

Notes and Queries

York Church Commemorated

This year saw the centenary of the foundation of the Anglican church of St John the Evangelist at York, Natal. The township was established in 1850 by a party of 246 Yorkshire settlers who came out under a scheme of co-operative emigration. The promoter, Henry Boast, a much-respected farmer, arranged for the sailing but the ship chartered for the voyage was found unseaworthy by the authorities and Boast had to pay for the maintenance of the stranded passengers until the *Haidee*, the replacement vessel, was ready some months later. The strain was too much for him and he died at Hull before sailing. His wife Mary Boast bravely decided to continue the scheme and assisted by her relatives accompanied the party to Natal. Land had already been purchased and the settlers, most of them experienced farmers, set to work to establish themselves on their plots. They produced grain, salted butter, hides, bacon, and timber sawn out of the bush. Since it was the age of horse-transport, they specialised in forage for the Pietermaritzburg market.

The township, however, never flourished. The inhabitants, a devout community, protested strongly against a railway line through York, reputedly because it would involve the erection of a hotel with bar and they were opposed to drink. Consequently the line was laid through New Hanover, which has continued to flourish whereas York has become a ghost-town of three dwellings.

In 1877 those settlers who were members of the Church of England constructed their own simple building, made of local shale and Gospel Oak roof-iron. It is now the only church left in York as the Wesleyan church, built in 1851, was demolished recently after standing empty for years.

The present Anglican rector, the Rev. I. D. Darby, conducted well-attended services during the period of celebration. Descendants of the original settlers came together also. The Ancient Africa Club of Pietermaritzburg held an outing for members and friends, who were shown round the church and the old graveyard containing the memorial stones of many settlers. Mr. Darby also spoke on the history of York and its sturdy pioneers. An attractive booklet entitled *The Church of St John the Evangelist, York, Natal, 1877-1977* and compiled by Ethel Norman Paterson also commemorates the occasion.

Trade Tokens

An interesting enquiry has been received from Dr. Clive Graham, Secretary of the Pietermaritzburg Numismatic Society.

Until recently few South African numismatists have been interested in the collection and documentation of trade tokens, i.e. 'coins' issued by private

firms to facilitate trade in periods when coin of the realm was in short supply. Collectors now realise the historical importance of these tokens in the development of South African currency, but their attempts to research into the precise circumstances surrounding the minting of these pieces, where they were minted, the dates of issue and the numbers produced are severely hampered by lack of original documentation. The trade token catalogue of the Africana Museum is itself a pure description of trade tokens, with minimal historical detail. Enquiries have recently been directed to the Birmingham Mint, which is frequently mentioned in connection with trade tokens, but they have replied that no records have been kept by the Mint of *any* of the private issues they have produced. The accumulation of historical information concerning trade tokens therefore seems to be our own responsibility, and assistance is earnestly requested.

A unique opportunity for the study of trade tokens was recently provided by Mr. K. Strachan of Umzimkulu, who made available for numismatic study the entire issue of Strachan and Company trade tokens. These are brass coins, in 3d., 6d., 1/- and 2/- denominations, bearing the inscription 'S & Co'. Details concerning the varieties and relative abundance of these coins have been acquired in an extensive examination of the coins provided, but historical details concerning the dates of issue, precise reasons of issue, etc., are conspicuously absent.

The firm of Strachan and Company was established in the Drift (now Umzimkulu, East Griqualand), by Thomas and Donald Strachan, in 1858, but the first documentary evidence of the tokens is a reference to them in a letter dated 1907. However, the two decades 1860-1880 were our main period of acute shortage in small change, during which many private tokens were issued. From our examinations of the coins available, there seem to have been four separate mintings, and we strongly suspect that the first issue may have been during the above period. Readers' assistance with information concerning this issue in particular, and in the wider problem of trade tokens in general will be most gratefully received.

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Maps

Last year we mentioned Christopher Merrett's bibliography of Natal maps. During 1977 this energetic carto-bibliographer has turned his attention to the Trigonometrical Survey 1 : 50 000 series of South Africa and compiled a two-part index to the maps. Part I covers the 157 Natal sheets, Part II the rest of South Africa. The *Index to the 1 : 50 000 map series* is published by the Natal Society Library.

'The basis of the index,' the compiler writes in the Introduction of Part I, 'is essentially that of the human environment, covering the following: settlements, railway stations, sites of historical importance, mission stations, dams, game and nature reserves; but lakes, passes and coastal features are also listed.

'The index is in no way intended as an authoritative gazetteer of Natal. Having been based strictly on the coverage given by the map, it suffers from

the deficiencies of maps in general (bias and lack of currency) and the 1 : 50 000 series in particular. Thus place names are reproduced as they occur on the map even where there is doubt about accuracy. In the case of settlements, the Automobile Association map of Natal (revised edition February 1976) was used as a guideline and all place-names shown on that map also appear in the index. The term 'settlement' is hard to define, especially in the case of non-European areas. In this connexion it was decided to list all agglomerations of population which were shown on the map to have a minimum of three urban functions (e.g. a school, church and shop). Thus scattered African settlement with no central place function is excluded.

'It is important to remember that coverage of Natal varies in date from place to place. Thus the currency of the index is variable, depending on the date of a particular sheet—the latest may be 15 years old. A list of place names found on the AA map but not on the 1 : 50 000 series forms appendix 1.'

Grave Business

Readers of English tombstones know that much wry humour is to be found in churchyards: South African gravestones tend to be more factual and less whimsical but, though they may be somewhat more solemn in tone than those in older cemeteries, they also record a wealth of historical information.

A number of burial registers listing the graves in the Church of England, Wesleyan and Dutch Reformed cemeteries in Commercial Road, Pietermaritzburg, have been handed over to the Natal Society Library by the local branch of the Van der Stel Foundation.

There are 13 volumes in all, of which six are alphabetical indexes. One of the Church of England indexes lists a few burials from the 1870s but the majority of the entries were made between the mid-1880s and the 1930s. The information contained in the entry varies from volume to volume but in general they all list the names of persons buried, the date of burial and the number of the grave; in some registers there is a column in which is entered whether the deceased is child or adult; in others the age is stated; (one is struck by the large number of infant deaths). The officiating clergyman is listed in some of the registers and in some the burial fees are recorded.

These registers will be invaluable in locating particular graves, and in establishing the burial dates of the people listed. Unfortunately, however, the records are not complete so they cannot, at this stage, be used to prove conclusively that a particular person is *not* buried there. It is to be hoped that the missing volume or volumes will come to light.

Mystery Mine

Roadwork near Sarnia exposed part of what is believed to have been an early gold mine. Although experts who have examined the shaft have expressed the opinion that it must have been the work of experienced miners, neither the Pietermaritzburg Regional Office of the Geological Survey, nor the Government mining engineer in Johannesburg has any record of the workings or of any permission granted to work such a mine.



The Church of St John the Evangelist, built a hundred years ago at the village of York in the Karkloof district of Natal. It was constructed of flat shale stones, hand-cut roof beams, and a roof of Gospel Oak iron. The people of York have long since left the village but there are services twice a month for farmers and their families living nearby.

(Photo: John Clark)

This intriguing information was supplied by Mrs. Mary Macartan of Pinetown who has spent several months unravelling the mystery of this unrecorded mine. The results of her researches have recently been written up in a supplement to the Pinetown Women's Institute's *Annals of Pinetown*.

Great Scot

Earlier this year George Gordon Campbell, Chancellor of the University of Natal and scion of one of the most talented, tough and versatile pioneer families, died after a long illness. The following tribute is taken from the funeral eulogy delivered by Professor Francis Stock, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University:

George Campbell was a descendant of a pioneer Natal family, his forebears having arrived on the *Conquering Hero* in 1850 among the Byrne settlers. Most of these settlers were tough and none more so than the Campbell clan. The name of the ship on which William Campbell, the original settler came, might have been an inspiration to those that followed. Marshall Campbell, W. A. C. Campbell, Roy Campbell, Killie Campbell and Sam Campbell all made their mark on Natal in a variety of ways.

George Gordon Campbell was born in Natal in 1893 and became a legend in his lifetime. He was educated at Hilton briefly and then at Maritzburg College. He entered this University in 1912, two years after its foundation, and in the year that our first permanent building was opened on the Scottsville campus. He proceeded to Edinburgh to study medicine, but the war intervened and he volunteered for service in the newly-founded Royal Flying Corps. At the time of his death a few days ago, he was one of the few surviving members of that elite corps—the fabric and string brigade that started the war—firing revolvers out of open cockpits. He returned to medicine, qualifying first with the M.B., Ch.B. degrees of the University of Edinburgh and later becoming, like his father before him, a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh.

Dr. George, as he was known, was not interested only in his studies. He was a keen and distinguished cricket player, captaining the Edinburgh University XI and playing for Scotland in two international matches against the Australians. He returned to general medical practice in Durban and continued this until a few years before his death, with the exception of the years of the Second World War, when he commanded a medical unit in the Western desert.

George Campbell's claims to distinction, however, were to be found in fields outside medicine. He followed in his father's footsteps in becoming President of the Natal Technical College, later to become the Natal College for Advanced Technical Education, and he was chairman of the College Council for many years. He was also a member of the Council of the Natal University College, later to become the University of Natal, being its chairman for 14 years until 1966 when he was elected to the Chancellorship, a post he held for a further seven years, resigning only due to ill-health.

He played a large part in the foundation and development of the Medical Faculty of the University of Natal, the only faculty in Southern Africa dedicated exclusively to the education of African, Indian and Coloured doctors.

He inspired the foundation of the Natal Society for the Preservation of Wildlife, and of the South African Association for Marine Biological Research, and as President of both these bodies for many years he guided their destiny and the development of conservation of the natural resources of land and sea, as well as of scientific research in these fields.

He played an important part in the development of the Royal Society of South Africa and was a founder member of the Natal Branch, of which he became President. The parent society in due course made him an Honorary Fellow and President.

The University of Natal, in collaboration with the Royal Society of South Africa, created a George Campbell lectureship in 1974 to commemorate his lifelong interest and contributions to medical and biological sciences. The first lecture was given in 1974, and the second will be given in about six weeks' time when the George Campbell Building for Biological Sciences in the University will be formally opened.

George Campbell was honoured by both the universities with which he was associated with the award of honorary degrees, in each case a Doctor of Laws. He also received civic honours in the City of Durban in recognition of all that he had done in his lifelong association with the City.

The contributions which Dr. George Campbell made to medicine, science, the University, the Technical College, the College for Advanced Technical Education, and other interests in the City were substantial. The recognition he received was local, national and international, but despite all these things George was never unmindful of his colleagues, nor did he lose the common touch. He will be remembered by all manner of men and institutions with gratitude and affection.

Natal Historian

In April this year the University mourned the death of another of its members, Professor Kenneth McIntyre. Although his own special interest was American history, he contributed so much to historical studies in Natal and to the training of historians that he deserves to be long remembered as a historian *in* Natal, if not *of* Natal.

Dr Andrew Duminy, Senior Lecturer in Historical and Political Studies, University of Natal, Durban, writes of the Professor with affectionate appreciation:

Professor K. H. C. McIntyre was known to all members of his staff—senior and junior—as ‘Mac’. This indicates the extent to which he ran the Department of History and Political Science at the University of Natal, Durban, with friendliness and informality. This arrangement required that his colleagues responded with the same openness and discussed departmental and private projects freely with each other. They will remember how it produced a unique and congenial atmosphere in which to work. They could feel that they were participating in a joint undertaking and sharing in its growth.

Mac was blinded in a landmine explosion while serving with the Royal Natal Carbineers during the Allied advance upon Florence in 1944. He would never allow that blindness was a disability and this point he proved with remarkable effectiveness—he compensated for not being able to read the written word by developing a complex system of reference to his tape

recordings and braille notes. Unable to rely, as do sighted people, upon 'looking things up' when the need arises, he stored information in his memory and was able to recall it when needed. His proficiency in remembering where things were, in navigating his way around his home or the department and in identifying people by their sounds (not necessarily their voices) was such that many, when first introduced to him, did not realise that he was unsighted.

It may be asserted that Professor McIntyre's greatest contribution to his academic discipline was to build up the Department of History and Political Science in Durban. In 1949, when he was appointed Lecturer, the department was a small offshoot of the department in Pietermaritzburg. He saw it (and he did not shrink from using this word) grow from this small beginning, through its part-time, Marion and City buildings phases, to reach its present strength and was appointed its first Professor in 1970. In addition to his administrative duties, he always took a full teaching load—he once recalled that he had lectured in every course which the department offered, some of these lectures being delivered on three separate occasions during the week! It was only after the department had grown sufficiently to allow for more specialisation that he was able to confine himself to American history, a subject in which he developed a special interest.

One of Mac's concerns was to create links between the historians in the University and interested persons—particularly teachers—outside it. To this end, he established the John Bird Historical Society. Its first meeting took place on 18 March 1960, when Professor E. H. Brookes delivered a paper on the formation and consequences of South African Unification. Thereafter, among the many prominent academics who contributed to its proceedings were M. W. Swanson, B. A. le Cordeur, S. Trapido, P. B. Harris, C. de B. Webb and T. Cope. The Society was an undoubted success in stimulating interest and its published proceedings constitute a valuable body of literature; many of these papers have in fact been republished in revised form by their authors.

His opportunities for undertaking research were few but he actively promoted and took an interest in the projects of others. One undertaking in particular aroused his interest: the compilation of a register of early Natal settlers, for which purpose he obtained a grant from the Ernest Oppenheimer Trust (this work is being continued by Mrs. Shelagh Spencer). He was also associated with the lengthy project to publish selections from the papers of Sir Percy Fitzpatrick and with the compilation of the recently-published *Guide to Unofficial Sources relating to the History of Natal*.

Mac died suddenly on April 20th, after an amazing recovery from a major operation at the end of last year. He will be remembered for his good humour, his courage and for the trust which he always placed in others.

Dundee Seeks Its History

1977 has seen the opening of a historical museum in Dundee. The enthusiasm of those responsible for assembling the collection is reflected in this local account of their activities:

It is not our Dutch ancestors alone who had the trekking spirit, nor David Livingstone alone, who reached the Zambezi. The researchers of the

Dundee and District Historical Society are travelling far and wide as they seek the lost relics and stories of the gallant pioneers who settled this entrancing part of Natal. They were tough stock, the Landmans and Labuschagnes, the Vermaaks and Cronjés, the Van Tonders and Kempes and the many others who marched beside Andries Pretorius to meet fate head-on at Blood River and who later, victorious, returned to the sheltered, wooded kloofs and the windswept heights of the Biggarsberg to put down their roots. Beside them marched and dwelt Englishmen. Alexander Biggar, the Rev. Parker Joyce, Dr. Prideaux Selby, their first doctor and J.P., James Twyman and Richard Bodien, their first teachers. Forts starred the map on this troubled frontier of the Buffalo, and as Zulu impis and Redcoats, Boer Commandos and Regiments of the Line marched and countermarched through this crossroads of South African history, tiny crossed swords sprinkled the map and the names of Isandhlwana and Rorke's Drift, Talana and Elandsplaagte spelt massacre and heroism on the grand scale.

After 1850 the postal lists showed families whose aristocratic blood lines linked them with the great in British history. Hyde and Neville, Comins and Dimock, Brandon and Napier, Urquhart and Bremner were of true blue blood. Into the hills came descendants of the great Admiral Collingwood, close friend and second-in-command to Nelson at Trafalgar, and of General Vandeleur of Waterloo fame. Out rode transport riders, Collyer and Schwikard, Dubois and Munger, to the diamond fields of Kimberley, to Barberton, to Pilgrim's Rest, over the Limpopo to the Tati and on to the mighty Zambezi and back to the incredible golden Reef. They helped build Southern Africa.

Missionaries trekked in to bring Christianity; the Reverend Döhne to Helpmekaar, the Reverend Prozesky to Normandien, and to Waschbank the Austrian Trappists who built the lovely Maria Ratschitz church beneath Hlatikulu, and the great evangelising Zulu Methodists, the Msimangs.

This exciting picture is being slowly and painstakingly sketched in by a small band of amateur historians. They have found their facts in the Rhodesian Archives in Salisbury, in the Mendelssohn Collection of the Houses of Parliament in Cape Town, at the University of the Witwatersrand, in the Killie Campbell Library in Durban and in the Archives in Pietermaritzburg.

The trail, however, yields its richest treasure from the hands of private persons. The keepers of family relics are usually the womenfolk and as they change their names on marriage, the trail is often confused and even lost. Some HYDE relics have been found with Pringles, Colepeper and Pousties, PASCOE papers with Mortons and Martins, a BIGGAR diary with a Krohn, DIMOCK photographs with Parrs and COMINS silver with Harries. Through the distaff side valuable relics have been traced to Somerset West, Amanzimtoti, Klerksdorp, Windhoek, Bulawayo and far beyond, even to Tasmania. Much new information relating to Voortrekkers and to 1820 and 1850 Settlers is being found. The fine portrait that forms the frontispiece of the latest Brenthurst Africana publication, *The Kitchingman Papers*, was found by a member of the Dundee Society in Pietermaritzburg and she arranged that it be handed over for safe keeping to the Albany Museum in Grahamstown. It was inevitably with a great-great-grand-daughter of James Kitchingman.

Astronomy

In last year's *Notes and Queries*, under the heading *Natal's Astronomer Extraordinary*, Mr. M. A. Gray of the Natal Centre of the Astronomical Society outlined the life and works of Edmund N. Nevill of the Durban Observatory. In March of this year a most exciting event added a few more pages to that history when Edmund's daughter, Miss Maud Nevill, flew to Durban from London and, on the 23rd, opened an exhibition, *Astronomy and Allied Sciences in Natal at the turn of the Century*, arranged at the Local History Museum and in collaboration with the Astronomical Society. The exposition was designed to focus attention on the story of the Durban Observatory and to do honour to its remarkable astronomer. Miss Nevill, an octogenarian of vivacity, charm and incredible energy, not only captivated the regard of all who met her but, by her delight in it and her recollections and reminiscences, made the exhibition—and the subject of it, her father—come vibrantly to life. Those who saw her briefly in the S.A.T.V. programme *Nevill of Natal* in *The Changing Sky* series, on the 24th of July, will understand how this could be so.

One of the most important exhibits was the transit telescope sent to Natal in 1882 for the observation of the Transit of Venus of that year—for which occasion the Observatory had been erected. This telescope was displayed in a replica of the tiny transit room where Nevill and his wife-cum-assistant Mabel, over the years, made many observations and calculations.

For the exhibition, instruments and documents were lent or presented by astronomers and scientific bodies all over South Africa and indeed the museum's own collection of this type of material was so increased in size and importance that a permanent exhibit on astronomy in Natal is soon to be arranged.

About 6 000 persons visited the exhibition, among these being the delegates attending the annual general meeting of the Astronomical Society of Southern Africa, held in Durban at the end of July.

The Conservation of Norwich, in Pictures

The Simon van der Stel Foundation was responsible for bringing to South Africa a photographic exhibition showing the results of the remarkable efforts of the people of Norwich towards the preservation of their beautiful city. Available through the British Council and sponsored by the Norwich Union Life Assurance Company, this exhibition toured the Republic and was seen in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Bloemfontein, Johannesburg and Pretoria before ending its progress in Natal, at Pietermaritzburg and then Durban. Everywhere it drew good attendances and attracted the interest not only of architects and conservationists but of the general public—a good augury for South Africa's own efforts in this direction. It was opened in Durban on the 10th of August by Mr. Robert E. Levitt, renowned Africana collector. As was the case in other centres, a small exhibition of pictures of local buildings of note, in danger or already demolished, was shown concurrently, perhaps encouraging positive comparison!

The Work of Barbara Tyrrell

On the 25th of August an exhibition of paintings by Barbara Tyrrell was opened at 220 Marriott Road, Durban, the home of the Killie Campbell Africana Collections, in the new wing. A departure from the artist's usual style and medium, the pictures were executed using pen and Indian ink, and acrylic paint, laid on mounting canvas attached to hardboard—producing a most interesting textured effect. Forty-eight of the paintings depicted African dress—with inimitable clarity and feeling—and a further ten were environmental. This collection is the basis of a new book, in which Barbara's son Peter will write the text. She has two other books to her credit.

Museums Conference

This year, for the first time since 1961, the annual conference of the South African Museums Association took place in Durban and was hosted by the Durban Museum and Art Gallery. It was held during the period 3rd to 5th of May in the lecture theatre of the Durban Centenary Aquarium and was attended by delegates from all parts of the Republic and Rhodesia, also Swaziland and Malawi, and the papers read and discussions shared were most successful and beneficial. The Mayor and Councillors of the City of Durban entertained the delegates to a cocktail party on the evening of the 3rd, and the conference ended with a dinner at the Royal Hotel on the night of the 5th.

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