an Honorary Member of the LSI. Immediately after his election on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 1833 Cole read a report from two traders, Hume and Millen, who claimed to have reached the Tropic of Capricorn. He proposed the establishment of a provisional committee of look into the possibility of organising an expedition under the leadership of Smith (AECA, 1833a). The AECA developed immediately out of this provisional Committee. Kirby (1965) does not explicitly disagree with this account of the origins of the AECA, but he does note that Smith had become

increasingly excited by exploration over the previous years. The 'official' account presents the establishment of the AECA as almost fortuitous: the Governor happened to read a report by two traders, Smith happened to be present at the meeting, and an expedition happened to be mounted. This account is misleading in a number of ways. Most importantly it hides Smith's long-standing ambition to mount such an expedition, his extensive earlier attempts to organise it, and the fact that his use of the LSI was a response to earlier failures to enlist official support.

Smith had conceived of mounting a scientific expedition to the north by 1827. In a letter to Sir Richard Plasket, the Colonial Secretary, Smith notes that he was writing a letter to "Lord Goodrich [sic.] to solicit [sic] a greater degree of Public support in exploring Africa South of the line" (C.O. 320/27, November 7, 1827). "Lord Goodrich" probably refers to Viscount Goderich of Nocton, recently made Secretary of State for War and the Colonies in April. In August Goderich was asked to form a cabinet by the King, but he proved a poor Prime Minister and resigned in January 1828 (*DNB*). Given the dates it is probable that Smith wrote to Goderich as Secretary of State for War and the Colonies. In 1828 Smith was sent on an intelligence-gathering mission to the Namaqualand, but this did not fulfil his ambitions. In fact, this expedition seems to have only whetted his appetite. Soon after his return, in May 1829, Smith wrote a long and forceful letter to the new Governor, Sir Lowry Cole, arguing that such an expedition was urgently required and that it would have significant scientific and commercial advantages. (C.O. 361/[between 32 and 33], May 26, 1829). Kirby argues that this letter is so forceful as to suggest that it was written at Cole's request to be passed on to the relevant authorities in Britain (Kirby, 1965).

Kirby's claim that the letter was intended for a British audience is confirmed by a January 1830 notice about Smith's planned expedition that appeared in the *Edinburgh Journal of Natural and Geographical Science* (January 1830:289). The speed with which this appeared suggests that Smith and Cole did not send the letter off just to the Colonial Office, but also to other potential supporters in Britain more generally. These documents establish that Smith was seeking to organise and lead an officially supported expedition to the North long before the idea was first reported as being discussed at the LSI in mid-1833. This notice from the *Edinburgh*

*Journal of Natural and Geographical Science* was also reproduced in part in the *Cape's Literary Gazette* (1, June 16, 1830).

The official account of the establishment of the AECA is misleading in that it ignores the pre-history of Smith's plans for an expedition, his close connection with Cole and his habit of establishing organisations to further his personal ends. One of the most important features of Smith's attempt to mobilise support for his expedition was that Cole closely supported him. This support must have developed quickly. Cole first arrived in Cape Town while Smith was on his 1828 and 1829 intelligence gathering mission in Namaqualand. The letter arguing for the expedition was submitted less than two months after Smith's return. Aside from assisting Smith to organise an expedition to the north, Cole also chose Smith for a diplomatic mission mounted to Zululand in 1832. Smith and Cole's interest in mounting a scientific expedition to the north would have been public knowledge in the Colony several years before they launched the AECA. Smith wished the expedition to be mounted under the auspices the Colonial Government or, if the Colony could not afford it, under the auspices of the British Government (C.O. 361/[between 32 and 33], May 26, 1829), but funding was not forthcoming from either source.

Smith returned to Cape Town in April 1833, after some further travels through the interior parts of the Colony. The LSI meeting that led to the establishment of the AECA was held less than two months later, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June. Cole was already party to Smith's plans. Cole's introduction of the report on the travels of Hume and Millen at this meeting was probably intended to trigger the LSI's involvement in realising these plans. Smith chose the LSI because official channels and sponsorship were closed to him for financial reasons. Although the LSI itself did not have the means to support the expedition it allowed itself to be used as an institutional springboard. In this, Smith's success should be contrasted with James Bowie's failure to use the earlier SAI to support the establishment of a botanic garden. Bowie was one the more senior scientific members of the SAI, but he lacked social status and did not have the close personal support of the Governor. It was again Smith's access to the Governor that probably made the exercise possible.

Cole's involvement in setting up the AECA points to the semi-official nature of the expedition. In addition to raising fund by subscription in the Cape, letters seeking financial and other support were sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies and War and the Admiralty. Requests were made to the Admiralty for the loan of instruments from the Observatory at the Cape and for assistance and patronage. The expedition, when it was finally mounted, was equipped not only with these instruments, but was also armed by the British Army and accompanied by British and Colonial troops. Furthermore, on his departure, Smith was empowered by the new Governor, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, to negotiate on behalf of the Government with any tribes he met. Thus, although the expedition was almost entirely funded by private sources, it drew heavily on the support, equipment and manpower of the Colonial and British Governments.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 1833 a provisional Committee of the LSI was formed to examine the possibility of mounting Smith's expedition. Fourteen men sat on this Committee, of whom all but one were LSI members. The one exception was the Army officer Lt. Edie of the 98<sup>th</sup> Regiment, a travel companion of Smith, who also accompanied him on his expedition to the north. Of the thirteen LSI members, all but two sat on the LSI's Committee in 1833. On the other hand, of the fourteen men, and again with the exception of Smith and Edie, only one man was a colonial official or army officer: F. S. Watermeyer. The membership of the Provisional Committee contrasts with the otherwise semi-official nature of the eventual expedition. The Provisional Committee did not, however, last for long. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of June, a meeting of the Shareholders of the expedition elected a Committee of Management. Two days later, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 1833, the Committee of the Cape of Good Hope Association for the Exploration of Central Africa met for the first time (AECA, 1833b). Below, in *Table 5.2*, are given the details of the nineteen members of the Committee of Management as it stood at the end of June 1833. Included are the Committee members' names, positions on the Committee, occupations, as well as whether they were members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the SAI and the LSI. In 1834 two further important individuals joined the AECA's Management Committee, these were Sir John Herschel and Thomas Maclear. They swung their full weight behind the expedition and assisted in ensuring the support of the Admiralty.

The membership of the Management Committee was drawn almost entirely from the LSI, with all but two, Malcome and Muntigh, being members. Of the remaining seventeen men, twelve were LSI Committee members in 1833. These included Wade, who was elected LSI President in August 1833, and Stoll, Murray and von Ludwig, who were LSI Vice-Presidents. This cross membership is the strongest link between LSI and the AECA. The link between the two was carried through to the general subscribers. In late 1833 fifty-four, or over a third, of subscribers were members of the LSI.<sup>12</sup> The Management Committee also included nine military men and colonial officials, including certain senior officials, such as Wade, Oliphant and Stoll. Although this implied a strong official interest in the AECA, officials did not entirely dominate the Management Committee. The expedition was officially sanctioned and supported, but it was funded by private interests. This goes some way to explaining the significant presence of businessmen on the Management Committee, a group that was otherwise underrepresented in the management of scientific organisations in Cape Town in the 1820s and early 1830s.

The significant presence of businessmen on the Committee also correlates with the fact that Smith's expedition was intended partially as a commercial venture. The expedition was intended to open up trading opportunities in the interior of the continent. This had been one of the original motivations for the expedition in Smith's 1829 letter to Sir Lowry Cole (C.O. 361/[between 32 and 33], May 26, 1829). In the instructions given to Smith by the Committee he was ordered to investigate any opportunities for trade. A trading party was eventually attached to the expedition to assist in the search for commercial opportunities. The Management Committee also felt that traders had been more successful than purely scientific men in exploring Africa. This was thought to be because the tribes in the interior understood trade, but not science. As a result they were open to men pursuing the former, but not the latter. The Committee recommended that Smith and his group, "attempt to penetrate into the depths of the hitherto unvisited regions beyond our Colonial Limits under the characters of TRADERS" (AECA 1833a: 11). This was far from subterfuge as trade was one of the expedition's actual purposes, but it was typical of a number of Smith's expeditions. Smith's intelligence gathering mission to Namaqualand, in 1828 and 1829, and his diplomatic mission to Zululand, in 1832,

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<sup>12</sup> Comparison of subscriber list of AECA (1833a) and LSI membership list in *Appendix G*.



had both been mounted secretly, being presented primarily as scientific research (Kirby, 1965; and Etherington, 2001). Smith was now planning a scientific mission under the cover of trade.<sup>13</sup> The trading dimension of the expedition also fitted in with its nakedly commercial aims of making natural history collections for later, profitable, sale.

By early 1834, with the strong backing of the new Governor, nearly £1000 had been raised. A subscription list was published towards the end of 1833, containing one hundred and fifty two subscribers, of whom several were organisations rather than individuals (AECA, 1833a). This list covers the first two hundred and thirty one shares issued, at £3 a share. Of the one hundred and forty nine early individual subscribers, there is occupational information for one hundred and sixteen. The single largest group of men was businessmen, accounting for forty-five subscribers. The next biggest group was colonial officials, with twenty-two subscribers. The only other groups with over ten subscribers were the military, with thirteen,<sup>14</sup> and employees of the East India Company, with fourteen subscribers. With the exception of this last group, the importance of businessmen, colonial officials and the military correlate to the dual semi-official and commercial nature of the planned expedition.

The presence of Indians on the subscriber list points to the important role played by non-Cape residents in the organisation and financing of the expedition. Indians, or British employees of the East India Company, formed an important element of Cape Town high society. Their status and attitudes placed them in a somewhat difficult position in the city's social milieu. They were both respected for their sophistication and education and resented for their condescending attitudes (Worden *et.al.*, 1998). Few Indians had joined the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> SLAS, the SAI or the LSI. This is not to say that they did not attend the monthly meetings of the organisations. They made donations to the Museum and there are indications that Indians played an important role in motivating the LSI's interest in meteorology (*Literary Gazette* IV (8), August,

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<sup>13</sup> The connection between scientific exploration and commerce was common in the period. In his statements to Congress and instructions to the Lewis and Clark expedition across America, Jefferson stressed both commercial advantages and trade (Goetzmann, 1966).

<sup>14</sup> This includes two R. N. Officers and three Army doctors.

1834). The absence of Indian members of the organisations may simply have been a consequence of their typically relatively short residencies at the Cape. Nevertheless they came out strongly in support of the AECA. At one level this is easy to explain. They were already in Cape Town, they had the resources, and they were interested. At another level, the presence of Indians signified a further dimension to Smith's ability to mobilise support for his expedition, either directly or through the LSI and the AECA. Not only was Smith able to get domestic political and financial support and official British support, he was also able to organise international private support.

Aside from the Indians, the AECA also sought support from foreign scientific societies and private individuals. The AECA's approaches to learned societies in India and Britain for assistance were unsuccessful, although very little is known about them. More interestingly, the AECA received vital financial support from Britain. In early 1834 James McQueen, a Scottish businessman, part owner of the *Glasgow Courier* and keen supporter of African exploration and geography, wrote to the AECA. He offered it £300 on the condition that that the organisation raised at least £950 from other subscribers. McQueen was soon exposed as an intermediary. The donation actually came from Robert Jamieson of Liverpool (Kirby, 1965). Jamieson was a philanthropist and merchant who wished "to civilise Africa by opening up its great rivers to navigation and commerce" (*DNB*). Later, in 1838 and 1839 he equipped two ships at his own expense, the *Warree* and *Ethiope*, to explore the Niger and other African rivers. It is not known what the connection was between Jamieson and Smith, but Jamieson's support for the AECA fitted in with his own private initiatives. Jamieson's later expeditions also combined privately funded scientific exploration with commerce and Christianity.

The AECA was established to finance, legitimate and organise Smith's long desired expedition. It was one in a long line of organisations established by him to further his own ambitions and goals. It drew heavily on the LSI for its leading members. It also attracted the support of the Admiralty, Army and Colonial Government as well as international financial support. This mobilisation of resources by Smith in pursuit of a personal ambition is quite remarkable. The close support of Sir Lowry Cole, the Cape's Governor, his replacement Sir Benjamin D'Urban as well as possibly Sir

James McGrigor, the head of the Army Medical Service, played an important role. Although the LSI and the AECA were technically separate entities, the AECA initially appears to have functioned more as a financially independent subsidiary of the LSI. Given the LSI's own origins in the Smith inspired SAI, this is not entirely surprising. The close connection demonstrates the central role of Smith's professional interests in creating, sustaining and shaping a large part of the Cape scientific community in the period between 1825 and 1834.

The AECA, along with the LSI and earlier SAI, have thus far been discussed almost entirely in terms of Smith's personal career interests. While Smith's pursuit of professional advantage provides a satisfying account for many features of his organisations, it fails to address their political appeal for their wider membership. Admittedly, attention has already been drawn, in *Section 5.2*, to the possible role of the LSI in holding together the colony's fractious elites, but there is little direct evidence for this. It has to be inferred from an apparent absence of conflict and debate. There is, however, a strong case to be made that the AECA was founded to forward to specific program of colonial expansion in the pursuit of Cape mercantile interests.

There is little explicit evidence of Smith's involvement in settler politics before the early 1830s. Admittedly he had been involved in anthropological research in the Eastern Cape during the first half of the 1820s and had published a paper on the "Bushmen" in *Quarterly Journal* in 1829. In 1832 he led an expedition to Zululand and returned committed to the settlement of a new colony in Natal.<sup>15</sup> In the process Smith increasingly aligned himself with the expansionary interests of Eastern Cape settlers and often Grahamstown-based mercantile interests. The links between scientific exploration and colonial expansion was apparent in the *Grahamstown Journal*, not only an important proponent of expansion (Keegan, 1996) but also a keen reporter of travellers accounts of the interior (Kirby, 1965). Furthermore, Smith actively sought and gained the support of the Commercial Exchange for the "military occupation and colonisation of Natal" along with his later co-founder of the

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<sup>15</sup> This expedition, according to Etherington (2001), had been in planning since 1828, so this commitment may have been even longer standing. I

AECA, J. C. Chase (Keegan, 1996:192). The establishment of the AECA in the following year almost certainly drew on this growing support for Cape expansion.

Eastern Cape settler demands for expansion have been identified by Crais (1992) and Keegan (1996) as central to the emergence of South Africa's later racial order. Keegan has argued that the Cape's eastern frontier began to experience a period of significant capital accumulation in the 1830s. This drove settlers (mostly British) to demand the expansion of the colony to create new investment opportunities and new markets. Central to the desire and demands for expansion was a development of a new racial order and, more in Crais's (1992) terminology than Keegan's, a reconceptualisation of race. This reconceptualisation moved away from the humanitarian and enlightenment emphasis on similarities, often theoretically couched in the language monogenecism. In its place emerged, as Crais (1991) and Bank (1995 and 1996) have noted, an increased stress on difference and white superiority. Bank (1995 and 1996) argues this was in part couched in terms of the emerging science of phrenology, but probably more important were polygenecist notions of racial difference. Polygenecism claimed that the differences between races were not environmental but a result of separate (and unequal) creations. Both Crais (1992) and Keegan (1996) point to the important links between the needs of expansion and the shift in conceptions of race, although it should be noted that the links are unlikely to be causally simple.

Arguably the most influential polygenecist of the early nineteenth century was Robert Knox. He was an ex-Army Edinburgh trained surgeon who had been in South Africa between 1817 and 1820 and who was a key figure in the development of biological racism. The relationship between Knox and Smith is not clear. Nevertheless, while Kirby (1965) notes that Knox and Smith differed in their categorisation of various racial groups, it is likely that their very ability to differ politely was premised on the acceptance of many of the same underlying racial ideas. Supporters of colonial expansion needed a more amenable conceptualisation of black Africans than that provided by the humanitarians. In Smith they no doubt found an ally. He was a scientific expert who could legitimate their interests in colonial expansion. Smith was not the dupe of the expansionist interests, rather he was a leading member of the group. This argument has been developed by

Etherington (2001), who stresses Smith's role in colonial expansion. Etherington, however, gives no attention to Smith's scientific activity, seeing it purely as a fig-leaf for his racist and expansionary interests. Yet Smith's science was a central part of his activities and Smith's racial and expansionary views activities would have been crucially mediated and legitimated by his science. This nexus of science, expansion and race would provide a fascinating entrée for an examination of the role of science in the Cape colonial experience, but doing so would involve taking Smith seriously as a man of science.

One of the important features of Smith's scientific/expansionist activity in the AECA was the ambiguous nature of the official support that it received. Although it was a privately funded and organised expedition, it nevertheless indirectly received significant official support. This was acknowledged by Fairbairn. In the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 1834 editorial of the *Advertiser* it was noted that,

"Although the Expedition has been undertaken by private Individuals, the countenance and support given it by three successive Governors of this Colony, and the assistance offered to it by the Board of Admiralty, cannot fail to satisfy the world at large, that the ends in view are of a public nature, and of a character just and honorable." (*Advertiser* X: 700, February 26, 1834)

The simultaneously private and official nature of this expedition has suggestive parallels with the nature of Britain's imperial ambitions in the Cape. The early nineteenth century saw Britain turn into a 'reluctant' imperialist and, as a result, run down her involvement in exploration (Stafford, 1999; Drayton, 2000). Britain's ambition was to restrain expansion and the expenses involved in such growth. As a result, Smith's expedition was launched, organised and primarily supported by Cape interests. It was these very same domestic and often commercial interests that Keegan (1996) has identified as driving the Cape's expansion against the wishes of the British Government and Colonial Office. Smith's expedition was primarily a colonial endeavour, as much opposed to the aims of the British Government as it was part of the imperial endeavour.

More generally, Smith's combination of private and official support was typical of the period. There were fully official expeditions. These included a large number of surveying expeditions mounted by the Admiralty, usually under the patronage of either John Barrow or Francis Beaufort. On certain occasions private individuals

could accompany such official expeditions. Examples include Sir Joseph Banks, on the first Cook expedition in 1768, and Darwin on the Beagle from 1831 (Browne, 1995 and 1996). Also important were privately funded and organised expeditions, which often received little more than official permission. Alexander Humboldt's expedition to South America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries fits this model. His expedition established a, if not *the*, model for much of the early to mid nineteenth century's natural history (Browne, 1983; and Cannon, 1978). A particularly important source of early nineteenth century private British funding for exploration came from the evangelical revival which saw increasing interest in missionary activity and the civilising function of commerce. A prime example in Africa were the activities of David Livingstone under the auspices of the London Missionary Society (Jeal, 1993; and Stafford, 1999). This evangelical funding often combined religion, commerce and science.

The AECA's role in expansion points to an important feature of the scientific organisations at the Cape:- the relationship of the organisations to the colonial and imperial endeavours. As has been repeatedly pointed out in this thesis, the institutionalisation of science in Cape Town was irretrievably connected to social and political developments in the colony. Whether it was the founding and suppression of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS in 1824, the loading of the Library Committee with Government supporters in 1825 or the support the SAI drew from the same elite in 1829 in partial opposition to the establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Yet none of these entirely colonial events is directly related to certain of the more recent historiographical interests of colonial and South African historians in slavery, race, imperialism and colonial expansion. The AECA, however, provides an obvious entrée to these concerns. Yet one needs to take care in proposing a simple relation between science, race and colonial expansion. As discussed in the next section, Sir John Herschel brought a different form of science and different racial ideas to the Cape. For all that, however, he was still a keen supporter of the AECA, although possibly not colonial expansion.

## 5.7 Something New: Sir John Herschel and the South African Literary and Scientific Institution

In early 1834 Sir John Herschel moved to the Cape to conduct a survey of the southern skies. He remained in the Colony for four years, leaving in 1838. During his stay at the Cape he had a significant impact on the LSI, including possibly rescuing it from an incipient collapse. Previously the LSI had followed the SAI in pursuing mainly natural history and geography. Domestic concerns and especially the professional needs of Andrew Smith motivated its activities. Herschel attempted to shift the LSI into the physical sciences, such as meteorology and the study of tides. This was both to serve his own interests and those of other British men of science. The changes introduced by Herschel were not simply about the objects of investigation, but involved his own specific conception of science. In many ways the LSI came to pursue what Cannon (1978) has termed Humboldtian science, after the German naturalist and explorer Alexander Humboldt. This involved the systematic and organised measurement and collection of information from around the world in pursuit of general natural laws. As Cannon also suggests, this systematic global scientific enterprise was as much Herschelian as Humboldtian. In its Herschelian form it became increasingly important to the LSI from 1834 onwards. Nevertheless, Herschel's arrival did not eclipse the organisation's earlier interests in natural history and the maintenance of the Museum, with these continuing to run parallel to his new projects. Importantly, it is not clear that the members of the LSI were entirely supportive of Herschel's research interests, or his humanitarian politics. The Institution appears to have ceased functioning even before his departure from the Cape in 1838.

Sir John Herschel was without doubt the most famous member of the LSI. He came from an already successful family, both financially and scientifically. His father, William Herschel, had discovered Uranus in 1781 and was one of England's pre-eminent men of science. Sir John Herschel attended Eton and then read Mathematics at St. John's College, Cambridge. He was elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 1813, at the age twenty-one, and was elected its secretary from 1824 to 1827. He was also President of the Astronomical Society from 1827 to 1829. Herschel was a man at the very centre of the British scientific and social

establishment. His *Preliminary Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy* had been published in 1830 and had been an immediate and influential success (Ruse, 1975; and Yeo, 1986). Although his primary interest was in astronomy, he was also involved in numerous other activities: including the reform of education at the Cape (Ferguson and Immelman, 1961), botany (Warner and Rourke, 1996), and meteorological and tidal research.

While Herschel was the most important scientific influence on the LSI, he was not the only Fellow of the Royal Society in the organisation. There were also two other Fellows: the Rev. E. J. Burrow and Thomas Maclear. Herschel, Burrow and Maclear were the only three men who had not been members of either the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS or the SAI to sit on the LSI's Committee. Burrow had little impact on the LSI,<sup>16</sup> while the role of Maclear, the new astronomer at the Royal observatory, was closely tied to that of Herschel. Thomas Maclear was an Irish surgeon and enthusiastic amateur astronomer (Warner, 1979). He appears to have been born to a comfortably off family. He settled in Bedfordshire in 1823 where he became friendly with William Henry Smyth, an astronomer who had built up a substantial private observatory. Through Smyth, Maclear met Sir John Herschel thereby establishing a relationship that would continue at the Cape in the 1830s. In 1831 Maclear was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. He arrived in the Cape just before Herschel in January 1834, and proceeded to develop the Observatory. But while Herschel was to have a very obvious impact on the LSI, Maclear's impact is more difficult to discern. He was elected to the LSI's Committee at the 1834 annual meeting. By 1836 he was one of the Vice-Presidents of the LSI, and he became president on Herschel's departure in

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<sup>16</sup> Burrow was the first of these three men to join the LSI. He appears on the membership lists for 1832, and was elected to the Committee in 1833. Burrow studied at Magdalene College Cambridge, and took his D.D. at Trinity College, Oxford, in 1820. His entry in the *DNB* makes no mention of his time at Cape Town, where he spent the years 1831 through 1834 (Burrow, 1971). He published mainly on ecclesiastical matters, but also in natural history with *Elements of Conchology, According to the Linnean System* (Burrow, 1815). A second edition of his *Elements of Conchology* appeared in 1818. After arriving at the Cape he took up the position of Chaplain to the Forces, a position previously held by the Rev. Fearon Fallows, who had just died. Burrow took over two of Fallows's roles simultaneously: Chaplain to the Forces and the only FRS in the Cape. He also became one of the two Secretaries to the AECA and his son, John Burrow, accompanied Smith on his expedition to the north (Burrow, 1971). There is no evidence of Burrow's activities or influence at either the LSI or the AECA.



1838. Maclear was also involved in the AECA. Given that Maclear and Herschel arrived in Cape Town at virtually the same time and were already close friends, it is not possible to disentangle their influence on the Cape scientific community. The two men were involved in the meteorological and tidal research, with Maclear using the Observatory as a base for both. Herschel, however, exerted more obvious influence upon the LSI.

The three most recent accounts of Herschel's time at the Cape, Warner (1992), Warner and Rourke (1996), and Musselman (1998), present his residence in different ways. They all agree, however, that Herschel was a humanitarian liberal with wide scientific interests. Warner (1992) focuses almost entirely on Herschel's astronomical activities. The LSI and Herschel's election to its Presidency only get mentioned in passing. Much the same is true of Warner and Rourke (1996), an account of Herschel's botanical activities at the Cape. Warner appears little interested in the impact of Herschel on the Cape Town scientific community or his effect on the LSI. Musselman (1998) is also not concerned with Herschel's impact on the Cape scientific community. Her paper focuses explicitly on the impact of the colonial experience on the physical sciences such as astronomy. This account does, however, make a number of important points about Herschel's place within the highly politicised structure of Cape Town society in the mid-1830s. As noted in the *Section 5.2*, the LSI appears to have been actively maintained as an apolitical space. Herschel's ardent humanitarian political position, aligned against both the conservative Cape-Dutch and the Colonial Government, meant that he would have had to be careful in letting his politics overtly intrude into the LSI. It is not clear that he was entirely successful in this, but at least initially he appears to have been.

Herschel's attempts to turn the LSI to the service of British science did, nevertheless, politicise the organisation in other ways, most importantly by attempting to turn it to the service of the British state. Ashworth (1998), discusses the relation of science to the state in the creation and maintenance of Britain's domestic and imperial power. He argues that,

"To activate the eye of the State required a mobilization of citizens and loyal indigenous people to learn methodically to observe the physical and social terrain in which they found themselves ... To be useful these observations had to be taken according to certain criteria, reduced to – as far as possible – standardized techniques, classified and carefully stored.

This was the raw material necessary for calculated decisions and making possible action at a distance." (Ashworth, 1998:152)

Ashworth claims that Herschel's activities at the Cape were motivated by precisely such imperial concerns. This suggests that the changes Herschel introduced at the LSI need to be seen as part of the mobilisation of the Institution's members to support his and his colleagues' global scientific endeavours and Britain's Imperial program. The support of local correspondents was legitimated by his philosophy of science, as presented in the *Preliminary Discourse*. Herschel argued for the accessibility of science, or the idea that non-specialists could practise science. Herschel was at pains to allow for a "division of scientific labour which would allow space for amateur observations without weakening the status of theory and theorists" (Yeo, 1986:268). This in turn allowed him to attempt to mobilise Colonial amateur men of science to fulfil both his own scientific ends and those of the British state. As is argued later, it is not clear that Herschel was successful in this endeavour. Members of the LSI were unwilling to pursue scientific research merely because Herschel urged them to do so and domestic motivations seem to have remained more important to the LSI than British scientific and imperial interests.

Herschel was quickly incorporated into Cape Town's scientific community. He arrived in the Cape on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January and was almost immediately approached by the AECA. Herschel and Maclear exchanged letters on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of January concerning the AECA's wish to borrow various instruments for Smith's expedition (Warner, 1984). According to Maclear's diary, he and Herschel were elected to the Committee of the AECA only a month later, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February. Herschel's rapid entry into the AECA was not matched by his entry into the LSI. His first diary entry concerning the LSI was only on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August, when he attended the meeting at which he was elected President. This was the first meeting Herschel attended because there had been no previous meeting in the year. There are no advertisements for the LSI monthly meetings in the *Advertiser*, *De Zuid Afrikaan* or the *Literary Gazette* for the period January to July 1834. There are, however, many advertisements for AECA meetings, and it would seem that the AECA largely took over from the LSI during the first half year of Herschel's residence in the Cape. The large cross membership of the two organisations, especially amongst the leadership, would have made this a viable option. The period after Herschel's

election saw the departure of Smith's expedition and the revival of the LSI's monthly meetings. The mid-1834 meeting also saw the start of a number of new scientific ventures.

Statistics were introduced into the LSI in 1834. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, Fairbairn had been particularly interested in conducting a statistical survey of the Colony for domestic reasons. It would have legitimated his authority to speak on behalf of the Colony and it had the potential for immediate, visible returns. The SAI was less concerned with such exclusively domestic matters, but never progressed far with its own planned statistical survey. The 1833 annual report of the LSI makes no mention of statistics. It is only in 1834 that statistics again enter the record. The LSI's 1834 annual report noted that a sub-Committee had been formed to review the possibility of conducting a statistical survey, and identified this as "with the revival of the inquiries formally proposed by the Literary Society" (LSI 1834:4). The Statistical Committee was to prepare a list of questions for printing and circulation in the Colony. Importantly the proposed survey was not just of domestic value, but was also to be of use to those interested in political economy outside the Colony.

"It should surely be kept in mind that no statistical experiment of a character more majestic and extensive has ever been made, than that now proceeding in the British colonies, by the abolition of slavery. It is an effort of political strength, which, for its magnitude and promise of great results, is worthy to consolidate such an empire. It brings all within the compass of one particular distinction of lofty moral character and abounding resources; and, as to its many economic results, ought to be studied every where with close and uninterrupted attention. It seems likely to afford an *instantia crucis*, as to some interesting controversies in political economy. No country, perhaps, ever received in so short a period so great an extension of Capital as this Colony is about to experience, and the result therefore cannot fail to have effect in deciding the celebrated question – whether profits of capital vary only with its abundance, or have their measure determined by the quality of the land which the circumstances of the society retains in cultivation." (LSI, 1834:5)

This interest in general theoretical questions of political economy and the implicitly international value of the statistical work was more typical of the SAI than the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The claimed genealogy for the Statistical Committee in the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS is misleading. It is unlikely to have been a direct re-establishment of the statistical efforts of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, if only because so little else of the Society's activities remained. While the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS may have had a more developed statistical program, the LSI program had more in common with that of the SAI.

In 1835 the annual report again exhorted the LSI members to mount a statistical survey. This time the focus was largely on the collection of information about the native tribes of the Colony rather than the political economy of its white inhabitants. This information was not to be collected just for domestic purposes, but was again part of an international project.

"Anything which tends to elucidate the character of the prevailing tongues in this extremity of the continent, will be of great value in the interesting questions respecting the origin and migrations of different races. The positions to be thereby analysed [sic] are of this kind: have all tongues sprung from a common source? Will the Malagass be found the connecting link between them and the Malay, and the cognate and widespread dialects of Polynesia and America? The establishment of a connection between them and the Malagash, in those points which are common to it and to the Malay, would afford a decisive instance in settling the controversy whether these tongues have an original affinity, or have only attained a modern resemblance by the common introduction of Arabic."(LSI 1835:4-5)

The SAI had been outward looking in its science. The note in the 1835 annual report went beyond this. It suggests that the LSI was now responding to requests from a British directed global research program. British anthropology of the early to mid-nineteenth century was adopting many of the attributes of Herschel's other scientific activities, becoming a global, standardised exercise in data collection. When Herschel prepared his *Manual of Scientific Enquiry* (1849) for the Royal Navy, a section on the collection of ethnological information was included. This was written by J. C. Prichard, whose long-standing ethnological enterprise envisaged proving the unity of mankind by linking all the peoples of the world through linguistic connections. By the early 1830s, Prichard's *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind* had gone through two editions, in 1813 and 1826. Prichard set ethnology the task of establishing "connections between the races of men on the basis of similarities of physical type, religion, political institutions, customs, and above all language, which he insisted was the most reliable indicator of racial affinity" (Stocking, 1987:51). This almost certainly forms the immediate official background to the LSI's interest in international anthropological data collection.

More suggestively, Prichard was pursuing a monogenecist racial project. (Stocking, 1987). This project was closely related to the humanitarian project of emancipation and the removal of legal obstacles to the equality of non-whites. Specifically monogenecism and humanitarianism rejected the increasingly biological innate

theories of racial difference being developed by polygenecists. As already noted, Smith may have held similar notions of racial difference to those of Robert Knox. If this was the case, the introduction of monogenist project into the LSI in 1835 (after Smith's departure) suggests that the LSI had become a locus for debates about race. Herschel, the arch humanitarian, may have been attempting to push an alternative conception of race in an organisation that was probably more familiar, if not dominated, by Smith's conceptions of race. Given the limited evidence it is, however, difficult to say more about events in the LSI itself.

Given the important issues the attempted statistical survey raised it is unfortunate that there are no records of the activities of the Statistical Committee. Its membership of nine men is only known from the LSI's entry in the 1835 *Cape Almanac*.<sup>17</sup> The membership of the Statistical Committee remained unchanged from its inception until at least 1837. It is listed in the *Cape Almanac* for 1838, but not afterwards and it would seem that the Committee closed down in 1837 or 1838. This Committee represented both the earlier 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI, although senior members of the SAI were better represented. The LSI never produced any statistical records. Whatever its motivations the Statistical Committee was as unsuccessful as the earlier efforts of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI. The origins of the Statistical Committee are also unknown. The timing of its establishment suggests that it was part of the resurgence and reconstitution of the LSI that followed the arrival of Herschel in Cape Town, although neither Herschel nor Maclear sat on the Committee. There is no evidence for Herschel's direct involvement in its activities. There is, however, a strong possibility that both the international flavour of the LSI's statistical ambitions in 1835 and the notions of race that it contained was a result of his Presidency.

The LSI's 1835 annual report notes that the "The Statistical Society of London has communicated with the Institution, in regard to its purposes" (LSI, 1835:3). There is no further comment on the nature of the correspondence, and the annual report merely exhorts the members to pursue further the statistical survey of the Colony. The Statistical Society of London had only been founded in 1834. On its

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<sup>17</sup> They were: P. B. Borchers, J. C. Chase, the Rev. A. Faure, W. F. Hertzog, Major Mitchell, A. Oliphant, J. Reid, G. Thompson and F. S. Watermeyer

establishment it had formed a Committee on colonial statistics, although this was soon absorbed into the Committee for communicating with provincial societies (Cullen, 1975). This body apparently tried to correspond with other interested societies and organisations, but nothing came of this. It is almost certain that the correspondence received by the LSI, and reported in its 1835 annual report, was part of this initial spurt of activity on the part of the newly founded Statistical Society. The link between the LSI and the London Statistical Society was probably through the Presidents of the two organisations, Sir John Herschel and Charles Babbage. They had been at Cambridge together, where they had both been members of the Analytical Society and remained good friends (Hyman, 1982; and Ring, Francis J., 1992). Herschel was certainly on the mailing list of the Statistical Society, or at least certain of its members (Crowe *et.al.*, 1998, item 2977). Herschel would have acted as the conduit for the reshaping of the LSI statistical efforts according to the interests of the London Statistical Society.

Herschel may have played only a facilitating role in shaping the LSI's interest in statistics, but he completely took over its meteorological efforts. The LSI's interest in meteorology predated Herschel's arrival in the Cape. The first recorded interest is a brief note in its 1833 annual report.

"The Meteorological instruments formerly ordered, have been received, and committed to the care of Dr. ADAMSON, who reports that he expects soon to have the proper situations for them, so that a regular series of observations may be made and recorded." (LSI, 1833:9)

The absence of more complete documentation for the LSI makes it impossible to trace the origins of this interest directly. Meteorology was, however, a popular scientific activity in the Cape in the 1820s. Meteorological records appeared in the *Cape Town Gazette* in the early 1820s and in the minutes of the Medical Society. In November 1830 an article on "Climate, Weather, &c." appeared in the *Literary Gazette* (*Literary Gazette* 6(10), November 10, 1830). Meteorology was offered as a particularly worthwhile pursuit, although no specific directions or instructions were provided. In addition both the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI were involved to a certain degree. In August 1830 a register of the weather at Algoa bay was laid on the table at the SAI (*Quarterly Journal* 1(5), 1830), while the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS acquired a barometer, hygrometer and thermometer to conduct meteorological studies (SALS, 1831).

Aside from the prior involvement of the SAI and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, there were two other more immediate sources for the LSI's interest in meteorology. The first influence was the Indian community in the Colony. In July 1833 the *Literary Gazette* carried a series of articles and letters on several topics including the nature and use of meteorological instruments, the tides and influence of the moon, and the weather at the Cape (*Literary Gazette* III (7), July 1, 1833). The notices were carried at the, "suggestion of many of our Indian subscribers and other respectable visitors from the East" (*Literary Gazette* III (7), July 1, 1833:106). The first evidence for a significant Indian involvement in the LSI was at the organisation's annual meeting in 1834. There is no suggestion of this in the annual report for that year, but their presence is recorded in a notice about the meeting: "Sir E. Ryan, Doctors Kennedy, Bousfield and Searle, and many other Indian visitors were present at the Meeting" (*Literary Gazette* IV (8), August, 1834). Their presence at this meeting may have been a consequence of Herschel's attendance and election to the Presidency. The exact relation between the Indians and the LSI remains unknown, and it is difficult to directly link the articles in the *Literary Gazette* to the activities of the LSI.

Herschel was the second source of the LSI's interest in meteorology. During his tenure as President it is impossible to separate his interest from that of the LSI. In this Herschel came to dominate the LSI as dramatically as Smith did the SAI. The first indication of Herschel's concern with meteorology at the Cape was in 1831, before he had even considered visiting. In 1831 he wrote a letter to Beaufort, head of the Royal Navy's Hydrography department, making suggestions about tidal and meteorological data collection for the newly appointed astronomer at the Cape of Good Hope, Thomas Henderson (Crowe *et.al.*, 1998, item 2484). Henderson did not stay long at the Cape and was soon replaced by Herschel's friend, Thomas Maclear. Both Herschel and Maclear are likely to have arrived in the Cape with a clear idea about what meteorological research they would undertake, but their interest in meteorology was not unusual in the period. Not only was it a topic of interest in the Cape in the 1820s and 1830s, but the recently established BAAS supported Meteorological research, including Herschel's work (Morrell & Thackray, 1981).

Herschel drew the LSI into assisting his meteorological research and established a Meteorological Committee. He did not introduce meteorology to the Cape but attempted to make it more rigorous, so that the reported results could actually be used. Herschel began to pursue his meteorological interests soon after his arrival. By April he was already making inquiries to the Colonial Government about its meteorological records (Crowe *et.al.*, 1998, item 2971). Meteorology was, however, only briefly mentioned in the LSI's 1834 annual report. There is a discussion about organising a meteorological observation post, reference to a register at the Observatory and mention of a special form for recording weather changes (LSI, 1834). Within a month the LSI had established a Meteorological Committee. In September 1834 the *Quarterly Journal* carried a set of instructions for collecting meteorological information:

*"Instructions for Making and Registering Meteorological Observations at various Stations in Southern Africa, and other Countries in the South Seas, as also at Sea. Drawn up for Circulation by the METEOROLOGICAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION, (and forming part of their first Report to the Institution.)"*  
(*Quarterly Journal* II:4 July – September, 1834, Part 2)

These instructions travelled beyond the Southern Hemisphere. In 1835, James Hudson of London received a copy and had it reprinted for use in Britain (Herschel, 1835). Herschel went on to make something of a speciality of writing up and issuing instructions for the collection of scientific data. His most important work in this line being the *Manual of Scientific Enquiry: Prepared for the Use of Her Majesty's Navy* (1849), which he edited and which was republished several times. He prepared the meteorological section himself, and it is directly derived from the instructions he prepared for the LSI in 1834.

The Meteorological Committee had not been established by the beginning of September. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 1834 Herschel recorded in his diary that he,

*"Completed Curve from the Barom<sup>r</sup> from Bance's Register.- Attended 1<sup>st</sup> ordinary meeting of the Phil Society as Presid<sup>t</sup> – The Meeting was thinly attended & nobody (after the routine matters of domestic arrangement were discussed) had any paper, or communication to make – So I stated (verbally) the results of my examination of Macleod's (or Bance's) Barometric obs<sup>ns</sup> with a view to get organised a system of Meteorological communications and to get up a talk"* (Evans *et.al.*, 1969:92, September 3, 1834)

Unfortunately there is no mention of the actual establishment of the Committee. Maclear notes his attendance at this meeting, but nothing concerning its content



(Warner, 1983). The first evidence for the Committee in Herschel's diaries is in November. The entry for Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1834, notes that "The Meteorological Committee met at Feldhausen when we resolved some resolutions & organised a plan of action and dined together – viz Major Cloete – Dr Adamson – Mr Chase Capn Bance – Mr Maclear" (Evans *et.al.*, 1969:107-8).<sup>18</sup> In all likelihood Herschel had prepared the *Instructions* published in the *Quarterly Journal* in advance and the Meteorological Committee merely acted to legitimate the LSI's involvement.

The instructions issued by Herschel, through the LSI, extended beyond that organisation's remit of Southern Africa, referring to "other countries in the South Seas". This global presumption is also apparent in the organisation's 1834 annual report,

"The Council has remarked on the importance of these observations every where, and especially in our situation. .... We have therefore again to observe the advantage of many and separate points of observation, and the benefit which would be answered from having a map of the districts of the winds for one or many successive days, as might be obtained through means formally noticed, in the records kept by the numberless vessels navigating the ocean. *A request to this effect as to a period of a week or a month, if issued by such a body as the British Association for the Advancement of Science, would probably meet with attention from navigators, and lead to valuable results.*" (*italics added*, LSI, 1834:8-9)

Although not apparent in either the *Instructions* or this call to the BAAS, Herschel was involved in a massive global meteorological data collecting exercise between 1835 and 1838 at sixty nine different locations around the globe (Morrell & Thackray, 1981; and Cannon, 1978). While the LSI would have provided him with a base in the Cape, it would hardly have served to legitimate and significantly assist in such a global project. For this he required the BAAS.

The Meteorological Committee is mentioned several more times in both Herschel's and Maclear's diaries. In September 1836 Herschel made an attempt to re-establish the *Quarterly Journal* for the publication of the quarterly meteorological reports. This was successful, at least in the short term. The publication of the last part of the *Quarterly Journal* followed in December and contained a "Report of the

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<sup>18</sup> There is a difference between Herschel's membership list and that in the 1835 *Cape Almanac*. J. C. Chase does not appear in the latter.

Meteorological Committee" (*Quarterly Journal* II: 1, December, 1836, Part 1).<sup>19</sup> The 1835 annual report, however, makes little mention of meteorological activities. The Meteorological Committee did not last beyond Herschel's departure from the Cape at the end of 1838.<sup>20</sup> The existence of a prior interest in meteorology and a functioning meteorological Committee suggests that meteorology was nevertheless a topic of widespread interest to members of the LSI. Herschel was able to attract to support for his investigations because he could exploit an existing vein of interest within the Colonial community. This was not possible with the other activity in which he tried to interest the LSI: tidal research.

The first public record of the LSI's interest in the study of tides appears in the organisation's 1834 annual report.

"In consequence of a communication of Mr. LUBBOCK, the Association adopted the resolution of making a series of observations on the Tides in Table Bay, and a Committee was appointed to consider the proper arrangements for this purpose. From the information received, it does not appear that this would prove expensive, as the machinery requisite is not of a complex character, and the indications would probably be obtained with considerable ease and correctness from some of the departments whose agents are in constant employment at the landing place." (LSI, 1834:6)

John William Lubbock was an astronomer, mathematician and banker. He was also a Fellow of the Astronomical and Royal Societies. He was Vice-President and Treasurer of the Royal Society from 1830 to 1835 and then again from 1838 to 1847. As with Herschel, he was at the intellectual and social centre of British science in the period. In 1831 he had begun to conduct research into tides. In doing so, he drew not only on his position at the Royal Society, but also on contacts at the Admiralty and within the BAAS (Deacon M., 1997; and Morrell & Thackray, 1981). The BAAS initiated a tidal research program led by its President William Whewell, who received £1000 from the BAAS for the work. Lubbock worked with Whewell relatively closely until autumn of 1834, when he became increasingly attracted by the "lure of competitive individualism" (Morrell & Thackray, 1981:515) and began to

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<sup>19</sup> The only other articles were "On filling Barometer Tubes" and a "Report of the Senate at the South African College to the Council of Managers, for the Session 1836". This edition of the *Quarterly Journal* is unlikely to have been specifically issued to carry either of these.

<sup>20</sup> The Committee is listed in the 1838, but not the 1839 *Cape Almanac*.

work alone. This, however, post-dates his letter to the LSI and at the time Lubbock wrote the letter he would still have been working with Whewell.

The letter from Lubbock can therefore be seen as part of a joint effort between Whewell and Lubbock to engage the LSI in their tidal research. The letter to the LSI is likely to have been instigated by Whewell, because Lubbock was less interested in collecting the necessary tidal data than in analysing it (Morrell and Thackray, 1981). After the split between Lubbock and Whewell, the latter increasingly pursued the collection of the necessary data. He was involved in organising tidal observations in Bristol and Liverpool and also continued his involvement in encouraging work in Cape Town. While there is no evidence that Lubbock ever contacted the LSI again, Whewell remained in contact with Herschel about tides (Warner, 1984). The September 1835 edition of the *Quarterly Journal* carried a letter from Whewell "On the Probable Importance of Tide Observations at the Cape of Good Hope" (*Quarterly Journal* II (4), September, 1835). This letter was read by Herschel at the LSI's meeting in May. As with meteorology, Herschel's interest in tidal work predated his arrival in the Cape. He had suggested both topics as research areas for Thomas Henderson in 1831 (Crowe *et.al.*, 1998, item 2484). So, neither Lubbock's nor Whewell's letters were the motivating factor for Herschel's own tidal work. Rather, their letters appear to have been used to help motivate the LSI to assist in the research.

The meteorological and tidal interests of the LSI ran side by side. As with meteorology it is impossible to distinguish between the interests and activities of the LSI and Herschel. Unlike the case of meteorology a "Tidal Committee" was never established. From an analysis of Herschel's and Maclear's diaries it would seem that the Observatory, and especially Maclear, played a large role in facilitating the tidal measurements. Maclear gave extensive attention to the tidal measurements and spent a significant amount of time designing and building a tide gauge (Warner, 1984). Maclear's involvement is not entirely unexpected. The Observatory was run by the Admiralty, which closely supported the tidal research (Deacon M., 1997). These results were reported to the Meteorological Committee, on which both Maclear and Herschel sat. This suggests that the Meteorological Committee may have acted as a "Tidal Committee". This is also suggested by a brief comment in

Herschel's meteorological *Instructions* that, "the collection of observations of the Tides has been made a part of the duties of your [Meteorological] Committee" (Herschel, 1835:17). The Meteorological Committee was probably made to stand in for a proper "Tidal Committee" because of an absence of more general interest in tidal work. Unlike meteorology, there is no record of independent Cape interest in tidal research. In June 1835 Maclear wrote to Herschel that Captain Stephens, of the 98<sup>th</sup> regiment, was interested in assisting in the Tidal work and that, "There is no one I am acquainted with in Cape Town save Capn Stevens who has zeal enough for the purpose" (Warner, 1984:90, June 12, 1835). Tidal work was the clearest example of an external priority imposed on the Cape scientific community in the absence of any domestic interest.

Herschel's introduction of meteorological and tidal research into the LSI changed the relation between British science and the Institution. The new relationship was not without precedent in the Colony. It closely approximated that between the Observatory and British science. Maclear played a central role in both the meteorological and tidal research. He did this alongside his official role as the Astronomer at the Royal Observatory at the Cape of Good Hope. His astronomical, meteorological and tidal work shared an important similarity beyond the fact that they were physical sciences. All three were research topics largely imposed on the Colony from Britain or by British men of science. This was also a feature of the Observatory. It was the only scientific organisation in the early nineteenth century Cape that was not established for domestic reasons. The observatory was imposed on the Colony by the Admiralty and this had important implications for the domestic legitimacy of the astronomer and the kind of science he could pursue. The astronomer was beholden to British science and British concerns. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the SAI and the LSI until 1834 were almost entirely focussed on Cape concerns. The arrival of Herschel changed this. His model of the relationship between the LSI and British science was much closer to that of the Observatory and British science than that of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS or the SAI and British science.

Crucially, the arrival of Herschel and a new scientific agenda at the LSI in 1834 did not signal the end of the LSI's previous interests. The 1834 and 1835 annual reports made as much of natural history and geography as of physics and statistics.

The Museum also continued as a key part of the LSI. Given the paucity of the record it is difficult to say with any certainty what the relation was between the LSI's old interests and the newer ones. While they are analytically distinguishable it is unknown how the members perceived the difference, how they reacted to Herschel's new science or, for that matter, what they felt about Smith's earlier scientific agenda. The record only allows one to point to the arrival of the new set of concerns. The set of changes inaugurated by Herschel marked the introduction of British and Imperial concerns into the LSI. For the first time a Capetonian scientific society was being led by foreign rather than local concerns and interests. In addition, Herschel may have pushed a more humanitarian political agenda in the Institution, although, as noted, the evidence for this is poor. It is not clear that the membership of the Institution entirely approved of either the scientific or political changes.

## 5.9 The Membership of the South African Literary and Scientific Institution

The LSI was the result of the merger of the SAI and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. This is apparent from its membership, with the two earlier organisations providing members to the LSI roughly in proportion to their relative sizes. As has already been noted this was not true of the leadership, amongst which members of the SAI were dominant. The occupational breakdown of the LSI's general membership also provides evidence of the merger, including significant numbers of professional and Army men. The membership suggests that many of the tensions that had divided the scientific community in the late 1820s had either been resolved or moderated by new allegiances. *Section 5.2* explored some of these changes for Cape Town more generally. The only group for which there is specific evidence is the medical community, with a rapprochement between the Army and civilian doctors in the early 1830s. A further link between the LSI and SAI was the membership of significant number of men with scientific interests.

More members of the LSI belonged to the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS than the SAI, but SAI members dominated the leadership of the merged organisation. Of the one hundred and

fourteen ordinary members of the LSI, seventy-five belonged to the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the SAI or both. Thirty-nine members had belonged to the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, twenty-one to the SAI, fifteen to both, and thirty-nine to neither. The large number of 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS members can be explained by the larger size of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS to the SAI, with one hundred and four to sixty-nine members. While ex-2<sup>nd</sup> SALS members dominated the membership of the LSI, SAI members dominated the leadership. *Chart 5.1* shows the previous affiliations of the total membership of the LSI and its leadership. The members of the earlier 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were marginally underrepresented in the leadership, while those of the earlier SAI were significantly over represented.

The distribution of national origins in the LSI did not differ significantly from the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI, which were themselves similar. Information about national origin exists for forty-seven of the LSI's members. This information is presented in *Chart 5.2*. About 55% of the members were from Britain, with England being the single most important source of members. The next biggest group was from the Cape, followed by Scotland. This breakdown matches that from the breakdown of the entire membership of the LSI, which can be seen in *Chart 5.3*. This complete data set is only an approximation and, as noted in the *Appendix A*, should be treated with care. *Chart 5.4* provides a comparison of the national origins of the membership of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the SAI and the LSI. This *Chart* also makes use of the complete, but again problematic, national origin data. There were few significant differences between the three organisations. The distribution of national origins amongst the LSI's leadership did not differ significantly from that of the organisation's total membership. This suggests that whatever the particular factors were that divided the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI and then led to their merger, they were not narrowly national or linguistic issues.

The breakdown of the membership of the LSI by occupation shows that the organisation was dominated by colonial officials and those involved in business. The occupational breakdown can be seen below in *Chart 5.5*. In terms of occupational distribution, the LSI had elements of both the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI. Both professionals and Army men were well represented. The leadership of the LSI does not display the same pattern of occupational distribution as the total membership. The occupational distribution of the leadership of the LSI is compared

to that of the general membership in *Chart 5.6*. As in both the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI, the businessmen are significantly under represented in the leadership. As has noted elsewhere in this *Chapter*, the Army and colonial officials were over represented amongst the leadership given their actual numbers in the organisation. Professionals were also more important to the leadership of the LSI than the SAI, although not as important as for the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. A comparison of the leaderships of the three organisations by occupation is given in *Chart 5.7*. Again, the similarities between the SAI and LSI are apparent.

The occupation breakdown of the LSI's membership indicates a rapprochement between Cape Town's middle classes and the Colonial Government. Some of the socio-political factors for this were examined in *Section 5.2*. Medical men are the only group for which it is possible to provide a more specific analysis. The divisions between the civilian and Army medical men in Cape Town were important in separating the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI. Civilian doctors joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS in large numbers, but largely avoided the SAI. Army doctors either avoided the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS or were actively excluded. The dislike of the two was apparent in the Medical Society, which in 1828 explicitly excluded Army doctors from membership (SAMS, Minutes, 4 April 1828). The source of this problem seems to have been resolved in the early 1830s. Nine civilian doctors, three Army doctors and the Army apothecary joined the LSI. This compares unfavourably with the thirteen civilian doctors that joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, but is an improvement on the three that joined the SAI. In June, 1833, the Medical Society finally allowed Army doctors to join the organisation:

"Moved by J. Fairbridge, and seconded by S. Bailey, "That such medical men in H. M. Service as are likely to remain some years in the colony, will be eligible to be balloted as members of this Society."" (SAMS, "Minutes", June 4, 1833)

Fairbridge and Bailey were both members of the LSI. More importantly both Fairbridge and Bailey had also been members of the SAI. The precise reasons for the rapprochement is unknown, although it may have had to do with civilian doctors being given a "greater role in formally advising government" (Deacon H, 1997:39). In November 1831 the South African Medical Society was given the regulatory roles previously held by the Army dominated Supreme Medical Council. This change suggests improved relations between the professional middle classes and the colonial Government.

The LSI had twenty-two members and subscribers with known scientific and literary interests. Given the generally dominant influence of the SAI, the balance of interests was unsurprisingly weighted towards the sciences. Nineteen of the men were primarily interested in the sciences. The details of the twenty-two members are given below in *Table 5.3*. It includes information on each man's recorded interests, their highest position in the LSI, their occupation and possible earlier membership of the SAI and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Most of the active scientific and literary members of the LSI had been members of the SAI, rather than the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Of the twenty-two men, nine had been members only of the SAI, four had been members of both the SAI and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and four had been exclusively members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. While this list is fairly large it leaves out many other men with scientific and literary interests in the Colony. A number of these, such as the Rev. George Thom and John Atherstone, became corresponding members of the LSI. But many others did not affiliate themselves at all. Of the twenty botanists recorded in the Cape between 1832 and 1835 by Gunn and Codd (1981) only eleven were affiliated with the LSI. The most glaring absences are James Bowie and C. W. L. Pappe. Pappe was later the Cape's chief colonial botanist and had joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, but not the SAI. This may have had to do with him being a civilian doctor. Problematically, his entry in the *DSAB* suggests that he was a founding member of the LSI in 1834. This entry is mistaken both in that the LSI was founded in 1832 and because Pappe appears in none of the organisation's membership lists. Bowie's absence is difficult to understand. One possible explanation is that the LSI became much more an elite organisation than merely a scientific body and that Bowie's increasingly marginal social status, he was to become a gardener to von Ludwig, meant that he was no longer able to comfortably participate in meetings. Social status relative to scientific status may have been more important in the LSI than the SAI.

Finally, the LSI was the only scientific organisation in Cape Town with female members. There were two women who joined the LSI: Lady Cole, the Governor's wife, and Miss Couzens. Neither were full members. They were Subscribers to the LSI, a status enjoying all the privileges and rights of full membership with the exception of being allowed to vote at meetings.<sup>21</sup> These two women were not the only subscribers. In 1833 fifteen men belonged to the LSI on this basis, of whom

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<sup>21</sup> The status of subscribes is given in the Rules and Regulations of the Institution (LSI, 1832).



nine were resident in Cape Town. Two of the male subscribers are known to have had an interest in science, including John Reid, a collector of curiosities who published in the *Quarterly Journal*, and George Rex, resident of Knysna and a botanical collector (Gunn & Codd, 1981). Reid had previously been a full member of both the SAI and the LSI and a Committee member of the former. Lady Cole and Miss Couzens were, therefore, not limited to a special category purely for women. Unfortunately nothing is known about Miss Couzens, and little is known about Lady Cole's involvement in science other than that she made several donations to the Museum, both when it was controlled by the SAI and by the LSI. The role of women in the Cape Town's middle classes has been examined by McKenzie (1997), who argues that women were being increasingly pushed out of the public sphere in this period. It is, therefore, surprising to find women joining the LSI. More generally, it should be noted that female membership of a learned society was a great rarity in Britain at the time. Allen (1980), in a discussion of the female members of the Botanical Society of London between 1836 and 1856, notes that women who joined the Botanical Society were typically of high social status, often of higher social status than the male members. This would certainly be applicable to the case of Lady Cole, wife of the Governor, who was possibly the woman with the highest social status in the Colony.

## 5.10 Conclusion

The LSI was created by a merger of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI. This merger was not of equals, and it was marked by a continuation of the SAI's leadership structure and scientific program. This merger was the result of a number of factors. The most immediate was the collapse of both the SAI and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS as viable independent organisations. They both lacked critical mass. Just as important, but less obvious, was the gradual removal of some of the social and political tensions that had previously kept the members of the two organisations apart. Neither of these two factors explain the uneven result of the merger for the SAI and the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. One possibility is that the SAI had a more focused and coherent program and that the Museum gave it a more solid institutional core than the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. The SAI may also have provided a more suitable model of scientific society for Cape Town in the

1830s. Its focus on science may have allowed the LSI to create a space from which politics, or at least some of the pressing issues of the day such as slavery and emancipation, were excluded. This would have allowed opposing elites within the colony, including the colonial officials and military officers as well as the growing British and Cape-Dutch middle classes, the opportunity to co-exist and to assert their collective identity as the new establishment. While Fairbairn's 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was overtly politicised, the SAI and LSI were overtly apolitical. As such the LSI could serve to unify the colony's elites, rather than draw them into partisan conflict, as Fairbairn was wont to do. Fairbairn was probably excluded from the LSI for exactly this reason – he was too radical and unwilling to compromise.<sup>22</sup>

Interpreting the LSI, at least initially, as an intentionally neutral space provides an robust way of investigating the role of science in the construction and legitimisation of settler ideologies. It suggests that science may have played a key role not only in virtue of its authority as an epistemic system, but also because of its derivative availability as a source of socially and politically “neutral” social activity. It was useful precisely because men of radically different political persuasions could all participate. This analysis differs from possibly more conventional interpretations of the role of science in supporting colonial elites, where its usefulness has been interpreted as lying in its exclusivity. For some, including possibly Dubow (2000), science served specific ends through its differential appropriation by competing groups. Similarly, Drayton (2000) claims that its epistemic authority lent the claims of those who wielded it, in his case the British Empire, important legitimacy. My analysis of the LSI suggests not an alternative but a complementary interpretation. After all, although science may have provided a unifying space for a fractured elite it excluded most others in colony, whether white or black.

The elite nature of the LSI was an important feature of the Institution. As Dubow (1999) has noted the membership of the LSI comprised a “roll call of Cape Town’s great and good”. This points to the role of the Institution in cementing an elite identity in the colony. It also has implications for the nature of the Institution’s

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<sup>22</sup> The BAAS again provides an interesting comparison. In spite of having members from a variety of opposing political backgrounds, several men were excluded from the BAAS as too politicised (Morrell and Thackray, 1981).

membership. Membership of the LSI may have been a signifier of social status in the colony. Like the SAI, membership of the LSI probably involved significantly more interest in science than membership of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Yet, it is probably also true that the large scale support attracted by the LSI (it was larger than either the SAI or the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS) was a result of the social kudos implied by membership. It is for this reason that the LSI may have formally survived into the 1850s, long after it ceased functioning as a scientific organisation. From the late 1830s on, membership may have been a sign of social standing or of membership of a particular elite group, rather than scientific interest *per se*. Between 1832 and the mid-1830s both these functions were combined.

The activities of LSI were initially a continuation of those of the SAI. The LSI had no non-scientific interests. Although Andrew Smith was not central to the LSI in the way he had been to the SAI, the continuity between the two organisations meant that his conception of science and professional interests still shaped the new organisation. This changed, in part, with the arrival of Sir John Herschel in 1834. He introduced new research concerns and turned the LSI into a tool for the pursuit of his own interests and for the interests of his fellow British colleagues, including Whewell, Lubbock and Babbage. While he seems to have been at least partially successful in pursuing his own ends, it is not clear to what extent the other members of the LSI adopted these. Herschel's arrival initially reinvigorated the Institution, but his program failed to mobilise widespread support for LSI. The Institution published its last annual report in 1835, and the last edition of the *Quarterly Journal* appeared in 1836. The later activities of the LSI are unknown and there is very little, if any, information on the organisation's activities after 1838 (Crawford, 1834).

The LSI was formed at a particular political moment in the Cape's history. On the one hand the liberal and humanitarian program, led most notably by Fairbairn, began to collapse. Significant humanitarian sentiment remained within Cape Town and especially amongst some members of the English speaking elite. But with the colony torn between the increasing influence of settlers in the Eastern Cape, the increasingly expansionary demands of commercial interests (both in the Eastern and Western Cape) and a conservative (often Cape-Dutch) pro-slavery backlash,

humanitarianism stood little chance of success. It is not surprising that in 1831 Fairbairn choose to join the Agricultural Society, which promised greater access to both members of the Cape-Dutch elite and commercial interests, even if at the expense of the colony's black inhabitants. More importantly, Smith's institutional activity, most obviously in the AECA, drew on these same changes, especially the growing support for colonial expansion amongst many settlers. The relation of the LSI's scientific program to these trends is unclear, but it is possible that Herschel's humanitarianism pushed the Institution after 1835 into an increasingly marginal position. On this account, the LSI remained in formal existence into the 1850s not as a result representing more general elite interests in Cape Town, as suggested in an earlier paragraph, but as a result of representing the interests of a humanitarian subset of the elite.

The LSI did not completely disappear from the records after 1838. It remains listed in the *Cape Almanac*, along with its Committee membership, until the 1857 edition. According to Crawford (1934) the remaining Museum collections, books and instruments were eventually donated to the newly established, and unrelated, South African Museum in 1855 or 1856. In early 1836, Andrew Smith returned from his expedition with large natural history collections. The AECA chose to sell some of this collection immediately and the sale was conducted in the LSI's rooms in Cape Town (Kirby, 1965). In February 1837 Smith returned to England with the remaining collection, which was exhibited at the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly. In the following year, Sir John Herschel also returned to London. This left the LSI without its two most important members. In 1837 von Ludwig, long time stalwart of all scientific organisations in Cape Town, left the Cape to visit Germany. He returned in 1838, but did not rejoin the Institution's Committee again in the 1830s. The increasingly moribund state of the LSI in the late 1830s brought to an end the first period of scientific institutionalisation in the Cape. It was only in the 1870s that the Colony would again support an active scientific society.

# 6 Conclusion

## 6.1 The Institutionalisation of Science After 1835

Of the four main societies I have examined in this thesis, only the LSI was still in existence in 1835. The LSI represented the culmination of two largely unrelated patterns of scientific institutionalisation that had begun with the attempted establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS in 1824. Although this Society was suppressed, its direct successor, the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, was successfully established in 1829. The SAI was also established in 1829, but like the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS was unable to maintain its early enthusiasm and high levels of support. In 1832 both the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the SAI were largely moribund and merged to form the LSI. Although the LSI continued to be recorded in the *Cape Almanac* into the 1850s, after 1838 it appears to have ceased functioning as an active scientific organisation. The process of institutionalisation described in this thesis had come to an end. In this section, I claim that the conditions that had given rise to the LSI and its predecessors in the late 1820s and early 1830s had largely passed by the mid-1830s, and that a general scientific society, whether on the model of the Literary Societies or the SAI, was no longer viable. The only two societies to continue were the more specialised Medical and Agricultural Societies.

The decline of the LSI in the late 1830s must be largely inferred from an absence of evidence for its activities. Crawford (1934) confirms there is little evidence for the activities of the LSI after 1838. Furthermore, the Institution published its last annual report in 1835 and the last part of the *Quarterly Journal* appeared in 1836. One of the only pieces of explicit evidence for the increasingly moribund state of the LSI is a report by the German naturalist Ferdinand Krauss, who visited Cape Town in 1838. He noted the Institution's activities in organising Smith's expedition to the north and visited the museum containing the collections by Smith and Verreaux, but observed, "[o]f late ... neither of these two collections has been augmented, as quite generally the zeal

of the Society [the LSI] seems to be on the wane these days" (Krauss, 1966). The collapse of the LSI can be contrasted with the continuing success of other (often British) cultural forms in the Cape. Dubow claims that by the mid-1830s an, "interconnecting set of institutions can be said to have taken root at the Cape" (Dubow, 1999: 17) including the Library, Museum, College and LSI, and he goes on to describe the continued developments of such organisations over the following decades. While the Library, College and the newspapers continued to grow, the LSI foundered. This suggests the reasons for and nature of the institutionalisation of science at the Cape differed, at least in detail, from those affecting the institutionalisation of other forms of cultural and intellectual activity.

The conditions that gave rise to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were specific to the late 1820s. I have argued, in *Chapters 2 and 3*, that John Fairbairn established the two Literary Societies as part of his attempt to establish civil society in the colony. This was to help create a liberal middle class in the pursuit of a wider ranging democratic social and political program. Fairbairn's endeavours formed one of the major parts of the more general late 1820s ascendancy of British liberal humanitarianism at the Cape. This ascendancy did not last into the new decade, and by the early 1830s was being challenged both by British settlers in the Eastern Cape, who rejected the humanitarianism, and by a conservative Cape-Dutch reaction in the colony more generally, which rejected both humanitarianism and liberalism. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were very much a product of the temporary success of this liberal humanitarian program and their disappearance in the 1830s was, I would suggest, largely a result of the failure of that program.

The SAI and LSI were the result of a different and largely unrelated set of factors to those that led to the two Literary Societies. As argued in *Chapter 3*, the SAI grew out of the institutional activities of Dr. Andrew Smith. He established the SAI, along with several earlier scientific societies and the South African Museum, to assist his career as a naturalist within the British Army's Medical Service. A group of the city's most important scientific men collected around Smith and his organisations, which were largely led by the colony's army and official elite. The LSI, as noted in *Chapter 5*, was the result of a merger of the SAI and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. With the collapse of the social and political motivation for the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and the absence of Fairbairn in the new organisation, the LSI mostly

represented a continuation of the SAI. The LSI retained the support of many scientific men in the colony and continued to be dominated by the colonial elite.

The decline of the LSI in the mid- to late 1830s was only indirectly related to social or political developments. Mostly it reflected changes amongst the Institution's scientific membership. In the 1820s and 1830s there were eleven men who were particularly involved in science and the establishment and organisation of scientific societies in Cape Town. These were, John Fairbairn, Thomas Pringle, Andrew Smith, the Rev. Fearon Fallows, Sir John Herschel, Jules Pierre Verreaux, C. M. Villet, C. F. H. von Ludwig, the Rev. J. A. Adamson, James Bowie and Thomas Maclear. Of these, Pringle left the colony in 1826 and Fallows died in 1831. More importantly, Smith returned to Britain in 1837, Herschel followed in 1838 and Verreaux left for France in 1838. Of the remaining six men, Fairbairn appears to have largely abandoned his interest in the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS by 1832 and neither he nor Bowie joined the LSI. By the late 1830s there were only four obvious candidates in the Colony to lead a rejuvenated LSI or establish a new scientific society: Villet, von Ludwig, Adamson and Maclear.

None of these four men had any apparent motivation to lead the LSI, or another society, in order to pursue science. Between 1837 and 1838 von Ludwig visited Germany, where he made substantial natural history donations to German universities and museums. On his return he did not rejoin the committee of the LSI, although he did join the committee of the Agricultural Society and rejoined that of the AECA. His scientific attention was increasingly directed at the botanic garden he had established in 1829. Through his involvement in extensive seed and plant exchanges he acquired international exposure and a significant reputation in botany and horticulture (Bradlow, 1965). Unlike Smith, von Ludwig had his own institutional base and, being independently wealthy, did not need to mobilise financial support for his projects. Villet was in a similar position, running an increasingly successful natural history business in the Cape. He offered animals, insects, birds, plants and seeds, many already in boxes prepared for sale and transport, and his advertisements in the *Cape Almanac* promised to "execute orders from all parts of the known world" (*Cape Almanac*, 1835:8). Villet had never been a member of any scientific society's leadership and he seems not to have needed or been interested in institutional support. In addition, his conservative politics would probably have largely alienated him from the

humanitarian and liberal sentiments of many of the leading British scientific men that dominated the LSI (*DSAB*).

The two obvious candidates to continue the LSI after Herschel's departure in 1838 were its secretary, the Rev. Adamson, and its President, the astronomer Thomas Maclear. Adamson and Maclear remained in formal control of the LSI into the 1850s, but neither needed the organisation to further their interests, scientific or otherwise. It would seem that they regarded their positions on the LSI as largely honorific. In 1835 Adamson had returned to teach mathematics, classics and physics at the South African College, which he had left in 1830 as a result of arguments over the teaching of religion. His career was largely devoted to education and he was the senior Presbyterian minister in the colony. He remained active in science, convincing the colonial government to acquire von Ludwig's botanic garden in 1848, but did not devote himself primarily to scientific pursuit. Thomas Maclear, the astronomer at the Royal Observatory at the Cape of Good Hope, was by virtue of his position, provided with the necessary institutional and organisational facilities to pursue his scientific interests. In addition, he probably did not see any need to act as an active leader of another organisation. For these four men, von Ludwig, Villet, Adamson and Maclear, membership of a scientific society may have brought some minor advantages, but none were sufficiently overwhelming for them to make such an organisation the centre of their activities. The activities of these four men, nevertheless, provide convincing evidence for the continuing presence of science in the city. Such activity was just no longer partially organised through a scientific society.

While the collapse of the LSI was mostly a result of the emigration and changing commitments of its leading members, wider social and political developments may also have played a role. As noted in *Chapter 5*, Herschel attempted to shift the LSI towards serving his own research interests and those of certain leading British men of science. It does not appear he was successful. In addition to involving the Institution in these activities in the physical sciences, he may have attempted to involve the Institution in J. C. Prichard's monogenecist ethnological research program. While this would have been compatible with Herschel's humanitarian views, it would have been in conflict with Smith's views on race, which themselves appear to have drawn on theories of innate biological difference (Bank, 1996). More generally, as Bank (1995 and 1996) notes, such monogenecist and humanitarian views would have been increasingly out of



keeping with the politics and ideas of the Cape, and especially the Eastern Cape. Given that Herschel's racial views became increasingly irrelevant to development in the colony, it is possible that the LSI itself may have become increasingly marginalised in the late 1830s.

While the LSI largely ceased functioning in the late 1830s, two other societies remained active: the South African Medical Society (established in 1827) and the Cape of Good Hope Agricultural Society (established in 1831). Neither was established by Smith or Fairbairn and, although they shared important cross memberships with the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, SAI and LSI, they were entirely different in conception, origin and intent. The Medical Society was established to further the professional interests of Cape Town's medical community. Burrows (1958) has claimed that the late 1820s was a period of great change for the colony's medical profession. The Medical Society can be seen, at least in part, as an attempt by Cape Town's civilian doctors to assert their status and authority in the face of legislative challenges from the colonial administration. Deacon (H 1997) argues that the city's civilian doctors continued to be faced by problems of organisation, competition and legislation through the 1830s and 1840s and needed to assert their status as members of a professional elite. It would seem that the Medical Society remained active because it continued to serve the interests of an important group within the city.

The Agricultural Society should probably be located in an alternative tradition to either that of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS or that of the SAI and the LSI. This tradition had seen the establishment of agricultural societies both in Cape Town and outlying towns since the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Agricultural Society was established by men who were mostly not connected to either Fairbairn or Smith. It also appears to have been entirely unconnected to Fairbairn's attempts to mobilise support of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS through agricultural improvement. While the LSI became increasingly moribund in the late 1830s, the Agricultural Society grew rapidly in numbers. In 1837 its membership stood at one hundred and fifty-six, with twenty-four members added in the previous year alone (Cape of Good Hope Agricultural Society, 1837). Most of these members were drawn from the Cape-Dutch community, and the Agricultural Society was far more representative of the Cape's white community as a whole than the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the SAI or the LSI. The rapid growth of the Agricultural Society probably had to do with its specialised and narrow remit

focussing on a topic of widespread interest in the colony. Above all, it was a practical organisation rather than a learned society. It also benefited from the official support it received from the Government: the Governor was the organisation's patron and several senior colonial officials sat on its committee. Finney (1993), has argued that the success and longevity of the Agricultural Society of New South Wales, founded in the early 1820s, was similarly a consequence of large membership, official support and narrow remit. While these advantages were also to a certain extent enjoyed by the SAI and LSI, the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS had neither official support nor a narrow focus. This may further explain the different fortunes of the SAI and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS in the early 1830s. The Agricultural Society may also have drawn support in the late 1830s from those who sought an alternative base to the increasingly inactive LSI.

While neither Fairbairn nor Smith was involved in founding the Agricultural Society, Fairbairn joined its committee soon after it was established. Interestingly, Fairbairn did not become a member of the LSI and, as noted in *Chapter 5*, may have been actively excluded from the merged organisation. Fairbairn's shift to the Agricultural Society may, however, have been a result of recognition that his hopes for the establishment of a liberal middle class and democratic self-rule were increasingly unlikely to be fulfilled. In the early 1830s, amidst the rising tensions resulting from the impending emancipation of slaves, Fairbairn largely abandoned his humanitarian concerns in the pursuit of a convergence of interests between the British and Cape-Dutch. Whilst the ardent humanitarians Philip, Herschel and Maclear sat on the committee of the LSI, none of them appears to have joined the Agricultural Society. Fairbairn might have moved from the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS to the Agricultural Society in recognition of the changing political and social realities in the colony. On the other hand the move might have been opportunistic and without strategic motivation.

While the Medical and Agricultural Societies continued to function, the decline of the LSI left the colony without a more general scientific society. Medical papers and case reports were read at the Medical Society and the Agricultural Society was involved in stock breeding and agricultural improvement, but the most widely practised of the sciences, such as natural history, horticulture and geography, were left to the pursuit of individuals. This change was, in part, the result of the passing of the social and political moment that saw Fairbairn attempt to use scientific societies to forge a new civil society. It was also, in part,

a result of Smith's departure from the Cape. Although this did not deprive the colony of knowledgeable and active men of science, it left the Cape without a leading man of science whose career structure, as I have argued, urgently required the support of scientific societies. As a result of these changes the pattern of scientific institutionalisation shifted away from societies. The colony only supported a general scientific society again in the late 1870s, with the establishment of the South African Philosophical Society in 1877 (Hall, 1977).

## 6.2 Science in Cape Town, 1824-1835

Between the mid-1820s and the mid-1830s science in Cape Town increasingly came to be organised around general scientific societies. The period saw the establishment of the first scientific organisations in the Colony and while some, such as the Observatory, survived the scientific societies did not. This section provides an outline of my most important findings about these scientific societies and why it was that they were established exclusively in this period. In addition, it explores some of the implications of my research for our understanding of the status of science in the Cape colony as well as the practice and nature of science in colonial settings more generally.

This thesis provides the first significant study of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the SAI, the LSI as well as the more general institutionalisation of science in Cape Town in the 1820s and 1830s. It goes beyond Crawford (1934) and Dubow (1999) in exploring the historical development of each organisation and in locating the societies in a broader Cape and international context. The establishment of these four scientific societies and the institutionalisation of science can, I claim, be largely understood in terms of two narratives, one domestic and the other international.

The first, the domestic narrative, is that of the political and administrative liberalisation of the colony and the efforts of John Fairbairn to encourage those developments and turn them to his own political ends. The mid- to late 1820s have been widely seen as a period of liberalisation and liberal ascendancy in the colony (from Walker, 1935; to Keegan, 1996). John Fairbairn has also widely been seen as one of the key agitators in the pursuit of these changes (Botha, 1984; and McKenzie, 1993). I suggest that the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS were not simply

a consequence of this process of liberalisation, some automatic flowering of British culture in a distant colony once conditions of freedom prevailed. They were established by Fairbairn as part of his attempt to construct a liberal, middle class political movement uniting the British and Cape-Dutch in support of his calls for representative democratic government in the Cape. In his attempt to found the conditions for civil society in the colony, Fairbairn also made possible the institutional efforts of others.

Broman (2002) has suggested two general categories of question about the relation amongst science, scientific societies, and civil society. First, how has the engagement with science shaped the societies and institutions of civil society and how has science been shaped by this engagement? Secondly, how has the engagement with science served the political and social ends of civil society? The establishment of the scientific societies in Cape Town, and especially the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, speaks to both questions. Since at least the mid-1970s, with Thackray's (1974) discussion of eighteenth and nineteenth century provincial British literary and philosophical societies, it has become common place to see science as serving social and political interests, often of emerging middle classes. This was also partially true in the Cape, where science, as conceived by Fairbairn, was almost entirely constructed around his need to mobilise popular middle class support for his political program. The kind of science he pursued, and the ends to which he turned it, were intimately tied to his attempt to establish a civil society.

Some historians of science have also acknowledged the more general role of science in the establishment of social and political identity in colonial settings. Chambers and Gillespie have noted that the pursuit of science has often been seen "to provide a mechanism for increased colonial autonomy and self-sufficiency" (Chambers and Gillespie, 2001: 226). The concept of civil society provides one of the key avenues for understanding the mobilisation of science, especially where science is used to challenge either an established domestic elite or an external authority. Attention to the role of science in civil society shifts attention away from the relation between science and the state, which according to Dubow (2000) has been the traditional focus of the historiography of science in South Africa. Such a shift of focus throws new light on the possible functions of science in society. Specifically, it shows that science could not only serve the

interests of those in authority, but that it could also be used to assert a political and social agenda in opposition to such authority.

Specific conclusions about the broader development of civil society at the Cape can only be provisionally sketched from an analysis of the four scientific societies, yet a broad-brushed sketch is nevertheless possible. The colony lurched traumatically in the early 1820s towards the emergence of civil society, as witnessed by the radical intentions of Fairbairn and his supporters, the arch-conservative views of the Governor and the resulting suppression of the *Advertiser*, *Journal* and 1<sup>st</sup> SALS. On the other hand, elements of civil society less antagonistic to the colony's Government, such as the *Tijdschrift*, were allowed to continue. After Somerset's recall in 1826, civil institutions appear to have flourished. As a result of the liberalisation of the colonial administration and the growing scale and acceptability of civil society the early radicalism of and challenge presented by organisations such as the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS was diminished. Civil society was domesticated and elements of the new socio-political order that had initially seemed so threatening became almost invisible. Through organisations such as the LSI, civil institutions and the civil society they represented became part of the colony's liberal *status quo*. Even challenges to this new *status quo*, such as the conservative Cape-Dutch backlash to liberalism, were channelled through the avenues provided by civil society. As such, they merely reinforced the liberal order they wished to challenge. This is possibly the most impressive evidence of the success of the liberal agenda at the Cape in the period. It might also be argued that civil society at the Cape in the 1830s served to prevent the stresses and strain of political difference, especially over slavery, from breaking out into open conflict. The material examined in this thesis only suggest this, but if it is correct then civil society at the Cape would have played the role its early proponents intended for it – that of preventing conflict (Porter, 2000).

The second, the international narrative, has to do with the changing structure of British science and the way this influenced the activities of Dr. Andrew Smith. The early nineteenth century saw the British state simultaneously reduce its direct support for science and indirectly open new opportunities for science in the military. In the post-Napoleonic retrenchment, conventional promotion opportunities within the British Army and Royal Navy were significantly reduced and the pursuit of science became an alternative route to promotion (Knight,

1974; Browne, 1996; and Ashworth, 1998). Simultaneously, science was in the process of becoming an increasingly specialised pursuit and scientific societies and organisations were becoming key locations for the making of scientific reputations and the mobilisation of middle class support for scientific activity (Morrell and Thackray, 1981; and Secord, 1986). Smith's institutional efforts at the Cape were strongly influenced by these developments. The Army's Medical Service sent him to the Cape, at least in part, to act as a naturalist. Such science provided him with the best opportunity for promotion, but the British state's policy of fiscal retrenchment limited the support it would provide. As a result Smith turned to the establishment of scientific societies to provide the necessary support for his ambitions, both scientific and for promotion within the Army.

The history of the institutionalisation of science at the Cape cannot, however, simply be told in terms of these two narratives. There is no single master narrative through which one can understand a single scientist's experiences at the Cape, let alone the experiences of the entire scientific community.<sup>1</sup> The domestic narrative of the construction of civil society in Cape Town ignores the formative role of Fairbairn's earlier membership of the Newcastle upon Tyne Literary and Philosophical Society in the years before his immigration to the colony. Understanding Fairbairn's institutional activity in the Cape demands recognition of this British dimension as he drew on his experience of the Newcastle Society in establishing the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. Even more importantly, the changes in the structures and organisation of British science do not explain the actual form of Smith's institutional activities at the Cape. To understand Smith's activities requires paying close attention to the social structure of Cape society and his social and political affiliations. Smith's membership of the Army aligned him with the colony's ruling elite and he assiduously cultivated links amongst this elite and with the colony's Governors. Furthermore he both drew on and provided support for those demanding colonial expansion. Recognition of these domestic links is absolutely essential to explaining the nature and memberships of the societies he founded

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<sup>1</sup> At the Cape, both inside and outside the community of scientists, science had multiple meanings and was turned to multiple ends. Recognising these different perspectives is central to understanding the institutionalisation of science at the Cape. Cain (2003) has argued that the literary theory concept of *polyvalence* can be usefully applied to cases where there is no master narrative.

Ultimately the establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the SAI and the LSI, can be studied neither in entirely domestic nor in entirely foreign terms. The establishment of these societies needs to be seen as involving ongoing negotiations between domestic and external, often British, influences. Importantly, these negotiations resist reduction to any simply model or analysis. Rather, in the Cape of the 1820s and 1830s, there existed many different domestic-external relationships (to Europe, other colonies and even regions in southern Africa yet uncolonised), serving different, often unrelated and sometimes incompatible ends. Taking Smith as the sole focus of study would result in an *entirely* different conception of the relation of British and Cape science than if one had taken Fairbairn as one's focus.

Adopting such a reciprocal approach recognising that many previous historiographical approaches to the study of science in colonial settings are not so much incorrect, as partial. Cohen (1959) and Flemming (1962), for instance, in their attempt to understand the apparent backwardness of early North American and Australian science, saw the defining feature of the relation between colonial science and European science as dependency. Colonial science was about collecting specimens for metropolitan savants. This feature is certainly also apparent at the Cape in the activities of numerous collectors, including Smith and von Ludwig. Yet it simultaneously ignores the value of domestic scientific activity, such as von Ludwig's acclimatisation work, and cannot answer why Smith received such extensive local support. It also ignores other domestic motivations for science, such as Fairbairn's social and political ambitions. Similar constraints apply to Basalla's (1967) work on the diffusion of science from Europe to the colonial world. He proposed a three-stage model by which a country moves from complete scientific dependency to international equality. Yet as Macleod (1982) has noted, Basalla's program ignores, amongst others, a factor to which my own thesis has drawn specific attention: the political and economic dynamics within a given colony. The process of assimilation and growth that Basalla offers makes no room for differences between colonies and is as Whiggish in conception as Fairbairn's own politics of improvement.

Macleod's (1982) solution to the problems facing the centre-periphery model has been to propose multiple, shifting centres, located not only in Europe, but also in colonial locations. While this offers a more complex and satisfying account of the

intellectual power relations implicit in colonial science, or metropolitan science for that matter, it still retains the focus on colonial science primarily as a form of independent activity. The last twenty to twenty five years, however, have seen a growing recognition that science was itself implicated in colonialism and imperialism. Science both shaped the imperial endeavour and was shaped by its involvement. For instance, Brockway (1979), in her discussion of the role of Kew Gardens, suggested that science served to make possible and maintain the British Imperial project. Through Kew Gardens, and the colonial botanic gardens it controlled, Britain was able to increase the financial means and resources to support its empire. In a less narrowly economic manner, Drayton (2000) has investigated in greater depth the important role played by science in legitimating Britain's Empire and that British botany and horticulture was shaped by the experience. Science justified British claims to be able to rule more efficiently in the name of improvement. This economic conception of science and politics provided a moral basis for the Empire's authority. Brockway's economic account of the relation of colonial and metropolitan science finds some support in the nineteenth century Cape. After all the Colonial Government did provide Smith with partial support. However, at the same time it refused numerous other requests, including the establishment of a botanic garden. As it happens, there are significant parallels between Drayton's analysis of Britain's attempts to secure political legitimacy through claims for improvement and my analysis of Fairbairn's calls for agricultural improvement in the colony. The fact that the SAI and the LSI studiously avoided agricultural improvement and any narrowly utilitarian concerns, however, suggests that Drayton's approach provides at best a partial account of the relation of science to the colonial and imperial enterprises.

My study of scientific institutionalisation in Cape Town is far more in line with a relatively recent tendency to take more seriously location and local concerns and motivations in studies of colonial science. Palladino and Worboys (1993) have for instance argued that it is essential to pay attention to the site of scientific production and not take the claimed universality of science at face value. Chambers and Gillespie (2001) have called for greater attention to be given to local, colonial actors in telling the history of science. The history of science in colonies involved far more than the diffusion of European knowledge and immigration of European men of science. It also involved the reactions and involvement of those already in the Colony, whether other white settlers or



indigenous peoples. Storey, in a study of the science and technology of the sugar cane industry in Mauritius, has drawn attention to “complex local struggles over what should constitute the colony’s science. These struggles involved peasants, planters, scientists, and officials; people from all ethnic groups; and people inside and outside Mauritius” (Storey, 1997:1). Through these struggles, Mauritians made their own agricultural science and their own social and political communities. Similarly, my study has also examined struggles within the Cape relating to both political and scientific identity.

By prioritising the local domestic factors, I do not claim that science played no part in the Cape in supporting Britain’s imperial program. Ashworth (1998) has pointed to aspects of Herschel’s residence at the Cape to support precisely such claims. But, it is because Herschel was such an unusual figure at the Cape, a ‘great man’ of the metropolitan scientific world, that he has attracted such attention. It was only by virtue of his status that he was able to involve the LSI in the research programs of British savants, including his own meteorological work. Even then, such activity metropolitan directed activity remained a minority scientific pursuit amongst the members and where he tried to mobilise support for scientific topics in which there was no local interest, such as the study of tides, his efforts were ignored. Britain had the power to impose scientific institutions on its colonies to pursue imperial ends. For example, it established the Royal Observatory and sent out an official astronomer. But this did not mean that it could impose its scientific concerns on the residents of a colony more generally.

Ashworth (1998) is also correct to identify Herschel’s activities at the Cape as part of an exercise in the activation and extension of the “Roaming Eye of the State”, but he neglects to explore whether this were successful. It would be worthwhile to investigate what practical impact, if any, Herschel actually had on scientific men at the Cape. I would suggest that his impact was minimal outside a small group of men directly linked to the British scientific establishment; Maclear being the most obvious example. In the case of eighteenth and nineteenth century India, Raina (1996) and Chakraborty (1999-2000) have argued that in a world with an inequitable distribution of political power and scientific authority, it is essential to investigate the flow of ideas and materials from colonial scientists to those in the metropole. The activities of those in the colonies were driven not only by the needs and beliefs of metropolitan scientists

(as a diffusionist or centre-periphery model would suggest) nor entirely by their own domestic needs and beliefs. Rather, it involved a reciprocal relationship, with those in the colonies often seeking metropolitan affirmation of their scientific worth by tailoring their material to the interests of those in Europe. This suggests, however, that one needs to be aware of these international links in order to understand the domestic actions of colonial scientists. But at the Cape there was a bewildering variety of such links, tracing back not only to different locations in Britain, but also numerous other European powers, including France and certain German states. Given the variety of these links, or in certain cases, the possible absence of any such links, no single set of metropolitan interests is likely to have been able to carry the majority Cape scientific community, let alone the whole community.

While the relations between those at the Cape and elsewhere are complex and likely to resist a simple analysis, some general points about the relations can be made.<sup>2</sup> Historians of science in South Africa have long recognised the external origin of many of the scientific ideas in the country (Dubow, 1995; Bank, 1995 and 1996; and Ross, 1999) and the establishment of scientific and literary societies has been seen, in part, as involving the importation of British cultural models (Dubow, 1999). This process has implicitly been seen as a one-way path from Britain, Europe or elsewhere to the Cape. No attention has been given to the importance of the reverse path, from the Cape to Europe and Britain, in shaping Cape science. Yet, understanding Smith's activities at the Cape, for instance, requires that one recognise his intention to return to Britain. Similarly the colony's extensive natural history trade was probably significantly boosted by the Cape's incorporation into the British imperial trading system and the liberalisation of its economy. Science at the Cape was not just shaped by the importation of ideas and cultural and social habits. It was also shaped by the integration of the colony into the British Empire and the opportunities this opened up in the colony. Greater attention needs to be given to the structural, social and economic connections between science in South Africa and Britain, as well as the rest of Europe, and other colonies.<sup>3</sup> My study would suggest that

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<sup>2</sup> Analyses are also required for the impact of French, German and Dutch science at the Cape. These, however, are beyond the scope of this thesis.

<sup>3</sup> Some of these themes have been examined in the Australian context, although mostly for the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries (see Home, 1988; and Home and Kohlstedt, 1991). The move from seeing the relation between colonial science and metropolitan science as one of

these were essential in shaping science in the early nineteenth century Cape, although their affects are likely to be very difficult to generalise.

Beyond suggesting a reciprocal relation between domestic and international factors in the institutionalisation of science, this study has a number of implications for our understanding of science in early nineteenth century Cape Town. It suggests that interest in science was widespread, with over two hundred and ten men involved in the scientific societies between 1824 and 1835. Kohlstedt (1990), in a discussion of the place of science in the early nineteenth century United States, has argued that traditional measures of the importance or status of science in a country, such as the numbers of men overtly pursuing science or scientific publications, fail to adequately

"explain or describe more general cultural attitudes toward science, broadly defined. We need to dig deeper into the national record, into a range of private and public behaviors – independent study, conversations, group activities, popular publications, and educational institutions. The pluralism and often the transience of these phenomena defy any simply and orderly pattern, but their variety attests to pervasive public curiosity and scientific subjects and helps explain the rapidity with which subsequent, permanent scientific institutions would be built in the last half of the nineteenth century." (Kohlstedt, 1990: 427).

A similar state of affairs is likely to have held in the Cape. Although there are no existing studies of such transient scientific interests at the Cape in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the fairly large-scale support enjoyed by the scientific societies in the 1820s and 1830s suggests a fairly pervasive earlier interest in science.

Some evidence for popular interest in science, and particularly natural history, can be found in the widespread exhibitions of exotic animals and natural history specimens, documented in the many advertisements in the *Cape Town Gazette* and the *Advertiser*, with those in the *Cape Town Gazette* predating the foundation of scientific societies. C. M. Villet is by far the most significant source

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dependency to one of interdependence parallels an increasing recognition amongst metropolitan historians that European culture, including science, drew enormously on the colonial experience (Bayly, 1989). Grove (1995) has shown how European conceptions of ecology were developed from colonial experiences. Drayton (2000) has made similar observations about British botany and agricultural science and Brown (1996) has demonstrated the links between the development of nineteenth century British imperialism and biogeography. In a different field, Sengoopta (2003) has shown how fingerprinting technology was developed in India and only later transferred to Britain.

of these, announcing not only specimens in his store, but also animals on display at his Menagerie. Other transient exhibitors also placed advertisements for their displays, whether of boa constrictor skeletons (*Advertiser* XIII: 978, October 26, 1836) or giraffes (*Advertiser* IX: 626, June 12, 1833). Other evidence comes from the widespread popularity of scientific lectures in the city, also reported in the *Advertiser*. These were not just public lectures. By 1833 a Mrs Rose offered classes to "YOUNG LADIES .. on some of the Elementary Facts in Natural Philosophy" (*Advertiser* X:665, October, 26, 1833). It would not just have been the British residents at the Cape that would have been exposed to these influences, the Cape-Dutch residents would also have been involved.

The spread of science in the Cape among the elites and growing middle classes in the 1830s may also have been encouraged by two forces. The first was the role of science in cementing an elite identity in the face of the strong centrifugal forces of the slavery debate. The second was the role of science in motivating and supporting the cause of colonial expansion. Although these points are apparently in opposition, the first draws attention to the role of science as a form of apolitical activity the second stresses science as a form political activity, they are not incompatible. Science could serve both ends and even the use of science to avoid politics was itself political. If science and scientific organisations were a flexible social and political resource in Britain in the early nineteenth century, they were equally flexible in the Cape. Seen in this way, my study speaks to several key concerns of South African historiography: slavery, race, colonial expansion and the establishment and maintenance of the colonial order.

In *Chapter 5* I suggested that the silence of the LSI over the issue of slavery was not surprising. One of the original intentions for civil society in seventeenth century political philosophy was that it would serve to diffuse conflict, not through resolution of the underlying tensions but through managing and avoiding them (Porter, 2000). Crucial to this is the overt suppression of the sources of the conflict, and this is related to the emergence of polite forms of behaviour and etiquette. McKenzie (1997) has observed the emergence of such forms of behaviour in Cape Town in the early nineteenth century. In addition the colony was almost torn apart by the conflicts surrounding slavery and emancipation (Keegan, 1996). I argue that both these factors together with the silence of the LSI on slavery point to the fact that the LSI was actively maintained as a politically "neutral" space. This prevented the irreversible alienation of the city's

elites. More positively, the LSI served to assert a collective elite identity in the face of serious tensions within the group. The scientific societies may therefore have played an important role in constructing and maintaining the new colonial order that was emerging in Cape Town in the first half 1830s. The higher order political goal of avoiding open conflict would have remained important in the Cape, but with the demise of the LSI in the late 1830s scientific societies no longer played a major role.

The role of the scientific societies in the developing and diffusing racial theories is difficult to assess. This is not necessarily true of science *per se* at the Cape. Bank (1995 and 1996) has shown that numerous men of science, most obviously Smith, were intimately involved in the development of biological theories of race. Rather it is an artefact of the focus of this thesis on scientific institutions as institutions. While race, in the guise of anthropology and possibly geography, was discussed in both the SAI and LSI, it formed only a part of the Institution's *official* and therefore recorded proceedings. The record nevertheless suggests that the Institutions' involvement in racial theory were far from simple. Conflicting sciences of race were present at the Cape and in the LSI in the early and mid nineteenth century. Smith's and Knox's polygenecist, biological and phrenological enterprises would appear to have supported active research projects. Yet, in the hands of Herschel and other humanitarians Prichard's monogenecist program may also have been a factor at the Cape. While science did not provided a clear cut answer to the status of black Africans it did provide a discourse for their analysis from which they were formally excluded. As with the case of slavery though, race was a contentious issue and great care would have had to be taken to prevent it from undermining the LSI's probably fragile unity. There is also little evidence that attitudes to race played an important role in defining membership decisions and activities of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the SAI and the LSI, although possibly they did after the mid-1830s.

The link between colonial expansion and scientific institutions is clearer, especially with Smith's establishment of the AECA. Here the connections between science, race and colonial expansion were never well concealed and sometimes explicit. While this implicates Smith, his science and the AECA in the colonial endeavour, there is less evidence available for the four scientific organisations that are the main topic of the thesis. These organisations were almost certainly involved in yet unexamined ways with the pursuit of colonialism.

Fairbairn's Literary Societies with their emphasis on improvement and progress may have served to legitimate British rule at the Cape in ways analogous to Drayton's (2000) claims for botany and agricultural science in the British Empire more generally. Smith's activities in turn can be seen as part of a growing nineteenth century project to described races as innately different. This would soon lay scientific and intellectual foundations for claims of white superiority. These are not concerns that have sat at the centre of my thesis, but will possibly be of interest to historians of South Africa and colonialism.

Cape-Dutch interest and involvement in science has gone virtually unexplored. It is generally claimed that Cape-Dutch intellectual culture was dominated by theology to the exclusion of science (Trapido, 1993; and Bank, 1995). Even a recent and sympathetic history of the Afrikaner people sees the scientific and literary societies of early nineteenth century Cape Town as an almost entirely British phenomenon (Giliomee, 2003). To be sure, no interest in science is apparent in the obvious expressions of conservative Cape-Dutch culture, such as the Maatschappij Ter Uitbreiding van Beschaving en Letterkunde (Society for the Diffusion of Culture and Literature), *Het Nederduitsch Zuid-Afrikaansch Tijdschrift* and *De Zuid Afrikaan*. The Maatschappij's prize essays were never on scientific topics and the newspaper and journal carried virtually no articles on science. This can be compared to the significant interest in science apparent in the English language press. Yet the relatively large scale Cape-Dutch support for the scientific societies that my analysis has revealed, at least in as far as membership is concerned, suggests otherwise. In addition, key leaders of the Cape-Dutch community supported the scientific societies. The Rev. Abraham Faure, editor of *Het Tijdschrift*, was a committee member of the SAI and LSI and President of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS. In addition C. J. Brand, one of the leading ideologues behind *De Zuid Afrikaan* was a committee member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and an ordinary member of the LSI. Interestingly men such as Faure and Brand, along with other members of the Cape-Dutch elite, had studied in the Netherlands where, as in Britain, there was strong interest in science and a well developed tradition of scientific societies (Roberts, 1999).

One possible explanation for the apparent absence of scientific interests in the overt expressions of Cape-Dutch culture is that in the 1820s Fairbairn radically politicised science. Fairbairn placed science at the forefront of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS and closely identified his liberal political program with the pursuit of

science. The successful establishment of scientific societies, he claimed in 1829, would prove the maturity and sophistication of Cape Town's middle class and demonstrate their readiness for political power (*Advertiser* IV: 205, May 30, 1829). In an 1824 article in his *Journal*, he argued that scientific societies and science were inherently destructive of conservative and established authority (Fairbairn, 1824a). The target of Fairbairn's science was the colonial government, but in the process of mobilising science in the pursuit of his political ambitions he may well have created a situation where science came to be widely associated with liberal British culture. If this was the case, and the association was widely made, then science might not have been available for cultural appropriation by the Cape-Dutch in the 1830s. On this account, the absence of Cape-Dutch interest in science can perhaps be seen as a reaction to its enthusiastic embrace by Fairbairn, and later, though the LSI, the colony's sometimes humanitarian elite. Support for this claim would require additional investigation of the place of science in Fairbairn's political program and rhetoric and further examination of Cape-Dutch attitudes towards science before the 1830s.

A further, complementary, explanation for the apparent absence of Cape-Dutch interest in science in the record lies in British attitudes towards the Cape-Dutch and their culture. Cape-Dutch culture and the Dutch language were widely derided by British residents at the Cape (Giliomee, 2003). The Cape-Dutch were widely seen as lazy, conservative and corrupt. In agriculture they were often described as uninterested in improvement, and backward. This was the opposite of the self-image of many British settlers at the Cape, who saw themselves as representing a Whig combination of science, agricultural improvement, political liberalisation and progress. The British settlers' attitude to the Cape-Dutch was driven, in part, by intellectual arrogance and involved a refusal to learn Dutch and the denigration of Cape-Dutch culture. These factors were not conducive to the recognition of Cape-Dutch scientific activity. It would have served the self-image of the British settlers to deny a history of scientific activity to the Cape-Dutch. As a result, any Cape-Dutch scientific activity may have been ignored and is likely to have been largely left out of the English language record. As Musselman has suggested, full recognition of Cape-Dutch involvement in science will probably involve an analysis of Dutch, German and French accounts of the Cape (Musselman, personal communication, 15 May 2003).

Science and scientific societies, can therefore, be seen to have played a more significant role in early nineteenth century Cape Town than has previously been recognised. This recognition provides an important corrective to an existing image of Cape Town, which has not so much downplayed the role and place of science as mostly ignored it. Between 1824 and 1835, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, the SAI and the LSI played a significant role in the social organisation of science and the mobilisation of support for science amongst the city's middle classes and elite. Ultimately, though, the city lacked a critical mass of scientific men with an urgent requirement for the organisational and financial support of such societies. With the departure of Smith in 1837 and then Herschel in 1838, science largely reverted to being an individual activity.

The early nineteenth century Cape presents a still largely unstudied area of investigation to historians of science. This study's greatest value lies, perhaps, less in what it has shown than what it suggests. Importantly, it shows that the inequalities in access and participation in science so prevalent in twenty-first century South Africa were already present in the early nineteenth century. Furthermore, we should not be surprised by the debates concerning the role and place of science in the new South Africa:- science in South Africa, as elsewhere, has always had an important political dimension. Science was an important constitutive and constructive element of the early South African liberal tradition. It is the very success of this liberal program has rendered the political role of science largely invisible.



# Appendix A Methodological Aspects of the Prosopographical Study

## Sources of Memberships

For the 1<sup>st</sup> SALS the names of the signatories were derived from the published *Papers of the South African Literary Society* (SALS, 1963). All signatories to the Society's documents to the Colonial Government are included. For the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, membership details were collated from the Society's two annual reports (SALS, 1830 and 1831), the *Advertiser* and the *Cape Almanac*. The membership details of the SAI are collated from the Institution's two annual reports (SAI, 1830 and 1831), the *Advertiser*, the *Cape Almanac*, the *Literary Gazette* and the *Quarterly Journal*. For the LSI, the membership details are collated from the Institution's three annual reports (LSI, 1833, 1834 and 1835) the *Advertiser*, the *Cape Almanac*, the *Literary Gazette* and the *Quarterly Journal*. The prosopography was only conducted for full members and subscribers to the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, SAI and LSI. All corresponding and honorary members were excluded from the analysis.

## Occupation

I have categorised occupations in two ways. The more detailed analysis breaks occupations down into twelve categories, most of which are self explanatory: Civilian Doctors (including a dental surgeon), Apothecaries, Ministers (all denominations), Lawyers (including Advocates, Barristers, Attorneys and Notaries), Business (including traders, book keepers, shop owners and other merchants), Indians (employees of the English East India Company), Colonial Officials (civil servants and members of the judiciary), Army Officers, Army Medical (Army surgeons and apothecaries), Royal Navy (Officers and Surgeons), Other (teachers, farmers, newspapermen, writers, scientific men, etc.) and Unknown (where no suitable evidence exists). This data is further collated into eight 'Occupational Categories': Professionals (Civilian Doctors, Apothecaries, Lawyers and Ministers), Business, Colonial Official, Navy (Naval Officers and Naval Surgeons), Army (Army Officers and Army Medical), Indian,

Other and Unknown. In the case of medical doctors and Army officers, occupations were often given in the published membership lists. Where Occupation is unknown, the space is left blank. Occupational information was further collected from: the *Advertiser*, the *Cape Almanac*, *de Lima's Almanac*, the *Literary Gazette*, the *Cape Town Gazette*, the *DSAB*, the *DNB*, Burrows (1958), Gunn and Codd (1981), and Botha (1984).

## National Origin

The information on national origin is broken down into two sets. The first set is for those where there is firm information on national origin. Most of this data is drawn from *DSAB*, with some from Burrows (1958), and Gunn and Codd (1981). Where there is evidence for national origins, the full name of the country of birth is listed in the prosopographies. In most cases, however, there is no explicit evidence for national origin. The second set of national origin information breaks the membership down into those born in Britain (marked 'B' for British, the English, Welsh, Irish and Scottish) and those born elsewhere (marked 'N-B' for Not British, which includes everyone else). This information is inferred on the basis of all available information, but often only on the basis of surname. This methodology leaves significant scope for error. By narrowing the categories down to only two (British and Non-British) I have hoped to reduce the significance of any errors by using larger categories. Nevertheless, the national origin data for each organisation's membership should be treated only as indicative of the distribution, rather than as an absolute description.

## University

University information is derived from the *DSAB*, the *DNB*, Burrows (1958) and Gunn and Codd (1981). The abbreviations are:

Aber. (Aberdeen)	Got. (Göttingen)
Camb. (Cambridge)	Leid. (Leiden)
Edin. (Edinburgh)	Ox. (Oxford)
Glas. (Glasgow)	Tub. (Tübingen)
Gosp. (London Missionary College at Gosport)	Utr. (Utrecht)

## Appendix B Tables

Table 3.1 Initial, February 1829, Committee of the Second South African Literary Society

Surname	Position	Occupation	1 <sup>st</sup> SALS	SAI
Rev. Adamson	Committee	Minister		Yes
H. Cloete	Committee	Lawyer	Yes	Yes
J. De Wet	Committee	Lawyer		
J. Fairbairn	Secretary	Other	Yes	
Dr. Fairbridge	Committee	Civilian Doctor	Yes	
Dr. Liesching	Committee	Civilian Doctor		
W. Liesching	Committee	Business	Yes	
W. Robertson	Committee	Other	Yes	
H. E. Rutherford	Committee	Business	Yes	
Capt. Stockenstrom	President	Colonial Official		Yes
Sir J. Truter	President	Colonial Official	Yes	Yes
Venning <sup>1</sup>	Treasurer	Unknown		
Rev. W. Wright	Secretary	Minister	Yes	

The list of names is drawn from the *Advertiser* (IV: 174, February 11, 1829). Occupation and affiliation details are drawn from *Appendices B, C and D*. See *Appendix A* for methodology used in categorising occupations.

<sup>1</sup> There is no biographical information available, although Venning's surname suggests that he is Welsh. There are also two Venning's in the membership lists for the Society, and it is not clear to which of the two this one refers.

**Table 3.2 Members of the Second South African Literary Society with Known Scientific and Literary Interests**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Committee Position</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Areas of Interest</b>	<b>SAI</b>
Dr. J. Atherstone		Civilian Doctor	Natural history, chemistry and Other sciences	
Rev. M. Borchers		Minister	History of Colony	Yes
J. C. Chase		Unknown	History	
C. F. Ecklon		Other	Botany	
Rev. A. Faure	President	Minister	Newspaper Editor and Religion	Yes
J. Fairbairn	Secretary	Other	Newspaper Editor, Politics and Natural History Lectures	
Dr. J. W. Fairbridge	Council Member	Civilian Doctor	Anthropology and Meteorology	
H. Macartney		Civilian Doctor	Natural History, Biological and Physical Sciences and Anthropology	
L. Pappe		Other	Botanist	
Dr. John Philip		Minister	Science and Religion	
J. H. Tredgold	Council Member	Apothecary	Chemistry/Geology	Yes
W. L. von Büchenroder	Council Member	Other	Intellectual, and published an Article on Earthquakes	Yes
C. F. H. von Ludwig	Council Members	Business	Botany and Horticulture	Yes

This list is compiled from the membership of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS, as given in *Appendix C*, the *DSAB*, Gunn and Codd (1981), the *Advertiser*, the *Literary Gazette*, the *Quarterly Journal*, the *Cape Almanac*, *de Lima's Almanac* and Burrows (1958). See *Appendix A* for methodology used in categorising occupations.

**Table 4.1 The Committee of the South African Public Library in mid-1824**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Position on Library Committee</b>	<b>Other Affiliations in the 1820s</b>
Lt.-Col. C. C. Bird	Colonial Secretary	President	2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS
Daniel Denyssen	Fiscal		2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS
P. Harmsen		Librarian	2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS
Rev. G. Hough	Anglican Minister		
Rev. F. R. Kaufmann	Lutheran Minister		
Thomas Pringle		Librarian	1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS
Sir John Truter	Chief Justice		1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS South African College SAI
Rev. J. H. von Manger	Dutch Reformed Minister		1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS

Data drawn from a combination of Tyrrell-Glynn (1972), Cape Almanac and membership lists in Appendices.

**Table 4.2 The Committee of the South African Public Library at the end of 1825**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Position on Committee</b>	<b>Other Affiliations In the 1820s</b>
Walter Bentinck	Auditor General And member of the Court of Justice		
W. W. Bird	Head of Department of Customs		Horticultural Society
P. G. Brink	Assistant Secretary to the Government		SAI
Daniel Denyssen	Fiscal		2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS
Rev. Fearon Fallows	Astronomer Royal		SAI Lit. & Phil. Society Observatory Horticultural Society
P. Harmsen		Sub-Librarian	2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS
Rev. G. Hough	Anglican Minister		
A. J. Jardine		Sub-Librarian and Secretary	SAI Lit. & Phil Society
Rev. F. Kaufmann	Lutheran Minister	Librarian	
George Kekewich	Judge on Court of Vice Admiralty		Horticultural Society
Sir Richard Plasket	Colonial Secretary	President	
Dr. Adnrew Smith	Army Surgeon		SAI Lit. & Phil Society South African Museum Horticultural Society
Sir John Truter	Chief Justice		1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS South African College SAI
Rev. J. H. von Manger	Dutch Reformed Minister		1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS

Data drawn from a combination of Tyrrell-Glynn (1972), Cape Alamanac and membership lists in Appendices.

**Table 4.3 Signatories to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July, 1825, Proposal for a Cape of Good Hope Literary and Philosophical Society**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Other Affiliations</b>
Dr. J. Atherstone	Civilian Doctor	1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS
H. Cloete Jnr.	Unknown	
Rev. Henry Collison	Minister <sup>2</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> SALS
R Crozier	Post Master General	SAI
Rev. Fearon Fallows	Astronomer	SAI Horticultural Society
J. A. Jardine	Librarian	SAI
J. Skirrow	Clerk of Works at the Observatory	SAI 2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS
Dr. Andrew Smith	Army Doctor	SAI Horticultural Society

List of names drawn from C.O. 235/430 [old 112]. Occupations and affiliations are drawn from *Cape Almanacs* and *Appendices*. See *Appendix A* for methodology used in categorising occupations.

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<sup>2</sup> This is inferred only from his title.

**Table 4.4 The Committee of the Cape of Good Hope Horticultural Society for 1828**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Affiliations in the 1820s</b>
Lieut.-Col Bell	Secretary to Government		SAI
Mr. Bird	Head of Department of Customs		
Mr. Bletterman	Business (Agent for Ceylon)		
Mr. Van Breda <sup>3</sup>	Other (Farmer)		SAI
Major A. J. Cloete	Army Officer	Secretary	SAI
Mr. Dreyer	Unknown		
Re. F. Fallows	Astronomer	Vice-President	SAI Lit. & Phil Society Royal Observatory
Mr. Hawkins	Agent of Affairs for the East India Company		SAI
Justice G. Kekewich	Judge of the court of Vice Admiralty	President	
Mr. McCarthy	Unknown		
Dr. A. Smith	Army Doctor	Secretary	SAI Lit. & Phil Society South African Museum
Major Rogers	Army Officer <sup>4</sup>		

The names are drawn from the *Cape Almanac* for 1829. Affiliations are drawn from *Cape Almanacs* and the membership lists in the *Appendices*. Note that no initials were provided for several Committee members. This makes identification less certain.

<sup>3</sup> This is assumed to M. Van Breda.

<sup>4</sup> Rogers was possibly an Army officer, but he was not part of the official Army establishment at the Cape, at least as indicated in the *Cape Almanac*.



**Table 4.5 The Committee of the South African Public Library in 1829**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Position on Committee</b>	<b>Other Affiliations in the 1820s</b>
Rev. J. Adamson	Presbyterian Minister		SAI South African College
W. W. Bird	Head of Customs Department		Horticultural Society
Dr. R. Dyce	Army Doctor		SAI
A. J. Jardine		Librarian	SAI Lit. & Phil Society
Dr. J. Muray	Army Doctor		SAI
J Reid	Attorney General's Department		SAI
J. D. Watt	Deputy Assistant Commissary General		

Data drawn from a combination of Tyrrell-Glynn (1972 & 1983), Cape Almanacs, and membership lists in Appendices. See also Literary Gazette (I, June 16, 1830).

**Table 4.6 The first Committee of the South African Institution, August 1829**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Affiliations in The 1820s</b>
Rev. Dr. Adamson	Presbyterian Minister	Secretary	South African College Public Library
Lt.-Col. Bell	Colonial Secretary	President	Horticultural Society
Clerke Burton	Master of Judicial Establishment Masters Office		
Major A. J. Cloete	Army Officer, Town Major of Cape Town		Horticultural Society
Dr. Robert Dyce	Army Doctor		Public Library
Rev. Fearon Fallows	Astronomer	Vice-President	Horticultural Society Lit. & Phil. Society
W. F. Hertzog	Assistant Government Surveyor		2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS South African College
J. A. Joubert	Advocate	Vice-President	2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS
J. W. Mackrill	Unknown (Possibly colonial official) <sup>5</sup>		
Major C. Michell	Surveyor General, Civil Architect and Superintendent Of Works		
Dr. J. Murray	Army doctor, presiding member of Medical Committee		Public Library
A. Oliphant	Attorney General	Vice-President	
Dr. Andrew Smith	Army Doctor	Secretary	Horticultural Society Lit. & Phil. Society
J. W. Stoll	Treasurer and Accountant General	Vice-President	South African College
M. van Breda	Farmer		Horticultural Society
C. von Ludwig	Merchant		2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS
F. Watermeyer	Colonial official	Treasurer	2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS

Membership list drawn from notice in *Advertiser* (IV: 227, August 15, 1829). Occupations, positions and affiliations are drawn from membership lists in *Appendices* and *Cape Almanacs*. See *Appendix A* for methodology used in categorising occupations.

<sup>5</sup> The only reference to a Mackrill in the *Cape Almanac* (1831) is to a "W. Mackrill" was an accountant in the Treasurer and Accountant General's Office.

**Table 4.7 Members of the South African Institution with Known Scientific and Literary Interests**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Committee Position</b>	<b>Areas of Interest</b>	<b>Other Affiliations</b>	<b>Occupational Category</b>
Rev. Dr. James Adamson	Secretary	Mathematics, physics, technology	S. A. College Library	Minister
James Bowie	Council	Botany		Other
Rev. M. Borchers		History of Colony	2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS	Minister
Daniel J. Cloete	Council	Article on viticulture in <i>SAQJ</i>		Colonial official
Major Dundas		Experimental Agriculture		Military
Rev. Fearon Fallows	Vice-President	Astronomy and natural history	Observatory Hort. Soc. Library Lit. & Phil. Soc.	Other (Astronomer)
A. J. Jardine		Natural History, article on Seals in <i>SAQJ</i> . Writer and Editor.	Library Lit. & Phil Society	Other (Librarian and editor)
Dr. John Murray	Vice-President	Article in on "Lock Jaw" in <i>Literary Gazette</i>	Library	Army Doctor
John Reed	Council	Chemistry		Other (Collector of curiosities)
Captain Roland		Astronomy	Observatory	Other (Fallows' assistant at Observatory)
Dr. Andrew Smith	Secretary	Naturalist	Museum Hort. Soc. Library Lit. & Phil. Soc.	Military Doctor
J. H. Tredgold		Chemistry Geology	1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS	Apothecary
Pierre Jules Verreaux		Naturalist, Collector, Taxidermist	Museum	Other
Eduard Verreaux		Ornithologist, Collector		Other
C. M. Villet		Natural History trader		Other (Ran shop trading in specimens)
W. L. von Büchenroder		Intellectual and Published An article on earthquakes	2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS	Other (Farmer)
C. F. H. von Ludwig	Vice-President	Botany and Horticulture	2 <sup>nd</sup> SALS	Businessman (also Apothecary and Botanical Collector)

This list is compiled from the membership of the SAI, as given in *Appendix D*, the *DSAB*, Gunn and Codd (1981), the *Advertiser*, the *Literary Gazette*, the *Quarterly Journal*, the *Cape Almanac*, de Lima's *Almanac* and Burrows (1958). See Appendix A for methodology used in categorising occupations.

**Table 5.1 The first Committee of the South African Literary and Scientific Institution, elected in July 1832**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Position on Committee</b>	<b>Most Senior Position in SAI</b>	<b>Most Senior Position in 2<sup>nd</sup> SALS</b>
Rev. Dr. Adamson	Minister	Secretary	Secretary (1831)	
Col. Bell	Colonial Secretary	President	President (1831)	
P.B. Borchers	Judge of Police and resident Magistrate	Council	Member	Member
Hon. Justice Burton	Master of Judicial Establishment, Masters Office	Vice-President	Council (1829)	
Major Cloete	Town Major of Cape Town and Major of Brigade	Council	Council (1831)	
Dr. Dyce	Army Surgeon	Secretary	Secretary (1831)	
Dr. Fairbridge	Civilian Surgeon	Council		Council (1831)
Rev. A. Faure	Minister	Council	Council (1831)	President (1831)
F. H. Hertzog	Assistant surveyor	Council	Council (1831)	Member
Dr. Leisching	Civilian Doctor	Council		Council (1831)
W. Leisching	Merchant	Council		Treasurer (1831)
W. Mackrill	Colonial official	Council	Council (1831)	Member
Major Mitchell	Surveyor General	Council	Council (1831)	
Dr. Murray	Army Surgeon	Vice-President	Vice-President (1831)	
J. H. Neethling	Advocate	Vice-President		President (1831)
Capt. Stockenstrom	Colonial official	Vice-President	Member	President (1831)
J. W. Stoll	Accountant General	Council	Vice-President (1831)	
C. F. H. von Ludwig	Other	Council	Vice-President (1831)	Council
Lieut.-Col. Wade	Acting Military Secretary	Council	Member	
F. S. Watermeyer	Colonial official	Treasurer	Treasurer	Council

Membership list drawn from notice in the *Advertiser* (VIII:532, 18 July, 11832). Occupations, positions and affiliations are drawn from membership lists in *Appendices* and *Cape Almanacs*. See *Appendix A* for methodology used in categorising occupations.

**Table 5.2 The Committee of the Association for the Exploration of Central Africa, June, 1833**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> SALS</b>	<b>SAI</b>	<b>LSI</b>
Rev. Dr. E. J. Burrow	Secretary	Minister			Yes
J. C. Chase	Secretary	Businessman	Yes		Yes
Ewan Christian		Businessman	Yes		Yes
Major A. J. Cloete	Sub-Committee	Army Officer		Yes	Yes
Dr. J. W. Fairbridge	Sub-Committee	Civilian Doctor	Yes		Yes
Rev. A. Faure		Minister	Yes	Yes	Yes
W. Liesching		Businessman	Yes		Yes
J. W. Mackrill		Colonial official	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sir C. Malcome	Sub-Committee	Royal Navy officer, visiting From East (possibly India)			
Major C. C. Michell	Sub-Committee	Surveyor General		Yes	Yes
H. G. Muntingh		Businessman		Yes	
Dr. J. Murray		Army Doctor		Yes	Yes
A. Oliphant		Attorney General		Yes	Yes
J. W. Stoll		Accountant General		Yes	Yes
George Thompson	Firm appointed Treasurers	Businessman	Yes		Yes
J. H. Tredgold		Apothecary	Yes	Yes	Yes
C. F. H. von Ludwig		Other	Yes	Yes	Yes
Col. Wade		Acting Military Secretary (later Acting Governor)		Yes	Yes
F. S. Watermeyer		Colonial official	Yes	Yes	Yes

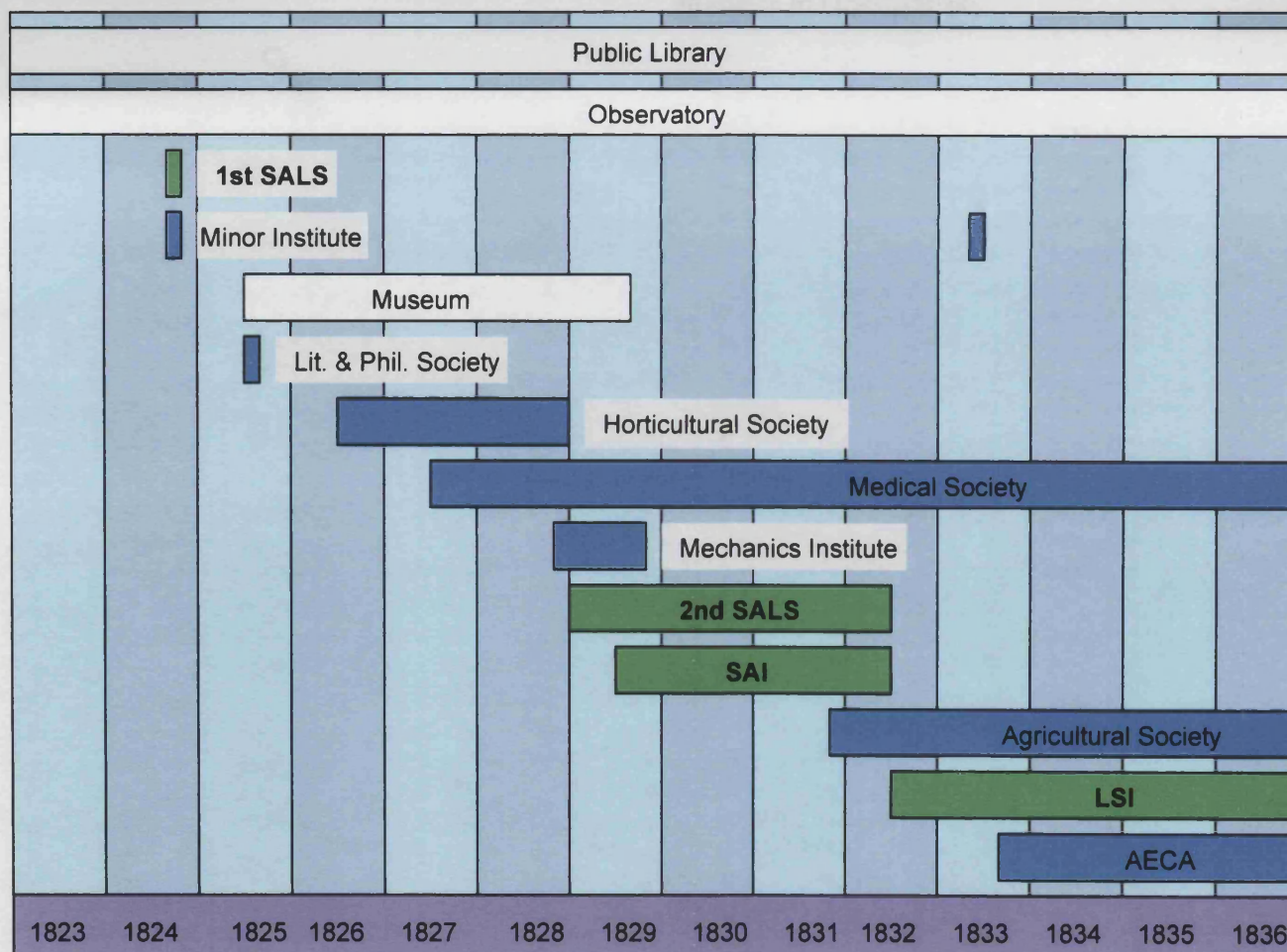
Membership is drawn from AECA (1833b). Occupations, positions and affiliations are drawn from membership lists in Appendices and Cape Almanacs. See Appendix A for methodology used in categorising occupations.

**Table 5.3 Members of the South African Literary and Scientific Institution with known Scientific and Literary Interests**

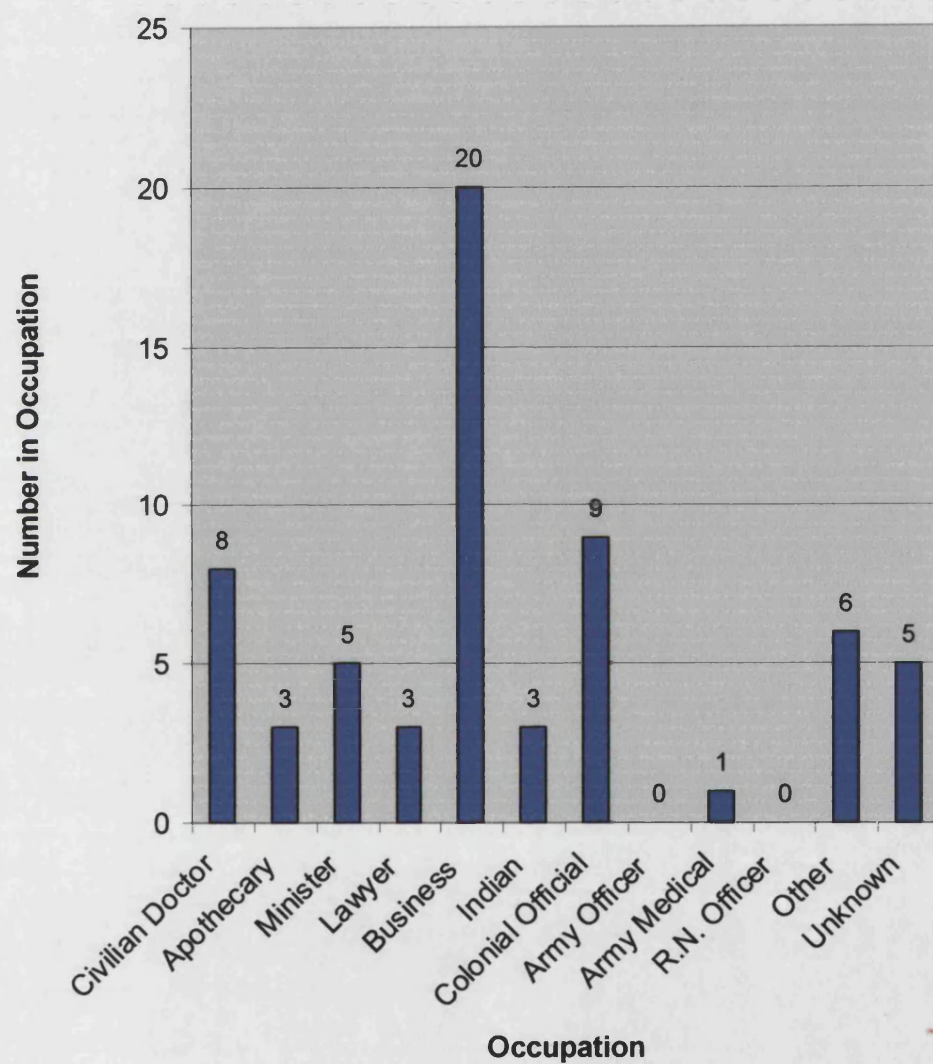
<b>Name</b>	<b>Known Areas of Interest</b>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>SAI</b>	<b>2nd SALS</b>
Rev. Dr. J. C. Adamson	Mathematics, Technology and Physics	Secretary	Minister	Yes	
Rev. E. J. Burrow	Natural History and F.R.S.	Council	Minister		
J. C. Chase	History, Exploration	Council	Other		Yes
D. J. Cloete	Article on viticulture in SAQJ	Member	Colonial official	Yes	
C. F. Ecklon	Botanist	Member	Other (Botanist & Apothecary)		Yes
Dr. J. W. Fairbridge	Anthropology and Meteorology	Council	Civilian Doctor		Yes
Rev. A. Faure	Writer and journal editor	Council	Minister	Yes	Yes
Dr. William Gill	Botany	Subscriber	Civilian Doctor		
Sir John Herschel	Astronomer, Natural History and F.R.S.	President	Other		
A. J. Jardine	Natural History, article on Seals in SAQJ.	Member	Other	Yes	
Thomas Maclear	Astronomer F.R.S.	Council	Other		
Dr. John Philip	Science and religion	Council	Minister		Yes
Dr. John Murray	Article in on "Lock Jaw" in <i>Literary Gazette</i>	Vice-President	Army Doctor	Yes	
John Reid	Chemistry and Collector of Curiosities	Subscriber	Other	Yes	
George Rex	Botany (Gunn & Codd, 1981)	Subscriber	Businessman		
Dr. Andrew Smith	Natural History	Secretary	Army Doctor	Yes	
J. H. Tredgold	Chemistry/Geology	Council	Apothecary	Yes	Yes
Jules Pierre Verreaux	Natural History	Member	Other	Yes	
Edward Verreaux	Natural History, Ornithology	Member	Other	Yes	
C. M. Villet	Natural History	Member	Other	Yes	
W. L. von Buchenroder	Intellectual and Published an Article on earthquakes	Member	Other (Farmer)	Yes	Yes
C. F. H. von Ludwig	Botany, Horticulture, Natural History	Vice-President	Other	Yes	Yes

This list is compiled from the membership of the LSI, as given in *Appendix ED*, the *DSAB*, Gunn and Codd (1981), the *Advertiser*, the *Literary Gazette*, the *Quarterly Journal*, the *Cape Almanac*, *de Lima's Almanac* and Burrows (1958). See Appendix A for methodology used in categorising occupations.

Chart 1.1: Scientific Societies in Early Nineteenth Century Cape Town



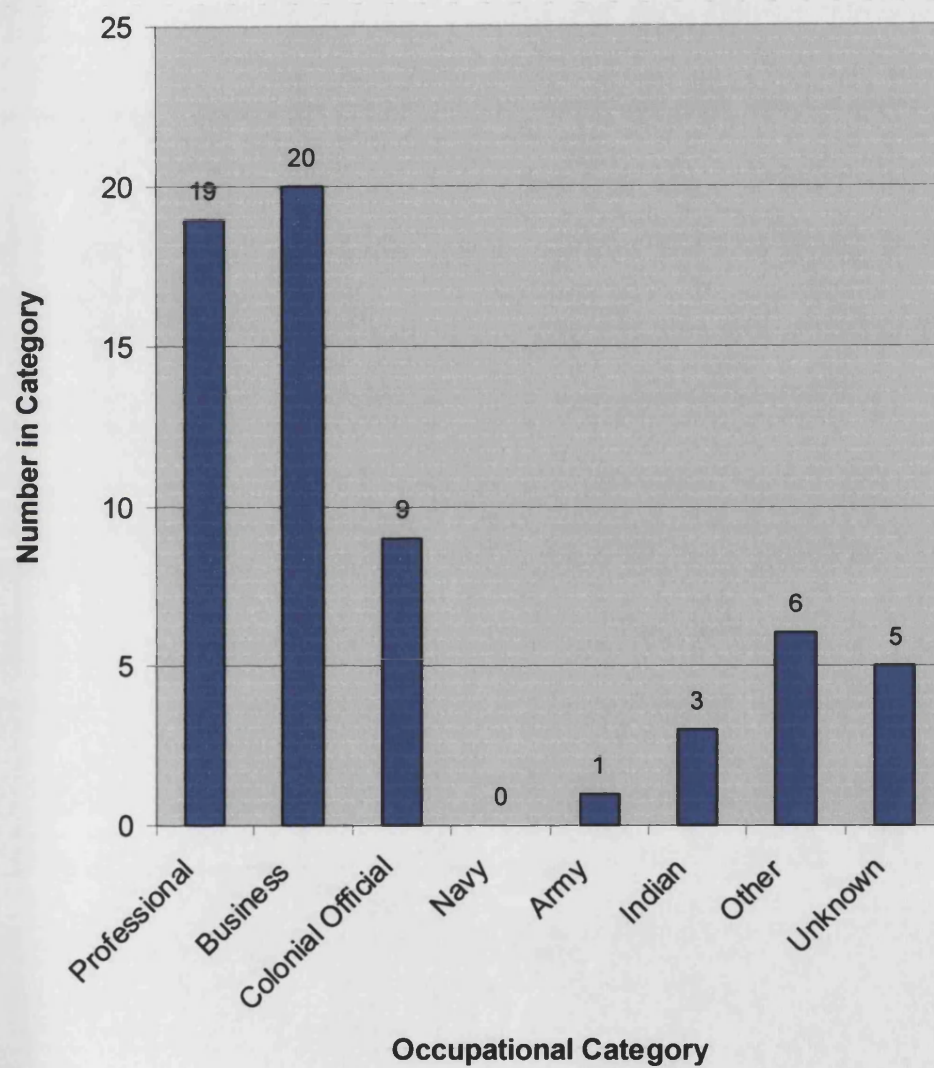
**Chart 2.1 Breakdown of 1st SALS Membership by Occupation**  
(For all 63 Signatories)



Data drawn from *Appendix D*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary.

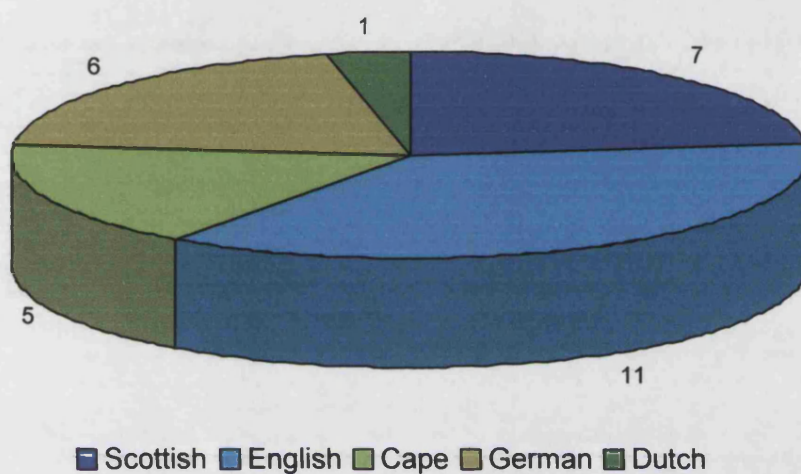


**Chart 2.2: Breakdown of 1st SALS Membership by Occupational Category**  
(For all 63 Signatories)



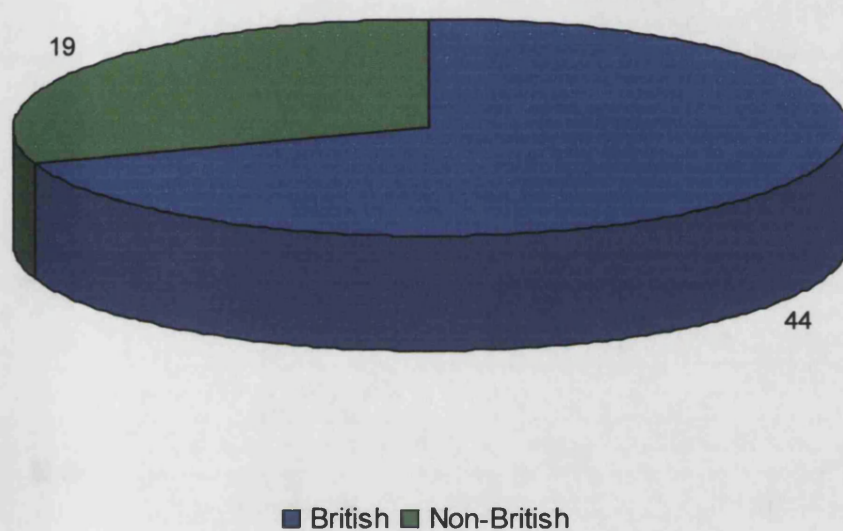
Data drawn from *Appendix D*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary.

**Chart 2.3: Breakdown of 1st SALS Membership by National Origin, where known**  
(For 30 out of 63 Members)



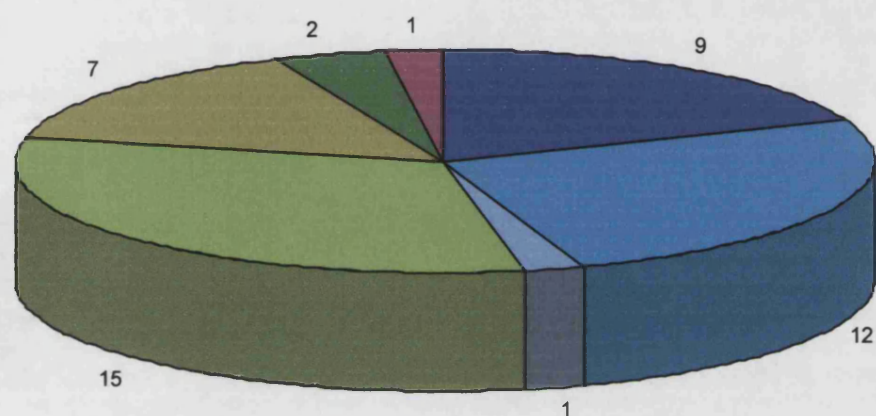
Data drawn from *Appendix D*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary.

**Chart 2.4: Breakdown of 1st SALS Membership by  
National Origin, complete data**  
(For all 63 Members)



Data drawn from *Appendix D*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary, especially for sources of national origins.

**Chart 3.1: Breakdown of 2nd SALS Membership by National Origin, where known**  
(For 47 out of 104 Members)



■ Scottish ■ English ■ Irish ■ Cape ■ German ■ Dutch ■ Danish

Data drawn from *Appendix E*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary.

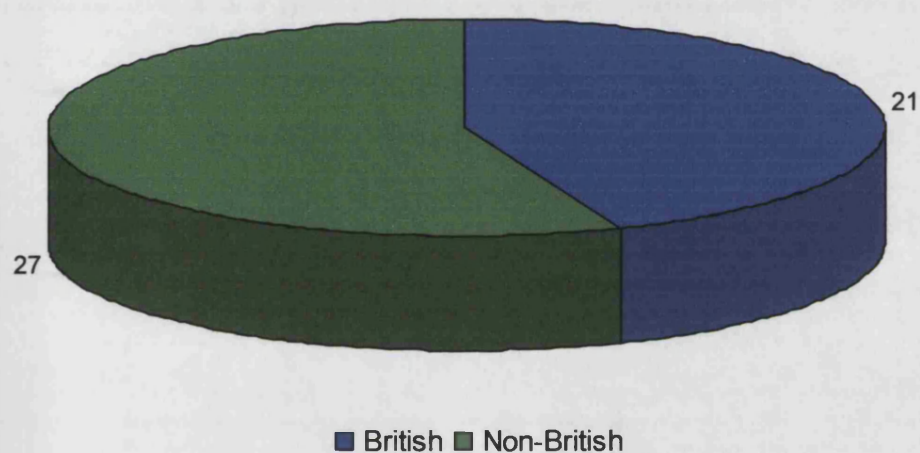


**Chart 3.2: Breakdown of 2nd SALS Membership by  
National Origin, complete data**  
(For all 104 Members)



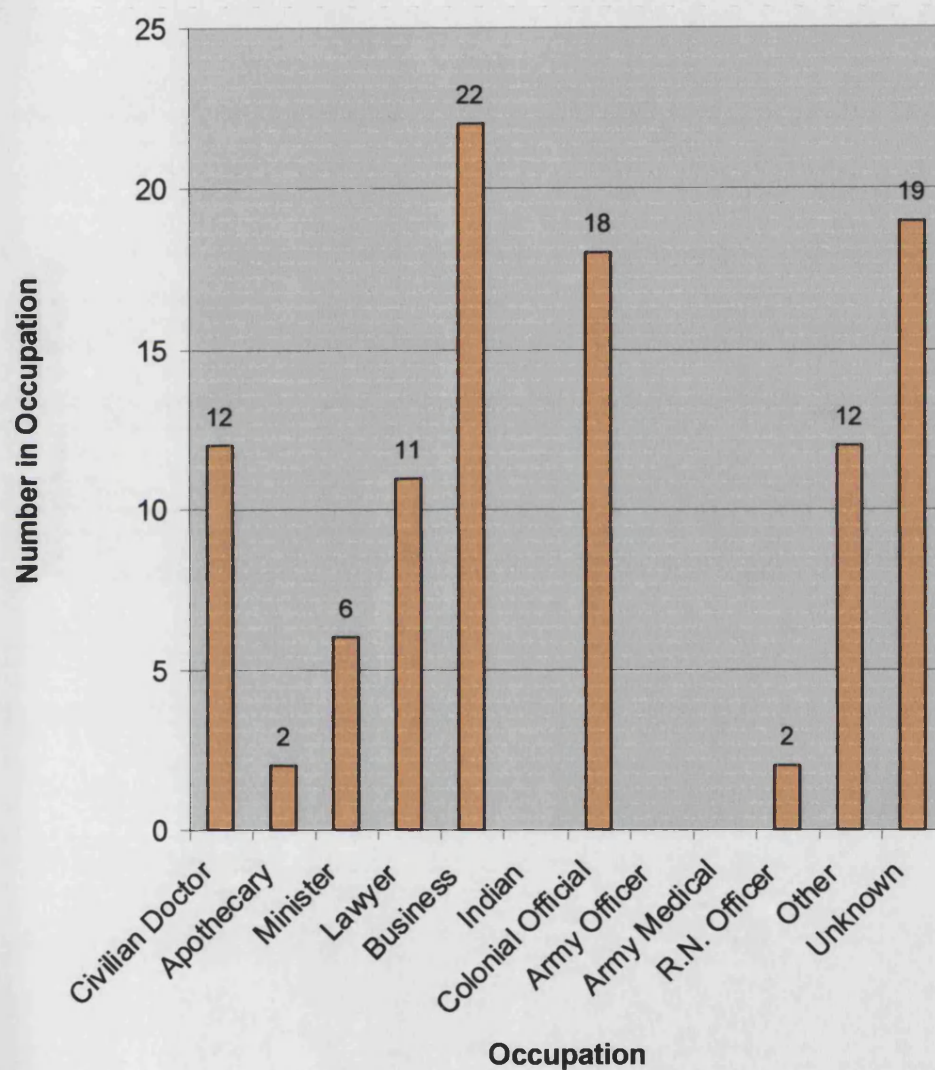
Data drawn from *Appendix E*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary, especially for sources of national origins.

**Chart 3.3: Breakdown of Signatories to the 29th of May 1829 Application for a License for the 2nd SALS by National Origin, complete data**  
(For all 48 Signatories)



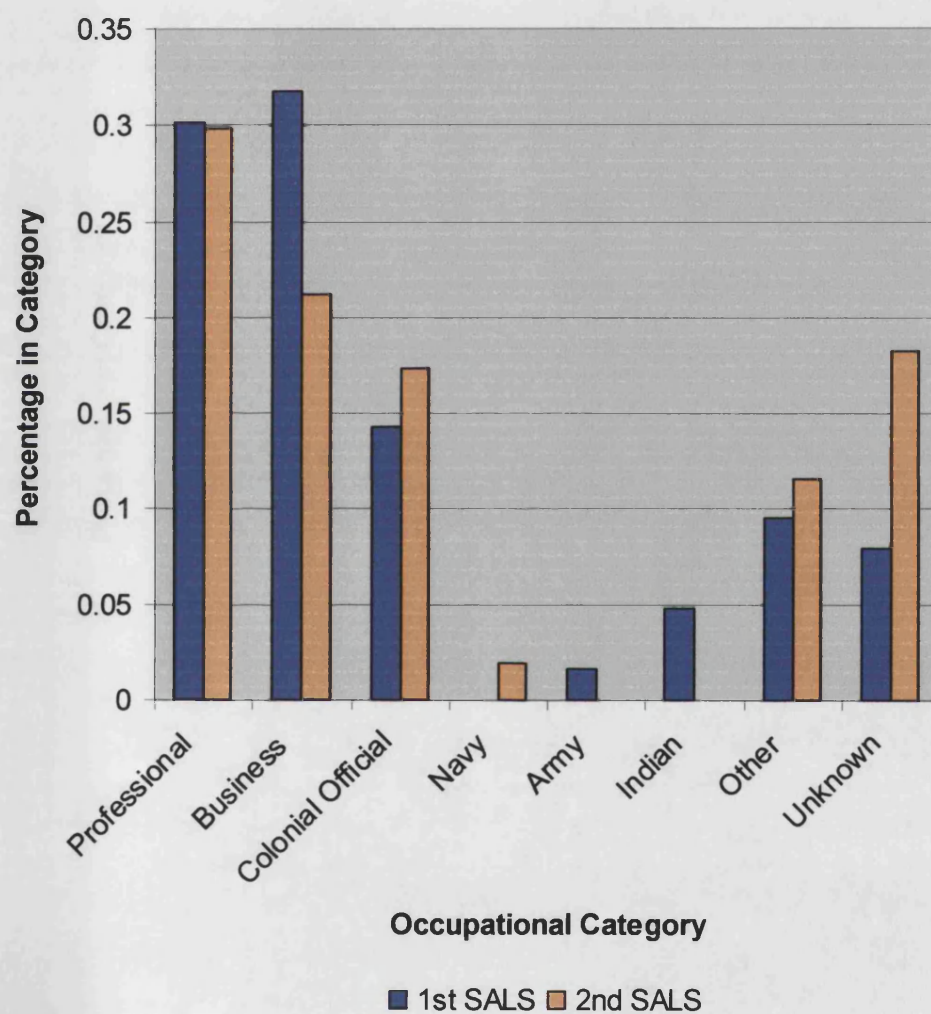
Data drawn from SALS (1830). See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary, especially for sources of national origins.

**Chart 3.4: Breakdown of 2nd SALS Membership by Occupation**  
(For all 104 Members)



Data drawn from *Appendix E*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary

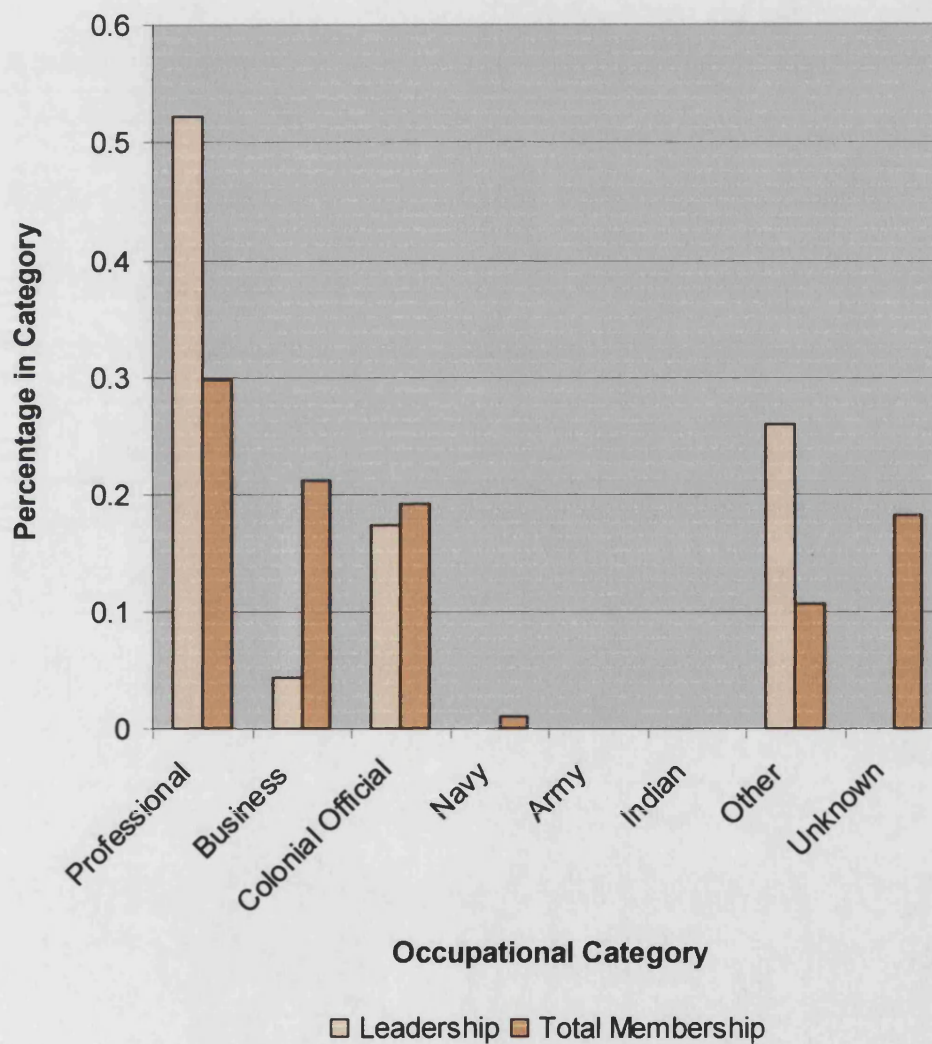
**Chart 3.5: Comparison of the 1st and 2nd SALS Memberships Broken Down by Occupational Category**  
 (For 63 Members of 1st SALS and 104 Members of 2nd SALS)



Data drawn from *Appendix D* and *E*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary

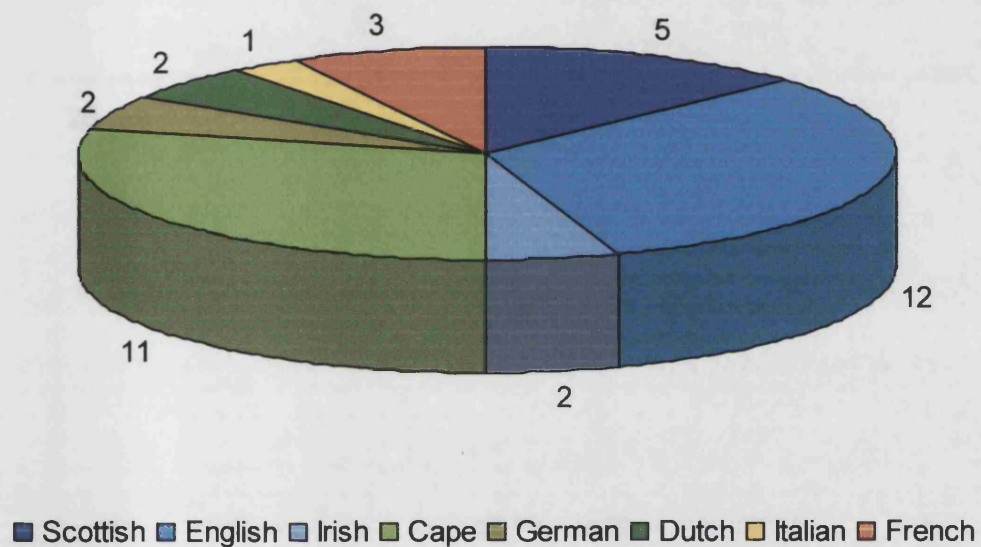


**Chart 3.6: Comparison of 2nd SALS Leadership and Membership Broken Down by Occupational Category**  
(For 23 in Leadership and 104 in Membership)



Data drawn from *Appendix E*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary

**Chart 4.1: Breakdown of SAI Membership by  
National Origin, where known  
(For 38 out of 69 Members)**



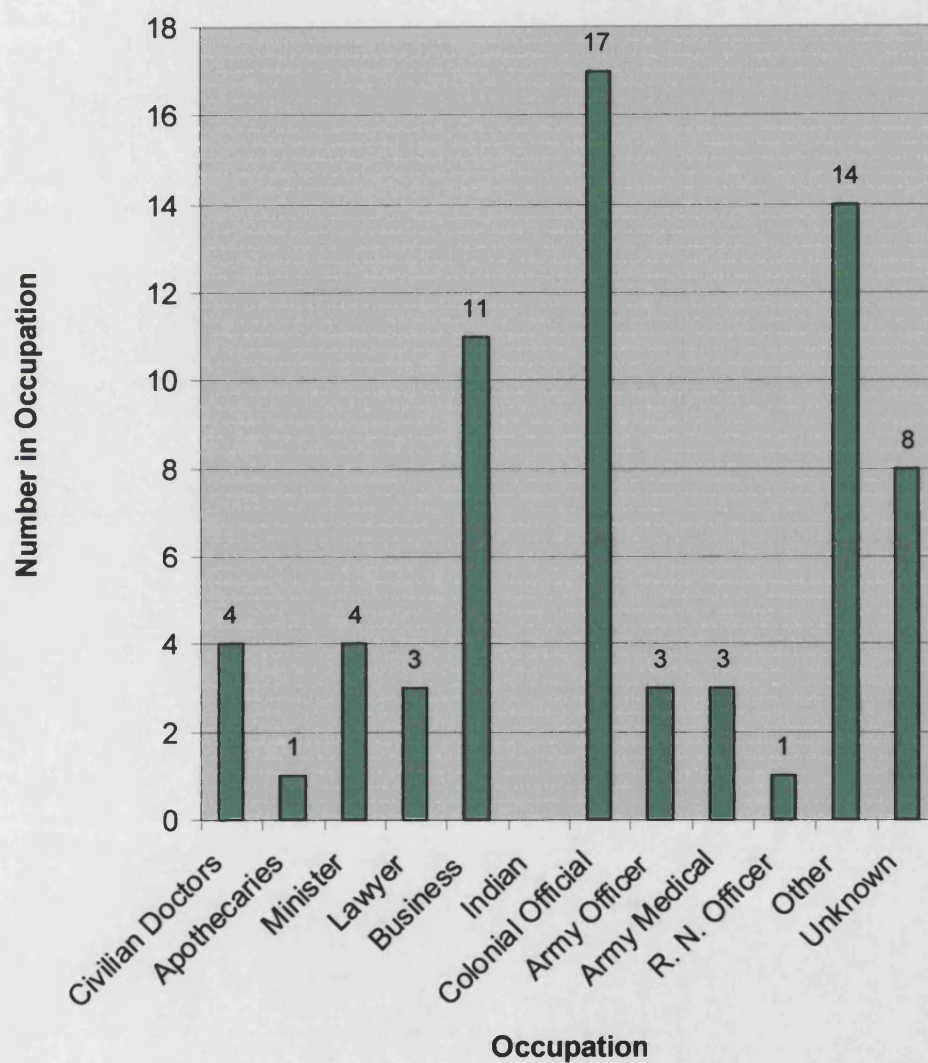
Data drawn from *Appendix F*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary.

**Chart 4.2: Breakdown of SAI Membership by  
National Origin, complete data**  
(For all 69 Members)



Data drawn from *Appendix F*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary, especially for sources of national origins.

**Chart 4.3: Breakdown of SAI Membership by Occupation**  
(For 69 Members)

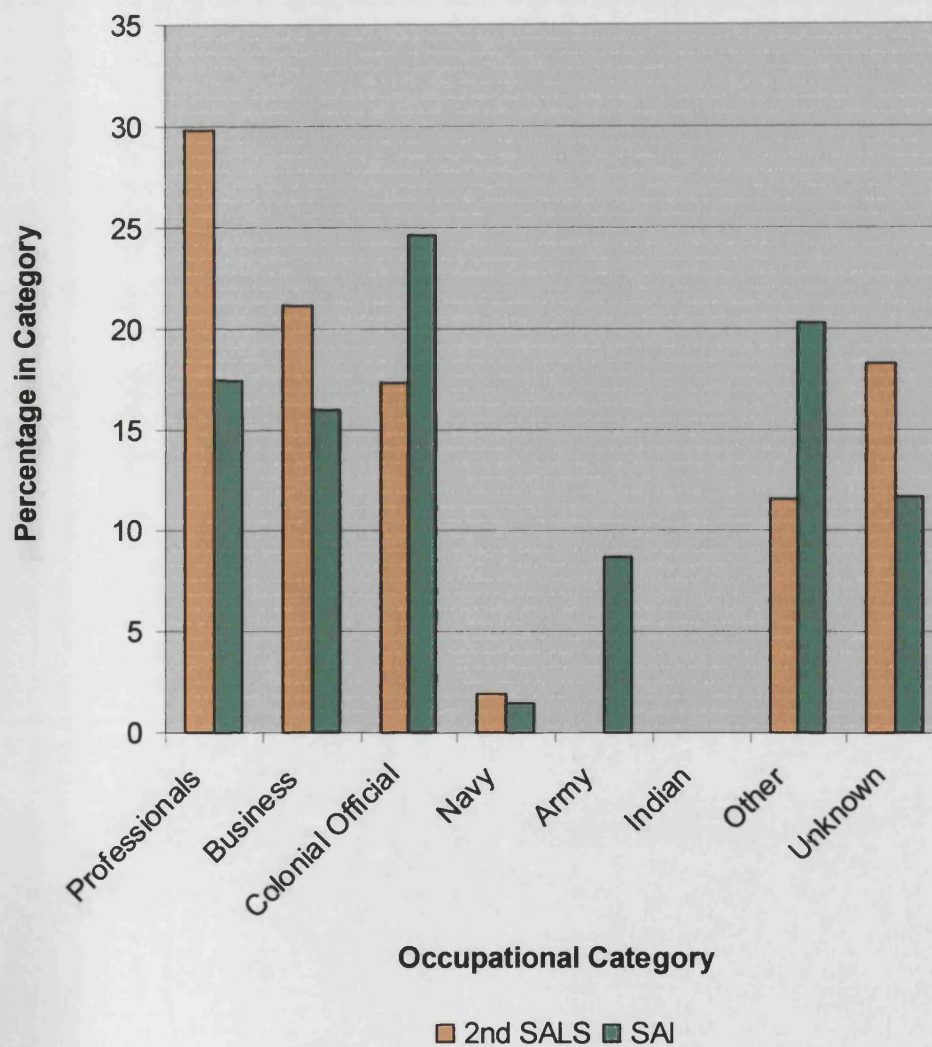


Data drawn from *Appendix F*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary.



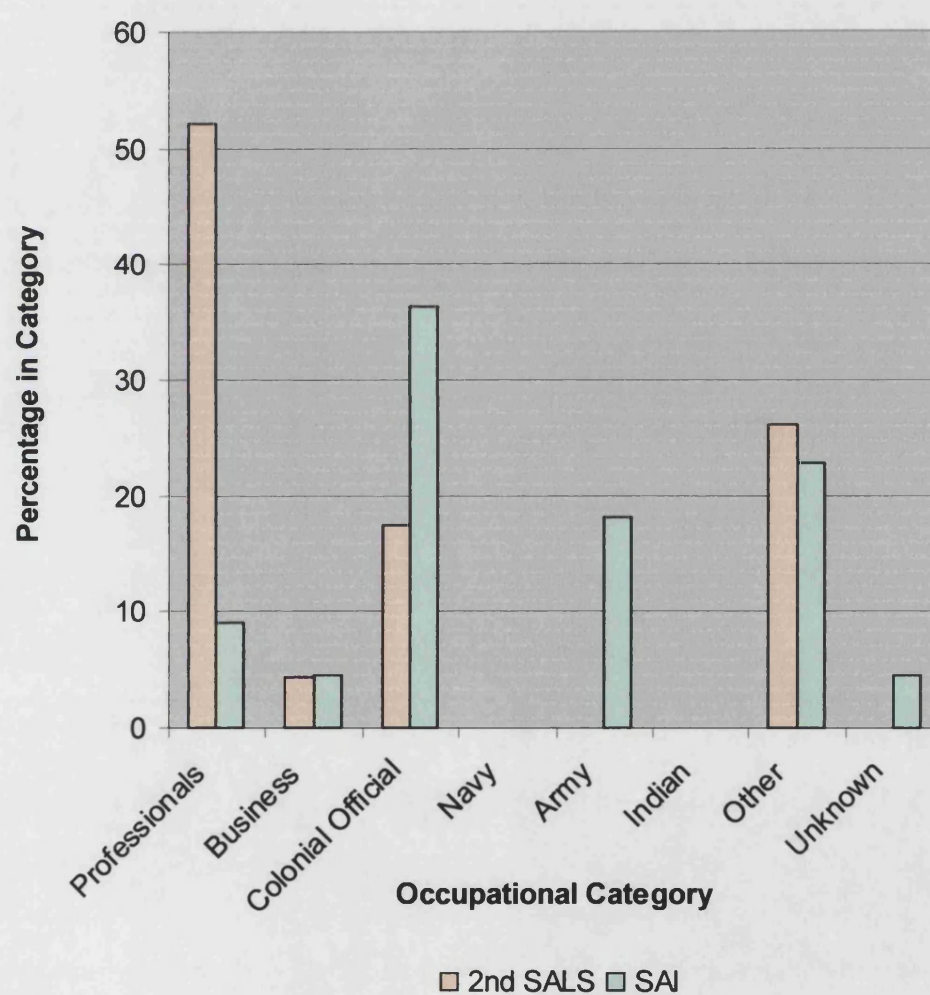
**Chart 4.4: Comparison of 2nd SALS and SAI  
Membership Broken Down by Occupational  
Category**

(For 104 Members of the 2nd SALS and 69 of the SAI)



Data drawn from *Appendix E* and *F*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary.

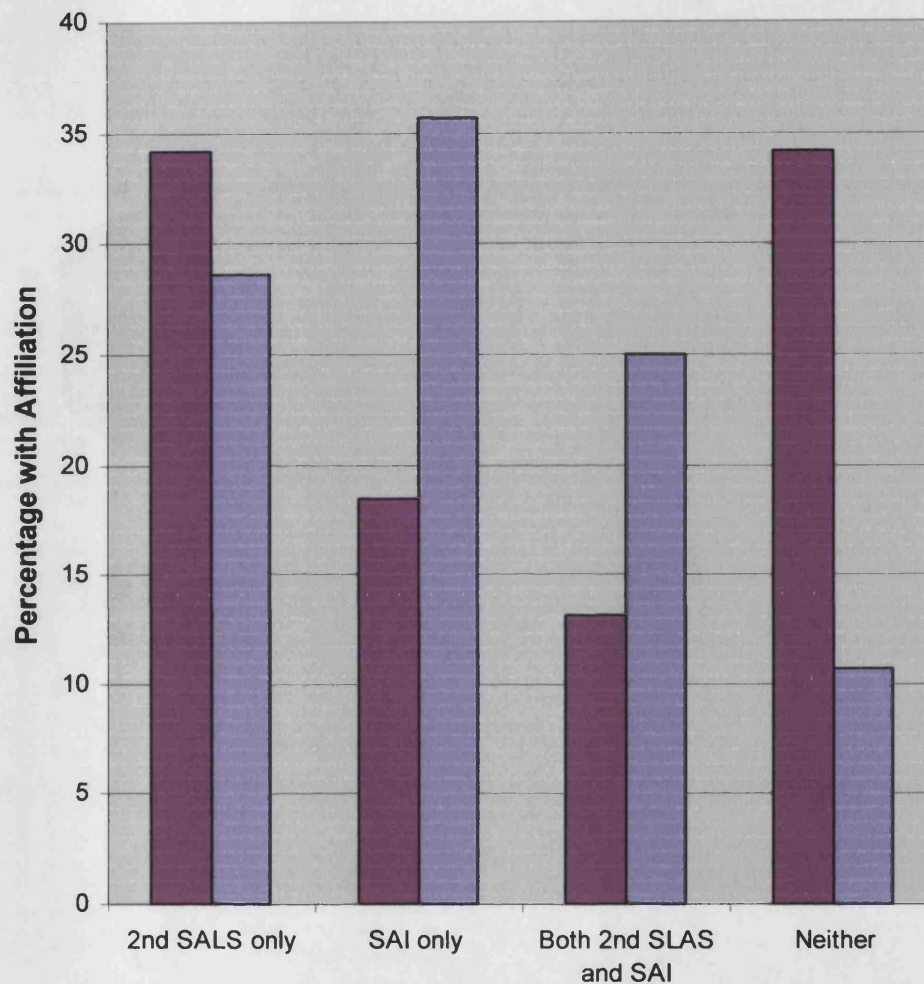
**Chart 4.5: Comparison of 2nd SALS and SAI  
Leadership Broken Down by Occupational  
Category**  
(For 23 in 2nd SALS and 21 in SAI)



Data drawn from *Appendix E* and *F*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary.

**Chart 5.1: Previous Affiliations of LSI Membership and Leadership**

(For total Membership of 114 men and Leadership of 28)

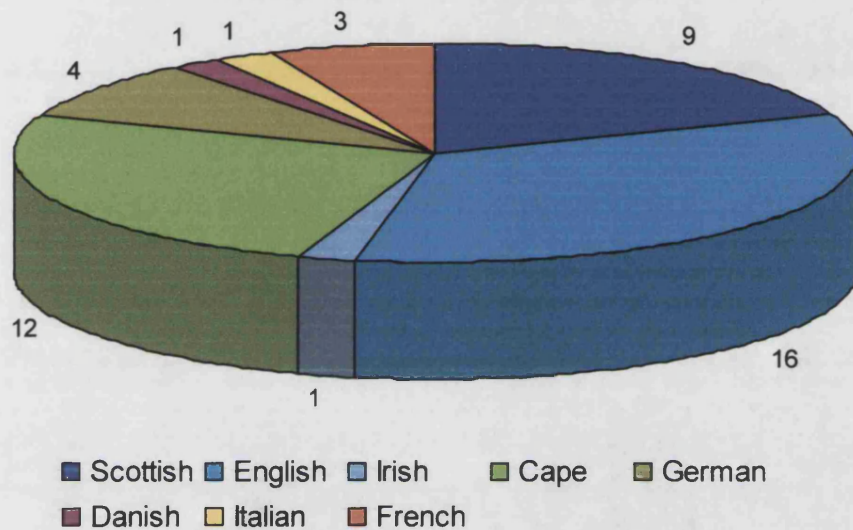


**Membership of the 2nd SALS and the SAI**

■ Total membership ■ Leadership

Data drawn from *Appendix E, F and G*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary.

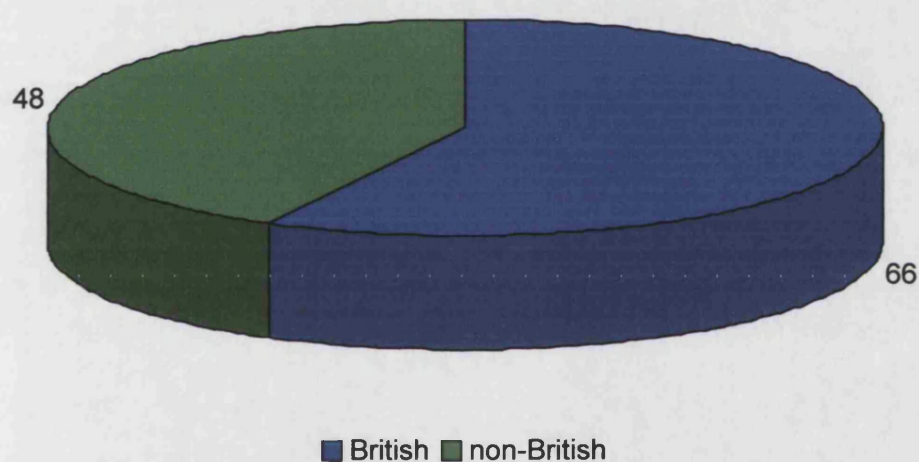
**Chart 5.2: Breakdown for LSI Membership by National Origin, where known**  
 (for the 47 men with confirmed place of birth, out of a total of 114 members)



Data drawn from *Appendix G*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary.

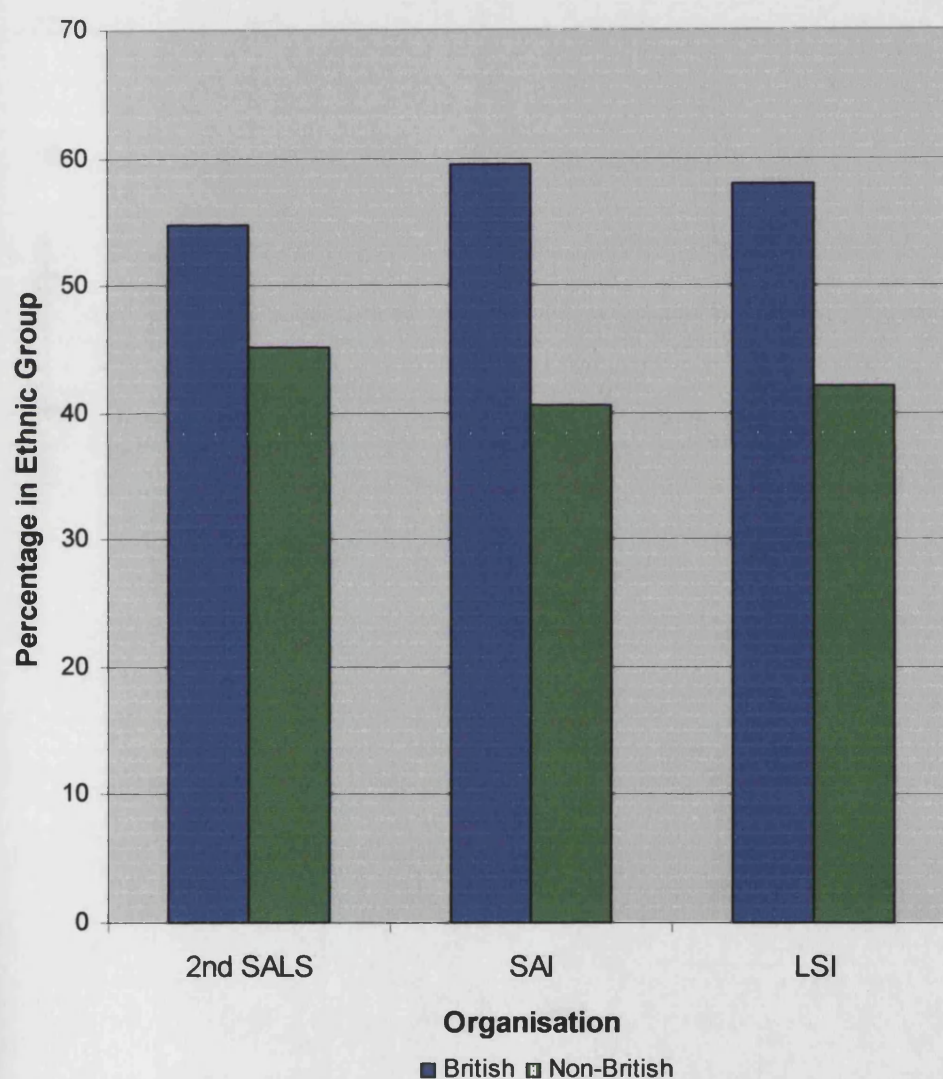


**Chart 5.3: Breakdown for LSI Membership by  
National Origin, complete data**  
(For all 114 Members)

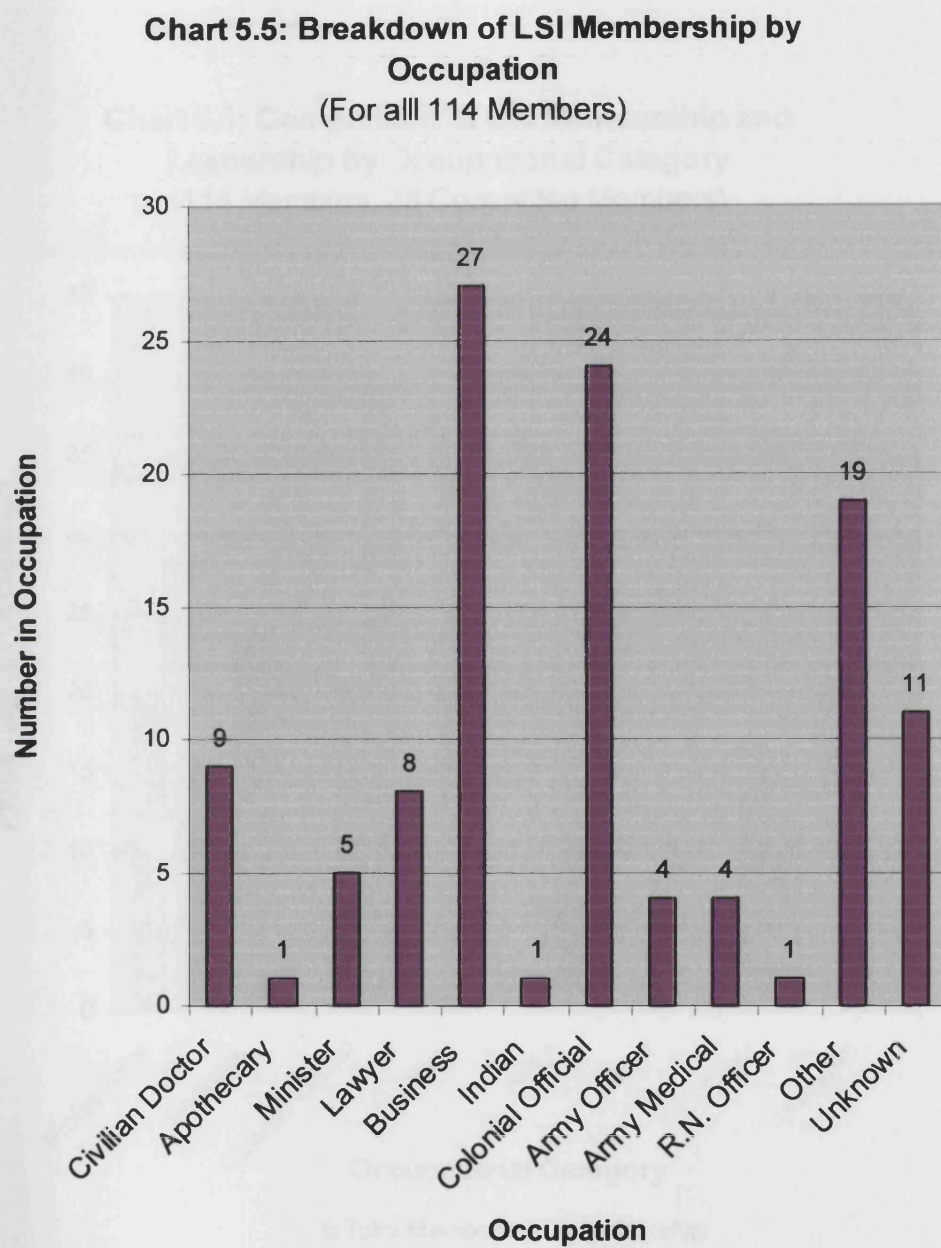


Data drawn from *Appendix G*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary, especially for sources of national origins.

**Chart 5.4: Comparison of 2nd SALS, SAI and LSI Memberships by National Origin**  
 (For total Membership of 2nd SALS of 104, of SAI of 69 and of LSI of 114)

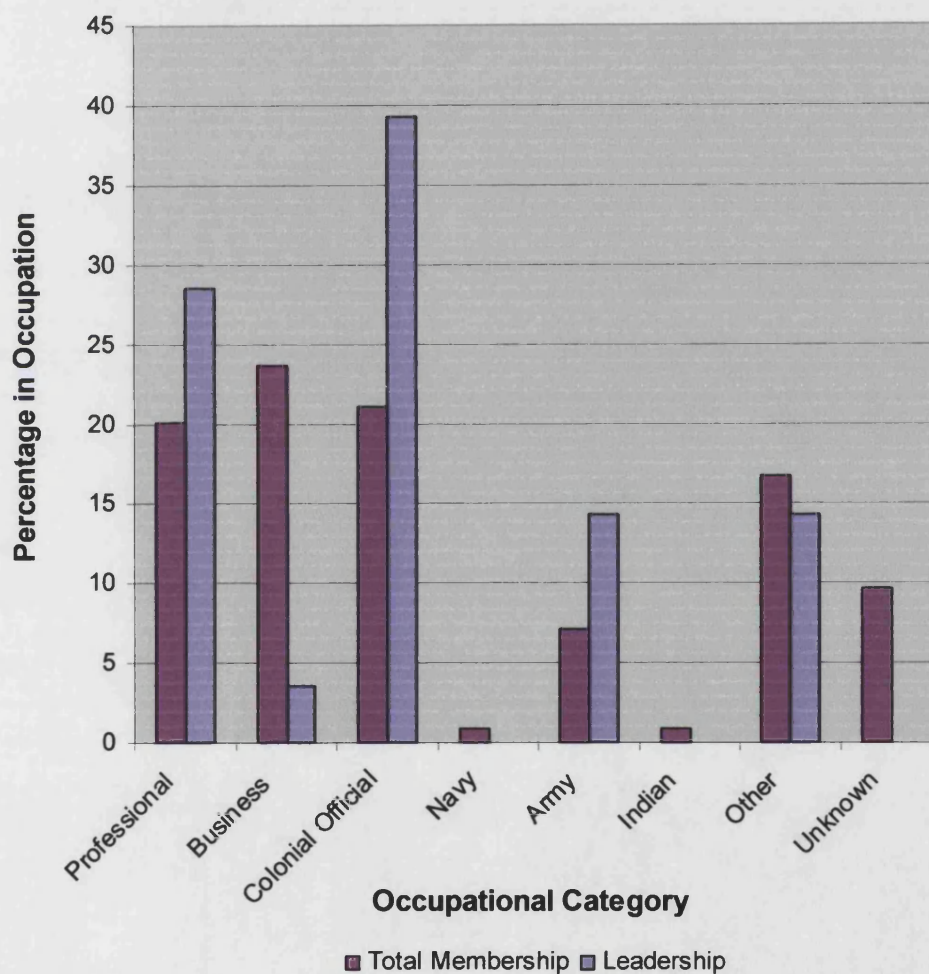


Data drawn from *Appendix G*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary.



Data drawn from *Appendix G*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary.

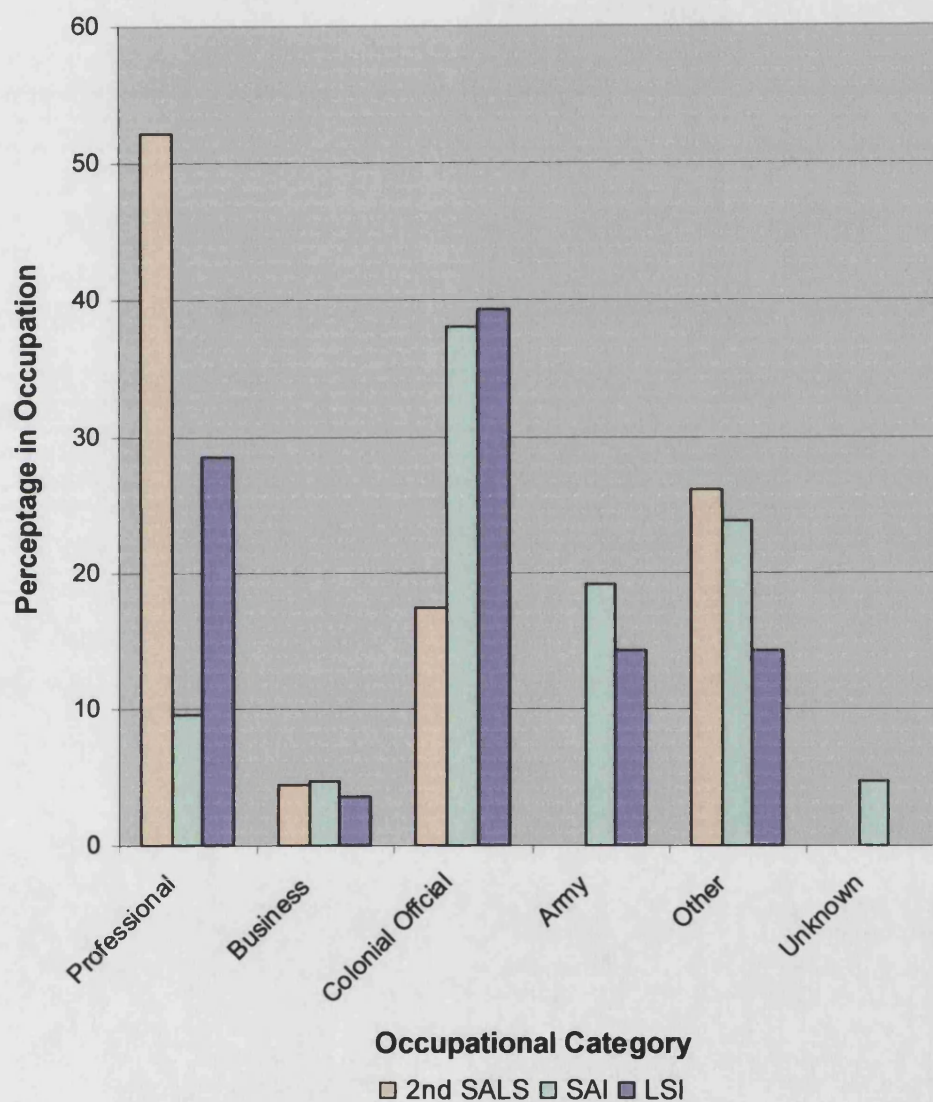
**Chart 5.6: Comparison of LSI Membership and Leadership by Occupational Category**  
(114 Members, 28 Committee Members)



Data drawn from *Appendix G*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary.



**Chart 5.7: Comparison of 2nd SALS, SAI and LSI  
Leaderships by Occupational Category**  
(23 men for 2nd SALS, 21 for SAI and 28 for LSI)



Data drawn from *Appendix E, F and G*. See *Appendix A* for methodological commentary.

# Appendix D Membership of the First South African Literary Society

Name	Occupation	Ethnicity	University	Membership of Later Organisations	
				2nd SALS	SAI
Abercrombie, Dr James	Civilian Doctor	Scottish		Member	
Atherstone, T.	Civilian Doctor	English			
Bailey, Samuel	Civilian Doctor	English		Member	
Blair, W. T.	Indian	B			
Borcherds, P. B.	Colonial Official	Cape		Council	
Christian, Ewan	Business	B		Member	
Cloete, Henry	Lawyer	Cape	Utr./Leid.	Council	Member
Collison, Francis	Business	English			Member
Collison, Rev. Henry	Minister*	B			
D'Escury, C.	Colonial Official	B			
Dickinson, Frederick		B			
Eaton, R. W.	Business	B			
Fairbairn, John	Other	Scottish	Edin.	Secretary	
Fairbridge, Dr. J. W.	Civilian Doctor	English	Aber.	Council	
Gadney, William	Business	B		Member	
Hancke, Henry	Other	B			
Herman, L.	Business	N-B		Member	
Heurtley, R.	Civilian Doctor	English			
Joubert, J. A.	Lawyer	N-B		Member	Vice-President
Knoble, J.	Colonial Official	German		Member	
Korsten, F.	Business	Dutch		Member	
Laing, John	Civilian Doctor	B	Edin.		Member
Liesching, C. F.	Apothecary	German	Tub./Got.	Member	
Liesching, F. L.	Civilian Doctor	German			
Liesching, William	Business	German		Treasurer	
Lind, J. J.	Colonial Official	N-B			
Maynard, Charles	Business	English			
Maynier, H.	Colonial Official	Cape		Member	
Miller, Capt. W.	Indian	B			
Monteath, J.	Business	B			
Moodie, Benjamin	Other	Scottish		Member	

Morrieson, R.	Indian	B			
O'Reilly, Edward	Army Medical	B			
Paton, George	Business	B		Member	Member
Philip, Rev. Dr. John	Minister	Scottish		Member	
Phillips, Benjamin		B		Member	
Pillans, C. S.	Business	Scottish		Member	
Poleman, P. H.	Apothecary	N-B			
Pringle, Thomas	Other	Scottish	Edin.	Corresponding	
Pugh, Herbert	Lawyer	B			
Reitz, G.		N-B		Member	
Robertson, W.	Other	Scottish		Member	
Robson, Rev. Adam	Minister*	B			
Rutherford, H. E.	Business	English		Member	
Simpson, John	Business	B		Member	
Simpson, Joseph	Business	B			
Smith, William		B		Member	
Thompson, George	Business	English		Member	Council
Thompson, W.	Business	English			
Thomson, John Robert	Business	English		Member	
Thornhill, C. T.		B			
Tredgold, J. H.	Apothecary	B		Council	Member
Truter, P. J.	Colonial Official	Cape	Leid.	Member	
Truter, Sir John	Colonial Official	Cape	Leid.	President	Member
Twentyman, Lawrence	Business	English		Member	
Twycross, S.	Business	B			
Versfeld, W. F.	Colonial Official	N-B			
von Buchenroder, W. L.	Other	German		Council	Member
(von) Ludwig, C. F. H.	Business	German		Council	Vice-President
von Manger, Rev. J. H.	Minister	N-B		Member	
Wentworth, C.	Civilian Doctor	B			
Witham, Lawrence	Colonial Official	B			
Wright, Rev. W.	Minister	B		Corresponding	

# Appendix E Membership of the Second South African Literary Society

Name	Occupation	National Origin	University	Membership and Positions		
				1829/1830	1830/1831	1831/1832
Abercrombie, Dr. James	Civilian Doctor	Scottish			Member	Member
Adamson, Rev. Dr. J. C.	Minister	Scottish	Edin.	[Founding Committee only]		
Atherstone, J.	Civilian Doctor	English			Member	
Bailey, Samuel	Civilian Doctor	English			Member	Member
Ballantine, W. T.	R.N. Doctor	B			Member	Member
Bance, Captain James.	R.N. (Port Captain)	B			Member	Member
Barker, John	Lawyer (& Colonial Official)	B			Committee	Committee
Batt, Henry		B			Member	Member
Beale, O.		B			Member	
Becker, F.		B			Member	
Bird, Lt.-Col. C.	Colonial Official	English			Member	Member
Borcherds, P. B.	Colonial Official	Cape			Member	Member
Borcherds, Rev. M.	Minister	Dutch			Member	Member
Brand, C. J.	Lawyer	Cape	Leid./Edin.		Committee	Committee
Brown, Alexander	Civilian Doctor	B				Member
Burton, W. W.	Colonial Official	English		President	President	President
Buyskes, E. A.	Colonial Official	N-B			Member	
Campbell, P. L.	Civilian Doctor	Irish			Member	
Carter, John	Civilian Doctor (Dentist)	B				Member
Chase, J. C.	Other	English				Member
Christian, Ewan	Business	B			Member	Member
Cloete, Henry	Lawyer	Cape	Utr./Leid.		Committee	Member
Cloete, Jacob		N-B			Member	Member
de Wet, J	Lawyer	N-B	Leid.			
de Wet, J.C.		N-B				
Ebden, John B.	Business	English			Member	Member
Ecklon, C. F.	Other	Danish			Member	Member
Fairbairn, John	Other	Scottish	Edin.	Secretary	Secretary	Secretary
Fairbridge, Dr. J. W.	Civilian Doctor	English	Aber.		Committee	Committee
Faure, A (LL.D.)	Lawyer*	Cape			Member	Member



Faure, A. (sen.)		Cape			Member	Member
Faure, Rev. A.	Minister	Cape	Utr./Gop.	President	President	President
Ford, George	Other	B			Member	
Gadney, William	Business	B			Member	Member
Gray, Alexander	Business	B				Member
Greig, George	Other	English			Member	Committee
Harmsen, P.	Other	N-B			Librarian	Librarian
Herman, L.	Business	N-B			Member	Member
Herman, W. F.		N-B			Member	Member
Hertzog, W. F.	Colonial Official	Cape			Member	Member
Hewitt, H.	Business	B			Member	Member
Hoffmeyr, J. J.	Lawyer	N-B		Secretary	Secretary	Secretary
Hohne, P. D.	Colonial Official	N-B			Member	Member
Horak, J. M.		N-B			Member	Member
Innes, J. R.	Other	Scottish	Aber.			Secretary
Jones, Richard P.		B				Member
Joubert, J. A.	Lawyer	Cape			Member	Member
Knoble, J.	Colonial Official	German			Member	
Korsten, F.	Business	Dutch			Member	
Kuhnhard, D.		N-B			Member	Member
le Sueur, John A.	Colonial Official	B			Member	Member
Liesching, C. F.	Apothecary	German			Member	Member
Liesching, jun. Dr. Lewis	Civilian Doctor	German	Tub./Got.		Committee	Committee
Liesching, William	Business	N-B			Treasurer	Treasurer
Loedolff, R. J.		N-B			Member	Member
Lorents, Charles Baron de	Colonial Official	N-B			Member	Member
Macartney, Henry	Civilian Doctor	B				Member
Mackay, William M.	Colonial Official	Scottish			Member	Member
Mackrill, J. W.		B			Member	Member
Maynier, H.	Colonial Official	Cape			Member	
Moodie, Benjamin	Other	Scottish			Member	Member
Neethling, J. H.	Lawyer	Cape	Leid.		Committee	President
Nichols, R. P.	Colonial Official	B				Member

Norton, Edward	Business	B		Member	
Pappe, L.	Civilian Doctor	German			Member
Paton, George	Business	B		Member	
Pears, Rev. J.	Other	Scottish	Aber.		Committee
Philip, Rev. Dr. Philip	Minister	Scottish		Member	Member
Phillips, Benjamin	Business	B		Member	Member
Pillans, C. S.	Business	Scottish		Member	
Plouvier, A. J. L.	Lawyer	N-B			Member
Price, J. F.		B		Member	
Prince, G. W.	Business	B			Member
Reitz, G.		N-B		Member	Member
Richards, Thomas		B		Member	Member
Rishton, Rev. J.	Minister	B		Committee	Committee
Robertson, W.	Other	Scottish		Member	Member
Rutherford, H. E.	Business	English		Member	Member
Saundby, H.		B		Member	Member
Simpson, Joseph	Business	B		Member	Member
Skirrow, John	Colonial Official	B			Member
Smith, William	Colonial Official	B		Member	Member
Smuts, J. J. L.	Business	N-B		Member	Member
Staedel, F. H.	Lawyer	N-B			Member
Stockenstrom, Capt. A.	Colonial Official	Cape	President	President	President
Sutherland, Thomas	Business	B		Member	Member
Thalwitzer, M.	Business	N-B		Member	Member
Thompson, George	Business	English		Member	
Thomson, John Robert	Business	English		Member	Member
Thornhill, John		B		Member	Member
Tredgold, J. H.	Apothecary	B		Committee	Committee
Truter, O. J.	Lawyer	Cape		Member	
Truter, P. J.	Colonial Official	Cape	Leid.	Member	
Truter, Sir John	Colonial Official	Cape	Leid.	President	Member
Twentyman, Lawrence	Business	English		Member	Member
Venning, S. B.	Business	B		Member	Member

Venning, W. A.		B		Member	
Versfeld, Dr. Jacob	Civilian Doctor	Cape	Edin./Glas.	Member	Member
Versveld, John		N-B		Member	Member
von Buchenroder, W. L.	Other	German		Committee	Member
von Horstock, H. B.	Civilian Doctor	N-B		Member	
von Ludwig, C. F. H.	Other	German		Committee	Committee
von Manger, Rev. J. H.	Minister	German		Member	
Watermeyer, F. S.	Colonial Official	N-B		Committee	Committee
Wright, Rev. W.	Minister	B	Secretary		

\* = uncertain

# Appendix F Membership of the South African Institution

Name	Occupation	Ethnicity	University	Membership and Positions		
				1829/1830	1830/1831	1831/1832
Adamson, Rev. Dr. J.	Minister	Scottish	Edin.	Secretary	Secretary	Secretary
Bailey, Dr. Samuel	Civilian Doctor	English			Member	
Balfour	Army Officer	B			Member	
Bance, Capt. J.	Royal Navy	B			Member	
Beddy	Other	B	Trin.		Member	
Bell, Lt.-Col. John	Colonial Official	B		President	President	President
Biel	Other	N-B			Member	
Borcherds, Rev. M.	Minister	Dutch			Member	
Bowie, James	Other	English			Member	Committee
Brink, J.	Business	N-B			Member	
Brink, P. G.	Colonial Official	Cape			Member	
Burton, Clerke	Colonial Official	English		Committee	Member	
Buyskes, E. A.	Colonial Official	N-B			Member	
Chiappini, Anthony	Business	Italian			Member	
Cloete, Daniel J.	Colonial Official	Cape			Member	Committee
Cloete, Henry	Lawyer	Cape	Utr./Leid.		Member	
Cloete, Major A. J.	Army Officer	Cape		Committee	Committee	Committee
Collison, Francis	Business	English			Member	
Cooke, Rev I	Minister*	B			Member	
Crozier	Colonial Official	Irish			Member	
Dickinson, Frederick	Colonial Official	B			Member	
Dundas, Major	Army Officer	Scottish			Member	
Dyce, Dr. Robert	Army Medical	B		Committee	Secretary	Secretary
Ebden, John B.	Business	English			Member	
Fallows, Rev. Fearon	Other	English	Camb.	Vice-Pres	Member	
Faure, Rev. A. C.	Minister	Cape	Utr./Gosp.	Member	Committee	Committee
Gie, J.		N-B			Member	
Gill	Civilian Doctor	B	Glasgow	Member		
Hamilton		B			Member	
Hawkins, William	Business	Irish			Member	

Hertzog, H.		N-B			Member	
Hertzog, W. F.	Colonial Official	Cape		Committee	Committee	Committee
Holloway, Lt.-Col.	Army Officer	English	RMA Wool.		Member	
Jardine, A. J.	Other	Scottish			Member	
Jones, J.		B			Member	
Joubert, J. A.	Lawyer	N-B		Vice-Pres	Vice-Pres	Vice-Pres
Judge, Rev. E.	Other	English	Camb.		Member	
Laing, Dr. John	Civilian Doctor	B	Edin.		Member	
Mackrill, J. W.		B		Committee	Committee	Committee
Michell, Major C. C.	Colonial Official	English		Committee		Committee
Miller		B			Member	
Muntingh	Business	Dutch			Member	
Murray, Dr. John	Army Medical	B		Committee	Vice-Pres	Vice-Pres
Nisbet	Business	B			Member	
Norton, Edward	Business	B			Member	
Nourse, Henry	Business	English			Member	
Oliphant, A.	Colonial Official	Scottish		Vice-Pres	Vice-Pres	
Paton, George	Business	B			Member	
Poupart, P. A.	Lawyer	B			Member	
Reed [or Reid], John	Other	B			Committee	Committee
Reits		N-B			Member	
Ronald, Capt.	Other	B			Member	
Skirrow, John	Colonial Official	B			Member	
Smith, Dr. Andrew	Army Medical	Scottish	Edin.	Secretary	Secretary	
Stockenstrom, Capt. A.	Colonial Official	Cape			Member	
Stoll, J. W.	Colonial Official	Cape		Vice-Pres	Vice-Pres	Vice-Pres
Thompson, George	Business	English			Committee	Committee
Tredgold, J. H.	Apothecary	B		Member		
Truter, Sir John	Colonial Official	Cape	Leid.		Member	
van Breda, M	Other	Cape		Committee	Committee	Committee
Verreaux, Eduard	Other	French			Member	
Verreaux, Jules Pierre	Other	French			Member	
Villet, C. M.	Other	San Domingo (French)			Member	

von Buchenroder, W. L.	Other	German		Member	
von Horstock, H. B.	Civilian Doctor	N-B		Member	
von Ludwig, C. F. H.	Other	German	Committee	Committee	Vice-Pres
Wade, Lt.-Col.	Colonial Official	English		Member	
Watermeyer, C		N-B		Member	
Watermeyer, F. S.	Colonial Official	Cape	Treasurer	Treasurer	Treasurer

\* Assumed from title: "Rev."

# Appendix G Membership of the South African Literary and Scientific Institution

Name	Occupation	Ethnicity	University	Membership and Positions		
				1832/1833	1833/1834	1834/1835
Abercrombie, Dr. James	Civilian Doctor	Scottish		Member	Member	
Adamson., Rev. Dr. J. C.	Minister	Scottish	Edin.	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Secretary</b>
Albertus, J.	Business	N-B			Member	
Bailey, Samuel	Civilian Doctor	English		Member	Member	
Balfour, A. L.	Colonial Official	B		Member		
Bance, Caprt. J.	R.N. (Port Captain)	B		Member	Member	
Barker, John	Colonial Official	B		Member		
Bell, (Lt.) Col. John	Colonial Official	English		<b>President</b>	Member	
Borchers, P. B.	Colonial Official	Cape		<b>Committee</b>	<b>Committee</b>	
Brand, C. J.	Lawyer	Cape	Leid./Edin.	Member	Member	
Breda, Pieter		N-B			Member	
Buck, J. T.	Business	B		Member	Subscriber	
Burrow, Rev. H. J.	Minister	English	Camb./Ox.	Member	<b>Committee</b>	
Burton, Clerke	Colonial Official	English		<b>Vice-Pres.</b>	Member	
Chase, J. C.	Other	English		Member	<b>Committee</b>	
Chiappini, Anthony	Business	Italian		Member	Member	
Christian, Ewan	Business	B		Member	Member	
Cloete, Daniel J.	Colonial Official	N-B		Member	Member	
Cloete, Jacob		N-B			Member	
Cloete, Major A. J.	Army Officer	Cape		<b>Committee</b>	<b>Committee</b>	
Cole, Lady Francis	Other	B			Subscriber	
Cooke, Rev. H. P.	Army (Minister)	B		Member	Member	
Cozens, Miss		B			Subscriber	
de Wet, J.	Lawyer	Cape	Leid.	Member	Member	
de Wet, J. C.	Colonial Official	N-B		Member	Member	
Deane, Thomas	Other	B			Subscriber	
Dickson, William	Business	B		Member	Member	
During, Captain	Army Officer	B			Subscriber	
Duthie, T. H.	Army Officer	Scottish			Member	
Duthrie, F.		B		Member		



Dyce, Dr. Robert	Amy Medical	B		<b>Secretary</b>	Member	
Eaton, R. W.	Business	B		Member	Member	
Ebden, John B.	Business	English		Member	Member	
Ecklon, C. F.	Other	Danish		Member	Member	
Fairbridge, Dr. J. W.	Civilian Doctor	English	Aber.	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Committee</b>	
Faure, Rev. A. C.	Minister	Cape	Utr./Gosp.	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Committee</b>	
Gadney, William	Business	B		Member	Member	
Gie, J. C.	Other	N-B		Member	Member	
Gill, Dr. William	Civilian Doctor	English	Glas.		Subscriber	
Greig, George	Business	B		Member	Member	
Hancke, Henry	Other	B			Subscriber	
Harmsen, P.	Other	N-B		Member		
Hawkins, William	Business	B		Member	Member	
Herschell, Sir John	Other	English	Camb.			<b>President</b>
Hertzog, W. F.	Colonial Official	Cape		<b>Committee</b>	<b>Committee</b>	
Hewitt, H.	Business	B		Member		
Hodgskin, G.		B			Member	
Hoffmeyr, J. J.	Lawyer	N-B		Member		
Hohne, P. D.	Colonial Official	N-B		Member	Member	<b>Committee</b>
Hope, Captain		B			Subscriber	
Horak, J. M.		N-B		Member	Member	
Innes, J. R.	Other	Scottish	Aber.	Member		
Jardine, A. J.	Other	Scottish		Member	Member	
Jerram, E. J.	Business	B		Member	Member	
Judge, Rev. E.	Other	B	Camb.	Member	Member	
Kennedy, Dr.	Indian (Doctor)	B				Member
Kunhardt, F. L.	Civilian Doctor	N-B		Member	Member	
Lawson, William	Colonial Official	B		Member	Subscriber	
le Sueur, John A.	Colonial Official	N-B		Member	Member	
Lehman, A.	Colonial Official	N-B		Member	Subscriber	
Liesching junr., Dr. Lewis	Civilian Doctor	German	Tub./Got.	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Committee</b>	
Liesching, William	Business	German		<b>Committee</b>	Member	
Loedolff, R. J.	Other	N-B		Member	Member	



Mackay, William M.	Colonial Official	Scottish	Member	Member	
Mackrill, W. J./S.	Colonial Official	B	Committee	Committee	
Maclear, Thomas	Other	Irish			Committee
Michell, Major C. C.	Colonial Official	English	Member	Committee	
Murray, Dr. John	Army Medical	B	Vice-Pres.	Vice-Pres.	
Neethling, J. H.	Lawyer	Cape Leid.	Vice-Pres.	Vice-Pres.	
Nichols, R. P.	Colonial Official	B	Member	Member	
Nourse, Henry	Business	English	Member	Member	
O'Flinn, Dr.	Civilian Doctor	B		Member	
Oliphant, A.	Colonial Official	Scottish	Member	Member	
Philip, Rev. Dr. John	Minister	Scottish	Member	Committee	
Plouvier, A. J. L.	Lawyer	N-B	Member	Member	
Poupart, P. A.	Lawyer	N-B	Member	Member	
Prince G. W.	Business	B	Member	Member	
Reid, John	Other	B	Member	Subscriber	
Rex, Geroqe	Business	English		Subscriber	
Saundby, H.		B	Member	Member	
Saunders, John	Business	B	Member	Member	
Schmidt, L.		N-B		Subscriber	
Silberbauer, G. W.	Business	N-B	Member	Member	
Skirrow, John	Colonial Official	B	Member	Member	
Smith, Dr. Adnrew	Army Medical	Scottish Edln.	Member	Secretary	
Smith, William	Business	B	Member	Member	
Smuts, J. J. L.	Business	N-B	Member	Member	
Staedel, F. H.	Lawyer	N-B	Member	Member	
Stockenstrom, Captain A.	Colonial Official	Cape	Vice-Pres.	Member	
Stoll, J. W.	Colonial Official	Cape	Committee	Vice-Pres.	
Thalwitzer, M.	Business	N-B	Member		
Thompson, Dr.	Army Medical	B		Subscriber	
Thompson, George	Business	English	Member	Member	
Thomson, J. D.	Business	B	Member	Member	
Thornhill, John	Business	English	Member	Member	
Tredgold, J. H.	Apothecary	B		Committee	

Truter, O. J.	Lawyer	Cape		Member	Member
Truter, Sir John	Colonial Official	Cape	Leid.	Member	Member
van Breda, P.		N-B		Member	
van der Riet, R. J.		N-B		Member	Member
Venning, W. A.	Business	B		Member	Member
Verreaux, Eduard	Other	French			Member
Verreaux, Jules Pierre	Other	French		Member	Member
Versfeld, Dr. Jacob	Civilian Doctor	Cape	Edin./Glas.		Subscriber
Villet, C. M.	Other	San Domingo (French)		Member	Member
von Buchenroder, W. L.	Other	German		Member	
von Horstock, H. B.	Civilian Doctor	N-B		Member	
von Ludwig, C. F. H.	Other	German		Committee	Vice-Pres
von Manger, Rev. J. H.	Minister	N-B		Member	Member
Wade, Col.	Colonial Official	English		Committee	President
Watermeyer, F. S.	Colonial Official	N-B		Treasurer	Treasurer
Watermeyer, G. F.	Business	N-B		Member	Member
Wollasnton, F. H.	Business	B			Subscriber
Wylde, Sir John	Colonial Official	English	Camb.		Subscriber

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