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Natalia

Journal of the Natal Society

No. 31 (December 2001)

Published by Natal Society Library
P.O. Box 415, Pietermaritzburg 3200, South Africa

SA ISSN 0085-3674

Cover Picture

A youthful reader in the Natal Society Library.
The child is Elizabeth Gordon (now Mrs Hilton), daughter of
the late Dr Ruth Gordon, well-known teacher and historian.
Mrs Hilton now lives in England.

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Editorial

The compilation of *Natalia* 31 has coincided with the 150th anniversary of the Natal Society. It is appropriate that this issue should open with a note from the current President, Mr Simon Roberts. In marking this occasion, *Natalia* reprints the paper on the centenary of the Society written by Alan Hattersley for the *Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library* of March 1951. Hattersley notes that the objects of the Society, as defined in 1865, laid stress on the ‘acquisition and preservation of information of local value and interest, and the general encouragement of habits of study, investigation and research within the Colony’ – a purpose which this journal still serves.

Together with Hattersley’s paper, we also reprint Lady Barker’s account of the grand bazaar of 1876, with an introduction by Dr Sylvia Vietzen. Through an account of the contributions of Miss Sue Judd and Miss Pamela Reid, the affairs of the Society are brought up to date in an article by Jewel Koopman, while the Director of the Library, John Morrison, looks ahead at the challenges facing the library in the future.

As libraries are (amongst other things) repositories of literature, the article by Jolyon Nuttall on the long friendship between his father and Alan Paton – a reworking for *Natalia* of some of the material researched for his recently published book – throws interesting light on the author of one of South Africa’s most celebrated novels. Paton was also the biographer of Jan Hofmeyr, so that John Deane’s paper on the J.H. Hofmeyr Memorial Trust provides a second link to him in this number of *Natalia*.

Our most substantial article is a study by Margarete Nürnberger of the events surrounding the death of Maqhamusela Khanyile, the Zulu Christian whose martyrdom is today acknowledged by both the Lutheran and Anglican churches. Milner Snell and the late Ken Strachan have provided an account of the post carts which carried the mails through southern Natal in the late 19th and early 20th century. Bill Bizley contributes a short article on the 1932 collision between a train and a tram at the Mayor’s Walk level crossing in Pietermaritzburg. Rather than a book review, Benedict Carton offers a review essay on the newest instalment of the *James Stuart Archive*. We offer also the usual assortment of *Notes and Queries*, book notices, and, sadly, obituaries.

During the year, Dr Dai Herbert tendered his resignation from the Editorial Committee. We regret that the pressure of work at the Natal Museum has drawn him away from us, but we welcome to the committee Jabulani Sithole of the School of Human and Social Studies at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg. Another significant change was the retirement of David Buckley from the Natal Society Library staff and hence from his post as secretary to *Natalia*. More than a minutes secretary whose meticulous records were a great boon to a succession of editors, David was a valued member of the Editorial Committee who provided a number of notes and short articles. His final great contribution is the updated Index which is appended to this edition of *Natalia*. We wish him well in his retirement.

Finally, we note with sadness the passing of Estelle Gericke. A long-serving teacher of history, Miss Gericke was a prime mover in initiating and gaining acceptance for field trips and excursions, and so must be given credit for having put many school pupils in direct touch with the rich historical heritage of the province. Through her influence, many youngsters found the study of history to be truly fascinating and rewarding.

MORAY COMRIE

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATAL SOCIETY

The Natal Society now has some 50 000 members. The main thrust of its activity is of course the library which, in addition to the main branch in the substantial building on Freedom Square and the Lambert Wilson Centre, administers branches in Northdale, Eastwood, Woodlands, Sobantu, Ashdown and Georgetown, together with a mobile library and a housebound service. The library is also linked to the electronic referencing systems of Sabinet and the University of Natal. On average, there are about 106 463 issues each month, and, in collaboration with the provincial library service, the Society is exploring the possibility of establishing two more branch libraries, one in the Vulindlela area and the other in Scottsville.

Overseeing the activities of the Society and its library is an elected Council of fourteen members, which includes representatives of substantial donors such as the municipality. Indeed, city council is the major channel of funding to the library. For the Natal Society, as for many other institutions whose primary function is to serve the community, the flow of money is seldom adequate. Despite the fact that the salaries and allowances of library employees are generally less than those received by library staff elsewhere in the Republic, out of the annual budget of some R7.5 million only R380 000 is available for the purchase of books. With book prices rising steadily, it is increasingly difficult for the library to maintain an appropriate holding. The Council is endeavouring to obtain grants from charitable trusts overseas.

Not only has the library grown immensely over the years, but it has been greatly transformed, and is by no means an elitist or neo-colonial organization. Colonialism may have been behind the foundation of the Society, in that its founders wanted to provide accurate information about the colony to prospective settlers in Britain and Europe, but the thrust to make it a free resource open to the whole community came from within. Not only do most of the branch libraries now serve formerly disadvantaged communities, but informal checks at the main branch indicate that some 93% of the people using the facility are not white, with the overwhelming majority (more than 80%) being African. Staffing of the library shows a similar trend. The motto of the Society, *Lux in Tenebris* (which loosely translates as 'a light in the darkness') is as apt today as it has always been.

Select List of Recent KwaZulu-Natal Publications

- CAMP, Steve. *Historic Pietermaritzburg*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter, 2001. R75,00
- MORRELL, Robert. *From boys to gentlemen: settler masculinity in colonial Natal, 1880-1920*. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2001.
- BAILEY, Neil. *Oh, but what a saint*. Pietermaritzburg: Priv. print, 2001. 274p.
- BAZLEY, Denzil. *Nil desperandum: the Bazley story*. Durban: The Royle trust, 2001. R90,00
- CHRISTIE, Yvonne. *Early pioneers of Greytown up to 1910*. Greytown, Priv. print, 1999. 146 p. illus. R60,00
- D'ASSONVILLE, V. E. *Blood River*. Weltevreden Park: Marnix, 2000. 71 p. illus., map.
- DESAI, Ashwin. *The poors of Chatsworth*. Durban: Madiba and The Institute for Black Research, University of Natal, 2000.
- GUY, Jeff. *The view across the river*. Cape Town: David Philip, 2001. R150,00
- LABAND, John. *The atlas of the later Zulu wars 1883-1888*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal press, 2001.
- McCRACKEN, Donal Patrick. *In the steps of Nellie: a history of Mitchell Park and Robert Jameson Park, and of the Zoological Gardens, Durban*. Durban: Durban Parks Dept., 2001. 112 p. illus., tables. R75,00
- MADI, Phinda Mzwakhe. *Leadership lessons from Emperor Shaka Zulu the Great*. Randburg: Knowledge Resources 2000
- TARR, Moira. *The Natal Moors*. Estcourt: Private print, 1999. 230 p. illus.
- THOMPSON, Paul S. *The Zulu rebellion of 1906 in maps*. Howick: Brevitas, 2001. ISBN 1 875976 24 5
- WEBB, C de B and WRIGHT, John, eds. and trs. *The James Stuart Archive of recorded oral evidence relating to the history of the Zulu and neighbouring peoples. Volume 5*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, and Durban: Killie Campbell Africana Library, 2001. 446 p. diags., tables. R345,00
- WHITFIELD, Tim and CAMP, Steve. *Paddling and portaging: 50 years of the Duzi Canoe Marathon*. [Pietermaritzburg] Umgeni Water, 2001. R140,00
- ZALOUMIS, Alex. *Zulu tribal art*, by Alex Zaloumis, photographs by Ian Difford. Amazulu publishers, c. 2000