

HEAD OFFICE

FILE NO. *9/2/003/60*.....

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Monuments Council filing
system implemented on
1 May 1990*

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For previous correspondence see

Old File No. *5/K/Gra/8*.....

NATIONAL MONUMENTS COUNCIL

EASTERN CAPE

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Director, Head Office
FROM: Regional Manager, Eastern Cape
REF: 9/2/003/0060 DATE: 13 March 1993
RE: BELLS CATHEDRAL OF ST MICHAEL AND ST GEORGE

1. Please find attached a copy of a self explanatory letter from Professor Lewis, Chairman of the Grahamstown Bells Appeal.
2. I explained to Professor Lewis that a subsidy from the National Monuments Council is not forthcoming as the above Cathedral is not a National Monument. Professor Lewis understood this, but asked if the National Monuments Council could try and ease the burdon of the Appeals Fund, in ways described in his letter regarding VAT and other import duties and levies.

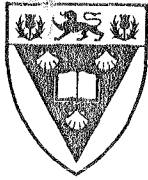
B. J. van der Merwe

N M C - R N G
PROCESSED
1993 -03- 22
HEAD OFFICE - HOOFKANTOOR

Mr. Duvet, can we assist in any way suggested?

11.30.93.

*Not at this stage but eventually the RTF maybe able to help then once we have established a fund raising DRIVE!
DUD.*



9/2/003/0060

Department of Geography
RHODES UNIVERSITY

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Mr. Jackson
National Monuments Council
P.O. Box 599
GRAHAMSTOWN
6140

9 March 1993

Dear Mr. Jackson

**RESTORATION OF THE BELLS OF THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. MICHAEL AND ST. GEORGE -
GRAHAMSTOWN**

The eight bells of the cathedral are the oldest ring of bells in Africa. They were cast in London in 1878 and erected in Grahamstown the following year. Unfortunately the frame in which they hung was never properly installed, resulting in the bells being difficult to ring and perhaps causing some damage to the tower.

In the 1980s, at a cost of some R400 000, the Cathedral authorities restored the tower and spire. The work was supervised by Mr. John Rennie.

In 1990 the specialist English bell engineers, Eayre and Smith, were consulted on the state of the bells and, as a result, Dr. Ayres designed a new steel bell frame for the Cathedral. The frame, weighing over six tons, was installed in 1992, and since then new fittings have been designed for the bells by Eayre and Smith. The bells are due to be shipped to Eayre and Smith within the next month, so that they may be conserved and prepared for their new fittings.

Some R180 000 has been donated towards the restoration project. The Rowland and Leta Hill Trust donated R30 000; Koch's Steel donated the bell frame, worth over R70 000; over 180 individuals donated amounts of between R2.00 and R1 000.00, and many hundreds of anonymous donations have been received. Unfortunately about R40 000 is still needed to complete the restoration.

I understand that the bells with their new fittings will be returned to South Africa duty free under code 9206.00, but that VAT may be levied on the value of the fittings. I understand that the new fittings will cost of the order of £4 380, which, at 4.7 R/£ equals R20 586. This should result in a VAT levy of R2 676. I do not know whether there might be other levies/duties. In view of the historical, cultural and educational value of these beautiful musical instruments I wonder whether your Council might prevail on the Government to waive VAT and anything else that might otherwise have been levied when the bells with their new fittings arrive in South Africa? The bells will, incidentally, be used to teach students of Rhodes University the art of change-ringing.

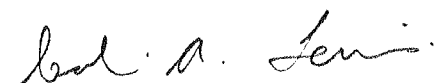
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HEAD OFFICE - HOOFKANTOOR

N. M. C. - R. N. G.
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REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE: EASTERN CAPE
STREEKVERTREDE: OOR-KAAP

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Finally, although I appreciate that the bells are not presently listed for recognition by your Council, I wonder whether Council may be able to contribute towards the cost of restoration, we have, after all, raised about 80% of what appears to be needed!

Yours sincerely



COLIN A. LEWIS

(Professor and Head of Department)
(Chairman, Grahamstown Bells Appeal)

Cathedral's memorial plaques cause heated debate in G'town

By SHELAGH STOW

THE use of the word "kaffir" on memorial plaques in the Anglican Cathedral of St Michael and St George has become the subject of heated debate in Grahamstown.

The fate of the offending plaques has been discussed several times over the years, but no decision has ever been taken as to whether they should be re-

moved from the cathedral, be amended or covered over.

Some members of the congregation find the wording of the plaques — many of them 100 years old — offensive.

Others maintain the plaques are a part of the history of the cathedral and of the Eastern Cape, and were so worded at a time when the word "kaffir" was

not perceived to be derogatory.

The sensitive issue was raised again in September this year when the Dean of the cathedral, the Very Reverend Anthony Mdlentshe, suggested in his monthly letter to parishioners that the use of the word in these times was not only offensive to black people,

☐ To Page 2

G'town debate over controversial plaques in Anglican cathedral

☐ From Page 1

but constituted violence.

He suggested the word "kaffir" be removed from the plaques, and a more acceptable term, such as "blacks" be used instead.

Lay minister Michael Breetzke was requested by the Parish Council to air the matter in the September issue of the parish magazine, *The Spire*.

Setting out arguments both for and against the retention of the plaques in their present form, Mr Breetzke said it had to be borne in mind the cathedral was a historic monument and served as an important attraction for visitors to Grahamstown.

However, he asked if the plaques could be justified if they were causing pain to members of the community. Mr Breetzke said if the plaques did not affirm loving relationships within the community, their place was not within the cathedral.

Because their historic significance could not be ignored, they should perhaps be housed in a museum.

A meeting was held earlier this month at which 35 invited parishioners discussed the contents of a document drawn up by members of St Paul's Theological College.

Suggestions in the document included the removal of the plaques to a museum, or to a designated section of the cathedral where candles could be lit and people could pray for repentance of past transgressions.

The meeting was chaired by former Eastern Cape Judge-President Mr Justice DDV Kannemeyer.

Judge Kannemeyer said yesterday he was not a member of the Parish Council and had been invited to chair the meeting. He was therefore unlikely to be involved when final decisions were taken.

Historian Keith Hunt said what had to be judged in historical terms was the motive at the time the plaques were erected.

In the middle 19th century the word "kaffir" had become a colloquial term to describe indigenous people of Africa, in particular southern Africa.

"No-one would have used it as an insult, but merely to denote a group of people," he said.

Words changed their meaning over the years, with this particular word having become derogatory in the 20th century. Dr Hunt said years ago no-one would have believed the unity of Europe was possible.

"People were at daggers drawn, and thousands of memorials to people who fought for their country were erected throughout Europe. It is nonsense to suggest that all these be pulled down if unification takes place," he said.

The Dean could not be contacted for comment yesterday. However it is believed the matter will be discussed at a meeting of the Church Council next month.

It's the "k" word that's causing conflict in the Grahamstown Cathedral

Grovetts Mail
Friday 16, October 1992

THE word "kaffir" - or perhaps as Federalism is now the "F" word, it should more coyly be designated the "K" word - has caused a degree of dissension and division among the congregants of the Grahamstown Cathedral.

For several months, the use of the "K" word, deemed offensive, demeaning, even violent by some has been the centre of debate.

The Spire, newsletter of the Cathedral of St Michael and St George, has carried parishioners' comment on whether the plaques, most of them dating back for well more than 100 years ought to be removed altogether.

Others suggestions have been the deletion of the "K" word or even more tablets in the form of footnotes apologising for the whites' unfeeling ancestors.

The "K" word issue was first brought to the attention of the wider public in an article submitted for the September issue of Spire by Michael Breetzke, Rhodes University student and parish councillor.

He notes arguments favouring the retention of the plaques. He writes: "They are part of the Cathedral's history and the fact that the Cathedral is a historic monument should be born in mind."

He concedes that their erection could have been a mistake and advocates not the destruction of the plaques but their removal to a place more appropriate "where similar historic artifacts can be seen and appreciated."

In the October issue Thami Tisani, wife of Canon Ezra Tisani, reminds readers that the erection of the plaques had first become an issue 143 years ago when Archdeacon Merriman condemned them thus:

"The tablets cannot be said to add much to the beauty or sanctity of the building..."

She notes the plaques are offensive, shocking even, by their unchristian messages and arrogant misinterpretation of the

events of the period.

But the plaques are not just part of cathedral history. They form part of Eastern Cape History, says Mrs Tisani and for that reason: "It is our duty to preserve them."

Mr Wouter Holleman, Deputy Director of the Albany Museum, takes a similar view on the "verbal violence."

Mr Holleman states the plaques are part of the history of the people of the eastern Cape, black and white, of the Cathedral and the people who worshipped there.

They are a record of events and attitudes which were real a century ago.

"That they do little credit to white South Africans today is a reflection of a change in attitudes. We cannot ignore the racist attitudes that then were prevalent as little as we can ignore the fact that in New Testament times slavery was an acceptable practice."

He suggests the plaques bearing the "K" word be covered "tastefully" and the covering bear an inscription that reflects that there is a plaque behind which was placed there in memory of whoever or for whatever reason.

A discussion document submitted as "from the common Room" by certain St Paul's Theological students sparked a meeting this week attended by 35 invited parishioners.

It notes that notices have been placed on the south wall and at the back of the Cathedral indicating a spirit of repentance but

states that these need rewording.

Nor do they think the process should end there. The situation was still causing hurt. Nor are they happy that the plaques be covered up.

"It suggests that an ugly part of history is being denied," they reason.

Suggestions include their (the plaques) being removed to a museum or removed to a designated area of the cathedral, where candles could be lit and people come to repent of the past and pray for renews strength towards a more relevant Christian witness....

They also call for instant action: that suitably worded notices in three languages be placed next to each plaque "as soon as possible" (ie by October 31).

★ That the plaques be either removed from the Cathedral altogether or be brought together to a designated area as earlier described. This to be done before the end of next year.

Chairman at this week's meeting, Mr Justice Kanne-

* from Pg 1

meyer, former Judge President of the Eastern Cape, noted that most of the plaques were erected before 1850. He also noted that the meeting of parishioners was not a statutory body and had no powers to make decisions.

Discussion had, however, proved fruitful.

"Even though opposing views were expressed there was found much common grounds towards seeking reconciliation rather than conflict," he said.

What future steps would be taken would be decided at a future meeting.

The Dean Father Anthony Mdletsche, said the Church Council was due to meet on November 19.

Mr Jimmie Mullins, grandson

of the well-known catechist and missionary, Robert John Mullins, who eventually took orders and became principal of the Kaffir Institute in Grahamstown, noted that it was students of the Institute which had carved the Cathedral's rood-screen.

"The Institute closed after Union in 1910 but before then no odium or stigma was seen to be attached to the 'K' word. Rather it was synonymous with Xhosa," he said.

Professor Rodney Davenport, former Professor of History at Rhodes University and author of the definitive history of South Africa now in its fourth edition, had this to say.

"I can understand why some find the plaques objectionable but I take Mr Holleman's point that monuments need to be preserved as evidence of the points of view of the period."

The plaques must be preserved, even if they were placed elsewhere. He noted that some had been put up in memory of people who had lost their lives killed in action.

"This aspect needs to be recalled. What about placing them in a special place in a cemetery?" he suggested.

Some are already discreetly placed behind pillars where they were virtually invisible.

But people must remember they were part of the past. It was in the interests of historical records they be preserved somewhere, some how.



9/2/083/0060

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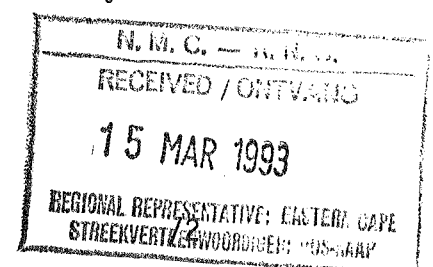
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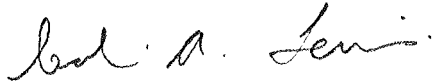


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Yours sincerely



COLIN A. LEWIS
(Professor and Head of Department)
(Chairman, Grahamstown Bells Appeal)

9/2/003/60

Eastern Cape Herald

26 October 1993

Nightmare of a silent Christmas

By KATE DYALL

THE bells of the Grahamstown cathedral are due in Port Elizabeth from London today, but the city could still face a silent Christmas.

The restoration of the bells, estimated to cost at least R250 000, cannot be completed until further finance is obtained, says church warden Wouter Holleman.

The restoration of the bells is complete but they have to be hoisted up the cathedral tower, installed in their

frame and then balanced. This is a delicate and highly specialised operation and needs to be done by a bell founder from the United Kingdom and involves additional costs, Mr Holleman explained.

However, the Bell Restoration Fund is about R18 000 short and the operation will not be completed until the money is available, he said.

Last week Grahamstown City Council voted in favour of a donation of R1 000 to the fund, with the possibility of more at the end of the financial

year or in the new financial year, says Town Clerk Lionel Pienaar.

The eight bells were shipped to Port Elizabeth harbour by Safmarine free of charge — this donation was worth about R24 000. Arrangements have been made to transport the bells to Grahamstown within a few days and then to unload them.

The heaviest bell weighs more than a ton and the ring is the second oldest in the country. They were first hung in the Cathedral of St Michael and St George, High Street, more than 100 years ago.

NATIONAL MONUMENTS COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

TO: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OPERATIONS
FROM: REGIONAL MANAGER, EASTERN CAPE
DATE: October 29, 1993

REF.: 13/6/4, 9/2/003/60, 9/2/033/16

RE: NMC/CPSA LIAISON MEETING

1. Your memorandum dated 21-10-1993 has reference.
2. The Eastern Cape has the following items for the Agenda of the above meeting viz

2.1 THE CATHEDRAL OF ST MICHAEL AND ST GEORGE,
GRAHAMSTOWN.

This cathedral ought to be declared for a number of reasons including the following:

A. It is considered by many knowledgeable people to be the finest example of religious architecture in South Africa.

B. The spire is the only structure in South Africa to have been designed by the victorian architect, George Gilbert Scott, the younger.

C. The Cathedral is historically important as it took over a century to complete the building. During the course of its history it has been used for a number of different purposes, including a sanctuary and armoury during the various Frontier Wars and as a mortuary for the victims of the Blaaukrantz Railway disaster of 1911. The Cathedral was also focal point of the famous schism between Bishop Merriman and Dean Williams. This contretemps went all the way to the Privy Council in London.

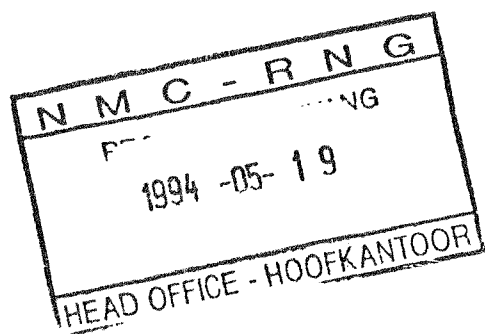
The building would have been declared long ago had the owners consent been received. The NMC has in the meantime been as helpful to the Cathedral authorities as possible, most notably with the Cathedral bells, when the NMC's help was sought to waive tariff and export duties for the

NATIONAL MONUMENTS COUNCIL
MEMORANDUM

TO: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: OPERATIONS
FROM: REGIONAL MANAGER, EASTERN CAPE
DATE: 16 May 1994

REF.: 13/16/4, 9/2/003/60
RE: NMC/CPSA LIAISON MEETING: 8 JUNE 1994

1. Your memoranda dated 1993-10-21 and 1994-04-29 have reference.
2. Please find attached submissions for the above meeting.



9/2/003/60

SUBMISSION TO CPSA/NMC LIAISON COMMITTEE: 8 JUNE 1994

CATHEDRAL OF ST MICHAEL AND ST GEORGE CHURCH SQUARE, GRAHAMSTOWN

This cathedral is worthy of recognition for a number of reasons:

It stands on the site of the oldest place of an Anglican church in South Africa.

The south wall of the original church is retained in the cathedral. The cathedral took well over a century to complete and during that time it served a number of different purposes, including those of a sanctuary and armoury during the various troubles that have afflicted the Eastern province. The cathedral was also the focal point of the famous schism between Bishop Merriman and Dean Williams, in the 1860's. This dispute went all the way to the Privy Council in London.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The cathedral of St Michael and St George is considered to be one of the finest examples of religious architecture in South Africa (D Radford, A Survey of Grahamstown, 1989.)

The most significant part of the building is the spire, the only structure in South Africa to be designed by the famous Victorian architect, George Gilbert Scott. Other architects involved in the erection of the structure included the diocesan architect of Grahamstown, William White-Cooper.

Throughout the turbulent history of the Eastern Cape, several settlers died in action against the Xhosa. Commemorative plaques were erected in the cathedral in terms that would be unacceptable today, although when erected these words were the standard description of the Xhosa, applicable only to them and was a descriptive rather than an insulting term. One of these plaques honours a prominent citizen of Grahamstown, Benjamin Norden, an unconverted Jew. This plaque must thus be unique in an Anglican church. In recent months there has been a certain amount of controversy around these plaques, especially when certain people do not take the inscription in the context of the times.

Environmentally the cathedral is very important. It dominates the centre of Grahamstown as no other building, indeed one of the earliest by-laws to be passed in Grahamstown was one forbidding the erected of any structure that could dominate the cathedral.

It would be interesting to know from the CPSA/NMC Liaison Committee as to the CPSA's attitude to the declaration of the cathedral as a national monument and the future of the commemorative plaques inside the cathedral.