



Chairman's Address to the Annual General Meeting
2017-11-18

The Society has enjoyed another phenomenal year, thanks to input from a great committee and many other wonderful people including the loyal members of the Society.

Each month when the committee reviews our monthly meeting one is constantly delighted at the quality and depth of the presentations and their presenters. Perhaps too one can measure the respect which the Society enjoys with the delight expressed by many of our presenters when they are approached. So thank you for your enthusiasm for presenters certainly appreciate the welcome and respect they receive at our meetings.

Some while ago we took the decision to circulate notices to anyone expressing an interest in the Society – which might at first seem a little unfair on those who pay to enjoy the benefits provided. But this decision has paid off for an increasing number have become members; which has contributed to our expanding membership and at a time when so many other bodies founder a little. We've recently gone a stage further with the need for non-members to pay R10 more for meeting entrance which hopefully will encourage more to join or help to swell the coffers more.

We live in the Internet Age so our website is all important. Each month the KZN Events Diary is loaded onto the website for people to view and download. Carol Allan has produced this for three years now and recently thanked the Society for its support but we owe Carol a huge thank you for her ongoing hard work in compiling this gem for everyone to share. By the way recently people have tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to advertise commercial events which just demonstrates its appeal.

I recently learned that back in the 80's the Society members regularly went on coach trips to places of interest – remembered by many because they regularly got completely lost. Well this year we've enjoyed a joint outing with Highway Heritage Society to the Botanic Gardens, which was ably led by botanist Dr Hugh Glen followed by another with Pietermaritzburg and Highway Heritage Societies to Nagle Dam. President Ian Smith started on the road of cooperation with sister societies and with Angie St George's organisational skills we have maintained this important spirit of sharing.

In fact both these bodies are now sharing their events which you'll now find on the Society website.

Whilst in the 1980's members visited places of interest we have tried to go one better with a midweek break; a break which 20 members enjoyed at The Oaks at Byrne. Angie says she's been badgered a little to organise a similar event – this time with Eshowe the probable base for some exploration of local places of historical interest. Robin Ralfe enhanced the Richmond area event with his family recollections – enjoyed by members before supper one afternoon so thank you Robin.

What else has the Society achieved this year being its 110th anniversary in KZN? Who would have believed a year ago that we would enjoy such a momentous afternoon at Muckleneuk? We have



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to thank the University for allowing the use of this splendid facility without charge and we are extremely grateful to eThekweni and the DLHM and its director Snothi Thabethe for such generous support.

We were able to recognise the tremendous contribution which the Campbell family has made to this city, the Province of KZN and South Africa so it was fitting that Jane Bedford should be our guest speaker. And I might add, the staff at Campbell Collections tell me the Killie Campbell Memorial Bench provides tranquillity when it's time to take a break from a busy schedule.

Whilst we enjoy the support of the city and the DLHM we have to ask what are we doing to support them? Your committee recently visited Neil Harris to look at parts of the Daphne Strutt Collection. Neil retires in a couple of years so we should be helping where possible to find a suitable replacement but learning in the meanwhile more about the work which Neil does and how we might help with a smooth transition.

We also know that the DLHM would appreciate the support of knowledgeable guides; guides who are generally known as Docent's in the museum world. How many members will put up their hands to help in this field? Performing this task is hugely enjoyable and most satisfying for one can present an unbiased if sometimes old fashioned perspective.

Very occasionally I've been at KwaMuhle when an overseas visitor arrives to look at the DHS-Delville Wood Exhibition. It gives one a great feeling talking to a Brazil engineer who is holidaying in South Africa, or a couple from Poland who have a direct connection to war even if it's the 2nd WW.

Other highlights of this memorable year are providing two Killie Campbell Bursaries of greater value than before; of seeing the income grow thanks in no small measure to good management of the catering by Memory Coutts who quietly but effectively took on this role; of seeing the bank balances grow thanks to outstanding management by Myra Boyes and the generosity of wonderful supporters; of receiving a Daphne Strutt book *Fashions in South Africa 1652 to 1900*, thanks to the kindness of Stella and Michael Cottrell – a book we struggle find and worry we will no longer be able to give it as a prize in years ahead; talking of Daphne Strutt we probably need to increase the capital by R10000 which would allow the fund to become self-sustaining; our relationship with DUT because of this prize is I might add excellent; the support of the annual writing competition which started three years ago continues; and enhancing the quality of the newsletter photographs from Sanabelle and Mikhail, aided at times by Hugh Bland; and enhancing awareness of the Society in the Press, Mikhail Peppas.

You have an excellent President, Ian Smith, to whom we owe a great deal for as I've said many times before; Ian laid down a splendid foundation from which the Society and I have benefitted tremendously.

Thank you

Hardy Wilson