

Notes and Queries

THIRTY YEARS ON

Contributed by Jack Frost

THE great ecclesiastical controversies of the 1860s which tore the Anglican Church in Natal apart (and even had reverberations further afield), left Pietermaritzburg with two central city churches and two parishes: St Peter's (the old Cathedral) in Church Street and St Saviour's in Commercial Road.

With the passage of time and the growth of several new generations, the old animosities disappeared and in 1957 a motion passed by the St Peter's vestry placed its property between Church and Longmarket Streets at the disposal of the Diocese of Natal as the site for a new cathedral. That vision was to become reality in 1981 with the dedication of the Cathedral of the Holy Nativity, built next to St Peter's, but not before St Peter's and St Saviour's had formally dissolved as separate parishes and united as a combined Cathedral parish.

In June 1976 as part of a ceremony which began in St Saviour's and ended in St Peter's (which acted as a cathedral until the new one was completed) the reunited congregation marched along Commercial Road and up Church Street headed by the band of the Natal Carbineers. Thirty years later, in 2006, that march was re-enacted by veterans of the 1976 occasion (including the then Dean, John Forbes, who had flown up from Cape Town to be part of the commemoration).

The intervening years had brought about huge changes. Young and middle-aged participants 30 years before were now old and grizzled. The Carbineers' band was on parade again, but in an attenuated form with a handful of musicians meeting the party as it arrived at the new Cathedral. Church Street had been turned into a mall and largely pedestrianised with only a single lane for traffic. The walkers now proceeded along the pavement with the parade enlivened by a thief dashing past, hotly pursued. And the demographics of the Cathedral congregation, in 1976 exclusively white, are completely different in line with the changing face of the inner city. Sadly, the openness to the city which was a *Leitmotif* of the design of the new building and its positioning on the site, has been completely negated by the growth of crime, necessitating the erection of high security fences and a single entrance from Longmarket Street.

BHAMBATHA UPRISING CLEANSING CEREMONY*Contributed by Pat McKenzie*

On Reconciliation Day 2006 IFP Leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi unveiled a memorial to Nkosi Bhambatha Zondi at Ambush Rock, Mpanza, in the presence of KwaZulu-Natal dignitaries and Zondi clansmen. The Bhambatha Memorial Committee was responsible for the erection of the memorial.

Also present were Graham Smythe, a descendant of the prime minister of Natal at the time of the Uprising and John McKenzie youngest grandson of Sir Duncan McKenzie, who led the colonial forces. Part of the proceedings was a traditional cleansing ceremony in which Nkosi Sakhi Zondi of Keate's Drift, Graham Smythe and John McKenzie washed their hands in a bowl of water as a token of reconciliation. The bowl was handed to them by a young woman Mazethu Zondi. A flock of pigeons symbolising peace was released.

DINUZULU STATUE*Contributed by Bill Bizley*

Heritage month, 2007, was supposed to see the unveiling of the latest in the series of Amafa-inspired sculptures, the striking 3,4 metre statue of King Dinuzulu. It will be positioned in Durban at the park ground between Berea Road and Warwick Avenue, next to the statue of Louis Botha. It was Botha who ordered the release of the monarch two years after he had been imprisoned for treason at the time of the Bhambatha Rebellion. (The narrative favours a somewhat anti-British perspective, but Dinuzulu's strangely British uniform plus helmet—which, in the sculpture, he carries in his hand—was insisted on in the original Amafa tender.) The pairing of the two statues is in accord with Amafa's policy of balancing historic memory, and is thus in keeping with the monuments it commissioned at Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift.



The Dinuzulu plinth is to be encircled with ten story panels, each relating to an episode in the king's life. Sculptor Peter Hall, who devised and sculpted the Pot with Horns motif in the eMakhosini valley (where Dinuzulu is buried), says that he found this latest statue to be his most challenging project yet. Sculpting took five months; and the actual casting (by Kim Goodwin at Lidgetton) another five. Under the direction of Amafa's chairman Arthur Königkrämer, the artworks commissioned by the body have

certainly been completed in record time. Kim Goodwin tells me that the atmosphere in his foundry, while he and his team were working on the huge Dinuzulu piece, was quite haunting, his Zulu co-workers looking on with awe as their revered ancestor gradually reached ceiling height before them.

In keeping with the policy of achieving cultural balance in the project, Amafa appointed journeyman and assistant Mondli Ndanda for the 10-month term of the completion of the work. In a sense Ndanda had to learn a new mind-set. While traditional Zulu sculpture in wood lasts well indoors, there has to be a durable substance like bronze for the sculpting of outdoor figures. Only 'western' technology has the foundry techniques that can accomplish this. Mondli was taken on board to become, as it were, *au fait* with a 'foreign' technology. He has proved to be a most willing student, and indeed has subsequently submitted a piece of his own to the tendering board of a centre of learning in Durban.

Peter Hall, who is more immediately famous for his miniatures, the shoe-maker gnomes outside Groundcover Shoes, says that he studied many photos and even prose descriptions of King Dinuzulu before he started work. While he considers it to be his finest piece yet, he is disappointed that—perhaps because of Amafa's succession of administrators—his striking piece at Rorke's Drift, where a bronze leopard lies atop a pile of shields, has never been officially unveiled.

DURBAN CONNECTIONS WITH BLOOMSBURY

Contributed by Brian Spencer

In the diaries of Virginia Woolf there are references in both text and footnotes to Alice MacGregor Ritchie (b. Durban 1897 – d. London 1941).

From the text one learns that Alice developed from an employee of Hogarth Press, whose praise of Virginia's *Orlando* was suspected of being 'in gratitude for our £20' to a friend whose comments were appreciated.

From the notes one learns that Alice was born in Natal, studied at Newnham College, Cambridge, was a travelling representative for the Hogarth Press from 1928 – c.1936 and then became editor of *International women's news*, a journal produced by the International Alliance for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship. She later worked in the League of Nations' Secretariat in Geneva. She had two novels, *The peacemakers* (1928) and *Occupied territory* (1930) published by Hogarth Press. In 1948 Hogarth Press also published her *The treasure of Li-Po*, with illustrations by her sister.

It was through Alice that her sister Marjorie Tulip Ritchie (b. Durban 1902 – d. England, c. 1995) met the Woolfs. Marjorie, known as Trekkie, was an artist and illustrator who had studied at the Slade. She was commissioned by the Woolfs to design dust-jackets for a number of books including Virginia Sackville West's *All passion spent* (1931).

In 1934 Trekkie married Ian Parsons who was employed by the publishing firm Chatto & Windus. At the outbreak of war he joined the RAF, and Trekkie the fire service. Later she worked as a land girl and then for Intelligence.

Their London home was in Victoria Square. After Virginia Woolf's death in 1941 they had Leonard Woolf as a neighbour. With Trekkie and Leonard's acquaintance in

the thirties, and their mourning over the deaths in the same year of Alice and Virginia, the Parsons and Leonard became firm friends, with the Parsons relinquishing their house and sharing Leonard's.

Leonard became devoted to Trekkie. Their correspondence has been published as *Leonard Woolf and Trekkie Parsons: love letters 1941 – 1969* (Chatto & Windus, 2001). When Leonard died in 1969 he left the bulk of his estate, including *Monk's House*, the Woolfs' home in Rodmell, Sussex, to Trekkie. She presented the latter to the University of Sussex. It is now run by the National Trust and is open to the public.

(Acknowledgement to Matthew Marwick for Internet research.)

MACRORIE LETTERS RETURN TO 'MARITZBURG'

Contributed by Sylvia Vietzen

The Macrorie House Museum in Pietermaritzburg has received an unexpected gift. It is a collection of letters written by members of the Macrorie family over the years 1889 to 1891 while they were living at 'South Hill', the old name of the house which is now the museum. Most of the letters are from Mrs Agnes Macrorie, wife of Bishop William Kenneth Macrorie, to their eldest daughter, Marion Acland and her husband Frank who lived in Cheyne Gardens, London. There were also some from the bishop and the other Macrorie daughters, Mildred and Elsie. How the letters survived, were found and returned to the home from which they were written is a remarkable story.

Early in 2006 the Curator of the Museum, Mrs Marigold Rei, received a letter from Miss Jane Cooke of Bristol, England. She had been clearing out a cellar in the home of her late brother-in-law in Hastings in the south of England and recognised that a bundle of letters on the verge of being thrown away could be of interest. She took the letters home to Bristol, sorted them, ploughed through the Victorian script and noted the recurring name 'Macrorie'. Having never heard of it before, she looked on the Internet and traced the Macrorie House Museum. She was so fascinated by her find that she transcribed the letters and sent an e-mail copy to Marigold Rei and said she would like to travel to Pietermaritzburg and personally present the letters to the Museum. This she did at a well-attended luncheon held in her honour at the Macrorie House Museum on Saturday, 19 May 2007.

It would seem that Jane Cooke's brother-in-law had a sister, Helen, who had been companion/housekeeper to Clemence Margaret Acland, Marion Acland's daughter and the Macrories' granddaughter. When Helen died her belongings came to her brother, including the letters. There they remained in somewhat disorganised storage until the vigorous and enthusiastic initiative taken by Miss Cooke. After all, she had never travelled south of the Equator before; but her courage was rewarded with two weeks in KwaZulu-Natal during which she was able to trace the names, events, places and activities mentioned by the Macrories in the letters, even to travelling on the old main line train between Kloof and Inchanga. She explored the nooks and crannies of old Maritzburg, including the sites of Scott's Theatre and the Theatre Royal. She visited the Cathedral of the Holy Nativity, St Peter's Old Cathedral and the site of St Saviour's Cathedral, giving context to the Colenso controversy and Macrorie's tenure as 'Bishop of Maritzburg'. She was also able to visit Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift, the Berg, Richmond and Byrne

as well as read the letters of Basil Macrorie already in the Museum.

The newly-acquired letters themselves await further archival and historical attention. They are largely of a domestic nature with family news predominating. However, they do throw intimate and very candid light on Anglican Church personalities—as could be expected from the Bishop of Maritzburg and his wife. They bring the Macrorie home to life and describe vividly its visitors and its comings and goings, including the bishop's travels through his diocese. They offer an insight into the social life of Victorian Maritzburg. They are not short of gossip and are especially revealing of the fashion and frivolities of the young Macrories: Basil, Mildred and Elsie. The younger sons were in England, Arthur as a naval cadet and Theodore at school, adding much newsworthy responsibility for Marion Acland with her own rapidly increasing family. Of special interest to the Museum is Mrs Macrorie's detailed commentary on running the household and garden, not least her perspectives on domestic staff—cooks, carriage drivers, coachmen, grooms and retainers—all part and parcel of privileged colonial family life.

There is food for thought here for keepers of museums and writers of history aiming to give meaning to colonial Natal in present-day Kwazulu-Natal. Macrorie House Museum is grateful for its good fortune. And it is extremely grateful that the letters were discovered by so enterprising a person as Jane Cooke.

NATAL FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

Contributed by Pat McKenzie

The Natal Society Foundation has awarded a scholarship to Ian Kiepiel who is a registered M.Sc. student with the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He is conducting research into the pollination biology and the breeding system of the charismatic plant genus *Clivia* and is seeking to understand its reproductive biology. The genus is well known in horticulture but poorly studied in its natural environment.

In announcing the award the trustees emphasise that the Foundation as an educational trust is carrying out its object, which is the promotion and general study of the arts, science, literature and philosophy.