

Notes and Queries

A letter from Mr R. O. Pearse

In our last issue, we carried correspondence from the renowned Estcourt headmaster on the subject of Alan Paton and his student and early teaching days, and took the liberty of quoting a mention of Mr Pearse from Paton's autobiography. Mr Pearse has responded to those notes.

Before I go any further, I think I should say a word in my own defence. I refer to the Alan Paton episode which I sent you. If you have any keen-eyed literary sleuths amongst your readers they have already written to you to say the episode can hardly be correct as Alan left College at the end of 1934, and King George's Silver Jubilee was in the early part of 1935. See the history of Maritzburg College, *For Hearth and Home*, by Simon Haw and Richard Frame, page 257: 'At the end of that year (1934) he (Paton) accepted a post as the principal of Diepkloof'. With all due respect to the author of a very fine book, Haw is wrong here. (He repeats the error on page 489). I had one year at College on the Staff, 1935, and for the first six months was very closely associated with Alan. The offer of a reformatory post only came to Alan from Hofmeyr round about March, and Alan discussed the offer with me on a number of occasions. I know he left College at the end of June 1935. In his *Towards the Mountain* Alan gives no date as to when he left College, but there is a very clear clue on page 139, where Alan says, speaking of his arrival in Johannesburg, 'He (Cornelius Olivier, senior probation officer of Johannesburg) put me in his car and took me to see Diepkloof Reformatory. It was the first of July 1935, and it was my first day as its head'. There was no hiatus between Alan's leaving College and his arrival at Diepkloof.

You ask whether I can throw any light on the authorship of the poem you print on page 72. I am afraid I cannot help very much, though I strongly suspect it was Alan himself. I should explain that in those days there were only about 200 students at NUC and literary talent was scarce. The editor of a magazine was often thrown back on his own resources and would include several articles and poems written by himself, but to avoid giving the impression that it was a one man show, he would attribute one article or poem to himself and the rest would appear under a nom-de-plume. The 1922 Commemoration Number (Volume 7) is a case in point. I edited this issue, with Alan as sub-editor. I claimed authorship of the two poems on page 16, but the article on page 26, 'Sunset and Evening Star', by 'Umhlali' was also mine, in spite of the snide 'Editorial' remark at the end. (Yes, in spite of Alan's gibe at the Estcourt High School's Speech Day episode, I did have at least

something of a sense of humour!) In the same issue, Alan claimed authorship of 'Song of the Northward Bound' on page 34, but 'Sonnet to Sleep', on page 29, by 'O.F.' was also by Alan, though where he got the 'O.F.' from I don't know.

To get back to the poem in question, the only two students who had the caustic wit to match the poem were Alan and W.M. (Bill) Adams. The poem reflects Alan's own opinions of NTC, as appear in *Towards the Mountain*. Bill Adams spent one and a half years at NTC. The culprit is not Neville Nuttall. It is not in his style at all, though he did contribute prolifically to NUC magazines of the time. I can think of no one else.

Mr Pearse observes that there seems to be a discrepancy in the numbering of early NUC magazines, which the compiler of *Notes and Queries* can confirm.

Early experiments with radio at NUC

The compiler of *Notes and Queries* has taken the liberty of extracting a further note on student affairs at NUC during the 1920s, and Alan Paton's participation in them, from the reminiscences of Mr Norman Ingle, who was at the College from 1922 to 1925.

Regular debates were held. The first each year was that for freshers. Some were invited to speak or read a paper on some subject, followed by a discussion. Radio in South Africa was barely known except for ships. While at school, I had been interested and used a crystal set and spark transmitter. At the Freshers' Debate in 1922 I read a paper on 'The Future of Radio'. Alan Paton thereafter thanked 'Professor Wongle' for his paper and amid roars of laughter poured scorn on my predictions.

Norman Ingle took his interest in things scientific into the teaching profession, and, despite Paton's derision (enacted, as it no doubt was, for the diversion of a small and cheerfully friendly student body) he pursued his experiments with radio.

In 1924 Gunnar Jaaback and I gave a talk and demonstration on radio. There was no broadcasting in Natal then, but there was in Johannesburg. We therefore at that time arranged for a special call to be made to us, which came through with crackles and a husky voice on a home-made valve receiver to about twenty students.

St Thomas's Church

The omission from last year's *Natalia* of a Note on the 125th anniversary of the parish of St Thomas in Durban was a regrettable oversight which, with help from Rosemary Webb (daughter of the same Norman Ingle) and the assistance of Janie Malherbe's *Port Natal*, we now hope to correct.

The Anglican parish of St Thomas can trace links back to Durban's earliest times, when, in March 1835, Capt. Allen Gardiner chose the ridge overlooking the Bay of Natal as the site for his much-desired mission and named it 'Berea'. The land passed into the ownership of Christopher Joseph Cato, and in the 1860s was donated to the Anglican Church of Natal.

The first St Thomas's Church had been shipped from England in pre-

fabricated form as a gift to the parishioners of Congella who, unfortunately, could not afford to have it transported down from the Point and made it over to the growing community on the Berea. In 1864 it was erected on the Ridge Road site of Gardiner's mission, and in June of that year was consecrated by Robert Gray, Archbishop of Cape Town.

By 1890 the congregation had outgrown its little wood-and-iron church, and set about raising funds for a larger building. A new site was also acquired, on Musgrave Road, and the nave of the second St Thomas's Church was consecrated in 1899. The old building remained standing until 1928 when, its small steeple having collapsed, it was found to be so dilapidated that it was demolished. In its place, a memorial to Allen Gardiner with four stained-glass windows portraying Natal's early history was erected. The old mission site and its churchyard has a second, and more direct, memorial of the Gardiner family. Gardiner's twelve-year-old daughter Julia had died on the eve of the family's departure from Natal, and was buried at Berea. Her tombstone (rediscovered after serving as a doorstep in the Cato home for many years and restored to the grave in 1864) bears an inscription penned by her father:

But soon the living stream she found
 Redeemed in love allayed her fears
 And bore her safe to Canaan's ground.
 And now she hymns the angelic strain
 Worthy for us the lamb was slain.

The University of Natal at the age of eighty

Although St Thomas's significant anniversary slipped by unmentioned in *Notes and Queries*, attention to the studenthood of Alan Paton has kept the early years of Natal's university very much in mind. 1990 brought the eightieth anniversary of the founding of NUC, but the university college remembered by Mr Pearse and Mr Ingle was the edifice on the Scottsville ridge that dates from 1912. During the past year, the compiler of *Notes and Queries* has delved into the university archives.

In May 1910, by one of its last acts before Union, the Natal Government signed contracts for a building on the 40 acres of virgin veld on the Scottsville ridge granted to NUC by the Pietermaritzburg Town Council. The foundation stone was laid by the Duke of Connaught on 1 December that same year. The architect was a local man, J. Collingwood Tully, and he placed his building – opened by the Union's first Minister for Education, F.S. Malan, on 9 August 1912 – precisely so that it would be central on the skyline as travellers left the town and passed down Commercial Road towards the Umsindusi. He described it enthusiastically:

The general planning of the block is based upon a quadrangular system, with the great hall in the centre. There are corridors running the sides of the quadrangle, formed with a series of arched loggias specially planned for climatic conditions peculiar to this province. The open courts on the east and west sides of the great hall ensure ample light and ventilation, while they also afford entrances to the various lecture rooms and laboratories ranged around.

The various rooms were described in fine detail – the great hall, that could seat 450 people on the ground floor and 90 in the gallery, with its teak entrance doors glazed with antique Flemish glass; the lecture rooms and theatres which each could accommodate fifty students – the humanities in the one wing and the sciences in the other. (Since student enrolment had dropped from the intake of 57 ‘aboriginals’ in 1910 to 48 in 1912, such accommodation must have seemed generous indeed.)

The library, committee room, and professors’ common room were above the entrance hall, and in the sub-basement were more laboratories, workshops, store-rooms, cloak-rooms and lavatories, together with two private apartments for professors. The latest and most improved drainage had been installed and connected to the town system, the government electrical engineer had installed ‘the electric lighting’, and, according to the architect, ‘all lecture rooms, lecture theatres, and the great hall will be artificially lighted by deflected rays from the ceiling. The electric light fittings have been specifically constructed for that purpose’.

In fact, the building was not completely ready when it was first occupied, and lack of funds prevented its being furnished with anything like adequacy. In February 1912, Council was informed that, since there was no money available for a clock, the circular spaces in the clock tower would be boarded up with wooden panels. Professor Denison had himself to scout about for laboratory cabinets. The Council room could not be carpeted, and the professors in the sunless ‘private apartments’ in the basement were denied even linoleum for their bare concrete floors. Professor Petrie remarked on the considerable noise which the builders continued to make for many weeks after the university had taken occupation, and later recalled that:

In those disturbed days, professors who had their pitch on the ground floor had to keep a sharp eye for the possible sudden disappearance of members of their audience through some trapdoor (the better ‘ole?) that had been left to give access to a fitting underneath which still had to be adjusted. On one notable occasion, at least, when unauthorised ventriloquism competed somewhat prominently with ‘the master’s voice’, the Senate had to take mild disciplinary action – a rare experience in the history of the College.

For the Arts, the proximity of the Chemistry department, which initially shared the back wing with Physics, was, as Alexander Petrie remarked, ‘a fact which was frequently, and forcibly, conveyed to sensitive noses, or indeed noses of any kind’. Norman Ingle, coming to NUC ten years later, had similar memories: ‘Upstairs, Professor Bews complained of the foul smell when we were doing qualitative analyses. Strangely enough, the smell seemed worse when diluted with air than when concentrated in the laboratory. Perhaps we were partly anaesthetised’.

During the Great War that intervened between the opening of the building and Mr Ingle’s arrival there, the College council offered all but the science laboratories to the government, and it served as a soldiers’ convalescent hospital. A structural relic of the period is the spiral staircase that was specially constructed to provide Bews with access to his first floor laboratory without having to trespass on the domain of the military. The end of the war brought the students back to Scottsville amid celebrations that impressed a local resident and were perhaps a foretaste of the Rags to come.

It was a Saturday night, and I heard a racket in the street outside. Going out, I found a procession of students, in their academic dress and carrying lights. At the head of the procession they flourished the Union Jack and their NUC banner, and they were singing war songs to the accompaniment of mouth organs, tin whistles, trumpets, bugles, dinner bells, and much beating on drums, brass trays, and paraffin tins.

Up Commercial Road they went, and into Loop Street, where they gathered together and gave their War Cry. Then a fellow in a B.A. hood called for three cheers for the king, which were lustily given, and a girl got up on a table to propose the toast of NUC – in nothing more harmful, I declare, than tea.

They closed with a vigorous rendering of *God Save the King* and marched away again.

Honorary doctorate for Joshua Radebe

One of the most happy recent decisions by the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg has been to confer the degree of Doctor of Philosophy *honoris causa* upon the founder and leader of the Pietermaritzburg Choral Society, Joshua Meyiwa Radebe. Born near Umzimkulu in 1936, Joshua Radebe went to the Amahehle School in the Ixopo district, and later to the Polela High School, before becoming a teacher himself in 1956. In 1968, after a period of teaching and studying in Estcourt, he moved to Sobantu. Since 1975 he has been a teacher at Amakholwa High School in Edendale, Pietermaritzburg, where he has produced a fine choir. Regarding the reasons for the conferring of an honorary doctorate, we can do no better than quote the university's own citation.

His great achievement has been the Pietermaritzburg Choral Society ... which he founded and which he conducts and manages. The choir, which is based in the Edendale community, is one of the most highly regarded of its kind in South Africa; it has received innumerable awards and accolades. For ten consecutive years it was placed first in the choral competition of the Natal African Teachers' Union; for five years it was placed first or second in the competitions of the National African Teachers' Association; for the last five years it has been first in the prestigious National Ford Choir Festival. In 1985 Mr Radebe, his choir with him, became the first African to conduct a South African symphony orchestra, in a performance of Mozart's Coronation Mass, in the Pietermaritzburg City Hall and in the Emmanuel Cathedral, Durban. In 1986 the Pietermaritzburg Choral Society was selected to represent South Africa in the International Eisteddfod in Llangollen, Wales, but political circumstances made the visit impossible.

The Pietermaritzburg Choral Society tackles a range of music from works by African composers to varied items from the Western choral tradition. In this respect it has contributed to choral practice by helping to bridge the space between different musical traditions. At least as profound a contribution, however, is the one it has made – in very troubled times – to the communities of the greater Pietermaritzburg area.

The choir's achievements are the result of inspired team work, but nothing would have been possible without the the musical intuition, the

dedication and the vision of Joshua Radebe. It is for these qualities that the University of Natal honours him.

The new Tatham Gallery

The opening of a new art gallery would be seen as a major cultural event anywhere in the civilized world. Istine Rodseth Swart comments on the new home for the capital's Tatham Gallery.

10 August 1990 saw the presentation of the new home of the Tatham Art Gallery to the people of Pietermaritzburg and to art lovers throughout the country. This marked the end of a long and often troubled gestation period of some 18 years — the idea of using the Old Supreme Court as an art gallery and education complex having been first conceived in 1972 by Valerie Leigh, a former curator.

That the new gallery was born at all is in no small way due to the dedication of its professional staff led by Lorna Ferguson. The creativity of those who worked under architectural, logistic, and numerous other constraints (not to mention a budget of five loaves and two small fishes) must surely rival that of the artists whose work graces the gallery. Architect Gordon Small and his team are to be congratulated on their skill and ingenuity. The requirements of a space for storing and exhibiting art works are very specific and the problems of transforming an old building not designed for this purpose are extremely complex.

The gallery staff is clearly committed to serving the public, not only by preserving valuable works of art and showing them to best advantage, but by making them as accessible as possible. Viewing hours between 10 am and 6 pm six days a week (Mondays excluded) should suit most visitors. The adjacent old Presbyterian church building will eventually serve as a visual arts education centre, catering for a variety of art classes and related activities. This ambitious scheme, which considerably expands the existing education programme, promises to be of great benefit to the community. In addition, the reference library will be made available to researchers in due course. Those who need time for digestion will be pleased to know that a windfall might bring the opening of a cafeteria.

On the ground level, the mainly South African works range from transcendental pieces of more peaceful times to brutal, disturbing paintings and sculptures reflecting a society at war with itself. The beautiful central gallery houses travelling exhibitions and will be a fitting venue for those from overseas once the cultural boycott has been lifted.

The upper level houses the internationally recognised English and French collections, the Corobrick ceramics collection, the Victorian collection and international graphics. The Victorian gallery with its impressive lantern cannot fail to charm. The original yellowwood from the ground level flooring has been used to create a floor for this room and allow adequate viewing distance for the very large Victorian paintings. Carpets hang in the major stairwell linking the two levels.

An interesting feature is the unusual and surprisingly effective use of wall colour: teal blue for the Victorian gallery and terracotta pink for non-gallery spaces to complement the predominant — and pleasing — grey. As it should be, the carefully planned and detailed finish provides

an unobtrusive background which enhances the works of art. The 'new' Tatham is a jewel in the city's cultural crown that should become the pride of all her varied peoples.

Register of researchers

J.F. Duggan, Africana Librarian with the Campbell Collections of the University of Natal, has seen a need for a register of people living in the Durban area who are able to undertake research on behalf of others who are not, and has asked us to broadcast the request that follows.

The Killie Campbell Africana Library is compiling a list of persons in the Durban area who are available to undertake ethnological, genealogical and historical research on request. Would any persons who are available to do such research please submit their names in writing to the library, together with details of their qualifications, their research speciality, experience and scale of fees charged. Letters should be sent to:

The Africana Librarian
Campbell Collections of the University of Natal
220 Marriott Road
Durban 4001.

The Librarian will advise people who are uncertain about fees. This appeal is aimed not only at professional historians but also at anyone who has some knowledge of how to use a library for historical research.

Badges, emblems and insignia: an odd collection in the Natal Society Library

June Bowen has sent us this note on an unusual and potentially useful collection that she has been building up at the Natal Society Library:

A chance remark by a colleague, some time ago, lit the spark of an idea, which was fuelled over the years by frustrated searches for illustrations of emblems and insignia of various South African organizations and institutions.

After taking charge of the legal deposit, periodical and newspaper collections of the library in 1982, I became aware of a large variety of compliments slips and letterheads that arrived with publications such as school magazines. Most of them carried beautifully coloured reproductions of the organization's badge or insignia.

I decided to assemble these, with a view to forming a collection that could, to some extent, provide material to satisfy enquiries for illustrations of specific badges, or requests for a variety of emblems on which to base ideas for new designs.

Over the years the collection has expanded to cover commercial logos and insignia, as well as the more conventional heraldic badges. Where additional information has turned up in published sources, photocopies have been added to the collection.

Each entry is pasted on a single sheet of paper, and these sheets are filed in lever-arch files. At present, we have nine such files, with the entries grouped into categories: educational, government, provincial, municipal, private (non-profit), and commercial organizations. All the mottoes and slogans have been indexed, and there is also a brief cross-reference index to place names and acronyms.

June Bowen has supplied some examples of the entries in her collection. Number 16 Squadron of the SAAF has as its motto, 'Hlaselani'. The Friends of the J.L.B. Smith Institute of Ichthyology in Grahamstown counterbalance their long title with the brief and apt motto 'Ichthos'. New Forest High School in Durban has the Latin 'Honor Ante Honores' while both Windermere High School and Wynberg Girls' Junior School in the Cape opted for the English version, 'Honour Before Honours'. The Windermere Girls' School has long since disappeared, swallowed up by Mitchell Girls' High which, in turn, is now being amalgamated with the Berea Girls' High School. If the new school wants a new motto, it might do well to consult June Bowen's collection (or perhaps, with the Old Testament in mind, it might borrow an idea from the Friends of J.L.B. Smith).

The whole collection is available for consultation in the Reference Department of the Natal Society Library.

Longmarket Girls' School centenary

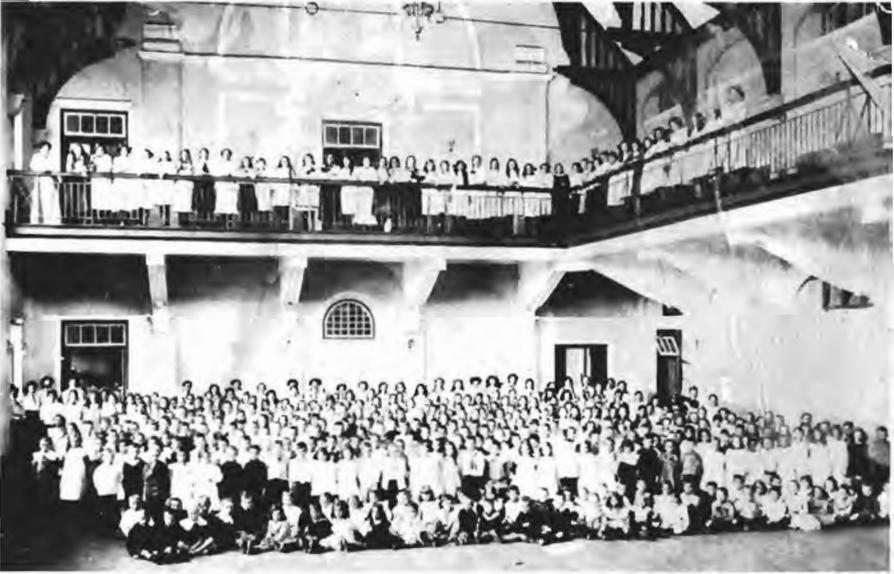
On 1 August 1990, one of the capital's best known primary schools, Longmarket Girls' School, celebrated its centenary. Graham Dominy supplied this note.

Pietermaritzburg's mayor, Mr J.J. Chapman, had been instrumental in establishing the Longmarket Street Girls' School in buildings vacated by the Boys' Model School at the corner of Longmarket and Boshoff Streets. The first principal was British-born and educated — Miss E.L. Jarvis.

One of the continuing priorities during the 20-year principalship of Miss Edith Walton (1903-1923) was to improve the school's accommodation. In 1905 the stately Flemish-style buildings facing Longmarket Street were completed and in 1910 construction began on the elegant verandahed Boshoff Street wing. In 1913 the adjacent Langham Hotel building was purchased, and this complex remained the school's home until 1972, when it moved to its present premises in Bulwer Street. In 1975 the old building was declared a national monument, and in 1989 it was transferred from the provincial administration to the Voortrekker Museum.

Although small boys have been pupils at Longmarket (before 1940 and again since 1976), it is as a force in white female education in Natal that the school has made its mark. The standard of teaching has been consistently high, and the unselfconscious dedication to the school of teachers, old girls and parents has stood it in good stead over the past century. The school has also played an important founding role in the history of other institutions. On 4 August 1920, 54 Longmarket girls became the founding pupils of Pietermaritzburg Girls' High School. In the post-Union period Dutch was taught as a first as well as a second language, and these classes were the forerunners of the Voortrekker Laer and Hoër schools.

Children came to Longmarket from all over the city and its surrounding areas (such as the then rural Northdale and Grange areas), travelling on foot, by tram and by donkey cart. During the 1960s the school became overcrowded, its sports facilities were inadequate and traffic was an increasing inconvenience and hazard. Eventually, on 4



Boys and girls of Longmarket Girls' School in the hall of the old school in 1912. The photograph was damaged in the 1987 flood.

(Photograph: Longmarket School Collection)

August 1972 the teachers and pupils, led by the Caledonian pipe band, marched from Longmarket Street to their spacious new premises in Bulwer Street.

The new setting brought natural hazards not encountered in Longmarket Street. In February 1978, amidst much excitement, the school was flooded to ankle-depth. Dykes were erected, but on 28 September 1987 the Umsindusi poured over them and flooded the school to a depth of 1,56 metres. The children were evacuated to the City Hall and there was no loss of life, but immense material damage was caused to the media centre, junior primary classrooms and administration wing. Canoeists helped to rescue valuable records, and the whole school community rallied to clean the lower storey so that, after opening the fourth quarter of 1987 in the upstairs classrooms, the school could return to normality in 1988.

Longmarket can face an exciting second century sure of its achievements during the first.

Changing schools

For Longmarket School, and for all the other schools of Natal, be they younger or older, the years to come will surely bring challenges no less daunting (though one hopes less dampening) than the floodwaters of the Umsindusi. Shifting demographic patterns have already had a significant effect on the provision of schooling in Natal. We have observed that Mitchell Girls' High School, which long ago swallowed up Windermere, is amalgamating with the Berea Girls' High School. Also in Durban, but north of the Umgeni, the Northlands and Beachwood Boys' High schools have

latterly been fused into the new Northwood Boys' High (a matter of some interest to *Natalia's* editor 'Jack' Frost and his colleague Prof. 'Bill' Guest, both Northlands old boys). In Pietermaritzburg, Wykeham School has joined with Collegiate to form the Wykeham Collegiate, which, happily, retains the well-known Wykeham hat in its uniform. Happily too, the old Wykeham campus has not been left vacant or consigned to demolition, but become the home for the St Nicholas School, a new foundation under the governance of the Anglican diocese of Natal. The challenges that St Nicholas, like other private schools, has set out to meet – those of providing a meaningful education to all children regardless of their race – are the challenges that every school community will have to confront in the decades ahead.

The Bishop returns

Another noteworthy and happy development in the Anglican diocese of Natal has been the return to the capital city of its bishop. The Rt Revd Michael Nuttall has come back to the house designed as the bishop's residence by Sir Herbert Baker in 1911. After many years' service as a children's home, the house has been renovated and refurbished, and may perhaps provide a notable topic for some future edition of *Notes and Queries*.

Settler anniversary

One of the advantages of an event which took place over a number of years is that subsequent commemorations of it can be similarly ongoing. *Natalia* 19 carried a note on the 140th anniversary of the arrival of the first Byrne Settler Ships. This year there were more 140th celebrations, as Shelagh Spencer records.

This event was organized by the Richmond, Byrne and District Historical Society, with both Richmond and Byrne as the venues. On the morning of Saturday 12 May the scene was the Richmond Agricultural Hall where speeches were delivered, and schoolchildren — Coloured, Indian and white — sang, danced or acted. A craft fair was held at the Richmond Memorial Hall from lunchtime on, and at 13:00 the bells of St Mary's Church were rung by octogenarian, Mr Malcolm Alleyne (a special event, normally reserved for Christmas Day). Thereafter the visitor could amble round the village, armed with the efficiently provided map and notes, and inspect the various historical sites. The day's formal proceedings were scheduled to end with a performance by the pipe band of Alexandra High School. This began under lowering skies and soon the band and their audience sought refuge in the Agricultural Hall, where bagpipes and drums both drowned the noises of the thunder and rain and stirred whatever Scottish blood was in their hearers' veins.

On Sunday the Byrne valley was the focus. The day's proceedings began with a thanksgiving service in the churchyard, led by the Rector of Richmond-cum-Byrne, the Revd John Green, assisted by Bishop Ken Hallows, Chief P. Majози of Ndaleni, and the Revd Eric Roberts. Thereafter people were free to visit *Newborough Grange* and *Blarney*. The nucleus of the present house at *Newborough* is the dwelling built by the Watson family, the farm's original owners, while *Blarney* was erected in the 1880s by Fred McLeod, one of the sons of Mrs Ellen

McLeod of *Dear Louisa* fame. Other attractions on offer included maypole dancing and a country fair on the market square (the first time since the square was laid out in 1850 that it came into its proper usage), a talk on the valley's early days by Dr Ruth Gordon, and the planting of a tree on the square by Mr Donald McLeod, who, some years ago, donated the *Blarney* homestead to the nation. A brief address by Mrs Sheila Henderson closed the day's events.

The weekend was a resounding success. It is estimated that 500 attended Saturday's events and that over 1 200 converged on Byrne on Sunday.

Well I'll be jiggered!

As the editor has noted, 'Mobbs' Moberly is leaving the *Natalia* editorial board. She has compiled *Notes and Queries* through several editions, and herself made many intriguing contributions. She will be missed. Her desire to move on has nothing to do with the condition which she describes in this last 'in house' note.

Though the expression 'itchy feet' means the desire to dance, or perhaps to travel, for many who have grown up in Natal it means something very much less pleasant.

While working on a nineteenth-century diary recently a researcher came across a reference to a sandworm. As this meant nothing to her she turned to Jean Branford's admirable *Dictionary of South African English*. Perhaps because the good Dr Branford is not herself a Natal person she has failed to give a satisfactory explanation of this nematode.

For a sandworm is indeed a worm and not to be confused with a fungus such as ringworm or an insect such as the jigger flea. Both these parasites are characterised by a fearsome itch. Sandworm is, in fact, the larval stage of the hookworm, and enters the human body through the skin, usually the skin of the foot. Many people who grew up in Natal vividly remember sandworm infections in their childhood, though these days the condition does not seem to be widely known.

The jigger flea on the other hand has never been common in South Africa. This insect came to Africa from North America and spread eastwards across the continent and thence (on foot, you might say) to India. There is some evidence that a few came southwards and reached Natal. It is interesting to note that, according to Doke and Vilakazi's *Zulu Dictionary*, the Zulu word for a jigger flea is *itikenya* which suggests that the flea, and the name for it, entered this country from East Africa, possibly brought back by South African soldiers and labourers who took part in the East African Campaign in World War One. A famous cartoon by Bruce Bairnsfather depicts a British tommy with his long, long shorts clutching his foot and exclaiming 'Well I'll be jiggered', which has surely immortalised this unappealing and yet interesting creature.

Tunga penetrans lives in sand, earth, straw, or dung. The impregnated female seeks out a warm and sheltered place in which to prepare for the birth of her young and where better than inside the human body? Secure under a toenail she swells to the size of a small pea, causing ferocious itching that may lead to scratching and then to ulceration and infection.

The best form of treatment is to dig the intruder out with a needle, and in most Kenyan villages there is at least one local expert who displays a large safety pin on the front of his shirt as a proud sign of his craft.

The present compiler of *Notes and Queries* cannot close without echoing the editor's tribute to Ms Moberly and expressing the hope that in her future pursuit of curiosities with which to beguile the readers of *Natalia* she will be plagued by nothing that is in the least parasitic, infectious, irksome, wearisome, or even just infuriatingly itchy.

Compiled by MORAY COMRIE

