

Concord

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Digitization in a small archives: The Alan Paton Centre & Struggle Archives experience by Nazim Gani

Introduction

Almost 10 years ago, the Library and Information Science (LIS) Professionals were writing about the rapid expansion of the World Wide Web and the development of digital technologies. They argued the change in the traditional role of libraries, museums and archives, keepers of literary, visual and cultural heritages as custodians of physical collections to creators of dynamic online information resources. Ten years later, the LIS professionals are coming together to evaluate, analyze and discuss progress in the area of digital repository. This paper will examine the digitization process in small archives and to share the experiences of digitization at the Alan Paton Centre & Struggle Archives.

Definition

Digitizing - is defined as the creation of digital objects from physical originals.

Digitization - is defined as a complete process that broadly includes: selection; prioritization; project management and tracking; preparation of originals; metadata collection, quality management; data collection; submission of digital resources to delivery systems and into a repository environment; assessment and evaluation of the digitization effort.

Why digitize?

The reasons for a digitization project or more precisely for digital conversion of non-digital resource material, are varied and may well overlap. I have identified a few reasons:

- to increase access: this is the most obvious and primary reason, where there is thought to be high demand from users and small archives have the desire to improve access to a specific collection;
- to improve services to an expanding users group by providing enhanced access to the institution's resources with respect to education and life-long learning;
- for preservation i.e. to reduce the handling and use of fragile or heavily used original material and create a back-up for endangered material such as brittle books and documents, and;
- to see partnerships with other institutions to capitalize on the economic advantages of a shared approach

Research has now shown that users are driving the demand for reliable, reusable and verifiable online resources in support of research, learning and teaching. Users are now seeking new ways in which information is sourced, accessed and utilized. Users are no longer willing to travel to a physical location to retrieve information but expect access to information from their own computer.

The APC experience

The APC digitization project began almost ten years ago. Being a small archive, the challenge experienced was staffing and financial resources. Hence, the APC opted for in-house scanning rather than outsourcing. The APC digitization project is very brief and further consideration was given in 2012 when the previous Head of the APC retired. As the collections- manuscripts and photographs are growing, a decision was made to digitize on a larger scale for access and preservation reasons, but keeping in mind that the user ultimately needs to consult with the collections physically for research purposes.

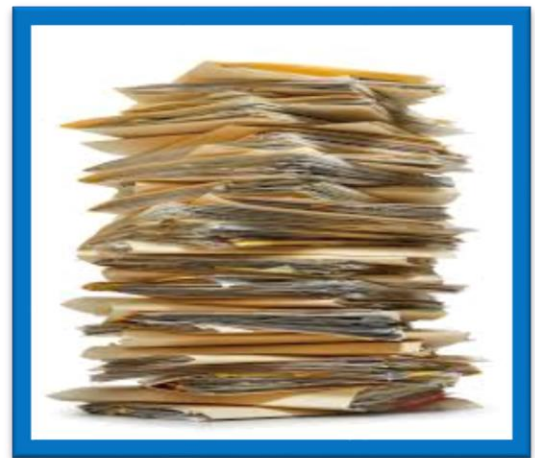
APC digitization project

Initially, the decision was to digitize the descriptive list and file list of the collections and to upload onto the APC website. This enabled the researchers to identify what sections are available with a collection. Many of the APC users are international students and therefore, material was scanned and e-mailed to those who could not physically visit the Centre. More recently, certain parts of the collections are scanned and uploaded. This enables the researchers to obtain more information about a certain collection. This project is continuing at a slow pace due to staffing issues.

The next project in terms of digitizing is the Oral History collection. A decision was taken to digitize all the OH transcript interviews. The process has begun and a database will be created for on-line access.

Conclusion

The intention of this paper is to provide a general but brief introduction to the digital project of a small archive. Digital technology is setting new trends for the cultural heritage sector by demanding new models for the creation, management and storage of information. The APC experience is unique and allowed for adequate planning, correct storage procedures, accurate metadata and the adoption of national and international best practices which are essential contributors to the success of a project. Small organizations may feel daunted by these prospects. However, collaboration will become a key component of most digital initiatives as a means of sharing expertise, risk and providing a supportive platform for technical and professional development.



Concord is edited and produced by Nazim Gani, with kind assistance from Sherian Latif, of the Alan Paton Centre & Struggle Archives. Photos are by Nazim Gani unless otherwise stated; all other are from the APC collections.

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22nd Alan Paton Lecture: 2015

“Vakasha: Alan Paton and Justice for Child Offenders”

by Professor Ann Skelton

Renowned author Alan Paton had been a passionate reformer in the field of justice for children, Director of the Centre for Child Law at the University of Pretoria, Professor Ann Skelton, revealed during the 22nd Alan Paton Lecture which she delivered at the Colin Webb Hall on UKZN's Pietermaritzburg campus.

This lecture, hosted by UKZN'S Alan Paton Centre and Struggle Archives, has been given since 1994, to commemorate Paton's life and to discuss topics which Paton was most involved in during his lifetime.



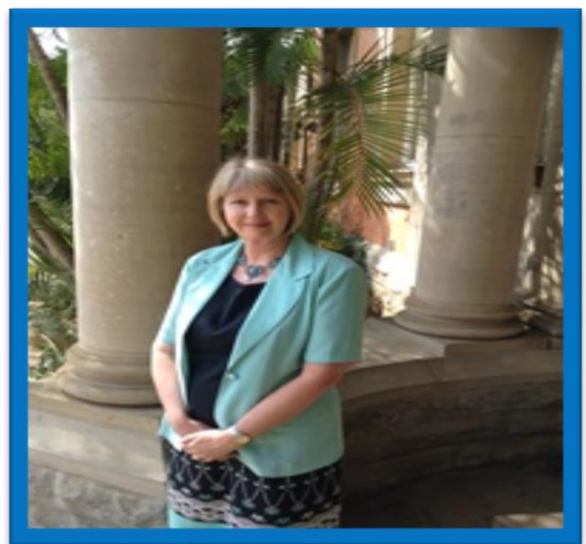
Left to right: Nazim Gani, Prof Ann Skelton & Prof Mbongeni Malaba

Skelton, who has worked as a human rights lawyer in South Africa for 25 years specialising in children's rights, is also an established researcher, and has published extensively in the fields of child law, family law, constitutional law, criminal justice and restorative justice.

Skelton said it was a great honour to be invited to deliver the Alan Paton Lecture, and a pleasure to be back in her home town of Pietermaritzburg and Alma Mater, UKZN.

Her lecture, titled: "*Vakasha: Alan Paton and Justice for Child Offenders*", reflected on a side of Paton which was not well known. She said although Paton was renowned for his writing, a part of him less public was that he was also a passionate reformer in the field of justice for children.

Skelton spoke of Paton becoming the principal at Diepkloof Reformatory School in 1935 where he experimented with other forms of punishment besides retributive and deterrent. He explored the ideas of reformatory punishment, which replaces the word punishment with treatment. Skelton spoke of Paton introducing controversial progressive reforms, including a system where boys at the school were encouraged to take personal responsibility and they were granted rewards and graduated freedom. Some of the changes he made included policy for open dormitories, work permits and home visitations. Boys were initially housed in closed dormitories and once they had proven themselves trustworthy they would be transferred to open dormitories within the compound.



Prof Ann Skelton

Skelton spoke to a unique attribute of Paton's approach, whereby he had placed importance on public ritual and ceremony. A ritual, referred to as 'Vakasha' meaning 'to go for a walk', entailed a boy receiving a shirt with a pocket covered with a piece of green cloth, called a 'Vakasha badge'. This was a confirmation of the gradual freedom a boy had received.

Skelton had noted that in 1946, Paton went on an international tour to look at reformatory schools in the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway and the United States. And it was during this tour that he penned his famous book *Cry the Beloved Country*.

Skelton said in her concluding remarks that Paton played a vital role in bringing about justice for children, a vision which was before its time, as he had focused on each child as an individual. She noted that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child guides the modern approach to children's rights, which advocates treating child offenders in a



(L-R) Sherian Latif with Prof Skelton

manner that promotes a child's sense of dignity and worth. Its desired aim is to rehabilitate and re-integrate children as opposed to retribution. An aim she said Paton knew well of as he had practised 'Ubuntu'.

Quote by Alan Paton

"They were afraid because they were so few. And such fear could not be cast out, but by love... I have one great fear in my heart, that one day when they turn to loving they will find we are turned to hating."

CONCORD

Out of the study of conflict and conciliation there comes hopefully, concord – that is agreement, harmony, and a 'being of the same heart and mind', so that justice and peace may take root in the new South Africa.

Professor Peter F. Alexander dies at the age of 65 1949-2015

South Africa's pre-eminent literary biographer, Peter Alexander has died in Sydney, Australia at the age of 65. Alexander was based at the University of New South Wales since 1978. He is the author of *Alan Paton: a Biography* published by Oxford University Press in 1994.

Alexander was born on 24 July 1949 in Grahamstown, where his father was an Anglican priest. He matriculated from Jeppe High School for Boys in Johannesburg. After studying literature at the University of Witwatersrand, where his lecturer was Paton's son Jonathan, and Leeds University, he went to Cambridge, where he met his wife-to-be, Christine.

It was while researching a thesis for a PhD at Cambridge University on the poet Roy Campbell in 1974, Alexander met Alan Paton, the internationally acclaimed author of *Cry, the Beloved Country*.

According to Alan Paton, 'The amount of effort and concentration required in writing a biography is many times greater than that required for an autobiography' (Alexander, 395). A biographer being confined to fact must suppress his imagination, intuition and emotion and confine his creativity to expression and composition. And it requires great skill to turn fact into interesting narrative. So when a biography succeeds, it is indeed a remarkable piece of work as is Peter F. Alexander's *Alan Paton: a Biography*.

Alexander gives a holistic picture of a human being in *Alan Paton: a Biography* with strengths and weaknesses who dedicated his life to bringing about transformation in South Africa. He was born into a racist society and remained ignorant of its ethos and his own conditioning until he became a young adult. It is still difficult for most people to understand that living in a racist society you become a racist.

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It does not matter whether you are black or white, your life is structured by the system in which you live because you abide by its norms and values whether you agree with them or not. Young Paton was fortunate to meet and work with many people who challenged his understanding of the South African situation and by the time he was in his thirties he was actively involved in denouncing its injustices. His book *Cry, the Beloved Country*, published in 1948, the year in which the Nationalist Party came into power, brought worldwide focus on racism in South Africa and helped to power the efforts of the liberation movements.



Prof Peter F. Alexander

Dr. Imtiaz Sooliman book launch

The Alan Paton Centre & Struggle Archives, Exclusive Books and Bookstorm hosted a book launch for *Imtiaz Sooliman and the Gift of the Givers: A Mercy to All* on Thursday, 16 October 2014 in the Leeb-du Toit Council Chambers, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus. The guest speaker was Dr. Imtiaz Sooliman, founder of the Gift of the Givers.

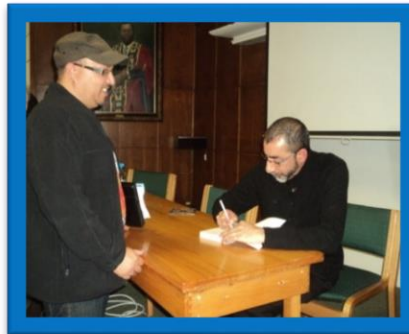
The book is written by journalist Shafiq Morton and tells a story of the establishment of South Africa's only home-grown relief organization, the Gift of the Givers, and its founder. In 1991, Dr. Sooliman, a medical doctor practicing in Pietermaritzburg, visited a Shaikh, a Sufi teacher, in Istanbul, Turkey, and received a message that would dramatically change his life and the lives of countless others – that he

would dedicate the rest of his life to helping others in need, regardless of race, religion or political affiliation.

As Africa's biggest relief NGO, Gift of the Givers has a reputation for speedy intervention in local disasters, but it has also conducted over 20 international missions in places such as Bosnia, Palestine, Japan, Haiti, Indonesia, Malawi and Mozambique. Since 1992, Gift of the Givers has put up hospitals, run clinics, created agricultural schemes, dug wells, built houses, developed and manufactured energy food, renovated fishing boats, offered scholarships and provided shelter, food and psychological succor to millions. It has responded to floods, war, famine, tsunamis, kidnapping and earthquakes.



Dr Imtiaz Sooliman with Nazim Gani



Gift of the Givers staff, Dr & Mrs Sooliman with Nazim Gani

A poem by Alan Paton “I have approached”

I have approached a moment of sterility
I shall not write any more awhile
For there is nothing more meretricious
Than to play with words.
Yet they are all there within me...
Therefore, words, stay where you are awhile
Till I am able to call you out,
Till I am able to call you with authentic voice
So that the great living host of you
Tumble out and form immediately
Into parties, commandos, and battalions...

Researchers at the Alan Paton Centre & Struggle Archives

Gustav Venter a doctoral candidate from Stellenbosch University visits the Alan Paton Centre



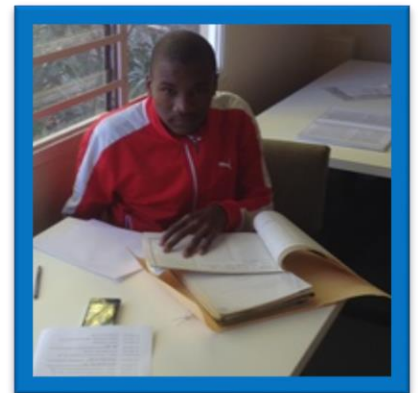
Gustav Venter is a doctoral candidate and part-time lecturer in the History Department at Stellenbosch University. Gustav Venter visited the Centre from 22nd to 24th June 2015. His doctoral thesis explores the history of so-called "white" professional football in South Africa. He visited the Alan Paton Centre in order to examine the papers of the Football Association of Natal and KwaZulu. He summarised his visit as follows: "My specific interest in the collection revolved around the fact that it contains some documentation relating to the National Professional Soccer League (NPSL). During the late 1970s this professional league – containing the likes of South African glamour sides Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates – absorbed a number of teams from the former National Football League (NFL), a whites-only league which disbanded after its 1977 season. In terms of my visit I would like to extend a big thank you to the staff of the Alan Paton Centre for their assistance and hospitality. It was a

privilege to visit the Centre and I would certainly recommend any researcher interested in related fields to do the same."

UKZN History Honours student research on non-racial cricket

Qhelani Msweli is a history honours student from the School of Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal. Qhelani visited the Centre on 18 March 2015 to undertake research as part of his history honours programme.

His topic is Natal Midlands non-racial cricket struggle, 1970-1990. The purpose of his research is to understand the role played by cricket against apartheid. Qhelani consulted PC 124 which is the Aurora Cricket Club and non-racial sport in Pietermaritzburg collection donated by Michael Hickson and Christopher Merrett.



History Honours student research on the Seven Days War

Sandile Kheswa is a history honours student from the School of Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal. Sandile visited the Centre on 28 June 2015 to undertake research as part of his history honours programme. His topic is the Seven Day War. His research focuses on the political violence during the Seven Day War. Sandile consulted PC 14, John Aitchison collection and PC 186, The Elandskop collection.

Dr. Gillian Gane from Cambridge visits the Alan Paton Centre



In March 2015, **Gillian Gane** came from Cambridge, Massachusetts, to spend a week at the Alan Paton Centre researching the history of the African Resistance Movement (ARM). Dr. Gane herself was a minor member of the ARM, which at the

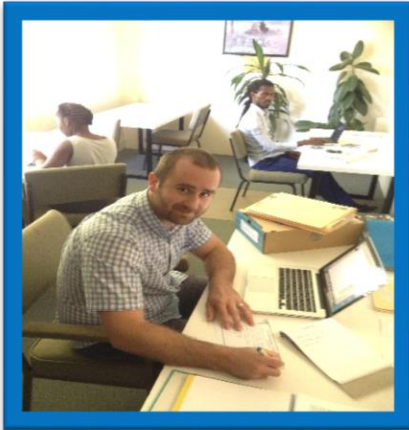
beginning of the 1960s was the first organization in South Africa to move beyond non-violence.

"In an underground organization," Dr. Gane says, "security demands secrecy. So if security works as it should, you don't know the names of more than a

handful of your fellows—it's a bit like belonging to a community of ghosts." Half a century after her actual involvement in the ARM, Dr. Gane has returned to the country of her birth to research her own past, which is also the past of a part of the struggle many may not know of. "We need at this stage to know many struggle stories," she says, "and we need to look at them with a critical eye."

What makes this possible in the case of the ARM (earlier known as the National Committee for Liberation or NCL) is the Magnus Gunther Collection, which was donated to the APC in 2007. This is surely the most comprehensive collection of documents on this organization anywhere in the world, according to Dr. Gane. She speaks warmly of not only the rich documentary resources at the Alan Paton Centre, but the comfortable amenities and the helpful and knowledgeable assistance of the staff, singling out Nazim Gani for particular gratitude.

PhD student from Cornell University, United States visits the APC



Brian Rutledge is a PhD student from Cornell University in the United States visited the APC for three weeks during 2015. His research focused on the social and economic history of black newspapers, like *Ilanga lase Natal* and *Bantu World*. Several mid-century figures like Albert Luthuli, RRR Dhlomo, RV Selope-Thema and others featured prominently in his research.

Charles Manda a researcher from UNISA visited the APC

Charles Manda visited the Centre on the 6 July 2015. Charles works at the Research Institute for Theology and Religion at UNISA in Pretoria. Charles intends to write a paper for a publication in an accredited journal. His research is on PACSA's role in building and healing. He consulted the PC11: PACSA collection.



Samantha Mansfield-Barry visits the Alan Paton Centre to research the 1973 Durban Strikes

Smantha Mansfield-Barry visited the Centre from the 6th to 9th July 2015. Samantha is an Honours student at the University of

Witwatersrand. Her research topic is focused on the 1973 Durban Strikes. Samantha consulted the Gerhard Mare Collection which is PC 126



Morgainne du Plessis visits the Alan Paton Centre to conduct research for her Master's thesis

Morgainne du Plessis is currently working on her thesis for her Master's Degree in History. She visited the Alan Paton Centre from the 7th to 10th July 2015 to do research for her thesis which is entitled "*How Beloved was Alan Paton's Beloved Country? A Historical Appraisal*". Her study aims to provide evidence that Alan Paton, even though first and foremost a fictional novelist, is also a literary activist using his novel as a 'war of words' as a form of resistance against the apartheid regime. Supervising Morgainne's thesis is Professor Karen Harris. Morgainne is a staff and student at the University of Pretoria in the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies.

Morgainne said that "the week spent at the Alan Paton Centre was absolutely wonderful. Both Mr. Gani and Ms. Latif were both so kind, helpful and accommodating. I truly feel incredibly privileged to have done my research in such an organised archive. The sheer work that must be put in to keep such a goldmine of primary sources in order must be a challenging and tiresome task. And for that I want to give my sincere thanks to both Mr. Gani and Ms. Latif for allowing me to work with the Alan Paton Collection. It's doing research in places like the Alan Paton Centre that truly keeps my passion for history alive".

Did you know?

Alan Paton also famously testified in mitigation at the trial (known as the Rivonia Treason Trial) of former president Nelson Mandela and other African National Congress leaders in 1963. The accused were at risk of receiving death sentences but instead were handed down life terms, in part due to the likes of Paton who supported them during this time.

HR Executive Director visits the Alan Paton Centre



On Monday, 29th June 2015 the Centre received a surprise visit from the Division of Human Resources. Mrs Avril Williamson, Executive Director of HR was accompanied by Mrs Shereen Balkisson, HR Manager in the College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science, and Professor Deo Jaganyi, Acting Registrar.



The three were taken on a tour of the Centre and Mrs Williamson described that the experience was “wonderful”. Mrs Balkisson noted that the tour was “informative” and was “impressed with the maintenance” of the Centre. Prof Jaganyi noted that the tour was “very interesting and informative”.

The APC staff expressed their pleasure at receiving their visitors.

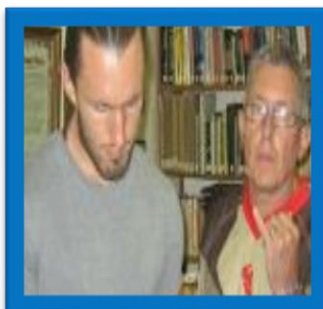
Left to right: Mrs Shereen Balkisson, Mrs Avril Williamson & Prof Deo Jaganyi

Chris Paton visits the Alan Paton Centre

Chris Paton



(L-R) Justin & Chris Paton



(R) Taylor May



(L) Sherian Latif



The Alan Paton Centre was honoured to welcome Chris Paton, grandson of Alan Paton and Justin Paton, great grandson of Alan Paton on the 18 December 2015. Accompanying Justin was his friend Taylor May from the United States. Chris Paton brought with him a portrait of Alan Paton and a plaque for the APC. These donations were bequested to the APC by his late father David Paton. David Paton had passed away in April 2015 in Johannesburg.

Prof. John Aitchison book launch

The Alan Paton Centre & Struggle Archives and the Natal Society Foundation hosted a book launch on Saturday, 25 April 2015 in the Leeb-du Toit Council Chambers, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus. The book written by Professor John Aitchison is entitled *Numbering the Dead: The course and pattern of political violence in the Natal Midlands, 1987 to 1989*. Professor Aitchison was the guest speaker at the book launch and paid tribute to all those who were willing to stand up and expose the reality of the violence that gripped the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands in the late eighties and early nineties.



Professor John Aitchison was born in Durban and then studied at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg where he was active in the National Union of South African Students and in the Liberal Party. In his Honours year in 1965 he was restricted without trial under severe banning orders for five years and then again for another five years from 1971 to 1976. After teaching at the Federal Theological Seminary he joined the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg where for many years he headed the Centre for Adult Education. Later he was head of the School of Education Training and Development. He retired in 2007 and is an Emeritus Professor of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He ran an Unrest Monitoring Project in the Centre for Adult Education from 1987 to 1994 and has played a significant role in national adult education policy development as well as in the development

of school teacher upgrading programmes. He is known for his strong commitment to education and non-governmental organisation development in the Natal Midlands. He has been active in a number of human rights and rural development non-governmental organisations such as the Association for Rural Advancement (of which he was Director for a time).



Numbering the Dead is a seminal account of the violent civil conflict that broke out around the city of Pietermaritzburg in 1987 and what ensued over the next three years. Aitchison and his colleagues, based at the Centre for Adult Education, documented and dissected the ebb and flow and the changing circumstances of this not-so-low intensity civil war in the region. They collected, computerized, and categorized literally thousands of instances of eyewitness or documentary evidence, and then applied an innovative synthesis of qualitative and quantitative approaches that uncovered the patterns and intimated the underlying causes. This book, mainly covering the period 1987 to 1989, presents a distillation of this monitoring work, conducted under unimaginably difficult and stressful conditions. It was originally done with the simple aim of stopping the killing by telling people in the province, in South Africa and the world what was happening, as accurately

and truthfully as possible.

Quote by Nelson Mandela

“There is no easy walk to freedom anywhere and many of us will have to pass through the valley of the shadow of death again and again before we reach the mountain tops of our desires.”

APC hosts Photograph and Film Preservation Workshop

Dr Estelle Liebenberg-Barkhuizen, Senior Conservation Officer at the Alan Paton Centre (APC) presented a photograph and film preservation workshop held at the APC on Friday, 3 October 2014. The workshop centered on the preservation of photographs and film. Estelle began with a short synopsis of the history of photography so that participants could learn about the different chemicals and materials used in the making of photographs and film, including glass plates, and the different types of photographs and film they might have in their archives and how to identify those. The participants looked at the types of damage photographs, film and glass plates can suffer when not treated correctly; and at preservation systems and methods to arrest and prevent damage. The workshop looked at policies for photograph collections and considered aspects of disaster management. The presentation was broken with a practical session in which delegates tested their photographs to try and identify what type of photograph they had brought to the workshop; and at the end of the workshop, Estelle demonstrated on how to repair a torn photograph; how to remove self-adhesive tape from the back of a photograph; how to make their own archival quality photo corners to be used in albums and how to make a four-flap folder. There was also a small exhibition of different types of photographs and film.

The workshop aimed to provide participants with sound understanding of how to implement best practices in the preservation of photographs and film; to identify the range of risks and dangers involved and the best ways to manage this using optimal storage systems and materials, and good handling and display methods. Participants will have a basic understanding of the necessary policies and plans needed to implement suitable preservation strategies.



Farewell tea party for Estelle Liebenberg-Barkhuizen



Dr Estelle Liebenberg-Barkhuizen, Senior Conservation Officer for the UKZN Special Collections retired at the end of December 2014. Estelle served the APC for 12 years doing archival description, conservation work for UKZN Special Collection, and helping with APC functions. Staff at the APC and PMB Library Services honoured Estelle with a lovely farewell tea party.

We at the APC are sad to see Estelle leave. We wish Estelle a long and happy retirement and we are grateful for her continued support and assistance. Go well, Estelle!

(L-R) Estelle Liebenberg-Barkhuizen with Sherian Latif

Natal Society Foundation book launch: *Standing on Street Corners: A History of the Natal Midlands Region of the Black Sash* by Mary Kleinenberg and Christopher Merrett

The Natal Society Foundation hosted a book launch on Saturday, 16 May 2015 at the Tatham Art Gallery to launch their new book *Standing on Street Corners: A History of the Natal Midlands Region of the Black Sash* co-authored by Mary Kleinenberg and Christopher Merrett. The guest speakers were Di Oliver and Paula Krynauw.

Mary Kleinenberg was a former regional chairperson and present Black Sash trustee. Christopher Merrett is an academic historian, writer and publishing editor.

The book, a handsome thread-sewn hard-cover with dust jacket, was launched to mark the 60th anniversary of Black Sash in South Africa on 25 May. The book contains numerous photographs of the personalities and activities of local Black Sash

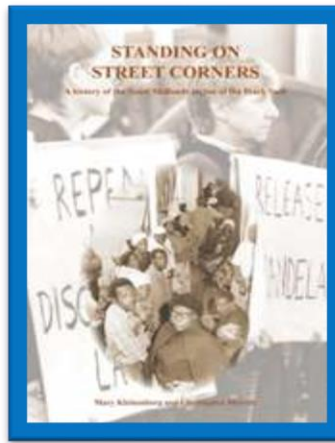
since the mid 1950's when the branch was formed as well as lists of members and those associated with the organisation.

According to the Publishers, The Natal Society Foundation, this book looks specifically at the Natal Midlands (Pietermaritzburg) region and the distinctiveness of its contribution. Like other regions it supported the liberation struggle through public protest and educational campaigns aimed at exposing iniquitous apartheid legislation.

Sylvia Vietzen in her review of the book said "this is a most impressive book". It tells how a relatively small group of women took a stand against the apartheid government's serious encroachment on the rights and freedom of the people of this country.



Mary Kleinenberg



Standing on Street Corners



Christopher Merrett

(Photographs kindly supplied by the Natal Society Foundation, Pietermaritzburg)

Quote by Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi

"Hope is said to be a commodity in short supply in this troubled land.
Fear there is an abundance".
