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All the royal visitors from Prince Alfred in 1860 to King George VI in 1947 who toured through what is now the South African Province of KwaZulu-Natal were descended from Queen Victoria<sup>2</sup> – with one exception. She was the exiled and widowed Empress Eugénie of France, and even then the purpose of her journey was identical with that of Queen Victoria's daughter Helena (the Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg) who travelled through Natal in 1904 on the way to Pretoria to visit the grave of her son, Maj. Prince Christian Victor ('Christle'), who had died in 1900 of typhoid fever during the Anglo-Boer War.<sup>3</sup> For Eugénie was also making a pilgrimage – not to the grave – but to the place in Zululand where, the year before, on 1 June 1879, her only child, Louis Napoleon, the exiled Prince Imperial of France, had been killed in a minor skirmish near the Tshotshosi River while serving as an observer on the staff of Lt.-Gen. Lord Chelmsford, the officer commanding the British forces invading the Zulu kingdom.<sup>4</sup>

Those people close to the exiled Empress, who saw her utterly prostrated when on 20 June 1879 they brought her the news of the death nineteen days earlier of her son and the best hope of those working to restore the Bonapartes to the French throne, thought she would not long survive the devastating blow. Certainly, she did not think so herself. Nevertheless, she lived on a further 41 years, long enough to wish at the time of her 94th and last birthday in 1920 that she could have a flight in an aeroplane.<sup>5</sup> She was, in fact, as this plucky desire demonstrates, an intrepid and venturesome woman of great strength of char-



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acter, and in 1879 she soon threw off the worst of the terrible grief and depression that engulfed her.

The Prince's body had been brought back to England and buried on 12 July 1879, but the Empress felt she must visit Zululand, not only to see the place where her son had fallen, but to collect all the details relating to his last moments. That way she not only would be able to reconstruct to her own satisfaction the final scene in the exact surroundings where it had been played, but would be equipped to reassure the adherents of the Bonapartist cause that the imperial pretender had died as befitted a soldier in the military tradition of his dynasty. As she wrote to her secretary, Franceschini Pietri:

I feel myself drawn towards this pilgrimage as strongly as the disciples of Christ must have felt drawn towards the Holy Places. The thought of seeing, of retracing the stages of my beloved son's last journey, of seeing with my own eyes the scene upon which his dying gaze has rested, of passing the anniversary of the 1<sup>st</sup> of June watching and praying alone with his memory, is for me a spiritual necessity and an aim in life.<sup>6</sup>

Queen Victoria, who remembered the Empress in her glory and pitied her fallen state, remained a true friend and great solace.<sup>7</sup> She sentimentally supported the idea of a pilgrimage (had she not made a cult of the memory her own beloved Prince Consort?) – and paid for the expedition; while the British government, internationally embarrassed by the Prince's death and the scandal of his being left in the lurch by a British officer, offered every facility for Eugénie's journey.

On the Queen's insistence and in accordance with Eugénie's wish, the Empress was accompanied by Brig.-Gen. Sir Evelyn Wood, KCB, VC, who had successfully commanded the Left and Flying Columns during the Anglo-Zulu War, and his wife, Paulina, Lady Wood.<sup>8</sup> As early as September 1879 Eugénie had confided to Wood her plan of 'going out to see the spot where her son fell'. Wood, only too aware of the rigours of such a journey, had then done his best to dissuade her, but had declared his willingness to accompany the Empress to Zululand should the Queen approve.<sup>9</sup> The Marquis de Bassano (the son of her chamberlain, the Duc de Bassano) was also of the party, as was Surgeon-Major Frederick Scott who had served on Chelmsford's personal staff and who, as Medical Officer in charge of Headquarter, had examined the Prince's body where it had fallen. They were joined by the Hon. Mrs Ronald Campbell. She was born Katherine Claughton, the daughter of the Bishop of St Albans,<sup>10</sup> and was the widow Capt. the Hon. Ronald Campbell, Coldstream Guards, the second son of the Earl of Cawdor. He had been Wood's Principal Staff Officer and close friend, and had fallen by his side in the ill-executed assault on Hlobane Mountain on 28 March 1879. His death had left Wood with a burden of remorse, and Eugénie agreed to make a detour in Zululand to allow Mrs Campbell to visit her husband's grave. Two Royal Artillery officers who had served with distinction with No. 11 Battery, 7th Brigade with Wood's column during the Anglo-Zulu War, and who had been friends and comrades of the Prince (he was trained as an artilleryman in the tradition of the great Napoleon at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich), completed the suite. They were Capt. F.G. Slade and Capt. Arthur Bigge. A complete establishment of servants accompanied them.<sup>11</sup>

Capt. Bigge went ahead to Cape Town to prepare for Eugénie's arrival, landing there on 2 April 1880. However, Queen Victoria intended him to be more than simply

the expedition's glorified quartermaster. She entrusted him with a special and confidential role in the Empress's entourage: he was to be nothing less than the Queen's eyes and ears, and she commanded him to 'inform' her of its progress.<sup>12</sup> He evidently fulfilled this delicate role to her entire satisfaction, for upon his return from South Africa he was appointed assistant to Sir Henry Ponsonby, the Principal Private Secretary to the Queen, and succeeded him in 1895.<sup>13</sup> Other members of the Empress's suite also reported dutifully to the Queen, but it was his regular reports which provided her with the fullest picture.

Before she left for South Africa, on 6 March 1880 Eugénie returned Queen Victoria the letters her sympathetic royal friend had written her since the death of her son, and entrusted her with a 'small sealed packet to be opened in the case of her death'.<sup>14</sup> For safety's sake Victoria carried the packet about with her everywhere while Eugénie was away. On her return, Eugénie insisted that the Queen open it and keep the contents, which turned out to be a splendid emerald cross, cut of a single stone without any joins, and set at the points with fine diamonds. It had been given to Eugénie by the King of Spain in 1853 when she married Napoleon III, and she had been keeping it to give the future wife of her son.<sup>15</sup>

Arrangements for special accommodation on board ship having been made as early as January 1880,<sup>16</sup> the party embarked at Southampton on 25 March 1880 on the Union Steamship Company's *German* which, since her first voyage in 1877, had established a high reputation for speed. Eugénie travelled incognito as Comtesse de Pierrefonds. To ensure her comfort and privacy, three first-class cabins on the port side were set aside for her exclusive use as a drawing-room, bedroom and bathroom. They were 'fitted and upholstered in an exceedingly tasteful manner', being hung with silver grey silk crape and splendid mirrors, and furnished with an exquisite writing table in black and gold and other pieces fit for an empress. A crown was painted on the drawing-room door. Her suite occupied five other cabins.<sup>17</sup> During the voyage she was more cheerful than at any time since the Prince's death, chatting with the officers of her party and engaging in fancy needlework on deck with her ladies, even though she found the heat oppressive and the voyage most monotonous.<sup>18</sup> In all, Eugénie's health, as Lady Wood reported to the Queen, much improved on the voyage, although she grew 'a good deal thinner'.<sup>19</sup>

However, by the time the *German* docked in Cape Town on 16 April, the realization that she was about to view scenes once familiar to her son began sorely to oppress the Empress. At Government House in Cape Town, where the Prince had also stayed the year before,<sup>20</sup> she avoided company and kept herself to the garden. Nevertheless, as the Governor of the Cape, Sir Bartle Frere, wrote to the Prince of Wales, although she liked 'to lead the conversation to anything relating to the poor Prince Imperial, & is often in tears in telling us about him', she managed to take a 'great interest in other things, especially in politics'.<sup>21</sup> (Not that Frere himself was in the mood to provide good company. His machinations had initiated the disastrous Anglo-Zulu War, and his reputation as an administrator was in tatters in consequence. In August 1880 he would be recalled, his brilliant career over and his high hopes of a peerage dashed.)

Eugénie, in Dr Scott's opinion, was continuing to improve greatly 'in health and spirits' when on 20 April she embarked on the *German* for Durban.<sup>22</sup> She arrived there on 23 April to be greeted by large crowds.<sup>23</sup> Before disembarking she presented Captain

Coxwell of the *German* with a handsome breast-pin as a memento of the voyage, and each of the officers with a photograph of herself.<sup>24</sup>

In Durban the Empress stayed in the same rooms in Captain and Mrs Baynton's house which the Prince had occupied.<sup>25</sup> She was much in tears despite the kind attentions of Lt.-Gen. Sir Garnet Wolseley who was on his way back to England having, only two days previously (on 21 April), been succeeded as High Commissioner for South-East Africa and Governor of Natal by Sir George Pomeroy Colley.<sup>26</sup> It was while in Durban that she had an encounter which betrayed her deep-seated apprehensions and abiding sense of horror in her son's death, and which gave Wood serious cause for concern. He reported the disquieting incident to the Queen:

We passed three black men running, and the Empress gave a start and a look of terror which made me anxious for her in Zululand. She shuddered crying "Ce sont des Zulus". I shall of course be very careful not to let any Zulus approach her suddenly, but I fear she will be greatly distressed on first seeing them.<sup>27</sup>

The Empress and her suite departed for Pietermaritzburg as rapidly as they could, which meant on the first leg of the journey taking the train as far as it went. A regular train service between Durban and Botha's Hill had only been inaugurated on 24 March 1879, and the difficult stretch in the vicinity of Inchanga, where nine iron girder bridges and a short tunnel were required, had still to be completed. Thus it was not until 21 October 1880 that the rails finally reached Pietermaritzburg,<sup>28</sup> and the Empress had to alight at the end of the line 35 miles from Durban at Bolton's Creek, where a makeshift platform had been hurriedly completed only 48 hours before. Escorted by the Natal Mounted Police, Eugénie proceeded the rest of the way to Pietermaritzburg by carriage.

In the colonial capital, the Empress was touched by the character of the crowds who maintained 'a respectful silence similar to that which one tries to maintain in a sick-room', while the men uncovered their heads and the women curtsied.<sup>29</sup> However, all this studiously followed decorum was ruined by boys and men 'of the lower classes' who broke through the lines and rode up close to the Empress's carriage, 'staring in a most vulgar manner' into it.<sup>30</sup>

She stayed at Government House where the Prince had also lodged, and a constable and an orderly were stationed at the entrance to prevent the public from entering the grounds – though no one was so crass as to make the attempt. Determined to tread in her son's footsteps, she walked as he had done the short way from Government House in Longmarket Street to St Mary's Roman Catholic Chapel in Loop Street. At the convent next door she visited the Holy Family Sisters who had prayed over her son's remains while he lay in state in St Mary's, expressing her gratitude with a large donation. However, while she toured the convent with the Mother Superior she broke down utterly. Nor was it surprising that she did so for, as Bigge had put it when explaining to the Queen why Eugénie (despite the wishes of the local Roman Catholics) could never have stayed within the convent's walls, it was there that 'the ghastly operation of identifying and changing the body from one coffin to another was carried out'.<sup>31</sup> While in the city the Empress assisted at Mass in the private chapel of Bishop Charles Jolivet, and visited the various Catholic schools where she presented the pupils with little gifts and photo-

graphs of the Prince. Although deeply affected, she carried out these duties in an affable and approachable manner.<sup>32</sup>

The mayor, Peter Davis, whose firm, P. Davis & Sons, was the Colony's leading printers and the owner of the *Natal Witness* newspaper, was granted a long interview, during which Eugénie made a point of expressing her sympathy over his son, Trooper Harry Davis of the Natal Carbineers who, at the age of twenty, had been killed at the battle of Isandlwana.<sup>33</sup> The Prince Imperial had been only 23.

The Empress left Pietermaritzburg quietly and unostentatiously on 29 April, and it took her 26 days to reach the Tshotshosi River. She travelled in a spider carriage drawn by four (rather than the normal two) horses, with either Lady Wood or with Mrs Campbell as companion. Wood himself drove. The spider was the South African version of the American buggy, so called because the light, small body of the carriage, slung on four disproportionately large but slender wheels, gave a distinctly spidery impression. But it was a comfortable vehicle, and its high wheels were good for negotiating rivers and drifts. The spider and its occupants were escorted by a guard of honour of 20 Natal Mounted Police under Sgt Faddy. The whole party, including cooks, servants and wagon drivers, numbered 75 persons besides 200 horses, mules and other animals, most of which had been supplied by the Natal government.<sup>34</sup> This caravan never travelled less than twelve miles a day, which was good going considering its size and the rough state of the dirt tracks but, as Bigge reported to the Queen, the Empress complained of the slowness of her progress, though the moment she reached places visited by the Prince she became 'much less restless'.<sup>35</sup>

Camping mainly at suitable sites by the road, and setting out early each morning to avoid the heat of the day, the party travelled north by way of Greytown, Mooi River, Umsinga, Helpmekaar, Dundee, Landman's Drift, Utrecht and Conference Hill to Khambula Hill. At these places Eugénie visited every site – whether camp, laager or house – that was associated with the Prince.<sup>36</sup> At a small roadside inn at Mooi River on 4 May the Empress was again – as she had been in Durban – thrown into emotional turmoil when confronted by a party of Zulu. Bigge described the encounter to Queen Victoria:

Suddenly the well known cry of respectful greeting "Inkose" was heard and a body of about 50 natives carrying assegais and sticks appeared – Poor Empress, as we who know her best anticipated, the first sight of the assegai caused her great emotion and it was truly a sad scene, she overwhelmed with grief with these almost naked natives sitting in a semi-circle before her ignorant of the sorrow caused by their presence.

However, it was best, Bigge reflected, that the 'inevitable trial' of coming face-to-face with Zulu armed with the very sort of weapons that had killed the Prince 'should be got over'.<sup>37</sup>

At Landman's Drift Melmoth Osborn, the British Resident in Zululand, who presided ineffectually over the thirteen weak but quarrelsome chiefdoms into which the British had fragmented the once powerful Zulu kingdom after their victory in the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, was waiting on Sir Garnet Wolseley's orders to accompany the Empress through Zululand. But, as Bigge explained to the Queen, Eugénie did not wish 'any strangers' to join her party, so Osborn returned rather ignominiously 'to his sta-

tion'.<sup>38</sup> In any case, the Empress was not ready yet to head east for Zululand and the Tshotshosi River. Not only were there still places in the Transvaal associated with her son to visit, but she had undertaken to go on to Hlobane so that Mrs Campbell could place her tribute on her husband's grave. So when on 8 May her party crossed over the Blood (Ncome) River at Landman's Drift into the Transvaal Colony, it turned north towards Utrecht. Ostensibly to avoid unnecessary 'public demonstrations', Eugénie handled Sir Owen Lanyon, the Administrator of the Transvaal, as she had Osborn, and turned down his dutiful offer to escort her over the Transvaal border.<sup>39</sup>

The Empress travelled to Utrecht by way of Balte Spruit on 11 May. There she visited the house where the Prince had stayed, and had lunch with Gerhardus Rudolph, the Landdrost of Utrecht, who was held in some suspicion by his fellow Boers for his pro-British stance.<sup>40</sup> Turning south, on 12 May she saw the fort built in May 1879 at Conference Hill named 'Fort Napoleon' in her son's honour,<sup>41</sup> and finally crossed the Blood (Ncome) river into Zululand on 13 May, reaching Khambula Hill the following day.<sup>42</sup>

At Khambula on 16 May, Wood proudly showed the Empress where, on 29 March 1879, he had broken the Zulu army in the decisive battle of the Anglo-Zulu War. Both Bigge and Slade had gallantly fought their guns in the same action. Wood's feelings must have been rather different on 21 May when he rode and walked up the eastern end of Hlobane Mountain with the Empress and Mrs Campbell. That had been a disastrous affray, and Wood was fortunate that the battle of Khambula the next day had effectively obliterated criticism of his unquestionably inept generalship on 28 March 1879. The party retraced his route on the day of the battle, and Wood supervised the erection of a stone headstone for Mrs Campbell's husband to replace the wooden headboard erected by the family of Llewellyn Lloyd (Wood's Political Assistant in 1879) who had fallen in the same engagement and been buried alongside Campbell.<sup>43</sup>

From the moment the expedition had left Pietermaritzburg, the ladies dressed in white helmets and dust coats, and wore top boots and skirts made somewhat shorter than usual as a precaution against snake-bite.<sup>44</sup> The Empress continued volatile, seeming to Bigge at times 'bright and cheerful but oftentimes sorely depressed'.<sup>45</sup> She was sleeping badly. At times she sat in her tent, reading and re-reading letters written her by her son; at others she walked miles in the evening after the party had bivouacked for the night. She was torn between impatience to arrive at the Tshotshosi River and dread at what awaited her. For some days she suffered from a fever which reached its height in the bitterly cold weather at Khambula where her 'wonderfully arranged' tent was nearly swept away in heavy rain and winds<sup>46</sup>

Generally, though, the Empress was happier than when she had been subjected to the curious stares from the crowds in Cape Town, Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Unavoidably, however, her Zululand pilgrimage was newsworthy, and she was hard put to evade a sensationalist and extremely tenacious woman writer and correspondent for the *New York Herald* who went by the name of 'Lady Avonmore'. This journalist had arrived in Natal, Bigge indignantly explained to the Queen, with the intention of writing a biography of the Prince Imperial, and she wanted – in emulation of the Empress – to visit the sites associated with him. That was intrusive enough, but she unpardonably claimed to be 'a dear friend' of the Empress and 'personally known' to her, insisting on being allowed to join her to 'testify her sympathy and affection'. Eugénie had never heard of

the importunate journalist, and would have nothing to do with her. Since Sir Bartle Frere was determined to secure the *Empress* from intrusions by journalists,<sup>47</sup> a heavy-weight deputation consisting of Wood and the Natal Colonial Secretary, Lt.-Col. C.B.H. Mitchell, intervened in an attempt to head 'Lady Avonmore' off in Durban and to dissuade her from starting in pursuit of Eugénie. Undeterred, she travelled north to Rorke's Drift on the Buffalo (Mzinyathi) River, and Bigge had then to make a special expedition south all the way from the camp at Munhla Hill (midway between Khambula and the Tshotshosi River) to cut her off. Adept at dissimulation, she persuaded the honourable Bigge that she would 'desist' but, as events were to prove, had no intention of keeping her lightly given word.<sup>48</sup>

At last, on 25 May, Eugénie reached the Tshotshosi River from Khambula by way of Munhla Hill, very much the route Wood's Flying Column had followed in May 1879, and a part of Zululand the Prince had participated in reconnoitring. Wood telegraphed Queen Victoria of her safe arrival, reporting she was as well as could be expected. The empathetic Queen understood Eugénie's likely state of mind and commented in her Journal: '... under such mental trial poor dear Empress, it must be too awful!'<sup>49</sup> Indeed it must have been. For a week the grief-stricken Eugénie stayed at the Tshotshosi, sleeping badly, sustaining herself with beef tea and little else, and praying on the spot where her son had fallen. She walked up and down the path from Sobhuza's homestead where, on the fatal day, the prince and his patrol had dismounted and refreshed themselves, and where her tent was pitched,<sup>50</sup> to the donga where the Prince, unable to mount his horse and cravenly abandoned by his companions, had been speared to death by the Zulu party who had ambushed them.<sup>51</sup>

Unhappily, the Empress was, as the Marquis of Bassano reported, disappointed with her impression of the spot where her son had died. Several well-meaning British efforts to tidy it up had made it resemble in its orderliness more an English graveyard than the wild and romantic scene of carnage Eugénie had imagined.<sup>52</sup>

Initially, men of the 1st (the King's) Dragoon Guards, who had recovered the Prince's body on the day following his death, had built a small stone cairn over the place where the Prince's stripped, stabbed and ritually slit body had lain. The 2/21st Regiment (Royal Scots Fusiliers) who, like the Dragoon Guards, were part of the Second Division invading Zululand, had subsequently erected a temporary wooden board on the site commemorating the Prince's death.

Then, in preparation for the Empress's visit, Sir Garnet Wolseley had despatched a party of Commissariat men and horses commanded by Maj. Henry Sparke Stabb, 32nd Foot – who had fought at the battle of Ulundi and who had remained in Natal as president of a board investigating and settling claims made by the colonists for losses suffered during the Anglo-Zulu War<sup>53</sup> – to make a determined assault on the site between 18 and 29 March. Behind the cairn Stabb's men erected a stone cross (made by Jesse Smith of 25 Loop Street, Pietermaritzburg, the Colony's leading stonemason, at a cost of £35 12s.5d.) to replace the 21st Regiment's board, and settled it firmly in a broad foundation of concrete. In doing so, they were following Queen Victoria's specific instructions for, as Stabb expressed it in his full report on the expedition, 'Her Majesty desired [the cross] to be placed to mark the spot' where the Prince fell.<sup>54</sup> This 'private and personal act of the Queen', as Sir Henry Ponsonby characterised it, unfortunately caused some annoyance in Natal circles. The prickly colonial authorities considered

themselves snubbed and believed that they ought to have been 'officially entrusted' with the work instead of the Queen commissioning Lady Frere to do it privately on her behalf.<sup>55</sup>

Having placed the cross, which Bigge in his report on the expedition to the Queen referred to as 'Your Majesty's Memorial Cross',<sup>56</sup> Stabb's work party, to prevent the summer rains washing their handiwork away, used dynamite to redirect the course of the donga. Then, as the finishing touches, they planted a few 'hardy trees' obtained from the Pietermaritzburg Botanical Gardens and built a stone wall to surround the whole site.<sup>57</sup>

To the Empress, who had imagined that she would see the vestiges of the grass trodden by her son in his dying moments, it was a dreadful blow to find the concrete layer and the very soil of the donga carefully raked for her inspection. Understanding her dismayed response, Captain Slade removed the layer of concrete which so offended her and restored the site to something closer to the natural terrain the Empress had nourished in her mind's eye. In accordance with her own conception of how the place where her son had died should be embellished, Eugénie planted the willow and ivy she had brought from Camden Place,<sup>58</sup> the house at Chislehurst which, since September 1870, had been the home in exile for herself and her son, and where Napoleon III had died on 9 January 1873.

While at the Tshotshosi River the Empress could not sleep for, as she told Pietri in a letter of 30 May, her soul was 'full of bitterness, regrets and sorrow'. She could only find some peace when near the spot where the Prince had fallen.<sup>59</sup> On the afternoon of 31 May she insisted on finding the site the Prince had selected during the course of his fatal patrol for the next camp of the advancing Second Division, and where he had made his last sketch. The place was three hours away on foot but, as Bassano who accompanied her reported, she walked 'with a sort of feverish strength', eating absolutely nothing on the way.<sup>60</sup> On horseback and in the company of Wood and the other officers, Eugénie also crossed the donga through which Lt. Carey and the survivors of the patrol had galloped on 1 June 1879. She was overwhelmed with bitterness when she contemplated how Carey had so obviously and cravenly left her precious son to be 'so wantonly sacrificed'.<sup>61</sup>

One of the Empress's main purposes in visiting Zululand was to gain definitive proof for herself and her followers that her son had died a brave and gallant soldier in the Bonapartist tradition to which he was heir. However, she could not bear to see any of the Zulu who had been involved in the fatal skirmish, so while she communed with her son's memory in the vicinity of the donga where the Prince had died, Wood took the opportunity between 26 May and 1 June to examine thirteen of the Zulu involved, inducing them to testify (Bigge informed the Queen) with 'presents of blankets, beads and money'.<sup>62</sup> Later, on the return journey from Zululand, Wood elicited a statement from a fourteenth Zulu in the Batshe valley near Isandlwana on 3 June, and from a fifteenth in Durban on 24 June. By command of Queen Victoria the statements were kept confidential.<sup>63</sup>

The Zulu witnesses' evidence was remarkably consistent, and Wood was able to assure the Empress and proud mother that without the shadow of a doubt her son had indeed stood his ground and, in the words of Langalibalele, who had seen him fall, 'fought like a lion'.<sup>64</sup> But this knowledge was in itself bitter. She could not restrain herself when giving vent to her anguish in a letter to Pietri on 30 May from deploring

most ungraciously that the only witnesses to her son's courage were 'a handful of savages one degree removed from the brute!'<sup>65</sup>

The evidence collected by Wood also had the unfortunate effect, as had earlier the sanitised condition of the donga where the Prince had been killed, of cruelly dispelling a romantic image that the Empress had formed in her own mind. She had imagined her son lying dead with his sword in his hand, and was considerably taken aback when Wood told her that the Prince had evidently lost his sword in the *melée*, and had fought to the end with his revolver and a spear seized from his foes. Slade found it difficult to persuade her that it was actually braver for him to have stoutly defend himself in that way than with his own sword.<sup>66</sup>

Ironically, as the dread day of the anniversary of her son's death finally dawned, the shameless 'Lady Avonmore' had the beneficial effect of taking the Empress's mind off the Prince for a few moments. On 1 June she camped five miles from the Empress, and Wood, Bassano and Bigge went across determined to see her off on this, of all days. As ever, she was full of lies and evasions that were remorselessly exposed as such at every turn, but everyone remained civil and she agreed finally to keep her distance – but not before quite astonishing Bigge with her 'audacity'.<sup>67</sup>

The Empress marked the anniversary of her son's death by passing the whole night of 1–2 June in prayer by the cairn. Speaking of it later, she clearly believed it had been a mystical experience:

More than once I noticed black forms on the top of the banks, which moved silently about and watched me through the tall grasses. This scrutiny was full of curiosity, but it was not hostile. I believe these savages wished rather to express their sympathy and their pity! ... And doubtless these were the very same men who had killed my son on the same spot ...

Towards morning a strange thing happened. Although there was not a breath of air, the flames of the candles were suddenly deflected, as if someone wished to extinguish them, and I said to him: "Is it indeed you beside me? Do you wish me to go away?"<sup>68</sup>

Once the fatal anniversary had passed, the Empress was anxious to be gone, though suffering from an attack of sciatica brought on by the strain and cold of her vigil. On 3 June the party moved south to encamp at the Batshe River while the Empress inspected the countryside which had been sketched by the Prince when out on patrol in late May 1880. The next bivouac was formed on 5 June at the battlefield of Isandlwana, half a mile away from the stricken British camp of 22 January 1879, where some of the bones of the British dead still lay unburied, despite the efforts of several burial parties over the preceding months.<sup>69</sup> Eugénie insisted that they stop and spend a day covering the poor remains with earth, and for two hours herself took part in the work.<sup>70</sup>

The Empress and her party pressed forward on 8 June to Rorke's Drift where they crossed back into Natal from Zululand. Her mission accomplished, the Empress allowed herself to sink into a deep depression and was very irritable to her companions. Wood reported to the Queen on 10 June that over the previous three days Eugénie had been 'very low and desponding' and had ceased to eat.<sup>71</sup> But the journey had to continue. By way of Estcourt (where on 16 June she paid a visit to Maj.-Gen. B.P.Lloyd, who had

been in command of Colonial Defensive District No II during the Anglo-Zulu War),<sup>72</sup> and on through Howick, the Empress's party regained Pietermaritzburg on 19 June. Seemingly well but slightly sunburned (so the local newspaper commented), Eugénie stayed less than two days at Government House. Outside the main gates, in Longmarket Street, a tent was erected in which the 'leading residents' of the City could enter their names in the visitors' book. On the Sunday she attended Mass celebrated by Bishop Jolivet. Afterwards, at her request, she had an interview over several hours with John Colenso, the first Anglican Bishop of Natal. His unorthodox theology had led to his excommunication and a schism in the Anglican community, and his protests against the unjustness of the Anglo-Zulu War had brought him into conflict with the military authorities and with many colonists. But he was a man of immense character, learning and integrity, and it says well for the Empress that she wanted to meet him, despite the disapproval this must have occasioned in many local colonial circles.<sup>73</sup>

On Monday, 21 June Wood drove the Empress and Lady Wood from Pietermaritzburg to Botha's Hill, the terminus of the railway back to Durban. Wood had barely started on his way back after taking leave of the Empress when the connecting rod which fastened the fore-carriage to the after part of the spider snapped in two. Fortunately for Wood, the horses were only going at a steady trot, but if he had been cantering as he had been earlier with the Empress, who liked to travel fast, she most likely would have suffered a dangerous accident.<sup>74</sup> In Durban Eugénie spent the night in the home of the sympathetic Bayntons (where she had stopped on the way to Zululand), before embarking on the *Asiatic* the next morning, transshipping at Algoa Bay on 26 June to the Union Company's steam-ship *Trojan*, bound for Southampton.<sup>75</sup>

On the way home the Empress landed on 12 July at Jamestown on St Helena, the island where the British had held the great Napoleon captive after Waterloo, and where he had died in 1821. The exiled and widowed Empress toured the houses where he had lived, staying more than an hour at Longwood where he had died, minutely inspecting every room. Fresh from Zululand where the current hope of the dynasty had perished, she commented: 'I am the only person named Bonaparte who will have visited the place where the founder of our race died'.<sup>76</sup>

The *Trojan* docked in Plymouth in the early hours of 27 July,<sup>77</sup> and the Empress went straight home to Chislehurst. The next morning, 'tired and worn' after a 'bad night', she wrote at once to Queen Victoria, her empathetic friend who had exercised her royal influence to marshal the support necessary to ease and finance Eugénie's every step on her pilgrimage to Zululand. Her words were ungrammatical but deeply felt: 'Thank [*sic*] most heartily for constant solicitude'.<sup>78</sup> A few days after the first anniversary of her pilgrimage, on 5 June 1881, a more collected Empress wrote to Wood, gratefully thanking him for his kindness and sympathy, and for all the trouble he had taken in making her journey to the Tshotshosi River possible. She concluded sadly of her pilgrimage that 'altho' trying, it was some consolation in my ever lasting sorrow'.<sup>79</sup>

## NOTES

1. I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the gracious permission of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to make use of papers in the Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, and to express my appreciation for the willing and expert assistance I received from the Registrar of the Royal Archives, Lady de Bellaigue, and her staff. Thanks are also due to the University of Natal for the generous funding which made this research possible.
2. Prince Alfred (later Duke of Edinburgh and reigning Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha) was Queen Victoria's son. King George was her great-grandson.
3. See Ruth Gordon, 'Royal visitors' in J. Laband and R. Haswell (eds), *Pietermaritzburg 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1988), pp. 94-5; James Pope-Hennessy, *Queen Mary: 1867-1953* (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1959), p. 24 and Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 1979), pp. 458-9.
4. For a detailed account of the Prince's fight to the death, see John Laband, "'He fought like a lion': an assessment of Zulu accounts of the death of the Prince Imperial during the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 79, 307 (Autumn 1998), pp. 194-201.
5. J. Ridley, *Napoleon III and Eugénie* (London, Constable, 1979), pp. 600-1, 607-8, 642-3.
6. Eugénie to M Franceschini Pietri, quoted in A. Filon, *Memoirs of the Prince Imperial (1856-1879)* (London, Heinemann, 1913), p. 230; D. Featherstone, *Captain Carey's Blunder: The Death of the Prince Imperial* (London, Leo Cooper, 1973), p. 210.
7. See Eugénie's grateful comments recorded by Maurice Paleologue in *The Tragic Empress: Intimate Conversations with the Empress Eugénie, 1901 to 1911* (London, Thornton Butterworth, 19-?), pp. 213-14.
8. The Queen requested the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, HRH the Duke of Cambridge, to grant Wood leave once Eugénie had expressed her wish for him to accompany her to South Africa, and on 12 January 1880 the Duke granted the necessary permission. See RA (Royal Archives) VIC/R9/68: Sir H. Ponsonby to the Duke of Cambridge, 4 January 1880 and RA VIC/R9/70: Cambridge to Ponsonby, 12 January 1880.
9. RA VIC/O36/43: Sir Evelyn Wood to Colonel Rickard, VC CB, 28 September 1879.
10. Ian Knight and Ian Castle, *The Zulu War: Then and Now* (London, Battle of Britain Prints International, 1993), p. 134.
11. Field Marshal Sir E. Wood, *From Midshipman to Field Marshal* (London, Methuen, 1906), vol. II, p. 96; J.P. Mackinnon and S.H. Shadbolt, *The South African Campaign of 1879* (London, Sampson Low, 1880), p. 327; C.L. Norris-Newman, *In Zululand with the British throughout the War of 1879* (London, W.H. Allen, 1880), appendix H, pp. 307-8; J.P.C. Laband, (ed.), *Lord Chelmsford's Zululand Campaign 1878-1879* (Stroud, Sutton, 1994), p. 241, n. 71; p. 269, n. 70.
12. RA VIC R9/129: Capt. A. Bigge to Queen Victoria, 4 April 1880.
13. On Queen Victoria's death in 1901, Bigge (1849-1931) became Private Secretary to the Duke of York, and continued to serve him in that capacity when he became King George V. Bigge was created Lord Stamfordham in 1911. See Pope-Hennessy, *Queen Mary*, p. 277.
14. RA Queen Victoria's Journal: 6 March 1880.
15. G.E. Buckle (ed.), *The Letters of Queen Victoria* (London, John Murray, 1928), vol. III, p. 134: Extracts from the Queen's Journal, Osborne, 18 August 1880.
16. *Illustrated London News*, 17 January 1880, p. 51. Eugénie wrote to Queen Victoria to inform her that she had taken passage on the *German* (RA Queen Victoria's Journal: 25 January 1880).
17. *Daily Telegraph*, 26 March 1880; *Illustrated London News*, 10 April 1880, p. 350; *Natal Witness*, 29 April 1880.
18. *Natal Witness*, 29 April 1880; Featherstone, *Captain Carey's Blunder*, p. 211.
19. RA VIC/R9/142: Paulina, Lady Wood to Queen Victoria, 18 April 1880.
20. A photograph of Eugénie's drawing room in Government House can be found in RA VIC/R9/139, and a photograph of her bedroom in RA VIC/R9/140.
21. RA VIC/T8/5: Sir Bartle Frere to the Prince of Wales, 20 April 1880.
22. RA VIC/R9/144: Dr F.B. Scott to Capt. Edwards, 20 April 1880.
23. RA VIC/R9/146: Lt.-Gen. Sir Garnet Wolseley to Ponsonby, 23 April 1880.
24. *Natal Witness*, 29 April 1880.
25. RA VIC/R9/137: Bigge to Queen Victoria, 18 April 1880.
26. *Blue Book for the Colony of Natal 1880* (Pietermaritzburg, Vause, Slatter & Co., 1881), p. C2.
27. RA VIC/R9/148: Wood to Queen Victoria, 25 April 1880.

28. B. Martin, 'The coming of the railway to Pietermaritzburg' in Laband and Haswell, *Pietermaritzburg 1838-1988*, p. 135.
29. Eugénie to Pietri, 3 May 1880, quoted in Featherstone, *Captain Carey's Blunder*, p. 211.
30. *Natal Witness* quoted in John Clark, 'The Child of France' in G.A. Chadwick and E.G. Hobson (eds), *The Zulu War and the Colony of Natal* (Mandini, Qualitas, 1979), p. 44.
31. RA VIC/R9/137: Bigge to Queen Victoria, 18 April 1880.
32. *Natal Witness*, 6 May 1880.
33. *Natal Witness*, 29 April and 1 May 1880; Eugénie to Pietri, 3 May, quoted in Featherstone, *Captain Carey's Blunder*, p. 211; Clark, 'Child of France', pp. 44-5; S. O'B. Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal 1824-1857: A Biographical Register* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1989), vol. 5, pp. 84-6.
34. *Natal Witness*, 1 May 1880; letter from the Marquis de Bassano, Seven Oaks, quoted in Featherstone, *Captain Carey's Blunder*, p. 212; Wood, *Midshipman to Field Marshal*, vol. II, p. 97.
35. RA VIC/R10/8: Bigge to Queen Victoria, 9 May 1880.
36. RA VIC/R 9/148: Proposed route of Empress. In the event, Empress's route diverged in many particulars from this tentative itinerary. See RA VIC/R10/8: Bigge to Queen Victoria, 9 May 1880 for a report on the actual progress of the expedition as far as Landman's Drift, and for another projected itinerary as far as Khambula.
37. RA VIC/R10/8: Bigge to Queen Victoria, 9 May 1880.
38. RA VIC/R10/8: Bigge to Queen Victoria, 9 May 1880.
39. *Natal Witness*, 18 May 1880.
40. Laband, *Chelmsford's Zululand Campaign*, p.280.
41. J.P.C. Laband and P.S. Thompson, *Field Guide to the War in Zululand and the Defence of Natal 1879* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1987), p. 101.
42. RA VIC/R10/13: Bigge to Queen Victoria, 16 May 1880.
43. RA VIC/R10/18: Mrs Campbell to Queen Victoria, 23 May 1880, in which she describes the erection of her husband's cross; Wood, *Midshipman to Field Marshal*, vol. II, pp. 97-100; Knight and Castle, *Zulu War*, p. 136.
44. *Natal Witness*, 8 May 1880.
45. RA VIC/R10/8: Bigge to Queen Victoria, 9 May 1880.
46. RA VC/R10/18: Mrs Campbell to Queen Victoria, 23 May 1880.
47. RA VIC/R10/49: Frere to Ponsonby, 10 July 1880.
48. See RA VIC/R10/13: Bigge to Queen Victoria, 16 May 1880 and RA VIC/R10/22: Bigge to Queen Victoria, 27 May 1880.
49. RA Queen Victoria's Journal: 30 May 1880.
50. RA VIC/R10/22: Bigge to Queen Victoria, 27 May 1880.
51. Bassano, 29 May, quoted in Featherstone, *Captain Carey's Blunder*, p. 213.
52. Bassano, quoted in Featherstone, *Captain Carey's Blunder*, pp. 212-13.
53. Mackinnon and Shadbolt, *South African Campaign*, p. 310.
54. RA VIC/R9/130a: Maj. H.S. Stabb to Chief of Staff, Pietermaritzburg, 10 April 1880. There is nothing mysterious about the provenance of the cross, or who paid for it, despite the apparent contradictions noted by Knight and Castle, *Zulu War*, p. 162. They draw attention to a memorandum in the Public Record Office, dated Buckingham Palace, 28 May 1880, which flatly states that the Queen had given no orders to the governor of any colony to erect a memorial cross to the Prince Imperial. And indeed she had not. Hers was a private act to which Frere and Wolseley were pleased to lend some official assistance.
55. RA VIC/R10/15: Ponsonby to Queen Victoria, 19 May 1880.
56. RA VIC/R9/137: Bigge to Queen Victoria, 18 April 1880.
57. The expedition finally cost £73 18s 5d. See RA VIC/R9/130a: Stabb to Chief of Staff, Pietermaritzburg 10 April 1880: Schedule of expenses connected with the erection of Her Majesty's Cross.
58. Knight and Castle, *Zulu War*, pp. 162-3, 165-7.
59. Eugénie to Pietri, 30 June 1880, quoted in Featherstone, *Captain Carey's Blunder*, p. 214.
60. Bassano, 1 June 1880, quoted in Featherstone, *Captain Carey's Blunder*, p. 213.
61. Eugénie to Pietri, 30 May 1880, quoted in Featherstone, *Captain Carey's Blunder*, pp. 214-15.
62. RA VIC/R10/22: Bigge to Queen Victoria, 27 May 1880.
63. See Wood Collection (Natal Archives Depot, Pietermaritzburg), II/1/2: confidential, statement of evidence endorsed by Brig.-Gen. Sir Evelyn Wood, Osborne, 29 July 1880.

64. Laband, "'He fought like a lion'", p. 201.
65. Eugénie to Pietri, 30 May 1880, quoted in Featherstone, *Captain Carey's Blunder*, p. 215.
66. Captain Slade to Charlotte Slade, 30 May 1880, quoted in Ridley, *Napoleon III*, p. 612..
67. RA VIC/R10/32: Bigge to Queen Victoria, 7 June 1880.
68. Quoted in Featherstone, *Captain Carey's Blunder*, pp. 215–16.
69. See J.P.C. Laband and P.S. Thompson, *The Buffalo Border 1879: The Anglo-Zulu War in Northern Natal* (Durban, History Department, University of Natal, Research Monograph No. 6, 1983), p. 75.
70. RA VIC/R10/32: Bigge to Queen Victoria, 7 June 1880; Slade to Charlotte Slade, 7 June 1880, quoted in Ridley, *Napoleon III*, p. 612.
71. RA VIC/R10/34: Wood to Queen Victoria, 10 June 1880.
72. *Natal Witness*, 17 June 1880; P.S. Thompson, 'Weenen County and the war, 1879' in John Laband and Paul Thompson, *Kingdom and Colony at War: Sixteen Studies of the Anglo-Zulu War* (Pietermaritzburg and Cape Town, University of Natal Press and N & S Press, 1990), p. 245.
73. *Natal Witness*, 22 June 1880.
74. Wood, *Midshipman to Field Marshal*, vol. II, p. 103.
75. *Natal Witness*, 22 June 1880; *Illustrated London News*, 26 June 1880, p. 627.
76. *Illustrated London News*, 7 August 1880, p. 103; Eugénie to Duchesse de Mouchy, 20 June 1880, quoted by Ridley, *Napoleon III*, p. 612.
77. RA Queen Victoria's Journal: 27 July 1880.
78. RA VIC/R10/104: Comtesse de Pierrefonds [Eugénie] to Queen Victoria, 28 July 1880.
79. Wood Collection VII/1/7: Eugénie to Wood, 5 June 1881.

## *New legislation for cultural heritage*

The National Monuments Act (No. 28 of 1969) has guided the management of South Africa's cultural heritage for the last three decades through the activities of the National Monuments Council (NMC). The National Monuments Act provided for several different categories of protection for heritage sites. Archaeological, meteorological and palaeontological sites for example, received a general blanket protection. All were protected from destruction, damage or alteration in any way (including scientific excavation), except in terms of an NMC permit. Blanket protection was extended to all sites older than 50 years in 1986.

Other than this blanket protection, the NMC protected cultural heritage sites in three ways. Sites considered sufficiently important were declared national monuments. Many deemed of lesser importance were placed on the NMC's National Register in consultation with local authorities. This brought the NMC into any local town planning decisions that might have affected the property. The NMC designated conservation areas of special historic, aesthetic or scientific interest. Independently, some local planning authorities 'list' heritage sites, so providing protection through various planning incentives and by a stringent application of the National Building Regulations. This system of listing important sites was sometimes poorly integrated with NMC strategies.

Though heritage legislation prior to 1969 introduced the concept of 'monuments', the National Monuments Act subtly altered the concept in that it provided for the declaration of 'national monuments'. This change has considerable implications; it raises the question of what exactly is meant by 'national', particularly in a country as divided and culturally diverse as South Africa. The term emphasised the political nature of monument proclamation. Section 10.1 of the act stated: 'Whenever the Minister considers it to be in the national interest that any immovable or moveable property of aesthetic, historical or scientific value or interest be preserved, protected and maintained he may ... on the recommendation of the council ... declare any such property ... to be a national monument'. Clearly, some monuments recently declared, such as the John Dube House (Dube was first president of the South African Native Congress, subsequently African National Congress) or the Passive Resistance Site in Durban, would not have been considered as being 'in the national interest' during the apartheid era, however sympathetically interested parties within and outside of the NMC might have motivated their declaration to the Minister. Their recent declaration is part of the process of the creation of a new past, one that acknowledges the oppression of past South African society. With respect to other interests, the generality of the criteria for monuments

(namely, aesthetic, historical or scientific value or interest) allowed individuals or local interest groups to recommend sites for declaration, whether or not those sites had a national character, whatever that might be. In practice therefore, the legislation allowed for the creation of a diverse suite of monuments other than those that represented opposition to the state. A Claim Your Heritage project (launched September 1998) provides an example: the NMC married national and local interests by inviting the public to honour democracy (a national interest) by nominating sites 'you consider to be of cultural significance in your community. [These] might include the homesteads of our leaders, or founders of democracy, or sites where historic events occurred, or places where people gathered to discuss community affairs' (NMC poster 1998).

The National Heritage Resources Act which replaced the National Monuments Act came into operation on 1 April 2000. The act established the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) which replaced the NMC. The SAHRA is charged with the overall management of the national estate which comprises sites or objects which are and will be of significance or value to South Africans now and in the future. Of interest is that the act promotes research into 'living heritage' – oral tradition, ritual, indigenous knowledge systems.

The act provides for a three-tier system for the management of South Africa's cultural heritage resources. Underlying this system is the principle of devolving responsibility for cultural heritage matters to the lowest competent authority. The SAHRA is responsible for national level functions, provincial heritage authorities for provincial level functions and local authorities for local level functions. The SAHRA will act in the place of provincial and local authorities in the event that none exists.

Formal protections are similar to those provided by the National Monuments Act, though the management of the protected resources is somewhat different. Blanket protection for cultural heritage sites older than 60 years, including archaeological, meteorological and palaeontological sites, is retained, as is the permit system through which work on these sites is managed. Existing national monuments will become provincial heritage sites in terms of the act, though they require assessment by provincial heritage authorities within five years to determine if any are nationally significant resources. As such, they will become national heritage sites and the responsibility of the SAHRA. Both the SAHRA and provincial heritage authorities may designate protected areas around cultural heritage sites; the provincial authorities are required to maintain registers of conservation-worthy resources and local authorities may designate heritage areas to protect places of environmental or cultural interest. Finally, objects or collections of objects may be declared heritage objects.

A major departure from earlier heritage legislation is the provision made for impact assessments, what is commonly termed in the cultural heritage field 'cultural resource management' (CRM). This gives the heritage authorities a greater compliance role than any earlier heritage authority had. Developers are required in terms of the legislation to notify heritage authorities of their intentions for any development over certain specified size categories. The heritage authorities may require that an impact assessment is carried out at the developers' cost. The criteria for evaluating heritage resources are not specified, though reference is made to management principles that are applicable to both national and provincial heritage authorities. The most important of these are the following, laid out in Section 5.7:

The identification, assessment and management of the heritage resources of South Africa must –

- (a) take account of all relevant cultural values and indigenous knowledge systems;
- (b) take account of material or cultural heritage value and involve the least possible alteration or loss of it;
- (c) promote the use and enjoyment of and access to heritage resources, in a way consistent with their cultural significance and conservation needs;
- (d) contribute to social and economic development;
- (e) safeguard the options of present and future generations; and
- (f) be fully researched, documented and recorded.

There is recognition here of the existence of multiple and different values systems and of the principle of minimal impact (cf. Carver 1996). If these requirements are to be properly fulfilled, it is critical that CRM teams have a multi-disciplinary character incorporating, for example, archaeological, anthropological, historical, architectural, economic and museum expertise. We are a long way from this in South Africa.

Thus far, only the province of KwaZulu-Natal has developed its own legislation and heritage authority. The roots of this independence lie in the fact that KwaZulu was the only homeland created by apartheid with a relatively effective heritage agency. The KwaZulu Monuments Council (KMC) had enjoyed close working relationships with several structures in Natal concerned with cultural heritage, such as the Natal Museum, the Natal Provincial Museum Service and the regional office of the NMC. Once it became clear that cultural heritage under democratic rule would be a provincial competence, the regional office of the NMC and the KMC entered into discussions to establish new legislation and a provincial heritage authority. A new body, *Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali* (Zulu for Heritage KwaZulu-Natal), was established on 1 April 1998 in terms of the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act (No. 10 of 1997). The act anticipated the national legislation, providing some inspiration to its authors. Not surprisingly given the order of their evolution, there are inconsistencies between the national and KwaZulu-Natal legislation which may require amendments at some stage in the future.

Like the earlier and new national legislation, the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act provides blanket protection to archaeological, meteorological and palaeontological sites and objects, but with an interesting rider that does not quite amount to an exception: ‘provided that *Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali* may ... take account of existing small-scale agricultural activities’ (Section 26.6.a). People engaged in small-scale agriculture are, however, required to cease operations upon discovery of archaeological material. Since a huge percentage of KwaZulu-Natal’s population is engaged in subsistence agriculture, often on land that is rich in cultural heritage sites (especially archaeological sites), legislation without this rider would be practically impossible to enforce. There was also concern for avoiding a situation in which thousands of people would be made law-breakers upon enactment of the legislation.

In a recent case in the Thukela valley, an important first millennium AD Iron Age site with evidence of large-scale industrial activity (see Van Schalkwyk 1994) was cleared of vegetation during the course of an NGO-driven project to establish community gardens. *Amafa*’s negotiations with the garden committee and the traditional authorities achieved a successful resolution whereby the gardens would not be located on that part of the site with the greatest concentration of archaeological material. *Amafa* accepted

this compromise knowing that the gardens would be subject to hoe rather than mechanical tillage. The community clearly appreciated the sensitivity of the archaeological remains and was prepared to work around them, even though their presence affected the development of what had the potential to become an important economic resource. This willingness to compromise may in part have been due to the excavation projects that had been going on in the immediate area since the late 1970s – one member of the garden committee had actually worked on one such excavation project. Amafa has demonstrated skill in negotiations of this sort, but it is going to be interesting to see the results of similar negotiations in areas in which archaeology, and indeed the conservation of an ‘alien’ cultural heritage generally, are unfamiliar concepts.

The KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act provides for several types of formal protections. Amafa may confer Provincial Landmark status upon a site with ‘important elements of the heritage’ of the province (Section 19.20.1) should that site be on land owned by the province or a local authority or a body supported by the province or a local authority. Formally-protected sites of equivalent significance which are not the property of the province will be termed Heritage Landmarks. Amafa is required to compile a Heritage Register of conservation-worthy sites and may also designate buffer areas (Sensitive Sites) around Heritage and Provincial Landmarks for the protection of those landmarks. Further, Amafa may provide Provisional Protection to any heritage resource. Significant objects or collections thereof may be given Heritage Object status. The act provides no clue as to how significance will be defined in each of these cases. It does, however, indicate that assessment criteria for CRM projects will be set out in regulations (Section 27.3.b). As already noted, these must be consistent with principles established in the national legislation.

Nationally, the tiered management system for cultural heritage resources is linked to a system of grading resources that the SAHRA is meant to establish. The grading must include at least three grades (Section 7.1) such that Grade I comprises sites and objects of national significance that are the responsibility of the SAHRA; Grade II comprises sites and objects of provincial or regional significance that are the responsibility of provincial heritage authorities; and Grade III other conservation-worthy sites and objects that are the responsibility of local authorities. The SAHRA is required to develop criteria ‘to assess the intrinsic, comparative and contextual significance of a heritage resource and the relative benefits and costs of its protection, so that the appropriate level of grading of the resource and consequent responsibility for its management may be allocated’ (Section 7.1). The criteria should be consistent with principles in the act which rate significance in terms of old chestnuts such as community or historical importance, rarity value, information value, aesthetics and cultural associations.

Despite the recognition in the act of different value systems, the significance grading system is fundamentally empiricist in that significance is considered to reside within heritage resources rather than be assigned to them by people and interest groups (cf. Tainter & Lucas 1983). Indeed, the whole idea of grading heritage resources against defined assessment criteria seems at odds with the principle of devolving responsibility to the lowest level and I suspect that it will not be possible to do so unproblematically. Significance is always assigned by interest groups, which are by definition local or in some sense limited. Significance is associated with sectoral interests and is therefore a political resource. This particular characteristic of significance provides an interesting