

Notes and Queries

THE FEVER WARD

The fact that the school was commandeered for use as a military hospital in the Second Anglo-Boer War is a well-known part of Maritzburg College's history. Construction of the school's handsome Victoria Hall began in 1897, the year of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, but the contractor had financial problems, work was delayed, and the hall was only ready for use in April 1899. A few months later war broke out, and the early months of the campaign in northern Natal resulted in hundreds of sick and wounded soldiers arriving in Pietermaritzburg on hospital trains. St George's garrison chapel, the Legislative Assembly building and Maritzburg College were three notable buildings in the city used as temporary hospitals. Contemporary photographs show rows of army tents in the Maritzburg College grounds, and to this day the little corrugated-iron sentry box at the head of the school drive is a reminder of the army's occupation.

Many of the men needing treatment were not wounded or injured, but seriously ill, usually with typhoid fever (or 'enteric' as it was then known). The Victoria Hall itself became a fever ward, and after the war, the headmaster, Mr R.D. Clark, ensured that the impressive brass plate naming the hall included reference to the fact that 'Her Majesty's sick and wounded soldiers' were nursed there. Clark and his family remained in their school house during this time, visiting and comforting the patients. Young Douglas Clark himself contracted enteric fever, from which he fortunately recovered, but from February to June 1900 there were thirteen deaths from the disease in the Victoria Hall.

In the hundred years since the hall was built, its walls have been adorned with various honours boards and memorial plaques; but nowhere was there any record of those men whose lives ended within its walls in 1900. Mr Steve Watt, an expert in Anglo-Boer War casualty lists and military grave-sites (and author of the book *In Memoriam* mentioned elsewhere in this issue) was able to compile a list of the names, regiments and dates of death of those thirteen men.

At a gala dinner on 24 June 2000 to celebrate the centenary of the Victoria Hall, Brigadier Michael Raworth, Defence Adviser at the British High Commission in Pretoria, unveiled a brass plaque containing those names. As the Victoria Hall is now a dining hall for boarders and no longer the school's main assembly place, this plaque may well be the last one ever placed there, but the school community is satisfied that this final addition rectifies an omission and gives a sense of completion.

J.M. DEANE

CHANGING THE CHURCH GUARD

The year 2000 saw two significant changes in the leadership of the Diocese of Natal. Bishop Michael Nuttall, diocesan since 1982, retired, to be succeeded by one of his two suffragans, Bishop Rubin Phillip of Durban. Dean John Forbes, dean of the cathedral since the amalgamation of the former parishes of St Saviour's and St Peter's to form the new Cathedral of the Holy Nativity in 1976, retired at the beginning of August. His successor is Rev Fred Pitout. Forbes' 24 years in office is exceeded only by the legendary first dean, James Green who, like the popes, remained at his post for over 50 years until his death in 1906.

Forbes was a key figure in the building of the new Anglican cathedral in Pietermaritzburg, while together he and Nuttall did much to position the church in support of the forces of political and social change – to the extent that the cathedral precincts were referred to by the security police as 'red square'. Their departure marks the end of an era.

T.B. FROST

CIVIC HONOURS

Pietermaritzburg, like many colonial cities throughout the world, acknowledges the medieval European origins of civic culture by the retention of various customs. An example of this is the conferring of civic honours, which might involve having one's name inscribed in a book, being made an alderman, or receiving the so-called 'freedom of the city'. The last-mentioned impressive-sounding honour meant little to an individual except the adulation of the moment. A regiment given that honour might make use of its right to march through the streets 'with colours flying and bayonets fixed', but the whole thing was mainly symbolism and pious fiction. It isn't surprising that Pietermaritzburg's list of recipients should consist largely of those worthies whose public-spiritedness showed itself in devoted service to city government. Visiting dignitaries whose fame had been earned elsewhere, but who struck a chord in the civic breast, were also likely to be so honoured. For example, among the names of Pietermaritzburg's freemen is that of World War 2 hero Viscount Montgomery of Alamein.

If any evidence were needed that political and civic culture in South Africa has changed dramatically since 1994, it is provided in the civic honours bestowed by the Pietermaritzburg-Msunduzi Transitional Local Council on 17 February 2000.

Certificates of commendation were presented to three individuals and two organisations: Peter Brown, political activist, supporter of good causes and uncompromising liberal opponent of the apartheid regime who suffered arrest, detention and banning at its hands; Mrs Durgha Bundhoo, whose 60 years of involvement in social, religious, educational and political affairs in the Indian community can hardly be rivalled; Dr Nqaba Ngcobo who in the face of many difficulties and obstacles, left Pietermaritzburg to further his education in South Africa and abroad, and is now a nuclear physicist; the Natalse Christelike Vrouevereniging, which since 1915 has undertaken social and developmental work among disadvantaged people; and the Khayaletu Project for homeless street children in the city.

Not only was there this recognition of merit in the present, but there were also five posthumous awards to persons who were born and/or lived most of their lives in Pietermaritzburg. In effect the city was saying 'if in the past credit had been more generously given where it was due, these people would have received civic honours in their time': John William Colenso (1814–83), first Bishop of Natal, staunch friend of the Zulu king and people and tireless fighter for truth and justice; Rolfes R.R. Dhlomo (1901–71), eminent Zulu writer and editor; Richard Msimang (?–1933) for his part in the early struggle for non-racial government in South Africa, and his role in drawing up the original constitution of the African National Congress; his brother H. Selby Msimang (1886–1982) in recognition of his lifetime of firm and humane dedication to the ideal of a non-racial and non-exploitative society; and Alan Paton, in recognition of his distinction as a writer whose works express in various ways a yearning for a transformation of South African society, and also in recognition of the bold manner in which he committed himself publicly to social and political change.

J.M. DEANE

JENNIFER CHEW, OBE

A graduate of the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg and former teacher at Pietermaritzburg Girls' High School, Jennifer Chew (*née* Comrie) received the Order of the British Empire from Queen Elizabeth at Buckingham Palace on 22 February 2000.

After her schooling at Durban Girl's College, Jennifer Chew was a student in Pietermaritzburg from 1957 to 1961, graduating with a BA then BA Honours in English and completing a University Education Diploma before she took up a scholarship at Cambridge. In 1965 she returned to Pietermaritzburg to teach at Girls' High School for two years. Following further periods of teaching in Manchester and Johannesburg, she and her South African-born musician husband, Dr Geoffrey Chew, moved permanently to the UK in 1970, living in Aberdeen before settling in Surrey.

The award of the OBE recognises her services to education through the promotion of literacy. Teaching in an English sixth form college from the late 1970s, she found that her pupils were less literate than they ought to be, and particularly poor at spelling. Using standardised spelling tests, and comparing British results with those of South African schoolchildren, she obtained objective data to confirm this impression. Pietermaritzburg Girls' High girls, for example, averaged some 11% higher than their Surrey counterparts. She ascribed this difference to the methods used to teach reading and spelling in the early grades, South African schools generally having persisted with the phonics method while Britain had moved to the less rigorous 'look-and-say' and 'whole language' approaches.

As a campaigner for a return to more formal teaching methods, she and others irritated rather than impressed the educational establishment, but she believes that they have had some impact on the new National Literacy Strategy. The award of the OBE, she feels, is not linked to any one particular achievement on her part, but rather to a long and largely informal campaign: the 'continual dropping of water on a stone'. In her view, however, the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are now moving in

the right direction, albeit slowly, while South Africa may be making the mistake of shifting the opposite way.

M.H. COMRIE

NATIONAL MONUMENT

The most recent annual report of the National Monuments Council for the year ended March 1999 lists only one new declared site for KwaZulu-Natal. The description is taken directly from the report:

The property with the Albert Luthuli House thereon at Groutville.

This property was the home of Chief Albert Luthuli, former leader of the African National Congress and South Africa's first Nobel Prize laureate. He was born in the former Rhodesia in 1898 and was educated at Adams Mission where he later lectured under the activist Z.K. Matthews. In 1943 Luthuli joined the ANC. By 1945 he was on the Natal executive of this organisation and in 1951 he replaced W.G. Champion as Natal leader. From Groutville he led the growing ANC in boycotts, strikes and pass protests. In 1957 and 1958 he was detained for a year during the Treason Trial, and when the ANC was banned in 1960 he was imprisoned during the 'emergency' period. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in the same year.

T.B. FROST

BYRNE SETTLER COMMEMORATIONS

Over the last year there have been a number of gatherings to mark the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Byrne and other settlers in Natal. The first known to the writer took place on Sunday 10 October 1999, exactly 150 years to the day that the third of J. C. Byrne & Co. ships, the *Henry Tanner*, arrived at Port Natal. It was held by the descendants of John and Janet King at *Lynedoch*, near Nottingham Road. Although the property no longer belongs to the Kings, the current owners generously allowed the family to meet there for the occasion. The focal point of the day was when a piper led those present to the King family cemetery for a wreath-laying service.

Two gatherings took place in March 2000. They were those of the families of John and Elizabeth Byrne ex *Sovereign*, and Duncan and Margaret McKenzie ex *Unicorn*. The latter was held at *Lion's Bush*, Fort Nottingham, which is still in the family, and also has a family cemetery. An outline of the McKenzies, their antecedents in Scotland and their achievements in Natal was given by Patrick McKenzie.

The main event was a commemorative gathering at Richmond and Byrne in mid-May. On Saturday 13th the focus was on Richmond with St Mary's church bells pealing out melodies periodically during the day, a programme of Scottish pipers, maypole dancing, gumboot dancing, Indian dancing, choir performances, arts and crafts stalls, and the performance of the play *Minerva children*. At Byrne on Sunday there were similar events, but Scottish dancing was on the programme, and instead of gumboot dancing, the Byrne Primary School gave an exhibition of Zulu dancing. A communion service was held in the churchyard of St Mary Magdalene, presided over by the Bishop

of Natal, the Right Revd Rubin Phillip, and thereafter Brian Spencer gave a talk on the settlers with particular reference to those who came to Byrne (i.e. the passengers ex *Minerva* and *Henrietta*).

It was on 3 July and 4 July that these two vessels reached Natal, and it was in this month, 150 years later, that three families commemorated the event. The McLeods mustered at Byrne over the week-end 30 June–2 July. The Ralfe family (who had originally settled in the Byrne valley, but had moved up to the Estcourt district in the later 1850s) had their gathering at Estcourt, at St Matthew's Church and then on the farm *Heavitree*. Both were *Minerva* families, and at both commemorative eucharists the hymn *For those in peril on the sea* was sung. The Hathorn family ex *Henrietta* were also remembered with a family gathering in July.

The 16 September saw a coming together of the descendants of William John and Agnes Campbell ex *Conquering Hero* at *Muckleneuk* in Durban. It included the dedication of a plaque in honour of Dr Killie Campbell in recognition of her role in preserving South Africa's history. Available at this event were copies of *A place of hope: William Campbell and the Colony of Natal, 1850–1865* by G.K. Tatham, and up-to-date Campbell family trees.

During the same weekend the Arbuthnots commemorated the arrival of their forebears James, Jane and family on the *Unicorn* (19 September 1850). On the Saturday there was an expedition to Richmond to visit the Richmond, Byrne and District Museum and to identify the farm on which James and Jane had settled prior to moving to the coast to embark on sugar farming. On Sunday Umzinto was the focus, with a commemorative service in St Patrick's Church and visits to sites connected with the family at Esperanza and Equeefa. Equeefa is the location of Holy Trinity Church which Jane had had erected in memory of her husband, who died at an early age in 1861. The church is no longer standing, but Jane and other family members are buried in the churchyard.

The Byrne Settlers featured in Pietermaritzburg's Heritage Week 21 to 29 September with an exhibition by the Midland Family History Society. This was held in St Peter's Church in Church Street, the space being shared with an exhibition on Anglican missions by the Diocesan Archives.

A large gathering took place at Kearsney College at Botha's Hill on Sunday 8 October. This was in remembrance of the *Haidee* settlers from Yorkshire, 246 souls in total. They were not Byrne & Co. settlers, but also reached Natal in 1850, on 7 October, under a co-operative scheme conceived by Yorkshire farmer, Henry Boast. They settled at York near Albert Falls. About 350 descendants attended, and after registration, a church service was held in the school chapel, followed by a talk on the settlers. Thereafter a picnic lunch was enjoyed on one of the fields. Markers with family names were strategically placed so descendants of each family could sit together, which meant that many met relations they had never encountered before. An interesting feature was an old flag of the Colony of Natal which was hoisted for the occasion!

The final settler celebration known to the writer will take place on 21 October when the family of Matthew Porrill ex *Haidee* gather on a farm near Ladysmith for their 150th anniversary.

Two small pamphlets have been produced by settler descendants to mark the anniversary. The publication of the first commemorated the family of William Cowey ex

Minerva, viz. *Cowey family's 150th anniversary, 1850–2000*, by Douglas Cook, and *Haidee reunion: Hull 10 July 1850–Port Natal 7 October 1850*, by Pat Smith followed in October.

S. O'B. SPENCER

THE ROYAL LOGISTICAL CORPS AND THE DALTON BARRACKS

An interesting item of Natalian interest from Ron Brown, former librarian of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. When the Royal Army Logistical Corps (an upmarket name for the Commissariat Department) took over the Royal Air Force station at Abingdon in Berkshire in December 1992, it re-named it the Dalton Barracks, in honour of Acting Commissary James Langley Dalton, one of the heroes of the defence of Rorke's Drift.

James Langley Dalton was born in London in December 1832 and in 1849 joined the 85th Regiment, the Kings Light Infantry. He served in Ireland, Mauritius, where he was promoted sergeant, and at the Cape of Good Hope, where he took part in the 8th Frontier War of 1850–1853. He returned to England and in 1862 was transferred to the Commissariat Staff Corps, becoming a Colour Sergeant in 1863. He also attended a course at the School of Musketry at Hythe in Kent. After a final tour of duty in Canada from 1868 to 1871, he took his discharge from the army, being awarded the Long Service Good Conduct Medal.

Dalton then came back to South Africa to settle in Natal, but when the 9th Frontier War broke out in 1877, he volunteered for service and was appointed Assistant Commissary. For his energetic services at the Ibeka Headquarters, he was thanked by Major General Sir Arthur Cunynghame.

The imminent outbreak of the Zulu war in 1879 made him return to Natal to join the British forces, where he was appointed second in command of the Rorke's Drift Field Depot, under Deputy Commissary W.A. Dunne. Dalton played a prominent role in the defence of Rorke's Drift. It was he who persuaded Lieut. Chard that trying to escape would be fatal and that their only chance was to fortify the area and fight. Having during his career done a course in field fortification, it was his energy and skill that enabled the defenders to construct from materials in the store – biscuit boxes and mealie sacks mainly – a formidable defence. During the onslaught, his calm courage and skill with a rifle proved invaluable to the defenders, and he saved the life of at least one defender, when he shot the man who was about to assegai him. At 47 years of age and standing over six feet tall, his very presence must have been an encouragement to his fellow soldiers. Private Hook described him as 'one of the bravest men who ever lived'. At the height of the battle he was shot and severely wounded. Lieut. Chard wrote that 'While firing from behind the biscuit boxes, Dalton, who had been using his rifle with deadly effect, and by his quickness and coolness had been the means of saving many men's lives, was shot through the body. I was standing near him at the time, and he handed me his rifle so coolly that I had no idea until afterwards of how severely he was wounded. He waited quite quietly for me to take the cartridges he had left out of his pockets.'¹²

After the battle, he was given six months sick leave and then appointed Senior Commissariat Officer at Fort Napier, and later given a permanent commission as Assistant Commissary. He died on 7 January 1887 in Port Elizabeth.

When the list of those awarded the Victoria Cross for their bravery during the battle was published on 2 May 1879, Dalton's name was not there. He was not a regular soldier, and the Commissariat was not then regarded with any great esteem. However the public outcry was so great that Dalton was awarded the V.C. on 17 November 1879. It was given to him at a ceremony at Fort Napier on 16 January 1880.

1. Ian Knight and Ian Castle, *The Zulu War: Then and Now* (London, Battle of Britain Prints International, 1993), p. 52
2. *Ibid.* p. 65

D. BUCKLEY

DAUGHTER OF SIN

Gillian Tatham (phone 033–3460614) requests information on the above book, by Mary Martens, published in 1915. This was her second book. The first, *Woman of small account*, appeared in England in 1911, and is still obtainable, but *Daughter of sin* is proving extremely difficult to trace. It certainly exists as Mrs Martens' grand-daughter has seen it in the British Library.

Mary Elizabeth Martens (*née* McKenzie) was born in Liverpool in 1870. She married Roelof Gerhardus Petrus Martens, and they lived on the farm *Jammerdal* in the Kranskop district. They had seven children.

Daughter of sin is about a white South African woman who has a baby by a black man. In such an eventuality, the law required that the man be given 25 lashes and two years' imprisonment with hard labour. The woman was also to receive two years' hard labour, so one presumes the baby was removed from her care. Mary Martens dedicated this book to 'the women of Natal who have to suffer under this wicked law'.

It was under Section 16 of the Natal Colony's Act 31 of 1903 that these provisions were laid down. It appears that this law was repealed only in 1957 and was replaced by the Sexual Offences Act – better known as the Immorality Act.

REFERENCE WORKS ON THE ANGLO-BOER WAR

For obvious reasons, this issue of *Natalia* contains many references to the second Anglo-Boer War. In addition to publications mentioned elsewhere, we note the following two works which would be of value to students of the war.

- * 'On the fringes of Buller's army: the Natal Carbineers and the colonial defence of Natal: the second Anglo-Boer War, September 1899 to July 1902', by Mark Coghlan. Copies of this unpublished thesis in two volumes are available at the Natal Museum, the Natal Carbineers Museum, and the Natal Archives in Pietermaritzburg.
- * *In Memoriam: Roll of Honour Imperial Forces, Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902*, by Steve Watt.

This is a comprehensive listing of the 25 188 individuals who died serving with the British Imperial forces in the Anglo-Boer War and in the period of occupation up to

1913. It gives full details of each casualty: name, regiment and number; place, date and cause of death; burial place and monument. It is published by the University of Natal Press in Pietermaritzburg.

