

HIGHWAY HERITAGE SOCIETY



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JULY 2018 NEWSLETTER

CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

Fortunately the weather is warming up after what, I believe, has been a cold snap all over the country. A small amount of rain fell 10 days ago and there was a little more yesterday. It was all very welcome.

As mentioned in our last newsletter our Outing will be at Tanglewood Farm, courtesy of Caryl Combrink and the Walker Family Trust and will take place on 4th August. We have invited members of the SA National Society and the Pietermaritzburg Heritage Society, and are hoping for a good turn-out. Hopefully many of you will join us for a sociable bring-your-own picnic lunch next to the lower dam. Please try to bring folding chairs as there is only limited seating available. You will notice that there are not many trees near the dam which is for a good reason. The trees present a good perch for Fish Eagles which are inclined to decimate the fish population in the dam! After the talk which I will present, after lunchtime, Caryl has kindly agreed that those who would like to walk on the farm may do so and has kindly offered to introduce those who are interested, to the animals past and present which have lived and now live on the farm. Meet the tame Cane Rat, many tortoise and birds and other animals which are now part of her family!

OUTING AND TALK ON 4 AUGUST 2018

Subject: "The Field brothers, Durban's Field Street, Field's Hill and Richmond Farm No. 999." As preamble to the story, which will be presented, it will relate to William Swan Field, who arrived in the Colony of Natal in July 1844 to take up his appointment as the Collector of Customs in D'Urban. He was elected as a Member of the Executive Council and in 1851 became the first Magistrate in D'Urban. In March 1845 his brother John Coote Field arrived from the Cape and WSF purchased a farm known as Tafelberg from William Cowie in June that year. John (known later as old Jack) settled on the farm and he and his wife built their first home on the property where Kloof High School stands today. On the 1 October 1851 title to the farm Richmond no. 999 was registered in the name of William Swan Field.

Speaker: Adrian Rowe

Date & time: Saturday 4 Aug. 2018 at 12:00 for picnic lunch or 13:40 for talk and walkabout.

Venue: Tanglewood Farm, Pinetown. Directions are included below. (verbal directions, if needed, may be obtained from Adrian or Marie)

Meeting Fees: Members & Visitors No Charge; **If you know of any friends who may be interested in joining our Society, please invite them to come along.**

No booking is required but please note that the gate into Tanglewood Farm will only be manned between 11:45 and 12:15 and again between 13:15 and 13:45. There is plenty of secure parking inside the farm available within a short walking distance of the bottom dam and facilities, where we will meet.

CHANGE OF PERSONAL PARTICULARS

If you move or change any of your contact details, please let us know. You may contact us at the above address or email Milly Rowe at roweam@telkomsa.net or phone her on 031 7644721. If you receive your Newsletter by post and have an email address please inform us, as this helps to keep our costs contained.

DIRECTIONS TO TANGLEWOOD FARM

From Durban take the Paradise Valley exit from the N3 and join the M13 heading for Pinetown. Just before climbing into Field's Hill, leave the M13 at Exit 19 (signed M1 Richmond Rd). At the robot turn left (south bound) into Richmond Road (M1) heading towards Mariannhill.

From Hillcrest/Kloof join the M13 heading towards Durban and at the bottom of Field's Hill glide off at Exit 19 and at the robot turn right into Richmond Road (south bound) under the M13 heading for Mariannhill.

ALL. At the third robot (Gillitts Rd) you will see Beier Industries on the left. Continue straight over this intersection and turn immediately right into Trafford Road. Travel straight for a little over 1 km and turn right into Motala Road (just before the robot at Hillclimb Rd) between two old Indian-owned houses (you are now entering Motala Farm). In about 200 metres, at the T junction turn left into Naidoo Rd., and follow this road straight to the gate of Tanglewood Farm. Provided you arrive within the allotted times someone will be at the gate to let you in. Secure parking is just inside the gate on the grass to the right.

MAP



REPORT-BACK FROM OUR LAST MEETING

Herod the Great: a great and, possibly, the greatest builder of all time

Audiovisual presentation by Alison Bastable – 26 May, 2018

The audience was delighted to be entertained with an audiovisual narrated by such a dynamic speaker as Alison, who is clearly passionate about King Herod's legacy. A ruthless leader representing Rome in Judea between 37 BC and 4 BC, Herod was a complex man, a manic depressive sufficiently paranoid to surround himself with a personal bodyguard of 2 000 soldiers. He was, nonetheless, a visionary responsible for some amazingly advanced architectural structures and must have had thousands and thousands of labourers working for him.

Alison's journey began in the rugged sandstone and basalt desert canyons of Jordan, at Petra on the King's Highway, once the principal trading route between Arabia and the Levant. Once the capital city of the nomadic tribe known as Natabaeans, who began migrating from Arabia during the sixth century BCE, it was here that Herod forged the magnificent Treasury (probably originally a temple), vast amphitheatre and monastery which attract tourists worldwide. Interestingly, today, the city's secondary "business" is second-hand cars – something of a contrast!

From here we were taken to Wadi Musa (Valley of Moses), a short distance from the main entrance to Petra and on to Caesarea Maritima in Israel, the enormous deep sea harbour created by Herod. He also built huge storerooms, temples, wide roads and masterminded an aquaduct for public baths and waterborne sewage.

We moved on to Masada where Herod was responsible for erecting a gigantic winter palace and fortress on top of a massive plateau 1 300 ft high near the Dead Sea, whose surface and shoreline is 1 388 ft below sea level. His palace sprawls over three rock terraces and there is a long, winding path leading up to it which, on average, takes 60-90 minutes to walk up and 30-40 minutes to walk down. Which is probably why there's a cable car there now to cater for the less energetic!

Another elaborate palace/fortress was erected at Herodium, about 10 km south of Jerusalem, where Herod re-shaped a hilltop using untold numbers of slaves and artisans to create a pleasure palace and safe haven with panoramic views across Bethlehem, Jerusalem and the Judean Desert. Within the complex there was the palace (which once had seven levels and towers at four corners), courtyards, palatial halls and chambers and an aquaduct system to supply water not only to the gardens but also to an enormous pool. (Fittingly, Herodium is where Herod is buried.)

Finally we reached the Old City of Jerusalem and the famous West Wall. Here, in 19 BCE, Herod undertook a project to artificially double the area of the then-existing Temple Mount, which resulted in the encasement of the natural steep hill and renovation of the temple. The plaza that was erected had a walled compound, and underground vaulted archways which exist to this day.

Thank you, Alison, for a most enlightening and entertaining afternoon!

FRANK STEVENS OF SARNIA

Researched & written by Hazel England (20 Apr. 2006)

Frank Stevens from Truro, England, arrived in Durban in 1881. He later started a boot and shoe store in Pietermaritzburg which displayed the well known golden boot sign. Frank Stevens's shoe stores soon spread throughout Natal to Johannesburg.



Sarnia was subdivided into farms which were purchased by T.C. Colenbrander in 1861, Spencer French Drake (75 acres) in 1861 and others. Mr T. P. James bought 50 acres from Capt. Drake in the 1880's and called his home Fairydene. After T.P. James' death in 1892, Mr Frank Stevens bought the Fairydene property where he discovered gold and deposits of clay. Two brickyards were established and he brought a Mr Steele from Scotland to oversee the yards. Once the business was established Mr Steele returned to Scotland and Frank Stevens trade marked "Terra Cotta" bricks which were used locally.

In 1899 conflict between the Transvaal Boer Republic and the British erupted into the Anglo Boer War. Prior to hostilities the British Army Medical Corp were liaising with the Natal Colonial Government to find suitable sites for Military Hospitals. Mr Frank Stevens sent a letter to the Premier of Natal, Mr Hime on 23 Oct. 1899 offering the use of his block of buildings and land at "Pinetown Bridge" as a hospital site. If the site was not suitable for a hospital, then Mr Stevens offered it for use by the Refugee Committee, to house those people fleeing from Johannesburg and Northern Natal. After initial rejection the hospital was accepted.

Once the hospital was accepted for development Mr Alfred Moseley of Middlesex, England donated a prefabricated hospital building and equipment. Named after Princess Helena Christian, the daughter of Queen Victoria, the hospital was opened on 26 May 1900. During the opening ceremony Mr Frank Stevens was thanked for his offer of the Fairydene site, as a hospital.

After the Anglo Boer War Frank Stevens found his business life had changed. Stock had been looted from many of his shoe shops and the losses caused hardships.

Where footwear had been commandeered, he did not get full payment as compensation. His 3 sons joined the Shoe Company and when Frank Stevens retired they took it over, followed by a name change to Frank, Rupert and Victor Stevens Shoe Store.

A railway spur line and siding was built from the Old Main Line to what is now Bullbrand Road, to transport his best bricks from his brickfield to Durban. Costs were not competitive with Durban brickyards and the excess bricks were used to build the Fairydene Hotel in 1905. Clay found near the brickyards was also used to manufacture tiles and sanitary ware.

This business closed before the brickyards in 1917 and the brickfields and railway siding were sold to Bullbrand Fertilizer, who required a railway line to transport animal bones, a vital ingredient of fertilizer. Bullbrand then erected an office block which was used subsequently by many companies including Wayne Leith of Leith properties until 2003.

Development around Pilots Hill, now renamed Paradise Valley flats hill in the 1970's, led to growth in Sarnia. An architect unearthed some kilns on the corner of Entabeni & Protea Roads and another near Bullbrand Road. The Pinetown Historical Society investigated the kilns and found bricks marked "Terra Cotta Brick Works", "Sarnia Brick Works" and a third example with only "Terra Cotta". It was evident that the kilns and bricks came from Frank Stevens' brick works. An article covering the topic appeared in the Highway Mail of 25 June 1976 with photographs. During alterations of the Fairydene Hotel to Pioneer Gardens Retirement Home, a "Terra Cotta" brick was donated to the Pinetown Museum.

A Title deed No 858 dated 14 Mar. 1931 confirmed that Frank Stevens had purchased "Entabeni" house in Ridge Road, Durban. Currently the site is occupied by Entabeni Hospital. "Entabeni" is the Zulu word for "On the Mountain". It was the connection with Frank Stevens that gave Entabeni Road in Sania its name.

Mr Jack Pastoll purchased the Fairydene Hotel in 1933 and laid out the golf course and new attractions. He lived in Underwood Road, and what is today call Pastoll Road, is where he had stables and a collection of historic carts and carriages. Sold in July 1973 the hotel had various owners until it closed in 1985. Redesigned, it became Pioneer Gardens Retirement Home in 1986. A commemoration plaque at Fairydene Village, records, the opening by the Mayor of Pinetown Mr B. Mathee on 22 June 1988, which was an historic occasion. Advertised as a secure Retirement Centre on the corner of Underwood and Stapleton Roads, it has become a much sought after development. In 1991 Pioneer Gardens Residents Committee changed the name to Fairydene Retirement Village.

The Heritage of Frank Stevens is commemorated in Steven Park, Housing Estate for the S.A. Railways in 1956, and the street names Entabeni and Christian Roads.

STEVEN S, Frank,
C.M.G. (1900); b. 1850;
m., 1887, Kate, e.d. of
Morton Green, Natal.
Rendered services to
Princess Christian Hos-
pital in Natal (dis-
patches). Well known
as a large boot and
shoe importer, with
business connections
and branches in many
towns of Natal and
Transvaal. Add., "Inte-
benge," Ridge Rd.,
Berea, Durban.



Extracted from: Natal Who's Who 1906

References used in producing the above article are available from the Chairman.

We look forward to seeing you at our outing on **4 August 2018**. **PLEASE remember to arrive when the gate is manned!**