

DIAS POINT

Brief History of DIAS POINT (NB - Dias is the Portuguese spelling)

In August **1487**, **Bartolomeu Dias** sailed from Lisbon, aiming to round the southern point of Africa and get to India. At the end of December 1487, he named our bay Angra das Voltas (Bay of Tacks) since he had to tack so much against southerly gales in his small caravels. He tacked **south** for several days, then **east**, then **north**, landing at what is now Mossel Bay on 3 February 1488. He sailed on east, then raised a stone beacon (**padrao**) on Kwaaihoek, a rocky point near the present **Port Elizabeth** where he saw the coast tended northwards, proving he **had** rounded Africa in the gales. In calmer weather, he headed back **west** along the coast, discovering the Cape of Storms as he called it, near the southern tip of Africa. His king renamed it the Cape of Good Hope on his return, since Dias had shown the way to a hopefully prosperous future. **On 24 July 1488** Dias landed at a rocky point west of a narrow bay he called **Angra Pequena (Narrow Bay)**. Next day, **25th July, St James Zebedee's Day**, he erected a **PADRAO** made of soft Lisbon **limestone**. Pieces of the **original**, found in 1953 by Professor Eric Axelson, are in museums in South Africa, Germany, Portugal and in Windhoek. In the Luderitz Museum is a plaster cast.

On 25 July 1988, 500 years after Dias raised his padrao, a **Namibian dolerite REPLICA PADRAO** was unveiled to mark the end of the **Dias 500 Festival**.

In 1903 the German colonists built a small **LIGHTHOUSE** on **Dias Point Ridge**, replaced **in 1910 by the 53-metre one**. The last light-keepers left in **1998** when lighthouses around the world were automated due to new technology (GPS).

In 1911 the Germans built a wooden Foghorn House on the Dias Cross Rock; it was destroyed by huge waves on 6 June 1977.



The **WOODEN BRIDGE** built for safer access to that Foghorn was destroyed by a gale on **15 November 2014**. It must be replaced!

Donations can be made to:
Dias Bridge – Standard Bank – Lüderitz
Acc No: 60001585753 – Code: 08 04 71

Proof of payments to be send to:
Crispin Clay, Vice Chair, 081 283 1875,
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