

Notes and Queries

Further notes on the sinking of U-197, 20 August, 1943

Readers of *Natalia* who have, in Volumes 23, 24 and 25, been following the research project initiated by the query, 'Who spotted U-197?' (the only U-boat sunk off the Natal coast in the costly years of our maritime war, 1942 and 1943) will be aware that I have found the incident to expose a considerable division of political interest in the allied surveillance of our coast during the war years. It seems that the Royal Navy operated a small High Frequency Radio network — certainly not unknown to Prime Minister Smuts, who provided the 'Price-Milne' technicians to service the outfit — but which reported back to no South African surveillance command (such as the Special Signals Service) but rather to a Direction Finding intelligence, which we can now assume to be the de-crypting Headquarters at Bletchley Park near London.

It must be remembered that all official South African war histories were ignorant of the facts, only published by Professor F H Hinsley in 1979, that as early as 1940 Britain had captured the ultra-secret German cypher machine Enigma, and developed at Bletchley near London a de-coding process (using those primeval computers that were the size of a house) that, by June 1941, began to have a significant effect on the Allied anticipation of German strategy. A researcher at the Imperial War Museum told me that this extraordinarily important jigsaw piece in the War War II puzzle was deliberately withheld because, even as Hinsley made the revelation in 1979, Enigma was still being employed in many Eastern bloc governments, and the British were still using their Ultra decryption technique. One can well imagine the British reluctance to share the decrypting technique with a government such as Smuts's, where it was common knowledge (as I don't think anyone would deny in retrospect) that certain departments were infiltrated through and through with 'fifth column' sympathisers.

Hinsley does not record the sinking of U-197 as an Ultra achievement. Nevertheless, the difference that High Frequency radio interception made is marvellously clear to the eye as one studies the reel upon reel of Admiralty microfilm that is today housed in the British Public Records Office at Kew in London. Our little Indian Ocean submarine warfare accounts for some two percent, perhaps, of the reams of decoded, translated messages between U-boats and Command that were regularly and painlessly radioed in to Bletchley by British radio intelligence. Even Doenitz's 'happy Christmas' messages, along with the conveyance of good wishes to distant fathers on the birth of bonny babes in the Fatherland, are all enshrined in the shiny black rolls of film.

Hinsley himself claims only one U-boat sunk off South Africa as a result of Enigma decoding (south of Cape Town in 1944), but the overall impression is quite misleading. The late Prof. Glen Harvey of Rhodes University, who was a member of the 'Price-Milne' secret team, asked, after the war, at the office of C-in-C Simonstown, whether 'huff duff' had in fact scored any triumphs on the coast of Africa. He was told that South African receivers had accounted for only one U-boat, off Dakar, North Africa. This hardly accords with the 'Most Secret' letter of 14 October 1943 that I quoted in *Natalia* Vol 25, which, two months after the sinking of U-197, congratulates a local officer for the 'efficiency of your station and close relations with this office' whereby 'the Royal Navy has been able to take effective measures against enemy units operating here ...'. But above all it does not accord with the reams of decrypted and translated radio messages that are now a matter of public record, and which, even if they were not all busy using the Enigma code, bear witness to the extraordinary job that was done by radiographic interception.

If the sinking of U-197 exposes a major political division in South African surveillance, the strange fact is that this exposes a stress-symptom on the German side, even in Doenitz's massively efficient network. Already the authors of the standard text, *War in the Southern Oceans*, knew that U-197 had given her position away in the attempt to find a meeting-place with her sister vessels, a 'rendezvous' called specifically to 'pass on to each other "Bellatrix", a newly-issued cypher code'. The question arises: How could experienced officers of the Kriegsmarine, with years of experience in Enigma operation, quite used by now to the machine that sat like a gawky typewriter on their radio desks, suddenly require, far south in the Indian Ocean, this irregular and extraordinary procedure?

The near-invincible power of Enigma lay in the fact that, with one twist of a cog on the machine itself, the cypher rotors could be changed manually, and a completely new alphabet of letters linked to numerals instated. Doenitz's U-boat arm had, in fact, become suspicious in the summer of 1942 that its 'ultra' secret code had been breached (a completely accurate suspicion, as we can now see) and their response was to insert

a fourth wheel into its Enigma machines. It was like a spanner in the works for Bletchley, who got no more joy after that until, after intense and exhausting work, the cryptographers began to break through again in April 1943. (Hough, p.51)

The thesis I put in the rest of this article is that when a new generation of Enigma code was ordered for August 1943 (to be called 'Bellatrix') U-197, even though it was commanded by such a veteran officer as Lt Kapitan Bartels, did not know how to handle the transition.

Let me amass the documentation to substantiate this thesis. Even as early as 19 June 1943, one might wonder whether the message from HQ to Gysae, one of the five vessels in the Indian Ocean *gruppe*, 'Have rotor blades suffered alienation or warped due to tropical climate?', refers to the diesel engines, or in fact to the actual cog rotors on the Enigma machine. (That tropical conditions were plaguing the U-boat men is made clear when Gysae radios home on 17 July: 'Ask Agfa whether film material which is unstable in tropical conditions can be stored at -20 deg C'.)

Amidst the hundreds of cryptographs coming in to Doenitz's headquarters in August 1943, one soon begins to see that the Indian Ocean *gruppe* were coming under a stress that was not inflicted by the enemy, but that was internal to the organisation. On 1 August Bartels earns himself a typical Doenitzian riposte: 'Expend your rage on the enemy ...' (!) Why Bartels's irritability? By 14 August all U-boat commanders were in receipt of an 'ultra' secret order that 'the Key Word order Bellatrix comes into force at 12.00 on 16 August.' Why were the Indian Ocean U-boats, for some fascinating but intangible reason, unable to accept this instruction? That the change of code was not going to be easy in this theatre is made clear by a further Head Office missive, also on 14 August, and also sent in Offizier Cypher (i.e. in Enigma cypher) to the effect that Bartels and Lüth must be

in naval grid sq 5855 at 8.00 on 17 Aug for instruction in regard to "Bellatrix." Kentrat is likewise to begin passage thither and report arrival. Bartels is to report when instruction has been effected.

One can only speculate that this wide deviation from general procedure was caused by a major breakdown in communication in the Indian Ocean *gruppe*: as HQ says to Kentrat (the leader of the group) on 18 August: 'A meeting with Bartels is necessary for instruction regarding the key-word order "Bellatrix".' The fact that, in the message cited above, it is Bartels who is asked to make the confirmatory report suggests that it was he and his officers who were causing the essential difficulty. If that was not enough, there came a further message on the 14, addressed to the *gruppe* in general, which shows a keen awareness that communication has reached a point of considerable fragility. It orders that 'rendezvous with other boats are always to be proposed in terms of disguised squares in future. If no disguised squares can be used, give the rendezvous in terms of naval grid squares and send message in offizier code.' (The German Navy, we must remember, did not use compass points but a 'chess-board' of squares for plotting positions.) It seems that Headquarters realised that if some of the Indian Ocean U-boats were *not* going to convert to Bellatrix on the due date, then they would have to take the extra security precaution of disguising their particular square of ocean. No doubt to the radio room back at Headquarters, this warning seemed purely academic: after all, what evidence was there that the British had so much as sniffed the new Enigma variation? But of course the hunch was all too correct, and I would assume that at least one explanation of Bartels's sudden demise on 20 August 1943 is that he omitted to disguise his positional square when he reported his whereabouts on High Frequency broadcast.

U-boat headquarters, with a whole world war on their hands, finds that it has to concentrate a whole flurry of messages on the Indian Ocean flotilla in the days leading up to 20 August. An order on 17 August, for example, a day after the change to Bellatrix is supposed to have happened, instructs Bartels to meet up with Lüth at 4.00pm on 18 August in square 7725. Immediately Kentrat in U-196 begs a countermand to this instruction, and he too joins in the radio fray on 17 August, when he requests, in offizier cypher, a new rendezvous with Bartels in JA2235 at 10.00am on 20 August. The strategists back home must have torn their hair: the Indian Ocean *gruppe* were quite unable, it seems, to get their act together.

War in the Southern Oceans suggests that it was on 17 August that U-197 fatally gave its position away, and claims that it did so in an operational report to Lüth in U-181. Alas, with no citation given at all, one cannot test this evidence. That work was written without knowledge of the Enigma politics within the U-boat arm, and I will simply note Bartels's radio message to Headquarters, again, on 17 August, the day *after* all U-boats were supposed to have converted to Bellatrix:

Have just sunk the *Empire Stanley* in Naval Grid sq KQ 6676 course 050deg.

Was that, then, the fatal giveaway moment for U-197 and Captain Bartels? The message is *not* in officier cypher! — how could it be: Bartels was unable to make use of the new variation of Enigma code. Now if we could also prove that KQ 6676 is *not* a 'disguised square', then we would see exactly how Bartels betrayed himself to the enemy (a nice retrospective justice, one would have to say, for the unfortunate *Empire Stanley*!) Incidentally, Lüth in U-181 might just have sealed the fate of U-197 by signalling Headquarters on the 19th: 'Bartels is remaining in area of the old rendezvous, as I have sighted four steamships there on westerly and easterly courses, and I (have missed) a 3000 tonner'. The last radio message recorded from the *gruppe* before the fateful afternoon of the 20th is an interesting one from Gysae: 'Bellatrix known but hold cyphers only 'til 1 October'. In cryptic fashion, Gysae seems to be asking how long he can survive with the wrong generation of cyphers in his Enigma machine.

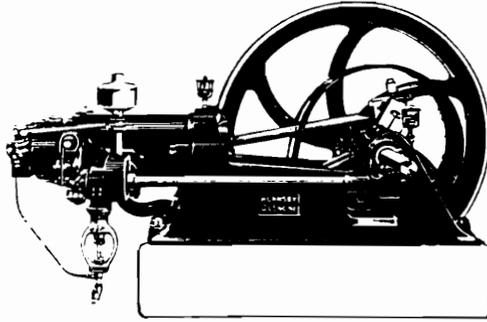
The terminal hours of U-197 are very briefly reported. Paging through hundreds of cryptographs fifty years later, I could not but wonder whether the officer on duty in Doenitz's office on 20 August 1943 had time to indulge a certain flicker of pathos as I did (the sun pouring down over Kew in October 1996) when I read Bartels's message of 2.26pm: 'Aircraft has attacked with a stick of bombs. Am unable to dive, position is 8252 southerly. U-197.' I wonder whether, as Headquarters radioed sister ships 'Assume that you are ... proceeding at best speed to Bartels ... bombed and unable to dive' the officer on duty realised that this submarine was going down as a result of some acute deficiency in what was otherwise a brilliant and efficient security system.

At any rate, the 'enemy' was now very much on top! Gysae reports on 24 August that he is being 'shadowed by flying boats' (i.e. RAF Catalinas) and requests that the very notion of a rendezvous now be abandoned. Headquarters was no doubt relieved to agree; on the same day it instructed that the scheme for a rendezvous be duly scrapped. Thus did the Indian Ocean flotilla slip away to the Atlantic, and to theatres of warfare that were less and less propitious for the German cause.

REFERENCES

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W H BIZLEY



Ruston Reminiscences from Natal

The following piece was found among the papers of Mr Roland Deane of Pietermaritzburg, who died in 1988 at the age of 86. It was written in the late 1950s or early 1960s for the house journal of Ruston & Hornsby, Ltd of Lincoln, England, but was apparently never submitted or published. A copy has been sent to the firm, which may possibly use it in some form. Its Natal interest and flavour, however, make it suitable for inclusion in the pages of Natalia.

During a lifetime of selling, installing and servicing Ruston & Hornsby engines in Natal, very few remarkable incidents can be called to mind, mainly because the engines perform so well that, once installed, we hear very little more about them. Exceptions to this rule do occur, though happily not very often, and these can usually be attributed to the failure of the human element to carry out the manufacturer's instructions.

One of our earlier experiences concerned a Ruston & Hornsby portable steam engine delivered to a farmer in the midlands of Natal for general farm work, such as threshing, grinding and timber-cutting. A Zulu employee was trained in the care and maintenance of this engine, and it was his pride and joy to keep it in spotless condition and perfect running order. About a year after delivery the engine was used to drive an ensilage cutter and blower to fill two 500-ton tower silos. There was a good spring of water adjacent to the two silos, and this was used to keep the boiler filled. All went well until the first silo was filled. We then received a complaint that the engine was losing power for no apparent reason. The Zulu attendant said it was bewitched, and this seemed to be borne out by the engine, which began to foam alarmingly at the safety-valve and other places.

The reason for this extraordinary failure was found to be in the boiler water. As the silo filled up it exuded juice containing a fair amount of sucrose, which seeped into the spring and was being pumped into the boiler. After a thorough cleansing of the inside of the boiler and cylinder, the engine ran as well as ever — with a different water supply, of course. This happened more than thirty years ago, and that particular engine is still working, the only replacements being a set of fire-bars and tubes.

The main difficulty in many of our engine installations is that they have to be in inaccessible places. Machinery has to be dismantled and taken to the site in pieces, the larger ones slung on poles and carried by men, the smaller ones balanced on the

heads of African women. This way of carrying loads is traditional among rural Zulu women, who are trained from childhood to carry most things on their heads, and will invariably choose this means, thus leaving their hands free. Once the writer, working at one end of a mile-long pipeline, passed the word along for someone to bring his cigarettes which had been left at the other end of the line. In due course the packet of twenty cigarettes appeared — balanced on the head of a young Zulu woman who had been working in a field nearby. A strong Zulu woman can carry a class PT engine or a bundle of water-pipes on her head with equal ease, and only requires assistance in picking up and putting down the load. We have several times had to transport plant and material in this way.

In 1948 our firm was commissioned by the African and European Mining Company to lay on water to their works in the Tugela valley, where gypsum was to be mined. The site of the pumping station was selected by the construction company's engineer, on the bank of the Inadi River, about a quarter of a mile from where the road forded the river. It was quite impossible to approach the site with any vehicle except along the bed of the river, which was smooth, and had a precipitous bank on one side and a gently sloping bank on the other. The water was from six inches to a foot in depth, and we had previously taken that route in an unladen vehicle, without any trouble. It was a different story, however, when our motor truck had on board a Mark II VSH engine. After proceeding up the river bed for about fifty yards, the truck sank into deep sand and would not move forwards or backwards, but settled down with water up to the floorboards. This was quite a serious predicament, and we dared not delay as the truck showed signs of sinking still further. The writer thereupon walked to Mr Smiley, the foreman at the mining camp, with a view to borrowing a suitable truck to salvage our Ruston & Hornsby engine before it disappeared into the river. Unfortunately no truck was available, so Mr Smiley sent twenty-four Zulu labourers to help us. We did not feel confident that they would be able to get us out of our difficulties, but we were mistaken. They waded into the river and completely surrounded our truck, grasping it wherever they could get a hand-hold. Having done this, a member of the gang began to chant a Zulu song, very like an old English sea shanty, with the rest joining in the chorus at appropriate intervals. We were still somewhat sceptical about the outcome, and would have preferred more action and less singing, but that is their way of doing heavy work.

When the song seemed to have reached its climax, the loaded truck shuddered, rose up out of the water, and was deposited a little to one side of where it had been embedded. More singing, and the process was repeated. Now that the truck was standing on firmer ground, we were all for trying to reverse down the river bed to safety again, but the cheer-leader would have none of it. He and his men continued to move the truck until it was standing on dry land well clear of the river, having carried it sideways for about ten yards up the sloping bank. The engine was then unloaded and the truck driven back the way it had come. Our rescuers carried the engine across the river and deposited it safely on its site, much to our relief.

On one occasion we had delivered and set up a milling plant which included a Mark II VTH engine, to a trader at Tugela Ferry. As usual we ran the plant for him and carefully instructed the miller in caring for the engine. On leaving, we gave him

a full case of lubricating oil which we informed him was sufficient for 250 hours' running. We were very surprised a few days later to hear that the engine was very unsatisfactory, had lost power, and was difficult to start. There was nothing for it but to send a mechanic back to investigate. He found that the miller had used up the case of lubricating oil, but he had used it as fuel oil! Strange to say the engine ran on it, with no ill effects except a slight loss of power and much exhaust smoke.

No wonder Ruston engines have such a reputation.

'Majuba' or 'Amajuba' – a misnamed battlefield?

Dr G.D. Campbell of Richmond, Natal, writes:

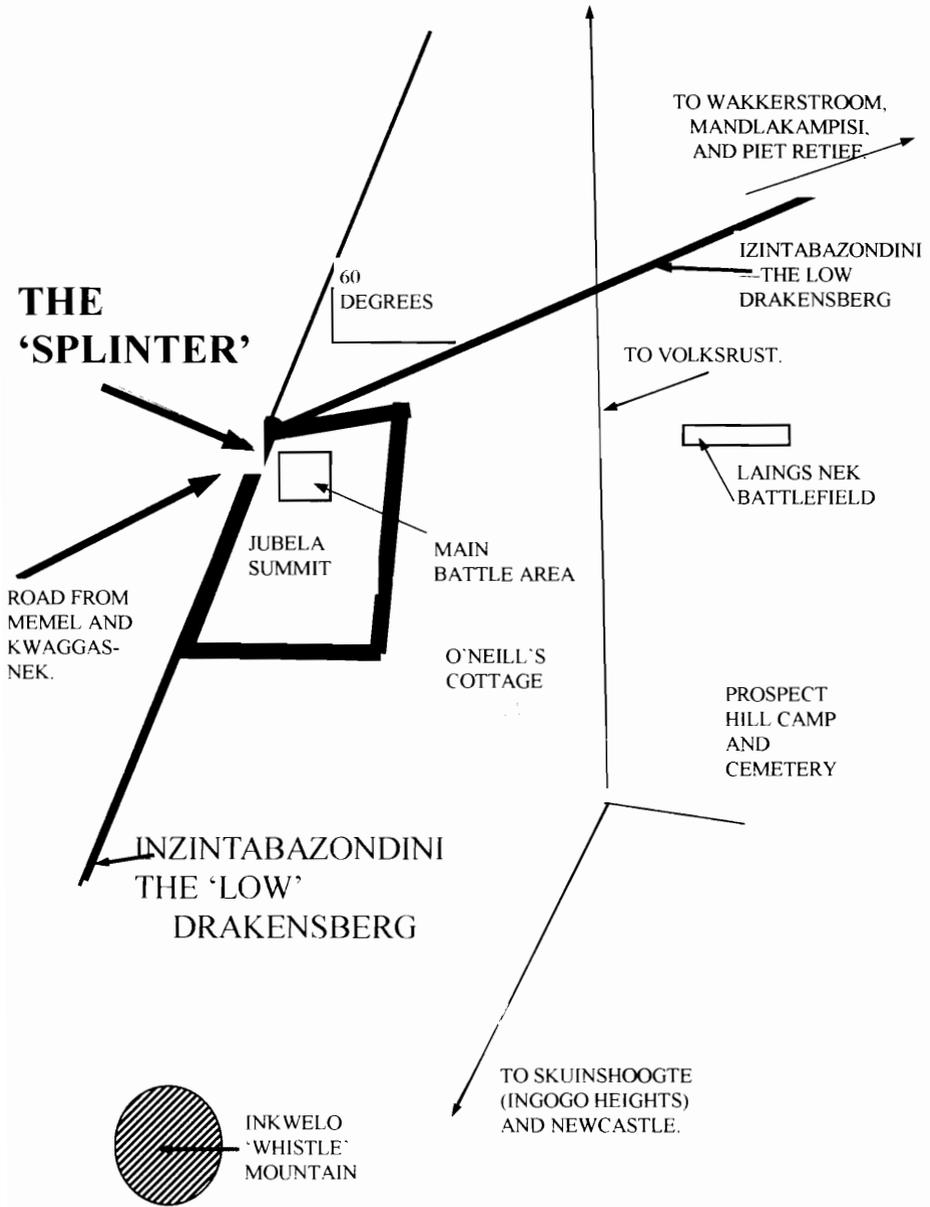
'On Sunday 28 February 1881, General Sir George Pomeroy Colley completed a climb to the summit of the Majuba Mountain with 375 men, arriving at about 5am. He was thrown off in less than seven hours by a much smaller Boer force in one of the most stunning defeats in British military history. British losses were 92 killed, including Colley himself, 134 wounded and 59 taken prisoner — a total of 285 casualties. The Boers lost one man, killed in their own crossfire, one died of wounds and five were wounded. (See Campbell, G.D. and Wilmans, J.F., 'Die emosionele toestand van Generaal Sir George Pomeroy Colley tydens die slag van Amajuba' in *Historia*, University of Pretoria, 1993.)

For many years this mountain has been referred to as Majuba or Amajuba, and more popularly the 'Hill of Doves'. However, it is plain to people that spend time there that doves (*Streptopelia capicola*, Zulu: amaJuba) are not all that commonly seen, nor are rock pigeons (*Columba guinea*, Zulu: izimVukudu), and certainly not as frequently as on the craggy inKwelo ('Whistle') mountain immediately to the south, from the base of which Colley marched. That indeed is the home of many doves and rock pigeons.

To the local Zulu people the Drakensberg is divided into two parts — the spectacular High Berg or Qathlamba ('Barrier of spears') and the Low Berg' or Izintabazondini ('Hills of Ondini'), named after a royal Zulu regiment. In the High Berg there is only one negotiable pass, the Sani Pass, in hundreds of kilometres, but between Oliviershoek where the mountains change into the Low Berg, and the Majuba Hill, there are no fewer than 16 — which include the magnificent Normandien Pass, known to very few Natalians or even tour operators.

If you look at a map of the Low Berg you will see that Majuba splits the range suddenly, so that it swivels acutely through 70 degrees to the east in a traverse towards the town of Piet Retief. Initially it runs towards Mandlakampisi ('Strength of the hyena') — surely the most magnificent of the Low Berg's mountains.

In the minds of many older Zulus and local Zulu-speakers, the mountain cleaves, splits or *splinters* the range, causing it to change course dramatically. If you look at the mountain from the Newcastle side, the summit appears to be perfectly flat. However, if you approach it from the Memel-Kwaggasnek side you see the summit as the long base of an isosceles triangle and it has a sharp and long aspect, rather like the back of a bush pig. The Gordons' Knoll, McDonald's Kopje and the Sailor's



Schematic view, showing how the Jubela Mountain 'splinters' the Low Drakensberg.

(G. D. Campbell)

Knoll are like bumps on a knife-like ridge, which neatly splinters the Drakensberg range.

The local word for a splinter is *ijubela*, and to splinter is *ukujubela*, and it is from this verbal base that the mountain has derived its inaccurate name of Amajuba. When one speaks of cutting certain cattle off from a herd, one uses the word *ukujubela*, as in *Awujubela lezizinkomo ezine* ('Just cut (splinter) off those four cows.') Hence the connotation of splintering the Drakensberg range.

A plea is made that the battlefield be referred to as the Jubela Mountain, and that the names Amajuba and Majuba be abandoned.'

Denis Hurley OMI, Archbishop Emeritus of Durban

The fiftieth anniversary of Archbishop Hurley's consecration as Bishop of Durban in that city's Emmanuel Cathedral was on 19 March 1997. At the time of his consecration he was the youngest bishop in the Catholic Church, and when he retired in 1990 he was the Church's oldest serving bishop.

From the beginning of his episcopate he worked for racial equality and social justice. The Catholic Church in South Africa itself was largely conservative in this regard. In 1951 he became the first president of the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference, and through his influence the Church became more outspoken — the Council's first pronouncement on race relations followed in 1952. He continued as president until 1961, and had a second period of office from 1981–87.

In 1976 he founded Diakonia, an interdenominational church organisation concerned with achieving justice and democracy in South Africa.

His opposition to apartheid called forth reactions such as the petrol-bombing of his home, and his arraignment on charges of slandering the South African Defence Force in regard to its actions in the then South West Africa. Three days before the trial the government withdrew the charges, realising how damaging the defence's evidence could be.

Archbishop Hurley had an international reputation, not only as a champion of human rights, but as someone whose thought has had a part in influencing modern Catholicism. At the Second Vatican Council in Rome from 1962–1965 he was one of a small group of delegates who ensured that controversial issues came under the spotlight. This assisted in the Church's ongoing adaptation to conditions in the contemporary world.

The golden jubilee was celebrated with a breakfast organised by Diakonia on 19 March, and a thanksgiving Mass on Human Rights Day (21 March). At the former, Archbishop Hurley gave an address entitled 'Memories of 50 years: from segregation, through apartheid to liberation and democracy.' In thanking him Professor Fatima Meer paid tribute to his constant battle for the oppressed. A selection of the archbishop's writings, entitled *Facing the crisis*, was launched at this function.

Archbishop Hurley is now curate at the Emmanuel Cathedral.

Baywatch '97

Robert Cross, of the Wildlife Society, writes:

Durban Bay, under pressure from 'civilisation' ever since its first visitors from Europe passed by in their sailing ships exactly 500 years ago, has been even more seriously threatened during the last year or so.

This time the threat came not from over-exploitation or pollution or from any of the other inevitable side-effects of having Africa's busiest port inside the Bay. Causing concern was the announcement made by Portnet in 1995 that it urgently needed to expand Durban harbour's container-carrying capacity and was planning to build a new container terminal on the Bay's central sandbank.

The response from the KwaZulu-Natal Region of the Wildlife and Environment Society was instantaneous and vociferous. After a well-attended meeting (which clearly showed that the people of Durban were deeply concerned about the suggestion), a sub-committee of the Society, known as Durban 20/20, was formed. It immediately launched a hard-hitting campaign attacking the sandbank option — so hard-hitting, in fact, that it acquired something of a reputation for being made up of 'rabid greenies'.

From the beginning, Durban 20/20 made it clear that it was not opposing development in the harbour, nor was it ignoring the need for another container terminal, but that it was opposing the sandbank plan on a whole range of environmental, social, conservation, aesthetic and economic grounds.

Its chairwoman, Jean Senogles, pointed out that Durban had lost about 43% of the Bay's water surface to concrete and metal when the authorities filled in sections of the Bay, instead of digging out from the land to create the necessary wharves and quays — as has been done in so many other parts of the world. 'The visual appeal of the water surface has an enormous impact on everything from property values on the Berea (where a bay view is highly sought after) to the requirements of our tourists, who contribute so greatly to the economy of our city and our province,' she said.

The loss to the city in rates from the prime buildings along the Victoria Embankment would be considerable, for they would lose value as a result of the sandbank's disappearing under cranes and concrete — with the ensuing noise and lights of round-the-clock operations at the new terminal.

The sandbank option and the whole container terminal question was subjected to an Environmental Impact Assessment, and later a Local Advisory Committee was established where other options were explored, and various interested and affected parties could voice their concern, share their knowledge and give explanations. Eventually it was decided that the sandbank proposal was unacceptable and that other options needed to be examined. It seemed that the Wildlife Society had successfully made its point, and that the sandbank — and all that it symbolised — was safe.

However, Portnet (in the person of its Port Manager, Mr Bax Nomvete), subsequently made several media statements about his personal preference for the sandbank site — and so Durban 20/20 continued its fight. Meanwhile, the Wildlife Society realised that it would be necessary to make the wider public aware of the enormous value of the Bay to the people of Durban and the province. This included



Durban harbour in the 1890s, showing the bay, the town and the Berea hill in the background. (By courtesy of the Durban Local History Museum.)



A Durban bayside scene of 1997 — showing electrified railway line, palm trees, pedestrian promenade, surviving Victorian cast-iron railings, and distant skyscrapers. (By courtesy of Val Adamson and The Wildlife Society.)

the obvious value to the city of the port itself, because of the thousands of people it employs, and the Bay's value as a tourist attraction or as the base for so many recreational uses, from fishing to yachting, from bird-watching to jogging (all of which have financial spin-offs for the city); or yet again as the aesthetic heart of the city.

And so in February 1997 the Society launched Baywatch '97 — a deliberately popularist public relations initiative to make the people of Durban more aware of their Bay. Activities have ranged from the obvious (media campaigns, talking to service clubs, taking stands at the Royal Show, Expo, etc.) to the less obvious, like 'fun days' for children at the bay, commissioning a dance score for the Playhouse Dance Company's piece 'This is not a parking Bay', exhibitions and 'soft-sell' media involvement.

In July the Local Advisory Committee finally put paid to any suggestions of using the sandbank for a terminal, and, by a consensus decision, agreed that the new terminal should be built at Salisbury Island. The one dissenting voice came from the Leisure and Commercial Bay Users' representative who, while totally rejecting the sandbank site, opted for the much-discussed southward development of the harbour into the area now occupied by the Durban International Airport.

And the way forward? Jean Senogles says 'We look to the day when a body of people with the broader interests of our Bay, our city and our province, are appointed to encourage good, integrated planning, bearing in mind that we need an efficient harbour, a thriving tourist industry and a beautiful city in which to work and live. We need an overarching Bay Authority that will be sensitive to both city and Bay — after all, the one is here because of the other.'

The Pietermaritzburg Philharmonic Society

Natalia 15 noted the beginnings of choral music in Pietermaritzburg in 1864 with the first performance of *Messiah*, and the establishment of the Philharmonic Society in 1881 under the leadership of Charles Lascelles. *Natalia* 27 must now record its demise.

The Philharmonic Society, unlike the Tatham Art Gallery which was in an analogous position *vis-à-vis* the city council, has found itself increasingly out of tune with the Transitional Local Council in recent years. The latter felt that it was not getting value for money for the municipal grant paid to the society. When it discontinued funding, the Philharmonic had little option but to disband.

It is a sad end to an institution whose life spanned more than a century. Moves are currently afoot to establish a Pietermaritzburg Amateur Music Society.

A forgotten Centenary

June 22, 1997 was a quiet winter's Sunday in Natal with not very much happening. It was very different 100 years previously, for Tuesday, 22 June, 1897 was the Diamond Jubilee of the reign of Queen Victoria, an event which threw the entire British Empire into a delirium of imperial and patriotic fervour. Indeed, the entire

week was marked by commemorative events, particularly in the capital of a fervently loyal British colony.

The whole of Maritzburg was decorated. Hardly a business or private residence but was bedecked with bunting, flags and lanterns, the combinations of colours selected by Indian traders being described by *The Natal Witness* as “fearful and wonderful”. All the churches began the week with special services of thanksgiving, while a combined military service in the town hall raised a collection of 900 pounds for the new garrison church. The great day itself was greeted by the *Witness* by an editorial of epic proportions — no less than four columns long. There was a grand military review of the garrison troops on the polo ground, a garden party at Government House (where the bands of four different regiments played) and corporation sports in the park. That evening bonfires 20 feet high, the wood liberally smeared with tar, were lit on Table Mountain, Cope’s Folly, Swartkop and World’s View. In the market square there was a fireworks display, the spectacle inadvertently added to when the decorations in front of the post office (not the present edifice but the building now housing the Tatham Art Gallery) caught fire.

Two foundation stones were laid. The first was that of the new YMCA in Longmarket Street. Today only older Pietermaritzburg residents will remember it; the site is occupied by United Bank on the corner of Buchanan Street. But the other architectural memorial of the occasion — also designed by the architect William Lucas — in the shape of the Jubilee Pavilion in the park, has survived. Indeed, it is presently getting both a facelift and a new lease of life as the future headquarters of cricket in the city. But it is the only survivor of an otherwise forgotten event.

If such enormous changes in lifestyle, demography, political ideology and social values can take place in a century, what, one wonders, might the Natal of June 2097 be like?

The role records play in revealing the past

At this time, when much of our country, and this province in particular, is tussling to unearth and distil the truth about our immediate past, a seminar led by three experts was an appropriate place to be on Heritage Day, 24 September 1997. It was hosted jointly by the KwaZulu-Natal Branch of the South African Society of Archivists and the Alan Paton Centre and took place in the Colin Webb Hall at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

Professor Charles Villa-Vicencio, seconded from his position as Professor of Religion and Society at the University of Cape Town to be National Research Director of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, spoke on ‘Documentation in the quest for “truth” in the TRC’. In answering three questions — Whose memories are housed in our archives?, How do we access that memory? and Who gets access to that memory? — he demonstrated, in a finely reasoned argument, that archival material is highly selective in its nature and its audience. It is available only to an elite. Archives must seek to service the nation in the more banal and ordinary events of life.

Cherryl Walker, previously Head of the Department of Sociology at the University of Natal in Durban, now KwaZulu-Natal Regional Land Claims Commissioner for the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights, gave the discussion a practical dimension by describing the work of the Land Commission: the day-to-day administrative procedures, frustrations, delays, multiple understandings of land use and ownership and the many varieties of the 'record' which are complicating the task of resolving land disputes. An underlying difficulty is that 'rights', which are implicit in restitution, often conflict with 'development'. A strategy must be found for rights and development to go together.

The seminar moved into a decidedly philosophical mode with an erudite presentation by Verne Harris, Deputy Director in the National Archives of South Africa, on the topic, 'Claiming less, delivering more: a critique of positivist formulations about archives in South Africa.' He challenged the archives profession to move from its long-held custodian approach to the post-modern era in which archivists will not merely hold material but will be purveyors of concepts; in which functions will shift from archives to 'archiving'. He pleaded for a broadening of context, opening up of space for new opportunities, soul and imagination. He went on to discuss the scope and limitations of technology for archives and left listeners reeling and somewhat appreciative of the 'sliver of a sliver of a sliver of the window into the past' which Harris suggested was probably all we get anyway.

The ardent group of archivists, historians and related enthusiasts went away well stimulated and as convinced as ever that evidence, if it is obtainable at all, hardly exists once it has been interrogated. The communal memory must nevertheless be nurtured against all odds — a salutary message for Heritage Day.

Hymnist identified

Angus Rose, formerly of Pietermaritzburg and now retired in McGregor in the Western Cape, writes:

'Some years ago I had the happy experience of editing the late Reg Pearse's biography *Joseph Baynes — Pioneer*, published by Shuter & Shooter in 1981.

Both Reg and I — and doubtless others — were intrigued by the identity of the author of a hymn beginning "Thou knowest, Lord, the weariness and sorrow". Baynes had arranged for this hymn, six verses in all, to be inscribed on the wall of the small mausoleum which he had erected to house his and his wife's mortal remains on Baynesfield Estate, where it can still be seen. The hymn's author appears to be someone with the initials H.L.L., though some old hymn books cite the name of Jane Borthwick.

Eighteen months ago I wrote to the editor of a magazine published in England asking if anyone could elucidate further. Several correspondents have produced the answer. The author was indeed Jane Borthwick, who died shortly before the end of last century. The hymn appeared in several old hymn books, notably those of the Methodist church, and one or two in Dublin. It appears that Miss Borthwick was a competent German linguist and had translated several hymns from the German. To

those translations she appended not her own initials, but H.L.L. — which stands for Hymns from the Land of Luther.

Sadly, all this information arrived too late for it to be shared with Reg Pearse, who died last year in his late nineties.

National Monuments in KwaZulu-Natal

In its report for the year ending 31 March 1996 the National Monuments Council lists twelve premises in the province as having been newly declared as national monuments. We quote from the report.

Dorchester House at 190 Loop Street, Pietermaritzburg. Built in the early 1890s, this house is regarded as a fine example of late Victorian red-brick architecture.

Norfolk Villa 196 Loop Street, Pietermaritzburg. This double storey building forms an impressive architectural unit with the adjacent Dorchester House. It was used as the residence of high-ranking officers of the imperial garrison.

Conservatoire de Hammerstein at 141 Alexandra Road, Pietermaritzburg. This house is named after the famous musician Oscar Hammerstein, a relative of a former owner. Its most important feature is a double-volume timber verandah characterised by the use of various carpentry techniques.

King's House in Eastbourne Road, Durban. Built in 1902 to serve as the seaside residence of the colonial governors, it became the traditional Durban residence of the Governors-General of the Union after 1910, and State Presidents after 1961. Set in extensive park-like gardens, it is a fine example of the colonial Edwardian style.

The John Dube House at Ohlange, Inanda District. Built about 1920, this is a late, but typical redbrick Natal colonial verandah house. It was the residence of John Dube, the first president of the South African Native Congress, which became the African National Congress.

The Green Point Lighthouse, Umzinto District. Built in 1905 to give seafarers warning of the notorious Aliwal Shoal, this cast-iron structure is one of the two oldest functioning lighthouses on the Natal coast. It was the first lighthouse in South Africa to be fully automated in 1961.

The lighthouse at Port Shepstone. This cast-iron structure replaced an earlier candle-powered masthead lantern in 1906 and is a prominent landmark on the Port Shepstone beachfront.

The Hattingsvlakte Rock Engravings on the farm of that name in the Estcourt District. These engravings are thought to date from four different periods in the late iron age.

The site with the so-called Collingham Shelter thereon, Mpendle District. The ceiling of the shelter has collapsed, making an archaeological excavation possible. Most of the deposits accumulated over a period of 150 years of occupation approximately 1 800 years ago.

The site with the cave known as Mhlwazini on the farm Solar Cliffs in the Bergville District. This cave is about 40 metres wide and 8 deep. Radio-carbon dating shows that it was first occupied from about 2 700 to 2 000 years ago. It is

regarded as one of the most important Holocene sites yet discovered in the province, and is noted for both the quantity and quality of artefacts preserved in its deposit.

The site known as Ngoduyanuka on the farm Zuurlaager in the Bergville District. This site consists of a number of circular primary enclosures which vary between 5 and 20 metres in diameter, and used to be livestock pens. They are surrounded by the remains of the floors of a ring of huts. Radio-carbon dating suggests that the site was occupied in the 17th and/or 18th centuries, and was probably built by the Zizi people who lived in the area before the Mfecane.

The property with the Morewood Memorial Garden thereon in the Lower Tugela District. The Morewood Memorial Garden is on the farm Compensation which was owned by Edmund Moreland, a Durban pioneer who, in 1851, refined the first sugar from sugar cane grown on the surrounding land at a mill situated on this site.

This will probably be the last time that *Natalia* lists new national monuments in the present format. The draft Heritage Bill proposes to reflect responsibility for a far wider range of heritage categories than the term 'monument' implies. The staff and assets of the National Monuments Council will be redeployed to a South Africa Heritage Agency, while the Bill provides for the devolution of powers to provincial heritage authorities, which will take responsibility for the management of heritage resources identified as culturally significant in the province.