

## Notes & Queries

### *Deux Ans à Natal*

In response to the formerly unpublished piece *Deux Ans à Natal*, Shelagh Spencer has contributed the following note:

It is certainly difficult to decide whether 'M. Bourbon' ever came to Natal. There is no sign of such a person in the Port Captain's lists of arriving and departing passengers during the period late 1847 to 1851.

On the other hand, Bourbon's reference to the wreckage of two French ships he had observed when entering Durban Bay is genuine (*viz.* the *Suffren*, which foundered in 1845, and the *Bordeaux*, wrecked in 1847).

Again, the bigamist (or was it trigamist?), well known in Mauritius, whom Bourbon encountered ten miles from Durban, is presumably Henry Shire (alias Lyster Henry), one of Natal's pioneer sugar planters. The Shires came to Natal in mid-1846 (here there is a discrepancy because Bourbon states that he had been in Natal four or five years), and settled at 'Milkwood Kraal' on the Little Umhlanga river, near Durban. Lyster Henry, as he was known, became a well-respected figure – one source even describes him as 'the squire of the district'. The evidence points to his having had a personal interview with Lt-Governor Benjamin Pine in June 1854, in which he gave his reasons for wishing to assume his own name, Henry Shire. Permission was granted. A week later he advertised in the press that he would resume the use of the name Henry Shire. Three weeks after this, Shire and his 'wife', Elizabeth Maillot, were married. One can only presume that these events were the consequence of the death of his real wife in Mauritius. (Incidentally, the Shires are credited with introducing the flamboyant tree to Natal from Mauritius.)

The story of the tragic lovers, however, is suspect. With its being 'the topic of every conversation' when Bourbon arrived, it seems strange that no report of such a death has been found in the Colony's newspapers then in existence (*i.e.* the *Natal Patriot* and the *Natal Witness*). Also, 'some little distance from town' suggests that they were not far from either Durban or Pietermaritzburg (the only centres at this early stage). Why, then, did they have to wait to get married, when clergymen were available in both centres?

The detail in which M. Bourbon gives the history of the Voortrekkers and early white settlement in Natal certainly indicates access to sources which, in that early era, it would have been difficult to obtain without an actual visit to the Colony. Did he come to Natal, or was his account compiled from information provided him by someone from Mauritius

who did? Bourbon's plagiarism of Delegorgue contributes to this scepticism as to his veracity.

### **Alan Paton**

Alan Paton, in his autobiographical *Towards the Mountain*, recounts how, at a Speech Day assembly at Estcourt High School many years after the student days during which he and R O Pearse took long walks together (encompassing Estcourt, Durban and even Ladysmith from Pietermaritzburg), he told a story involving the Headmaster: 'I thought it was funny, and the boys and girls thought it was funny. I think the staff thought it was funny, but I don't think the headmaster thought it was funny'.

Perhaps, after all, Paton misjudged the reaction of his host on that occasion. Professor Colin Gardner's 1988 Natal Society Lecture on Alan Paton (published in *Natalia* 18) has drawn a response from Mr Pearse.

It gives one of the clearest accounts I have yet seen of the development of Dr Paton's political philosophy. However, I would like to have seen greater emphasis on the Alan Paton whom his friends knew, the human Alan rather than the political philosopher – his love of a joke: 'he loved a drink, he loved people', as Professor Gardner so aptly puts it.

Stories of the humorous, puckish, fun-loving Alan are, of course, legion. Here is one that occurs to me at random.

The year was 1935, and I was on the Staff of Maritzburg College together with Alan. It was the year of King George V's Silver Jubilee, and 'Scratch' Leach, still beloved by many an old boy, was Acting Head of College (the Headmaster, Pape, was on leave). The occasion was the Morning Assembly. Of course the Hall was packed with boys, with the Staff, in dignified array, drawn up in a large semicircle on the stage.

After explaining the significance of the occasion, 'Scratch', in his rather heavy, ponderous manner, said, 'Now boys, tomorrow we are all going down to the Show Grounds to take part in the celebrations. You will all march down to the Show Grounds, and when you arrive you will line up in front of the pavilion. Each boy will then – sit – down – on – his – own – AREA'.

The silence that followed was electric with tension. Each boy was holding his breath, trying desperately not to laugh, for, of course, you never, never laughed on such an august occasion as Morning Assembly! Suddenly, in the silence, Alan let out a bellow of laughter, and of course brought the house down. Against the assault of laughter, said Mark Twain, nothing can stand.

Mr Pearse also comments on *Natalia's* choice of a photograph to accompany Professor Gardner's lecture. 'It is the only decent one of him I have ever seen, apart from the rather juvenile one on the dust cover of the first (1948) edition of *Cry, the Beloved Country*. I have never been able to understand why the media persisted in using those dreadful pictures of Alan, the grim, dour, unsmiling political philosopher, rather than of the Alan whom his friends knew, impish and fun-loving.'

With Paton and Pearse at N.U.C. during the early 1920s was Neville Nuttall, not such a great walker but a close friend who at one time edited the college Magazine with Paton as his assistant. The trio all intended going into

teaching, and to that end supplemented their university studies with courses at the Natal Training College (the institution whose consignment to oblivion was lamented in *Natalia* 17). The recollection that Mr Nuttall later became Principal of N.T.C. adds piquancy to an already barbed verse that he and Paton accepted for publication in the summer term of 1922 (*NUC Magazine*, Volume 6).

*NATAL TRAINING COLLEGE*  
(*'How it strikes a Contemporary'*)

Age-old, musty specimens,  
 Rows of worn and battered books,  
 Soulless women, biting pens,  
 Imbeciles, with vacant looks.  
 Dry discussions, nearly dead;  
 Words on words, and meaningless.  
 Weak-eyed students, deeply read.  
 Minds as rusty as their dress.

Gloomy lecturers flit round,  
 Hovering like a hot nightmare,  
 Everywhere a dreary sound,-  
 Endless talking, always low,  
 Sound asleep, and yet awake.  
 By-and-bye a bell will go,  
 And the drowsy spell will break.

MORPHEUS

It was unusual for the *N.U.C. Magazine* to publish material under *noms de plume* other than the writer's initials, so that authorship can generally be readily traced. Perhaps Mr Pearse (or some other student contemporary) may be able to identify the scathing rascal concealed behind the dormant deity?

***Mashea and the Barnacle***

In last year's number of *Natalia*, contemporary verses referring to tsetse fly control under the title 'Mashea and the Barnacle' were published, together with a query about some of the references contained in them. Dr Ian Player has responded with these comments:

MASHEA should be spelt MASHIYA, and the person thus named is W E Foster, or Willie Foster as he is known in Zululand. He had big, bushy eyebrows and the Zulus therefore named him 'Mashiya'.

Foster was right-hand man to R H T P Harris – of Harris Fly Trap fame. In fact it was Foster who developed the first trap while Harris was on leave in Durban. It was, however, rather a crude one, and Harris immediately altered it. Another man involved in the making of the first trap was Sam Deakin who worked for Harris in the late 20s/early 30s.

Foster was originally a stock inspector in Zululand and went there after the Bambatha rebellion. In the 1920s he was seconded to Harris to help with the anti-tsetse fly work. When Harris retired, Foster worked for Dr Kluge who took over from Harris, then in 1953, when the

Umfolozi Game Reserve was handed back to the Province of Natal, he became Game Supervisor for the Natal Parks Board. He was a fluent Zulu linguist and greatly respected by the Zulus. I took over from him at Umfolozi Game Reserve in 1955 and enjoyed many interesting hours in his company.

Sorry to say I don't know who the Barnacle is. If he had a Zulu name it would be easy. Harris's Zulu name was Makamisa, meaning The Stutterer.

### ***Flat Earthmen***

In his article on Fort Napier, Graham Dominy notes the unfortunate part played by the *Natal Witness* and its then editor Horace Rose in whipping up anti-German sentiment in Pietermaritzburg whilst German nationals were interned there during the Great War. Today, as the reprinting of book reviews in the present number confirms, the editors of *Natalia* and the *Witness* have a productively cordial relationship. Regular readers of the country's oldest newspaper will be familiar with the contributions to its columns from the Midlands' most staunch Flat Earther, and the happy connection between the two journals leads us to pre-empt any future editors' efforts to mark a centenary that is still a few years off. In April 1895 Captain Joshua Slocum sailed, alone in his sloop *Spray*, from Boston Massachusetts on the first leg of a circumnavigation of the world. A little over two years later, escorted by the port pilot tug but in a 'smart gale' and with seas too rough to permit a tow, Slocum brought the *Spray* safely across the bar and into Port Natal.

Captain Slocum remained in Durban from 17th November to 14th December 1897. He did some cribbage with Harry Escombe (but declined to stake his sloop on a game of cribbage with Natal's Prime Minister), encountered the great explorer Stanley at the Royal Hotel, and visited many public schools where he 'had the pleasure of meeting many bright children'. The last comment, however, was made in the context of his doubts regarding the quality of education in the hinterland of Southern Africa. When he eventually got back to the United States (in June 1898) he wrote out his experiences in *Sailing Alone Around the World*.

It sounds odd to hear scholars and statesmen say the world is flat; but it is a fact that three Boers favoured by the opinion of President Krüger prepared a work to support that contention. While I was at Durban they came from Pretoria to obtain data from me, and they seemed annoyed when I told them that they could not prove it by my experience. With the advice to call up some ghost of the dark ages for research, I went ashore, and left these three wise men poring over the *Spray's* track on a chart of the world, which, however, proved nothing to them, for it was on Mercator's projection, and behold, it was 'flat'. The next morning I met one of the party in a clergyman's garb, carrying a large Bible, not different from the one I had read. He tackled me, saying, 'If you respect the Word of God, you must admit that the world is flat'. 'If the Word of God stands on a flat world - ' I began. 'What!' cried he, losing himself in a passion, and making as if he would run me through with an assegai. 'What!' he shouted in astonishment and rage, while I jumped aside to dodge the imaginary weapon. Had this good but misguided fanatic been armed with a real weapon, the crew of the *Spray* would have died a martyr there

and then. The next day, seeing him across the street, I bowed and made curves with my hands. He responded with a level, swimming movement of his hands, meaning 'the world is flat.'

Captain Slocum's complaint was against the ignorance of the Boers, however, and not their bigotry. 'Real stubborn bigotry with them is only found among old fogies, and will die a natural death, and that, too, perhaps long before we ourselves are entirely free from bigotry' – an observation confirmed in time by Horace Rose and a continuing line of others like him.

### ***A Maritime Museum in Durban***

Captain Slocum was thoroughly charmed by Port Natal: 'this delightful place is the commercial centre of the "Garden Colony", Durban itself, the city, being the continuation of a garden'. He would doubtless be distressed to find that today the view of the Berea from his anchorage in the bay has been obliterated by glass and concrete towers, but perhaps encouraged to discover that recent town planners have been able to recreate garden-like open spaces in the very centre of the city. Having been much impressed by the enterprise of Durban's two yacht-clubs and the quality of local seamanship ('the *Spray* was not sailing in among greenhorns when she came to Natal'), he might be pleased, too, to find that long-overdue steps have been taken towards providing this great seaboard city with a maritime museum.

When this scribe discovered the museum on a bright winter morning, the enthusiasm of the curatrix made a rather stronger first impression than the scope and range of the exhibits. A reconstruction of a small early Durban building (the original, built in 1902, still stands in Seaview) features a collection of enlarged photographs covering various aspects of activity on and around the bay down the years, and contains the nucleus of what could become a lively record of the development of one of the world's major ports. Propped high on trestles, the small steam pilot boat *Ulundi* is entirely inaccessible to the visitor, but moored in tandem at the quayside and moving gently on the last vestiges of swell are the two real treats, the ocean-going tug *J R More* and the minesweeper *S A S Durban*.

The most memorable deeds of *J R More's* working career are documented in a display of press cuttings. It is the sort of collection which might have been assembled by the vessel's Master himself, and indeed the tug, for all that it is dormant and retired, has about it an air of having merely paused between jobs, as if the crew might come back on board even before one has left, shoulder one aside, and bring her back to life. *S A S Durban* has much the same feel. Wads of cotton waste are tucked between pipes ready to be used again in a moment. There's a chart on the chart table, just where it was left for the next watch.

These do not match the conventional image of museum exhibits, sterilised into facsimiles of what once they were: they are working ships in which the visitor becomes one of the crew, squeezing out of a hard and narrow bunk, clambering up to the bridge, grumbling about what comes out of the galley, shouting orders into a speaking tube and ringing down to the engine room for Slow Ahead as we gently pick up a tow or edge towards an errant mine. No doubt pilfering and scratching fingers will in time force the erection of barriers, and looking will replace acting, but by then the museum will perhaps have developed other attractions.

### *A Day of Genealogy*

Interest in origins is one of the aspects of *The British Character* which the late Mr Pont might well have enjoyed depicting. It is not, however, a trait peculiar to the British alone, and the serious study of genealogy is gaining popularity locally. Dr M. J. O'Connor provided the material for the note below.

Following an offer to deliver a lecture to the Natal Coastal Branch of the Genealogical Society of South Africa by Mr Gordon Haddon from England, and a similar offer to the Natal Midlands Branch by Mr Des Armstrong, South African representative of the Irish Heritage Foundation, the two branches decided to co-operate and arrange a Day of Genealogy, making use of the services of these two gentlemen as well as of local speakers. In the event, the lecture that Mr Armstrong was to have given was delivered by Mrs Kathleen Neill, founder of the Irish Heritage Foundation.

Various crises – including the eleventh-hour discovery that the proposed venue would be without electricity – threatened to upset the planning, but, with the help of Mrs Addison of the Public Relations division at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg, a suitable lecture theatre was found at the university and the participants gathered there on 11th February 1989. The event had been widely advertized on radio and in the press, but the public response was well beyond the expectations of the organizers, with over 150 people attending.

The topics of the lectures were carefully selected to cover as wide a range of topics as possible to assist the family historian, both beginner and more advanced. After the opening, Mr Con Roeloffze, president-elect of the Genealogical Society of South Africa and chairman of the Southern Transvaal Branch, introduced proceedings with a talk on 'What genealogy is all about'. He was followed by Mrs Neill, who spoke on research in Ireland, and Mrs Annaliese Peters (secretary of the Coastal Branch) on the Bergtheil Settlers. Mrs Beryl Laing, chief librarian of the Family History Library of the Mormon Church, spoke about the Genealogical Library of her church, and Mr Brian Spencer of the Don Africana Library on the topic 'Libraries and Genealogy'.

Lunch and teas were provided by a small team of members and their wives, and in the afternoon Mrs Judy Hawley of the Natal Archives spoke on 'Genealogy and the Natal Archives Depot' and Mr Gordon Haddon on genealogical research in the United Kingdom. Before a panel discussion brought the formal proceedings of the day to a close, Mrs Cynthia Giddy spoke on the topic 'Putting Leaves on your Genealogical Tree'.

Apart from the lectures, the day featured a number of exhibitions. These included displays by the Natal Archives of genealogical source material and by the Mormon Church of the use of its International Genealogical Index. Mrs Neill's Irish Heritage Foundation mounted a display which included the cloak used in the installation of the chief of the Neill clan, Mrs Giddy had illustrations to complement her lecture, and there were displays of books on family history and the use of computers in genealogy.

The excellent response shows the increasing popularity of genealogy, and this trend is confirmed by statistics from various archives depots

which indicate that about a third of researchers using their facilities are working on family history. As a follow-up to the day, participants were invited to a Saturday morning workshop at the Natal Archives, and this was also well supported. In spite of gremlins in the planning stages, the organizers could congratulate themselves on a very successful event.

### *Settler Descendants' Solidarity*

Mr John Deane has provided this note on a memorable gathering.

To mark the 140th anniversary of the arrival of the first Byrne Settler ships in Natal, an enterprising group of descendants arranged a gathering at Baynesfield on 4th July 1989. It was widely advertized in the press, and despite unseasonably overcast and rainy weather, about 400 people arrived at the Baynesfield community hall on that Sunday morning. For those who were not sure in which settler party their forbears reached these shores, ships' passenger lists were available, and all were encouraged to wear name-tags which included the name of the ancestral vessel. A general feeling of affinity prevailed, and intermarriage of settler families enabled some to sail under more than one flag. Morning tea was followed by talks on Joseph Byrne and his agent John Moreland, given by well-known Natal historians Shelagh Spencer and Ruth Gordon. Cooking-fires were provided outside, and the family picnic parties illustrated a persistence even unto the third and fourth generations of many aspects of The British Character immortalized by the cartoonist Pont. The afternoon session, back in the hall, was devoted to contributions by various settler descendants who spoke of particular pioneering experiences of their families. The day proved to be a very enjoyable occasion, and by general consensus, worth repeating.

### *The Environment at Risk*

During the past year, the 'Garden Colony' where Joshua Slocum called some ninety years ago has experienced some rude shocks. Significant levels of 'acid rain', apparently related to the injudicious use of hormonal herbicides, have been measured over Durban and elsewhere in the region. Toxic industrial waste, instead of being safely disposed of, has been merely dumped, seemingly on a large scale. Raw sewage in the Umsindusi River, never entirely absent from the water that flows through Pietermaritzburg, has more than once risen to poisonous levels, and the authorities have acknowledged that the familiar pall of factory smoke over the once-sleepy hollow may really be endangering human as well as animal and plant life. Also in the capital, some of Scottsville's jacaranda trees – along King Edward Avenue and elsewhere – have perhaps not survived the mistaken application of an over-strong weed-killer, and the canopy over upper West Street has been hacked down to make way for traffic. Expanding human settlement everywhere is eating away at the natural habitat of animals and birds, and in the Midlands the conversion of open grassland to commercial forests is having the same effect.

The changes being wrought on the environment by human folly and greed are irreversible and hugely destructive. It is a situation which the journal of an organization calling itself 'The Natal Society' must note with great alarm.

Fortunately, educationalists in Natal are alert to the danger, and increasing emphasis is being given to environmental education. An annual competitive symposium on the conservation of our environment and natural resources provides a forum for reports on secondary school research projects which achieve increasingly laudable standards. The overall winner in 1989 was the Conservation Club of Pinetown Boys' High School, which made a study of the Mhlatuzana Valley that extends from Key Ridge to the Durban harbour. Some of the conclusions drawn in that study (entitled 'Catchment Conservation – A Logical Approach Towards Environmental Responsibility' – warrant repeating:

Now, more than ever before, Man's survival on Earth is threatened: threatened by the explosion of his population numbers and his irresponsible actions. Those basic elements upon which he survives – air, water, and soil – he is now polluting, mismanaging, or simply destroying. Lack of care will result in damage to those very foundations on which Man's life depends, as green pastures are transformed to deserts and majestic rivers to dry troughs.

Urgent and appropriate action is needed now. Procrastination and ongoing debate often lead nowhere. It is only through decisive action that our survival, and that of other species, can be ensured.

### ***The Provincial Council Building in Pietermaritzburg***

The building that latterly housed Natal's defunct provincial council was built for its colonial predecessor, the Legislative Council, and first occupied in 1889. To mark the centenary, T.B. Frost has provided the note that follows.

Natal's first Legislative Council was opened in 1857 and met in the only place available, the government schoolroom which stood on the corner of Longmarket and Chapel streets. While the doings of the politicians attracted considerable popular interest in a society with little in the way of entertainment, the venue was hardly commensurate with even the small dignity of a nominated Legislative Council in one of the least of Her Majesty's colonies.

In 1864 plans were drawn up by the Colonial Engineer, Peter Patterson, for a new building on the government erf in Commercial Road facing the market square. The foundation stone was laid in 1865, but such was the economic adversity of the times that the project was not complete until 1871. This building served a variety of purposes: it housed the Supreme Court, the rooms at the northern corner were used as the Post Office, and it accommodated the sessions of the Legislative Council in its principal hall.

In the 1880s, with Responsible Government in the offing, the parliamentarians of the day sought more commodious and permanent accommodation than a Supreme Court building, used merely on sufferance of the Chief Justice. Accordingly, the adjoining erf 24 in Longmarket Street, on which stood St Mary's church, was purchased from Bishop Colenso. A new St Mary's was erected at the corner of Burger and Commercial roads before the old was demolished, but the ground was cleared in time for the celebration of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in June 1887, when the foundation stone of the new

parliament building was laid by the Governor, Sir Arthur Havelock. The winning design was that of James Tibbet, who had probably been employed as a draughtsman by the famous architect P.M. Dudgeon, and the building was taken into use in April 1889 with due pomp and ceremony, the guard of honour provided by men of the 64th Regiment, the 6th Dragoons, and cadets from Maritzburg College.

The building has been described by Brian Kearney as 'one of the finest in Pietermaritzburg'. The exterior is graced by classical columns and pediment. Inside, a visiting Englishman thought that 'it would put to shame, as far as internal arrangements are concerned, our Palace of Westminster'. Corridors ran down both sides of the lofty assembly hall and led to the various offices of the legislative councillors. The hall itself was panelled in dark timber, with hangings and upholstery of crimson velvet. Semi-circular clerestory lights were arranged along the two long sides of the space. A ladies' gallery was added in 1890. In 1894 it was one of the first places to be fitted with 'the electric light'.

Additions were made in 1898 to provide a library, refectory, larger kitchens, a billiard room and so on. The building was set off by the elegant cast-iron fences and gates which surrounded it, while a marble statue of Queen Victoria was erected on a pedestal in front. Including furnishings, it cost £28 000. Considering the resource base of the colony at the time, it was indeed a remarkably splendid and prestigious public building.

The granting of Responsible Government to Natal in 1893 created a bi-cameral parliament. The lower house, now known as the Legislative Assembly, met, of course, in its new premises. The new upper house, the Legislative Council, met in the equally new Town Hall. That, alas, was burned to the ground in 1898, hastening the day when the Legislative Council would have a home of its own. Plans for a building attached to the Legislative Assembly were accordingly drawn up and a foundation stone laid in 1899.

Progress here was hindered, however, by the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War later that same year. The stone was coming from the Mooi River area, but was held up when the railway was required for military purposes. The contractor, one Frank Turner, seeking further materials, was besieged in Ladysmith, caught by the Boers when he attempted to escape, and sent to Pretoria as a spy! Not until 1902 was the building completed. Delays in construction, moreover, were not the only effect of the war. As the casualties from General Buller's disastrous early attempts to raise the siege of Ladysmith flowed back to Pietermaritzburg, the Legislative Assembly building, together with St George's Garrison Church and Maritzburg College, was commandeered by the military as an emergency hospital. Once more, for a time, parliament had to hold its sessions in the Supreme Court next door.

May 1910 brought the advent of Union and the end of the colonial parliament. The Legislative Assembly premises were henceforth to be home to the new Provincial Council. The Legislative Council building was used by a variety of provincial departments until the Natalia building was opened in 1973. Thereafter the Provincial Council used the vacated building as offices and committee rooms.

When South Africa became a Republic in 1961, the position of the Provincial Council was preserved for a further 25 years despite steadily encroaching central government authority. The Constitution Act of 1983, however, sounded its death knell and in 1986 it was disbanded. Since then the historic old buildings have been occupied largely by the ghosts of politicians past, though present-day ones still use the debating chamber occasionally when Joint Committees of the Tri-cameral Parliament meet there.

### **Poetry in Prince Alfred Street**

In *Natalia* 18, *Notes and Queries* briefly outlined the history of the Prince Alfred Street house now occupied as a studio-cum-gallery-cum-library-cum-office by the Midlands Arts and Crafts Society. MACS' regular exhibitions generally confirm the usual notion that 'arts and crafts' means painting, ceramics, sculpting and working with fibre and fabric in various ways, but the society has also on occasion hosted what can best be termed 'soirees'. The patrons (the word is more appropriate in this context than in the cinema) assemble to sip wine, sherry, or whatever while they listen to local poets read their own works. Musical interludes – at the latest event, Jimmy Freeborn singing his own compositions – are interspersed between the readings, and the whole is rounded off with a light and simple supper. The twice-invited poets have been Moira Lovell, Floss Mitchell, George Candy, Clive Lawrance, and David Pike, and their various works complement one another and balance nicely to make up a stimulating evening. Mr Lawrance has graciously granted permission for *Notes and Queries* to print two of his shorter poems:

#### AFRICA

This land is old and kind:  
 You feel it  
 In the veld, in rocks and trees,  
 Even in cities and townships,  
 On warm and windless days,  
 There's a stillness, old and kind:  
 Only the weather  
 (Bridge-bending storms  
 Or slow-drying decay)  
 And the people, white and black,  
 Are new and violent,  
 Blaspheming of privilege and revenge,  
 Grappling or grovelling for power,  
 Not for Africa;  
 Africa waits for the rain, the seed,  
 The tree, the fruit ...  
 Africa is immensely patient,  
 Old and kind.

*JACARANDA IN A WHITE SUBURB*

Only this morning,  
 Serene in sunlight,  
 This purple lady  
 Presided over green lawns:  
 Now she trembles  
 In the reaching fingers  
 Of a storm ....

***The Township Troubles***

Pietermaritzburg's enthusiasm for celebrating its 150th year in 1988 was greatly dampened by the events that have affected, fearfully and terribly, black people in the neighbouring townships. Although they share the same workplaces, white people are generally so isolated from the lives of their compatriots that they have had little knowledge of, and scant insight into, these events. The two short letters printed below were written by a domestic servant in order to explain her seeming unreliability to her employer. They are reproduced here, verbatim, as an unusual piece of primary historical evidence. Perhaps the only comment required is that *Natalia* feels a need not to reveal the identity of the writer.

*Monday 5th June, 1989.*

I was a risk to come to work this morning. But I saw the buses & kombis full with people this morning. So I thought what will happen if I follow the people. Anyway we didn't see anything this morning. Some of the people didn't go to work like my husband didn't go. he said he was frightened because they warned them on Friday if they happen to see them at work they take further steps for them and they are Inkatha so he stay away. Well we dont know what it will be this afternoon when we go home. Lets hope will be safe until Thursday.

*16th June, 1989*

I am coming to do my ironing tomorrow please leave the door opened. But come a little bit later because its a holiday or stay away or goverment holiday I dont know mybe you heard about it. Thats why Ill come a little bit later to see first whats happening. Anyway hope to come to morrow.

***National Monuments in Natal***

*Notes and Queries* customarily lists the national monuments proclaimed in Natal during the previous year, and the list is generally a lengthy one. This year only one proclamation and two provisional proclamations can be reported. The Annual Report of the National Monuments Commission for the year ended 31st March 1988 describes them as follows:

**Declared monument:**

*The Old City Hall building in Main Street, Kokstad.*

This building with its Neo-Classical element was erected in 1900 to serve as City Hall and municipal offices. The building was designed by the architect Arthur Fyfe and officially inaugurated on 1 January 1901.

**Provisional proclamations:**

- a) Stand (Erf) 313 with the buildings on it at Umzinto.
- b) St Andrew's Presbyterian Church building (also known as The Little Abbey Theatre) at 86 Commercial Road, Durban.

The same report (Annual Report No. 19) notes the publication in the *Government Gazette* of a Government Notice concerning the issue of a salvage permit for the wreck of the English steamship *Newark Castle*, which stranded near Richards Bay in 1908.

Compiled by MORAY COMRIE

