



## **DURBAN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT BACK**

When I did my report for 2020 I stated that the less that one said about it the better. I also expressed the hope that 2021 would be a better year. So far it has not. With this third wave now upon us I have my reservations but the main purpose of this letter, apart from bemoaning the dreadful fate that has befallen all of us through the Covid-19 pandemic, is to assure you that the Alumni Association has not forgotten you. As you are aware we should have had our AGM on the 8 February 2021 but that had to be aborted due to the lockdown regulations. For those who have paid their subs, all I can say is your money has not been squandered and will be put to very good use! In fact one outing has been arranged and that is for a visit to the Umngazi Hotel and Spa between the 26th and 28th of November. This in fact follows on the only function we had in 2020, apart from the AGM and that was the visit to The Cavern also in November. I can tell you that as soon as the regulations allow, we will be having the AGM and starting the year's activities.

Within the ambit of this year's activities I have suggested to Mr Finn Christensen that we should get a straw vote as to whether there would be much support for three outings, more of a history nature than anything else that I have suggested. Here they are:

1. Isandlwana and Rorkes Drift. Many of us have done this trip and have been enthralled by the dramatic tale that was told about these events. I can distinctly remember the late Ken Gillings taking the Alumni Association on a tour quite a number of years ago. My suggestion is that while many of us might have been to Isandlwana and have heard the story narrated, it has been more from the British/White point of view. I am aware of the fact that there are some excellent Zulu guides and I would suggest that we get them to take us around and explain these momentous events but particularly from a Zulu point of view. Also, I would suggest that we try and stay in the lodge which is on the Buffalo River and commanding a magnificent view across to the Isandlwana itself.
2. A number of years ago Denis O'Leary arranged a history tour of Ladysmith. In fact the Ladysmith Historical Society rolled out the red carpet and entertained us the one evening in their hall. We had an excellent guide and apart from the battle of Ladysmith we also took in the battle of Spion Kop. This was a very successful outing and I would suggest that we stay at a lodge at the foot of the Platrand where some of the battles did take place.
3. Byrne and Baynesfield. Perhaps I am prejudiced about visiting Byrne because this is where my ancestors wound up as settlers in 1850. However, it's a beautiful valley and apart from the history of Byrne itself, there is also the Richmond Museum. Also, Baynesfield is a must because apart from the glorious Manor House with its period furniture, there is also an agricultural museum. I would suggest that we stay at The Oaks at Byrne which is a very pleasant country hotel.

Before we arrange anything we want to see obviously if there is any support. I would therefore suggest that those who are interested do an email to Finn Christensen on [Christensenf@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Christensenf@ukzn.ac.za). This is something of the straw vote, there is no commitment. We merely want to see what level of support that would be.

In the intervening period keep well and safe. I just hope that this wretched pandemic is going to lift soon and we will be back to our normal lives.

Kind regards.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robin Ralfe", enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

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ROBIN RALFE  
PRESIDENT