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NATALIA

Natalia is published annually in Pietermaritzburg by the Natal Society Foundation. The journal publishes articles on the history (in the broadest sense) of KwaZulu-Natal.

The first editor of *Natalia* was historian and Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of Natal, Professor Colin Webb.

The present editor, T.B. “Jack” Frost, has edited the journal for more than 15 years. The *Natalia* Editorial Review Committee includes established historians and writers who have published a wide variety of books, papers and articles on the history, languages, cultural traditions, buildings, geography, natural history and environmental conservation of the Province.

Submission of articles for *Natalia*: *Natalia* is a fully refereed, printed journal dedicated to publishing contributions relating to the history of KwaZulu-Natal. The journal is published annually in December each year. Submissions of original manuscripts are invited and should be sent by e-mail to the editor at jack.frost@futurenet.co.za from whom the *Natalia* style-guide document can be requested. The annual deadline for manuscripts to be considered for publication in that year is the end of May. Articles may be submitted as e-mail attachments to the editor in MSWord or Rich Text Format. Factors affecting final publication include the quality of the manuscript, the associated peer review process, and the number of manuscripts which have already been accepted.

Subscriptions: Printed copies of *Natalia* are available as are back numbers of most volumes. Please contact the NSF Secretary, Pat McKenzie (mckenzie@3i.co.za) regarding orders or more information.

Access to digitised back-issues of *Natalia*: Free access to the digitised contents of all 40 published *Natalia* volumes is available in PDF format from the Foundation’s internet web-site (given below).

THE NATAL SOCIETY FOUNDATION

Founded in Pietermaritzburg in 1851, The Natal Society has served the scientific and literary interests of the community of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, for the past 158 years. It founded the Natal Museum (now a state-supported national institution) and the Natal Society Library which became the largest privately-owned public library system in the country (until transferred to the city’s Msunduzi Municipality in 2004).

Today the Natal Society Foundation, a registered Non-profit Organisation, continues the original aims of the Society in “the general encouragement of habits of study, investigation and research” by publishing *Natalia*, maintaining a specialist Victoriana and Africana research library, and providing funding to support scholarship, research and publications.

Further information on the Natal Society Foundation can be found at its web-site: www.natalia.org.za

Natalia

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The photograph of Madiba is published courtesy of the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory at the Nelson Mandela Foundation.

The portions of the letter displayed are similarly courtesy of the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory at the Nelson Mandela Foundation.

The photograph of Alan Paton is published courtesy of the Alan Paton Centre, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution made by professional graphic artist Mthokozisi (Chilli) Zwane in painstakingly cleaning and preparing the images of the letter for publication. A former Natal Society Foundation scholarship holder, he was also responsible for much of the work of scanning back volumes of *Natalia* for electronic publication on the web.

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Editorial

THIS YEAR *Natalia* features two previously unpublished pieces. The first represents a considerable coup for the journal: a letter written in 1979 by Nelson Mandela from imprisonment on Robben Island to Alan Paton. Ironically, he never learned that the letter was not delivered, nor did Alan Paton ever know that it had been written. It might have made a great difference to both men had they been able to communicate freely. There's a hand-written note at the top of the letter which says: "Afgekeur. Gee verwitting. Beswaar teen Alan Paton." (Not approved. Inform. Objection to Alan Paton).

The letter was discovered among the Nelson Mandela papers in the National Archives by Nelson Mandela Foundation staff and it is published here for the first time by kind permission of Verne Harris, Head of the Memory Programme at the Nelson Mandela Foundation.

Our other offering in this category is a letter describing a visit to Zululand by the writer Nellie Fincher, who worked for the *Witness* about a hundred years ago.

The six articles in this edition of *Natalia* cover an exceptionally wide range of topics: Lightning in Zulu culture, the state of emergency of 1986–1990, flying boats in Natal and Zululand, attempts to create viable harbours on the Natal South Coast in the colonial period, King's School in Nottingham Road and the early days of the Natal Parks Board. The continued strength of the journal is suggested by the fact that all but one of these pieces was submitted unsolicited. Indeed, only recently the Editor received an e-mail from an advocate in New Delhi inquiring whether the forthcoming edition was still open for contributions. He had to be told that *Natalia* 41 was fully subscribed. This inquiry, however, illustrates the increasing value of having the entire *Natalia* corpus freely available on the Internet as this is where our would-be contributor had discovered our existence.

The power of the Internet is also illustrated by an e-mail received by the Editor from Vani Schütte in Germany. She is an Indian South African by birth and came upon *Natalia* in researching her family history. *Natalia* 15 (1985) was an issue devoted to commemorating the 125th anniversary of Indian immigration to Natal

and, among other pieces, published an interview with Mr Sam Chetty. It transpires that he is our correspondent's uncle and so a reunion was arranged of him, Pat McKenzie the *Natalia* Secretary, who has known him for many years, and Moray Comrie, who did the original interview a quarter of a century earlier. A record of this latter-day meeting appears in our Notes and Queries section.

For the rest, we follow our well-established pattern: Notes and queries, obituaries of prominent citizens of the province and book reviews and notices.

It has been the practice in the past to publish an updated index after every 10 volumes. Thus the *Natalia* 11, 21 and 31 editions carried increasingly large indexes. So, what of *Natalia* 41? A new index is due. Times have changed, however. The previous three indexes were prepared by Natal Society Library staff, notably the late David Buckley, as part of their duties and at no extra cost to the journal. But the Natal Society Library is no more and investigation revealed that it would prove an expensive exercise for the Natal Society Foundation, which now funds us, to pay for a new hard-copy index.

And it would have been fruitless expenditure. Since the publication of *Natalia* 31 the Internet and search engines have transformed the way we access information. A series of test searches for *Natalia* material produced a 100% success rate. So if any reader wishes to find out anything which might have been published in any previous edition of *Natalia*, just google it!

We trust, however, that in the brave new world of Internet wonders, a hard copy of *Natalia* 41 will still find a welcome place on the shelves of readers interested in both the past and the present of this region.

JACK FROST