

EDITORIAL

It is a pleasure to share another Toposcope Journal with our Society members and other history enthusiasts around the country.

At around 50 pages and with no centre colour plates, this Journal is unfortunately a trimmed down edition, because of LAHS budget restrictions and the rising costs of printing.

We start close to home by reporting on our visit to Rokeby Park and the Blaaukrantz Bridge, then Serena Gess takes us into our Albany thicket for a close look at how this unique biome presented particular challenges and opportunities in the 1820s. Following his talk to LAHS last year, Professor Jeff Peires writes about complex Khoisan and Xhosa genealogy in 'The View from the Toposcope.' Paul Skelton shines a light on local riverine biodiversity and underscores the threat to one freshwater fish, the Rocky, which historically and symbolically is our area's very own. Then, the wider context and detail of defences in and around Bathurst – especially at the Powder Magazine and St John's Church – are presented meticulously by Rod Hooper-Box in his article.

From further afield, William Martinson helped us appreciate, through his architect's eyes, the Mgwali Mission and aspects of Kat River Valley's history. The highlight for our LAHS members last year was undoubtedly our two-day adventure in September: we travelled on Andrew Geddes Bain's 'Queen's Road' to various sites rich in history and the unexpected (like the grave of 'Kleintjie's' Khoikoi victim). Thomas River village was a revelation to many of us, and the same could be said of the moving story of Tiyo Soga and the Mgwali Mission.

Lastly, we have made good on our 2022 resolution to include, in every issue, an account of women who made their mark in our area. By presenting the account of Chief Maqoma's daughter, *Nkosazana Amakhaya*, Stephanie Victor has introduced us to a little known yet inspiring story that challenges preconceptions.

I thank all contributors to this Journal, and many LAHS Committee members who wrote reports on our outings, made suggestions and helped proof-read. Special appreciation goes to Gwynn Crothall, Tech Helper *extraordinaire*, and Joy, Heather and Margaret for excellent proof reading. The Journal is a collaborative effort, and we have a great team!

Sue Gordon