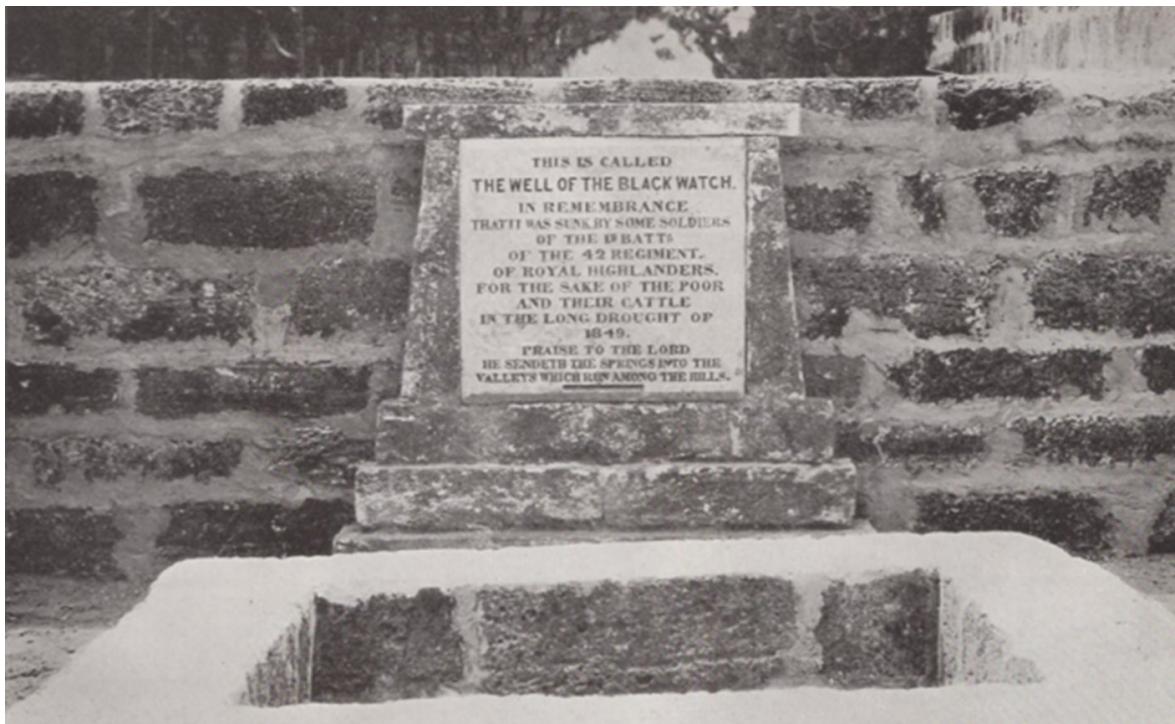


## THE WELL OF THE BLACK WATCH



*Black Watch Well as it appeared in John J Bushell's 1938 guidebook, Picturesque Bermuda, 29th Edition. Governor Elliot had the granite slab made in 1849 to commemorate the site.*

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By Linda Abend and Margie Lloyd, Bermuda National Trust

*This is part of a series of architectural articles by the Bermuda National Trust that will highlight some of Bermuda's endangered historic buildings.*

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Straddling Langton Hill and Black Watch Pass is a small structure that protects a long-forgotten landmark known as Black Watch Well.

The Royal Gazette of 14 August 1849 reported that during a period of severe drought Governor Captain Charles Elliot was concerned for the people living in the neighbourhood of Mount Langton, near Government House. Elliot arranged for a well to be dug on the northwest corner of the Government House property, about 20 feet from the North Shore Road. This well produced a plentiful supply of excellent water. The sinking of the well was performed by soldiers of the 42nd

Royal Highland Regiment of Foot. The 1st Battalion arrived here in April 1847 and was quartered at the nearby Signal Station. The Royal Highland Regiment Band attracted large crowds at their publicly-held practices which were held weekly during the duration of their stay in Bermuda. The Regiment's informal name Black Watch became official in 1861. It is thought the name reflects the dark colour of their tartan uniforms as well as their original role to "watch" the Highlands. The Regiment's pattern was imported from London and sold in Bermuda as "42nd Regiment plaid".



*History of the 42nd Royal Highlanders "The Black Watch" by Lieut. Col. Percy Groves RGA published in 1893.*



The well eventually fell into disuse and the area became overgrown until 1933 when a new road was begun which would link the Bermuda Railway tracks to the North Shore Road and required cutting through the grounds of Government House. Carving through solid limestone to create the road was done by machines. The Recorder of 6 January 1934 announced the opening of the new road that Governor General Sir Thomas Astley Cubitt named Marsh Folly Road. The reason for this name and the saga of the Marsh Reclamation scheme is a topic for another article.

It was Governor Cubitt who accidentally found Governor Elliot's granite slab. He had it cleaned and re-installed over the well which he then had enclosed by a small stone wall. Sometime before 1950 a small gazebo with a slate roof was built to cover the well.

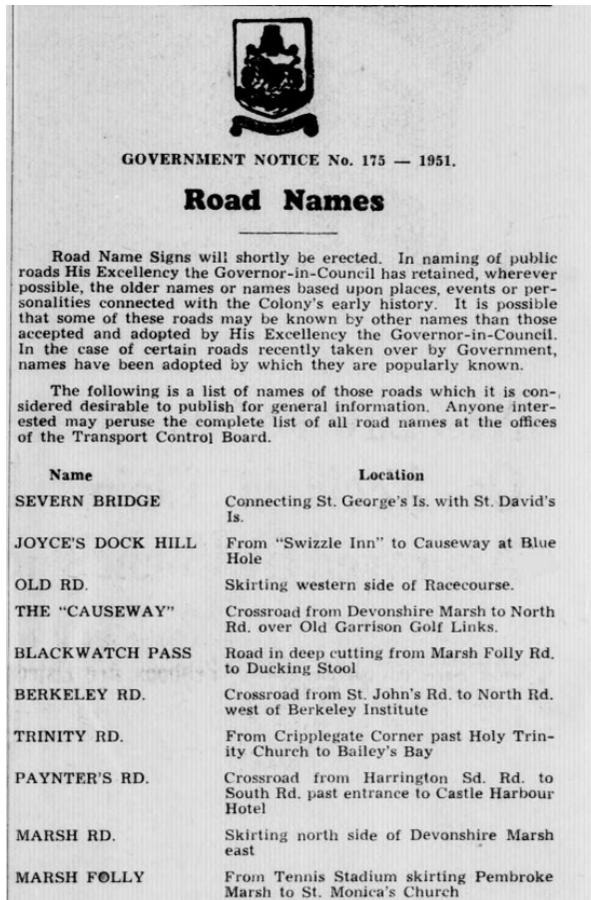
## Opening of New Road to Ducking Stool.

Named "Marsh Folly" By Governor.

On New Year's Day at noon His Excellency the Governor opened the new road which passes along the Pembroke Cemetery and the Railway lines then turning to the north passes through a very deep cutting and emerges out at the Ducking Stool adjacent to the main road that passes over the hill above the Pembroke Parish Church.



In 1951 the Bermuda Government began to name public roads and new signs were erected. Wherever possible the old names, based upon places, events or persons, were retained. A published list of new names included Blackwatch Pass for the "road in deep cutting from Marsh Folly Road to Ducking Stool". Marsh Folly Road went "from the tennis stadium skirting Pembroke Marsh to St Monica's Church".



GOVERNMENT NOTICE No. 175 — 1951.

### Road Names

Road Name Signs will shortly be erected. In naming of public roads His Excellency the Governor-in-Council has retained, wherever possible, the older names or names based upon places, events or personalities connected with the Colony's early history. It is possible that some of these roads may be known by other names than those accepted and adopted by His Excellency the Governor-in-Council. In the case of certain roads recently taken over by Government, names have been adopted by which they are popularly known.

The following is a list of names of those roads which it is considered desirable to publish for general information. Anyone interested may peruse the complete list of all road names at the offices of the Transport Control Board.

Name	Location
SEVERN BRIDGE	Connecting St. George's Is. with St. David's Is.
JOYCE'S DOCK HILL	From "Swizzle Inn" to Causeway at Blue Hole
OLD RD.	Skirting western side of Racecourse.
THE "CAUSEWAY"	Crossroad from Devonshire Marsh to North Rd. over Old Garrison Golf Links.
BLACKWATCH PASS	Road in deep cutting from Marsh Folly Rd. to Ducking Stool.
BERKELEY RD.	Crossroad from St. John's Rd. to North Rd. west of Berkeley Institute
TRINITY RD.	From Cripplegate Corner past Holy Trinity Church to Bailey's Bay
PAYNTER'S RD.	Crossroad from Harrington Sd. Rd. to South Rd. past entrance to Castle Harbour Hotel
MARSH RD.	Skirting north side of Devonshire Marsh east
MARSH FOLLY	From Tennis Stadium skirting Pembroke Marsh to St. Monica's Church

*The Royal Gazette, 26 May 1951.*

At some point and for an unknown reason the granite slab was replaced with a wooden sign that changed the Royal Highlanders to Loyal Highlanders. In October 2015 the well was re-dedicated when a new roundabout was installed at the junction of North Shore Road, Langton Hill and Blackwatch Pass. Participating in the ceremony was the pipe and drum band of the Black Watch Regiment, now part of the Royal Regiment of Scotland. If any of the band members noticed the error, nothing was said. The Royal Gazette article got the story wrong in stating that the regiment dug the well "to provide help during a disastrous 1848 fever outbreak".

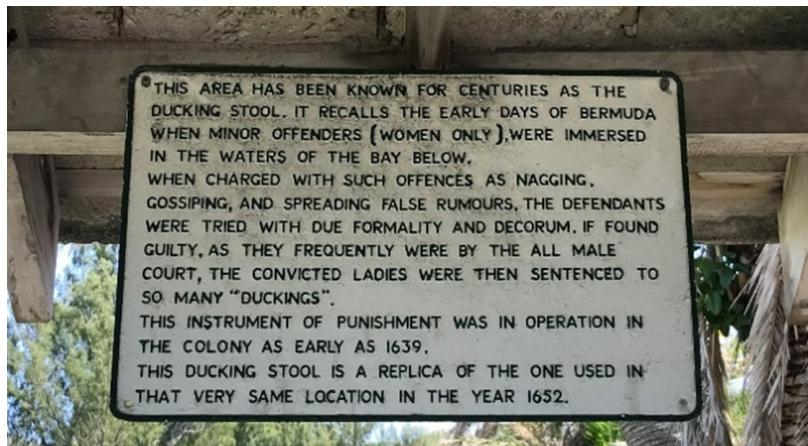


*The wooden sign now installed at Black Watch Well.*

Recently a second sign has appeared above the well. This one describes the history of the Ducking Stool. Its location above the well is illogical since no one in the 1600s was dunked in a well that was dug in 1849. And where is the replica that is mentioned in the sign? A more appropriate place for this sign would be across the road at Ducking Stool Park. In both cases it would seem that, unintentionally perhaps, history is being rewritten and no one cares.



*Blackwatch Pass leads from Marsh Folly Road to North Shore Road.*



*A second sign now appears above the Black Watch Well.*



*A re-enactment at the North Shore Pembroke ducking stool. The Royal Gazette, 21 Aug 1957.*

**Other Sources:** Bermuda's Architectural Series Pembroke; The Recorder 12 Aug 1933; The Royal Gazette 20 Apr 1847, 6 Jul 1847, 14 Aug 1849, 9 Jan 1934, 8 Oct 1950, 20 Oct 2015; Bernews 22 Oct 2015.

