

Notes and Queries

End of an era

The Victoria Club has been a Pietermaritzburg institution since 1859 and has occupied its site in Longmarket Street for almost a century. But on the last day of 1996 it closed its doors for the last time, the victim of declining support caused by the twin problems of security and parking, as well as a general change in social mores away from the old patterns of 'club life'. Its demise has been seen as both a symptom and a symbol of the decay of the central business district.

A proposal to relocate elsewhere having been narrowly defeated, the club has amalgamated with the Country Club, which has become the Victoria Country Club. Its oldest member, Dorando the tortoise, who joined when the Imperial Garrison left the city in 1914, is in temporary accommodation in Hillcrest until suitable quarters can be provided for him in his new home.

Meanwhile, the old building in town remains forlornly shut, with as yet no sign of the 'upmarket development' promised in a press report by its anonymous purchaser.

New publications for the South African War Centenary

Gilbert Torlage, chairman of the Research and Publications sub-committee of the body which is already making arrangements for the celebration of the centenary of the South African War, reports on new publications in the pipeline:-

In order to plan for the commemoration of this event a number of committees have been formed. One of these looked into the availability and variety of literature on the South African War. It found that there were certain gaps which it felt should be filled.

The publications this committee has planned to be ready by the time of the centenary are: *A Handbook on the South African War, 1899-1902*. This will contain general information on the Boer and British forces, the Royal Navy, general outlines of the war, decorations and medals, casualties and graves, black, Indian and coloured participation, blockhouses and concentration camps, and a few miscellaneous subjects. The book, therefore, will be a ready reference about the war and the combatants.

There will also be a road guide to all the major sites in KwaZulu-Natal. This will have maps, photographs and brief descriptions of all the sites and major events of the war in the province. Finally, there will be a series of booklets on all the major local battles and events. Each booklet will run to about 7 000 words and include photographs and maps. The booklet series will cover the battles of Talana, Elandslaagte, Willow Grange and Colenso, Ntabamnyama and Spioenkop, Vaalkrans, the Thukela Heights and the recapturing of northern

Natal, and the siege of Ladysmith. There are options open for other titles to be added, such as the role of black people and the guerrilla phase.

At present negotiations are proceeding with publishers who are interested in undertaking this project. It is hoped that most of the publications will be ready for sale some time in 1998.

Early Natal historian

William Clifford Holden (1814–1897) was one of Natal's first historians. Holden, a Methodist missionary, arrived at the Cape in 1840. In May 1847 he came to Natal to replace the Revd William Davis in Durban, who moved to Pietermaritzburg to establish a mission at the Zwartkop location. Holden began his work in Durban in James Archbell's wattle and daub chapel. Holden's time in Natal was marked by bickering and arguing with his fellow Methodist missionaries. He soon had a falling out with his predecessors Davis and Archbell. He disapproved of what he considered their worldly behaviour, which included their buying of land for profit and frequenting public auctions. In June 1848 a special meeting of the committee of the Albany and Kaffraria Methodist Mission was held to investigate the complaints made by Holden and the Reverends John Richards and James Allison against Davis and Archbell. Archbell resigned as a result of the meeting but Davis continued with his mission. In June 1847 Holden, Allison and George Parsonson wrote to the Wesleyan Mission in London requesting that Davis be transferred. At the first annual meeting of the Natal District of the Wesleyan Mission, Davis complained that Holden and the others had written privately to the general secretary without informing him. The meeting censured Holden for this.

Despite the rather undignified bickering Holden built up his congregation and was responsible for putting up the first substantial church building in Durban in 1850. He was also successful in building up a large African congregation, which included Abantwana, Shaka's uncle. In 1853 Holden left Natal to return to the Cape, where he continued his mission work at Somerset East.

While in Natal Holden had begun work on a history of the Colony which he completed once he had returned to the Cape. *A History of the Colony of Natal* was published in 1855. The work was a combination of a general history of Natal and an immigrants' guide. The work was aimed at attracting people to Natal. Holden felt that such people should only be agriculturalists with capital, or labourers. The five chapters, of twelve, which deal with the history of Natal, form a narrative which begins with the sighting of Natal by Vasco do Gama and ends with the British annexation.

At the time of the publication of this history Holden had completed *The Past and Future of the Kaffir Races*, but it was only published in 1866 by the Wesleyan convention in London. Part one of the work consisted of a chapter on Zulu history, which was based on information obtained from 'the best informed Europeans' and 'the oldest and most intelligent natives', including Abantwana.

Holden wrote a number of other historical works later in his career. These included *A Brief History of Methodism and the Methodist Missions, British Rule in South Africa in the Story of Kama and his Tribe, and of the War in Zululand*. He also edited the *Reminiscences of the Early Life and Missionary Labours of the Revd John Edwards*.

M. SNELL

Natal and Zululand Study Circle

A society, to be known as the *Natal and Zululand Study Circle* was established at a meeting held on 21 October 1996 on the premises of the Royal Philatelic Society, London at 41 Devonshire Place, London W1.

The Committee of the Society is as follows: Brian Cartwright, Tony Chilton (Hon. Treasurer), John Dickson (Hon. Secretary), Dr Alan Drysdall (Hon. Editor), Martin Eichele, Roger Porter and Ian Shapiro (Chairman). Michael Wigmore and Morgan T. Farrell were appointed as local representatives for South Africa and North America respectively.

The Society will concern itself with the postal history, postage stamps, revenue stamps and postal stationery etc. of Natal and Zululand during the colonial period. The inter-provincial period will be included. The pre-eminence of the Anglo-Boer War Philatelic Society is recognised in relation to the philately of the campaign in Natal, and that of the Transvaal Study Circle in relation to the New Republic, and those periods will be addressed only to the extent necessary to provide overall coverage of Natal and Zululand.

In order to ensure continuity during an initial period, the committee intends to remain in office en bloc during the calendar years 1997 and 1998. Membership of the committee will be the subject of an open vote of all members at the time of the Annual General Meeting for 1998, to be held within a few months after the close of 1998, and annually thereafter.

Membership of the Society will be on a calendar year basis from 1 January 1997. The initial membership subscription is £10 p.a. The journal will be sent anywhere in the world by surface mail at that rate. By airmail an additional rate of £3 must be paid. Persons paying in sterling should remit to the Secretary, but members have the option of making payment to their local representatives. South African subscribers paying R70 p.a., will receive the journal by sea; R90 p.a. if by air. North American subscribers may pay US\$15 p.a. by sea; US\$20 p.a. if by air.

Members who paid the first years subscription before 1 January 1997 are classed as Founder Members. Founder members could also send a contribution to a Founders' Fund when paying their 1997 subscription, participation in this fund, and the amount subscribed being entirely voluntary. The fund will be applied to exceptional expenditure, such as support for the occasional publications of the Society.

The aim is to produce a quarterly journal during 1997. The title *The Journal of the Natal and Zululand Study Circle* will be the title of last resort. A more singular title is desirable: titles as *Indaba*, *ePosi*, *Gnus*, *Mail Runner* and others were considered. Founder members are invited to make recommendations for the title of the journal, and for a logo for the Society, to appear on the cover of the journal.

Applications for membership are welcome, and should be addressed to Mr John Dickson, Lismore House, Shepton Beauchamp, Ilminster, Somerset TA19 0LJ, United Kingdom.

The editor looks forward particularly to receiving articles and notices for the journal.

JOHN DICKSON

Natal Museum extensions

Though the Natal Museum has been an independent institution since 1903, it was the child of The Natal Society. (See 'The Natal Society Museum 1854–1904' by Shirley Brooks, in *Natalia* 18, p.59; and the chapter 'The Natal Museum' by Brian Stuckenberg in Laband & Haswell's *Pietermaritzburg 1838–1988 A new portrait of an African city*, p.160). With quasi-parental pride and interest, therefore, this journal notes the completion, as we go to press, of major building works at the museum, which add another three stories to the 1968 wing. These provide much-needed extra space for the museum's extensive specialist library, for some of the research departments and their collections, and for the administrative staff. Former offices in the oldest (1903) part of the building have been redesigned to provide the Education Officers with more space, which now includes a small lecture theatre to complement the facilities of the John Pringle Hall. During the two-year contract period, administration, the library and most of the research departments were housed in the old Colonial Building in Church Street.

Now that the contractors have left and the whole institution is once more under one roof in Loop Street, the museum's technical staff will be able to resume work on the ambitious 'Story of People in South Africa' exhibitions. These already include sections featuring the Portuguese explorations, a San/Bushman cave in the Drakensberg and a 19th century colonial street and interiors. Next on the agenda is the recreation of an Iron Age village, and an exhibit featuring the beginnings of towns and trades.

National Monuments in Natal

In its report for the year ending 31 March 1995 the National Monuments Council lists ten premises in KwaZulu-Natal as having been declared national monuments. We quote from the report:

The property with the Victorian cottage thereon, at 238 Boom Street, Pietermaritzburg. This Victorian cottage was built before 1876. It has a dormer window on the street facade and a corrugated iron verandah spans the entire front of the house. The walls are of mud-brick and shale-plaster. It is one of the oldest remaining houses in Pietermaritzburg.

The property with the Dutch Reformed Church thereon, at 151 Smith Street, Durban. Plans for this church by the well-known ecclesiastical architects, Louw and Moerdijk, were approved in February 1923. The building is designed in the Cape Dutch revival style, with the main facade characterised by a large pedimented gable in which a prominent portico is set. The first church service was held on 2 February 1924.

The old dairy on the farm Nels Rust 849, Richmond district. At this dairy, built for J. Baynes in 1898, the commercial production of butter was pioneered in Natal. As such it was also the first modern dairy in the country. The dairy was designed in the Arts and Crafts style by Kent and Price. It is built of local shale and has Pietermaritzburg redbrick quoining to the corners and windows. It has a wide and steeply pitched verandah, specifically to keep the building and its perishable contents cool.

Baynes House, on the farm Nels Rust 849, Richmond district. This Victorian manor-house was erected c.1887 by R. Lightfoot for J. Baynes, one of the Byrne Settlers of 1850. Baynes was a prominent agriculturist, member of Parliament and a philanthropist. He was particularly innovative in dairy farming.

The first cattle dip constructed in South Africa, on the farm Meyer's Hoek 847, Richmond district. This cattle dip was built in 1902 for J. Baynes and was the first ever erected in South Africa. It was designed by civil engineer G. Alexander and has a curved corrugated iron roof supported by gum poles, and covering the structure which has a maximum depth of 2,25m. This site is of great significance in the development of stock farming in South Africa, which gave security from the ravages of tick-borne diseases.

The property with the Richmond and Byrne district museum thereon, at 46 Victoria Street, Richmond. It is an A-shaped villa, with a lean-to structure at the rear and a corrugated iron roof with a verandah. It was built of shale, which was unique to the Settlers of the Richmond District.

The Fairfell homestead with ten metres of surrounding land, situated on subdivision 2 of erf 755, Howick. Fairfell was built in 1872 for Sir George Morris Sutton who became the fifth Prime Minister of the Natal Colony in 1903. The house is a fine example of a rural KwaZulu-Natal verandah house with a steep corrugated iron roof. Sutton was also a pioneer regarding the utilisation of wattle trees for tannery purposes.

The property with the Dutch Reformed Church thereon, at 103 Murchison Street, Ladysmith. The present building is the third church on this site and was inaugurated on 10 August 1929. This octagonal church is an unusual example of the work of Gerhard Moerdijk and is built of rusticated sandstone with a tiled roof. The well integrated steeple with a clock and weather-vane, and a large rose window set in an oval voussoir, are particularly noteworthy.

The property with the Soofie Mosque thereon, being subdivision 3 of erf 1006, Ladysmith. This mosque, erected in 1965, was named after Hazrath Soofie Saheb, a prominent South African Muslim mystic who established twelve mosques in Natal. It replaced the modest original mosque erected between 1895 and 1910. The mosque is noteworthy because of the successful integration of traditional Muslim architecture with building materials and structural systems which are typical of the 1960s.

The site with the town hall thereon, Ladysmith. While a section of this building, primarily known for its historical associations with the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902), had already been declared a national monument under Government Notice No.1709 of 10 August 1979, the declaration has now been amended to include the entire town hall, as well as a portion of surrounding land.

In addition, two movable objects, declared cultural treasures, are:

- i) The two cannons known as Castor and Pollux used during the siege of Ladysmith, and subsequently placed in front of the Town Hall.
- ii) The 'One O'Clock Gun' mounted opposite the City Hall in Pietermartizburg.