

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PORT ELIZABETH
NEWSLETTER NO 45, JANUARY 2017**

Dear Member

Once more may we wish all members and friends a very happy New Year and we hope you have just enjoyed a blessed Christmas a thoroughly enjoyable holiday.

PUBLICATIONS

<i>Port Elizabeth</i> by Margaret Harradine	R400.00
<i>Hills Covered with Cottages</i> by Margaret Harradine	R450.00
<i>Donkin Heritage Trail and Richmond Hill Trail</i>	R 30.00
<i>History of the E H Walton Group</i>	R 50.00
<i>'Looking Back' Cumulative Indexes, Volumes 1-12 (1961-72), 13-22 (1973-82), 23-30 (1983-91) and 31-41 (1992-2002)</i> Each	R 20.00
<i>Gazetteer of the Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage Divisions of the Old Cape Colony</i> compiled by Bartle Logie & Margaret Harradine	R350.00

These books may be purchased by arrangement with Lyn Haller, or some of them from No 7 Castle Hill Museum. Please contact Lyn or a Committee member should you require further details. We also have stock of many back-numbers of *Looking Back*, so please ask and we will check our stocks for a particular issue for you.

We also have a *Cumulative Index for Looking Back Volumes 42-53 (2003-14)* in digital format and available to members by email, free of charge, on application.

SOCIETY'S WEBSITE Please check our website for the latest Newsletter and Programme, if for some reason you have lost or did not receive your copy. Let us have your comments and any suggestions you may have to improve the site. The site is in the process of being made more user-friendly, so please bear with us while this is going through. When the changes are complete, we will be keeping it up-to-date on a regular basis.

Our website address is – www.historicalsocietype.co.za.

CENTENARIES, ETC, IN 2017

The following important anniversaries for the new year are listed in Margaret Harradine's *Port Elizabeth*:

150 years (1867)

May 14 The 465-ton iron barque *Balaklava* struck Roman Rock (situated about 2.4 km east of Bird Rock, the name thought to have been derived from the prevalence of the Red Roman fish, *Chrystophrys cristiceps* in its vicinity). The rock's alternative name is Dispatch Rock, not as might be expected, from the number of ships 'dispatched' there -- which included the *Orchomone* (1892), *Dover Castle* (1914) and *Rhodesia* (1917) -- but from the name of the first survey ship to chart Algoa Bay [*LB*, March 1964]. The *Balaklava* was carrying two stained glass windows for Holy Trinity Church.

Nov 19 & 20 Floods caused damage to buildings, especially in South End, and to the Baakens Bridge.

Nov 23 Six Dominican nuns arrived by ship from Ireland, under Mother Rose Whitty, to found the Holy Rosary Convent. They lived in the old stone house to the east of the later Chapel in Western Road, and still survives but in a sadly neglected state.

100 years (1917) The Great War must have been very much uppermost in the thoughts of Port Elizabethan people in this year but, back in PE:

Feb 14 At a Council meeting, the first full-time Firemaster, Algernon Pett, was confirmed, taking over on 1 April. Their headquarters was in Military Road, and they were equipped with a Chalmers motor car (converted into a hose & fire tender) and an ambulance.

Feb 21 The *SS Mendi*, carrying men of the 5th Battalion of the SA Native Labour Corps to Europe to take part in the Great War, was struck by the *SS Darro* in the English Channel. 616 South Africans and 31 crew members drowned, after displaying exemplary discipline as their ship sank.

Nov Major Allister Miller made the first flight from Cape Town to PE, landing on the Golf Club course, but the surging forward of the crowd of onlookers caused him to collide with a bunker, which damaged the propeller.

50 years (1967) And finally, this contribution from Carol Victor:

Jan 1 Walmer was incorporated into Port Elizabeth.

Mar 13 Airliner 'Rietbok' crashed into sea off Kayser's Beach near East London. All on board killed including several prominent local businessmen.

Reopening of Wylde Bridge, Swartkops The website Algoa News FM gave coverage to the reopening of the "oldest bridge in PE" after a 3-months renovation in which the structure has been "painted in a number of different colours and illuminated with beautiful LED lights"; we note that, in the article, they now term it the 'Swartkops River Bridge', perhaps to be politically correct (?) You historians will have noted the very inaccurate historical details of the bridge's construction and naming, which your Scribe took the trouble to correct on line.

REPORT BACK ON HERITAGE PROJECTS AND NEWS

- Bayworld Museum historian and Curator for No 7 Castle Hill Museum. Both posts have been advertised recently, so we must wait and see who is appointed.

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