



# South African National Society

**History - Culture and Conservation. Join SANS.**

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 APRIL 2015

**THE DATE:** 14<sup>th</sup> April 2015

**VENUE:** KwaMuhle Museum, Bram Fischer Road [Ordnance Road] Durban.

**TIME:** Meeting commences at 17h30; Refreshments will be served from 16h45.

**PARKING:** Off Bram Fischer/Ordnance Road [next to the Museum]; security person is present

**FEATURE:** April 2015 is the **100<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY of GALLIPOLI** so SANS is delighted that **Robin Smith** will be talking about this.

**Robin** writes:

*"In 2007 I was fortunate enough to be able to spend a week on one of the most evocative battlefields of the Great War. Our guide was Colonel Christopher Newbould C.B.E. We stayed in the city of Cannakale, on the Asian side of the Dardanelles opposite Gallipoli and visited a number of the Turkish batteries there which gave the Royal Navy such problems.*

*Every morning we crossed to Gallipoli and four days was barely sufficient to see all that there is to see. There are numerous graveyards maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in pristine condition. Some huge monuments are a feature, the largest being the Turkish Victory Arch and graveyard. There is also a monument to the Turk who rescued a wounded ANZAC soldier in no man's land. But by far the most evocative is the 4-metre high granite plaque with the excerpt from Ataturk's speech of 1934.*

*Gallipoli is sparsely populated, the countryside only able to support a few shepherds and their flocks. The battlefield itself is guarded and maintained by the Turkish Army.*

*Gallipoli is just as sacred to the Turks as it is to the British, Australians, New Zealanders and French who fought there.*

*The literature of the Dardanelles campaign is extensive. There are official accounts from the British and Australians which are well worth reading. Books from British authors are numerous and there are a number of recent Australian and New Zealand accounts. There is a final slide to my talk giving a small selection for recommended reading.*

*And the internet – just Google Gallipoli!*

*The whole episode is intriguing and not least because of the involvement of Winston Churchill and numerous British officers who fought in the Anglo Boer War, Ian Hamilton being the most senior."*

Gallipoli is marked by Australia and New Zealand on 25<sup>th</sup> April each year as a solemn national holiday – ANZAC DAY - during which the nation's fallen are remembered at dawn and other services. Servicemen and women and people from all walks of life march through cities and towns both large and small as a mark of respect to those who gave their lives for freedom in that and subsequent wars. In 2014 to coincide with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Australian's leaving for service in the war, the National Anzac Memorial was officially opened in Albany, Western Australia. Albany was the port from which many Australians looked back for the last ever view of their homeland.

## March Meeting– Stephen Coan talking on - A FAMILY AFFAIR: THE POWELLS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Stephen Coan is a talented editor, journalist and author who frustratingly for SANS members will be living in Gauteng by the time you read this, so firstly thank you for finding time to talk to SANS before your departure Stephen.

Like all good stories this one first traced the path that lead to his initial interest in the Powells. His work on (Sir) H Rider Haggard was the link that prompted initial enquiries from the UK when Colonel Geoffrey Powell a nephew of Sydney Powell, and an author and publisher himself, wrote to Stephen in 2002 and set him on the path that lead to many discoveries about Sydney Powell's intriguing life.



**Stephen Coan**

Sydney was the second son of William Powell. William Powell, who had left Britain in disgrace after a scandalous divorce, gave Natal a wonderful legacy in the Colonial Building in Pietermaritzburg. The building's soundness of both design and construction has been well and truly reinforced for it stills stands, fully restored in spite of an apparently devastating fire during its fairly recent refurbishment. Stephen ended his fascinating presentation by showing pictures of the fire; discussing the tenders for the rehabilitation and showing pictures of what can only be described as a remarkable rebirth or Phoenix to use Stephen's own words.

But the main part of the evening focussed on Sydney Powell, adventurer, traveller and writer. Members can follow the link to read Stephen's paper in *Natalia Issue 44* pages 19 to 32. However please note that you will need to register, a quick and easy process which requires minimal personal information, before you can read or download the wealth of material about KwaZulu-Natal, not just about Sydney Powell the writer. Every issue of Natalia is available online and articles of interest can be downloaded as \*.pdf files. Click on this link or copy and paste it into your browser: <http://www.natalia.org.za/natalia.html>

OTHER NEWS: Members who accepted the invitation from Vusi Buthelezi HOD Killie Campbell and Otterley Press to attend the launch of Stan Schoeman's *The Eloquent Bead* were royally entertained. The launch was held in the Prof Jeff Guy Masakhane Seminar Room. Gorgeous displays of beadwork were on show with the most spectacular being worn by one of the young ladies present. Many of Barbara Tyrell's paintings adorned the walls and we learned much about the background to Stan Schoeman's collecting and recording of the traditional beadwork produced by the Zulu ladies some fifty or so years ago. And to cap all this there was an abundance of excellent South African wine and food to look after the needs of the inner man (and lady).

For those who would like to learn more or purchase the book, follow this link to Otterley Press. <http://www.otterley.com/>

**Barbara Tyrell** was due to celebrate her 103<sup>rd</sup> birthday two days later on 15<sup>th</sup> March – warm congratulations from SANS, Ma'am.

**Ian Smith** rightly believes this is **OF INTEREST** as it pertains to the First World War.

Britain's outstanding First World War debt has been repaid after the Chancellor redeemed £1.9 billion from an outstanding bond.

The 3.5% War Loan was the most widely held of any UK Government bond with more than 120,000 holders, or 60% of all holdings of government gilts.

About 97,000 of these investors held less than £1,000 and almost 38,000 holders owned less than £100, according to the Treasury.

The 3.5% War Loan was issued in 1932 by the then-chancellor Neville Chamberlain in exchange for the 5% War Loan 1929-47, which was issued in 1917 as part of the effort to raise money to pay for the First World War.

The Debt Management Office estimates that Britain has paid some £5.5 billion in total interest on the 5% and 3.5% war loans since 1917.

The move comes as the Government looks to remove all other undated gilts in its portfolio, some of which have origins going back to the 18th century.

Current low interest rates mean the Government is able to refinance the debt with new bonds.

The Treasury is also looking to remove all six of the other remaining undated gilts in its portfolio, including some debt originally issued in the era of the South Sea Bubble in the 18th century.

The plan to repay the First World War debt was announced in December, when Chancellor George Osborne said: "We can, at last, pay off the debts Britain incurred to fight the First World War.

"It is a sign of our fiscal credibility and it's a good deal for this generation of taxpayers. It's also another fitting way to remember that extraordinary sacrifice of the past."

**Heritage Matters overseas:** It seems we are not alone in terms of ensuring Heritage Places are easy to find. The following is from the UK with acknowledgement to the Daily Telegraph.

At last, people can finally find our house writes William Cash in the Daily Telegraph of 29th November. Daft rules mean heritage signs will show the way to McDonald's but not some stately homes. You may have thought that as a historic house that has been open to the public since the 1970s, we would have been 'awarded' Brown (Tourist) Signs years ago. Alas not. Until last week, the only 'permanent' signage we had was a laminated arrow with the house logo on which I had stapled to a piece of wood and nailed half way up a telegraph pole at the point where most people tend to turn around.

At the recent Historic Houses Association (HHA) AGM, President Richard Compton said that the backlog of repairs for member houses had risen from £390m in 2009 to £764m in 2013 – an increase of 96% in just four years. Such figures, he said, should 'set alarm bells ringing'.

This lack of any sense of government priority for heritage can be gauged by the fact that although a Brown Sign Task Force was set up back in 2011 to rectify the absurdities of the government promoting visiting McDonalds over actual heritage attractions, the recommendations of this report – to introduce a new definition of tourism that separates 'genuine' tourist attractions from those with a 'purely commercial interest' – have yet to be actioned by any government ministers.

This is not uncommon in the historic house world. Indeed, the whole subject of which local tourist and visitor attractions are deemed worthy of 'Brown Sign' status is a highly controversial and sensitive subject within the heritage tourism and historic house world.

Despite bringing in over £24 billion to the UK economy, government policy and guidelines to local authorities on heritage tourism signage has been both 'inconsistent' and often 'illogical' according to the HHA, which has been campaigning for a 'review' of the existing system which is based on awarding signs according to numbers of days open to the public (typically 160), parking capacity and number of toilets.

This means that many historic houses which are – like Upton Cressett – located way off the beaten track and urgently require signage to help people actually find the place are being turned down by local Highway authorities for Brown Signs whilst tourist signs are being granted to retail parks, garden centres, supermarkets and in one case noted by the HHA's policy director, Frances Garnham, 'even a McDonalds fast-food restaurant'.