



# South African National Society

**History - Culture and Conservation.**

Founded in 1905 for the preservation of objects of Historical Interest and Natural Beauty  
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## SECOND QUARTERLY REVIEW: 2019

Dear Members

As will be seen from this review (covering the period from the end of March to June 2019), the society has had a busy few months and there is also much to look forward to in the months that lie ahead.

We do appeal for your support at this year's AGM which will be held at the Durban Country Club on Saturday 16 November. Our speaker is the very well known scientist and marine biologist Prof Mike Bruton. Details will be sent out in August but do diarise now.

During the past months, a number of new members have joined our society and our total membership is now 111. Welcome all our new members and we hope you will enjoy a long and happy association with SANS.

The fact that so much has been achieved in the first half of this year has been the result of an exceptionally hard working and enthusiastic committee. We also value the support of our members. Your generosity towards the Development Fund, the Killie Campbell Bursary Fund, your attendance at meetings and your participation in excursions makes for a growing dynamic society.

Enjoy looking back on highlights of the past three months!

Best wishes

Sincerely

Angela St George

## VISIT TO OLD ST THOMAS' AND RIDGE ROAD CEMETERY

On Wednesday 27 March a group of 35 SANS members visited one of Durban's oldest cemeteries.

Professor George Devenish delivered an excellent paper on Allen Gardiner. He emphasised that Allen Gardiner was a product of his time whose life needs to be viewed in context. Gardiner was a Victorian, born into a world where Britain ruled the waves and the Empire was omnipotent.

As a sea captain during the Napoleonic Wars, Gardiner had a life of adventure. But after the death of his mother and having survived a critical illness, Gardiner decided to devote his life to missionary work.

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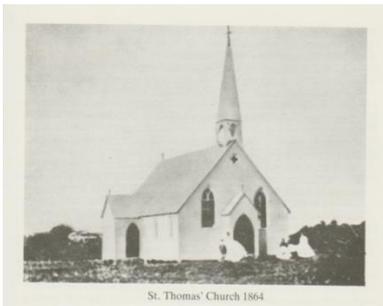
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With dramatic flair Prof Devenish described Gardiner's visit to Dingane and he also explained Gardiner's contribution to the development of Durban in the 1830's.

Our next talk was given by Col Patrick Acutt. This was a personal account of the well known Durban family, who contributed greatly to St Thomas' and whose name became synonymous with property development in Durban.

Our excursion concluded with a visit to present day St Thomas' Church, Musgrave (1899). George Devenish pointed out interesting architectural aspects of the church including the beautiful Te Deum window. The Colenso controversy was also discussed.

After a busy morning our coffee and a sandwich at St Clements was most welcome!



The first St Thomas's church was a corrugated iron structure shipped from England. It was inaugurated by the Archbishop of Cape Town, the Rev Robert Gray, on 28 June 1864.



This 1928 memorial chapel replaced the old church. In the cemetery lie the graves of many of Durban's prominent pioneer families.



Patrick Acutt, Angela St George, Prof George Devenish and Udo Averweg



Marion Spence, Audrey Fuller, Sally Bath and Yvonne Johnstone in the Memorial Garden



Julia Gardiner, the daughter of Capt Allen Gardiner, died at sea. The site of her actual grave is not known.



The beautiful stained glass windows have been expertly restored after vandalism in 2015.

## **APRIL MEETING: AN ADDRESS BY KAREN MONK-KLIJNSTRA AND THE PRESENTATION OF THE DAPHNE STRUTT AWARD**

Myra Boyes presented Alexandra van Heerden, a third year Fashion Design student at Durban University of Technology with a bursary and a copy of Daphne Strutt's, *'Fashion in South Africa 1652-1900.'*

In her acceptance speech Alexandra said of her future "If I had a crystal ball it would show me completely engulfed in the world of fashion. I love the styling aspect of fashion and certainly trend setting."

We will follow the fashion career of this talented young lady with interest.

Because of the significance of this award, Robert King was asked to give a talk on Daphne Strutt (use the link to read more). <http://sanationalsociety.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Daphne-H-Strutt.pdf>

Daphne Strutt was a fashion designer, close associate of Killie Campbell and the curator of the Old House Museum.



Karen Monk-Klijnsstra's talk was entitled "Inspiration in the Ordinary "and out of a suitcase came her wonderful designs of award winning outfits. What a different SANS presentation, but the audience were riveted!

## **MAY MEETING: IN RECOVERY-LAKE ST LUCIA RE-IMAGINED**

The talk on the above subject by Nicolette Forbes was most informative and it was delivered to a full house. The speech was well supported by clear, informative maps explaining the all important changes to this World Heritage site.

The research project has received international acclaim and in 2017 Nicolette Forbes and her colleague Bronwyn James were selected as winners of the National Wetland Award in the Research and Science Category.

Those interested to read more are referred to our Web Page at

<http://sanationalsociety.co.za/sa-national-society-meeting-13-may-2019/>



Nicolette Forbes



Isimangaliso's Critical Habitat Restoration

## **JUNE MEETING: APOLLO 17 –THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE LAST MEN ON THE MOON**

To commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic Apollo 11 mission, the society screened the documentary of the final Apollo mission which took place in 1972. The documentary featured spectacular NASA footage and exclusive interviews with scientists some of whom had worked on the Apollo program in the 1960's and 1970's.



Launch of Apollo 17



Crew of Apollo 17

Our thanks to Steve Kotze, for putting together this first successful SANS Movie evening!

More information can be found at <http://sanationalsociety.co.za/apollo-mission-to-the-moon-1972-documentary-presented-by-steven-kotze/>

## NOTTINGHAM ROAD WEEKEND 31 May-2 June 2019

First on the itinerary was a visit to the **Mandela Capture Site** to view the impressive steel sculpture designed by artist Mario Cianfanelli. The museum at the site proved interesting and we all felt the audio- visuals told the story of the Long Walk to Freedom in an inspirational way.



Next stop was **Hilton College** where we were met by our guide, Bev Davidge, the museum curator. The museum contains fascinating memorabilia including early exam papers, handwritten letters from boys to their parents and a full record of sporting achievements dating back to the 1870's.



Sculptures, fountains, the beautiful chapel, the memorial garden and the pristine school buildings confirmed Alan Paton's description of Hilton as the most beautiful school in South Africa.



It was early evening when we arrived at **Tweedie Hall** but a warm welcome awaited us. Helen and Nicole are passionate about this historic home where they host weddings and special events. Built between 1886 and 1891, Tweedie Hall with its period furniture in place, is a gracious home and a return visit is on the SANS agenda.



Moira Gruenerberg with Robert King



Rear view of Lynedoch

**Lynedoch** was the farm of the King family who came to Natal in 1849 as Byrne settlers. As we sat in the beautiful garden of this 1856 home, Robert King told of the hardships of the early years. A trip to Pietermaritzburg in a wagon was a two day event and so only undertaken twice a year. Supplies were limited, farming was difficult, roads almost non-existent and rivers were impassable. Families had to become self-sufficient and the early settlers supported one another especially during Bushmen raids, the floods and the extremely cold winters. Eventually in 1885 the Durban-Pietermaritzburg railway reached Nottingham Road and this marked the beginning of a new era for Lynedoch.

Lynedoch is the oldest house in the Midlands of Natal and through the years has welcomed many prominent visitors including the Governors of Natal. We felt privileged to have been welcomed here in 2019.

Schools visited on Saturday included Kings and Clifton. **Kings School** has a rich history. Tanya Mitchell, the present headmistress, follows in the footsteps of her father and grandfather. This is a unique school with a strong sense of belonging. Education is far more than simply what goes on in the classroom.



**Clifton** is today a co-educational day and boarding school with an inter-denominational Christian ethos. Set on a 40 hectare estate, there are modern classrooms and boarding houses but children are encouraged to explore the woods, swim in dams and climb trees. Headmaster, Viktor Kurtz, stressed that values of honesty, integrity and tolerance are the core of Clifton's philosophy.



Viktor Kurtz with Robert King



In the grounds of Clifton Nottingham Road

**Strathearn** was the farm of Charles John Smythe who was married to the King's daughter, Margaret. Both Charles and his wife were hard working and enterprising. Charles Smythe also served as Prime Minister in the Natal cabinet and after Union served as Administrator for eight years. His grave and that of Quentin Smythe, who was awarded the Victoria Cross in WW2, are to be seen in the family cemetery.



View from Strathearn



Grave of Charles Smythe



Strathearn as it is today

At **St John's Gowrie Church** we were introduced to Rev Jonathan Payne who explained that the church had been erected in 1885 on land donated by James King. Known affectionately as "the tin church" St John's is affiliated to the United Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. The church is a national monument and remains a place of vibrant worship.



Our visit to **Michaelhouse** on Sunday morning focused on the new Heritage Centre. Robyn Gruitjers has been involved in the set up of this wonderful facility and her passion and enthusiasm for her work was evident to all. The Heritage Centre was opened in 2018 and houses interactive digital and physical displays

celebrating the school's rich history. The centre is on two levels and features a gallery space dedicated to the many renowned artists who have been past pupils.



Michaelhouse Chapel



New Heritage Centre

A visit to the Midlands would not be complete without including a visit to an art centre. We were delighted that Fee Halstead-Berning was able to welcome us to **Ardmore** and share the Ardmore story. The photographs show how these amazing ceramic pieces are created from the first design to the final delicate painting.



At **Braco**, the home of the Shaw family, we enjoyed eating our picnic lunch in the beautiful garden of wonderful old trees and hydrangeas, azaleas and camellias. The breathtaking views of the Karkloof made this a perfect, tranquil spot to end a most enjoyable weekend.



**On behalf of the 18 members who participated in this excursion our thanks are extended to**

**Robert King** for his meticulous planning and preparation as well as for his interesting talks and indeed for making our Notties weekend a memorable experience.

**Clive and Linda Foss and the staff of Notties** who made our stay at the Nottingham Road Hotel so pleasant and comfortable.

**Helen Wilkes, Nicole Wortman and Liane Adnesgaard** for the visit to Tweedie Hall.



**For their generous hospitality and for opening their homes for us we thank**

Moira Gruenerberg of Lynedoch  
Sylvia and Baden Smythe of Strathearn  
William Shaw of Braco

**At the schools and churches we visited our appreciation goes to**

Mr Bev Davidge of Hilton College  
Tanya Mitchell of Kings School  
Viktor Kurtz of Clifton Nottingham Road  
Robyn Gruitjers of Michaelhouse  
Rev Jonathan Payne of St John's Gowrie

**At Ardmore our thanks to**

Fee Halsted-Berning

**For the souvenir program and photographs used in this report a sincere thanks to Myra Boyes.**

Photographs were also extracted from websites of Tweedie Hall and Kings School and from [www.kznpr.co.za](http://www.kznpr.co.za)