

Editorial

DEBBY Joubert's cover photograph of an overflowing Midmar Dam reminds us of the precarity of our lives in a post-Covid world, in which drought and, particularly in the last year, flooding make us so vulnerable in KwaZulu-Natal. And yet *Natalia* continues to prevail! This 52nd issue continues to pit the built environment against the historical, the political against the nostalgic, and pitches power and democracy against resistance and reconciliation.

An introduction to the silent buildings of the city – public and not so public – is drawn from a conference paper published in December 2022, but deemed relevant in this form for the audience of *Natalia*. This prefaces a paper by Milner Snell, considering awkward social and political corners of the colonial era, before Christopher Merrett's article on something continually topical in contemporary South Africa – university strikes. Merrett also considers the role of Colenso (harking back to Snell's paper) in the move towards human rights activism, and reinforces the polarised nature of urban space in colonial Natal. Shorter articles on Sarnia and its history, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's impact in Pietermaritzburg, preface the book reviews.

As usual there are a number of these. One of the significant impacts of Covid has been a disarticulation of the process of receiving the books, getting them out for review and then tracking them. This will be remedied for the next issue, which will be considering volumes published over a slightly longer period than usual. However, for this volume, we have submissions ranging from John Laband's critique of Rankin and Schneider's work on the Voortrekker monument, many elements of which are embedded in KwaZulu-Natal, to Zamambo Mkhize's discussion of polygyny. Many thanks to the University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, Tafelberg, the Natal Society Foundation Trust and the Royal Agricultural Society of Natal, and De Gruyter for supplying review copies of these volumes. May I assure the publishers that books not reflected are in the process of being reviewed and will feature on these pages next year.

Our standing committee is Mxolisi Mchunu, Sbongiseni Mkhize, Smangiliso Khumalo, Chris Ellis and Sibusiso Mbotho and while much was under the radar,

their presences are noted. So, for the moment, many thanks to the editorial committee for yet another year of patience; and we look forward to a productive, engaged and back to 'normal' thinking year.

Thank you, readers, as ever for your support.

DEBBIE WHELAN