



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 JULY 2015

THE DATE: Tuesday, 14th July 2015

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

TIME: Meeting commences at 17:30; Refreshments will be served from 16:45.

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

FEATURE:



Adams was founded in 1865 and must have a place in every Durban booklover's heart as well as the hearts of those who studied at UKZN. As the company celebrates its 150th Anniversary we felt it appropriate to invite Peter Adams to come and talk about the firm's history and the motivation of its founders, the people who helped to make the company what it is and learn how bookselling has changed since those early days.

FEATURE: **Weekday Outing to St Paul's Anglican Church, Durban**

Many will recall Chair Ian Smith asking whether members would attend a weekday outing or event. Well here's the first of these, in this case being arranged because visits to leading churches must perforce take place outside weekends.

The Date: Friday 24 July 2015

The Time: Meet at 10:00 at St. Pauls Anglican Church, Monty Naicker Street (formerly Pine Street) Durban.

Parking: You may park in the carpark in the church grounds, off Monty Naicker Street. Church security will be present. Then join other attendees in the Bishop Rubin Phillip Hall on the First Floor of the Church Hall complex.

The Program: We will commence with morning refreshment and a look at a small historical photographic display in the hall. **DAVID HUGHES** will then present a short half-hour talk on the history of St. Paul's, and the gathering will conclude with a walkabout through the Church to view items of historical interest.

Please come join us for an interesting look-back at old Durban, as St. Paul's enjoys its 166 year vintage this year.

There will be a small charge between R10 to R20 to cover costs but this will only be finalised after this newsletter is posted. For catering purposes, kindly let Ian Smith (iansandra@mweb.co.za or Cell **0733 549 385**) know if you are attending by no later than Monday 20 July. There will also be an acceptance list at SANS July meeting when the cost will be known.

Lastly we are grateful to Archdeacon May Laban for the use of the Church Hall.

18th June 2015 marks the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo and we were privileged to listen to Robin Smith making a comprehensive and enthralling presentation about the battle that changed the course of history and brought peace to Europe for fifty years. The presentation differed from the one's we are used to because we looked at paintings not photos and we looked at blood and gore in good measure rather than listening to a political summary.

Close to 200 000 troops fought this battle which lasted over four days and culminated in the battle of Waterloo itself with its front just 4 km wide. In this small area imagine a third of all forces as casualties, dead, wounded or missing then include the cavalry horses and one looks upon a scene of unimaginable carnage and horror. Robin explained that he has visited this extremely compact site but sadly the topography was greatly altered some years after the battle when the flat ground from far around was scraped into a substantial mound with a Lion astride the top; named Lion's Mound.

We heard that Wellington had surveyed and mapped this area during the preceding year and had chosen this hillside with its a sunken lane hidden just behind the ridge as his defensive position. His field artillery was lined along the back of the ridge and also hidden from the French.

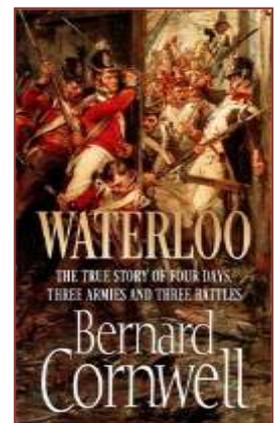
Wellington and Napoleon had totally different approaches to the conduct of a battle. Wellington rode his horse between different parts of the battlefield which enabled him to see developments, inspire his men yet remain hidden behind the ridge for some of the time. There was a famous Elm tree that Wellington used to survey the battle and to issue orders.

Napoleon remained in much the same place and relied on his commanders Marshals' Ney and Grouchy to conduct affairs. In fact Napoleon had a weakness in his high command. Had the Prussians been chased after their defeat at the Battle of Ligny and as they retreated through Wavre on the 17th June this would doubtless have had a major influence on the outcome. Napoleon's strategy had been to defeat the individual armies before they could form a major force but now this strategy failed because of poor intelligence and not knowing where the Prussians were until it was too late.

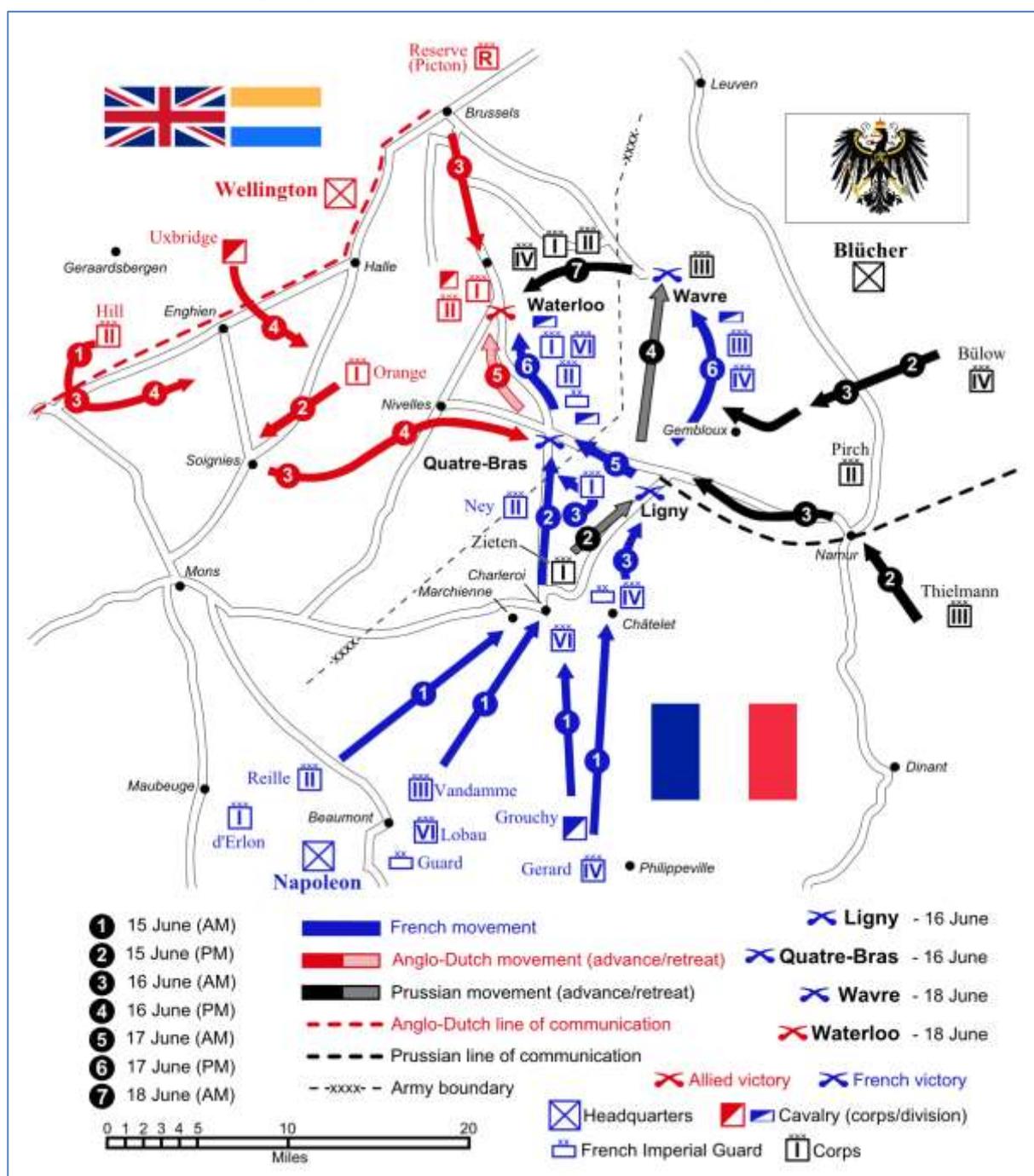
The arms used by the different forces included muskets that would kill at 60 – 80 metres; rifles that were deadly as far as 300 m away but which were mainly used by skirmishers; heavy and light cavalry with heavy cavalry swords or sabres and field artillery that fired straight and howitzers that lobbed shells, both of these with devastating effect when firing into densely packed troops.

Like Wellington, Blücher was a true leader and rallied his men with his presence. He was 74 years old at the time of the battle, was unseated from his horse yet got right back on and continued to inspire his men. He was nicknamed *Marschall Vorwärts* by his troops because of his aggressive approach to warfare. The Prussians were advancing through the defile of Saint Lambert, an area which had been soaked with rain throughout the previous night and most of the day and was more like a swamp than a passage. The guns sank to their axles and the men were exhausted and becoming dispirited until Blücher made a short but rousing speech. After that the men redoubled their efforts to reach Wellington and join the fray. His arrival undoubtedly proved the factor that lead to Napoleon's final defeat and eventual later capture and exile to St Helena.

It would never do justice to Robin were we to attempt a summary of his wonderful address but as always Robin ended by recommending a couple of key books, one of which was only published last year, Bernard Cornwell's, *Waterloo; The History of Four Days, Three Armies and Three Battles*. Members might be interested to learn that Cornwell's book is available in Audio format as well as print.



Map copied from Battle of Waterloo in Wikipedia



There is a wealth of information on the web. Just Google, *Wellington Museum, Belgium*; in Wikipedia search, *Battle of Waterloo*; *Wavre*; *Ligny*; the high command and generals, *Wellington*; *Blücher*; *Bülow*; *Napoleon*; *Ney* and *Grouchy* amongst others.

SANS 16th June Bishop Colenso Outing Report

The Bishop Colenso outing proved to be a day to be remembered mainly for the right reasons as we heard some excellent presenters and were shepherded around Pietermaritzburg with expert historian and author Simon Haw. At the end of this wonderful day we hit a glitch at the Tatham Café which was totally overwhelmed by the numbers seeking sustenance and SANS can only apologise because our Pietermaritzburg colleagues had given the café every warning of the numbers to be fed.

St Peter's Church is a Colenso church and John Colenso is one of the few people buried at the altar of a South African church. However because of the public holiday we could only listen to Simon describing the many interesting features of this early Anglican edifice from outside.

After the fascinating introduction to Bishop Colenso and St Peter's Church we then strolled through the lanes from Church Street to the KZN Museum in Jabu Ndlovu Street where morning tea which was kindly arranged and served by ladies from the Pietermaritzburg Heritage Society.



SANS Members listening to Simon Haw at the front of St Peter's Church on June 16th

The KZN Museum has a splendid lecture theatre so comfortably ensconced in this we heard John Deane, who was on the committee that rebuilt Bishopstowe, describe how the small group of dedicated people with the help of a talented architect, had researched and reconstructed as much as possible of the original Colenso homestead designs, for it appeared to have several existences. Funds had been raised, some from Colenso's old college at Cambridge, and Bishopstowe rebuilt as closely as possible to its original form.



The KZN Museum currently has an exhibition entitled **Democracy** which celebrates 20 years of Democracy. **Bishop Colenso** is portrayed in one of its displays but this exhibition occupies just a small part of the KZN Museum. The museum is a real centre of knowledge and well worth an extended visit. And at the time of writing entry for pensioners costs nothing so add it to a wishlist when in Maritzburg.

It was time to move on and the group strolled down the street looking at the many splendid buildings and statues that make Pietermaritzburg the fascinating city it is. In spite of the roadworks Graham Allan managed to take many good photos showing the range of different buildings – for which we are most appreciative.



Ancient and Modern – a contrast in period architecture



**Statue of Hope
Mohandas Gandhi
Church Street, Maritzburg**

The last stop was the Tatham Art Gallery which has a great range of paintings and other artworks and the cafe on the first floor a sound reputation. So as we remember the good things most of all feelings were that this was an excellent outing for which sincere and grateful thanks are due to our history colleagues in Pietermaritzburg and Simon Haw and John Deane in particular.