



# Cecil Rhodes and the the Founding of Rhodesia

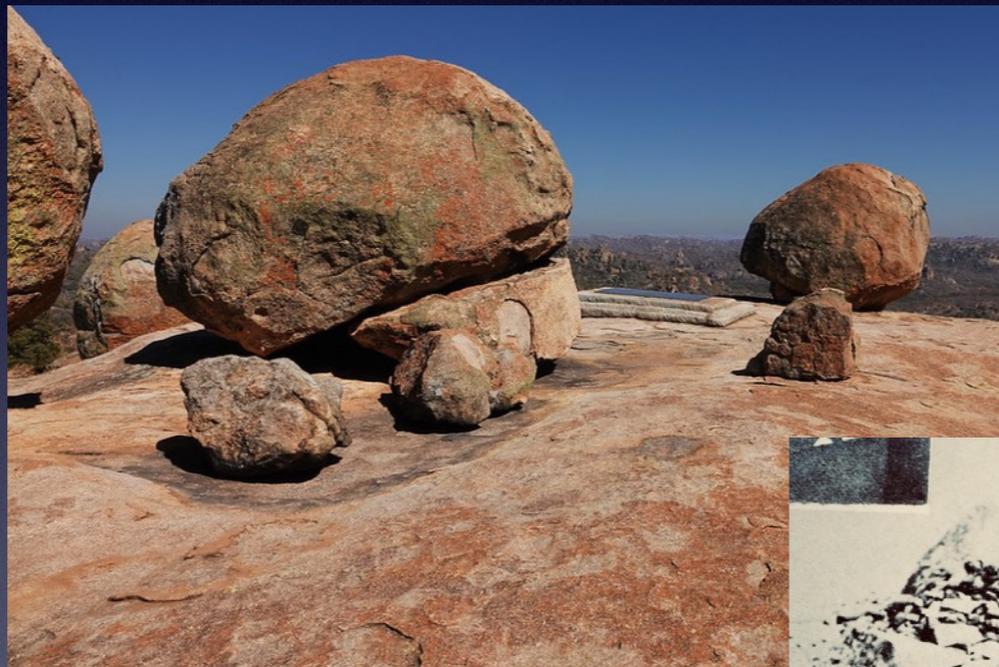
Tim Ewbank  
6th December 2019

# A complex personality

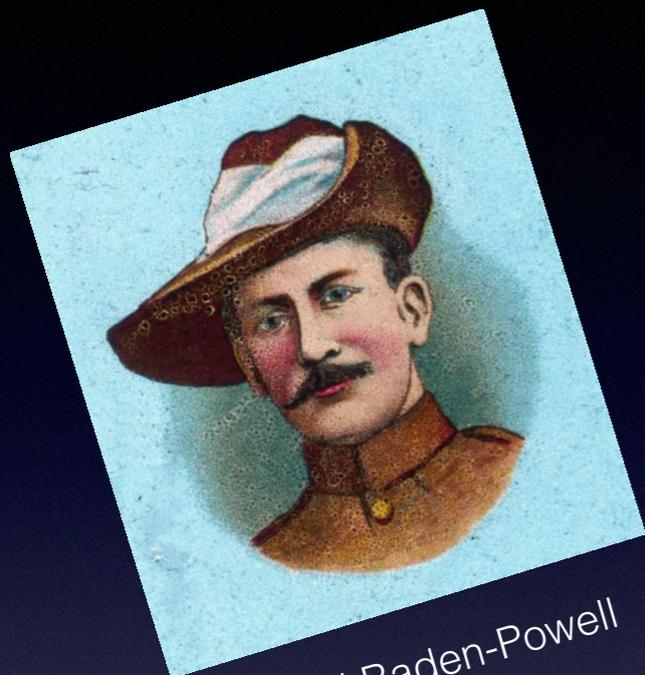
Was he?	or?
brilliant entrepreneur	unashamed monopolist
champion of empire	ruthless imperialist
enlightened policy maker	racist

- what was the driving force in his life?
- sexual orientation?
- how is he remembered ?

# Personal connections



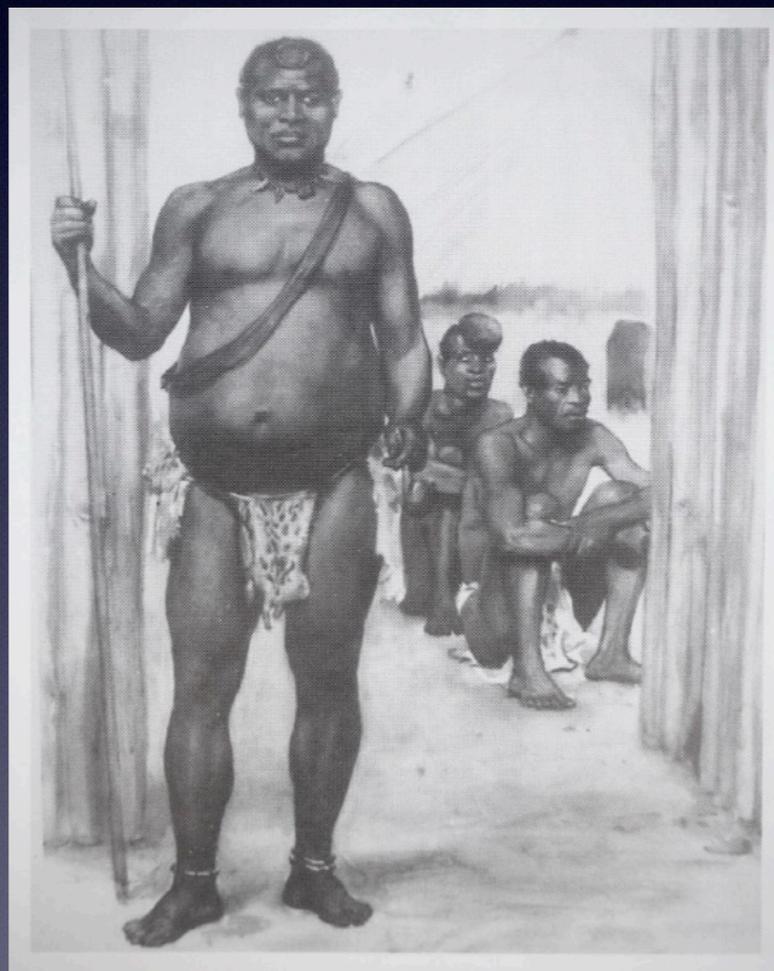
# An extraordinary cast of characters



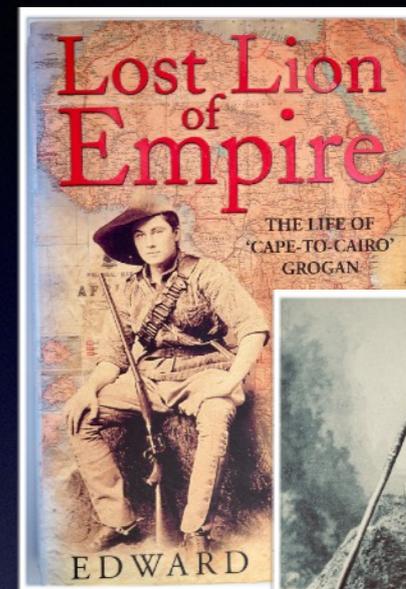
Col Baden-Powell



Princess Catherine Radziwell



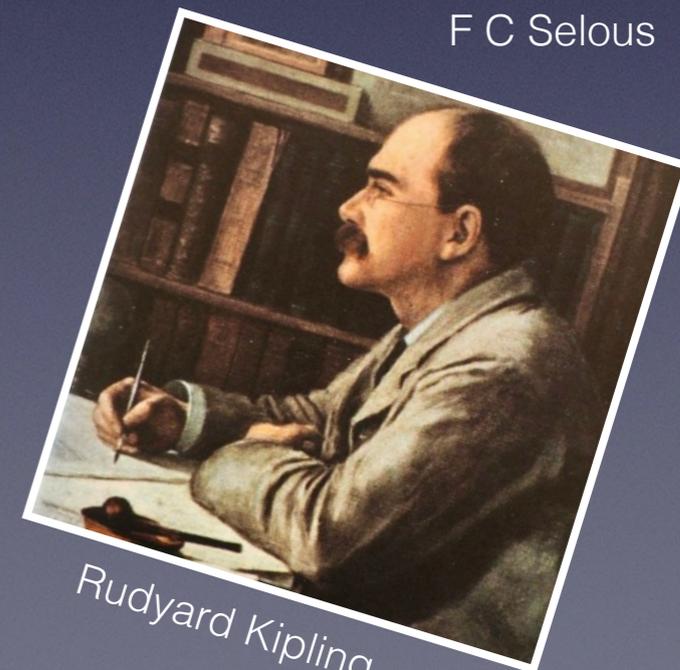
Lobengula, Matabele King



Ewart Grogan

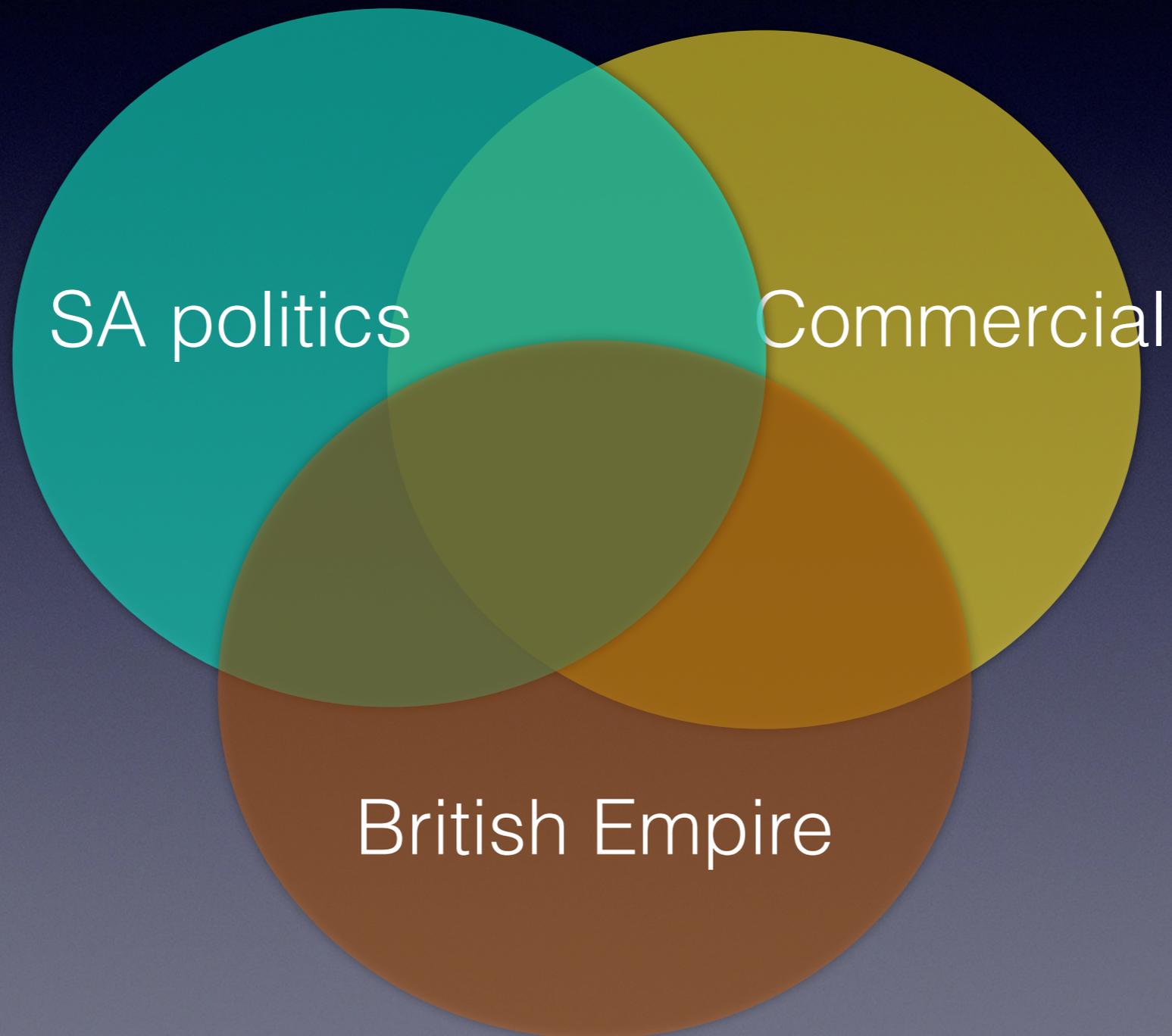


F C Selous



Rudyard Kipling

# The Spheres of Rhodes's Life



# Early life

- 7th child of vicar of church in Bishops Stortford
- Unremarkable child in a generally happy family
- went to local grammar school
- did not go directly to university, unlike his brothers
- hesitant aspiration to be priest or lawyer
- went to South Africa for health reasons
- arrived in Natal in 1871 to grow cotton



# Personal characteristics

- Tall, blue eyed
- Physically hardy, despite weak heart
- Weak speaking voice
- Scruffy; no interest in possessions
- Money was only useful to buy power
- Personally charming
- Empathetic, persuaded people their cause was his too
- Saw value of Oxford in networking, not learning
- Became consummate political operator

*Every man has his price*

# Sexual Orientation

- Normal family life, growing up
- Masculine society in diamond fields
- Preferred the company of young men, distinct physical types:
  - Aryan appearance
  - handsome, ambitious, risk takers
- Some rumours; but no evidence
- Exception, Princess Radziwell



# Commercial success

- 1871 leaves Natal for Kimberley
- stakes a claim on De Beers mine
- partnerships with Rudd & Beit
- Buys up claims in a market slump
- Makes a killing on pumping monopoly
  
- 1880 founds De Beers to control production and marketing of diamonds, by 1888 controls 90% world diamond production (35yrs old)
  
- Slow to recognise importance of The Rand, distracted elsewhere. 1887 creates Consolidated Goldfields Co

*where did he get his commercial smarts & drive from?*

# Southern african politics

- 1880 become member of Cape Parliament (aged 27) to further commercial interests
- buys a controlling interest in *Cape Argus*
- despite being a poor speaker, proved highly effective political operator
- introduced compound system for african labour at mines (Diamond Trades Act, 1882)
- directly involved in establishment of British Protectorate over Bechuanaland
- 1890 -1896 Prime Minister of the Cape

# 1877 Confession of Faith

Strongly influenced by John Ruskin's inaugural address at Oxford:

*There is a destiny now possible to us, the highest ever set before a nation.... (England) must found colonies as fast ...as she is able formed of her most energetic and worthiest men*

Interpreted Darwinism as Divine will

Conceived a global secret society, whose purpose was to bring the whole civilised world under British Rule



# The Rhodes Manifesto

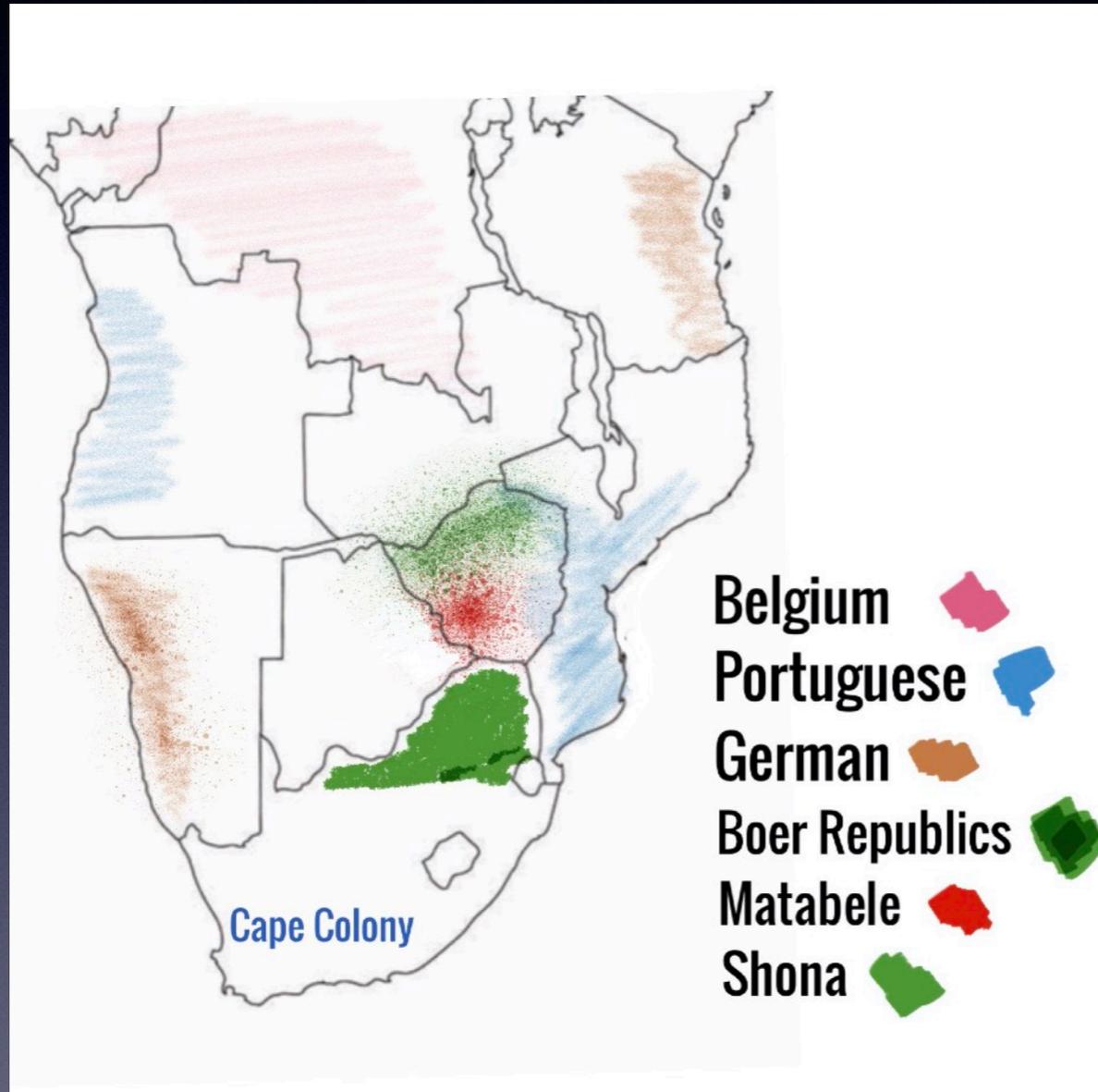
His first will contained:

*The wish came to me to be useful to my country...I contend that we are the finest race in the world, and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race*

Included in modified form in his five subsequent wills; modified to include God's role in furthering white races' destiny

These principles remained the driving force of his imperialist ambitions throughout his life

# Geopolitics of *Scramble for Africa*



Portuguese  
*Mapa Rosa*

Threat of east-west block: Germans, Boers & Portuguese

# The Rudd Concession



Numerous concession seekers, missionaries, prospectors and adventurers petitioning the king

1888 Signed by Lobengula.

Allowing:

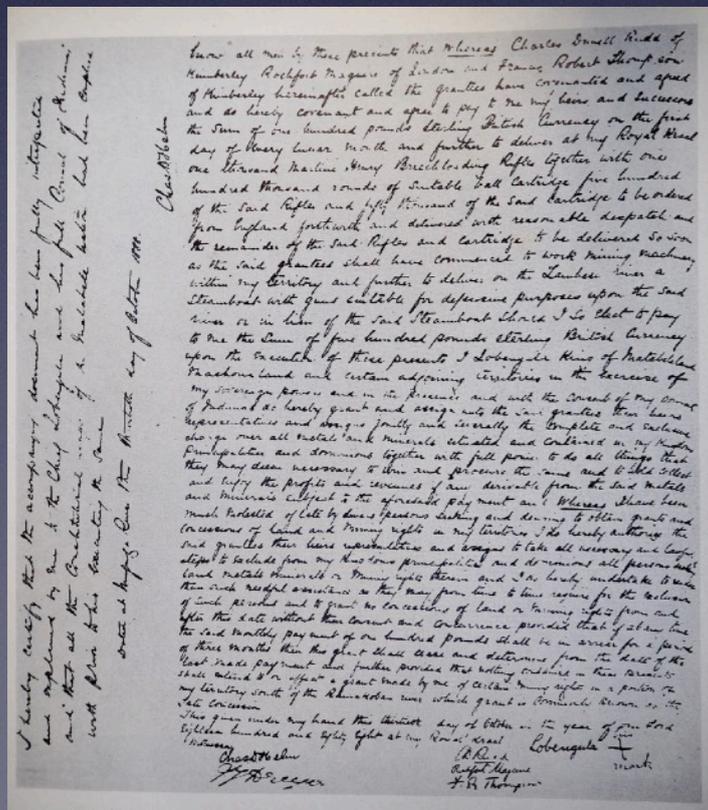
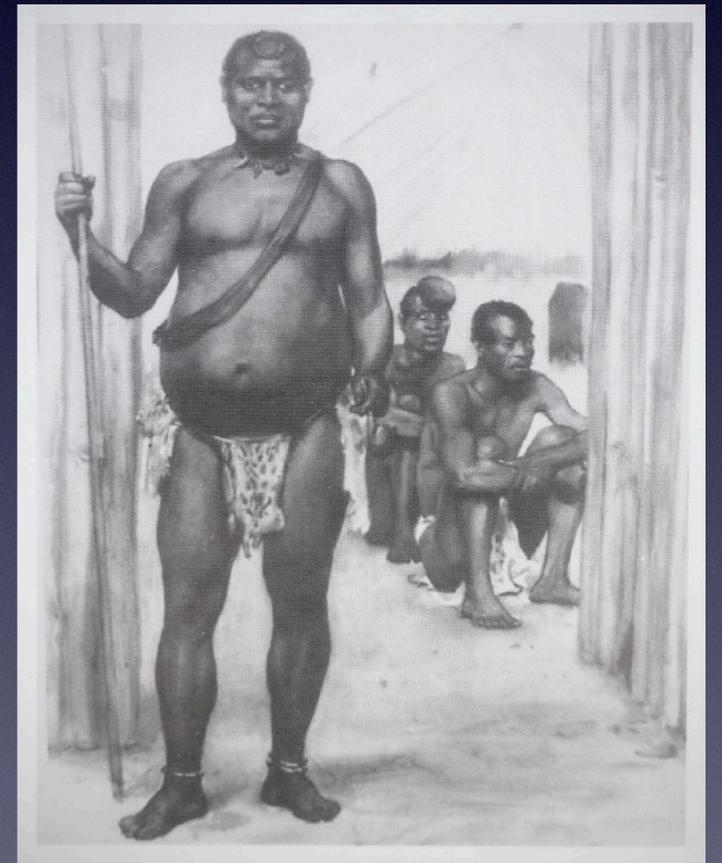
10 prospectors into country

in exchange for:

1,000 rifles and ammunition

£100/month

Steamboat on the Zambesi



# BSAC (British South Africa Company) Charter



- Having gained the concession, Rhodes petitioned British PM, Lord Salisbury for a royal charter. BSAC floated for £1,000,000

*All the powers necessary for the purpose of government ... the right to establish banking ...to make and maintain railways, telegraphs and lines of steamships, to carry on mining operations and license mining companies, to settle cultivate and improve lands.., to preserve peace and order...to obtain a police force and have it's own flag*

- All based on a agreement with an illiterate king to allow 10 prospectors into his kingdom!
- Lobengula sent two indunas to London repudiate the concession, but was out-manoeuved by Rhodes

# The Pioneer Column & Settlement

- Recruits 196 pioneers, plus 400 BSA Police + wagons & labourers. Mixed skills. No women
- Lead by Frank Johnson. Police commanded by Lt. Col Pennefeather. FC Selous was column's guide
- 30th June 1891 entered Matabeleland & skirted Lobengula's heartland. Covered approx 300kms in six weeks. In mid-September, raised flag at Fort Salisbury & disbanded to stake prospecting claims and land
- Used force to eject Portuguese from Manicaland, but failed to establish access to the sea

# 1893 The Matabele War

Jameson deliberately provokes Lobengula

How to make a war in thirteen words!

Rhodes to Jameson “ Read Luke 14:31”

Jameson’s reply: “All right. Have read Luke 14:31”

*What king going to make war against another king,  
sitteth not down first and consulteth whether he be able  
with 10,000 to meet him that cometh against him with  
20,000*

- Two military engagements *en route* to Gubulawayo
- Lobengula burns capital
- Retreats towards Zambesi



# The Shangani Patrol

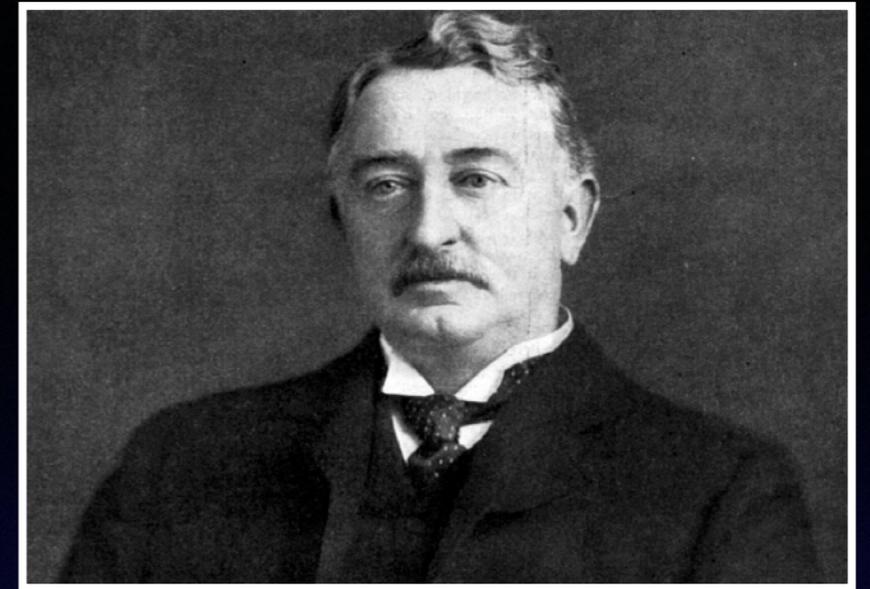


Alan Stewart *"to the memory of brave men: Major Alan Wilson's last stand"*

- Patrol trying to capture Lobengula
- Patrol lured into an ambush & all 34 men killed
- Major Allan Wilson exceeded his orders
- Became part of the founding legend of nation

1892 - 1895

Height of his power & popularity



Country named after him  
Privy Councillor

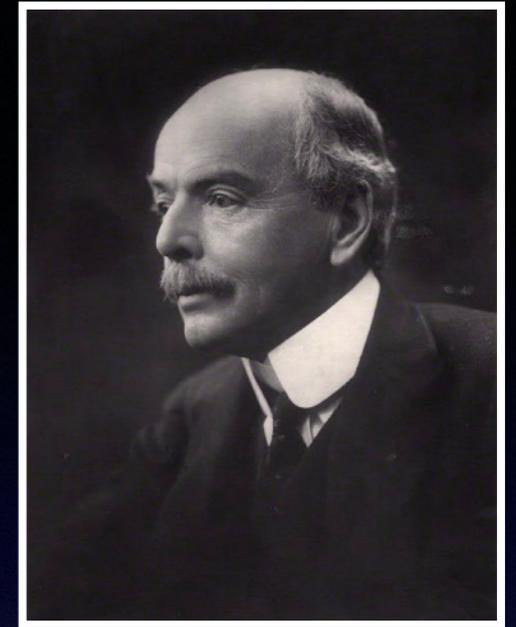
One of the richest men on the planet

Prime Minister of the Cape  
Chairman of De Beers  
Board member of Consolidated Golfields  
MD of BSAC

*Any possible conflicts of interest?*

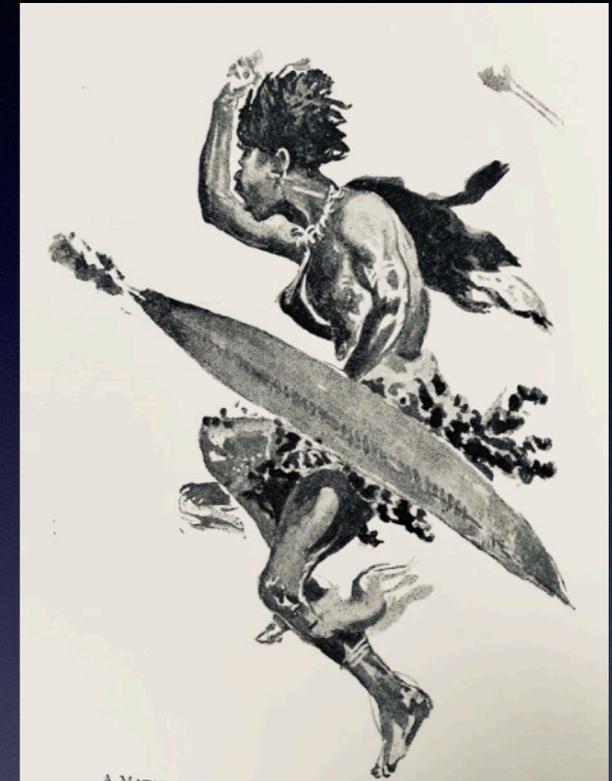
Aged 36

# The Jameson Raid



- Transvaal President, Paul Kruger
- Rhodes sees Boer republics as block to northern expansion
- Grievance based on treatment of *Uitlanders*, disenfranchised high tariffs & nepotism
- Planned armed rebellion in support of National Union
- Rhodes and British Government complicit
- Launched attack 29th December 1895
- Fiasco - *uitlanders* unsupportive & Boers knew they were coming
- Massive international fallout
- Jameson & 14 others tried in London (denies Rhodes's role)
- Rhodes & Beit pay £200,000 in fines and SA prisoners released

# 1896 The Rebellion



- Planned by spirit mediums (*mwari*)
- Matabele uprising, complete surprise to settlers
- Initial attacks on isolated settlers
- Small number of European deaths had massive impact
- Settlers laagered into main towns

# *The rebellion in the Matopos*

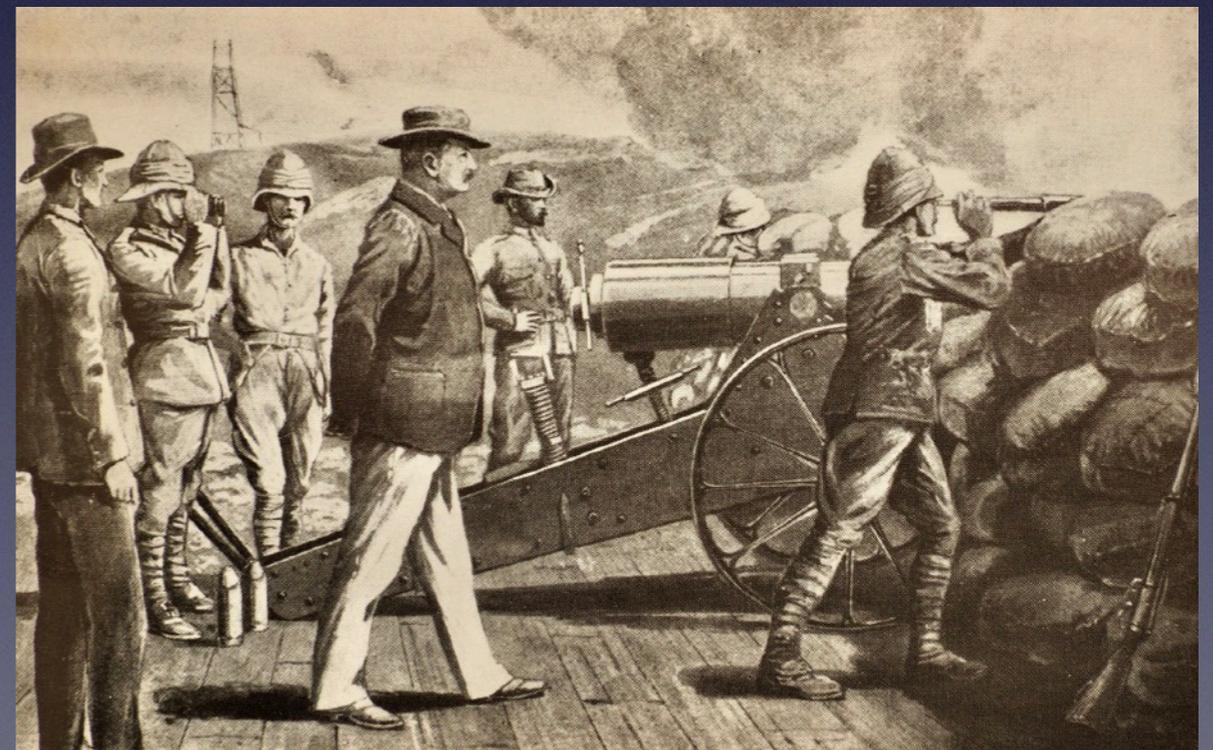


- Rhodes recognises the impossibility of military victory
- Shows great personal courage in arranging to meet Matabele leaders
- Wins them round to establish peace
- Subsequent Shona uprising

# Boer War

- October 1899 war declared
- Initial British losses in Dundee and Ladysmith
- Rhodes beseiged in Kimberly
- Constant conflict with CO, Col Kekewich
- Threatens to surrender town, unless British mount relief
- 124 day siege

- Col Baden Powell commands defence of Mafeking



# Decline & Fall

- Forced to resign as PM of the Cape Colony & MD of Chartered Company after Jameson Raid
- Priority was to preserve BSAC charter in London
- *ComproMat* may have helped with Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain
- Entanglement with Princess Radziwell
- Failing health
- Died 2nd March 1902 (aged 48)



# Rhodes's Legacy in Southern Africa



1881



1902

- Jameson Raid was forerunner of the Boer War
- His aspiration for SA federation became reality
- Racial policies laid the foundation of apartheid

# Rhodes's International Legacy



Massively popular in SA and Europe  
Poster boy of Empire

Added an area x5 larger than UK to  
British Empire

Controversial in his lifetime & beyond  
*I admire him, I frankly confess it; and  
when his time comes, I shall buy a piece  
of the rope for a keepsake*  
Mark Twain

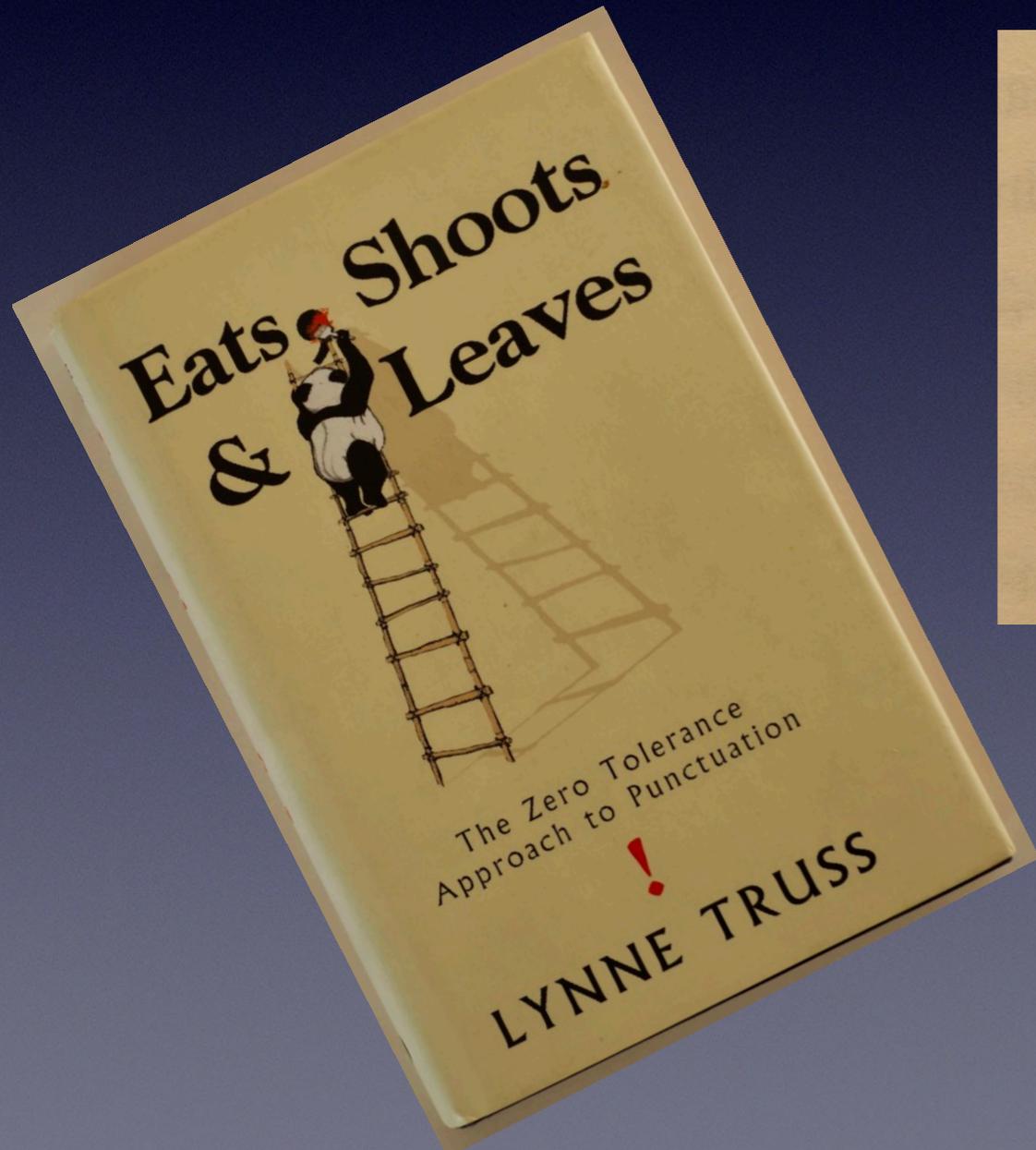
*Explains why so few statutes to him in UK?*

# Rhodes Scholarships

- largest & longest lasting modern educational endowment
- 52 post-grad scholarships per year to Oxford colleges
- Specific criteria & country allocations:
  - success in manly outdoor sports
  - leadership, “qualities of kindliness, unselfishness, manhood & devotion to duty”
  - literary & scholastic achievement
- Open to all colours (1972), creeds & latterly gender (1975)

# Two improbable literary connections to Jameson Raid

Jameson Raid inspired Kipling's most famous poem "If"



It is under these circumstances that we feel constrained to call upon you to come to our aid should a disturbance arise here the circumstances are so extreme that we cannot but believe that you and the men under you will not fail to come to the rescue of people who are so situated.

Part of telegram send by Uitlanders to Jameson, quoted in *Eats Shoots & Leaves* meaning dramatically changes depending on whether there is a full-stop after "aid" or "here"

# “Rhodes Must Fall” Movement



Started in Cape Town  
University



2016  
High profile campaign in Oxford  
VC's decisive intervention