

Notes and Queries

AN IMPORTANT FIND IN THE RICHMOND, BYRNE AND DISTRICT MUSEUM

Contributed by Brian Spencer

In 1962 a hard-cover drawing book was handed to the Museum committee by Stafford Talbot who was in the process of emigrating to New Zealand. He had found it in *The Oaks*, at Byrne, the home of his grandparents Richard and Elizabeth Hosking.

The album was not in good repair. The body was detached from the boards, the first five pages were loose and twelve pages had been removed. It was observed that there was a finely hand-drawn frontispiece with the inscription 'Elizabeth 1832', and that there were interesting photographs, pleasing sketches and much ephemera in the book, which was then put into store.

In a recent conversation with a Hosking great-grandchild it was suggested that an examination of the volume may reveal family information, which it certainly did.

Of the photographs, nine were taken in India with only two having titles. One is of a lady being carried in a sling, with in pencil below 'A Dandy, Nynee Tal'. The other is of a lake and steep tree-covered hills with a few scattered buildings. Below in pencil is 'Nynee Tal, N.W.P. India'. A dandy is a form of transport, being either a cloth, slung hammock-like, on a pole and carried by two men or, as in the photograph, a cloth slung between two poles and carried by four men. Naini Tal is in the foothills of the Himalayas, north-east of Delhi towards the border with Nepal.

Two of the remaining Indian photographs are of small tented camps, and four are of a large camp dominated by a marquee with a tall, rectangular, flat-roofed, entrance tent in front of it. In the views of this camp there are two elephants with mahouts and howdahs, an Indian dignitary and his entourage with a party of English men, women, babies in arms and their servants. In one photograph all the people are sitting or standing behind a small tea table. The ninth photograph is of a large residence with a British official and his staff posed in front of it.



Sketch of Rome, with St Peter's and the Vatican in the distance

It is the ten sketches that are of the greatest interest. Eight were taken in Italy and have in pencil below them the subject, the initials W.H. and a date running from March



Sketch of Tivoli

to August 1824. They show scenes on the Gulf of Pozzuoli and views of Assisi, Florence, Perugia, Rome and Tivoli. All are pencil sketches with detailed architectural features. Some are incomplete, others have been enhanced with a sepia wash.

The two remaining drawings show work in progress on the Birmingham, Bristol and Thames Junction Railway. Both scenes are in sepia. The one is described as a 'View of the north front of the Gallery under the Paddington Canal and of the suspension bridge over it with the retaining walls in the north cutting and the excavations as they appeared in October 1839'. The description of the other is 'View of the iron arch suspension bridge over the Paddington Canal and of the north front of the Gallery for passing the Railway under it'. Each has a note in pencil 'Now the West London'.

According to the *Dictionary of National Biography* a William Hosking (1800–1861) went to New South Wales with his parents and siblings in 1809. While in Australia he



Sketch of the Birmingham, Bristol and Thames Junction Railway

was apprenticed to a general builder and surveyor in Sydney. After the family returned to England in 1819 he was apprenticed to W. Jenkins, an architect in London. In 1824, as part of his studies for his profession, William travelled for a year in Italy and Sicily where he made drawings. Of these he exhibited one at the Royal Academy in 1826 and two in the Suffolk Street Gallery in 1826 and 1828 respectively. In

1830 he was elected a Fellow of the Society of Artists. In 1834 he was appointed engineer to the Birmingham, Bristol and Thames Junction Railway. In 1838-9 he designed the arrangement at Wormwood Scrubbs by which the Paddington Canal was carried over the railway and a public road was carried over the canal. When first executed these arrangements were apparently the focus of much attention. He was elected



Another view of the Birmingham, Bristol and Thames Junction Railway

a fellow of the Institute of British Architects in 1835. In 1840 he became professor of architecture and engineering construction at King's College, London.

Hosking had numerous publications to his credit. He wrote and, together with Jenkins illustrated, articles on architecture and on building for the seventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* which were also included in the eighth edition. He designed a number of churches, private residences and public buildings.

In 1836 he married Elizabeth (1809–1877), second daughter of William Clowes, a well-known London printer. It was their son Richard Winchester Hosking who married Elizabeth McLeod, daughter of George More and Ellen McLeod, and in whose home, *The Oaks*, at Byrne, the album was found.

LUTHULI MONUMENT

Contributed by Moray Comrie

The first decade of democracy in South Africa has seen a drive to erect monuments to black people to balance the memorials to white individuals and institutions. On 21 August 2004, President Thabo Mbeki unveiled one such to Nobel laureate and ANC President Nkosi Albert Luthuli in KwaDukuza, formerly Stanger. (Incidentally, Luthuli himself preferred to spell his name 'Lutuli', just as he preferred the Zulu 'Mvumbi', meaning continuous rain, to his given Christian names, but the family now generally accepts the more phonetically accurate version of 'Luthuli'.)

Luthuli died in 1967 after being struck by a train as he walked across the Umvoti River railway bridge. Though his health was failing and his hearing was poor, the suspicion persists that his death might somehow have been contrived. Speaking at his funeral, Alan Paton observed that 'history will say ... that a noble voice was silenced when it would have been better for all of us had it been heard'.

It is intended that these words should be inscribed on the monument. The memorial was commissioned by the Chief Albert Luthuli Memorial Project and stands adjacent to the town hall and civic council chamber at the crossing of King Shaka and Chief Albert Luthuli Streets. After a competition to find a suitable design for a life-sized memorial sculpture celebrating Luthuli's life, the commission was awarded to Pietermaritzburg sculptor Gert Swart. Mr Swart has also sculpted the monument to the Zulu fallen at Isandlwana and the Shield of the Nation at the museum commemorating the battle of Ncome (or Blood) River, and has twice exhibited at the Tatham gallery. The gallery has his work in its permanent collection, and his carved wooden Essa cross hangs in the chapel at the Evangelical Seminary in Pine Street.

While he is the sculptor, Mr Swart attributes a full share in the conceptualisation of the monument to his wife Istine and to Pietermaritzburg architect Tony Wilson. The vision for the monument goes beyond a single statue of Luthuli. From street level, a wheelchair ramp and a broad sweep of shallow steps invite one up to the paved area where the sculpture stands, and from this a path leads between landscaped lawns to the door of the council chamber. This in itself reminds one of the interaction between ordinary people in the street and their elected representatives in council that is crucial to the democratic process for which Luthuli campaigned.

On the side of the paved area towards the town hall stands the Indaba Tree, where king Shaka himself held council as he consolidated the Zulu nation. In conceptualising the whole monument, Swart was mindful of how the idea of an African renaissance rests on recognising the greatneses of the past and building on them. In the shaded space around the tree, and half encircling it, is placed a cantilevered bench in the stylised form of the head and horns of a buffalo – the classic battle formation of a Zulu army now put to peaceable use as a spot to sit and talk.

In similar vein, the horn motif is carried into the concrete wall curving back from the low plinth on which Luthuli stands and the wall is crested with a bronze feather, a representation of the *isithwalandwe* (blue crane feather) which was an ancient Zulu award for bravery. It has been adopted by the ANC as an award for meritorious service to the community, and in 1955 the Congress of the People that adopted the Freedom Charter made this award to Dr Dadoo, Father Trevor Huddleston, and Luthuli himself.

Viewed from the side, the wall is reminiscent of the head and wings of a bird – the traditional dove of peace perhaps, or a phoenix rising. Set into one end of the wall is a bronze half-circle that frames a cut out tree, an echo of the Indaba Tree which can be seen as a symbol of the nation. On the outside curve of the wall the branches end in stark thorn like twigs that simulate nerve endings that convey the pain of the people. On the inner side leaves sprout and the edges of branches are moulded to break the harsh fall of light on the bronze and suggest that the tree can now provide shade and the peace for the nation for which Luthuli strove.

Set into the hollowed trunk of the tree is a single candle, the spark of freedom burning in the heart of the nation and signifying the Defiance Campaign that Luthuli led in 1952. At the base of the candle is a scroll, signifying the Nobel Peace award.

Beside the ramp and at the head of the steps rising from the corner of the site stands the figure of Luthuli himself. The statue is life-sized but no more – Mr Swart wanted to portray him as a man of the people, elevated as a leader but not some remote giant. In his left hand he holds his hat, as if he has just doffed it or is about to raise it in salutation, and his right hand is rising as if to greet someone. His face has the same gladly welcoming smile, and he looks out across the busy street corner over KwaDukuza (once Shaka's enormous homestead, so vast one could become lost in it) and towards his home at Groutville. As a passer-by who paused to watch the installation of the bronze statue commented, it looks as if he is really there, and about to speak.

And that, perhaps, is the most telling tribute that can be paid to the monument that is itself a tribute to Albert Luthuli. Paton's prescient comment was absolutely correct – the nation would have been spared much suffering if Luthuli's voice had been heeded in his lifetime.

THE RELOCATION OF THE NATAL SOCIETY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS TO THE ALAN PATON CENTRE AND STRUGGLE ARCHIVES

Contributed by Jewel Koopman

The Natal Society Special Collections were moved from the former Natal Society Library in Church Street, Pietermaritzburg before it was to become the Msunduzi Municipal Library in 2005. These collections are now on permanent loan to the Alan Paton Centre

and Struggle Archives (APCandSA) on the Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). This relocation process took place gradually between 2002 and 2004, and is now complete. The Special Collections are now available for use at the APCandSA.

The Special Collections consist of the Africana, O'Brien, Hattersley, Pamphlet and Photograph collections.

The Africana Collection consists of books which have been purchased by, or donated to, the Natal Society over the last 154 years, since it began on 9 May 1851. The original purpose of the Natal Society was not to develop a library, but rather to inform prospective immigrants of the actual conditions in the Colony of Natal. The Natal Society Library and the Natal Museum developed as the Natal Society grew. The nucleus of the library is even older than 1851, as it took over the books from the original Pietermaritzburg Reading Room, which opened in 1845, and became known as the Natal Reading Society in 1846, and the Pietermaritzburg Public Library in 1849. Some of the books in the Africana Special Collection are even older than this, having been donated by members. Some important books in the collection are those by and about Bishop Colenso. These books, and those about early missionary activities in various African countries, are being used by theology students doing post-graduate research.

The O'Brien Collection came to the Natal Society after the death in 1959 of Dr William John O'Brien, who had been a member of the Natal Society since 1879 and its president from 1903 to 1905. He was an avid book collector, and had a very large private library. He played an important part in the early days of the Natal University College, as he was instrumental in obtaining a grant of 53 acres of land, on which the original buildings were constructed. Dr O'Brien was president of the Council of the Natal University College from its inception in 1910 until his retirement in 1953. The William O'Brien Men's Residence was named after him, in honour of his many years of service to the University.

Dr O'Brien was a very civic-minded person, and sat on many boards and committees. He was on the board of Grey's Hospital for 52 years. He believed that 'the hospital was primarily instituted for the treatment of the sick poor equally without respect to colour'. He was honoured for his dedication by the naming of the O'Brien Block at the Old Grey's Hospital. Pietermaritzburg Technical College also acknowledged his role at the College by naming their women's residence 'O'Brien House'. Dr O'Brien was also chairman of the Pietermaritzburg Botanical Society for 17 years, and chairman of the Girls' Collegiate School for many years. In recognition of his contribution towards Pietermaritzburg, he was made a Freeman of the City in 1945, and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Philosophy.

The Hattersley Collection was bequeathed to the Natal Society Library after the death of Professor Alan F. Hattersley, who had been a member of the Library since 1917, and president of the Natal Society Council from 1930 to 1933. He was the first Professor of History at the Natal University College, and was well-known as Natal's leading historian and an author of many books on Natal history.

The Pamphlet Collection consists of some very old and rare pamphlets, where obscure and surprising information can be found to the delight of researchers. Some of the pamphlets are part of the Africana Collection, whereas others are part of the O'Brien Collection, and cover quite different subject matter.

The Photograph Collection consists of photographs of old Pietermaritzburg and Natal, Natal Society history and Natal personalities.

The Natal Society Records from 1851 to 2001 are also housed at the APCandSA, as are the minutes of the Natal Society Drama Group and the Cygnet Theatre programmes.

Members of the public as well as students, staff and researchers, are welcome to visit and use this valuable historical collection in the Reading Room of the Alan Paton Centre and Struggle Archives. For further information, please contact Jewel Koopman, Alan Paton Centre Librarian, Tel: (033) 260 5926; e-mail: koopmanj@ukzn.ac.za

CENTENARY OF THE NATAL MUSEUM

Contributed by Bill Guest.

Sir Henry McCallum, Governor of the then British Colony, officially opened the Natal Museum on 30 November 1904, with the Carbineers' Band providing deafening entertainment within the confines of the new Loop Street building. The occasion marked both a conclusion and a beginning. It was the end of a long gestation period during which the Natal Society had struggled ever since its foundation in May 1851 to provide Pietermaritzburg with both a museum and a library in imitation of the facilities available in Britain and elsewhere in the Empire. Faced with inadequate government funding and a narrow subscription base, the Natal Society concentrated primarily on enlarging its library holdings. It nevertheless managed to expand its museum collection from the confines of a few glass cases crammed into its committee room to a separate exhibition hall. This too soon became so overcrowded with specimens that it highlighted the need for a dedicated building in which the museum could be controlled and funded independently as a government institution.

The Natal Museum Act No. 11 of 1903, which foreshadowed a new era, provided for a government-nominated Board of Trustees to assume responsibility for the new edifice, which was completed in July of that year. A far-sighted minority of museum committee members favoured finding a large site outside municipal limits to allow for future expansion but the choice of 237 Loop Street prevailed, being at the city's commercial and residential centre. Therein lay the seeds of future space constraints.

By 1904 the perennial challenges of inadequate funding, insufficient space and shortage of staff had already been entrenched. Financial considerations reduced the initial 1904 staff complement of seven (excluding cleaners) to four by 1910. There was no staff increase and few salary increments prior to 1949. The Natal Museum was fortunate in its selection of foundation staff, not least in the choice of Dr Ernest Warren as the first Director. A doctoral graduate of University College London, he came to Pietermaritzburg with glowing testimonials after a brilliant academic career which had led to his appointment by his 'alma mater' as assistant Museum Curator and assistant Professor in Zoology. It was appropriate experience for the dual career that he was subsequently to pursue as head of the Natal Museum and as one of the initial eight professors appointed to launch the new Natal University College.

The first lectures were given in February 1910, with all of Warren's classes, through-

out his teaching career, being held at the Museum, where the University made a heavy investment in specimens and models. From 1911 to 1930, while Warren served as its chairman, all University Senate meetings were also held there. It was the beginning of a long relationship between the two institutions which was to be strengthened by research and teaching contacts between members of staff, and by the presence of a succession of local professors on the Museum's Board of Trustees. The first of these was Warren's protégé S F (Frank) Bush, who joined the Board in 1936 and served as its highly influential chairman between 1939 and 1969. A formal Memorandum of Agreement, which brought further mutual benefits, was only concluded between the Museum and the University in February 2003.

The link which Warren established between these two institutions was relevant to the objectives of the Natal Museum that he declared in 1904. It was to be 'an educational force', its collections were to be 'of practical utility' and it was 'in time' to become 'a centre of scientific research'. Warren and his successors as head of the Natal Museum pursued these goals with varying degrees of success, as far as available funds allowed. In addition to University classes, Warren promoted the Museum's educational function by giving informal lecture tours through the exhibition halls to school children and pupil teachers, as well as launching a series of popular evening talks for adult audiences.

As early as 1907 named duplicate specimens of birds and other species were being sent for instructional purposes to schools in and beyond Pietermaritzburg. Between 1961 and 1969 Laura Kelsall was employed to produce 669 portable 'travelling cases', containing appropriate teaching exhibits for circulation among outlying schools via the Provincial Library Services. In 1969 the Museum appointed its first permanent Education Officer, J. M. Z. Michau. Under the guidance of subsequent highly innovative museum educationists, including Iris Bornman, Peter Croeser and Mabongi Mtshali, it gradually extended its in-house and outreach programmes to all sectors of the community, including disadvantaged learners from township and rural schools.

The Natal Museum's collections, especially those on exhibition, have always been associated with its educational purpose, though Warren's initial intention primarily to develop a natural history collection was soon expanded from his own particular enthusiasm for mammals to include increasing numbers of other specimens. Financial and spatial constraints, coupled with the research interests of staff members, motivated the exchange of some collections with other institutions and a concentration in certain fields. Research output was initially largely limited to what the first three heads could produce themselves: Warren (1903–1935) on diverse scientific topics, Dr Reginald F. Lawrence (1935–1948) on spiders and Phillip H. Clancey (1950–1952) on birds. In 1953 research capacity was vastly improved with the appointment of a new Director, Dr John A. Pringle (1953–1976), who published on snakes and two assistant professional officers, Reginald Lawrence and Brian Stuckenberg, who subsequently became Director (1976–1994). He and his successor, Dr Jason G.H. Londt (1994–2003), developed the Museum's collection of flies into one of the largest in the southern hemisphere, as well as their own international reputations as research scientists.

Staff and building additions since the 1950s facilitated the expansion of other specialist collections and areas of research expertise. These are associated, among others, with Oliver Davies, Tim Maggs, Aron Mazel and Gavin Whitelaw (Archaeology), Martin Hall, Graham Dominy and Frans Prins (Ethno-Archaeology, Cultural History

and Anthropology), Bruno Lamoral, Peter Croeser and Charles Griswold (scorpions and spiders), David Barraclough (flies), Dr J.D. Plisko (earthworms), Dolf van Bruggen, Dick Kilburn and Dai Herbert (land snails, marine molluscs and slugs), and Dr Judith Masters (primates, in particular African bushbabies). Much of this research output was reflected in the Natal Museum's own publications, the *Annals of the Natal Museum*, initiated in 1906, and the *Natal Museum Journal of Humanities*, started in 1989, since 2000 known as *African Invertebrates* and *Southern African Humanities* respectively. The high quality of these journals, coupled with their extensive distribution through exchange agreements with other institutions, has helped to maintain the Natal Museum's enviable international reputation. This is now in the care of a new Director, Luthando J. Maphasa (2003–) and his 48-strong staff.