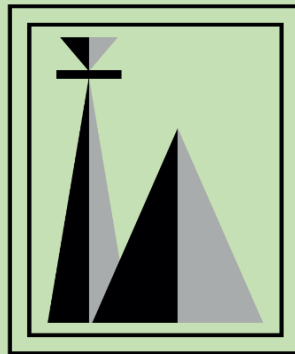


# LOOKING BACK

**The Journal of the Historical Society of  
Port Elizabeth**



**HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PORT ELIZABETH**  
FOUNDED 1959

## KYKIES IN DIE VERLEDE

**Die Joernaal van die Historiese  
Vereniging van Port Elizabeth**

Volume 64 2025

# LOOKING BACK

Volume 64

2025

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## Chairman's Report - 2025

During 2025, the Society has continued with the membership growth that has been experienced since the end of the Covid-19 pandemic. To us it seems that a “history is hip” era is starting to emerge. Across age, gender and social groups, a societal reawakening of the importance of history is taking place. Perhaps it's merely a case of the selective perception of a committee hard at work? Or is it a consequence of the changes taking place in a society where social services, particularly at a local government level, are seemingly collapsing, in concert with the placename changes undemocratically foisted on an indifferent public? Our role is not to find the reasons - our role is to meet the expectations of a membership that is growing by the year.

But we are a long way from membership of earlier years. In 1967 the Society had a membership of 367, our annual dinners were filled with pomp and ceremony and were widely reported in the press. Adjusting for population growth, our Society today should have 1155 members. Today our paid-up membership is less than 150. So, if history is hip, should we not be beyond 2000 paid up members?

But technology and trends change everything. Today, social media (a subset of new media<sup>i</sup>) dominates. People don't belong to societies, they follow Facebook groups and influencers, doomscroll webpages, and generally don't read printed media. These are our challenges for 2026, of how to adapt to the new media, while not losing the centuries of traditions and strengths from the printed media. In other geographic areas, historical societies are closing, and we belatedly learnt of the Grahamstown Historical Society closure. Today, it's a case of adaption to new media trends and changing demographics. The 2025 committee has tussled with these challenges and the Society has grown, a growth we must sustain and accelerate in 2026.

### **Committee**

During 2025 the committee continued to operate as we did during 2024. The benefits of having a small committee, with clearly defined roles and a KISS (Keep it Super Simple) method, continued to yield results. In 2025

<sup>i</sup> New media is an umbrella term for all digital content created, distributed, and accessed via computers and the internet, such as websites, podcasts, and e-books. Social media is a subset of new media specifically designed for user-generated content, community interaction, and network-driven engagement (e.g., Facebook, TikTok).

we kept our 100% record of committee meeting attendance and got a lot done.

We have also managed to keep the Society in the black and improved our financial position over the previous financial year. It is only through the positive roles played by the President, Committee and a supportive membership, that we have had the stability and guidance to enable the sort of growth that we have been experiencing.

## **Media Outreach**

During 2025, we have continued the practice of increasing public visibility of the Society through establishing a broader electronic footprint and publishing items in the press. A decision was taken to upgrade the website of the Society through the introduction of a new look and feel, the inclusion of our blue plaque programme, and a map-based interface for the heritage attractions of the City as published in *The Donkin Heritage Trail and Richmond Hill Trail*. The new website has been launched to coincide with our 66<sup>th</sup> AGM on 24 February 2026, and it signals the start of an era where we fully embrace the new media without losing the strengths of traditional media.

Our contributions to *The Herald* have continued to be published during 2025, but more recently, we have noted a change in editorial policy where our opinion pieces are being published as letters to the editor. A considerable amount of collaborative research and voluntary effort goes into writing opinion pieces. Judging by the feedback we've received on these opinion pieces, we have developed an appreciative following amongst *The Herald* readership, as an objective and compelling historical perspective on understanding current affairs.

But the time expended in producing opinion pieces cannot be sustained when assessed against the return of being published as "letters to the editor" in a context where the printed media is experiencing declining circulation and readership. From necessity, we have started exploring our "new media" options, with its digital, interactive, and user-generated content. Following a thorough evaluation, the Society has begun the process of positioning our outputs towards the new media, with interventions that retain the traditional media advantages of credibility, a broad reach, and established brand authority. We anticipate that our efforts will start producing outcomes during 2026, and members will be kept apprised through our existing communication channels and our ever-increasing new media footprint as recorded on the back pages of this journal. But while we shift towards the new media, we recognise the cyclic

nature of change, that traditional media can adapt, and that print still has a role to play, provided the needs of both existing and new readers are embraced.

## **Looking Back**

Since its establishment in 1959, the Society has published 144 journals in 64 volumes, with the first volume having been published in 1961. Our decision in 2023 to place all copies of *Looking Back* on the Society website at <https://historicalsocietype.co.za/> has enhanced the Society's standing, as our journals now regularly appear on search engine results, in artificial intelligence summaries, and website traffic. While digital migration has increased the costs of hosting a website and having to comply with library requests for journals in terms of the Legal Deposit Act 54 of 1997, the objectives of the Society justify the increased costs. But despite high costs, printing of member copies will continue. Printing *Looking Back* is already a third of the annual membership fee, but it is a worthy tradition which we will preserve. While print numbers have stabilised, our electronic reach is exponentially higher, and well worth the costs of retaining and improving our current printed editions.

## **Presentations**

During 2025, the Society has made numerous presentations on its work and on the history of Port Elizabeth. Talks have proven to be popular within communities of senior citizens and amongst retired members of the business community. Presentations have also been made to the local branch of the Genealogical Society, tourism organisations, and church organisations. We are gratified by the interest being shown in the Society and it represents a further indication that the voice of the Society is still highly regarded throughout the city. We have also recognised that our standing as a Society is a consequence of our rich heritage, and not the singular contributions of individuals at a point in time. Over the years, we have had the privilege of being led and supported by stalwarts such as Eleanor Lorimer, Graham Young, Alfred Porter, and Margaret Harradine – to name only a few. It is this proud tradition that has formed and sustained the Society, those standards by which we must judge ourselves, and that to which we must aspire towards in years to come.

## **Outings 2025**

While it is the stated objective of the Society to host one outing per month, the number of outings remained below our stated goal during 2025.

In January, by popular request, we hosted a visit to the Serpent Players Garden at the AFDA campus located at 28 Bird Street, Central. The

garden was launched in November 2024, by AFDA, Grindstone Property Management and Development, and the Society. The January outing was organised for those members who were unable to attend the November 2024 opening of the garden.

Sadly, Athol Fugard passed away on 08 March 2025, and the Society hosted a memorial at the Serpent Players Garden on 12 March 2025 (see report on the memorial in Gallimaufry in this edition). It was heartening to hear from his daughter, Lisa Fugard, that Athol had been thrilled when he saw the photos and press coverage of the November 2024 opening of the garden.

In February, the Society spoke at Wesley Gardens on the Ancient History of Algoa Bay. The talk traced the evolution of anatomically modern humans on the Palaeo-Agulhas Plains of Algoa Bay through to the modern usage of Gqeberha. During the year, similar talks were presented at other venues and have proven to be popular, while aligning with the Society objective of developing the maritime heritage theme through the re-opening of the Main Public Library.

In June 2025, we participated in the *Welcoming of the Whales to Algoa Bay* festival. The festival is now held over two days due to the growth in visitor numbers. Talks are hosted on Saturday, and the Society presented a history of *Port Development in Algoa Bay: Common Sense Lessons for Prosperity*. The talk was well-attended, and the Society has been approached to participate in the 2026 event. On Sunday, the Society, in partnership with *The Children's Feeding Trust*, ran a bookstall. We sold Society publications, while *The Children's Feeding Trust* sold second hand historical books from their bookshop, that operates from the Walmer Town Hall. Over the years this bookshop has become a popular institution that sells books donated by the public to fund the provision of food to children in need. Books donated are often of great historical value, and we therefore support the book sales of *The Children's Feeding Trust* at the Whale Festival and at our AGM. In 2025 we donated a new advertising banner to *The Children's Feeding Trust* and we wish to continue the tradition of supporting this non-profit organisation into the future. They do exceptional work, and love history. And our members love that!

The Society also conducted a historical tour of the Willows Resort, where the *Welcoming of the Whales to Algoa Bay* festival was being hosted. Our tour was completely oversubscribed, and it was a privilege to meet so many enthusiasts of history amongst the festival participants.

In June 2025, we hosted a talk by Tony Voss at the Alliance Francaise located at Mackay Street, Richmond Hill. Dr Voss, a Nelson Mandela University research associate, lectured in English until his retirement from the University of Natal in 1995. The talk was about Henry Glasse, an Englishman born in India and schooled in the radical circles of London, who moved to Port Elizabeth in the early 1880s. Glasse became instrumental in developing a South African anarchist perspective that was to shape non-racial politics in South Africa.

The committee has decided to host our talks at the Alliance Francaise to demonstrate our support for the older parts of the city. The Alliance Francaise offices are in the heart of Richmond Hill, have excellent facilities, and the Society needs to support initiatives that support the history of our city. The historical old home which houses their offices is well kept and close to restaurants and a vibrant cultural life. The Alliance Francaise also hosts a number of activities that would be of interest to members of the Society. Members are advised to regularly check the Alliance Francaise website at <https://www.afportelizabeth.com/> for a full schedule of events.

In August 2025, the Society visited St Mary's Cemetery and St Peter's Church. Since our last visit in 2023, there have been big changes as Society members have assisted with the removal of litter and alien vegetation from the cemetery, and the Mandela Bay Development Agency (MBDA) renovations of St Peter's have been completed. Liz Eshmade, who has carefully documented and published a book on St Mary's cemetery, gave an excellent talk on some of the features in the area.

In September 2025, the Society partnered with the Botanical Society of South Africa, Dendrological Society of South Africa, Fat Tracks Mountain Bike Club, and the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) for an outing to the Ledger Searle Wildflower Reserve. The Society led a walk of participants and provided a historical background of the area. Subsequently, several of our Society members have become active in the eradication of alien vegetation at various locations across the city.

In October 2025, we were treated to a wonderful talk by Mike Burton on his book, *Treading a Delicate Tightrope*. Mike was principal of All Saints College in Bhisho during the education crises of the 1980s, where he walked a tightrope to balance education and political change during turbulent times. His gripping personal account transported us to the liberation struggle of the 1980s and the educational issues that informed

policy in the nascent South African democracy. As Franklin Sonn once said, Mike did the impossible, to teach excellently as well as to struggle with conviction. For more details on obtaining your own copy of the book, either contact a good bookstore such as Fogarty's or contact the author directly at [mmswburton@gmail.com](mailto:mmswburton@gmail.com).

October 2025 also saw us hosting a *Trivia Throughout Time* evening at *The Tap Room at Bridge Street*. The venue is in the old historic part of the Baakens Valley and is popular for its excellent live events, restaurant, craft beer and its artisanal gin distillery. A good crowd faced off for an evening of tough historical questions, ranging from ancient history to local. The evening was the brainchild of Johan Van Rooyen and Yasna Ramsudh, and they pulled out all stops to ensure a well organised event that was enjoyed by all. Competition was fierce for a great range of prizes, with Lynn Howse's team walking off with the honours.

November 2025 saw us having our annual lunch at Savages Fine Foods in Park Drive, Central. Savages has become an institution and benchmark for excellence since the building was acquired by Konrad and Cindy Hoekstra. The historic building was at one stage teetering on the edge of becoming another dilapidated feature of a decaying Central, until the Hoekstra's decided to use their lifelong love for history to transform an old historical feature into a heritage gem. Their approach demonstrates the transformative potential of history and Savages proudly displays a blue plaque awarded by the Society. Cindy Hoekstra entertained members with an inspirational talk on their work and experiences over the past decade. Today, Savages is a beautifully restored Victorian property - a fine dining establishment that masquerades as a coffee shop during the day and transforms into a chandeliered delight for evening events and food and wine pairings. For more information or to book a sensational delight for any occasion, contact <https://www.facebook.com/savagesPE>.

### **The Main Public Library**

Since November 2023, Society members have been active in the Main Library Friends, a voluntary group constituted in terms of the policies of the municipality. The objectives of the Society involvement in the library are twofold.

Firstly, to ensure that the necessary renovations are undertaken to enable the responsible reopening of the historical Main Public Library. The library has been closed to the public since 2014, and while the first stage of renovation has been completed, the renovations needed for the reopening of the facility have not been completed. The delay in the

reopening of the facility have also resulted in further damage to the library interior, as the roof gutters were not being maintained. Unless societal pressure is applied, it is evident that a perverse incentive exists for the library to remain shut.

Secondly, the centrality of maritime heritage and the library in the development of the city has enormous tourism potential. We aimed to demonstrate the library's transformative potential to visitors from cruise liners docking at Port Elizabeth, to raised awareness. The initiative has been warmly welcomed by the tourism industry and the success roundly acknowledged in the press. From Society funds and the donations of library visitors, lights have been repaired, and equipment purchased. The area around the library has been beautified by removing vegetation that is damaging the building, we've established a garden in partnership with the St Croix Sea Scouts and the Zwartkops Conservancy, and we've erected signage telling the Maritime Heritage story of the city.



*Interpretive signage erected at the library*

But still, despite numerous representations to the municipality, city leadership remains unresponsive, and library renovations remain stuck in procurement, and large budgets remain unspent - diverted towards the end of each financial year to other uses.

In November 2025, increasing numbers of local people became aware – through social media – that the library was open when cruise ships were in port. They started visiting the library in large numbers. In trying to manage visitor numbers, we arranged a few tours of the library, and

people arrived in their droves. On one single Sunday morning, 1200 people signed the attendance register on behalf of an estimated 2000 people. To manage demand, we've introduced a booking system for the free tours, and these were also snapped up within hours.

There is only one conclusion. The people of the city love their library, they want it restored, and the Society has won many friends. But the concerns remain. At the time of taking this journal to press, rumours are widespread

that the city again intends diverting the library budget to other uses. We have submitted questions to city leadership in writing. Should satisfactory answers not be forthcoming, we will be hosting an information session on Market Square for city leadership to account to the Main Public Library and its users.

Maybe, just maybe, we can get some progress towards instilling a new appreciation for this unique and magnificent facility, an icon of the city, and the key to the city's economic future prosperity. Our work with the library has reinforced one simple fact. When the library prospers, the city prospers.

We have an obligation to try - even if failure is thought to be inevitable – to force the corrupted powers that retard growth out, and to unharness the library's proven potential for economic and social prosperity, for all.

## Blue Plaques

During 2025 the Society awarded blue plaques to two schools (St Augustine's Primary School and Collegiate Junior School) and one church (The Hill Presbyterian Church). Blue plaques in South Africa date back approximately 40 years, when the Witwatersrand branch of the Simon Van der Stel Foundation (today the Heritage Association of South



*The blue plaque awarded to the Collegiate Junior School on 14 January 2026 by Society President, Prof Charles Wait. His granddaughter, Jocelyn Wait, Shelley Van Rooyen - Headmistress of Collegiate Junior, and Louise Erasmus - Headmistress of Collegiate Girls High School, were in attendance*

Africa (HASA)) installed a blue plaque. Originally inspired by the blue plaques of the United Kingdom, they have been adapted to the South African context and are now a key programme of HASA. In Port Elizabeth, the first ceramic plaque was awarded by the Society to “Sunnyside” in Bird Street on 13 December 1982<sup>ii</sup>.

While the early blue plaques tended to focus on colonial heritage, they

<sup>ii</sup> See Bennie, J. 2022. Blue Plaque Project in Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha). *Looking Back*, Volume 61 Number 1: 26-39).

are now found in many parts of South Africa celebrating the diversity of the country's shared heritage. The blue plaque programme for schools was established in 2015 by the Western Cape Centre for Conservation Education in partnership with the then Simon van der Stel Foundation (now HASA). The Historical Society of Port Elizabeth, an associate of HASA, partners with HASA to award blue plaques for schools and other features. For the school's programme, an aluminium blue plaque is produced, and blue plaques have been awarded to four schools in our region. For other historical features, a locally manufactured blue plaque in a composite material, has been awarded to the Serpent Players Garden and The Hill Presbyterian Church. From 24 February 2026 onwards, a register of plaques awarded by the Society will be maintained on the website at [www.historicalsocietype.co.za](http://www.historicalsocietype.co.za).

### **The Neglect of Central**

Notwithstanding the progress that has been made in some areas, we are still faced with the ongoing deterioration of buildings within the historic heart of the city. Central continues with the downward trajectory that started taking place from the 1990s onwards. Despite initiatives led by government organisations such as the Mandela Bay Development Agency (MBDA), the deterioration has gathered pace in recent years. Organisations such as the Central Special Ratings Area (SRA) have certainly made a positive difference, and the Society continues to participate in the activities of the SRA.



*Workers from MES assisting with the clearing of invasive fig trees at the Main Public Library*

Despite the demolition of houses in Clyde Street and in Military Road, the Society believes that the problems are manageable. However, there needs to be political will from government to work collaboratively with the private and voluntary sector to find solutions. And political will is glaringly absent.

Over the years, the Society's numerous submissions to government have gone largely unanswered. We'll certainly keep asking questions, but there comes a time to start doing things, and devoting resources towards fixing things. We've started clearing the overgrown vegetation in St Mary's. Unfortunately, many trees cleared in 2022 by MBDA have coppiced as herbicide was never used as advised by the Society. We have also started cleaning the area around the Main Public

Library by working with organisations such as MES and partially funding the services of homeless people to fix where government is failing. It's not about whether we should be doing this, it's just an unfortunate fact that unless we try, we're complicit in allowing the collapse to continue. Going forward, in 2026, we plan to expand these activities, to slowly put back into the city a drive and determination to fix, to restore our broken historical heart. Is it possible? We won't know unless we try.

## Donations



*Fort Frederick Title Deed*

Our activities over the years, and our messaging that we need to deal sensitively with historical material, has yielded several requests for advice and donations. All books or items of historical interest that are donated are considered for inclusion within the Alfred Porter collection. The Main Public Library has a section dedicated to the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth where noteworthy publications and donations to the Society are catalogued and managed as reference items. The intention is to launch this collection as a feature of the Main Public Library once all the cataloguing and designs for the shelf have been completed and we're confident that the water leak problem is resolved.

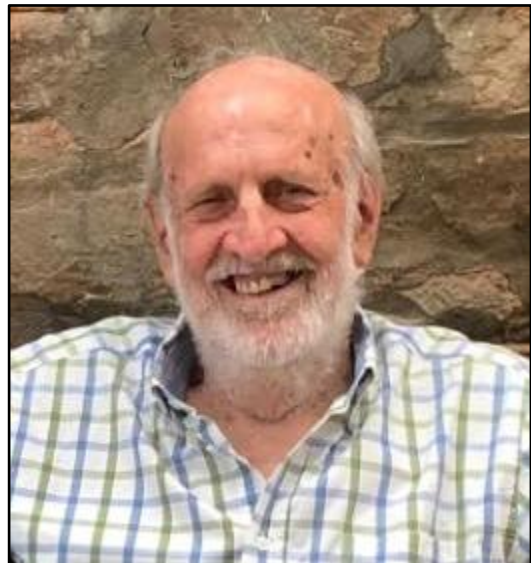
One of the items, from the activities of the Main Library Friends, is the beautifully framed Fort Frederick title deed, donated by Susan Zeiss. Susan was married to the late Allan Zeiss who passed away in 2012. Allan was well known for his love of the Eastern Cape, devoting his career to the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (NMBM) and the Coega Development Corporation (CDC). I clearly recall the title deed from Allan's office at CDC, and he proudly told me how he rescued it from certain destruction at the NMBM, after it had been "thrown out", as all records had been digitised. Allan would have been delighted to see this significant document conserved within the Main Public Library.

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## Obituary: Roy Allen Lubke (1940-2025)<sup>i</sup>

Professor Roy Lubke, the distinguished botanist, pioneering environmentalist, and supporter of the Grahamstown Historical Society, passed away on 10 June 2025. Professor Lubke dedicated his career and much of his retirement to Rhodes University and to the town of Grahamstown. His life was one of adventurous spirit, wide-ranging interests, and a remarkable generosity of time and energy given to people and causes.

Professor Lubke was born in Durban, South Africa, on 22 July 1940. After discovering a passion for biology at Durban High School, Professor Lubke went to Rhodes University in 1960, arriving by ship in Port Elizabeth. During his first year, he became enthralled with Professor Edgar Twyman's teaching of Botany and developed a passion for fieldwork inland and along the coast. He completed a BSc majoring in Botany and Zoology in 1962 and a first-class Honours in Botany in 1963.



*Roy Allen Lubke (1940-2025)*

Professor Lubke's academic journey continued with further study abroad, travelling and working in Europe and North America. He completed his PhD in Botany at the University of Western Ontario, Canada, in 1969 and went on to earn an MSc in Science Education from the University of Keele in the UK in 1978.

He returned to South Africa in 1970 as a Lecturer at the University of Witwatersrand, where he taught until December 1974. In 1975, he joined Rhodes University as a Lecturer, where he remained for the rest of his working career. Over the years, he advanced to Senior Lecturer (1977-1983) and Associate Professor (1984-1999), before serving as the Head of the Department of Botany from 2000 to 2002. Professor Lubke retired in 2002 but continued as an Emeritus Associate Professor, teaching Rehabilitation Ecology and remaining active in research.

Professor Lubke was a prolific author and editor, contributing significantly to environmental education and public understanding. With Irene de

<sup>i</sup> Compiled from an obituary prepared by Susanne Vetter and Craig Peter of the Department of Botany, Rhodes University, and memories of the editorial team of time spent with Roy Lubke.

Moor, he was the lead editor of *A Field Guide to the Eastern Cape Coast*, first published in 1988, and an expanded second edition published in 1998. In 2021, he and Irene de Moor edited the *Guide to the Natural and Cultural History of Grahamstown/Makhanda*, published by the Makhanda branch of WESSA and dedicated it to one of the old friends of the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth – CJ Skead.

Professor Lubke was a specialist in Plant Taxonomy and Ecology, boasting almost 30 years of extensive experience in the Eastern Cape and other parts of southern Africa. His ecological research was characterised by a strongly applied focus, tackling specific environmental problems and becoming a respected authority on the biodiversity and floristics of the Eastern Cape, coastal ecology (including management of dunes and estuaries), and the reclamation and stabilisation of challenging areas such as mine dumps, coastal drift sands, and riverbanks.

In 1989, he co-founded Coastal and Environmental Services (CES) with Dr Ted Avis and Mr Peter Jackson to conduct environmental studies. CES has grown into one of the strongest environmental companies in the country, undertaking contracts throughout Africa.

His commitment to science and community was unwavering, serving on the Board of Trustees for the Albany Museum (1976-1995), the South African Association of Botanists (SAAB), the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa (WESSA), and the Grahamstown Historical Society. Professor Lubke was an enthusiastic and active member of the community, volunteering at the SPCA, and had a passion for the local arts. He was a member of the "Grahamstown Players" and a long-standing contributor of reviews to *Cue* during the National Arts Festival.

Professor Roy Lubke's life was a testament to his profound love for nature, his dedication to science and education, and his unwavering commitment to his community.

The Historical Society of Port Elizabeth was one of the beneficiaries of Professor Lubke's impact as he never ceased to encourage, cajole and motivate a passion for science and community. A lasting memory of Roy was his boundless enthusiasm in exploring the dunes of Hougham Park in 2022, his excitement for innovative ideas, and the allure of new challenges. While he will be sorely missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him, the memory of his impact will continue to inspire people for many years to come.

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## Gallimaufry

Gallimaufry has been a regular feature of *Looking Back* for many years. As noted in the 2017 journal (*Looking Back*, Volume 2017, No1), 16<sup>th</sup> century Middle-French cooks made a meat stew called *galimafree*, subsequently adapted to *gallimaufry*, with a variety of meanings including “hash” or “potpourri”. In *Looking Back*, it’s a place where the editors place noteworthy events that occur during the year.

### **The Athol Fugard Memorial**



*Proteas for Fugard at the art silhouette of the Serpent Players*

Harold Athol Lanigan Fugard (1932-2025) passed over peacefully on 08 March 2025. On 14 November 2024, the Society had unveiled a blue plaque and assisted in developing the Serpent Players Garden at the Old Museum situated at 28 Bird Street, Central. The Serpent Players theatre group was established on those premises in July 1963, and the stars of the Serpent Players went on to win the highest international honours in theatre. Athol Fugard was one of the Serpent Players. The Historical Society of Port Elizabeth, in association with AFDA and Grindstone, hosted a memorial event in the Serpent Players Garden on 12 March 2025.

It was a spontaneous and remarkable event, with no superstars, just wonderful people who shared their memories and stories of the life and legacy of Athol Fugard. Mark Wilby, Dean of the AFDA campus, spoke of his experiences with Athol Fugard on the filmset of *Marigolds in August*, a film shot on location at Schoenmakerskop and released in 1980. Professor Richard Haines from the South African Cultural Observatory, with its offices in Donkin Street, gave the keynote address and reflected on the life of Fugard, whom



*Professor Richard Haines (SACO)*

he regarded as South Africa's greatest playwright. Fugard, who grew up in Port Elizabeth, made lasting contributions to South Africa's cultural economy and even with his passing, continues to place the spotlight on the city's unrealised heritage potential.

Mike Pantsi, the veteran community activist, widely recognised for his role in Arts, Culture and Heritage, spoke of the inspirational work of Fugard, of how he inspired generations of young artists and activists.

But the star of the show was undoubtedly George Luse. On the interpretive signboards around the garden, which tell the story of the Serpent Players, George Luse's name was there – one of the original Serpent Players. We'd never heard him speak before, but what an inspiration. It was heartfelt, and it was moving to all present.



*George Luse, one of the original Serpent Players*



*Mike Pantsi, Judy Chalmers and Graham Taylor*

In the large and appreciative audience were several stalwarts of the struggle for democracy and a non-racial future, and all present expressed their appreciation for the work and effort that has gone into establishing the Serpent Players Garden.

## **Kirkwood and Sons**

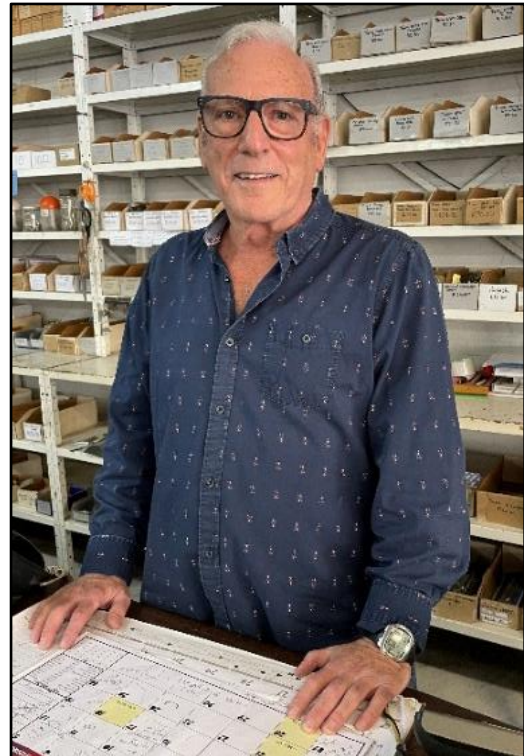
On 10 April 2025, *The Herald* published an article on the closure of Kirkwood and Sons, the iconic hardware supplier in Main Street (now Govan Mbeki Avenue). Kirkwood and Sons was opened in January 1930 by John Kirkwood, who subsequently handed over the business to his son, Tom.



*The street facing façade of Kirkwood & Sons*

In 1962, Solly Blumberg purchased the business and over the years, despite all the changes that have taken place in Main Street, the business retained its status as a reliable supplier of hardware and maintenance products.

The business even survived the disruptions of the Integrated Public Transport System (IPTS), introduced in 2008, and which completely changed the face of Main Street (some would say destroyed it). Main Street was simply blocked off by construction workers, with no warning, for a period of two years. Through sheer resilience and tenacity, the business survived and the current owner, Mr Peter Blumberg finally decided to close shop and retire in July 2025. Graham Taylor and Carol Victor were able to visit the store prior to the closure. Modern developments, such as the IPTS, are certainly not always progress.



*Peter Blumberg, retiring owner of Kirkwood & Sons*

### **Church of Scientology Grand Opening**



*Market Square Opening Ceremony*

On 06 April 2025, the grand opening of the new Ideal Church of Scientology Eastern Cape took place. The Society was invited as a guest speaker at the opening of the church. The renovation of the 10-storey former United Bank Building is a significant landmark for

the City. The 35.5 meter high United Bank Building was completed in 1934 and was known as Port Elizabeth's first skyscraper and is located on a church grant that was privately purchased in 1843. In 2012, the building was purchased by the Scientology Church and went through a period of



*Speakers at the Opening (l to r): Patricia Mokwala, Rev Thabang Xaba, David Miscavige, Prince Sonwabile Ndamase, Graham Taylor*

extensive renovation that involved the most meticulous restoration process. The Church of Scientology is known for acquiring, restoring and occupying prominent heritage, landmark, and historic buildings worldwide. The meticulous renovations focus on preserving original architectural features while upgrading them for modern use. In the case of the old United Bank building, the project included the restoration of the black granite and the two-dozen carved lion heads, and involved more than 50,000 hours of work, over a period of more than a decade. The opening of the church was a truly international event, with visitors from all over the world, and the leader of the Scientology Church, David Miscavige, leading a dedication ceremony. A report on the opening and photographs are available at <https://www.scientology.org.za/scientology-today/events/eastern-cape-grand-opening.html>.

### **Griffin Hawkins's List of Inhabitants of Port Elizabeth in 1822**

In the South African collection of the Main Public Library, there was a tattered and stained old manuscript of the first directory of Port Elizabeth. The single page list was in a battered old frame with cracked glass, the paper mounted with rusty drawing pins. Alfred Porter reviewed the list in *Looking Back* (1978, Vol 18(1):22-28), indicating that the list was discovered among Griffin Hawkin's papers after his death at the age of 79 in 1883. The reference to Walmer in the list, indicates that this is a copy of the original list, as the name Walmer was not adopted until 1853. The Main Library Friends, assisted by the Historical Society of Port Elizabeth, have restored the list. Thys Kotze of Colin Wells Framing supplied the new frame with art glass, framed to archival standards. Suzanne Louw, the renowned local paper restorer, volunteered her time to remount the list onto acid free board. The restored list is now back in

the Main Public Library and will be placed on display, with accompanying explanatory signage, when conditions in the library permit.

## **St Augustine's Primary School<sup>i</sup>**

On Friday 05 December 2025, a blue plaque was awarded to St. Augustine's Primary School located at 6 Prospect Hill, Central. The school has a rich history spanning over 175 years. Founded in 1847 by Father George Corcoran, the school began as a two-storey building serving as a chapel, school, community hall, and presbytery. The original structure stood where the McSherry Hall is currently located.

In 1852, Reverend Thomas Murphy assumed responsibility for the parish and the school. Under his guidance, the existing building was expanded and later became known as St. Augustine's Hall. The hall functioned as a multipurpose facility, accommodating church services, school activities, and community events.



*Ceremony for the unveiling of the blue plaque at St Augustine's Primary School on 05 December 2025*

The Marist Brothers, arriving in 1879, established a fee-paying institution named St. Patrick's Junior School in the Baakens Valley. Due to space constraints, they relocated to a site adjacent to St. Augustine's, leading to the two schools operating concurrently. In 1911, St. Patrick's moved to Bird Street, but the Marist Brothers continued their involvement with St. Augustine's.

The Assumption Sisters from Grahamstown took over the administration of the school in 1918, following the Marist Brothers return to France during World War I. Their leadership continued until 1954, when a Marist Brothers resumed the principal's role, supported by Dominican Sisters and lay teachers. A significant development occurred in 1960 with the demolition of the old school building and the construction of a new facility.

In 1983, St. Augustine's transitioned to a co-educational institution, welcoming both boys and girls. This change was accompanied by the integration of the Assumption Sisters' convent into the school premises,

<sup>i</sup> Text of an address prepared by the staff and learners of St Augustine's Primary School for the unveiling of the blue plaque on 05 December 2025.

providing additional facilities such as a needlework room, art room, and tuck shop. The convent building, generously donated by the Assumption Sisters, remains an integral part of the school's infrastructure.

Throughout its history, St. Augustine's has adapted to the evolving educational landscape, expanding its facilities and programs to meet the needs of its diverse student population. The school's enduring legacy is a testament to its dedication to providing quality education rooted in strong moral and spiritual values.

The blue plaque was awarded to the school at a function held on the school premises, where the award was accepted by the Principal of St Augustine's, Nicola Jordan and Father Jerry Browne of St Augustine's Cathedral.



*The blue plaque installed at St Augustine's on 05 December 2025*

### **The Hill Presbyterian Church**

The Hill Presbyterian Church in Central stands out as one of the City's oldest landmarks. Rev George Renny came out from Scotland in 1861, and services were held temporarily in the Grey Institute. A competition amongst architects from various parts of the Cape Colony was held for the design of a church to be built on the corner of Belmont and Alfred Terraces. The winner was F Molesworth Pfeil of Mossel Bay, and it was completed in 1865, but only after the original builder went insolvent. Commercial depression reduced church membership and Mr Renny returned home two years later.

In commemoration of the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church establishing itself on the current site located at the corner of Belmont Terrace (now Athol Fugard Terrace) and Alfred Terrace, a blue plaque was awarded on 28 September 2025. The Society was privileged to attend the celebrations over a weekend with a full programme of festivities where the blue plaque was unveiled by the Reverend Lahai Bercovich.

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## **School of Medicine and Public Health**

**By: Charles Wait<sup>i</sup>**

The establishment of a School of Medicine and Public Health at Nelson Mandela University has been a journey of seventy years - from 1946 to 2016. The focus of this article covers this period where successive generations envisioned, advocated for, and worked tirelessly toward the establishment of a medical training facility in the Eastern Cape, specifically in the city once known as Port Elizabeth, now renamed as Gqeberha. This journey unfolded in three distinct yet interlinked phases.

The first phase (1946–1965) traces the early involvement of Rhodes University College, and from 1951, Rhodes University. The second phase (1965–2005) represents the sustained commitment of the University of Port Elizabeth to the ideal of medical education for the region. The third phase (2005–2016) coincides with the formation of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University - following the merger of the University of Port Elizabeth, the Port Elizabeth branch of Vista University, and the Port Elizabeth Technikon - and the continuing pursuit of this dream under the name Nelson Mandela University, adopted in 2017.

Throughout these decades, the Medical Association of South Africa (prior to 1998) and, later, the South African Medical Association (founded on 21 May 1998), stood as enduring allies, giving voice and substance to the aspirations of the academic community and the broader public for equitable access to medical education in the province.

In conclusion, the recommendations arising from the Ten-Year Plan of 2015 and the tasks envisaged in 2016 were, as outlined above, brought to fruition within five years. Nelson Mandela University welcomed its first cohort of MBChB students in March 2021 and officially launched its new Medical School on 30 November 2021 - an occasion that signified the realisation of a long-cherished dream. These pioneering students will make history as the first to hear the Vice-Chancellor confer upon them the MBChB degree, each kneeling to be capped by the Vice-Chancellor in a ceremony that will forever symbolise the culmination of more than seven decades of perseverance and vision.

The story of the Nelson Mandela University Medical School beyond 2016 - its unfolding achievements, challenges, and contributions to society -

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remains to be written. It will be told in another time, by other authors, and in ways that reflect the continuing evolution of this remarkable institution.

## **1946 - 1965**

On 23 July 2016 the Minister of Higher Education and Training gave permission to the University to establish the country's tenth School of Medicine. This announcement was made five days short of seventy years since the first talks in such regard took place on 28 July 1946.

The first effort to establish a Faculty of Medicine<sup>i</sup> in the Eastern Cape was launched soon after the Second World War ended. On 7 August 1946, the Senate of the then Rhodes University College<sup>ii</sup> received a report of the Deputy Master<sup>iii</sup> about a visit paid to Port Elizabeth<sup>iv</sup> on 28 and 29 July of that year. During that visit a discussion was held with the mayor of Port Elizabeth on the possible development of Engineering, Commerce and Medical schools in Port Elizabeth<sup>v</sup>.

The Senate of Rhodes University College, upon receipt of the report by the Deputy Master about his visit to the Mayor of Port Elizabeth, resolved to appoint a committee consisting of Prof Barker, Mr Irving, Professors Liddell, Rennie, Varder and White to formulate a policy about developments in Port Elizabeth, for the information of Senate and of Council.

The Senate committee reported to Senate on 9 September 1946 and Senate agreed that a Fact-finding Committee consisting of four persons be appointed to make a survey of the possibility of expanding the College into the field of Engineering, Commerce and Medicine. This committee also had to inform the municipality of Port Elizabeth about such considerations.

The Fact-finding Committee met on 11 November 1946. At that time the committee could avail itself of the findings of three reports on medical training in South Africa which followed one another in quick succession. These reports were known as the Botha Report of 1939, the Hugo Report

<sup>i</sup> The terminology Faculty of Medicine/Medical Faculty/School of Medicine/Medical School, referring to a university facility where predominantly medical doctors are educated, is used interchangeably depending on the source document. Eventually the accepted terminology at Nelson Mandela University will become School of Medicine and Public Health within the Faculty of Health Sciences.

<sup>ii</sup> Full university status was conferred on 10 March 1951.

<sup>iii</sup> The equivalent of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in the post titles applied since full university status was obtained.

<sup>iv</sup> Although the city's name changed to Gqeberha the original name will be used as it was at the time of the events covered in this review.

<sup>v</sup> Unless stated otherwise, all information related to Rhodes University College or Rhodes University was retrieved from the Senate and Council Minutes for 1946 to 1948 which are kept in the Rhodes University Archives in the Cory Library at Rhodes University in Grahamstown (now Makhanda).

of 1943 and the Report of the National Health Commission of 1944 (MASA).

Still in 1946, on 7 and 9 December, Senate considered a report by the Advisory Committee regarding the admission of non-Europeans<sup>i</sup>. In this report a case was made that the claim of the College for a School of Medicine would be greatly strengthened if the College were prepared to train both Europeans and non-Europeans for the medical profession.

On 19 June 1947, from a report by Prof Barker, Senate noted that the Fact-finding Committee was at that stage awaiting a report by the Midlands Branch of the Medical Association of South Africa on the possible founding of a Faculty of Medicine in Port Elizabeth.

During the second semester of 1947 no further discussions or resolutions were reported in the official minutes of Senate or Council. In 1948, on 20 February, Council noted that the report of the Fact-finding Committee to Senate was circulated to Council members, but no resolution is recorded. It seems that this matter moved to the backburner at that stage.

Currey (1970:100-103) reveals the reason why this matter indeed moved to the backburner. After the end of the Second World War "...the College was now able to turn with zest to facing once more the big issues...". One of these big issues was the decision of the Natal University College to set in motion a process whereby it could become an independent university. A government commission that was investigating the future of the University of South Africa visited Rhodes as well and learned that Rhodes was in favour of a similar process for itself.

The drive to obtain full university status and to find the free capital of £150 000, which was the government's condition before such status could be conferred, now required the full attention of the Master and of Council.

Currey (1970:130) continues: "If Rhodes at this period<sup>ii</sup> had cause to give much thought and planning to its own inner life it also had cause to ponder its relations with the bigger world outside...For Rhodes...the ever-burgeoning industrial and commercial activity of Port Elizabeth...". The author continues to sketch the reservations which both Senate and Council had, mainly on financial grounds, to establish university activities in Port Elizabeth. Because of the interest shown by the City Council of

<sup>i</sup> This was the official name of the Committee at the time. Where related nomenclature is used, it is on grounds of its appearance in the reports referred to.

<sup>ii</sup> Referring to the early and middle 1950s.

Port Elizabeth, specifically in a letter to the Vice-Chancellor in June 1957, Rhodes faced the issue and over the next three-and-a-half years a future presence in Port Elizabeth was planned. In May 1959, an ad hoc committee of the University reported that the government had approved the establishment of Departments of Accounting, Architecture and Quantity Surveying in Port Elizabeth.

Rhodes in Port Elizabeth went into action at the beginning of the academic year of 1961. No mention is made of a Faculty of Medicine at this branch of Rhodes University. During the next year Rhodes's possible participation in such a faculty re-entered the stage from a different angle.

In 1962 the local branch of the Medical Association of South Africa<sup>i</sup>, then known as the Cape Midlands Branch of the Medical Association of South Africa, once more took up the matter of a Faculty of Medicine in Port Elizabeth. Dr Counihan drew up a memorandum on behalf of the Association which he labelled as being for the mayor's information. In this memorandum, dated June 1962, the author referred to the 1960 report by the National Bureau of Education and Social Research of the Department of Education. This report predicted a shortage of 2000 doctors by 1965. Dr Counihan extrapolated this shortage to between 2500 and 3000 by 1972. He reported that the Association had approached Rhodes University and the local political representatives and "all have shown interest".

On 18 January 1962 the City Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee resolved:

"that a deputation be appointed consisting of His Worship the Mayor as Chairman and other interested persons to interview the Minister of Education as regards the establishment of an Engineering and/or Medical Faculty in Port Elizabeth".

The mayor presented this resolution to a meeting at the city hall where the Medical Association and other interested parties were present. At this meeting, the mayor "...emphasised that he was perturbed at the very little forward planning that was being done for Rhodes University in Port Elizabeth and that a university with some status might not materialise for many years. The mayor had an interview with the Minister in August 1962 and after discussion with the Minister and Dr Alty<sup>ii</sup> the Mayor came

<sup>i</sup> Unless the context indicates differently all references to the local branch of MASA were retrieved from either the MASA Archives at 104 Hurd Street, Newton Park, Port Elizabeth or are contained in documents at the Nelson Mandela University Archives and Exhibition Centre on the Second Avenue Campus of Nelson Mandela University in Port Elizabeth.

<sup>ii</sup> The Vice-Chancellor of Rhodes University.

to the conclusion that the only way to achieve our objective would be to apply for a dual-medium independent University sited in Port Elizabeth”.

On 11 September 1962, the mayor submitted a formal request to the Minister of Education, Arts and Science to consider favourably the establishment of a dual-medium university in Port Elizabeth which could later include Faculties of Agriculture, Engineering and Medicine<sup>i</sup>.

At this stage the wheels were thus set in motion for what would become the University of Port Elizabeth and 55 years later the Nelson Mandela University for which a School of Medicine and Public Health was approved in 2016 – a journey that started in 1946 and would eventually last very near to a full 70 years and beyond.

### **1965-2005**

The Act on the University of Port Elizabeth<sup>ii</sup> (henceforth UPE) was published in the Government Gazette, Volume 11 Number 721, on 19 February 1964 and the new university opened its doors for students at the beginning of the academic year, 1965 (Rautenbach, 1995:297).

Once the Cabinet had decided on 13 February 1963 (Rautenbach, 1995: 176) that a new university could be established in Port Elizabeth, the next steps towards a Faculty of Medicine came from the Eastern Cape Branch of the Medical Association of South Africa (henceforth MASA) which prepared itself to ask for the establishment of a Faculty of Medicine, now at UPE.

To gain support for a proposed motion to the local branch of MASA calling for the establishment of such a faculty, the chairman, Dr J.B. Nel, wrote to the Administrator of the Cape Province on 16 October 1963. Within a week Dr Nel received the disappointing reply that the Administrator would not be able to lend support to such a proposal because of the funding required. At that stage, the Administration of the Cape was heavily involved in setting up the Tygerberg Hospital for the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Stellenbosch.

Dr Nel nonetheless went ahead and on behalf of the association called a press conference with the local press and the SABC on 13 December

<sup>i</sup> The Rhodes University's perspective on the establishment of UPE is covered by Currey 1970 Chapter 9.

<sup>ii</sup> The name of the institution changed to Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University on 1 January 2005 when the merger with the local branch of Vista University and with the Port Elizabeth Technikon was completed. On 21 July 2017 the name changed to Nelson Mandela University.

1963. At this press conference Dr Nel announced the Association's intentions and that it was ready to raise R750 000 for this purpose<sup>i</sup>.

The newly appointed Vice-Chancellor, Dr E. J. Marais (later Prof Marais), who took office on 1 June 1964, was soon taking several actions to break ground for a medical faculty (Rautenbach, 1995:315).

Prof Marais's enthusiasm was supported by the local branch of MASA. The Association made available its 1964 report on the existing facilities at the Provincial Hospital in Port Elizabeth to Prof Marais. The next move from the local medical fraternity was a call by Dr P.D. Beck in October 1964, during his term of office as chairman of the local branch of MASA, for the establishment of such a faculty (Rautenbach, 1995:281). Dr Beck and MASA persuaded the Mayor of Port Elizabeth, Councillor Graham Young, to call a meeting of local political representatives and other interested persons, who included the Vice-Chancellor, at the City Hall to discuss future hospital facilities in Port Elizabeth. Prof Marais was represented by Dr JB Nel at the meeting held on 5 November 1964.

Soon after Prof Marais took office the Minister of Home Affairs and of Education, Arts and Science, Mr Jan de Klerk, on 2 October 1964, addressed the annual dinner of the Cape Midland Branch of MASA in Port Elizabeth. In this address, the Minister's view was that, to launch significantly more unspecialised medical practitioners required advance planning of at least ten years. Without mentioning UPE this view meant that, should planning be started at that stage, a Faculty of Medicine would be a possibility by about 1975. The Minister outlined the plans for various universities to increase the number of medical doctors. The Minister went on to say that a Medical School for the University College of the North<sup>ii</sup> had been approved the previous year and earlier in 1964 one for the University College of the Western Cape<sup>iii</sup>.

The Minister's address in Port Elizabeth was followed a month later with a letter by him to the Administrator of the Cape, Mr Nico Malan, to enquire whether the Cape Province was considering any plans to extend hospital services in Port Elizabeth. Mr de Klerk alerted Mr Malan to the possibility that a faculty of medicine might be established at UPE sometime in the future. The Administrator's reply was that the Cabinet would have to take a decision in principle about a future faculty of medicine and then only could the province incorporate it in its hospital

<sup>i</sup> Based on the Consumer Price Index the equivalent of the amount of R700 000 (estimated by Prof. Barker in 1948 = £350 000) would have been R1 115 723 in 1963.

<sup>ii</sup> Now the University of Limpopo.

<sup>iii</sup> Now the University of the Western Cape.

planning. The Administrator reminded the Minister of the experience at the University of Stellenbosch when the Tygerberg academic hospital was planned, and it was envisaged that an academic hospital in a white group area might not have the desired variety of clinical material. This was likely to be the case at UPE too when the academic hospital was placed on the campus in Summerstrand. On 9 March 1965 the Administrator informed Prof Marais of this correspondence between him and the Minister and reported that no further response had yet been received from the Minister.

Prof Marais continued with exploratory work regarding a Faculty of Medicine. On 3 March 1965 he wrote to the Association of American Medical Colleges to find out about the principles on which teaching hospitals were planned and built in the USA. Prof Marais followed up on the meeting called by the mayor, as mentioned before, with a visit to Dr J.A. Hendriksz and Dr J.H. Cairns regarding future hospital facilities in Port Elizabeth. On 29 March 1965, he wrote a summary of these discussions during which he specifically alerted the two officials to the possibility of a future Faculty of Medicine at UPE which should form part of the considerations about the planning of future hospital facilities.

The Vice-Chancellor continued his initiatives on 6 May 1965 by writing a letter to the Director of the National Building Research Institute at the Council for Industrial and Scientific Research. In this letter he enquired about standard norms for the provision of hospital buildings.

Ms Merlin Nell was appointed to the staff of the UPE Library in 1966, to take charge of the journals section (Nell,2017). The next year Prof Marais requested her to visit the library of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research in Pretoria. This library was clearing out some of its collection of scientific journals and allowed other libraries to select what they needed. Ms Nell was asked to not only think about the faculties already at UPE, but also about the possibility of a future Faculty of Medicine.

On 4 October 1967 UPE received a letter from the Committee of Enquiry into Medical Training stating that the Cabinet decided to investigate:

- the need for further medical training,
- where and when to establish such facilities and
- the consideration of training white and other population groups jointly.

UPE responded on 13 February 1968 by submitting a memorandum to the Committee in which strong factors motivating a Faculty of Medicine

in Port Elizabeth were stated. Receipt of this memorandum was acknowledged a year later in a letter by the Scientific Advisor to the Prime Minister dated 7 March 1969. In this acknowledgement letter the Advisor asked for further details on the number of medical practitioners in Port Elizabeth. The Vice-Chancellor collected such information from Dr J.N. Sher who was the Medical Officer of Health of the Municipality of Port Elizabeth. In his reply, Dr Sher once more assured the Vice-Chancellor of the support of the medical fraternity for a Faculty of Medicine in Port Elizabeth (Nelson Mandela University, 1968).

An unfortunate misunderstanding caused the local press to publish a report stating that UPE had not applied for a Faculty of Medicine. The result was a letter of protest from the Cape Midlands Branch of MASA to the University, dated 24 July 1968. The Registrar of the University responded on 21 August 1968 by submitting a copy of the memorandum of 13 February 1968.

The local branch of MASA did not allow the idea of a Faculty of Medicine at UPE to die. In a letter dated 31 July 1972 the Registrar of UPE wrote to the Secretary of the Department of National Education to convey a decision taken by a meeting between the local branch of MASA and the Vice-Chancellor of UPE. This meeting requested the Registrar to determine from the Department whether it was true that the Cabinet had decided on a sequence for the establishment of new Faculties of Medicine, as follows:

- the one at the University of the Orange Free State<sup>i</sup>, which was in fact started in 1971,
- the Rand Afrikaans University,<sup>ii</sup>
- the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and<sup>iii</sup>
- the University of Durban-Westville<sup>iv</sup>.

The Secretary of the Department of National Education confirmed on 14 August 1972 that the Cabinet in 1969 had decided as indicated.

In Port Elizabeth the local enthusiasm remained alive. In a letter dated 24 August 1972, Prof Marais encouraged the efforts of MASA to proceed with such initiatives, but despite this encouragement, MASA felt compelled to write to the Registrar of UPE on 21 February 1973 to let the University know that the Association was aware of the University's decision to postpone an application for a Faculty of Engineering by seven

<sup>i</sup> Now the University of the Free State.

<sup>ii</sup> Now the University of Johannesburg.

<sup>iii</sup> Now the North West University.

<sup>iv</sup> Incorporated with the University of Natal into the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal in 2005.

years. The Association accepted that the University would take a similar standpoint about a Faculty of Medicine.

MASA kept its efforts alive and on 15 August 1973 requested the University to appoint an observer and advisor to MASA's Medical School Sub-Committee. This person would serve in a personal capacity and not as a representative of the University. Prof G.J.J. van Zyl was appointed in this capacity<sup>i</sup>.

During 1980 Prof Marais left UPE to take up a full-time position on the President's Council. By the time the new Vice-Chancellor, Prof S.J. Schoeman, took over, the above period of 7 years from circa 1972 had expired.

It appears that Prof Schoeman took a pragmatic and cost-conscious approach to the establishment of new facilities, and this applied to a Faculty of Medicine too. On 23 November 1981 he prepared a *Report on the Possible Establishment of a Medical Faculty at UPE*.

In this report the Vice-Chancellor started by saying that he regarded it one of the duties of the executive management "...to develop the University optimally with due allowance for the viability of new directions, the needs of the community and the national interest".

To compile this report, the Vice-Chancellor interviewed several persons. In the public sector, at the national level, he had discussions with Dr R. Venter and Dr J.B.Z. Louw of the Department of National Education, Dr J. de Beer of the Department of Health, Welfare and Pensions. At the provincial level he met the Member of the Executive Committee in charge of hospitals of the erstwhile Provincial Administration of the Cape Province. In the academic world he spoke to senior lecturing staff at the Faculties of Medicine at the Universities of Cape Town, Orange Free State and Witwatersrand.

Locally the Vice-Chancellor discussed his findings with Members of Parliament and of the Provincial Council of the Cape Province. This meeting took place on 3 December 1981 during which a memorandum prepared by the University served as the basis of the discussion. This meeting was very well received by the politicians as is evident from a letter of appreciation received from Ms Molly Blackburn, a member of the Provincial Council. Fellow politicians named in her letter are Mr Andrew Savage, Mr Ken Andrew and Mr Edward Trent.

<sup>i</sup> Owing to the nature of his appointment it seems as if no records of proceedings of this Sub-Committee were conveyed to UPE.

On 14 January 1982 the Member of Parliament for the Walmer constituency, in which UPE fell at that stage, Mr Andrew Savage, followed up on the meeting with UPE of 3 December 1981 by writing to Dr Angus Hofmeyr who was at that time the chairman of the local branch of MASA. This letter urged Dr Hofmeyr to pursue the matter, and he was promised the support of Mr Savage and his colleagues.

Dr Hofmeyr agreed to taking on the task of chairman and co-ordinator of a steering group to investigate the establishment of a Faculty of Medicine together with the issues which the Vice-Chancellor pointed out in his discussions with Ms Blackburn and her colleagues. Dr Hofmeyr's only condition was that he had to receive an official request from the politicians so that he could get authorisation from the executive committee of MASA in January 1982.

The Vice-Chancellor's Report next served on the agenda of the Executive Committee of the UPE Council on 22 February 1982 and the agenda of the full Council on 22 March 1982.

The following salient points emerged from the Report.

"The original objectives which motivated the establishment of a university in Port Elizabeth included the eventual provision of the two fields of training, i.e., Engineering and Medicine. It would thus be advisable, even if merely provisionally, to consider the possible establishment of a medical faculty at UPE".

"It became clear that the need for qualified medical practitioners would in future be largely determined by the policy on providing free or almost free medical services and the change in attitude towards the services of the private medical practitioner. This is largely a political matter (in the broad sense of the word)".

The facilities available at the seven faculties in South Africa could at the time deliver 1200 qualified doctors per annum. Population projections for 1980-1990, with a desire to maintain at least a 1:1700 ratio between doctors and the population, required that 504 doctors should qualify per year. For the period 1990-2000 this number of required new doctors increased to 960 per annum. One can thus spot a degree of caution for an oversupply of doctors in the projections.

It was estimated that the salaries for academic staff of a medical faculty would add R3 267 631 to the University's 1981 salary bill of R 8 725 727.

“As regards the University itself, the entry into the academic management and climate of at least 30 professors with the present 65 would be a relatively big shock”.

The Executive Committee of Council recommended to the full Council that no further decisions should be taken at that stage and that the matter not be investigated any further, however, that Council should always be receptive for submissions from other bodies and be willing to consider new facts.

The Council approved these recommendations on 22 March 1982.

Although enthusiasm at the University seems to have waned, the local branch of MASA kept the fire alive. Dr Hofmeyr followed up on the correspondence between himself and the local politicians, mentioned above, by a letter to the Administrator of the Cape Provincial Administration dated 13 May 1982. When, after six months of waiting for a reply, no reply had yet been received by 9 November, he re-submitted the letter and wrote directly to the Minister of National Education too.

The Minister’s reply contained the following discouraging paragraph:

“In view of the fact that the existing medical training facilities appear to be more than sufficient for the needs of the White population and the fact that constant attention at the highest level is given to the need for providing medical training facilities for all groups, I am convinced that it will at this stage serve no purpose to form a steering and co-ordinating committee for the establishment of a faculty of medicine at the University of Port Elizabeth” (RSA Date indistinct).

The local community did not surrender. On 29 August 1983, Mr John Christopher, representative of the local business community on the UPE Council, reported to Council that the local branch of MASA, despite the discouragement by the Minister of National Education, had formed a committee under the chairmanship of Dr Angus Hofmeyr with the terms of reference to investigate the possible creation of a Medical Faculty at UPE.

At the time the government appointed a committee to investigate future facilities for medical and dental training, a committee which became known as the de Villiers Committee.

Dr Hofmeyr’s committee determined that the government has decided that one further medical faculty would be established within the near future at one of the South African universities and that the universities would be invited to apply for a Medical Faculty. UPE received such an

invitation and consequently prepared a memorandum that was submitted to the de Villiers Committee on 28 June 1984. This memorandum was supported by the local medical fraternity evidenced by annexures to the memorandum written by the local branch of MASA, the Senior Medical Superintendents of the Provincial Hospital, Livingstone Hospital and Dora Nginza Hospital and the Head of the Department of Paediatrics at Livingstone Hospital.

Paragraphs 3.1 and 7.6 of the memorandum specifically pointed out the willingness of the Council of UPE to accept students from all population groups on academic merit. In the post-1994 South Africa this willingness of the UPE Council may not seem worth mentioning, but to have been taken at the time, was a major political breakthrough and a sign of the autonomy of a university council.

In its report the de Villiers Committee devoted pages 148 to 151 to the Eastern Cape and noted that two memoranda had been received from universities in the Eastern Cape interested in the establishment of a Faculty of Medicine, namely, UPE and the University of Fort Hare.

Although the Committee did not recommend a Faculty of Medicine at either of the two universities, it recommended that the position be revisited every 5 years. Discouraging for the local efforts, but an olive branch was held out. As the five-year period ended UPE, and the local medical fraternity, took time by the forelock.

On 8 May 1989 UPE's Joint Planning Committee<sup>i</sup> appointed an ad hoc Committee<sup>ii</sup> on a Medical Faculty. The renewed actions at the University and the persistent enthusiasm of the local medical fraternity were dealt a blow from an unexpected angle. This turn in the tide was the high-level summit conference on academic medicine held by MASA on 28 to 30 May 1990 in Gencor's Magaliesberg Conference Centre.

The Conference formulated a vision statement and a mission statement for academic medicine. Eight work groups produced eight different models for the future management of academic medicine.

The management consultants, Ernst & Young, were requested "...to evaluate the eight proposed models...so that your Association will be in a position to submit a recommendation to the Director General for Health and Population Development ..." (Ernst & Young, 1990).

<sup>i</sup> Composed of the Executive Committee of Council and the Executive Committee of Senate with functionaries such as the two Registrars.

<sup>ii</sup> Chairman: Prof Willem Oelofsen, Head of the Department of Biochemistry.

The consultants recommended:

1. “a non-racial unitary health system,”
2. “regions divided into academic and non-academic areas which were not necessarily bounded by the present provincial boundaries,”
3. the academic region to be known as an Academic Complex and
4. the non-academic region to be known as a Regional Health Board.
5. The Southern and Eastern Cape were identified as two of the non-academic regions that would have a regional health board.

Did Sunday 30 September 1990, when MASA issued a press statement accepting the recommendations of the consultants, ring the death knell for a Faculty of Medicine at UPE? (Nelson Mandela University, 1990).

When UPE’s *ad hoc* Committee on a Faculty of Medicine met on 1 November 1990 it had the outcomes of the MASA conference of May 1990 on its agenda. Encouragement to persevere came from the representative of the local branch of MASA, Dr P. Benson. Further encouragement to persevere came from the Acting Regional Director of Hospitals and Health Services, Dr Leon Cilliers, who referred to the good points in the MASA standpoint; but he was still of the opinion that the Eastern Cape’s case had merits which UPE could once more put to MASA. He pointed out that the real authority from whom to gain the support was the South African Medical and Dental Council. That UPE should not get cold feet was his final view (Nelson Mandela University, 1990).

Against all odds, on 12 December 1990, an invigorated and daring UPE requested an informal meeting with the Minister of National Health and of Population Development to discuss a possible extension to medical training in the Eastern Cape, but this request was turned down by the Director-General of the Department in a letter dated 2 February 1991.

The Director-General motivated this standpoint by referring to two investigations that were conducted at that stage.

The first one was into the future of academic training and the second into the future need for human resources in the medical field.

One year after UPE’s request for an informal meeting the University was informed that the investigations determined that future training would be based on two considerations.

The first consideration was a ratio of 1 doctor for 800 persons in urban areas and for 5000 persons in rural areas, whereas the national ratio needed to be 1 to 1900.

The second consideration was that future training of medical students should be community-oriented and community-based<sup>i</sup>.

At that time, South Africa's very important negotiations towards a new constitutional dispensation took place and it is thus to be understood why such matters as the establishment of a new Faculty of Medicine moved down the priority list of government.

At UPE matters, however, took a new turn. The heads of the following departments took steps to form a new Faculty of Health Sciences consisting of:

- Human Movement Science,
- Nursing Science,
- Pharmacy,
- Psychology and
- Social Work

On 3 August 1995 Senate approved the establishment of the Faculty of Health Sciences. Even before the Department of Higher Education approved the establishment of the Faculty of Health Sciences, UPE was visited on 10 November 1995 by the National Assembly Portfolio Committee on Health accompanied by the Standing Committee on Health of the Eastern Cape Legislature. This visit was aimed at determining the work and the facilities of the Department of Nursing Science.

On 1 January 1996, the new faculty came into being. An early foreign visitor to the new faculty was a delegation of the Primary Health Care Equity Program of USAID on 27 March 1996. At the time of UPE receiving the approval for the establishment of the Faculty of Health Sciences the Minister of Health made an appointment that would have future bearing on a fully-fledged medical faculty at UPE.

The Minister appointed the Implementation Support Group for Academic Health Services Complexes<sup>ii</sup>. This group visited the eight existing medical schools during February and March 1996, which were at the University of Cape Town, the University of Stellenbosch, the University

<sup>i</sup> As a matter of interest, embodied in the approach applied by the School of Medicine and Public health once established at Nelson Mandela University.

<sup>ii</sup> AHSC from here onwards.

of Natal, the University of the Orange Free State, the University of the Witwatersrand, the University of Pretoria, the Medical University of South Africa and the University of Transkei<sup>i</sup>.

These visits revealed a major problem at the medical school of the University of Transkei, namely a lack of resources. The Eastern Cape Provincial Health Department and the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Transkei requested that the National Department of Health appoint a team to investigate and evaluate and then report on the existing facilities in the Eastern Cape.

On 23 July 1996, the Faculty of Health Sciences at UPE was visited by Prof Sir Raymond Hoffenberg and Prof Hugh Philpott. The information requested from the Faculty of Health Sciences, which necessitated some research and enquiries, was furnished on 9 September 1996 (Nelson Mandela University, 1996).

This submission of 9 September 1996 by the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at UPE, Prof Josua Fullard, responded to the request by Prof Hoffenberg and Prof Philpott to be furnished with information regarding the available facilities at UPE for the possible pre-clinical medical training for 80 students as well the additional facilities that would be needed.

The Dean made a proposal for a joint offering of medical training by UPE and UNITRA<sup>i</sup>. The proposal was built around four points, namely, that:

- an Integrated Academic Health Service Complex should be a collaborative undertaking between the University of Port Elizabeth and the University of Transkei.
- the complex should be situated in Port Elizabeth.
- UPE should provide the pre-clinical training programme, and
- UNITRA should provide the clinical training programme at a distant campus in Port Elizabeth.

The Hoffenberg Committee was granted three months to report, and they delivered their report on 30 September 1996. This report was based on, amongst others, interviews held with some professionals and senior students at:

- the Medical School of the University of Transkei, the Mthatha General Hospital, Henry Elliot Hospital and associated institutions,
- the East London complex, including Frere Hospital, Cecilia Makiwane Hospital, Duncan Village Day Hospital, New England

<sup>i</sup> University of Transkei, renamed Walter Sisulu University.

Hospital in Grahamstown and the health-related facilities at Rhodes University and

- the Port Elizabeth complex including Livingstone Hospital, Port Elizabeth Provincial Hospital and Dora Nginza Hospital.

The Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at UPE, Prof Josua Fullard was one of the professionals interviewed on 23 July 1996, as mentioned above. In the report of this interview the eleven strengths of the UPE Faculty of Health Sciences were listed together with two weaknesses.

Amongst the strengths was an advanced transformation process with more than 50% of undergraduate students from the previously disadvantaged groups. Another strength was the good collaboration and interactions with Professor Mazwai of the medical school in Mthatha.

The Hoffenberg Committee requested Raubenheimer and Partners, Quantity Surveyors, to determine the cost of providing the facilities for a future AHSC in the Eastern Cape.

The quantity surveyors based their estimates on a medical school that would comprise a gross building area of 20 000 square metres. The resultant estimates for options were:

1. Mthatha (R270 432 783),
2. East London (R133 692 371) and
3. Port Elizabeth (R79 828 951).

Option 1 was the most expensive because it required a new 500-bed hospital at a cost of R150 000 000 and renovations to existing district hospitals of R68 552 783.

Option 3 was the cheapest because its new medical school would cost R36 250 000 compared with R50 000 000 for the other options. The lower figure was caused by the existing facilities at UPE. In addition, the upgrading of Dora Nginza Hospital would cost R41 698 951 compared with upgrades at Option 1 of R68 552 783 and R 81 812 731 at Option 2.

The Hoffenberg Committee summarised the position in Port Elizabeth as follows (Nelson Mandela University, 1996):

“Points in favour are the following

- The health services facilities are suitable for undergraduate and postgraduate clinical teaching.

- The University of Port Elizabeth has strong Science and Health Science faculties that could easily be expanded for the teaching of medical students.
- UPE is transforming from an institution that was seen to be supporting the apartheid regime, to meet the requirements of the new South Africa and is using its resources to address the gaps created by apartheid in the Port Elizabeth region.
- UPE has an excellent campus and great potential to expand.
- Port Elizabeth has good schools and other amenities.
- There is the potential of considerable local support from business and industry.
- The Dora Nginza Hospital is new, well designed, only 25% commissioned, leaving large areas eminently suitable for easy adaptation to house all the clinical, and some preclinical, departments of a new AHSC.
- There is an abundance of residential facilities for staff and students.

Points against are the following:

- The thought of moving the Medical School<sup>i</sup> from Umtata<sup>ii</sup> to Port Elizabeth, particularly with the historic perception of UPE, as being reactionary.
- Port Elizabeth is not near the centre of the Eastern Cape and would not be well placed to assist in the development of health services in the impoverished Transkei.
- It is not likely that the Department of Health would expand a Port Elizabeth hospital to Level 3. It is more likely to do so in East London.

Recommendation:

“This option is practically and logistically the easiest to accommodate. In both the short term and the long term, it would take very little expenditure to develop a full AHSC in Port Elizabeth.”

The Commission made a nine-point final recommendation of which the following aspects are quoted:

- There should be an AHSC in the Eastern Cape.
- This AHSC should be situated in Umtata.

<sup>i</sup> Referring, amongst others, to the proposal of 9 September 1996 by the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at UPE, as reported above.

<sup>ii</sup> The spelling of the time as used in the Report. Now Mthatha

- There should be a moratorium on the admission of medical students to UNITRA<sup>i</sup> for two or three years while the facilities in Umtata are being upgraded.
- A postgraduate centre should be established in East London.

Final recommendation 6, not listed above, left room for a future reconsideration of the situation: “Progress in the development, planning and implementation of the new AHSC should be reviewed annually. If at the end of two years it is clear that development is not proceeding expeditiously, the decision to site the AHSC in Umtata should be reconsidered”.

We can assume that the two-year period would have ended in 1998.

At UPE the Dean of Health Sciences, Prof Josua Fullard, took ill and died on 30 June 2001. He was succeeded by Prof Raj Naidoo from the Department of Pharmacy.

At the time of Prof Naidoo taking the reins the national focus about tertiary education was directed by “...a wide-ranging policy process for the transformation of the higher education system, which started in the early 1990s” (Republic of South Africa,2002).

In this policy process the Minister of Education appointed a National Working Group. The Group’s Terms of Reference necessitated that it should make recommendations to the Minister about the number of tertiary institutions and the possible merger of institutions.

In Port Elizabeth, these recommendations resulted in the incorporation of the Port Elizabeth branch of Vista University into the University of Port Elizabeth on 1 January 2004. This process was taken to finality on 1 January 2005 when the Port Elizabeth Technikon became part of the new institution henceforth known as the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (Nelson Mandela University).

## **2005 – 2016.**

A Faculty of Medicine at Nelson Mandela University is officially mentioned at the end of the first year of the new university’s existence. In a Council document of 9 December 2005 “Council NOTED that consideration would be given to possibly relocating the Health Sciences Faculty to the Vista campus<sup>ii</sup> ...which could lead to the eventual

<sup>i</sup> University of Transkei, now the Walter Sisulu University.

<sup>ii</sup> Renamed the Missionvale Campus of Nelson Mandela University.

establishment of a medical school due to the campus's proximity to the Dora Nginza Hospital" (Nelson Mandela University,2005).

Some three years elapsed<sup>i</sup> before the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor, Prof Derrick Swartz, made an oral presentation to Council on 26 September 2008 and was authorised to "...investigate the viability of establishing a Medical School at Nelson Mandela University as soon as possible" (Nelson Mandela University,2008).

We should appreciate that the merger of three tertiary institutions over the period 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2005 was a monumental task and that new faculties could not be added to management's plate until the new structures had been firmly established.

In an interview Prof Naidoo (Naidoo,2017) revealed that, during his term of office, which ended with his retirement on 31 December 2011, the matter of a Faculty of Medicine had often been discussed at the level of the Executive Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences. In the Minutes of the Faculty Management Committee of 4 June 2009 Prof Naidoo reported that a delegation from the Port Elizabeth Hospital Complex Board had visited him to discuss programmes offered and to request that a Faculty of Medicine be established at Nelson Mandela University. Prof Naidoo undertook to discuss this matter with the Vice-Chancellor (Nelson Mandela University,2009).

Further interest was thus shown by the local medical fraternity in the establishment of such a faculty at the university.

Prof Naidoo retired at the end of the year in which The National Planning Commission published its Diagnostic Report, 2011 (RSA,2011A Section 6). In this Report, we find a concern for the situation about the supply and the training of health professionals. The Report states that:

"the most severe of these policy lapses concerns the treatment of staff, particularly professional staff in the public health service... On the supply side, training capacity for all levels of health professionals was reduced. Today, there is a massive shortage of skilled staff in the health system.... While these personnel-related challenges are recognised by policymakers, the response has been ad hoc and in many instances inappropriate, resulting in the system lurching from crisis to crisis... Improving health outcomes depends on several determinants one of

<sup>i</sup> The Records Management Office at Nelson Mandela University confirmed on 16 January 2017 that the matter did not appear in Senate and Council documents during this period.

which was raising the number of people trained throughout the health system (and ensuring that they were retained in the country)".

The iron was hot, it was time to strike. Prof Naidoo was succeeded on 1 January 2012 by Prof Victor Exner who took office in the year in which the National Planning Commission published its National Development Plan which contained a vision for South Africa for the year 2030 (RSA,2011B).

Chapter 10 of the National Development Plan is devoted to the visions and targets for 2030 about the promotion of health. The vision was held that by 2030: "there has been a significant shift in equity, efficiency, effectiveness and quality of healthcare provision".

To achieve the vision, the Plan established some targets for 2030. For primary health-care the target was set to have "primary healthcare teams (that) provide care to families and communities". To achieve this target "primary healthcare teams are established with requisite complements of doctors, specialists, physicians and nurses".

The Diagnostic Report together with the visions in the National Development Plan were strong indicators to Prof Exner and staff that the proverbial iron was getting hotter.

The first documentary proof that the Faculty did not allow the grass to grow under their feet is found in the feedback Prof Exner gave to the Board of the Faculty of Health Sciences on 12 October 2012 (Nelson Mandela University,2012). In this feedback the Dean assured the Board of the Faculty that the Nelson Mandela University Council wanted to pursue the establishment of a Medical School.

We now find that developments about and the implications of a possible medical school have appeared regularly in the Vice-Chancellor's Report to meetings of the Nelson Mandela University Council. On 12 October 2013 the Report contained, inter alia, the following:

What deserves closer attention is medium to long-term sustainability, managing uncertainties, and re-engineering specific aspects of our business model for better efficiency gains and growth. These aspects, all of which have potential strategic implications for our future financial sustainability, include:

- Funding demands for future major new growth and development, particularly the proposed medical school and marine and maritime capability.

In subsequent reports of the Vice-Chancellor, Council is regularly reminded of the funding implications; but funding is not the only aspect attended to.

The Faculty of Health Sciences duly acknowledged the existence of a Faculty of Medicine at the Walter Sisulu University (WSU) and the need to inform those colleagues of the plans to apply for a similar faculty at Nelson Mandela University. Prof Exner and the Acting Vice-Chancellor, Prof T.T. Mayekiso, paid a visit to WSU and found them not opposed to the idea (Nelson Mandela University,2013A).

Prof Exner received, as a key part of his brief when he took over the deanship, the task to encourage the Faculty to dismantle the departmental silos in favour of restructuring the Faculty into schools. His vision was to move rapidly towards creating an ethos of a multi and transdisciplinary approach recognising all levels of health professionals as important members of integrated healthcare teams.

By late 2012 the restructuring had been completed and approved by Senate. The restructured faculty was successfully launched at a function in 2013. Guests included several dignitaries, a large detachment of press corps and the Acting Vice-Chancellor of the Walter Sisulu University who was previously Dean of Health Sciences at that university, Prof K Mfenyana.

The completed restructuring was the beginning of a transformation process in the Faculty of Health Sciences. From the outset, it was decided to place the emphasis on a growing international trend and following it towards trans- and multi-disciplinary approaches in healthcare training to achieve truly integrated healthcare teams, with a view to improving and optimising healthcare delivery. All future re-circulation of existing programmes as well as new programmes, including the medical undergraduate Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, MBChB will be done in line with this ethos. Experience has indicated that if health professionals are trained from the basic level to work together as teams, rather than in traditional silos, patient care is optimised. In this way health professionals also learn to respect one another's roles as equally important irrespective of their being mid-level workers or super specialists.

To start the trajectory towards developing the new MBChB programme and re-curriculating all the existing programmes the Faculty of Health Sciences formed an Expert Reference Group (ERG) in 2013 to guide the Faculty in achieving one of its five objectives. The ERG was composed of senior academics, medical specialists and curriculum experts from the University of the Witwatersrand, University of Cape Town, Walter Sisulu University and the University of Stellenbosch.

The Expert Reference Group reported on 31 March 2014. In the Executive Summary to what the Group called a “Blueprint for a Medical Degree at Nelson Mandela University” shortages of health-workers are acknowledged as well as a global consensus that places the emphasis on the urgency of scaling up the education and training of such workers. The vision of the group was one of “...an innovative medical programme training competent, accountable health professionals with a transformative, primary healthcare-based approach to address the health needs of the Eastern Cape and beyond” (Nelson Mandela University,2014).

To achieve this vision, the Group proposed the establishment of a School of Medicine and Public Health amongst the other schools that were already operating in the Faculty.

Once the ERG had completed its task by late 2014 the Faculty staff started to take charge of the tasks and still continue to manage and lead the process.

The Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences explained this approach to a meeting of Senate on 14 November 2014. It entailed the fact that the University already had degree programmes in the School of Clinical Care Sciences in the Department of Nursing Science, the Department of Radiography and the Department of Emergency Medical Care. It was envisaged that these offerings would be extended by a Bachelor of Clinical Medical Practice and then a fully-fledged MBChB programme.

Using the Report of the Expert Reference Group as a baseline the Department of Higher Education and Training was approached and funding of approximately R73 million allocated over three years was secured to start the process of transforming Health Sciences education towards equity in health at Nelson Mandela University. The funding would also allow for the appointment of a consultancy firm to prepare a 10-Year Master Plan that would include the introduction of medical training by means of a New School of Medicine and Public Health in the

Faculty of Health Sciences at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (Nelson Mandela University,2015).

This plan was completed in 2015. It acknowledged the vision in respect of healthcare contained in the National Development Plan as an anchor motivation for the establishment of medical training at Nelson Mandela University. The Ten-Year Plan identified three other government healthcare initiatives which such a school at Nelson Mandela University could help realise in the Eastern Cape. These three initiatives are Operation Phakisa, the National Health Insurance Plan and the work of the Office of Health Standards Compliance.

Against this background came the announcement by the Minister of Higher Education on 23 July 2016 giving permission to the University to establish the country's tenth School of Medicine.

On 1 January 2017 Prof Lungile Pepeta, previously from Walter Sisulu University, took over as Executive Dean. From that date started some great work to be done, alluded to earlier in this review. The physical facilities on the Missionvale campus had to be designed and constructed, a fresh approach to medical education had to be envisaged and decided upon, syllabi had to be drawn up, professional accreditation obtained, and staff recruited.

These tasks were completed in time for the first students to register at the start of the academic year 2021.

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## Jack the Baboon By: Graham Taylor<sup>i</sup>

This is a story of Jack, the baboon from Kariega. But I'll stick with Uitenhage - the town name of Jack's time. The story is well known<sup>ii</sup>, but time has distorted it. Jack was a chacma baboon (*Papio ursinus*) whose mother had been shot by a farmer when he was still an infant. A railway worker, James Wide, had lost both his legs in a train accident in 1877. Wide, known as Jumper for his ability to jump between railway waggons while shunting trains, slipped, and fell under a train. Lucky to survive, Jumper lost both his legs, fitted a pair of wooden replacements and started work as a signalman at Uitenhage. In 1881, Jumper noticed Jack leading ox waggons through Uitenhage. Impressed with the baboon's intelligence, he acquired the baboon from the waggon driver. The baboon did everything for Jumper. Jack was his best friend, his assistant for chores around the house, and his work assistant – like a modern-day guide dog – but more. Jack would pump water for Jumper's garden, carry away refuse, transport Jumper to work on a railway trolley, and operate the signals at the Uitenhage railway station.

Rail passengers complained to rail management about the safety risks of having a baboon operating railway signals. The rail authorities investigated, and Jack and Jumper were fired. After much pleading and protest from Jack's co-workers and friends, Jack's competence was put to test by railway authorities. Jack passed with flying colours, Jumper was reappointed, and Jack was formally employed by the railways with an employment number and a ration of maize and brandy.

For nine years Jack and Jumper were a familiar sight in Uitenhage, until Jack passed away from tuberculosis in April 1890. The story was reported in the prestigious *Nature* journal in 1890 by George Howe<sup>iii</sup>, and the story continues to be told across the world. But the story has a larger context. The legends of the American Wild West were founded on the logistics of gold rushes and ingrained into a cultural mythos by Hollywood. Yet our own history is as compelling, if not more so.

<sup>i</sup> This article was originally written as an opinion piece for the Herald newspaper, but was never published. The article is based on an interview with an ancestor of the Bellingan and Marais families and credit is due to the guidance and advice of Charles Marais, the well-known Addo farmer. The article is published in *Looking Back* as it documents previously unknown facts, of the time before Jack became a Signalman. As far as can be determined, Jack's days as a waggoneer have not been previously documented and is deserving of further research.

<sup>ii</sup> See Ivor Markman's article on Jack the Baboon Signalman in *Looking Back* (2009, Volume 48, Number 1: 49-52).

<sup>iii</sup> Howe, G. 1890. A Unique Signalman. In *Nature*, September 1890, page 185.

Ours is an incredible story about an emerging South African logistics system and the rush for South Africa's mineral resources. Jack's story starts amid the world's largest rush for mineral resources – the 1870 diamond rush and the gold rush of 1886. It was a global scramble for South Africa's mineral wealth and Port Elizabeth boomed as the gateway to the interior – and Jack was right there. Few people know what Jack did before becoming a railway worker. Yet, the story is well known among the Khoisan, *trekboer* and stock farming families, who came to dominate the transport rider industry while supplementing their meagre income from the parched lands they worked. The Khoisan were the first explorers of the trade routes from the interior to Port Elizabeth. The ancient trade routes of the Khoisan (or more precisely, the !Xam-ka !'ē people), on tracks worn from centuries of use, became the trade routes of the transport riders. With the mining rush, the tracks became roads, the economy grew, and labour was in short supply.



Figure 1: Photograph taken by Reverend George Howe, circa 1890<sup>i</sup>

<sup>i</sup> The photograph taken by Reverend George B. Howe was supplied by Euan Nisbet, Emeritus Professor of Earth Sciences at Royal Holloway, University of London. Reverend Howe had cared for Professor Nisbet's grandfather, Reverend Joseph Lister (1887-1988), who had lost his eyesight as a young child, and had been taken to London for medical care. Professor Nisbet's great grandfather is Joseph Storr Lister (1852-1927), the Uitenhage born Conservator of Forests who pioneered driftsand reclamation and methods to protect indigenous forest. *Umtiza listeriana*, the rare endemic tree species occurring in the East London area, was named to honour Joseph Storr Lister.

They plied the ox waggon routes into the interior, conveying goods to the mining areas. Jan Marais, a great grandfather of the Bellingan and Marais farming families, was a transport rider. Jan had raised Jack as an infant, after his mother had been shot by a farmer from the Tsitsikamma mountains. Jack quickly learned how to become a *voorryer* (front rider) of the waggon. Jack would walk in front of the ox waggon, encouraging the oxen forward, bouncing in front of their horns and on their backs. He knew how to tether oxen, knew the names of waggon parts, and was one of the team when they rested. Around the fires of mealtimes, Jack would stand in line like everyone else for his share of water, stew and brandy. It was here that he developed the brandy habit that he took back to Uitenhage.

So, when Jack came to Uitenhage leading the ox waggon, attracting the attention of the legless Jumper Wide, he was already an accomplished *voorryer* of the waggons plying the routes to the interior that form our current rail network. But by then, the era of ox waggon logistics was coming to an end. Rail was squeezing waggon logistics out, through efficiencies and an elaborate system of taxation at outspans and markets. Jan Marais never sold Jack to Jumper, there was only an agreement that Jack was best suited to be with Jumper Wide, Jack would grow his own clothes, that he would be well treated, and would get his regular “*dop*” (shot of brandy).

And that is the contextual story of Jack the baboon, a service animal extraordinaire, who pioneered, through his own initiative, assistance to disabled people. But Jack was more than a service animal, he was a master of logistics, both rail and waggon.

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## **Boy Scouts Going to Camp**

**By: Coleen O'Brien<sup>i</sup>**

When Lord Baden-Powell convened a camp for a group of boys taken from various walks of life to test his theories of the value of scouting, he did not have an idea of the impact it would have on the children of the world. The Scouts, and later, the Girl Guides, were movements formed after the 1907 camp on Brownsea Island in Dorset, England. These movements have spread throughout the world, giving both boys and girls the opportunity for games and outdoor activities which mould and develop character and leadership skills.

South Africa was not slow in forming Scout groups and the first troop in Port Elizabeth was formed in 1908, a few months after the publication of *Scouting for Boys*. As the popularity of Scouting grew, new troops were formed in various areas of the city. Some troops had religious affiliations and, in 1915, the first Jewish troop was formed. However, this troop had gone into a period of inactivity and in February 1927, was reformed with a very enthusiastic group of boys.

*Travel a mile westwards from your headquarters till you find a spot where seven roads meet. From this point go down a hill in a south-south-westerly direction. Follow this road till you find a war memorial about 100 yards on your right. You should strike this point about fifty minutes after starting out. Rest here for ten minutes. Change your direction so that the sun is shining in your faces. Mind the road-menders. When the road takes a sharp turn to the north leave it and look for the signs of 'Bony-knees the Scout'. These, if correctly interpreted, will indicate the camping ground for the night.*

These are the instructions given to the 1st Jewish Troop of Boy Scouts in February 1927 when they went on their first camp. Their *Minutes Book* contains a report in a local newspaper about the occasion which caused a lot of excitement in the area.

*The Jewish Troop is off to its first camp and a dozen or more hefty Scouts are busy packing the trek cart while all the ragamuffins of the neighbourhood seem to have gathered together to watch the preparations with envy. The Scoutmaster waves a cheery "goodbye" as he steps out with his pack on his back and leaves the Scouts to find the way by themselves. Along the road he will be watching them from the bushes, ready to step in when the wrong turning is taken or when someone tries to drink on the march.*

*"Lay hold of the drags," yells Zartz (Assistant Scoutmaster of the Troop). "Heave!" And away goes the trek cart followed by dozens of interested spectators and all the*

<sup>i</sup> Regional Coordinator: Heritage, Eastern Cape South, Scouts South Africa.

*mongrels within a five mile radius barking and racing round like mad things. The city is soon left behind and the rumble of the wheels grows less as the cart leaves the asphalt and gets on to country roads. The going is heavy – no talking is allowed while pulling up hills.*

*Whoa! Big Bertha! Ten minutes rest. The war memorial has been reached. A bit of chocolate goes the round – diminishing in size till it reaches Bernstein, who promptly cuts its existence short. On we go again till after a further forty minutes pull we reach the spot where the signs of Bony-knees are to be found (perhaps!). We all form up in extended order and slowly move forward examining closely every mark on the ground. Yes! Here a stone has been removed quite recently – the earth is still wet. Here are two stones, one on top of the other. This means “Go straight ahead.” Soon we find an arrow made of branches, then a blaze on a tree, and eventually a cleft stick with a message indicating that this is the camping ground. No sooner have we deciphered the message than something drops down into the middle of us and there is a scramble for safety! It is Bony-knees himself. He has been hiding in the tree watching all our doings.*

The article goes on to describe the setting up of the camp, sorting out their meals, campfire fun, going to sleep under the stars, the games played the following morning before breakfast, the Scouts Own prayer service and striking the camp.

*The old cart is packed again and in a twinkle we are on the road for town. After a lovely tramp through the evening dusk headquarters is reached once again, and as the Scoutmaster takes his leave the eager question comes from every throat: “When can we go again, sir?”*

The route taken by the troop was taken from their headquarters which, at that time, was off Rink Street. The big intersection described is now known as Five Ways and the country road they went along is Target Kloof. They had a break at the War Memorial at Walmer Town Hall before proceeding to Dodd’s Farm where they camped overnight.

The days of using trek carts for moving equipment to campgrounds is long over but there are some examples of them at the older scout troops. They are very proud possessions of the troops who still have them.

At present, there are over 60 million Scouts and volunteers worldwide with 176 National Scout Organizations. The aim of the Scout movement is to create “transformative learning experiences for young people everywhere.” It is still possible for both boys and girls to have a fun learning experience and develop leadership skills while enjoying the kind of activities enjoyed by the 1st Jewish Troop all those years ago.

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## Grisly Times at Thornhill

By: CJ Skead <sup>1</sup>

Probably because they were assisted by Khoekhoe tribesmen who would have known the country well, the earliest White explorers on their way down the Langkloof in search of ivory in the bushveld country far to the east would, inevitably, have found themselves faced with the wide tidal reaches of the Gamtoos River. In consequence, they would have had no option but to cross the river above its ebb-and-flow a few kilometres downriver from the present Hankey.

Once across the Wagendrift<sup>2</sup>, a steady climb up and over fynbos-covered hills past Loerie, would have brought them to some of the finest country they had yet encountered on their long trek up from the Cape. Here, they had reached a partly-forested hilly land under a low mountain range which faced southwards to the sea, the Van Stadensberg of today.

Those tough white-skinned pioneers were heading into country as yet unnamed except by the Khoekhoe whose placenames would have meant nothing to those Dutch trekkers. They would have had to start coining their own names as they went along, river names, hill and mountain names, forest and bush names, and so on, many of which have come down to us to the present day.

The arrival of those successions of Dutch/South African first-comers lay somewhere between the years 1700 and 1710 with their successors following well into the dying years of the 1700's.

Inevitably, after crossing the Gamtoos River's Wagendrift, the first day's trek stopped at a campsite near a patch of bush-forest not far short of the deep Van Stadens River gorge where all hope of passage by waggon was impossible. Here they rested their weary bodies and gave their oxen and horses time to enjoy an abundance of grass and water, lions

<sup>1</sup> Extract with permission from the Skead family from Skead, C.J. 2005. *Tales of Plants, Places and People*. Port Elizabeth: Private Publication.

<sup>2</sup> Skead uses the spelling *Wagendrift* and *Wagen-drift* in his original manuscript. Our reprint standardised on *Wagendrift*. The copy of the original survey diagram by James Swan (SG460/1816 copied from Title Uit.Q.1-48 dated 1.7.1816) uses hyphenation to align with the standardised template for the copy prepared by Surveyor Jno. Melvil dated 18.12.1967. Secondly, the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1:50,000 topographical sheet (3324DD) uses *Wagendrift* as the farm name, *Wagondrift* as a placename on the farm, and *Wagon Drift* as a railway station name on the Eastern bank of the Gamtoos River. The name *Wagendrift* thus depicts the farm name.

allowing. Lions? Yes. Lions were there because game was plentiful there and, because game was plentiful, the men on the trek could hunt for the pot and stock up for the next stage of the journey ahead.

Many later passers-by were to outspan at that forested site before the first written report told of the place and what it held for man and beast. That report came from young Ensign (Lieutenant) August Beutler who, with a quasi-military force in 1752, had been sent out by the Dutch East India company to explore the most eastern quarters of a developing colony of which the first elephant-hunters and cattle-traders had brought back glowing accounts. The name of that campsite, Beutler found, was Galgenbosch, a macabre title very much out of character with the charming nature of the natural surroundings.

In Beutler's own words, the name Galgenbosch had come about "...because some travellers had cut their names on a tree, and someone else had added a gallows above".

What was all this about? He does not explain, nor does he mention the names carved there. Why, oh, why didn't Beutler jot down those names in his report and say a word or two about the gallows motif? Had he done so we might now be able to trace the careers of those men commemorated in such coarse graffiti defiling a lovely tree. Maybe, too, we might have come to know why the gallows had been chosen as a sort of emblem? Was it someone's idea of a joke or had those five men been hanged there for some good reason? Will we ever know?

That name Galgenbosch of obscure origin might have lived to haunt us to this day had it not been changed to something more acceptable to a later generation, as we shall see as this story develops. Meanwhile, let us look at another Galgenbosch and compare the origin of its name with our Galgenbosch near the Van Staden's River.

In her delightful book "The Plains of Camdeboo", Eve Palmer tells how, when her grandparents took over a farm called Galgenbosch in the far-inland Pearston district, the young wife objected to living with so bizarre a name. As a result, the alternative Cranemere was born in circumstances very different from those at the Van Staden's Galgenbosch site. The farm's chosen name of Galgenbosch had come

from the presence of a rather puny witgatboom, unsullied by graffiti, but with a touching story of its own. It told how some misguided individual had been forced to take refuge in the tree when charged by a lion and then pulled unceremoniously out of the branches and torn to pieces by the beast. Thus, no hanging had taken place there, only death by mauling.

Ugly or not in name, our forest Galgenbosch under the Van Stadensberg came to be a much sought-after campsite for all travellers and, later, as an allocated leeningplaats when the trek-boere arrived.

Where exactly was the site of our Galgenbosch on the trek-route of old? Can we pinpoint its position accurately today? The answer is NO but the nearest, and certainly the most satisfactory, assessment comes from the late Professor Vernon Forbes' book "Pioneer Travellers of South Africa" published in 1965 in which he considers the present farms Fairlight and Sunnyside, a little east of Thornhill's shopping-centre, to be the most likely Galgenbosch of old, an estimate supported in later accounts dealing with the old farm-name Klaare Fontein, today's Clarafontein. In other words, Galgenbosch was, for all intents and purposes, the modern Thornhill country running from the residential area eastwards to the Van Staden's River. Knowing what that country is like today; let us turn to comments by some of those eighteenth century travellers who followed in Beutler's 1752 footsteps and see what they had to say about the countryside of their times.

Eighteen years after Beutler's visit, there arrived at Galgenbosch a party of men who had been sent by the Dutch East India Company to determine new boundary lines for the eastward-expanding colony. This Boundary Commission led by Faber and Mentz, the first ever in this eastern part of the country, found on arriving at Galgenbosch "...great quantities of dung...some as old as about four days."

The words "...great quantities" and an "accumulation of dung" must have been the contemporary measure by which travellers were able to judge the comings and goings of fellow trekkers. Other written records reveal similar remarks about campsites elsewhere along the general trekroutes and, it must be remembered that, by 1770, much back and forth movement had been taking place along that trekroute since the earliest

elephant-hunters had established what were to become convenient stopping-places within the capabilities of a day's trek by both men and trek-animals.

Then, by the 1770's, twenty years after Beutler, a very different type of eastward-moving trekker began tasting the delights of a little-explored country; professional men began to benefit from the efforts of those who had gone before. Two such were the Swede, Karl Thunberg, and his English companion Francis Masson from Kew Gardens in London, both botanists and plant-collectors who found Galgenbosch country to be entrancing enough for Thunberg to refer to as "...the finest forest we have seen in the whole country", a strange remark from one who, only a few weeks before, had passed through the Outeniqua forests at George. Masson backed him in this and not only found the countryside to be well-stocked with game but himself charmed by what he saw of the "...woods and grasslands".

While these two travellers were in camp at Galgenbosch, they met a small party of 'Gonaqua Hottentots' from whom they were able to get some 'fresh' milk which, fresh as it certainly was, was so contaminated with kraal-dust that they had to filter it in some way before drinking it, a sure test of the strength of Thunberg's stomach. Is it possible that some of that "...quantity of dung" found at Galgenbosch by Faber and Mentz two years before could have come from cattle belonging to the Gonaqua tribe living there and not necessarily from the animals of other white passers-by? Questions follow questions, with never an answer in sight.

Four years after Thunberg and Masson, another Swede, Anders Sparrman, also a trained botanist, although a young medical doctor by profession, wrote of 'Galge-bosch' as "...a little wood frequented by lions and still more by buffaloes". The fact of lions being there in 1776 helps us to understand just how important that Galgenbosch area must have been to the passing throng because, as hinted earlier, if lions were there, game would have been there along with the eland and hartebeest mentioned by other travellers, all food for hungry men and their staffs while their oxen and horses made the most of the pastures, lions permitting.

By now, lowly but beautiful Galgenbosch had gained a reputation of its own, and even as late as 1803, twenty-eight years later, the German, Dr Heinrich Lichtenstein, hunted elephant at what he called "...a very pretty spot in the middle of a forest called Galgenbosch".

To show that such remarks were not meant to be flattering to a naturally beautiful part of the world and to prove that Galgenbosch had lost none of its charm after the turn into the nineteenth century, the Rev CI la Trobe of the Moravian Missionary Society, in search of a site for a mission-station among the Khoekhoe, compared the scene there in 1816 "...to an extensive range of parks [where] the elegant mimosas [sweetthorn trees] on the hills are in coppices or stand singly". He was then in camp at the farm 'Klare Fontein', the 'Clarafontein' of today, more or less where Prof Vernon Forbes' chose 'Sunnyside' and 'Fairlight' farms as the most probable site of the Galgenbosch campsite of old. What hope do we have now of seeing the glories of the Galgenbosch of old? Nil. The whole area had been swallowed up by gumtrees, wattles, and pines.

Somewhat surprisingly, no mention of yellowwood trees came into any of those fulsome comments on Galgenbosch's ambience. Surely no yellowwood tree can be seen for anything other than what it is, king of the forest and a glory in its own right, heavily draped in Old Man's Beard to set off its hoary age while surpassing any other tree species in majesty, many also attractive in their own right.

Yellowwoods undoubtedly thrived in that area as some still do into the early years of the twenty-first century. But they had a close call, according to the late Mr George Puttergill, a longtime Thornhill farmer who, when interviewed in the 1980's, told how a commercial saw-miller had been given permission to fell the best of the big 'uns and cart them away for profit.

Mr Puttergill Junior then took me to see a magnificent specimen growing about two hundred metres up the hill behind his homestead. Here was an example of what the Thornhill yellowwoods of the pre-1920's must have been and indeed, of what the yellowwoods of Beutler's, Thunberg's, Sparrman's and la Trobe's days would have been. Such being the case, why on earth did none of those early admirers of Galgenbosch's beauty mention them in their texts?

When brooding over the gallows motif along with the five names carved into the tree trunk, and while assuming that that gallows' sign had been meant to let other possible wrongdoers know that the men named had been hanged there, one's first instincts were to choose a yellowwood tree as being the most suitable for the purpose. The break of the first lateral branches from the main trunk would afford enough height to keep the feet of a hanging body from touching the ground. What better base, then, for carving names and a macabre logo than the full face of a tall and broad yellowwood trunk?

Thus it was that, with Mr Puttergill standing by, my eyes started wandering across the breadth of the immense tree trunk in the hope of finding vestigial scars in the bark after all those two hundred and fifty years and more. How stupid can one get? For one thing, the expectation of finding anything at eye-level was absurd because well-established tree trunks expand sideways and their growth distorts any irregularities such as logos and surnames. Moreover, the naturally scaly nature of yellowwood bark means that any surface etchings would soon be sloughed off taking the graffiti with them. Similarly, to look upward in the hope of finding the marks being carried heavenwards with growth would be even more absurd despite human weakness to think along those lines. One must not hope for immortality by carving one's initials on a giant yellowwood; far better to choose some other species of tree, or a cave-wall, and hoping that no future vandal will scrape them off.

The puzzle remains. Is it possible that those names and the gallows-sign were carved on a yellowwood tree? Why should they have been? Why not on any large enough tree which would serve the same purpose?

To many, the replacement of the gruesome name Galgenbosch with the alternative of Thornhill by a farming society in the first half of the nineteenth century would certainly have satisfied local tastes, but little did those early Thornhillbillies know that the ghost of Galgenbosch was to rise again, thanks to their own careless use of language and by their ignorance of the meaning of Galgen - in its true gallows context. And, little could they know that a century and a half later would see the old name Galgenbosch reduced to GALGBOS in its Afrikaans idiom prior to suffering the further indignity of another decline to a puzzling GALBOS.

Fair enough, perhaps, because such changes would have met the mood of the moment in the way sloppy thinking often brings change without anyone knowing or caring about events happening before their eyes. In this case, the Dutch words *galgen* for gallows and *bosch* for bush were being 'elevated' to Galgbos in their modernised forms but, more strange 'goings-on' were about to surface when the South African Road Motor Services found that they needed a name for a new roadside bushhalt in the old Galgenbosch area. Then, somewhat strangely, the words GALBOS HALT appeared on a new signboard at the behest of the Railway Bus Services. Why the GAL- for gall now, you might ask, when an already attenuated appropriate GALGBOS was there for the taking? Had the bitterness of a onetime hanging been considered as offensive to local farmers?

Intrigued by all this, I wrote to Railway Headquarters at Johannesburg asking for an explanation of this evolutionary oddity, not by way of criticism but out of need for a plausible reason. Their answer was, as might be expected, somewhat disingenuous. They claimed that, after consulting with local farmers and others, they had chosen GALBOS on learning that a plant known as Deadly Nightshade, a weed of arable lands and home gardens, was common there and that it was known to all by its Afrikaans name of *galbos*. At no time had they been made aware of any previous GALGBOS and its forebear GALGENBOSCH with its historical significance. Touché.

They were correct in saying that a plant, the Deadly Nightshade, was and is common enough around Thornhill despite it being no South African indigene. The books tell of it having been imported from Europe as early as 1652 and we all know what that date signifies in the South African context. We are also told that its ripe berries are poisonous if eaten too heartily but that, paradoxically, the leaves are gathered readily by the wives and children of black farmworkers for boiling up into a tasty green vegetable. True enough, especially in the Eastern Cape where the plant is known by its Xhosa name of *msobosobo*.

Thus, in such devious ways, had the modest *msobosobo's* name of *galbos* come to be proudly ensconced on a roadside signboard for all to see. How odd are the ways of mankind and how strange that an oldtime

name like Galgenbosch should have found immortality of a kind in the name of an alien plant in a very different language.

With plantlife as a guiding theme in this collection of vignettes on Plants, People and Places, Thornhill's grass, bush and fynbosveld has another stirring tale to tell of a placename very much Thornhill's own, if in another language. This one concerns that horror of horrors - FIRE, and FIRE at its very worst when commemorated in Thornhill's Xhosa name of kwaNdlutshile, 'the place where the huts were burnt'.

What huts? What fire, and when? It must have been a very special blaze for it to have been remembered to this day. Normally the burning of so combustible a thing as a thatched hut, tragic as it is for the family concerned, is a passing event where simple wattle-and-daub huts are soon replaced by using local saplings, mud, cow manure and thatch.

I battled hard to find the truth of the Ndlutshile fire story among local black people. They all knew the name and its meaning but, beyond that, it was no more than a name to them, its origin was obscure and nobody seemed to care. A shrug of the shoulders and a spread of the hands said it all.

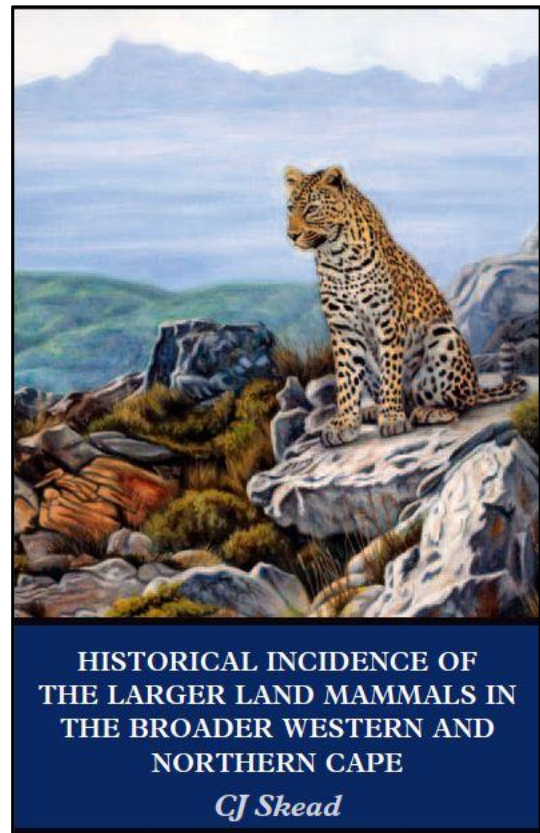
The lexicographer, Dr Albert Kropf, in his '*Kaffir-English Dictionary*' of the late nineteenth century made mention of kwaNdlutshile as did J McLaren's 1963 revision, both of which told of a fire having swept through there, a bland statement smacking of the obvious.

Several idle theories were advanced by black residents at Thornhill without any convincing evidence coming to light. I persisted with my questions in the hope that father-to-son tradition held the secret of the fiery devastation, a perseverance which paid off when enough evidence had been collected from many elderly mouths over a wide stretch of country, and not only at Thornhill. The cause of the holocaust had been none other than the Great Fire of 1869 which, starting at Knysna, two hundred kilometres to the west, had swept steadily eastwards along the mountains and across fynbosveld, had jumped the Gamtoos River before reaching Thornhill and had swept up all fragile huts standing in its path.

Those father-to-son-to-grandson stories had been worth waiting for; kwaNdutshile had been all-too-appropriately and sadly named.

The puzzle of the old-fashioned Galgenbosch name at Thornhill, if ever any hanging ever occurred there, is now something we shall have to file away among the unsolved problems of local history. The gallows motif must surely have relevance to something sinister. Why choose a gallows if it was not meant to convey a message? And who were those five men whose names appeared below the gallows sign?

Questions! Questions! Questions!



*Two of CJ Skead's publications, as republished by the Centre for African Conservation Ecology. Today, most of Skead's original publications are collectors' items.*

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## **GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS**

Contributions in English or Afrikaans not exceeding 3000 words are welcome. All contributions must be original and must not have been published elsewhere. Articles must be typed in Arial size 14 font, with footnotes restarting at the bottom of each page, and references at the end of the article. Articles must be submitted in MS Word (\*.docx) format. Illustrations must be contained within the MS Word document.

For general style and reference techniques, contributors can refer to this issue for guidance. The editorial sub-committee reserves the right to edit contributions where necessary, and the edited draft will be submitted to the author for approval before publishing.

All correspondence in connection with this Journal must be addressed to:

The Editor, Looking Back

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- i. To foster and promote interest in the historic past of South Africa, particularly of the Eastern Cape and more particularly of Port Elizabeth and district.**
- ii. To stimulate interest in historic research.**
- iii. The placing of descriptive plaques on buildings or other places of historic interest in Port Elizabeth and district.**
- iv. To disseminate the results of its work in the widest possible manner by the publication of a bulletin or journal, or by any other means.**
- v. To undertake the organization of lectures and visits to local historic sites.**
- vi. To co-operate or associate with any other organization whether local or national having similar interests and objectives.**

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