

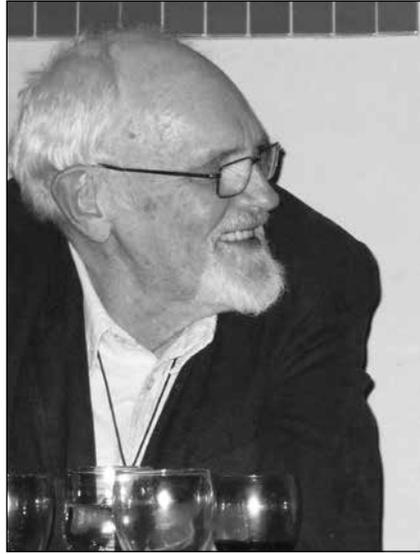
Jefferson John Guy (1940–2014)

I LIVE in a block of flats and one of my neighbours is John Shepstone, a great-great-grandson of Natal's empire-forging Theophilus. This last October, John had recounted to me the story of his discovery, through a serendipitous encounter with a complete stranger, the possibility that his famous forbear may have sired a love child in his youth, a child who was then adopted by a farming family in the Eastern Cape. John had just purchased – but not yet read – Jeff Guy's 530 page biography *Theophilus Shepstone and the Forging of Natal* and asked if I would introduce him to its author as he hoped to find out more.

I invited them both round for supper.

Jeff arrived, bottle of red wine in hand, clearly at war with himself. After all, in his book – over which he had dedicated his labours under immersive conditions for seven years – he had dismissed the theory of a secret Shepstonian offspring. It was a theory, interpreted from an epistolary exchange, which in fact had been developed by other meticulous historians of these events. Jeff had dismissed it in no more than a footnote. "Too much has been made I think of the two surviving letters that Shepstone wrote to Fynn on his return to Grahamstown in 1836 and possibly refer to a pregnancy", he argues, on page 69.

So now, here, on the one hand, was a Jeff who was over supper prepared to be defensive and prickly and to explain himself in lengthy empirical detail on the full matter (he began to read us sections of this and that, making his case) – not *quite* managing to mask the rivalry he brandished when encountering peers in his field.



Jeff Guy celebrating his 70th birthday

But on the other hand, here now too was Jeff the lover of a good puzzle, a welcomer of interesting new ideas and uncertainties, a reveler in intrigues – sexual and otherwise. Here was Jeff the deeply curious and the deeply empathetic, for whom a hidden affair would have likely increased his affection for his book's arrogant main character. (He was invariably more sympathetic to individuals betraying failures or flaws.) Jeff was clearly fascinated by what John related to him; and was struggling now because the weight of his interest had also made him shy.

It says much about Jeff, as a historian and a human being, that this latter side won the day. Generosity prevailed. The next day he turned over to John Shepstone all of his own notes, documents, correspondence on the matter. Included were copies of the letters from the young Theophilus to Henry Francis Fynn, email addresses and his own correspondences from his

professional “rivals” on the matter, their journal articles, writings from his own notebooks – everything he possessed which might allow John to follow up on this interesting matter of family history. And which might prove that Jeff had been wrong.

Jefferson John Guy died in December 2014 in the UK after delivering an invited lecture at the commemoration for anti-imperialist Bishop John William Colenso, whose magnificent story of struggles against the blind power-wielders of his own day Jeff had portrayed in the 1983 biography *The Heretic*.

Unlike his protagonist, he lived a secular life as a proclaimed atheist. But his commitments to truth and justice in his own work, and his admiration for brave acts – bravery lived especially by people vulnerable to the wages of power – revealed a capacity for deep reverence. Religious scholars have commented that Jeff’s work on Colenso has the best understanding of the theology at the heart of the debate, evidence of his dedication to thorough recreations of historical context in his work.

Despite a reputation for being a stormy personality, he was a caring and entertaining friend, holding forth with insights and stories. He had a humour that was wicked, clever, and very very funny. He could be a brutal and witty gossip; yet his disdain was ultimately reserved for the powers and the principalities.

A believer in “slow research” (his most important contributions, starting with *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom* (1979), were in book form), Jeff was bewildered by careerism and the corporatisation of academic engagement. He valued intellectual life

as a humanistic project, writing articles for public newspapers – most especially around issues of economic inequality and global political violence. History, for Jeff, was only relevant as a means to engage with and understand the present. He believed in revolution with a small r and humanity with a big H, which made him vulnerable to his failures of cynicism. A deeply contemplative, and also complicated, human being, Jeff’s ethical sensitivities saw him residing abroad from 1967 until Mandela’s release.

Born in 1940 in Natal, Jeff completed his private schooling in Pietermaritzburg, an experience he remembered grimly. He failed maths and, ironically, history: seven years later, after wandering around southern Africa (crewing on a ship, working on a farm, riding the roads on a motorbike), he rewrote his exams and enrolled at University – where history captured him. He ventured to London where he worked as a teacher. In the light of increasingly intolerable political conditions in South Africa, which saw many of his friends fleeing into exile or detained from 1967, he decided not to return home. In 1971, after marrying Naimi Haque, he taught for 14 years at the Roma campus in Lesotho of the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, where his children – Heli and Joe – were born. He took up a post as history lecturer at the University of Trondheim in Norway, where his family resided until 1992.

A towering figure in South African historiography – particularly for his writings on the colonial past of his native KwaZulu-Natal – Jeff Guy will be remembered by his friends and colleagues for the animated curiosity and concern for justice that informed his craft.

A memorial was held at UKZN's Killie Campbell Africana Library in Durban, the archival repository for documents that formed a cornerstone of Jeff's historical work.

Thembisa Waetjen was Jeff Guy's colleague for 12 years in Historical Studies at UKZN. She is now academic

coordinator of Student International Training (Programme in Social and Political Transformation) and a research associate at the Durban University of Technology.

THEMBISA WAETJEN

(With acknowledgements to the *Sunday Tribune*)

Penelope Anne Haswell (1946–2014)

PENELOPE Anne Haswell (nee Routledge) was born in Barberton on 25 April 1946. Her father was a manager for Barclays Bank and was regularly transferred. First to Pilgrims Rest – where she commenced her schooling in the one-classroom school which still stands – and then to Nelspruit – where one of his clients was James Stevenson-Hamilton, and Penny developed a love of the Lowveld, especially Kruger Park, which remained with her throughout her life. Her father's transfer to Stilfontein, resulted in her attending the Convent of Notre Dame in Kroonstad, from where she matriculated in 1961.

She met Rob Haswell at registration for the University of the Witwatersrand in 1962. He surreptitiously signed her up for the boxing and rugby clubs, but she was one step ahead of him and enrolled him for ballet and debating. Financial constraints saw her leave Wits midway through her second year, but their friendship continued to blossom and they married in Johannesburg in August 1967. The following month they left for the United States, where Rob was to obtain an MSc from Southern



Penny Haswell

Illinois University in 1970. Their first child, Bobby, was born in Murphysboro, Illinois in 1969.

In September 1970 they moved south to Baton Rouge, when Rob was appointed as a Visiting Professor in the Department of Geography and Anthropology at Louisiana State University. Their second son, Benjamin, was born there in 1971, and Penny was able to en-