

# *Notes and Queries*

## *Sites of Significance*

On 18 March 1993 a plaque was unveiled at the Lambert Wilson Building of the Natal Society by Mr Peter Brown, a former Chairman and founder member of the Liberal Party. It reads as follows:

In 1958 this building was donated to the Natal Society by LAMBERT WILSON a member of the Liberal Party of South Africa.

ALAN PATON (1903–1988) became Chairman of the Liberal Party of South Africa on 24 June 1956. The national offices of the Party then moved into this building from Cape Town. They remained here until the Party was forced to disband in terms of the Prohibition of Political Interference Act of 1968.

Shortly before, on the same day, a plaque was unveiled by Alan Paton's sister Mrs D. Arbuthnot, at 18 Pine Street where he lived as a child from 1903 to 1914.

The Lambert Wilson Building was donated to the Natal Society in 1958 on condition that it be used to provide a library service to 'non-whites' as at that time the only library facilities in Pietermaritzburg were for whites. In 1975 the facilities of the Natal Society were opened to all races and in 1980 the lending library in the building was closed and re-opened as a Children's Reference Library with the approval of Lambert Wilson who was at the time living in Australia. For a short time before he donated the building, Lambert Wilson ran a club open to all races which was forced to close through legislation.

P. C. G. McKENZIE

## *The Burger Street Gaol*

The Burger Street gaol has been part of the fabric of Pietermaritzburg society since 1862. In 1879, in the scare which swept the Colony following the disaster of British arms at Isandlwana, hasty arrangements were made to incarcerate the Governor and his staff there for their own protection should that prove necessary. It is a silent reminder of colonial and post-colonial history, especially as many of its unwilling occupants must have found themselves there, not because of any crime they might have committed, but because of some technical contravention of segregationist control.

The graffiti-covered cells — with scratched calendars on which the unfortunate inmates ticked off the slowly passing days a prominent feature on the walls — are evocative. Certain cell blocks should surely be preserved as

national monuments. Undoubtedly the most powerful and grimly-moving relic in the place is the old death row with its evidence of where once was the beam to which the noose was attached, and the gaping hole between first and ground floor where the trapdoor opened for the great and final drop. This facility was apparently built only in the 1930s. Some of the earlier executions were reportedly from a beam projecting out of a first floor cell block window — but it is not known for certain whether it was ever used for that purpose.

Today the grim old place has a happier use. With the completion of the new Pietermaritzburg Prison on the slopes of Signal Hill, the Prisons Department ceased to have need of the building in 1989, and in October 1992 it was taken over by Project Gateway, an evangelical church organisation. It is now used as a centre to provide housing and training, with cells converted to hostel-type accommodation. The rehabilitation of former prisoners is also intended, and a house across the road in Burger Street, the former home of the St George family, is now used for this purpose. It is also hoped to establish a museum, but that project is presently in abeyance due to lack of funds.

T.B. FROST

### ***J. Gilmour Williamson, Booksellers***

The death of Alice Mary Williamson on the 10th July, 1993, was the epilogue to one of Pietermaritzburg's longest-running businesses.

In 1852, Peter Davis and John May founded the May and Davis bookshop, as well as a printing and publishing business. They took over the *Natal Witness* from David Dale Buchanan, May retired in 1860, and the firm was thereafter known as P. Davis and Sons. Davis later expanded his activities to Durban, where he started the *Natal Colonist* newspaper. The Pietermaritzburg bookshop was sold to Leonard Bayly in 1920, and he in turn sold it to Joseph Gilmour Williamson in 1933. On his death in 1963, his daughter Alice inherited the firm, which she ran until 1982, when, due to rising rentals, the shop, which had operated under the name J. Gilmour Williamson, was finally closed.

DAVID BUCKLEY

### ***Gandhi Honoured in Pietermaritzburg***

Leading players from all walks of life on the local scene, and international dignitaries, came together in June 1883 to honour Gandhi by unveiling a larger than life-size bronze statue of the Mahatma in the Maritzburg Mall to mark the centenary of Gandhi's 'most creative experience', an incident that took place on 7th June 1893, exactly a hundred years ago, when the young lawyer was forcibly removed from a 'whites only' train compartment at Pietermaritzburg station, and spent a bitter night on the freezing platform. This was the time of Gandhi's self-realisation that kindled an unconquerable spirit in his life.

Gandhi had two options on that occasion: to return immediately to India, or to stay in South Africa and use his education positively in resistance to any form of cruelty and injustice. He chose the latter. This was the beginning of a life dedicated to the preservation of human rights and equality. 'My active non-violence started from that date,' he later said of this incident.

Dr Nelson Mandela delivered the main address at this historic ceremony, and the unveiling was performed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Dr Karan Singh represented the government of India.

Dr Mandela referred to the sculpture of Gandhi as a statue of hope in our country. 'We hope that all South Africans have now won their birthright to life, liberty and equality, and together we shall be able to forge a non-violent society from the horrors brought by racism and *apartheid* rule. [Gandhi's] experiments with truth,' said Dr Mandela, 'launched him into a path from which he emerged as the unrivalled champion of equality and freedom of all the oppressed people of the world.'

Dr Karan Singh said it was South Africa that gave birth to the concepts of *ahimsa* and *satyagraha*, which were to have such a profound impact on the course of history. *Satyagraha* means literally 'keep to the truth.' Gandhi considered truth a dominating principle of life, not to be enforced by violence, but by the power of love and spiritual conviction. He did not consider it the weapon of the weak, or of expediency, but that of the stronger spirit. 'For me, truth,' said Gandhi, 'is the sovereign principle, which includes numerous other principles. The truth is not only truthfulness in word, but truthfulness in thought also, and not only the relative truth of our conception, but the Absolute Truth, the Eternal Principle, that is God. The seeker after truth should be humbler than the dust. Only then, and not till then, will he have a glimpse of Truth.'

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in Porbander in India on 2nd October 1868. He went to England in 1888 to study law, and came to South Africa in May 1893 at the age of 24, to assist in a lawsuit. Subsequent events caused him to stay for 21 years. He founded the Natal Indian Congress in 1894.

Gandhi's political thinking evolved and matured in South Africa. With *satyagraha* as his weapon, Gandhi made a significant contribution to the long and courageous struggle against racial discrimination in South Africa. He later became the key figure in the struggle for the liberation of India from British rule.

Gandhi was on the political stage for more than fifty years, inspired two generations of Indian patriots, and sparked off a revolution which was to change the face of Africa and Asia. His activities were many and varied. He took an integrated view of life, and hence there was hardly any aspect of it — social, religious, political or economic — which was left untouched by him. With his loincloth, steel-rimmed glasses, rough sandals, a toothless smile and a voice which rarely rose above a whisper, he had a disarming humility. He was, if one were to use the famous words of Buddha, a man who had 'by rousing himself, by earnestness, by restraint and control, made for himself an island which no flood could overwhelm.'

The epic life of Gandhi came to an end on 30 January 1948. He met his death facing the forces of darkness with compassion and love. He had said 'If I am to die by the bullet of a madman, I must do so smiling.' He bowed to his assassin and died with the name of God on his lips. He was the victorious one in death as in life.

'Generations to come . . .' observed Albert Einstein, 'will scarcely believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth.'

The Gandhi Memorial Committee in its endeavour to pursue Gandhi's philosophy of peace and non-violence, with the co-operation of the government of India, plans to make a film on Gandhi in South Africa, based on Professor Fatima Meer's book *Apprenticeship of a Mahatma*. The Committee is also working with the Institute for Black Research at the University of Natal, on a publication dealing with Gandhi's speeches and writings, which will be

released shortly. To mark the Gandhi Centenary the South Africa Post Office issued commemorative covers on 7 June 1993, and the Committee has purchased the unsold covers which are being offered for sale to the public.

D. BUNDHOO

### *Ladysmith also*

With so much media attention given to the unveiling of the Gandhi statue in Pietermaritzburg in June 1993, and the prominent people present on that occasion, it was inevitable that other events to mark the Centenary were somewhat overshadowed. Maureen Richards of the Ladysmith Siege Museum reminded us that in September 1970 Mr C.C. Desai, a member of the Indian Parliament, unveiled a statue of the Mahatma in Ladysmith, in the grounds of the Vishnu Temple. On the same day, Mr A. Soobiah Pillay, a prominent citizen of Pietermaritzburg, officially opened Mahatma Gandhi House in Forbes Street, Ladysmith, a shop and office building erected by the Mahatma Gandhi Trust, the rental income on which would be used for student bursaries.

Twenty-three years later, in 1993, Ladysmith again honoured the Mahatma by arranging various events, including laying the foundation of an 'Eternal Flame Monument' in the Town Gardens. Mr H.B. Maharaj, President of the Sanathan Darma Sabha, said it was hoped that the central site for the monument would emphasise Gandhi as a universal figure, and help to create peace and unity among all the people of Ladysmith.

### *Absentee Landowners*

It has become the accepted wisdom amongst historians of colonial Natal that absentee landowners and great land companies such as the Natal Land and Colonisation Company were in their heyday in possession of millions of acres of the best farming land in the colony. Shula Marks, for example, accepts that they owned 'nearly half of the colony's real estate' [review of A. Duminy and B. Guest, eds, *Natal and Zululand from earliest times to 1910* in the *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, XIII, 1990–1991, p. 115] while Charles Ballard and Guiseppe Lenta write that they owned 'several million acres of the best farm land in the midlands'. [B. Guest and J.M. Sellers, *Enterprise and exploitation in a Victorian colony: aspects of the economic and social history of colonial Natal* (Pietermaritzburg, 1985), p. 126] Similarly, Colin Bundy writes that 'Over five million of the six million acres of land owned by whites were in the hands of absentee proprietors.' [*The rise and fall of the South African peasantry* (London, 1979), p. 168]

This acceptance that absentees held such vast possessions is often cited as the main reason for Natal's failure to become an important food-producing colony, yet it is not borne out by the evidence. At the greatest extent of absentee landownership, in the mid-1870s, the companies and speculators owned just under one-and-a-half million acres with the Natal Land and Colonisation Company, by far the largest owner, peaking at 657 967 acres in 1874. [Natal Land and Colonisation Company, *Annual Reports* (Natal Archives) and A.J. Christopher, 'Natal: a study in colonial land settlement', unpubl. PhD thesis, Natal, 1969] The remaining four-and-a-half million acres

of white-owned land were in the hands of settler farmers, many of whom possessed more than one farm, often using those in winter-grazing areas as labour reserves.

How then has this misconception arisen? Most writers on land ownership in colonial Natal rely on Henry Slater for their information. In 1980 he wrote that 'by 1874 it was estimated that five million acres belonging to private individuals or land companies were occupied by Africans'. [S. Marks and A. Atmore, eds, *Economy and society in pre-industrial society* (London, 1980), pp.162–163] His source for this is C.W. de Kiewiet, [*The imperial factor in South Africa* (Cambridge, 1937), p.192] whom he quotes verbatim. De Kiewiet does not explicitly say, however, that the private individuals were absentees. His source was a letter written by the Secretary for Native Affairs, Theophilus Shepstone to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Carnarvon, in 1874. [Colonial Office 179, (Public Record Office) 116, 22 September 1874]

A reading of this letter shows that the private individuals included not only absentee landowners but *all* settler landowners, absentees and farmers alike. Shepstone, in referring to Africans living on private farms in Natal, does not distinguish between types of owner but writes that 'thousands occupy private farms on various conditions and some pay a rent which occasionally amounts to 20/- a hut . . . Such is already the position of Natives who occupy say 5 000 000 acres belonging to private individuals'.

Although it cannot be denied that one-and-a-half million acres was a considerable amount of land to be tied up in the hands of absentee landowners, there still remained vast areas in the hands of farmers, few of whom utilized more than a small proportion of the arable land at their disposal before the end of the nineteenth century. The failure of Natal to become an important food-producing colony lies as much at their door as at that of the absentees.

JOHN LAMBERT

### *Nude bathing*

(John Lambert also provides an interesting sidelight on social mores:)

A recent issue of the regional history journal, *Contree*, featured an article on bathing in nineteenth-century East London. It referred to the extent to which bathing in the nude was practised in that seaside resort.

I have for some time been interested in the apparent contradiction between on the one hand, the widely-accepted view of Victorian 'stuffiness' and its insistence on the observance of the external forms of public decency and, on the other, the acceptance until well into the nineteenth century of mixed bathing in the nude on the public beaches of Great Britain. The Anglican diarist, the Rev. Mr Kilvert, includes many fascinating glimpses of the prevalence of the custom as late as the 1870s and of growing opposition to it in the United Kingdom.

Settler attitudes in colonial Natal closely reflected this change. From the 1860s Durban enacted by-laws to prohibit nude bathing in the Bay and on the Back Beach for anyone over the age of twelve. Yet the by-laws do not seem to have been widely observed by men, if complaints in the press are anything to go by. As early as 9 January 1863 an irate correspondent complained in the *Natal Mercury* that it was impossible for 'any female to pass along the beach . . . without having her sense of propriety shocked'. The habit was not

confined to Durban's beaches and complaints also appeared about the number of men and boys bathing nude in Pietermaritzburg's Msunduze river.

It is interesting that the earliest complainants decried a custom which they saw as being peculiarly British. Recognising the widespread acceptance of nude bathing, some suggested either screening off the bathing places or limiting the hours of bathing. Others, such as the writer mentioned above, were determined to see the 'degrading' habit ended completely and recommended the introduction into Natal of the 'American and Continental fashion of bathing dresses for both sexes'. This offers an intriguing contrast to the usual picture presented in the Natal press of British 'virtue' and particularly continental laxity.

Despite the official prohibition of nude bathing, the municipal authorities, particularly in Durban, were reluctant to enforce the by-laws, possibly because of the widespread acceptance of the habit and possibly because of the amount of ridicule letters of complaint attracted. The controversy continued to grow, however, with the clamour against nude bathing being expressed in tones of increasing outrage. On 23 November 1875 a correspondent to the *Natal Mercury* thundered that 'the scenes that are frequently enacted at the [bathing stage] are an outrage on [sic] decency. It is impossible to walk along the beach at high tide without witnessing an amount of nudity that would be repugnant to barbarism. Similarly, on 2 March 1891, a correspondent 'RCA' expressed outrage in the *Natal Mercury* at the 'unmanly and disgusting exhibition of full-grown men bathing without drawers amongst small boys, and seemingly to take a pride of [sic] exposing themselves out of the water as often as possible to any passer-by'.

With the municipal authorities reluctant to take action 'RCA' advocated the introduction of the rather novel punishment used in Malta and Gibraltar where 'any person is justified in sending to the police the clothes of any person found bathing without drawers . . . so that those who are so fond of exposing themselves near the water may have the privilege of doing the same at the police station'.

Despite the vigour with which the advocates of nude bathing defended their right to expose themselves, the habit became less common by the early twentieth century. 'The best and purest of Natal's daughters' now began attacking public bathing even by men in bathing drawers. They demanded facilities for separate amenities so that in the words of 'One who Knows', writing in the *Natal Mercury* on 27 February 1908, they would not have to mix with 'Tom, Dick and Harry who are clad more or less in wet tights'. Calling for an end to the 'saturnalia on the beach' the writer condemned those women who 'like to mix with men clad in wet, clinging costumes'.

Views like this were exceptional, and the controversy over bathing, nude or otherwise, seems to have been dying a natural death until it was revived during the First World War when an influx of imperial soldiers saw public decency affronted by 'the constant exposure of nude bathers to the public gaze at the beach bath'. [*Natal Advertiser* 15 August 1917] Once the war was over the hubbub again died down and, ironically, with the advent of the more permissive 1920s, nude bathing disappeared and bathing costumes became the accepted norm.

### *Natal Museum Dredging Programme*

The rudiments of the Natal Museum mollusc collection (snails and sea shells) were assembled more than 100 years ago, even before the institution, as we now know it, came into being. At the time, these few shells were simply part of an exhibit in the collections of the Natal Society, the bulk of which later formed the foundation of the Natal Museum. The shells themselves were identified by Henry Cliften Burnup, now regarded as the pioneer of molluscan research (malacology) in Natal. Burnup served as honorary curator of molluscs at the Museum from about 1897 until his death in 1929, during which time he published a number of scientific papers and corresponded extensively with colleagues in Europe. The collection expanded considerably under his care and the nucleus of a malacological library began to appear. Since these early days, and with the establishment of the Natal Museum as a centre for natural history research, the collection has continued to grow, specialising initially in land snail research and more recently in marine molluscs.

Until the end of the 1970s virtually all the existing marine molluscan material in the collection was littoral in origin, either being collected alive in the intertidal zone or washed ashore as dead shells. Tantalising glimpses of what lay in the deeper waters had come from a limited amount of deep-sea dredging undertaken at the turn of the century, from which it was clear that our knowledge of the molluscan fauna of the continental shelf and slope was severely lacking. In the early 1980s, Dr Richard (Dick) Kilburn of the Museum's Department of Mollusca set out to investigate the feasibility of initiating a dredging programme in the hope of remedying this situation. After one or two pilot exercises, the programme got under way in earnest in 1981 with the first of a series of annual cruises off the Transkei, on board the CSIR's RV *Meiring Naudé*. Many lessons of a technical nature were learned on these initial trips, not the least of which was that the equipment needed to be at least twice as strong as it had been made initially. Six years later, with much valuable material literally 'in the bag' (not to mention greatly improved dredging skills) the focus of attention turned to Zululand. This proved to be a malacological treasure-trove and saw us bringing up a great many ornate and brightly coloured tropical species which reach the south-western limits of their distribution in this area.

With these two areas now sampled we chose next to study the south and west coasts, undertaking one trip in the Cape Agulhas area and another off Saldanha Bay/St Helena Bay, on board the Sea Fisheries vessel *Sardinops*. Although not nearly as rich as Zululand, these areas provided us with samples of the characteristic Cape fauna which tends to be much more restricted in its range than that of the tropical waters. Despite being a more comfortable vessel, the *Sardinops* proved to be less suitable for dredging than the *Meiring Naudé* and this, combined with the vast area of the continental shelf off the south coast, presented major technical problems which, with current financial restraints, we were not able to overcome. The Natal Museum Dredging Programme has thus had to be terminated, the last trip being the West coast one in 1993.

Over its thirteen-year duration the programme dredged a total of over 1 000 stations, at depths from 15 m to more than 800 m, from off Kosi Bay to off St Helena Bay. Currently material from these is being studied in 12 different countries by nearly thirty other malacologists. More than 164 species new to science have been described to date, but by far the greater part remains to be studied. No doubt this will keep future researchers busy for many decades to

come. A project that was initially conceived through ambitious and perhaps wishful thinking turned, in the end, into one of the most extensive scientific dredging programmes ever undertaken in southern Africa. The value of the material obtained is scarcely measurable and the research potential of the collection has been increased perhaps a hundredfold. What started out as a handful of shells in one of the Natal Society's exhibits has now become the largest collection of shells in Africa and one of the largest in the southern hemisphere.

Opportunities to obtain deep-water material from off the south coast are not exhausted. Through the assistance of the Division of Sea Fisheries we may yet get to sample such waters, but as their guests rather than under the auspices of our own programme.

DAI HERBERT

### *Fort Napier: 150 years from Fort to Hospital*

On 31 August 1843 a detachment of British troops of the 45th Regiment (later known as the Sherwood Foresters), accompanied by 'coloured' troops of the Cape Mounted Rifles together with support units, wives, children and other 'camp followers', arrived in Pietermaritzburg. The Union Jack was hoisted for the first time on a hill at the western end of the Voortrekker capital. The following morning construction started on a fort on the site, named Fort Napier in honour of the governor of the Cape, Sir George Napier. Fort Napier was established in the aftermath of the clash between the Voortrekkers and the British at Port Natal in 1842. It took more than a year to reach an agreement between the Volksraad and the British, and the military occupation of Pietermaritzburg was a result of that agreement. The garrison finally withdrew in 1914 at the outbreak of World War I, seventy-one years later.

The influence of Fort Napier on Pietermaritzburg has been discussed in various articles in *Natalia* over the years and is still the focus of a major research project. The 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Fort was marked by a feature article in the *Natal Witness* on 31 August 1993 and, a few weeks later, on 6 October, at a ceremony at the restored Officers' Mess building, marking its proclamation as a national monument. The gathering was addressed by the Administrator of Natal, Mr Con Botha, who also unveiled the plaque. Dr John Vincent, the head of the Provincial Museum Service, reports that the new roof of the building was sorely tested by a torrential downpour, but that all puddles were satisfactorily mopped up before the proceedings began.

GRAHAM DOMINY

### *Mary Elizabeth Cooke*

7 November 1993 marked the centenary of the death of Mary Elizabeth Cooke, the founder of the Pietermaritzburg Children's Home.

Mary Cooke was born in 1850, the daughter of John and Hannah Cooke, who farmed at Baddesley Ensor in Warwickshire. She came to Natal in 1882 and worked for a time for Frederick Pearse, who ran a stationery business in Pietermaritzburg from 1881 to 1886.

A good Wesleyan Methodist, her conscience was stirred by the plight of the street children of her day — children who were orphaned, or abandoned by

parents gone to the gold diggings of the Transvaal, or whose parents were destitute. She began a campaign for a home for these children, and roused the interest and support of several prominent citizens, including A. W. Baker, Henry Campbell, Henry Bale, John Ireland and Rev. John Smith, minister of St. John's Presbyterian Church.

On 1 February 1887, she opened a home in a cottage in Retief St. lent rent free by Mr Baker, with two children whose parents were destitute and in the last stages of consumption. Messrs Bale, Campbell and Ireland formed a 'committee of reference and supervision' and Mr Baker acted as secretary. Other children soon came and by August her family had grown to fifteen. The cottage in Retief St. soon became inadequate and the home moved to a house in Burger St. next to Oxenham's Bakery.

Meanwhile, Rev. John Smith had collected £600 for the home and in March 1889, at a meeting held at the Y.M.C.A., the Children's Home and Orphanage was firmly constituted, with a board of trustees elected to control the money collected and any property the home might acquire. The trustees were the Mayor, the Master of the Supreme Court and Messrs Bale, Ireland and Campbell.

Mary Cooke's work was a labour of love and she accepted no remuneration for her services. It was a considerable labour. Henry Bale told the meeting in 1889 (reported in the *Natal Witness* on 26 March) that the number of children then in the home was 22, and their ages ranged from one to fifteen years. Most of the children were orphans; all of them were motherless, and some few were destitute. Many of them came to the home uneducated, boys twelve years old not knowing their letters, but all had been sent to school, and were doing well. Miss Cooke had considerable difficulties in connection with the Home, partly owing to the character of the children who came, and the circumstances which had attended them previously. A great improvement, however, had taken place in them during their residence in the Home. Some had received situations in various parts of the Colony, and some had been provided for by their parents elsewhere, the number who had passed through the Home and who had now left being about 22. The expenditure per month came to the remarkably small sum of £22, or in other words £1 per head covered all costs including rent and to some extent clothing. The question had arisen more than once as to whether only orphans should be received, but it was thought advisable that the Home should be open to all who were destitute . . . Miss Cooke's had been a labour of love, and it was surprising to everyone that she had succeeded so well with so little help, as only one African was employed to assist her, and the way in which the children were kept reflected great credit on her management.

Sadly, the strain of her work affected Mary Cooke's health and in 1893 she became seriously ill. She died on 7th November 1893, aged 44.

During her seven years in charge, she had firmly established the Home in the hearts and minds of Pietermaritzburg, and the public continued to support it. In 1914, it moved to a site in Longmarket St. where it remained until 1993. In 1951 it was named the Mary Cooke Home in tribute to its founder.

DAVID BUCKLEY

### *Shepstone Centenary*

The centenary of the death of Sir Theophilus Shepstone occurred on 23rd June 1993. When he died, Pietermaritzburg came to a halt. His funeral was an enormous event attended by every distinguished citizen in the Colony from the

Governor down. The *Natal Witness* devoted considerable space to editorial tributes, biographical details, accounts of the funeral and details of tributes paid from the pulpits of city churches. His was a name, according to the *Witness* 'revered by all the aborigines on the continent'. Three years later his statue was erected on the corner of Longmarket Street and Commercial Road, the only private citizen to be thus honoured until the unveiling of the Gandhi statue almost a century later.

The *Witness's* centennial appraisal was somewhat less enthusiastic. History has not dealt nearly as kindly with him as with, for instance, his one-time friend, Bishop Colenso. His philanthropic concern to protect blacks from the exploitation of white settlers is acknowledged, but he was also at heart an imperialist, ultimately devoted to the forcible extension of colonial power. With the benefit of hindsight, the Shepstone System, with its confining of blacks to reserves, its indirect rule through dependent chiefs, its passes and other control mechanisms, its implicit categorisation of people as 'surplus', and its plausible exclusion of black people from the franchise, is seen to be the true ideological ancestor of the twentieth century's much grander system of apartheid. Had a statue not already been standing, it is highly unlikely that, as in the case of Gandhi, a centennial statue would be erected in Shepstone's memory. The *Witness* hoped, though, that the new South Africa would be mature enough to leave him standing where he is.

T.B. FROST

### ***Robert Morley's Mother***

In the biography of this well-known British actor who died last year (*Robert, my father* by Sheridan Morley, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1993) it is stated that Robert's mother, Gertrude Emily Fass, was the fifth of ten children of 'a wealthy German adventurer who had made his fortune in South Africa'. It would seem that a considerable part of that fortune must have been made in Natal, because it was in Pietermaritzburg that 'the German adventurer' settled. He was Adolph Fass (c. 1839–1905), one of the capital's early merchants. He was born in Gollnow, Prussia, and apparently came to Natal in the early 1860s. Certainly he was here by April 1862.

Fass settled in Pietermaritzburg as a storekeeper, and in September 1863 married, in St Peter's, Sophia Wilhelmina Hester Gahde (born c. 1847), the daughter of Heinrich Daniel Gahde who seems to have come to Natal from the Cape, and his wife Sophia Dorothea Mocke (c. 1825–1883). (Heinrich Gahde became a naturalised British subject in December 1849, in Natal, and worked in Pietermaritzburg as a builder, and at one time farmed on *Borrel Fontein* near the Noodsberg.) Between June 1865 and May 1866 Fass was in partnership with Edmund Escombe (brother of Harry Escombe) and Isidore Adler, under the style Fass, Adler & Escombe. For a time he continued alone, but in the 1880s was trading as 'A. Fass & Co., Merchants and Importers', with stores in both Pietermaritzburg and Durban.

He retired to Chalfont St Peter in Buckinghamshire, where he died. Major Morley, who had been in the 4th Royal Dragoon Guards and had served in the Anglo-Boer War, met the Fass family when they were living at Chalfont St Peter, and married Gertrude in January 1906.

SHELAGH O'BRYNE SPENCER

### ***Letter from an old friend and colleague***

It was good to hear recently from Ron Brown, sometime Natal University Librarian, member of the Natal Society Council and the *Natalia* editorial board in the early 1970s, now living in Oxford. In his letter he mentions his special interest in *Natalia* 22, dedicated to the memory of the late Professor Colin Webb. His friendship with Colin dated from 1962 when they arrived together as newcomers to the Pietermaritzburg campus of the University. Other information from Ron which may be of interest to many of our readers, is that John Young, whose father was in the 24th South Wales Borderers, formed the Anglo-Zulu War Research Society two years ago. Its journal appears three times a year. Further details may be obtained from Mr Young at 24 Ash Groves, Lower Shearing, nr. Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire CH21 4LN, England.

### ***Historical and Developmental Atlas of KwaZulu-Natal***

Work has begun this year on the preparation of an historical and developmental atlas of this region, under the joint editorship of four members of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. They are Professor John Laband of the Department of Historical Studies, Professor Rob Fincham of the Institute of Natural Resources, Ms Helena Margeot of the Cartographic Unit in the Department of Geography and Professor David Davies, Emeritus Professor of Geography. The atlas will fall into five sections: cartographic introduction; Stone Age and Iron Age; political and administrative developments; socio-economic developments; and the post-apartheid era.

The motivation for the production of the atlas is the realization that this is a region with a complex history, which faces tremendous challenges today and in the future. To understand these problems and to devise solutions, it is necessary to comprehend historical developments and to analyse trends over time. An ideal means of doing this is through an atlas where raw information and a series of problems and contested interpretations are translated into accessible maps and diagrams, supported by succinct textual explanation.

The project, which will draw on the expertise of researchers in a number of fields, will take three years to complete.

### ***National Monuments proclaimed in Natal***

The National Monuments Council's annual report for the year ended 31 March 1993 records three further proclamations in Natal.

*The two fortifications from the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902) known as North Gun Point and South Gun Point, situated on Lancaster Hill, Vryheid.* These stone fortifications were erected by the British forces on 18 September 1900 on Lancaster Hill in order to strengthen their position there. This led to the eventual retreat of the Boer forces on 12 December.

*The property with the house known as 'Portview' thereon, 183 Cowey Road, Durban.* This double-storey house was erected in 1905 by T.B.F. Davis, a prominent resident of Durban and one of the founders of the University of Natal. The building is a good example of an Edwardian dwelling in its original context. The gardens on the property are also worth noting.

*The old Satya Vardhak Sabha crematorium and waiting-room, Cremorne Cemetery, Pietermaritzburg.* A Hindu cultural organisation, the Satya Vardhak Sabha, was established in 1928 in accordance with the Vedic doctrines of the Hindu faith, with the purpose of promoting the principles of hygiene and the philosophy of reincarnation. A crematorium was built later the same year, and all population groups thereafter made use of this cremation facility. There are two structures on the property, namely a waiting-room for mourners and the crematorium with its classical cupola. This was Natal's first crematorium.

In addition to these three declarations, there was one provisional declaration, which accords legal protection for a maximum period of five years, during which the desirability or otherwise of a permanent declaration is investigated. *The parsonage, known as Dower House, Dower Street, Kokstad.*