

Book Reviews and Notices

THE HERETIC: A STUDY OF THE LIFE OF JOHN WILLIAM COLENZO 1814-1883

by JEFF GUY

Johannesburg, Ravan Press/Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1983. 378 pp. illus. R19,95.

During his lifetime, Bishop Colenso was accused at various times of being a man of dubious faith, a heretic who was responsible for a major schism in the Anglican Church in South Africa, a quarrelsome monomaniac, and an irresponsible meddler in African affairs who caused bloodshed amongst the Zulu people. There have been a dozen attempts since his death in 1883 to analyse aspects of his varied career, but, as Dr Guy (University of Lesotho) argues, this approach has tended to fragment Colenso's life and has failed to place him in historical context. This book (published in the centenary year of Colenso's death) overcomes both these problems. Dr Guy has succeeded admirably in placing Colenso within the context of nineteenth century English religious thought and colonial Natal society, and in producing the first comprehensive assessment of the development of the thought and actions of one of Natal's most controversial and remarkable personalities.

The book studies Colenso's life in three major chronological periods: his career up to 1861 during which time he established a reputation as a successful writer of school arithmetic textbooks, but also took the first tentative steps into controversial doctrinal and missionary debate; the period 1861 to 1872 which was the height of his notoriety as a biblical scholar; and the final ten years of his life when he achieved almost equal notoriety as the champion of Natal and Zulu Africans against the colonial and imperial authorities. There is, however, a strong thread of continuity throughout Colenso's life, viz. his religious thought. It is this aspect which Dr Guy believes "has been overlooked or misunderstood by all his biographers, and yet it is this which gave a pattern and continuity to a life which is too often considered as one characterised by inconsistency and violent change of attitude." (p. 96-7).

The early development of Colenso's religious thinking is traced through the letters he exchanged with his future wife Sarah Frances Bunyon. (These letters are housed in the Natal Archives and have apparently not been used since the authorised biography of 1888). Under Miss Bunyon's influence,

Colenso moved away from a narrow evangelicalism towards the liberal, humanitarian theology of thinkers such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge and F.D. Maurice. This movement is studied against a most lucid analysis of the social and religious ferment of mid-nineteenth century England. Industrialisation and the accompanying intellectual and scientific advances, had posed profound challenges to conventional Church of England doctrine and clerical status, and many clerics retreated into rigid orthodoxy. The religious philosophy which Colenso came to espouse was one which saw faith as a subjective experience which lay beyond the material world. Thus his faith stood firm against the shattering revelations of Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830-33) which disproved the Biblical stories of the Creation. The young Colenso also developed a universalist religious outlook which held that God can be discerned in people's actions everywhere, and that even the non-Christian had an awareness of "the good". Furthermore, to Colenso, commitment to Christianity implied social action. These beliefs, when allied to a deep humanitarianism, gave Colenso a powerful commitment to activism even where this defied social convention.

Thus, shortly after he arrived in Natal as missionary Bishop in 1855, Colenso felt impelled publicly to criticise the current state of missionary endeavour, which Dr Guy labels as "ideological terrorism". (p. 51) This brought him into immediate conflict with many of his parishioners, colleagues, and Bishop Gray of Cape Town, but worse was to follow. Daily contact with African converts at his mission at Ekukanyeni (outside Pietermaritzburg) revealed to Colenso the considerable difficulties in trying to explain the Bible as a literal document to intelligent, rational and humane non-Christians. He was forced to begin to re-consider the foundations of the Christian faith, and in London in 1862, he had published his most famous — or infamous — work, Part 1 of *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua critically examined*. This declared unequivocally to an incredulous public that the Bible was not historically true, and that it should be assessed in its historical context and against current scientific discoveries. Colenso was not alone in these beliefs. Dr Guy indicates clearly the similarity between his ideas and those of certain leading churchmen in England, but makes a penetrating analysis of why there was such a virulent attack on Colenso by the Church, and why successful efforts were made to destroy his influence as a biblical critic. Briefly, he argues that Colenso's attack on the Bible as an unscientific and unhistorical document was an effective attack on the spiritual and social roots of clerical authority, and at a time moreover of intellectual and social upheaval. Furthermore, the notion that an uneducated black heathen could make intelligent criticisms of English Christian doctrine was anathema to most Victorians. Hence Colenso's failure as a biblical scholar, and his "sentence" as a heretic and final excommunication by Bishop Gray. Protracted and expensive litigation followed, and in 1870, Bishop Gray formally established the Church of the Province of South Africa.

In 1873, the final and infinitely more difficult and lonely phase of Colenso's life began with the so-called Langalibalele "rebellion" and subsequent trial. Once again the Bishop found it impossible to remain silent while "the truth" as he and his devoted family saw it, was being distorted by the lies and ambitions of local officials, and by the ignorance and expediency of metropolitan officials. The bitter political wrangles into which Colenso

was thrust until his death, and which included the Anglo-Zulu War and the post-war "settlement" in Zululand, destroyed his twenty-year friendship with Shepstone (about which the author writes most interestingly), brought upon his head gross accusations by colonists and local officials, but also earned him the friendship and respect of Cetshwayo and the Usuthu. Dr Guy eschews both of the major conflicting interpretations of Colenso's political role, viz. the liberal belief that Colenso was a staunch defender of African freedom, and the radical view that although the Bishop deplored the harshness of imperialism and colonialism, he nevertheless actively promoted the incorporation of Africans into the world capitalist system. Instead, he places Colenso firmly into the context of English imperialism, which held that English civilisation and colonial rule were inherently superior and just, thus indicating the inappropriateness of calling him "a great tribune of African freedom". But at the same time, Dr Guy points out that Colenso's imperialism was tempered by his humanitarianism, his intelligence, his universalist theology, and his unique insight into African customs and society gained from his experiences at Ekukanyeni. These insights inevitably brought him into conflict with the more racist and ignorant colonists and local officials.

Dr Guy claims considerable relevance for today of Colenso's religious and political concerns. The recent uproar over the consecration of the theologically progressive Prof. David Jenkins as Bishop of Durham gives point to the first claim. As regards Colenso's political relevance, the author maintains that the issues of government propaganda, racial brutality and state violence which Colenso fought against, are still with us, and consequently, "the answer to the question whether his battle for justice was a success remains an open one". (p. 359)

Finally, tribute is paid to the courage of a man who suffered abuse, contempt, ostracism and apparent failure, but who never, by word or letter, articulated the profound distress and agony this caused him.

It seems churlish to mention minor technical faults in a work of outstanding scholarship, but it is incumbent on reviewers to do so. Apart from two split infinitives (pages 41 and 61), footnote 12 (p. 92) is too general and footnote 30 (p. 314) is missing. There is no footnote or index entry to the mention on p. 289 of the little-known C. Vijn, *Cetshwayo's Dutchman*. Bibliographical purists will note minor inconsistencies in the layout of the "Published Sources" (e.g. compare *Poems of Robert Browning* and *Tennyson's Poems*; there is no (ed.) preceding the second entry under Edgecombe, R.; and there are separate entries for two volumes of the same work under Buckle, G.E. which could have followed the convention used under Colenso, Frances E., *The Ruin of Zululand* . . .). Finally, the index entries for certain of the German thinkers are incomplete (e.g. Hitzig, Knabel, Kurtz), and while the entry under Colenso himself is extremely detailed and conveniently sub-divided, one can experience problems in locating some headings within the sub-divisions from cross-references in the main sequence of the index. Thus the main heading "Evolution, theory of—" refers one to "Colenso, J.W., influence of scientific thought and achievements on". It takes some searching to locate that particular entry under the sub-division "intellectual qualities and opinions". A similar problem occurs with the cross-reference from "Cambridge".

These minor issues, and the fact that some theologians and historians will no doubt continue to criticise Colenso's theology and beliefs about the Zulu polity — including Dr Guy's sympathetic approach to the latter — will not, however, detract from a major work of criticism and evaluation. The author's lucid style, and the physically attractive format, will give this book deservedly wide appeal.

P.L. MERRETT

THE BUFFALO BORDER 1879. THE ANGLO-ZULU WAR IN NORTHERN NATAL

by J.P.C. LABAND and P.S. THOMPSON with SHEILA HENDERSON
Durban, Department of History, University of Natal, Research Monograph No. 6, 1983. 127 pp. illus. R5.

This is an excellent portrait of a frontier community, in its colonial context before, during and after the Anglo-Zulu War. The authors are well known to students of that deplorable war, which continues to command the attention of so many researchers, who approach it from differing standpoints, quite a few of them totally polemical. Such a trend is healthy so long as it does not spawn fresh prejudices. It would be unscholarly, for instance, if the implied criticism of research into the more military side of the war (C. Ballard, *Natalia*, 13, 1983, p. 39) is taken too seriously, however tempting the alternatives of liberalism or 'a rigorous material analysis rooted in European Marxist philosophy'. In this book we find a narrative style of history, reinforced with a modicum of analysis (especially in the opening sections), that concentrates on the actions of colonists, volunteer units, black levies, and imperial forces. It does not pretend to include the Natal black or the Zulu interests, although the former are not overlooked by any means, so far as the evidence allows. Legitimate, necessary, accurate, an original contribution to knowledge and (if one's mind is sufficiently open) to understanding of what transpired in 1879: such are its qualities and achievements.

The geographical orbit within which the authors work is Klip River County, comprising the Klip River and Newcastle Divisions and the somewhat anomalous Umsinga district, composed of parts of the two divisions together with the Native Location proclaimed in 1849. In any sense this part of Natal was the cockpit of war in 1879, basically because it related so closely to the territory in dispute between Cetshwayo KaMpande and the Transvaal authorities, incidentally because within its confines stood Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift. Hence there is no shortage of incident, much of it familiar by name, at any rate, to the interested reader. But the thread of the impact of all such events is clearly sustained, by skilful historical presentation, from the reconstruction of what these exposed frontier communities were like before 'the wound of war' afflicted them, through the fluctuating episodes of conflict themselves, to the 'Return of Peace'. The authors' systematic treatment of all the main issues invites comparison with their previous contribution, *War comes to Umvoti* (1980), although the Buffalo border of course was much more at the centre of things. Again there

is an invaluable bonus in the shape of a guide to the sites of the war where wartime fortifications have survived, embodying the results of the authors' meticulous fieldwork.

Some of the key maps would be all the more intelligible if they carried a full explanation of the symbols used on them. This is partly covered on the map of the Border as it was on 11 January 1879 (page 41), but is absent from those of the Border on 29 March (page 63) and 31 May (page 74). The illustrations — photographs, portraits, sketches — are nicely chosen and enhance the narrative. There are a few errors in the printing of the text, for instance where it deals with the force that returned to Isandlwana on 21 May: 'proceeded' for 'preceded' (page 72), and 'interned' for 'interred'. This last refers to the burial of the dead of the 24th Regiment, and '2/24th' (page 73) hides the fact that they belonged to the First and Second Battalions. Men of the 2/24th were still busy with the work of interment as late as September 1879, and the Natal authorities had to return to the task a couple of years later. But Isandlwana could never be an easy resting place.

FRANK EMERY

A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF INDIAN SOUTH AFRICANS

edited by SURENDRA BHANA and BRIDGLAL PACHAI

Cape Town, David Philip and Stanford, the Hoover Institution Press, 1984. 306 pp.

Since H.M. Adamson ('The Indian Question in South Africa, 1900-1914') and L.M. Thompson ('Indian Immigration into Natal, 1860-1872') wrote their M.A. theses in the 1930s, the history of South Africa's Indian community has attracted spasmodic interest but has by no means been exhausted by the various books and theses devoted to the subject during the last fifty years. A recent innovation was the publication of *Documents of Indentured Labour: Natal, 1851-1917* (Durban, 1980) edited by Y.S. Meer and others, in which a selection of primary evidence relating to indentured Indian immigration into this part of the world was allowed to speak for itself. That innovation has now been expanded by the publication of *A Documentary History of Indian South Africans*. The editors, Surendra Bhana (Professor of History, University of Durban-Westville) and Bridglal Pachai (formerly Professor of History at the University of Malawi), are well-qualified to have made the judicious choice of documents contained in this book. The former is currently conducting further research into the history of Indians in South Africa, while the latter has written extensively on the subject and is widely known for his *International Aspects of the South African Indian Question, 1860-1971* (Cape Town, 1971) and *Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1969).

Bhana and Pachai's documentary collection attempts to illustrate the history of Indian South Africans from the arrival of the first indentured labourers in 1860 to Indian involvement in the contemporary political issues of the 1970s and 1980s. As the title of the book suggests, the emphasis is on

the documents themselves but each item is placed in broader context by means of an explanatory preface and each section of the work has a brief historical introduction. Part I deals with the often traumatic period of Indian settlement in South Africa (1860-1914) and comprises fifty-three documents which are grouped thematically to reflect and explain 'social situations', 'trade and residence', 'immigration', 'constitutional and political issues' and '*satyagraha*'. As the last indicates, Mahatma Gandhi's sojourn here understandably comes in for particular attention and forms the climax of the first section of the book. In Part II a more strictly chronological approach is applied to the remaining thirty-five documents in order to explore the Indian 'search for equality' through three distinct historical phases: (1) 1914-1946, when the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement was put to the test and the conciliatory approach of the South African Indian Congress failed to prevent the enactment of legislation which discriminated against Indians (2) 1947-1960, when a younger generation of Indians began to demonstrate a decidedly less compromising attitude and parted company from the 'moderates' who still clung to 'negotiation' politics and (3) 1961-1982, in which period Indians, finally recognized as a permanent part of the local scene, have argued intensely among themselves as to the most effective means whereby a broad South Africanism, embracing the population as a whole, may eventually be achieved to ensure peace and justice for all.

The editors must have encountered considerable difficulty in limiting themselves to a mere eighty-eight documents. Those chosen nevertheless constitute a successful blend of official and non-official material that not only reflects the discriminatory legislation and hostile attitudes with which Indian South Africans have had to contend but also vividly portrays their responses (through various phases) to the situation, and their struggle for recognition as full citizens. The book has not been lavishly produced, thereby hopefully making it accessible to a wide readership, but the format and size of print chosen make it easy to handle and read. This, coupled with its useful subject-index, precise table of contents and bibliographical notes for those who wish to explore further, ensures that it will serve as an invaluable research-tool for students as well as a useful guide to anyone who seeks to gain a better understanding of a community that has made a significant impact upon South Africa, not least upon Natal.

W.R. GUEST

WEBB'S GUIDE TO THE OFFICIAL RECORDS OF THE COLONY OF NATAL: an expanded and revised edition together with indexes

compiled by J. VERBEEK, M. NATHANSON and E. PEEL
Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1984. R19,50.

Perhaps the supreme accolade for the bibliographer or reference book compiler is to find one's work referred to by personal name alone. This third edition of the *Guide to the official records of the Colony of Natal* recognizes in this fashion the pioneering bibliographic work undertaken by Professor Colin Webb, first published in 1965 and revised in 1968.

The earlier editions were based on the holdings of five collections and divided into two main sections. Section 1 listed unpublished government records by originating department and form in an inventory type listing familiar to archive users. Section 2 identified thirty-two major published information sources and analysed them in four sub-sections: reports, statistical returns and tabular statements; sessional papers; reports of commissions; and papers published for general information. In each case the analysis took the form of chronological arrangement of items identified by subject captions. An appendix supplied a selective listing of relevant items from British Parliamentary Papers and other colonial publications. The *Guide* thus provided a portable bibliographic summary of Natal's colonial period but did not solve the basic dilemma of collections of archival material or government publications. Unpublished documents are inevitably housed in the groups, often arbitrary, which give them relevance and coherence; while published documents may contain a wide variety of data under general, periodical type titles. At best one has a proto-classification yet the requirement of the researcher is generally an approach by subject regardless of document origin or form. A classic case is that of the Government House group of documents in the Natal Archives which owes its cohesion to bureaucratic organization while overlapping the subject content of other departmental collections.

Sensibly the compilers of this edition have adhered to the familiar layout of the *Guide*, building on a proven framework. As they are all librarians it is no surprise to find that entries follow the provisions of the Anglo American cataloguing rules (AACR II) and are thus well laid out and easily interpreted, especially with the help of sample entries (p. xv). The source collections have been increased to twenty-six, six of them overseas. An expanded section 1 reflects fifteen years of growth at Natal Archives and presumably a certain amount of internal reorganization, exemplified by the holdings details for the Government House collection. Section 2's core publications have increased in number from thirty-two to forty-eight accompanied by useful bibliographical notes, while section 3 contains an amplified version of the second edition's appended list of non-Natal publications.

Most notably, however, the compilers have addressed the subject access problem noted above by providing computer-generated author and subject indexes with the help of coded bibliographic entries. In addition to updated entry captions and document titles and responsibility (justifiably interpreted in the widest sense) the indexes are derived from the contents notes provided for each item. These notes are invaluable both as a means of subject retrieval and simply describing individual items, many of which have unilluminating or even misleading titles. The concept of subject indexing in this fashion can only be applauded but one must record misgivings about its practical application. The reviewer selected from each of the *Guide's* seven sections a sample, based on a table of random numbers, which in total constituted one percent of the 4 212 bibliographic entries. Forty-two entries were thus scrutinized closely, revealing no less than thirteen queries. These relate to both author and subject indexes. For example, Sir M.E. Hicks Beach (Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1878-1880) is absent from the author index in spite of the inclusion of references to his correspondence in

contents notes (G91, G99). The sample showed that entries in the author index were incomplete, pointing only to some of the relevant documents: for example, T.G. Crowly (C895) and Sir G. Wolseley (G76). The computer may have had an aversion to Sir Garnet as his unpublished memoranda are subject indexed (under Wolseley-correspondence), ignoring the more obvious author entry (A27) and a similar fate befalls Melmoth Osborn (G122). The subject indexing of a work of this nature is an immense and complex task. Clearly not everyone can be satisfied, yet major omissions were found. The Cedara Agricultural Collection forming a 27 volume unpublished Archives collection (A89) is not indexed against the subject entry, while the Indian Immigration School Board (A20) has no direct entry nor a see reference and is modestly subordinated to the entry Education — Indian. Place names would seem to be a popular starting point for subject based retrieval: there is considerable potential for local historical studies complementary to the work of geographers and others. However, the index entry for the Newcastle election petition of 1892 (F366) is to be found only under Elections; while the entry Newcastle fails to refer to this document and the petitioners are not indexed. Similarly a document on the railway branch line to Dundee (C1249) has no reference from the place name. Finally, a number of general terms from the sample were found to be lacking: Wesleyan Missionary Society (G76) and the ship Nipisiquit (E15) are untraceable; while Arms and ammunition is missing a reference (C1441).

From a conceptual point of view this is a magnificent publication: one simply hopes in view of the crucial importance of the subject approach that the above sample is aberrant. There can be no doubt that Professor Webb can be justified in his expectation in the foreword that the *Guide* has now become “. . . a sophisticated mining instrument . . .” (p. vii). The bibliographic core has been supplemented by an introductory essay on the constitutional development of Natal (by Graham Dominy); maps showing the territorial expansion of Natal; and tables listing the civil establishment (Natal and Zululand), magisterial districts and boards. Appendices list unpublished documents other than those to be found at the Natal Archives, principal officials, and legislative sessions of the colony. The typography and layout are superb and in themselves an encouragement to browsing and the stimulation of research. Taken as a whole, the *Guide* has become an indispensable handbook to the colony of Natal and although this edition will not slip lightly into the researcher's briefcase, that in itself is a measure of the level and sophistication of bibliographic control now achieved for the colonial period.

CHRISTOPHER MERRETT

ZULULAND AT WAR 1879

by SONIA CLARKE

Johannesburg, The Brenthurst Press, 1984. 300 pp. illus. R160.

The intense interest which the appearance of yet another work on the Anglo-Zulu War has aroused is testimony to the unique ethos which this fascinating conflict has engendered.

Sonia Clarke's latest venture is not a sequel to her earlier volume, *Invasion of Zululand 1879*, but rather a fresh and fascinating exposé of the events and

the actions of some of the participants in the war. The value of this work is that it offers explanations of events which have hitherto largely been clouded in obscurity.

The volume contains two major collections of documents, the first being the Alison letters acquired by the Brenthurst Library in 1967 and the second, the Royal Letters, obtained in 1972. It is the former collection which contains the most valuable letters and which has aroused the most interest.

Sir Archibald Alison, head of the army intelligence department in England from 1878 to 1882, encouraged officers involved in the conflict in Southern Africa to keep him informed about military affairs. The bulk of the Alison letters therefore consist of highly confidential and invaluable information concerning the actions of the major participants in the war. Now, with the publication of the letters, researchers will be able to gain fresh insights into some of the mysteries of the war which have remained hidden for so long. It is unlikely that any copies of these letters are in existence except for one letter written by Glyn's Staff Officer, Major C.F. Clery to Major G.B. Harman which has remained embargoed in the Brecon Museum for many years.

What do the Alison letters reveal? The most interesting information in the letters concerns the personality, attitudes and actions of Chelmsford and his staff. The bulk of the letters were written by two key figures, C.F. Clery, Glyn's observant and astute staff officer and J.N. Crealock, Chelmsford's much-maligned military secretary.

Few would argue that Chelmsford's military reputation must depend on an evaluation of his strategy and actions at Isandlwana. Prior to the publication of these letters much of Chelmsford's conduct was hidden as a result of an ingenious cover-up operation initiated by Queen Victoria and the Duke of Cambridge to protect the general. Cambridge's motives were probably to protect himself as well as the Horse Guards establishment from damaging attacks by Wolseley's reformist 'Ring' while the Queen felt genuine sympathy for Frere and Chelmsford and possibly also wished to protect the Duke. Thus the letters also reveal the bitter power struggle within the late Victorian army.

Not only do the letters reveal that prior to leaving the camp on the morning of the 22 January, Chelmsford forgot to leave orders for its defence but also that his staff attempted to shift the blame for the defeat on to the shoulders of Glyn and Durnford. Chelmsford's failure clearly to delineate the respective responsibilities of himself and Glyn at Isandlwana, contributed further to the uncertainty and confusion over strategy.

It was in fact Clery who gave Pulleine orders for the defence of the camp and who, after the battle, informed Chelmsford of the initiative he had taken. The general's reply, 'I cannot tell you what a relief it is to me to hear this', is illuminating. The vague orders which Chelmsford sent to Durnford further compounded the uncertainty that prevailed among the officers and men at Isandlwana on 22 January.

The letters also reveal a great deal about J.N. Crealock, Chelmsford's military secretary, who emerges with few redeeming features. Described by Clery as 'swaggering, feeble, self-sufficient, superficial and flippant',

Crealock appears to have been highly ambitious, sarcastic and more inclined to give attention to his painting than to his despatches.

Clery's perceptive comment that he doubted whether Crealock dominated Chelmsford, as has been so often alleged, is probably an accurate one. Nevertheless Crealock's arrogant and conceited manner antagonised, angered and embittered most of the people who came into contact with him and led to them blaming Chelmsford for his weakness in tolerating this impossible state of affairs.

The letters also reveal that Chelmsford gave too little attention to choosing the right men for important positions of command in the British invading force. Crealock was employed because the general could not think of anyone else for the position, Glyn was honest but simple and lethargic and Pearson was colourless and lacking in vigour and initiative. These were hardly the men required to instil bravery and confidence amongst the members of the various columns.

The letters also reveal the gross overconfidence and complacency which prevailed among Chelmsford and his staff on 22 January and the general's irritability and reluctance to listen to advice.

Much of the validity of the evidence rests on an evaluation of the credibility of Clery and Crealock and researchers will have to approach this minefield with caution.

Other letters in the book concern a wide variety of other incidents and events during the war. The letters of the enterprising Captain H.G. MacGregor, who was with Pearson's column at Eshowe, are extremely valuable. Pearson is exposed as a poor leader and MacGregor's colourful descriptions of conditions during the siege at Fort Eshowe are fascinating. Researchers will find his beautifully drawn maps and diagrams extremely useful.

The period leading up to Chelmsford's final victory at Ulundi is well documented with many letters dealing with the death of the Prince Imperial, the movements and actions of Wood's column, the dilatory progress of H.H. Crealock's First Division and the battle of Ulundi. Most of the letters are the work of J.N. Crealock and C.F. Clery but there is a sprinkling of other contributors all of whom, in their descriptions, further illuminate this period of the war.

The Royal letters consist in the main of correspondence of Queen Victoria and the Duke of Cambridge to Sir Bartle and Lady Frere and reveal the confidence which the royal family had in Frere's control of events in Southern Africa. These letters also shed light on the attitude and work of Cambridge as Commander-in-Chief of the British Army.

Sonia Clarke must be congratulated on her superb arrangement and selection of the letters which appear in this prestigious work. The book reveals her deep insight into the conflict as a whole and her attention to important details such as accurate footnoting and informative biographical sketches of the major participants. Her maps are clear and accurate and the illustrations (some of which are in colour) enhance the visual impact of the book.

Although some will find the cost of this volume almost prohibitive, it is a work to be treasured and will in the years ahead become a much sought-after collector's item.

JEFF MATHEWS

LIONS RIVER DIVISION AGRICULTURE SOCIETY 1884-1984

by PEARL SCOTNEY and CHARLES SCOTT-SHAW

Howick, the LRDAS, 1984. 79 pp. illus.

NATAL'S ROYAL SHOW

by RUTH GORDON

Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1984. 142 pp. illus.

My notion that country folk are a fund of happy anecdote and earthy reminiscence has been somewhat put out of joint by these two volumes. Future researchers and local historians will be very much indebted to them for their careful scholarship and meticulous detail. It's just that one never realised how 'local' local history could be. It seems that 'homo urbanus', the mere city-dweller, does, after all, have the surer sense of what is worth remembering and what is remorselessly, indefatigably, relentlessly and amazingly parochial. In their final paragraph, the authors of the book on the LRDAS (as they rather unmusically call themselves) come to this benevolent conclusion:

So many of the names of such men, some recorded over a hundred years ago, are to be found in the present minute books and reflect beyond doubt that history repeats itself.

It does, it does. Readers of this book will have no reason to contradict that gentle philosophy.

But let them not therefore skip to the last page, with its wisdom of copse and glen. They would then miss the tang of the piece: the muddy roads that defeated Model T Fords, the Creamery Boards that defeated dairymen, and the Chairmen whose sons became Treasurers, and the Treasurers whose wives became Secretaries, and the Secretary (if I read correctly) whose husband was a President who became a Chairman, and who then became a Vice-Chairman before becoming Chairman again, only to be ousted by a Chairman who was a son of a President, and whose son, upon becoming Vice-Chairman, married the next Secretary. (In vain did I search through all these Wives who became Secretaries for a Secretary who became a Wife. To no avail. Respectability like this speaks volumes).

It seems that this valley lacks a first-rate crank, some monarchical nut, for instance, who might plant a 'King George VI slept here' stone on the Lions River siding that — for that memorable night in 1947 — became Centre of the Empire. (Which siding was it? Nice test for Lions River scholarship).

Dr Ruth Gordon is rather more deft at dodging the pitfalls. The first half of her book on the Royal Show nicely frames the advance of agriculture against the background of the growing colony. But 'perspective' — that precious commodity — dwindles as the book goes on. I imagine that not everyone will find it equally instructive that the children of the Jacaranda School loved a horse called Foxon, or that the judge of jams for 1953 didn't like marmalade and was pleased to get on to the pickles, or that in 1955 the RAS committee congratulated the Geloftefees committee on their excellent cleaning-up, or that in 1964 the Jehovah's Witnesses were charged not only for use of chairs but also for electricity, or that Mrs Vivienne Pigg's mother once lost her 3rd Party disc.

What we don't learn, by the way, is what the many illustrious Guests of Honour — Knights, Honourables, Excellencies, a Prince, two Earls, Viscounts, Presidents — ever actually *said* in their speeches. (Or rather, we learn what they didn't say. In 1974 — 'the year of the Dolphin Display' — the wind blew so strongly that State President Fouché lost his place and the speech ended sooner than usual).

I won't say that there isn't a certain character-building fascination in these extraordinary facts. The equanimity of one's compassion is thoroughly tested. 'It is of interest to record that Barbara McKenzie, wife of the late Colonel Gordon McKenzie, has maintained her avid interest in horses . . . ' It interests me, I readily confess, that such an interest interests: on that escalating principle, these are not books one easily puts down.

Nevertheless, I would prefer that the 'salt of the earth' was mixed with a little more spice . . .

W.H. BIZLEY

VICTORIAN PIETERMARITZBURG

Paintings by MAT LOUWRENS, text by DR RUTH GORDON
Springfield, Village Publishers, 1984. 143 pp. illus. R85.

In this substantial volume Mat Louwrens has assembled watercolour representations of some sixty of the more significant buildings of colonial Pietermaritzburg which have survived into the mid-1980s. The precariousness of this survival is re-emphasised by the realization that, given a mere month's delay in publication, the authors might well have inserted the addendum "now demolished" against the views of the little porticos that recently graced Change Lane. If this collection of pictures does no more than spur conservationism, it will have been of value.

One suspects, of course, that most of the 2 000 copies in this limited edition will be taken up by those who already know and care for the city. For them, the chief value of the publication may well be its text. Here Dr Ruth Gordon provides detailed accounts of the history of each featured building together with comments on the architecture and notes and points of interest. Minor but irritating aberrations in the punctuation do mar the impact of the text, and the lay reader might wish for less fact and more anecdote, but this is a concise compendium of information which is nowhere else so readily accessible to the student of local history, and it stirs one to look anew at buildings which have come to seem familiar.

The range of buildings represented seems at first to be very comprehensive, but on reflection one becomes aware that the focus is almost exclusively on substantial public and commercial edifices and the residences of the wealthy and powerful. The absence of the humbler domestic cottages (which are no less representative of our Victorian architectural heritage) not only unbalances the work but reduces its validity as a reflection of the colonial city in both architectural and human terms.

Valuable as Dr Gordon's text is, this is ultimately a picture book, and it must be judged on the quality of Mr Louwrens's watercolours (which have been finely reproduced by the printers). Mr Lourens's eye is, regrettably, clinical rather than creative. Impressively accurate though his pictures may be as renderings of the best efforts of our Victorian architects, they disappoint as works in their own right. As Mr Louwrens explains in an

introductory note, he has worked from photographic slides which have been carefully copied and traced, and perhaps it is this very methodical process which robs the end products of depth and vitality. Moreover, it is in the treatment of brickwork — in Dr Gordon's words the "essential characteristic of the Pietermaritzburg townscape" — that Mr Louwrens's technique is least convincing.

That Mr Louwrens's roots as a painter are in the commercial studio is always evident in his work, and one's overall impression of the book is that of an elaborate publicity brochure rather than of a work of intrinsic artistic merit. Paradoxically, and most unfortunately, the publication of this particular book has highlighted the need that exists for a work — perhaps a photographic essay — of just this type.

M.H. COMRIE

AN HISTORIC TOWNSCAPES CONSERVATION SCHEME FOR NATAL by R.F. HASWELL

Pietermaritzburg, the Natal Town and Regional Planning Commission, 1984. 86 pp. illus. R7,50.

This Report, commissioned by the Natal Town and Regional Planning Commission, begins with a survey of the making of historic Natal townscapes — Dutch-Afrikaner dorps like Pietermaritzburg and Weenen, British settler towns like Richmond, Howick and Estcourt, German settlements and Indian townscape features — showing how the historically pure townscape contributions of these groups have been woven into a truly Natalian tapestry.

The central thesis of the book, supported with reference to the American historic preservation movement, is that our historic townscapes should not merely be statically preserved, but practically and imaginatively rehabilitated for continuing use. Land and building values can be increased thereby, attractive space provided for small businesses, derelict areas revived and a sense of belonging and continued social life preserved.

The author's final conclusion is that conservation is not an end in itself, and any townscape conservation scheme can only be termed successful if, by people taking greater pride in their townscapes, the quality of community life is enhanced.

BRITISH SETTLERS IN NATAL 1824-1857: a Biographical Register. **Volume II, Babbs to Bolton**

by SHELAGH O'BYRNE SPENCER

Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1983. R22,50.

Just as *Natalia* 13 was being printed last year the second volume of Shelagh Spencer's attractive and fascinating reference book was published. It contains the biographies of a further 132 settlers and includes many significant Natal figures such as Catherine and Charles Barter, Capt. W.D. Bell, Samuel Benington, Alexander Biggar and Benjamin Blaine.

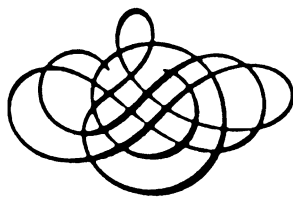
Work on Volume Three which will complete the B names is well under way. This volume will be published in the second half of 1985.

ON THE HIGH FLATS OF NATAL: earliest pioneers in the Highflats/Ixopo area of southern Natal.

by VALERIE WOODLEY

Highflats, Maxann Books, 1984. 98 pp. illus., col. plates, maps. R32,50 + GST.

This interesting book details the history of a district much neglected by historians. Apart from G.E. Francis's pamphlet *Historical Ixopo* published in 1924, nothing has been done to set down the history of the area. As Mrs Woodley says in her Foreword, this is not a history textbook but an attempt to record some of the earliest pioneers with anecdotes gleaned from the older inhabitants, a number of whom have since died. The book is profusely illustrated with photographs, drawings and eight pages of delightful paintings in colour of the Highflats and Ixopo Anglican churches, and bird and animals indigenous to the area. *On the high flats of Natal* has been published in a limited edition of 250 copies and is obtainable from Maxann Books, Private Bag 513, Highflats, 4640.



Select List of Recent Natal Publications

- BUTLER-ADAM, J.F. *and* Venter W.M. Indian housing study in Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Pietermaritzburg, Natal Town and Regional Planning Commission, 1984.
- CHETTY, T.D. Job satisfaction of Indian married women in the clothing manufacturing industry in Durban and its effects on their interpersonal family relationships. University of Durban-Westville, 1983.
- CHETTY, T.D. *and* Omar, S.M. Grey Street area: a survey of a community. University of Durban-Westville, 1983.
- DAVIES, R.J. *and* McCarthy, J.J. Residential growth in the Durban-Pietermaritzburg metropolitan region during the 1960s. Pietermaritzburg, Natal Town and Regional Planning Commission, 1984.
- FAIRALL, Monica. When in Durban; Monica Fairall's guide to the city, Natal coast and interior. Cape Town, Struik, 1983.
- MINNAAR, A. de V. Empangeni; a historical review to 1983. Pretoria, Human Sciences Research Council, 1984.
- RODSETH, Fred. Ndabazabantu: the life of a Native Affairs administrator. Johannesburg, Valda, 1984.
- SCOTT, J.D. Dougie Horton; the story of a conservation farmer. Pietermaritzburg, Shuter & Shooter, 1983.
- WILLCOX, A.R. The Drakensberg Bushmen and their art. Winterton, Drakensberg Publications, 1984.

Register of Research on Natal

This list has been compiled from individual submissions from subscribers to *Natalia* and from the Natal Archives. Persons knowing of current research work that has not been listed are asked to furnish information for inclusion in the next issue. A slip is provided for this purpose.

- ATKINS, K.E.
Togt labourers 1838-1910
- BERNING, G.
Durban history
- BRAIN, Dr J.B.
Biographical dictionary of Catholic missionaries
- BRAIN, Dr J.B.
Malaria, missionaries and the Great Depression
- COGHLAN, M.S.
Militia movements in early colonial Natal
- COLENBRANDER, P.J.
Zulu civil war, 1856
- ELLIS, B.
Impact of Natal settlers on local environment
- ELPHICK, R.
American Board Mission
- EMERY, F.
Sir Bartle Frere
- GERICKE, E.
Ntumeni
- GOLAN, D.
Historiographic study of the Zulu
- HADDON, Gordon W.
The York Settlement (Natal) . . . 19th century
- HALE, F.
Norwegian immigrants in South Africa
- HARRIS, V.S.
Relations between African and White on the land in northern Natal, 1910-1936
- HAZELL, B.
Klip River in the 19th century

- HILLEBRAND, M.
Art and architecture in Natal, 1910-1945
- HOLNESS, C.O.
Natal genealogy
- HUGHES, H.
Social history of Ndwedwe
- LA HAUSSE, P.
African women and the informal sector of Natal
- LABAND, J.P.C.
Political economy of Umvoti County 1843-1910
- LAMBERT, J.
Economic and social changes in Black Natal, 1880-1906
- McCRACKEN, *Dr* Donal
Botanical research and exploitation in Colonial Natal
- McFADDEN, P.
Boer occupation of Dundee
- MARTIN, B.
Geography: Natal Railways
- MAYLAM, P.R.
African urbanization in Durban
- MEINTJES, S.M.
Social and economic history of Edendale
- MINGAY, M.A.
Polela/Ixopo district
- NEWMARCH, D.M.
Library of the Natal Parliament
- OVENDALE, R.
Natal and the Transvaal 1893-1899
- PARLE, J.
Impact of the economic depression of the 1860s on Maritzburg
- POSEL, R.
History of rickshas in Durban
- RAYBOULD, J.S.
Pietermaritzburg 1906-1914
- SCHEEPERS, L.D.M.
Stamps and postal history of the Nieuwe Republiek 1886-1888
- SPENCER, B.M.
Maritzburg streets
- SWANEPOEL, A.C.
J.C. Boshoff
- TORR, L.
Urbanisation in Durban
- WARHURST, *Dr* P.
Natal and the Far Interior in the nineteenth century
- WELLINGTON, N.M.
Natal agricultural history 1845-1875