

Notes and Queries

More Alive Than Dead

Walkabout

Exploring towns on foot has become increasingly popular in the last decade. We asked Mr. Trevor Wills, Urban Geographer and veteran town walker, to comment on town trails.

What is a town trail? Town trails are map guides which should ideally, like nature trails, apply techniques of guided — but questioning — self-discovery, though not to the rural habitat of flora and fauna, but to the built environment within which most of us live — the town. Trails should not entirely spoonfeed the user with ‘correct’ assumptions and judgements or select what official opinion may judge to be important or beautiful, in the way that traditional town guides often do. Trails aim to develop an active response not only to the sights but also the sounds and smells of town life, which may equal or exceed in importance the sights so often stressed. They set out to achieve this objective by providing the user with a carefully conceived route through town, perhaps some difficult-to-obtain information, and most importantly, where children are concerned, challenges of some sort, e.g. questions or pictorial quizzes requiring careful scrutiny and thought about the area being traversed.

The selection of a route is crucial; it should be chosen with the care devoted to his plot by the expert thriller-writer and should not be simply a haphazard linking together of discrete historical relics or architectural gems (however important each might be individually). Used as an educational tool the trail should encourage its user to ‘read’ the townscape, improving his/her appreciation by mastering an ‘urban vocabulary’. At the very least the town trail should provide the visitor and resident alike with a meaningful route to follow to see a town or parts of it *on foot*. In taking in the visible history of a place, the slower the means of locomotion the better.

In South Africa there is an increasing interest in learning about towns and cities on foot, although there are few town trails conforming to the definition given above. In the Cape, walking tours of Cape Town’s centre have long attracted visitors and residents alike, while in neighbouring Stellenbosch the publication of the delightfully illustrated *Footloose in Stellenbosch* has no doubt encouraged many to don their walking shoes. Stellenbosch also offers their unique *Stellenbosch River Trails*. In Port Elizabeth the local branch of the South African Institute of Town and Regional Planners, in conjunction with the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth has recently launched the *Donkin Heritage Trail*, a comprehensive walking tour aimed at increasing awareness of that city’s historical heritage. Not to be outdone by the larger centres, members of the Department of Geography at the University of Fort Hare have devised an *Alice Town Trail*. In Durban the indomitable Professor Barend van Niekerk’s *Durban at Your Feet* contains much to

delight the conservationist, presented in hard-hitting, often provocative fashion. Sadly, however, his book contains no maps, and the visitor in particular, might find a few map guides an invaluable addition. Prof. van Niekerk's frank personal view of the central area of Durban delivered in the form of a suggested walk presents those who take up his invitation with an environmental challenge.

Pietermaritzburg has fortunately never lacked a core of concerned citizens and local experts, and many visitors and residents alike have learnt much about the city's past and present strolling through the lanes with, for example, local architect Gordon Small, and local historian Mr. T.B. Frost. Mr. Rob Haswell and the writer, both members of the Department of Geography, University of Natal, have in recent years conducted many groups of schoolchildren, teachers, lecturers, foreign visitors and conference delegates' wives around their City Centre Walk. A route map outlining the City Centre Walk is now available from the Pietermaritzburg Publicity Association. The Pietermaritzburg Municipality is currently preparing a more comprehensive booklet of walks, to complement their admirable *Green Belt Trails* (World's View area).

As enjoyable and beneficial as guided walking tours undoubtedly are, they can never cater for more than a small percentage of the urban population. What is needed are cheaply produced, freely available self-instructional walks, presented in a way which will encourage a broad spectrum of people to look around towns with a keener eye. To foster an interest in town trails local organizations might follow the example of the Heritage Education Group and the *Daily Mirror* newspaper who sponsor in Britain a nationwide 'Wide Awake' trail-making competition, which has been extremely successful. Perhaps in this way we could begin to upgrade general urban environmental awareness.

Simon van der Stel Foundation

Members of the Foundation continue actively to explore Natal, to encourage interest in the past and to press for the preservation of noteworthy sites and buildings. One of the main aims of the Natal committee at the moment is to arouse public interest in the activities of the Foundation and to make a concentrated effort to enrol more members. A particular aspect of this effort involves arousing the interest of young people in the preservation of South Africa's rich historical heritage.

Under the Chairmanship of Mr Simon Roberts the Natal Regional Committee has met regularly at Macrorie House. Dr J.A. Pringle is the Natal Regional Representative on the Council of the Foundation. Two interesting outings were organised and were well supported by the members. The first was a walk through the streets and lanes of Pietermaritzburg on Sunday, 20th April, which was organised and led by Mr Gordon Small, who is a member of the Committee. On Saturday, 23rd August, the Hon. Secretary, Mrs Joan Roux, organized a very successful all-day outing to Estcourt, Weenen, Muden and Greytown. The highlight of the trip was the journey on the narrow gauge line from Estcourt to Weenen with Mr Billy Bester in the cabin of the ever-faithful locomotive, *Liliputian*. The tour also included interesting visits to Fort Durnford at Estcourt, which now serves as a local

history museum, and to Greytown's local museum which is located in a house which was formerly the official residence of the local magistrate. Members were particularly grateful to the ladies in charge of the museums in both places — Mrs F. Bulman at Fort Durnford and Mrs B. Gordon at Greytown — who had made a point of being present to welcome us. Each curator gave an illuminating talk on the history of the museum for which she was responsible and also drew attention to some of the particularly noteworthy exhibits.

It is gratifying to note that Macrorie House continues to attract a steady stream of visitors who derive considerable pleasure from studying the various exhibits on view. Because of the generosity of a variety of public-spirited citizens this collection is continuing to grow, and it certainly adds to the atmosphere of this elegant and well-preserved colonial Victorian home.

Overpark Restored

Rather less well-preserved until quite recently was Pietermaritzburg's mysterious, derelict mansion, Overpark. Earlier this year it was sold and the new owner has set about meticulously restoring it. One of the people closely involved in the restoration was Mr. Gordon Cunningham who has contributed this note:

Since 1964 the house stood empty. The grounds became the haunt of vagrants and tramps and the alleged suicide by hanging of a mental patient gave rise to the rumour that the house was haunted.

Over the years the house was vandalised until in 1980 it was virtually a ruin. All the internal doors had been ripped off their hinges, fittings destroyed and hardly a pane of glass remained. Only the beautiful friezes on the 18 foot high ceilings gave a hint of the elegance of the old building.

The recent purchase of the property by a patron and preparations for its restoration have been the focus of much public interest.

The firm of architects, Franklin, Garland, Gibson & Cunningham have spent a great deal of time in attempting to refurbish the building to its previous state. The systematic restoration will include the replacement of all rotten roof timbers, roofing iron and roof slates. Much of the interior plaster is being redone. An old fireplace and surround has been purchased to replace the one ripped from the wall by vandals.

The restorers are placing great emphasis on detail and every effort is being made to match wall-paper, door and window fittings and light fittings.

Something is known of the early history of Overpark though much is still not clear. With the assistance of Mrs Shelagh Spencer, the Reverend Charles Scott-Shaw has compiled the following notes which were originally published in *The Presbyterian Herald*, October 1980.

The restoration of Overpark House in Loop Street has a special interest for our Church. I am almost certain this lovely Victorian home was the original Presbyterian Manse.

The Deeds Office and our Church records establish that Erf 12 Burger Street (122) Loop Street (1 acre 2 roods and 2 perches) was bought by the Presbyterian Church for £56 in 1859 from Mr Marquard.

Tenders for brickwork, carpentry and slating were called for in 1860 and on 1st April 1862 the Rev. William Campbell and his family took occupation. This house remained the Presbyterian (First Church) Manse until it was sold in 1897.

The story behind the building is very interesting. Mr. Campbell was the first Presbyterian minister and chaplain in Natal. He was most successful in raising funds, for the amount collected not only paid off the debt on the Church but supplied a substantial amount for the building of the Manse. The Manse site is referred to as 'the healthiest site in the city'. The Bird papers in the Archives record that Mr. Campbell brought back the Manse plans from Scotland. One only needs to visit Overpark to note how well situated is the Minister's study with its separate entrance from the living rooms of the Manse.

It is interesting to note that in *The Third Book of the Prophet Ignoramus*, the writer says that the Presbyterian Manse is a better house than that of the Lieut.-Governor, Keate.

It is an unfortunate reflection upon Presbyterians that personal sentiments and divided loyalties caused them to split into two separate congregations in Pietermaritzburg. The 'argy-bargy' of those times resulted in the building of another Church and Manse and incidentally such financial decline of the First Church that the lovely old Manse and the Church clock had to be sold. Both these have now been restored. We are grateful to the restorers.

Saving the Queen's Tavern

Old Durban has found a new champion in Professor Barend van Niekerk. Armed with a flaming pen he rides like St. George against the twin dragons of demolition and development. His book, *Durban at Your Feet* (reviewed elsewhere in this issue) has jerked Durbanites and others into noticing and enjoying many fascinating and often forgotten features of the City. During 1980 he has been particularly occupied with the campaign to save the Queen's Tavern.

The Queen's Tavern in Durban, situated just below the Greyville Racecourse at 16 Stamford Hill Road, is undoubtedly South Africa's — and perhaps thus Africa's! — oldest eating and drinking establishment which survives in the same building in which it was established. Opened in 1894 in the not too spectacular but nevertheless not undistinguished looking building — and a casual glance at recently constructed watering holes would easily confirm this judgment — there must be something prophetic in the fact that after so many vicissitudes and so many near demolitions the Queen's Tavern has once again been saved from the jackhammer and probably for the last time since it has now been declared a monument.

There is nothing fancy about the area where the Queen's Tavern is situated; indeed it is really a slum with this quaint building protruding like a healthy finger of a leprous hand of this mangy patch of Durban. Now the Queen's Tavern — or the British Middle East Indian Sporting and Dining Club, or Muff and Duff for short — gives shelter to a veritable 'little hero of Durban', the title I bestowed in a recent book on

Durban on a very small number of business people or institutions who have given the city and its people something more than the commodity they sell for profit — who have, in fact, put something back and who have made a contribution to the ever diminishing quality of our lives. Such an institution is the Queen's Tavern and such a man its owner Mr Peter Noel-Barham, who in 1973 converted a building, then verging on decay, into the graceful place it now is and who, after a three year battle during which he spared no effort, finally saved it from demolition when in 1977 it was provisionally declared a national monument. Alas, on the ground of some bureaucratic reason or another the order was not final and in February this year I learned that the owners of the restaurant had to vacate. The battle for the preservation then started. In 1894 — which in South Africa is a long time ago as far as buildings go and even a longer time as far as eating establishments above the rank of corner cafe go — this building first opened its doors to the winners and diners of Durban. It was called the Queen's Tavern apparently because of the presence nearby of the Queen's Own Regiment at Greyville. It was then — as indeed it has again become in very recent times — a place to which people of taste would go for a drink and a bite. Before the expansion of the city to the Berea this was an elite residential area. However, with the area surrounding it deteriorating, the clientele changed and it became one of Durban's roughest joints before that distinction was wrested from it in our time by the establishments in Point Road. Through the grace only of some divine intervention the delicate stained glass windows celebrating Holbein, Haydn, Titian, Tennyson and Raleigh came through unscathed, despite the fact that the building once housed a rather wild jazz club. Enter the 'British Middle East', as many call it, and you will enter something distinctive. There is, first, the circular bar with its backdrop of a gigantic and genuine old world bar mirror and the decorative pressed steel ceiling; then there are the turbaned waiters reminiscent of the now-vanished world of the old Marine Hotel. And then there are the graceful customs of a more gentle yesteryear, right from the lukewarm scented water which is poured over your hands as you sit down, to the obligatory decanter of port passed around with your coffee. The bric-a-brac and pictures also bespeak the Victorian era of grace, leisure and delicacy. Now the battle of the Queen's Tavern had to be fought on various fronts and various levels and some of the details cannot be told. In essence it involved persuading a mammoth financial empire from the Transvaal which intended to build a huge shopping complex there to save and build around — and, over and underneath if need be — this little gem of the now so depleted treasure house of Victorian architecture in Durban. The mayor in all his splendour had himself photographed at the entrance, the Administrator wrote a letter or two, the National Monuments Council did their thing, but above all two companies, Gordon, Verhoef and Krause and Berger Paints renovated the building to the state of its former pristine glory. The philosophy here was simple: nothing but the best for the jackhammers and if the building must go, then let it go in its full splendour so that everyone can

know in no uncertain terms what criminal act of cultural vandalism they were guilty of. And it worked.

On the day of the *preliminary* victory celebration a more than lifesize picture of Queen Victoria was unveiled by the deputy mayor. Television took the victory into every corner of the land and the Queen's Tavern was given a new lease of life. But the victory is still a *preliminary* one since the saving of the Queen's Tavern simply as a building and not as the eating place it has been for almost a century now will be a hollow victory indeed. But at least having learned something about the twisting of arms and the squeezing out of long forgotten human feelings out of hardened consciences I am confident that we can also win that battle . . . if there will be one at all.

Of Grave Importance

Cemeteries are important sources of historical information and we are glad to report that the Pietermaritzburg City Engineer's Department has supplied a useful finding aid.

During the latter part of 1979 the City Engineer was approached by the then Chief Librarian of the Natal Society Library to undertake the redrawing of certain old cemetery plans. These plans covered the Dutch Reformed, Presbyterian and portion of the Church of England cemeteries on the Grey's Hospital side of Commercial Road, and the Wesleyan and Church of England cemeteries on the opposite side of Commercial Road. The Roman Catholic and Jewish Cemeteries were not included.

Two of the plans were in a very bad state of repair and in fact, almost illegible. These plans were patched as far as possible and traced on to draughting film. The true scale of the plans had been mislaid making it necessary to deal with one block at a time. Each block was then measured and where possible the names and grave numbers were marked on the tracings.

Many graves were unmarked, headstones too weathered or damaged to be legible, making it impossible to obtain a complete record of the graves. The largest plan, that of the Dutch Reformed Church and Presbyterian cemeteries was partly damaged and the same procedure for the copying of the plans was adopted.

Other plans were in reasonable condition and were simply traced and checked on site for any further information that could be obtained. No reference was made to burial registers kept in the Natal Society Library (Reference Section) in the re-drawing of these plans.

Arms and the Men

Pro Patria

South Africa's senior regiment, the Natal Carbineers has celebrated its 125th anniversary. In January there was a week of celebration with events in which the regiment, its former members and the public participated. There were formal messes and a dinner and a special race meeting at the Pietermaritzburg Turf Club; the films *Pro Patria* and *Carbineer* were shown, the Regimental Colour was trooped and the programme concluded with a drum-

head church service at the Drill Hall. In addition *The Natal Witness* published a special supplement which recorded much of the regiment's history. Founded in the early colonial days, proudly bearing no less than 26 battle honours on its colour, the Natal Carbineers is still a fighting force, having performed several spells of border duty in recent years. As former commandant, Mr. G.R. de Carle has commented 'Without doubt the regiment will continue to fulfil the calls which may be made upon it from time to time in the defence of South Africa and will live up to its motto *Pro Patria*'.

Zulu Dawn

Two years ago Pietermaritzburg buzzed with all the excitement of film-making. Redcoats drilled on the Oval and black soldiers in the immaculate uniforms of Sikali's Horse stepped out smartly in the City streets. Last year the Anglo-Zulu War Centenary, with all the celebrations, commemorations, criticism and comment it evoked, kept attention focused on the events of 1879.

After all this ballyhoo it was inevitable that *Zulu Dawn* was something of an anti-climax. Like any locally-made movie it provided a certain amount of fun in spotting one's friends among the extras and in recognising familiar places more or less disguised and decorated. Some of the military scenes were excellent, especially the crossing of the Buffalo and the escape across Fugitives' Drift. But, in our view, the film failed to entertain or enlighten. The characters never developed into anything more than flat cardboard-like creatures and the knowledge that the Zulus were heavily defeated a few hours later destroyed any sense of excitement at their victory at Isandlwana. The film did nothing to enhance understanding of black/white relations in the nineteenth century or explain how Britain, unprovoked, could attack a friendly neighbour and get away with it. On the other hand, even though Cetshwayo was portrayed as much more aggressive than the historical evidence suggests, perhaps the scenes at the king's *ikhanda* did just manage to convey the sense that the Zulus also had a case.

The Last Outpost

This television documentary broadcast in September also had a strong military flavour. Shots of the Natal Carbineers, the Caledonian Pipers and memorials to the dead of various colonial conflicts and two world wars all served to remind the viewer that the British Empire and Commonwealth were paid for in blood. It is remarkable — as Prof. Trevor Cope pointed out at last year's Centennial Conference on the Anglo-Zulu War* — that while Zulus have traditionally been depicted as aggressively militaristic, it is in fact the British and colonials who erect memorials to military valour and rejoice in tales of battles and victory; exploits in war hardly feature in Zulu folklore.

Although it purported to make fun of Natal and, to this end, exaggerated our British connections and supposedly 'British' values, *The Last Outpost* was generally well received in Natal. Views of rich Midland pastures; of gracious Victorian homes in Durban and Pietermaritzburg; of English-looking schoolboys singing Hymns Ancient and Modern in English-style school chapels, of 'flannelled fools' and rugby-booted heroes on the playing fields of

*'The Zulu War in Zulu Perspective'. *Theoria* 55, October, 1980.

Maritzburg College; and of the lavish interior of the Durban Club, redolent of the Raj and all it stood for, certainly delighted white English-speaking Natalians and probably most other viewers as well.

It is worth asking, however, what it had to offer beyond the carefully selected and picturesque sequences such as these. Attempts to examine the contention that Natal is the 'last outpost' of the British Empire by putting questions to various Natal personalities were spoiled by bad editing; too rapid cutting-in rendered many of the answers unintelligible and unrelated to the context. Presumably, as this was not a serious documentary, there was no intention of presenting a balanced picture and therefore blatant one-sidedness and glaring omissions must be forgiven. (Where, one wondered, were Natal's black and brown people? And were there no educational institutions for girls?) But if a humorous and deliberately slanted view was intended then a witty and whimsical commentary was needed. Instead both the music and the words were unsuitably ponderous and solemn, and at times positively banal. This writer believes this was most clearly shown by the producer's failure to see that the League of Empire Loyalists is simply a monumental joke! What began a few years ago as an elaborate student prank and has continued as a light-hearted parody was presented with a deadly earnestness.

This grave and heavy-handed pomposity made it quite clear that the makers of the film had entirely missed the point. Our greatest and most enduring 'English' characteristic is surely the ability to laugh at ourselves. In this, as often in more serious matters, Natal owes much to its students for reminding us to keep things in proper perspective.

Documents Lost and Found

From Mr C.O. Holness comes a query concerning Church records:

There seems to be some mystery as to the whereabouts of the early records of baptisms, marriages and burials in Natal. The first trader settlers arrived in Natal in 1824, and although in the early stages Port Natal could not be regarded as a civilized settlement, there is no doubt that before the advent of the first established churches, white women had come to Natal and set the foundations of a stable community.

The missionaries led by Capt. Allen Gardiner R.N. and the Rev. Francis Owen, and the American Board Missionaries, Adams, Champion, Grout, Wilson, Venables and Lindley, were early on the scene and there is no doubt that they and other missionary successors baptised, married and buried white people as well as black. Yet where are the records of these baptisms, marriages and burials of the early Natal settlers — vitally important to genealogists as they are? The American Board records of these ceremonies do not appear to be held by the United Congregational Church, their successors, nor are they lodged at Harvard University where a great collection of Board records has been lodged.

This is a very serious gap in the historical records and we appeal to researchers and others to pass on any information they have which might lead to the discovery of these documents.

Certain other documents have recently come to light in Pietermaritzburg.

In the storerooms of an old business firm in the City was found the ac-

counts ledger of Dr C.M. Aldridge, a medical practitioner of the 1860s. This massive leather-bound tome contains a beautifully written record of all the doctor's consultations and accounts. The usual fee for a confinement was £2.0.0 but we were amused to read of one case when the doctor arrived after the baby had made its appearance and the fee was duly reduced to £1.0.0.

A most exciting discovery was recently made in the Natal Archives when three albums of unusually early photographs were found. The provenance of the albums is unknown and the pictures are undated but the internal evidence suggests that they are among the earliest photographs taken in Natal. Mrs Spencer who has examined the albums notes that some of the pictures were undoubtedly taken before the end of 1858. For example, there is a picture of Canon Jenkins, a military chaplain, who is known to have left the Colony in December 1858. Obviously of later date is the one of Peter Pater-son, Colonial Engineer, who arrived in June 1860.

Not only are the pictures unusually early and of surprising clarity, but many of them are probably unique in that they depict personalities of whom no other photographs are known to exist. Here, for example, we may note Philip Allen, Colonial Treasurer (1852–1862). Many well known officials are represented as well as clerical gentlemen, military figures and other notables. Governor Scott, in full gubernatorial attire, is seen about to mount his horse at the back of Government House; the artillery is shown on the parade ground at Fort Napier. Dr Callaway was photographed with a missionary group, possibly at Springvale. One of the most fascinating and unusual studies is of Sir Theophilus Shepstone and Bishop Colenso — the only known instance of these two having been photographed together. There are also several pictures of Ekukhanyeni (Bishopstowe) showing the buildings, the missionaries, the converts and the pupils.

This writer was struck by a fine group which shows a number of the school pupils. The children are all wearing shirts of a white or cream material with military-style collars and metal buttons, the shirt front, collar and sleeves decorated with coloured braid. The similarity to the familiar red-trimmed calico 'kitchen suits', once so common in Natal, was so startling that we consulted Mrs Daphne Strutt, Curator of the Local History Museum in Durban and author of *Fashion in South Africa 1652–1900*. Her theory is that the 'kitchen' or 'picannin' suits were modelled on the shirts and knickerbockers worn by white colonial boys and writes,

In the Local History Museum are two photographs presented by Mrs. C. Clarkson. They show Pendula, a young Zulu, and were taken in about 1880. In the first he is seen as he appeared when he first joined the house staff of a certain Durban lady. In order that he should be properly clad, she made him simple uniforms, modelled on the knickers-and-tunic suits worn by her own small son but in easily laundered galatea. For outside work the suits were navy blue trimmed with white braid, and for inside they were white trimmed with red braid. Benjamin Greenacre saw and admired these uniforms and had them copied in various sizes for sale at his store.

We would be interested to hear of any photographs or other evidence which might link the suits with the Colenso model.

Golden Jubilees in 1980

We extend congratulations to two organizations which celebrated their fiftieth anniversaries this year.

The Southern African Ornithological Society was founded in Natal and its half century was appropriately celebrated in Natal. Professional ornithologists and amateur birdwatchers met at Hluhluwe for the Society's Annual General Meeting, the presentation of a number of talks and discussions and some varied and rewarding birdwatching. The occasion was also marked by the appearance of *Bird Atlas of Natal*, a pioneering study which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue.

1930 also saw the founding of Entabeni Hospital in Durban whose story is told in *The Place on the Hill* by Marilyn Poole.

Linking Pietermaritzburg and Port Natal

In an earlier issue of *Natalia* (No 1, 1971) we published an account of the hazards of road travel between our two major cities. In this issue we note the centenary of another significant link between them — the railway. Yet another connection between our cities which has not been written about in the detail it deserves is the Umzinduzi/Umgeni waterway even though this only affords a means of communication to the intrepid canoeists. Mr T.B. Frost has drawn our attention to a turn-of-the-century description of the dear old 'Duzi. To the modern reader the words are quaint and fulsome and, in this pollution-conscious age, sadly inaccurate. The occasion was the move of St. Anne's Diocesan College from the City to Hilton in 1903 and the speaker Bishop F.S. Baines. He regretted that the young ladies would now 'lose that cheering sight — the beautiful, limpid, pellucid river, the Umzinduzi'.

Turning our thoughts downstream we note some of this year's events in Durban. The information was supplied by Mrs Daphne Strutt.

1980 started off fairly quietly but the mid-year holiday period was enlivened by the organization of Durban's second *Military Tattoo; Navy Week*; and last but not most important in the cultural field, the *Arts 80 Festival*. For this latter, and with the blessing of the Durban City Council, members of the art fraternity in Durban arranged a programme varied enough to attract people of all ages and all races. Between June 1st and July 20th some 24 separate productions took place, involving as wide a cross section of people as possible. The aim of the festival was in the words of Jill Addleson, one of the organisers, "To take art off its pedestal without lowering its standard. It attempts to break down the barrier between art and life, between art and people. It encourages a light-hearted approach, but above all it emphasises that art can be enjoyed by everyone".

Among the events were Art exhibitions and demonstrations, a film festival, and items under the headings of Ballet, Drama, Music and Opera. In the Durban Art Gallery the Cinzano Glass Collection, one of the most beautiful contributions, was seen by 4 000 people during the Festival period Exhibition. In addition there were group activities such as a Festival of Kites (exhibited or flown competitively), pavement drawing by children and adults at one end of Fenton Lane whilst an open air craft market was held at the other, and a 'How To Draw'

course held over four evenings with Andrew Verster, Daryl Nero, Basil Friendlander and Di Kenton. 'Bathing Beaux and Belles' was the title of a fashion show/lecture showing bathing apparel through the ages and presented by the staffs of the Local History Museum and Durban Art Gallery.

As part of the Navy Week celebrations, a Naval Art exhibition was held in the Gardens and exhibition rooms of the Local History Museum. It was composed of three separate collections, one of pictures executed by local naval artists, one showing selected items on loan from the S.A. National War Museum and a third, 'Harbour History in the Making' displaying maritime drawings of subjects of lasting importance by Tom Hamilton, presently Durban's marine artist.

On 27th August Capt. Caspar Caspareuthus, pioneer aviator, unveiled a plaque at the Old Stamford Hill Airport building, commemorating the fact that it was here that the first scheduled commercial air mail service (piloted by Capt. Caspareuthus) landed and was welcomed by the Mayor of Durban on 26th August, 1929. The building is now the headquarters of the N.M.R. Comrades Association.

A large rock, a piece of Table Mountain sandstone, on a vacant site in Carinthia Road, off Quarry Road was this year declared a National Monument. Identified by the striae which scar it, this is a relic of a huge ice sheet which carried rocks and boulders across the country before depositing them. This one is part of the Dwyka Tillite which has been quarried on both sides of the Umgeni valley since the middle of the 19th century.

Durban preservationists are still engaged in the fight to save the old Main Station buildings — and the Queen's Tavern. At present the thread supporting the sword of Damocles that hangs above them seems adequate. The vital issue with regard to the station would seem to be whether a good, lucrative use can be found for it so that, once restored and adapted, it can support itself.

1820 and All That

Settlers' Day has been observed for the last time; next year this public holiday falls away from our national calendar. But those who came from other countries to make their homes here will not be forgotten for it seems certain that their lives and achievements will go on providing much fascinating material for their descendants, historians and others.

Anyone with an interest in early Natal settlers will be delighted to hear that the first volume of Mrs Shelagh Spencer's mammoth *Biographical Register of Natal Settlers* is to be published next year (Abbott — Ayres). For each settler who arrived in Natal before 1858 there is a biography — the length of these depends on the amount of material available and they range from a few lines to two or three pages — a list of children and their marriages, and a detailed note on the documentary sources where information was found.

Willowfontein Centenary

A nineteenth century group of settlers which is less well known than some others was the settlement at Willowfontein near Pietermaritzburg. In an ar-

ticle in *The Natal Witness* of July 16th 1980 Ivor Glass told the story of the 17 families who were placed on the Voortrekker farm, *Wilfontein*, in the hope of improving the supply of fresh produce to the Pietermaritzburg market, and paid tribute to their courage and perseverance. When they arrived on their farms the veld had been burnt to a cinder and they pitched their tents among the ashes; from such a desolate beginning they went on to overcome other hardships of every kind and eventually turned the valley into an area of great productivity.

The Fynns and Canes and Tarka Post

Some of Natal's settler families came not from Great Britain but from the Eastern Cape. From Mr Brian Randles of the Kaffrarian Museum at King William's Town comes this note on the Cape connections of two familiar Natal personalities.

In *Natalia* No. 5, 1975, Mrs. Margaret Rainier, in reference to the part played by Albany settlers in the pioneering days of Natal, remarked that there was possibly some family relationship between John Cane and Henry Francis Fynn.

Her conjecture is very probably correct for Henry Francis Fynn married firstly Ann Brown (1817–1839) and in 1841, after Ann's death, married her sister Christiana (1821–1870). They were the daughters of John Brown (1791–1835) and Ann Cane (1792–1857) who were married at St. Ann's Church, Westminster on 2nd October, 1812.¹ They came out on the Settler ship *Northampton* in 1820 and settled at Clay Pits in the Albany District.² A witness at the wedding was Ann's brother, Thomas Saunders Cane, who also came out in 1820 and was killed at Clay Pits in 1835 during the 6th Frontier War. There were two other brothers, John and William Cane, and she had three sisters Katherine, Rebecca and Mary.³

John Cane, the Natal pioneer, was the son of Edward Cane of London and was born c. 1800⁴ which would make him about eight years younger than Ann Brown (née Cane). Enquiries to St. Ann's Church brought no response and unfortunately other attempts to establish that Ann's father was also Edward Cane have proved fruitless. Perhaps a *Natalia* reader may have the opportunity to settle the matter by personal research in London. However it seems unlikely that there were two persons of about the same age named John Cane so it seems reasonably probable that Henry Francis Fynn married successively two nieces of his fellow pioneer. A negative aspect is that John Cane, the Natal pioneer, seems to have had very little contact with the Eastern Cape or with Ann Brown (née Cane) and her family, but having come to the country in 1813 aged about 13,⁵ he may have lost touch with his family.

Henry Francis Fynn served as Diplomatic Agent to the Thembus at Tarka Post on the upper Swart Kei River from 1837–1849,⁶ and it was here that his first wife Ann died in 1839. I was agreeably surprised to find her grave still in good condition. In 1849 Thomas Baines painted a water-colour entitled 'Mr. Fynn's Tomb, McDonald's House, Tarka Post'⁷ at the request of Mrs. McDonald "who had expressed a wish to have a drawing of the tomb of a relative who had died and was buried

in a small enclosure beside the garden".⁸ Baines of course erred in describing it as *Mr. Fynn's tomb*. Ann Fynn was in fact Mrs. McDonald's sister-in-law, for she was Henry Francis Fynn's sister born in 1805 and she was married to Donald McDonald in Grahamstown in 1824.⁹

There is a further link with Natal through the 45th (Nottinghamshire) Regiment. The 45th Cutting near Durban is well known to Natalians and a detachment of the 45th constructed the fortification at Tarka Post. On 28th September, 1849, Thomas Baines did a painting¹⁰ of the fort and noted the inscription on the gateway: 'This fort was, *Dei Gratia*, constructed by the light company 45th regt. 1 corporal & 4 gunners royal artillery A.D. 1846'.¹¹ I was delighted to find that this inscribed stone had survived and is in remarkably good condition. It was fortunately kept at the nearby farm, Thibet Park, for many years and in 1977 Mrs. G.C. Phillips kindly presented it to the Kaffrarian Museum, King William's Town. It is currently on loan to the Fort Beaufort Historical Museum which is nearer the site of the Post.

Today there is only slight evidence of the outline of the fortified post, but it is pleasing to be able to record that the National Monuments Council has agreed to erect a cairn with an inscribed plaque which will record Henry Francis Fynn's service there and indicate the site of the fort.

NOTES

- ¹ *Twin Trails* by Marjorie Dick Davies. K.B. Davies (Pvt) Ltd., Salisbury 1974. pp 16, 134 & 148.
- ² *Natalia* No. 5 pp. 59-60.
- ³ *Twin Trails*, p. 148.
- ⁴ *Dictionary of South African Biography*, Vol. II p. 123.
- ⁵ *Ibid.* Vol. II p. 123.
- ⁶ *Ibid.* Vol. I p. 306.
- ⁷ *Journal of a Residence in Africa* by Thomas Baines, edited by R.F. Kennedy, Vol. I, 1842-1849. The van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1961. Illustration No. 20 opposite page 176.
- ⁸ *Ibid.* p. 202.
- ⁹ *The Family of Donald and Eliza McDonald* compiled by Mercy Murray, copied by T.S. Moodie. King William's Town, n.d., and *Twin Trails* p. 16 and p. 144.
- ¹⁰ *Catalogue of Pictures in the Africana Museum* by R.F. Kennedy, No. B. 193.
- ¹¹ *Journal of a Residence in Africa*, pp. 196-197.

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