



South African National Society

History – Culture – Conservation

Founded in 1905 for the preservation of objects of Historical Interest and Natural Beauty

<http://sanationalsociety.co.za/>

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NEWSLETTER & PROGRAM FOR July 2016

- THE DATE:** Tuesday 12th July 2016. 16:30 for 17:00. Evening projected to end around 20:30
- EVENT :** Opening of the Delville Wood 100th and DHS 150th Exhibition.
The eThekweni Municipality – Durban Local History Museum has catered for the evening with wines provided by the SA National Society.
Detailed program for the evening will be given to those who sent an RSVP.
- VENUE:** KwaMuhle Museum, Bram Fischer Road [Ordnance Road] Durban. In view of anticipated numbers parking will be allowed on the grass as well as parking bays.
- DRESS:** The Official Opening of the exhibition will be outside in the marquee covered quadrangle so warm clothing is recommended.
- Civilian:** Suit or smart casual
- Military:** No 1b or Undress Blues
- Ex-Service:** Regimental – Ex Service blazer and tie
- Medals – miniatures may be worn

Acceptances closed on Friday 8th July at which time all places had been filled.

Report Back on June Meeting.

Barn Swallows – Discovery of a new roost and previously unknown behaviour

Roy Cowgill projected the spectacular radar images of the birds dispersing from the Wetland adjoining Durban's Old Airport that would not display at the time of his February presentation. Although Roy was time constrained this was another fascinating revelation of the way technology provides detailed information about so many things.

Before most flights take off and again after most leave, a safety vehicle drives the runway to ensure amongst other things that the runway is free of debris. When the safety vehicle drives the length of the runway after a take-off it is looking for amongst other things, the carcasses of birds that have been aircraft strikes.

The radar was set up at the old airport for training purposes. Examining and showing the data revealed some previously unobserved and at least in the Southern Hemisphere possibly unknown behaviour. Very early in the morning and before the first flight it recorded a safety vehicle driving the runway. Soon after there was the image of an aircraft taking off. Then it showed a pattern of birds leaving an area on the other side of the airfield and flying across the runways and dispersing.

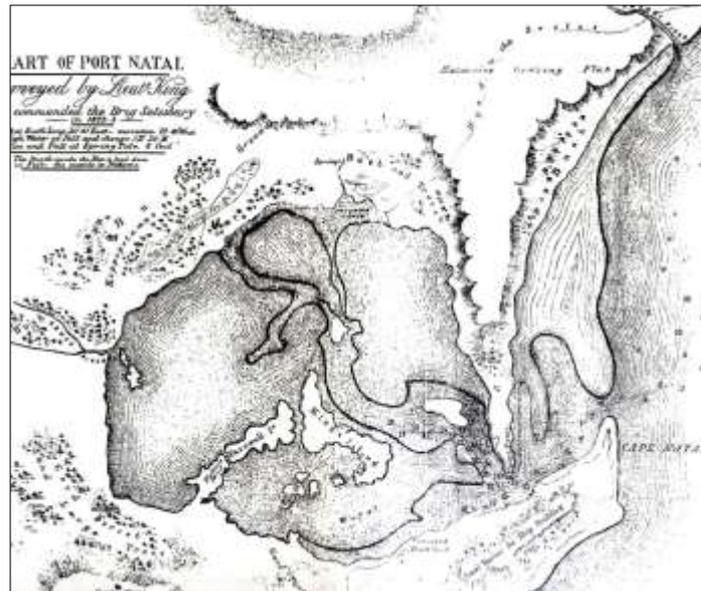
Soon another aircraft taxied into position and took off but during this interval there was zero swallow activity. Then another wave of swallows took off and flew across the runway. This happened again with an aircraft leaving to be followed by another flight of swallows. And from this two things were learned. Firstly this was a completely unknown yet major Barn Swallow roost in a previously unknown wetland between the airport and the refinery. Secondly an amazing behavioural pattern was discovered for the birds had learned to fly across the runways in between aircraft take-offs. How do we know this? It was because the safety vehicle never found any swallow carcasses following each runway drive-by and check.

Presentation - The Old Durban Forest - and title of the book

At the June meeting Professor Donal McCracken, supported from the audience by his wife Patricia and another co-author Dr Hugh Glen, shared his extensive knowledge of this fair city and its once extensive forests. Need we add, whilst entertaining us superbly in his inimitable style?

Quoting from his book we learned of the first record of the forests recorded in the 1680 s:

- There are many dense forests, with short stemmed trees; but at the bay of Natal two forests, fully a myl sq, with tall straight and thick trees, fit for house or ship-timber, in which is abundance of honey and wax.
- Lieutenant King (1822-1823), which marks the Bluff with 'good timber for shipbuilding'; the southern interior Bluff as 'forest Large Trees'; and the area around the bay where the village of Durban would grow up, 'Bush and Trees'.



- Commander Edward Hawes's 1831 map has the Bluff marked, 'High, thickly wooded and abounding with game and wild animals'.
- Jo Cato 1852



- Then Thomas Oakes's sketch map, with the confusing double date of 1846 and 1855 written on it, marks both the area on the Berea north of the Botanic Gardens, and what is today Glenwood as '**Dense forest**'.
- Johan Wahlberg 1840 wrote: Paths through the woods near the [Port Natal] lagoon are being cut ... so that the Boers may be able to operate against the English if they should land ... The vegetation in the [uMhlanga] forest is growing thick again, many bushes and trees in bloom. Glow-worms common.
- Adulphe Delegorgue's writing in 1847 describes a forest that is hard to visualise today: From the very first [at Port Natal] I devoted my time to combing the woods and to preparing my specimens. When I was out hunting, it sometimes happened that I was too intent on the pursuit of my prey **and lost my way completely**. Sometimes I was caught up by twisted, thorny, impenetrable bush, from which I could extricate myself only by lying flat on the ground and crawling.
- George Russell records: Shortly after my arrival [in Natal in 1850], the last party of Elephants were seen from the Market Square in an open patch on the Berea close to the site now occupied by the Observatory [Botanic Gardens], near my present residence.
- *Natal Mercury* (12 July 1854): On Friday night, another lion of large size visited this neighbourhood, having been traced from the entrance to the Botanic Gardens, along and through the Berea to the estate of Henry Milner, Esq., where, near the site of the intended sugar mill it attacked and devoured the greater part of an ox ... The same lion (doubtless) was heard roaring on Saturday night, behind the Berea on Mr Cato's farm.

Donal then went on to discuss the Death of the old Durban Forest and the reasons for this.

- The Durban forest survived as long as it did because the town was beside the bay; the Berea had a bad reputation for wild animals; it was cut off by wetlands; the forest was difficult to traverse; and the town's population grew relatively slowly.
- The Durban forest was destroyed by:
- Collecting firewood.
- Cattle in the forest edges.
- Fuel (white mangrove) for the Congella lime kilns.
- Timber for building (in the 1850 s Durban had one sawmill; by the 1860 s this rose to three).
- Creeping urbanisation and linear road development on the Berea slowly from 1860 s (Botanic Gardens Road developed in 1873)
- Merchant princes building mansions.

Re-greening the Town. Ironically this practice was increasingly widespread in the developing world of the mid 1800 s, so Durban was no different and the re-greening of Durban can be traced to 1857 with:

- Street planting beginning from 1857.
- Establishment of parks:
- Botanic Gardens (1849/1851)
- Then Westend Park (1864). Then Albert Park; Victoria Park; Town Gardens; and Medley Wood Gardens.
- Mitchell Park; Berea Park; Bulwer Park; and Congella Park – either carved out of woodland or open grassland
- Mr Keit and the early municipal Parks Department

Mark Twain spoke of the Berea's **loveliest trees, and the greatest variety I've ever seen anywhere, except approaching Darjeeling in India**. He was about right; the Berea had been carved from its environment like an Indian hill station cut out of the Himalayan forest. But we should not forget that some remnants of the once great Durban forest survive in Burman Bush, Virginia Bush and Pigeon Valley.

Vale two long standing members Robert (Bob) Youngleson two months ago and Joan Law at the end of June.

Bob Youngleson was born in Pretoria on the 3rd November 1942. It was wartime and his father was an officer in the South African Airforce. After a short sojourn in Port Elizabeth the family moved to Durban, initially staying in the cottage in the grounds of the Royal Hotel, before moving to Westville.

Bob went to Westville High School where he excelled at rugby and became head boy in his final year. After school he registered at the University of Natal where he studied Law. On graduating he joined Teddy Browne and his son Tim when they formed the law practice he was to work at for the rest of his life, E R Browne and Sons.

Bob was a man of many parts. He enjoyed rugby and was an ardent Sharks supporter, often attending their games. He was interested in nature, birds and wildlife and could often be seen tramping the Durban Country Club golf course on early Saturday morning bird walks. He made frequent trips to games reserves and loved the peace and tranquillity of being close to the mountains at his holiday home in Himeville. He was a keen and very good photographer and during all these trips he would have his camera on hand to take photos. A very practical man, Bob was an accomplished craftsman. He enjoyed repairing things and spent some of his happiest moments in his workshop where he crafted all sorts of useful items out of wood. He also enjoyed discovering new things and new places and was interested in the history of KZN.

Well known in Durban legal circles, Bob was highly respected not only for his legal expertise, but for the ethical and principled way he conducted his professional life. He believed passionately in doing the right thing and playing fair. Although he was a very private person, Bob loved people. He wanted to solve their problems, legal or otherwise and he was always willing to go the extra mile to help anyone who needed it. Always generous with his time, he was happy to spend many hours chatting to people, sharing their experiences, and offering sage counsel and advice.

Most of all, Bob will be remembered as a loyal, generous, and caring friend and a loving husband and father. He will be sorely missed by many but especially by his wife, Anne and his daughters, Annemarie and Penny.

Liz Ralfe – 5th May 2016

Joan Law's funeral was held at St Thomas Chapel in the cemetery on Ridge Road, on Thursday 7th July where Ian Smith, Naureen Craig, David Hughes, Robert King and Leon Nicholson all paid respects and represented the society. Joan was a longstanding member of the society but what many members will not know is she passed away in Mothwa Haven which was very the home in which she grew up. What few members will also know is that recently we learned that Sinothi Thabethe had asked his staff at KwaMuhle to gather as much history of the building as possible including talking to anyone who had worked there. Ian Smith and Robert King planned to interview Joan and record what she remembered of her working life for the museum but sadly this had been left too late.

Feedback from Debbie Lutge's thought provoking and inspiring Shakespeare presentation

The feedback from Debbie Lutge's thought provoking and inspiring presentation last month has been greater than anything since my membership of our society. One person commented, 'That I gained a greater understanding of Shakespeare than in all my years at High School.' Another member sent this comprehensive list which also contains links to even more information about the bard and his contribution to the language that has more words to describe something than any other.

Words Shakespeare Invented

The English language owes a great debt to Shakespeare. He invented over 1700 of our common words by changing nouns into verbs, changing verbs into adjectives, connecting words never before used together, adding prefixes and suffixes, and devising words wholly original. Below is a list of a few of the words Shakespeare coined, hyperlinked to the play and scene from which it comes. When the word appears in multiple plays, the link will take you to the play in which it first appears.

For a more in-depth look at Shakespeare's coined words; [please click here](#).

academe	accused	addiction	advertising	amazement
arouse	assassination	backing	bandit	bedroom
beached	besmirch	birthplace	blanket	bloodstained
barefaced	blushing	bet	bump	buzzer
caked	cater	champion	circumstantial	cold-
compromise	courtship	countless	critic	dauntless
dawn	deafening	discontent	dishearten	drugged
dwindle	epileptic	equivocal	elbow	excitement
exposure	eyeball	fashionable	fixture	flawed
frugal	generous	gloomy	gossip	green-eyed
gust	hint	hobnob	hurried	impede
impartial	invulnerable	jaded	label	lacklustre
laughable	lonely	lower	luggage	lustrous
madcap	majestic	marketable	metamorphise	mimic
monumental	moonbeam	mountaineer	negotiate	noiseless
obscene	obsequiously	ode	Olympian	outbreak
panders	pedant	premeditated	puking	radiance
rant	remorseless	savagery	scuffle	secure
skim milk	submerge	summit	swagger	torture
tranquil	undress	unreal	varied	vaulting
worthless	zany	gnarled	grovel	

For more words that Shakespeare coined please see the Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language by Dr. Ernest Klein (1966) or Shakespeare-lexicon: A Complete Dictionary of All the English Words, Phrases and Constructions in the Works of the Poet by Alexander Schmidt (1902). For words Shakespeare used only once, please see The Once Used Words in Shakespeare by James Davie Butler (1886).