

Notes and Queries

Hunting for History

Documents are to the historian what the elements are to the chemist or field specimens to the botanist; without them history as a scientific study is impossible. It is pleasing, therefore, to be able to report that the search for Natal documents of all kinds is being actively pursued. Chamber's Dictionary defines a document as *a paper or other material thing affording information, proof, or evidence of anything*, and we urge our readers to spread this interpretation wherever they can; although there is undoubtedly a growing awareness of the importance of preserving things from the past, there are still too many people who think that historians are only interested in the very old and the very important, consequently many fascinating and potentially valuable items are being neglected or destroyed. Some of the people and organizations pursuing and recording documents are described in these pages and we are always glad to receive news of other activities of this kind.

Natal Historical Documents Project

Professor K. McIntyre, Department of History, University of Natal, Durban, is once again appealing to people to preserve family papers. His assistants have travelled the length and breadth of the Province and have succeeded in directing the attention of a number of people to the value of their family papers. The aim of this Project is not the collection of documents so much as the identification and location of them and the intention is to compile a guide to private papers in Natal. Natalians who are still in touch with their overseas relations might find it rewarding to try and trace the letters that were sent home by the first generation of immigrants.

Our readers will hardly need to be reminded of the wonderfully detailed and human picture of the life of the Byrne Settlers that emerges from Ellen McLeod's letters, published in *Dear Louisa*. We are delighted to hear that this work, which has been out of print for some time, is to be republished.

The Killie Campbell Africana Library

The Killie Campbell Africana Library remains the University's premier depository for Africana and Nataliana, and continues to offer to students of Natal history a service of immeasurable value. All who recognise the great debt of gratitude which Natalians and scholars owe to the late Dr. Killie Campbell will welcome the news that the Natal branch of the South African National Society has decided to establish a Dr. Killie Campbell Bursary Fund to assist deserving students in their historical research work.

Mrs. Daphne Strutt, our Durban correspondent, writes:

It is something which would have been very near to her heart, and will stand as a memorial to the splendid way in which she always gave

unstinted help to students of history of all ages and at all times. No one will ever know how many Africana books could not have been written at all without her assistance and encouragement. The trustees who have been appointed for this Fund are:

Prof. F. E. Stock, Principal of the University of Natal.

Mr. T. M. Downie, President of the South African National Society in Natal.

Mr. Guy McDonald, Past President of the South African National Society in Natal.

Mr. P. J. M. Burton-Moore, representing Syfret's Trust and Executor S.A. Ltd.

A target figure of R10 000 has been set, to which the South African National Society has contributed R1 000. To publicise the Killie Campbell Bursary Trust a garden party was held on the afternoon of the 16th June at Muckleneuk, 220 Marriott Road, Killie Campbell's home and now the repository for the University's Campbell Collections. Miss Jenni Duggan, the Librarian in charge of the Collections, gave a splendid and moving address, telling the story of Killie's life and recounting episodes in her collecting adventures. The party was held on the wide terrace below the house and the weather was perfect. Some guests came in Victorian dress, and many ladies wore long gowns and, in the midst of our troublous times, it was a strangely nostalgic scene. After tea on the terrace the staff of the Library conducted parties through the house where everything glowed with well-being and intensified the feeling that Natal's beloved Killie Campbell was very near that day. The gathering was the National Society's idea but without the enthusiastic assistance of the University of Natal, the Campbell Collection staff and in particular Miss Duggan, it would not have been the memorable occasion it undoubtedly was.

Campbell, Stuart, Webb and Wright

1976 has seen the completion of the first stage of a documentation project of immeasurable importance. In March the first volume of the *James Stuart Archive of recorded oral evidence relating to the history of the Zulu and neighbouring peoples* appeared under the joint imprint of the University of Natal Press and the Killie Campbell Africana Library. The editors and translators, Prof. Colin Webb and Mr. John Wright, need no introduction to readers of this journal and it seems probable that *Webb and Wright* will soon be a household word, like *Brookes and Webb*, among all those interested in Natal and Zululand history. Recording of oral information about the African past is very largely a development of the late twentieth century. In the case of the Zulu and neighbouring peoples, however, it began much earlier, with the work of James Stuart. A Natal colonial civil servant, Stuart had a deep interest in the African peoples of Natal, Zululand and Swaziland, and an appreciation, unique for his time, of the need to record not only their customs, beliefs and oral literature, but also their historical traditions before they disappeared under the impact of a transplanted Western culture.

From the late 1890s, when he was about 30 years of age, until his departure

for Britain in the early 1920s, Stuart, a Natalian born and bred, used the extensive contacts with Africans which he acquired as a magistrate and as an official of the Natal Native Affairs Department to seek out informants with historical knowledge, and to record their statements in writing. A fluent Zulu linguist, he was able to gain unusual insights into local history and customs. In his methods of inquiry and recording he anticipated by more than half a century many of the techniques today regarded as standard in the scientific collection of oral evidence.

The statements which Stuart took from a total of nearly 200 informants are now housed, together with his notes and writings on Zulu customs, language and oral literature, in the Killie Campbell Africana Library, Durban. The value of the collection has long been known to scholars, but the virtual impossibility of sorting the mass of documents into any meaningful order makes research from the originals a slow and haphazard business. In 1970 the Department of History and Political Science of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, decided to launch a project aimed at extracting the historical evidence from the collection and publishing it in printed form.

The first volume of what is envisaged as a five-volume work is now available. It contains statements, ranging in length from less than one page to more than fifty, of 39 informants. Among the many topics commented on are Shaka's military campaigns and methods of rule, the court life of Dingane and Mpande, the reactions of Africans in Natal to colonial rule, and the 'Bambatha' disturbances of 1906. To make the volume as useful a research tool as possible, the editors have translated into English those passages originally recorded in Zulu, and have provided comprehensive annotations, as well as an index.

No stone unturned

The compilation of the James Stuart Archive involved the editors and translators in countless hours of desk work, deciphering the manuscripts and poring over Bryant's Zulu Dictionary and other reference works. But research into Zulu history has another, less sedentary, side. Archaeological fieldtrips organized by the Natal Museum give Natal history students the opportunity to learn a great deal about the methods of a closely-allied discipline, and to see at first hand another dimension of the search for 'information, evidence or proof' of the life of the past. The calloused hands, the thorn-torn legs, the wading through crocodile-infested waters, the sunburn and the tick-bites are a small price to pay for the interest and excitement of an excavation. These discomforts also have the effect of making the sufferer feel he is going back in time, for he is experiencing almost exactly what the first pioneers had to endure in their early struggles to subdue virgin country and turn it into agriculturally productive land.

Mr. Martin Hall, a member of the Natal Museum Archaeology Department, has sent this report on the 1976 field excursions:

Archaeologists at the Natal Museum in Pietermaritzburg have been involved in two important excavations this year. The first fieldtrip was to Babanango in Zululand, where a complex of cattle enclosures, built by Iron Age farmers probably between one hundred and fifty and two hundred years ago, was investigated. It would seem that the people

who built the settlement kept both cattle and sheep and grew a variety of crops. Using new recovery techniques remains of maize were found; which is particularly important, since the prehistory of this crop is virtually unknown in Natal and Zululand.

On the second expedition, which was to the Umfolozi Game Reserve in Zululand, a line of game pits, dug by Shaka in the 1820s was mapped and excavated. Information on the method of construction and utilization was obtained, and valuable additions were made to our knowledge of Zulu history.

In June the University Library in Pietermaritzburg presented an exhibition on the theme, Mgungundhlovu. Archaeologists from the University of Cape Town, working in conjunction with the Natal Museum, have mapped the whole of Dingane's settlement, and investigated in detail selected zones of the site. The display of books and photographs demonstrated dramatically the valuable inter-relationship of literary and archaeological sources.

Maps and Mapmakers

So geographers, in Afric maps,
With savage pictures fill their gaps;
And o'er uninhabitable downs
Place elephants for want of towns.

The tone of Swift's verse seems to suggest that there is something inherently inferior about the habitats of elephants and that Africa would have been a better place if its maps had been full of towns. Wildlife enthusiasts would certainly disagree with this point of view but no one would dispute the value of the modern cartographer's more scientific approach. Nonetheless it is to be hoped that those of us who enjoyed the elements of whimsy and fantasy in old maps, may be allowed a few sneaking regrets that to-day there seems to be so little mystery about the face of the once Dark Continent. With or without elephants and dolphins, maps are indispensable documents for all scientists (and once again we include historians in that term) and we are glad to hear that a bibliography of Natal maps, comprising 36 items, published in 1972 by R. A. Brown, former Librarian of the University Library, Pietermaritzburg (see *Natalia* 2 pp 34-36), is being expanded by Mr. Christopher Merrett of the Natal Society Library. The bibliography now covers maps of, or parts of, Natal and Zululand, in sheet form or in books, from 1820 to the present. Excluded are maps wider in scope than Natal and Zululand alone, sketch maps with no academic value, and large scale building plans. Entries are made by area, qualified by subject and date, and each is annotated to outline the scope and content of the map. Cross references are made from a name index of important Natal cartographers. The bibliography currently numbers 300 entries, and the compiler would be interested to hear from anyone possessing relevant maps.

Paintbrush Commando

In *Natalia* 2, 1972, Mrs. Jennifer Verbeek of Pietermaritzburg asked if readers could supply her with information on the Natal paintings of Frans Oerder.

More facts have now been uncovered, and she writes:

Frans Oerder who was 'Official War Artist' to the Boer forces 1900-1902, is known to have worked in Zululand just before the War. None of his Natal paintings was traced in my investigations, but the mystery has now been solved. Oerder's war pictures are very rare indeed and for a very sad reason. According to his son, Oerder was teaching in the Transvaal after the Anglo-Boer war and had all his pictures displayed for a history class when the small schoolhouse burned down and his invaluable pictures and records were all destroyed. A few of his Magersfontein pictures have survived; some are housed in the War Museum, Bloemfontein, and nine sketches were put up for sale at Sotheby's, Johannesburg, on October 31 1975.

Of Bricks and Mortar

In *Natalia* 5, 1975, we drew attention to the Liaison Committee for the Preservation of Historical Amenities and its preliminary list of Durban's historical buildings and amenities of value to the civic community. This project continues and work has also begun on recording notable buildings in Pietermaritzburg. From the Natal Provincial Library and Museum Services comes news of complementary documentation activities. In collaboration with local authorities, local experts and local enthusiasts, the condition of Natal historical sites such as battlefields and forts is being examined and recorded. A register of buildings erected before 1939, excluding Durban and Pietermaritzburg, has been started.

Detailed news of two fine old Durban homes comes from Mrs. Strutt:

Murchie House

The news that 'The House that Withstood Elephants', 745 Ridge Road, is to be preserved and restored is a light in the darkness as far as Durban is concerned. This house, believed to be the first built on the Berea (in about 1849 by Mr. Bishop) was the home of the family of Mr. Alexander Murchie from 1881 until Miss Lillian Murchie, the last of the daughters and now aged 92, recently moved to Gillitts. Murchie House was one of those given top priority rating in *A First Listing of the Important Places and Buildings in Durban*, drawn up by the Liaison Committee in 1974. It was saved because its new owner, Mr. Brian Agar, is a forward-thinking man and recognised its importance. He bought it to save it from the demolishers and is restoring it, at the same time making it a functional home. May this be an example to other Durban property owners or property seekers.

Cato Manor House

Alas, Cato House, built in 1842 for George Cato, first Mayor of Durban — and probably the oldest existing building along the Natal coast — is still unrestored and hovering on the brink of disintegration. It, too, was on the priority listing of buildings worthy of preservation. It was in the hands of the Community Development Department but a Stay of Demolition was obtained some five years ago although not

before the roof and all the woodwork and flooring had been removed. Now it is mercifully, but very temporarily, protected from vandals by the scrub which has grown up around and inside the old building. The brick walls were originally unplastered and where the later plastering has flaked away pieces of shell are clearly visible in the lime cement. Still flapping on some of the interior walls are remnants of the six layers of wallpaper that have superseded each other over the years. The house was built on a drystone foundation and was a typical Natal verandah house. The verandah floors are of brick and slate and the posts — now gone — were of wood. The house was added to in about 1860 and the addition was roofed with iron. Possibly the plastering was done at that time.

Cato House was fortified by means of walls connecting the out-buildings with the main structure and there was a well within this enclosure. It seems completely senseless that this interesting skeleton of a most historic house should be allowed to disintegrate.

While on the subject of buildings, *Natalia* notes the publication of a second collection of pen and ink drawings by Harold Bailey, *Pietermaritzburg and the Natal Midlands*. There is no doubt that the regular appearance of Mr. Bailey's drawings in the *Natal Witness* has helped to open the eyes of many Natalians to the charm of the old buildings around them. The technical skill and artistic merit of the sketches should not, however, mislead us into taking them for reliable historical documents. For example, in the first collection, published last year, there is a drawing of the Christian Science Church at the corner of Loop and Chapel Streets. The church appears to be flanked by a two-storey building which actually stands at the corner of Leighton Street, about a hundred yards further up Loop Street. It is also a pity that both books have been published with exactly the same title.

Charles Dickinson

The upheaval of moving house is something which everyone dreads, but it is when the movers are at the door that forgotten papers turn up in cupboards and corners. When the Natal Society Library moved to its new building last year many treasures were rediscovered, including several albums of old railway photographs and a portfolio of water-colour paintings. The latter find is described by Mrs Verbeek:

Mr Tony Hooper, Librarian of the Natal Society Library, recently brought to my attention a valuable collection of water-colours painted by Charles Dickinson during the 1850s. The paintings are in excellent condition.

The collection was donated in 1938 by Mrs Wood, wife of Dr Willy Wood, then M.O.H. for Pietermaritzburg, and a member of the Natal Society Council. With the pictures is a newspaper cutting dated 24.9.39 which notes, 'An interesting collection of water-colours, made in Natal from 1853 to 1857 has been given to the Natal Society and is now on exhibition in the Public Library. The pictures are the work of Mr C. H. Dickinson who lived in Natal from 1853 until 1870. Mr Dickinson

had an eye for a picturesque bit of landscape and he made many sketches as he wandered about the country. He must surely have been the first artist to paint the Valley of a Thousand Hills, although to him it was only the "View of Inanda from the Durban-Maritzburg road". From an historical point of view the most important are those showing Durban and Maritzburg. There is an interesting picture of the Point and Bluff painted from Salisbury Island and also a view of 'Maritzburg "from the road to the Bishop's station". This was obviously painted from Mountain Rise on the road to Bishopstowe . . . showing fairly clearly the extent to which the town had spread in 1857 . . .'

Charles Hammond Dickinson arrived in Natal in the early 1850s. In *Pictorial Africana* Gordon-Brown notes that a C. Dickinson painted scenes of the Cape in the early 1850s, and if this should be the same Dickinson, (and there is no reason to suppose otherwise), then it is probable that he arrived in Natal after a short stay in the Cape.

Marianne Churchill Gillespie refers to having met a friend of her brother Frank, 'Charlie Dickinson', who was about the same age as her brother (25?), and that he was 'engaged to be married in two years'. Mrs Shelagh Spencer's *Register of Natal Families* notes his marriage in 1858.

Another newspaper clipping of the same date, this time from the *Natal Witness*, describes Charles Dickinson as an 'old resident of Pietermaritzburg.' Descendants of Dickinson who still live in the Capital have informed me that he first earned his living as an ironmonger at 23 Longmarket Street, Pietermaritzburg, and then went farming near Baynesfield. He retired to England before the Anglo-Boer War, and many of the inscriptions on the backs of the paintings which read, 'C. H. Dickinson, Ilfracombe', were probably inserted at a later date. He did not return to Natal, and died at Ilfracombe 'sometime near the turn of the century'.

Postscript

It is to be hoped that among all the documentary treasures which Natalians are uncovering, some of the earliest Natal postage stamps will be found. A local philatelist, Mr E. C. Wright, urges the greatest care with old stamps: no attempt should be made to remove the stamp, and the whole envelope should be preserved intact. An article by Mr Wright on the first Natal postage stamps will appear in the next issue of *Natalia*.

The Duke's People

The attention of the Editorial Board has been drawn to the fact that some of the settlers mentioned in this article in *Natalia* 5 were not Buccleuch settlers. William Payn came on the *Edward* and was from St Lawrence in Jersey, while John and William Nicholson were both born in the East Riding of Yorkshire. They did have connexions with Hampshire as both married Hampshire girls, two sisters, the Misses Harrow of Alton, and John, prior to emigrating, had been living in the same parish as the Duke's tenants. The Nicholsons arrived with their families on the *Sandwich* more than two months

after the *Lady Bruce* had reached Port Natal. Mrs John Nicholson's first letter home in 1850 describes how her husband set out, two days after landing in Durban, for the Illovo in order to see the Beaulieu people, and at the same time to look for suitable land. She recounts that he was impressed with the area where the Buccleuch people had settled, and was able to get permission to have his allotments and his brother's, situated in the same district.

The full list of the Duke's people taken from lists received by John Moreland from Byrne & Co. (which can be seen in the Moreland Papers in the Natal Archives) is as follows:

CROUCH, John 46, Frances 45, Priscilla 23, George 21, Stephen 19, Eliza 14.

CROUCH, William 29, Sarah Jane 23, Ann 6, William 3, John 1.

GREGORY, Charles 18.

GODDEN, John 41, Anne 44, John 18, George 11.

GODDEN, Isaac 38, Sarah 35, William 9, Mary 7, Emma 3, Jane 1.

STOTE (or STOTT), James.

FOSS, Ambrose 36, Mary 40, Anne 16, Wyatt 14, Elias 12, Richard 10, Eliza 2.

WARN, John 20.

WILLIS, William 19.

WESTBROOK, James 19, Henry 17.

HOUSE, Charles 18.

BURGESS, William 16.

BOUND, Charles.

The New Cathedral Centre

Natalia, 1, 1971, included an article by Kenneth B. Hallowes, Bishop Suffragan of Natal, entitled *A New Cathedral Centre for Pietermaritzburg*, which discussed the modern concept of a Cathedral and outlined the many factors to be taken into account by the Pietermaritzburg Cathedral-Centre Committee.

Now, five years later, many of the problems have been solved and the detailed planning has been completed. The latest news of the project comes from Bishop Hallowes:

On the evening of July 16th, 1976, the result of the Architectural Competition for the new Anglican Centre in Pietermaritzburg was announced. The first prize went to two Cape Town architects, Mr E. Kammeyer and Mr N. Rozendal whose design was described as having 'an outstanding conceptual clarity which set it apart from other schemes submitted.'

The winning design expresses very clearly the relationship of the Church to the world and the community in which it is situated. It is a 'sanctuary', but, at the same time, looks out and reaches out to the community around it, thus expressing something of the function of a Cathedral in the world of to-day.

There is also a clear distinction between the structural building area, and the natural 'parkland'. In the words of the assessors 'It is the

relationship between parkland and the accommodation structure which is one of the significant qualities of this design. The minimum area of this fine urban site is built upon.'

'St Peter's Church remains untouched by this development', the assessors' report continues, 'and it is used as an historical entrance foil to the new Place of Worship which is directly behind it. The height of the Place of Worship is the same as the height of St Peter's Church.'

The architects have also fitted their design to the proposed designs of the City planners, and the 'Bells Mall' is a feature of it.

It will be noted that we have spoken of a 'Cathedral-Centre', rather than of a 'Cathedral'. The Centre is designed to give accommodation for purposes of Worship, Fellowship and Administration.

For Worship there will be the Worship Hall to seat 750 with the possibility of extending to 1 000 on special occasions.

For Fellowship there will be a refectory for 80 people, extending to a hall for bigger occasions; a lunch room to seat 30 people; a common kitchen to serve both rooms; a lecture hall with raking floor seating 200; ten rooms for smaller meetings, Sunday School, etc., and a resource centre and library.

For Administration, there will be various offices for the Bishop, the Dean and other personnel, a flat for a caretaker, together with storage facilities for cleaners, etc.

Many local people were disappointed that one or other of our Pietermaritzburg architects did not win the competition, but the anonymity of the competition must be stressed. No one knew who the authors of the design were until the envelopes of winning designs were opened.

It is hoped that building will commence by the middle of 1977, but there is a great deal of work to be done by both the Architects and the new Cathedral Building Committee before the final details are completed, and the project is put out for tender. We trust that the Centre will not only play an important functional role in our city, but will also grace it aesthetically.

The new Cathedral-Centre is to be called the *Cathedral Church of the Holy Nativity*, a choice of name which has not passed without comment. The correspondence columns of *The Natal Witness* carried a number of letters regretting the submersion of the names of the two historic Cathedrals into a name which revealed nothing of the origins of the new Cathedral parish.

The inaccuracy of the story that Natal was discovered on Christmas Day was also pointed out. One of the correspondents expressed his 'sadness at the abandonment of names which have been part of the fabric of Church and community since 1857 in the one case and 1869 in the other, a move which one cannot but regard as an act of historical vandalism' (12.3.1976). Another correspondent suggested that the retention of the names, St Saviour

and St Peter, would 'symbolise and emphasise the unity of the two churches in the new Cathedral'. The choice of name has been defended on the grounds that it would be inappropriate to link the Saviour's name with that of His saint, Peter. The question of historical inaccuracy notwithstanding, it is argued, the name 'Natal' is with us, and the Star of Bethlehem is incorporated in the diocesan coat of arms; hence the suitability of 'Nativity' for this diocese.

Steam Power

Encore!

It was after we went to press last year that Pietermaritzburg people were invited to say 'Farewell to steam', marking the end of local steam-driven passenger services with a ceremonial jaunt to Howick, organised by the local Branch of the S.A. Railway Society. The response was so overwhelming that, even though an extra coach was added, many would-be travellers were disappointed.

It was a happy day, flavoured with a spicy mixture of excitement and nostalgia, smoke and cinders, sunshine and steam, energy and high spirits. There were many children in the party but it was undoubtedly the adults who responded to the sense of occasion and felt a twinge of sadness at the passing of the age of steam.

So successful was the outing that it has been repeated twice and shows every sign of becoming a regular Pietermaritzburg entertainment. Those of us who took part in the November farewell may be forgiven for feeling a little cheated that what was supposed to be 'the last steam train' turned out to be the first of a series! On the other hand, no one really minds seeing the grand old engine, like a retiring stage star, returning for more and more curtain calls.

Railways — 'The greatest civilizing agency'

The 'Steam Specials' to Howick have given local photographers some superb opportunities for railway photography and we hope that someone will organise an exhibition of these pictures. Those who rode in the trains would be pleased to see how they looked to those who crowded the crossings and the embankments, while the photographers would welcome the chance to compare their pictures.

Many magnificent railway photographs of an earlier period were recently displayed at the Local History Museum, Durban. The exhibition was unique in that these photographs, many from private sources, had never before been shown together. The railway exhibition in August and September was organised by the South African National Society to mark the centenary of the ceremony on January 1 1876, when the first sod was turned to initiate the building of the line from Durban to Pietermaritzburg.

This was, of course, not Natal's first railway, for the line between Durban and the Point built by the Natal Railway Company, had been opened as early as 1860; the extension to Umgeni had begun operations in 1867. The N.G.R. was conceived in 1875 when the Natal Government was empowered to take over the existing lines and raise a loan to finance the construction

of the Pietermaritzburg line, and in January 1877 the Natal Government Railways officially came into being.

Among the exhibits were a wooden model of the Durban station, examples of early surveying equipment, the first survey maps, and a number of fascinating printed items such as brochures, timetables and menus. The exhibition was opened by Mr J. C. B. Irving, Natal System Manager of the South African Railways, who gave an interesting résumé of Natal railway development.

Pollution-free puffer

Technicians in the Physics Department, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, have recently rescued and lovingly restored an old Stirling engine. This was probably acquired in 1910 when the N.U.C.'s first science equipment was bought. At that stage the infant College had no premises of its own and was sharing the Maritzburg College labs. Mr Roger Barker has sent this Note about the engine:

This type of external combustion engine, invented by Robert Stirling in 1816, contributes little or nothing to air pollution, and is entirely quiet in operation. Its virtues make it a possible alternative to the internal combustion engine. It can run on any fuel, including sunlight.

Research on Stirling-principle engines has been done in Sweden and the Netherlands, and prototype engines have been installed in boats and buses. Unfortunately the production costs of the engine could not be reduced to meet the competition of other engines.

Operation of the engine depends on change in volume of the air enclosed between the piston and cylinder. The increase in volume of the trapped air is effected by the application of an external heat source, in this case Propane gas. The air is cooled again by water circulating in the green water jacket.

The strong virtue of this type of engine in the present state of affairs, is its cleanness of operation. The external combustion takes place continuously in a hot walled chamber. There is obviously no limit on the amount of air that can be supplied for combustion purposes. As a result, the unburnt residual gases characteristic of internal combustion engines are eliminated.

It seems probable that sociological pressures will soon force the addition of a pollution control device for petrol and diesel engines. This financial pressure on the internal combustion engine would make the economics of the Stirling engine appear better than they do at the present time.

... Horse Power

In his review of Patricia Vinnicombe's *People of the Eland* (see p. 53) Mr David Lewis-Williams has drawn attention to the large number of horses which figure in the Bushman paintings of the Drakensberg. The Bushmen

were quick to appreciate the usefulness of horses and the colonists within reach of the raiding parties from the mountains suffered heavy losses. These nineteenth century Natal horses must have been tough, hardy beasts but Daphne Child in *Saga of the South African horse* says little about them. The history of the horse in Natal might be an interesting topic to pursue.

Horses for the Jameson Raid

Dr B. J. T. Leverton has uncovered some information about a Natal horse breeder:

As a body of colonists the Natalians were not very much directly affected by the Jameson Raid of 1896 and many suspected that behind it all was the hand of that arch opponent of theirs, Cecil Rhodes. Many of them wanted nothing to do with antagonism towards the Transvaal, but yet there was one who was called in to play his part in the planning of the ill-timed sortie. This was a Boston farmer by the name of Joseph Jardine, one of Natal's foremost horse breeders. On his farm 'Calderwood' from the late 1870s he bred horses of all kinds and types, for the race track and hardier horses for other purposes. For the Jameson raid a very hardy type of horse was needed which could go longish periods of time without water or proper forage. For this type of animal Jardine was approached and, as usual, he was able to produce the goods. All the horses supplied by him were quietly moved through the Free State to their ultimate destination. In the raid itself Jardine's animals proved their worth and it was not on their account that it was aborted. In the fighting in Natal which followed the 1899 Boer invasion hundreds of horses were needed and Joseph Jardine once again came to the fore with help. Unlike many horse breeders in Natal Jardine immediately saw the threat of motorised power after the turn of the century and abandoned his breeding of horses in time for him to turn to something else.

Natal's Astronomer Extraordinary

For most people astronomy is a subject of only the remotest interest, but two events in 1976 have brought it somewhat nearer to the man-in-the-armchair: the coming of television has brought Patrick Moore's extensive knowledge and vivid accounts of the heavens right into our homes, and the Viking spacecraft has landed on Mars.

Astronomical observation in Natal goes back well over a hundred years and its story is now being pieced together by Mr. M. A. Gray, Secretary and Historian of the Natal Centre of the Astronomical Society. He writes:

Upon the recent rediscovery of a 3" diameter Transit telescope which is now residing in the Local History Museum, Durban, it was decided to embark upon a research project — to trace the history of this 1880 instrument, and of the Natal Observatory which was built in 1882 in the Botanic Gardens, Currie Road, Durban, and finally demolished in 1950.

The search for old information has proved fascinating and naturally,

frustrating as there are inevitable gaps. Some of these gaps could well be filled by your readers. The period from 1850 onwards until 1912 has been almost completed and the work has broadened to include the whole of the works of the man who was invited out to the old Colony by Sir David Gill (Astronomer Royal, Cape Town) and Mr. Harry Escombe (Durban) in 1882 to observe the December 1882 transit of Venus; this was Edmund N. Nevill — or, as he preferred to be known — Neison.

Apart from astronomical observations, Neison's work soon extended itself to include meteorology (he set up 46 observing stations in Natal), chemistry, toxicology, agriculture, assaying and the compiling of Natal's tide tables.

Neison was frequently in the centre of many stormy debates as to 'why such a person as a mere Astronomer, who spends much of his time playing tennis and at night reclines under a telescope for no apparent good purpose' should receive any salary at all! During his thirty year sojourn in Durban, he actually had to forego his salary on several *annual* occasions but stolidly kept on churning out invaluable data concerning our weather, and the heavens about us and answering many rude letters in the Press.

He married one of his assistants, Miss Maud Grant (Grant's Grove, Durban) and changed his name back to Nevill. He and his spouse were forced to live in a small ramshackle hut where all the computing had to be done, until the Colonial Government finally relented and acceded to a ten-year-old request that a house be constructed. The Nevill family then moved in, but not before he had finished off the plastering and installed the plumbing at his own expense! Their third child was born in this house — which is presently occupied by the Department of Health. Eventually he gave up the unequal struggle and retired to England, arriving in Southampton the day before the Titanic was sunk in 1912. He eventually died in England in 1946 and was survived by his wife for a few years.

What of the Observatory after 1912? A fully trained assistant (Mr. Hodgson) was to take over the work, but he suddenly became seriously ill within a month of Nevill's departure and, being 'a most intractable and irascible patient' he and his Maker finally came to terms and he died in a Natal nursing home, leaving the Observatory without any trained staff. The Observatory was forced to close down but fortunately, the meteorological and chemical work had by then been taken over by the new Union Government. The place became a ghost of its former self but was still equipped with some superb and very costly instrumentation — a lot of which had been purchased and donated to Natal by Nevill.

The Union Government then offered the Observatory to the City of Durban which accepted with alacrity. The City Council soon found this possession embarrassing as there was nobody around who knew how to operate any of the equipment and in 1916/7 the Council offered it to the new Technical College, which, some years later, gave it all to the University of Natal. The 4" refractor telescope is now in the care

of the Department of Physics, Pietermaritzburg, and the transit telescope eventually came to rest in the Local History Museum, Durban. Of the six that were specially constructed only one other is known to have survived, and is now in the Observatory at Greenwich. The 8" Grubb telescope which had been purchased in 1881 at a cost of £600 by Mr. Escombe and paid for out of his own pocket was sent to the University but has unfortunately not been preserved.

In 1924, under the presidency of Dr. Sam Campbell (Technical College, Natal University, etc.) a local Astronomical Society was formed and this ran successfully for a number of years. Eventually the old guard died off and so did the Society until it was reconstituted round about 1946. Since then it has had its ups and downs but is a strong society at the time of writing.

Any reader who has old photographs or memories of the Observatory—especially for the period from 1912 onwards—is asked to contact Mr. Gray at P.O. Box 2704, Durban 4000. All assistance will be very greatly appreciated and all original material will be returned after suitable copying.

The Caxton Connection

1976 is the five hundredth anniversary of the year in which William Caxton brought the art of printing to Britain. It seems an appropriate opportunity for us to draw attention to the life and work of Peter Davis, whose name is synonymous with printing and publishing in Natal.

A compositor by trade, Peter Davis came to Natal in 1850 to work on the printing staff of *The Natal Witness* in Pietermaritzburg. Two years later he and a man named John May purchased the paper. The partnership of May and Davis lasted until 1860. By 1863 Peter Davis had been joined by his sons and they were able to expand the business and open a second printing works in Durban. It was under the direction of Peter Davis Jnr that the firm reached its peak and it ceased to exist after his death in 1919.

In 1922 Davis' widow presented to the N.U.C. Library nearly 4 000 of her late husband's personal collection of books. This had the effect of more than doubling the size of the College library which, at that time, was housed in the Main Hall.

A bibliography of publications with the Davis imprint, which was begun by the late Dr H. L. Maple, a former librarian of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, is being continued by Mr. Brian Spencer. He will be glad to receive information about Davis publications and can be contacted at the University Library, Pietermaritzburg.

Supernatural Natalians

The story about Alexander Beale's supposed haunting of the old Natal Society Library building started us wondering whether Natal has any other ghosts. While we admit that the supernatural is not the province of the historian, it is true that it is not only fact but also legend that make up the many-textured fabric of the past. Our readers might care to send in ghostly anecdotes.

Tailpiece

A number of people responded to our appeal for information about the earlier distribution of baboons in Natal (*Natalia* 5), and there seems little doubt that they were widely distributed in the Natal midlands. There are records of encounters with baboons at various times in the Karkloof, the Mid-Illovo district, near Table Mountain, on the Ntabamnyama at Rosetta and on the farm *New Forest* in the kloof leading up to the headwaters of the Umgeni. This evidence certainly shows that our enquirer was misled in his assumption that they had been confined to the Berg and the coastal bush, but suggests that they usually chose to live within reach of rugged country.

DAPHNE H. STRUTT

M. MOBERLY