

ALEXANDRA HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY

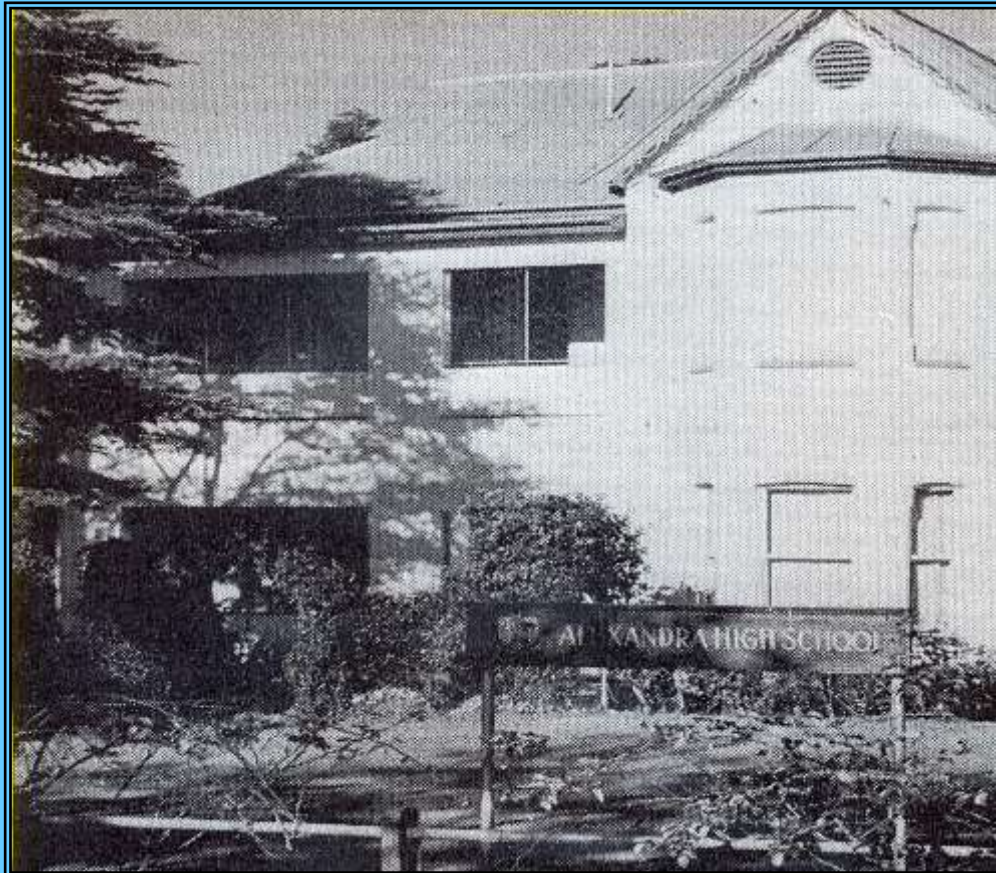


ALEXHUNT

In the 1950's the province acquired a two-storey house in Alexandra Road and, subsequently, the adjoining properties near the famous Alexandra Park.

The first 53 pupils began their high school careers in the first of those old residences, 53 Alexandra Road.

The remaining houses were later demolished to make way for the construction of Founders' House which was first occupied in 1966.



53 Alexandra Road

Where it started...

The first classrooms were in the lounge and two of the bedrooms, while the dining room served as the Headmaster's office.

Two prefabs were added and served as a laboratory and general purpose room.

During 1960, work continued on the construction of the present school and in January 1961, the new intake of second formers occupied the middle floor of the south wing.

The third form remained in the old house and eventually moved to the new building at the beginning of the second term.

Construction continued and the school gradually occupied more and more of the south and middle wings of the school.



53 Alexandra Road

ASSEMBLY TREE



The first assembly of the school was held under a magnificent jacaranda tree sited next to the driveway from Alexandra Road to the school hall, roughly in line with the present squash courts.

Present at the Assembly on February 23, 1960 were the Director of Education, Mr L Beibuyck, the school's inspector, Mr R Steer, the first Headmaster, Mr F H Udal, the Vice Principal, Mr B Butler and five members of staff.

Sadly the shady old Jacaranda, known as "The Assembly Tree", was blown down in a freak storm in 1982.

The historic bronze plaque which marked the assembly tree is now housed in the foyer of the school.

Assembly Tree



In 1961 assemblies were held in the ground floor science laboratory (complete with grand piano) and in 1962 in what was then the music room beneath the hall, now part of the woodwork / metalwork complex. The hall was completed later in 1962 and assemblies have been held there since.

The first speech day took place at the end of 1961 and was held in what is now the lower ground floor of the middle wing. For a number of years this was an open area with only a concrete floor and pillars supporting the two floors above. All speech days since 1962 have been held in the school hall.

The first athletic sports day took place on 9th September 1961 and was won by Boyds with 121 points. Shepstones were last with 15!



The boys themselves helped to plant lawns and trees and a team of labourers with stonemasonry skills later built the terraces using stone excavated from the levelling of the sports fields.

Fires were lit around huge boulders and once the rocks were heated they were split, thus providing the stone needed.



Mr Udal retired at the end of 1969 and was replaced by Mr Richard Hurworth. During his tenure, the school grew considerably both in numbers and in reputation.

Mr Roy Beaumont followed Mr Hurworth as Headmaster and he was succeeded by Mr Andrew Layman who brought a new vision to the school.

In the early 1990's, Alex underwent significant changes, establishing itself as a leader in response to the demands of a 'new' South Africa. The first non-white pupil was admitted in June 1991 into Standard VII, and he, Wiseman Khumalo, was appointed Deputy Head Prefect when he reached standard X in 1994.

In the meantime, at the beginning of 1992, the School became co-educational and now boasts a school population which reflects a non-racial, non-sexist society.



Alexandra High School



50th Anniversary






FOUNDERS' ASSEMBLY



**Alexandra High School
60th Anniversary**



Together we strive to excel!

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QUEEN ALEXANDRA

– AFTER WHOM THE SCHOOL WAS NAMED

Alexandra Caroline, queen consort of England, was born in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1844.

In 1863, at the age of 19, the beautiful and vivacious Alexandra married Edward VIII, Prince of Wales.

As Queen, Alexandra became very popular as a result of her great charm and dedication to her family. She had a strong character and did much to help the poor and suffering.

An original life-sized portrait of Queen Alexandra is housed permanently in the school library.

This portrait originally hung in “Kings House” in Durban – the official residence of the old governors, and the Royal family and State President when on visits. When the Republic came into being in 1961, the portrait was transferred to the Natal Museum in Loop Street, where it hung until 1983. In that year, it was donated to Alexandra High, the companion portrait of King Edward being given to King Edward School in Johannesburg.



This official copy of the State Portrait of Queen Alexandra (1844-1925), consort of King Edward VII, is a pendant to the portrait of King Edward (1841-1910) on the right. The original was painted by Sir Samuel Luke Fildes (1843-1927) and was first displayed in 1905. The copies were made for hanging in embassies in British Colonies all over the world, including South Africa.

The Queen is wearing coronation robes over a gold dress with ropes of pearls and diamonds around her neck. She is wearing the George IV diadem, while her crown rests on a cushion to the right.



**King Edward VII
and
Queen Alexandra
1901 - 1910**



This official portrait of Queen Victoria hangs in the stairwell of the Tatham Art Gallery.



The succession of British monarchs:

Victoria (1819 - 1901)

Edward VII (1841 - 1910)

George V (1865 - 1936)

George VI (1895 - 1952)

Elizabeth II (1926 -)



Who was Alexandra?

THE LOCAL TOURIST Sizakele Gumede



ALEXANDRA Park. Alexandra Swimming Bath. Alexandra Road. Alexandra Road Police Station. Alexandra High School. It is Alexandra this and Alexandra that, and this is not just in Pietermaritzburg; Durban also has its own (although lesser) share. Now, who exactly was this Alexandra?

The short, simple and uncomplicated answer is that Alexandra was the British Queen Victoria's daughter-in-law, who was married to her eldest son Edward.

The Danish princess Alexandra married Edward the Prince of Wales on March 10, 1863. To commemorate the union, Pietermaritzburg laid out the Alexandra Park during that same year.

When Queen Victoria died, it was Alexandra's husband who succeeded her as King Edward VII (1901 to 1910). Alexandra became the queen.

The salmon-pink, redbrick, U-shaped building that features the interesting front façade that is symmetrical around its central gabled entrance, is the Alexandra Road Police Station. It was named after this same Alexandra. Previously, the building served as the Natal Mounted Police Barracks.

Alexandra High School was established in the fifties, in a two-storey house that the government had acquired along Alexandra Road. The school started with 53 pupils and was officially opened on February 23, 1960.

Ever heard of King George V? That was Alexandra's son who was king from 1910 to 1936. Durban used to have a hospital called King George V Hospital. It was recently renamed King Dinuzulu Hospital.

If Alexandra was King George V's

mother, then Alexandra was the grandmother to that king's children; King Edward VIII and King George VI.

King Edward VIII ruled for just 325 days and then chose to abdicate the throne in favour of marrying a divorcee, one Mrs Wallis Simpson. A hospital is still named after him in Durban.

Some people ask who would now be king or queen had King Edward VIII not abdicated? Well, the answer is; it would be the same Queen Elizabeth II. When Edward VIII died in 1972, he had no children.

As for King George VI (1936 to 1952), you are likely to remember him as the one who suffered from a speech impediment, as revealed in the 2011 movie titled *The King's Speech*.

But that King George VI is the father of the current British monarch, therefore, Alexandra is the great-grandmother of the currently reigning Queen Elizabeth II.

We know Queen Elizabeth II very well. Not so long ago, she celebrated her Diamond Jubilee of 60 years on the throne. She is fast catching up to Queen

Victoria who still holds the record of being the longest-reigning monarch in the history of the United Kingdom — 63 years and 216 days, from 1837 to 1901. Queen Elizabeth II will break this record next year, on September 10, 2015, and many people are crossing fingers for her.

As already mentioned earlier, again in straightforward language, Queen Victoria was Alexandra's mother-in-law.

And down the line from Queen Elizabeth II there are Charles, William and the latest addition (wait for it), another George, who has just celebrated his first birthday.

Alexandra is still there in the young George's line, but now it becomes complicated, and becomes a matter for another column.

And the answer to; Alexandra this, Alexandra that, who exactly was this Alexandra?

Well, Alexandra was Queen Victoria's daughter-in-law, wife of King Edward VII, mother to King George V, grandmother to King George VI, and great-grandmother to the current monarch, Queen Elizabeth II.



Alexandra Swimming Bath, Alexandra Road Police Station, Alexandra High School and Alexandra Park — all named after someone called Alexandra.
PHOTO: SIZAKELE GUMEDE

What is this original oil painting worth?



It is hard to say because it is:



too big to hang anywhere else.



not signed by the artist.



not relevant to many collections.



expensive to restore and repair.

THE MURAL

- ON THE SCHOOL HALL

The plaque was designed and built by the late Miss Sylvia Baxter.

It took her months of hard work, with sometimes a stretch of 48 hours' work on moulding, colouring and baking the clay. It was fired in forty six pieces of ceramic clay, measuring 4 meters by 2 metres and its mass is over a ton. Metallic oxides were used to give it its beautiful colouring.

The plaque was unveiled by the late Senator A E Trollip, then Administrator of Natal, when the School was officially opened on the 25 September 1964.

The Plaque is a symbolic representation of the Holy Trinity.

The lips represent the word of God, "let there be light" as shown on the open page of the book.

The eye is the all-seeing eye of God, stressed further by the four cardinal points of the compass, with the eye as the hub.

The bird, a stylised dove, represents the Spirit.

ACADEMICS MURAL

The scale pans and feather are there as a reminder that conscience should weigh as light as a feather.

The torch signifies the light of learning.

The "clouds" indicate the formlessness of the earth before the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Dry land (Africa) and the waters can be distinguished; so, too, can night (stars) and day.



THE SCHOOL BADGE, HOUSES AND MOTTO

Mr Udal, the first headmaster, designed the school emblem himself, using the Maltese Cross from the royal coat of arms of Queen Alexandra, the elephant indicating Pietermaritzburg, and the Wildebeest of Natal.

For the motto, Mr Udal's own signet ring bore the words, Tant Que je Puis – archaic French, meaning "I do my best".

Mr Lamond, a colleague of Mr Udal's at Maritzburg College translated this into the Latin, "SUMMA DILIGENTIA LABORO".

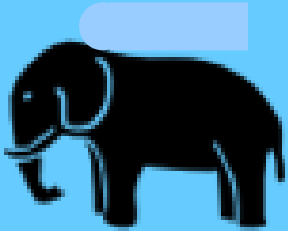
Then Mr Udal and his wife chose the distinctive colours of sky blue and maroon, and with the help of a local outfitter, devised a full range of blazers, badges, colours, rugby jerseys and all the other uniform needs of a school.

Until the early 80's, Colours and Honours blazers were sky blue. Due to problems in sourcing affordable material, they were changed to Navy Blue.

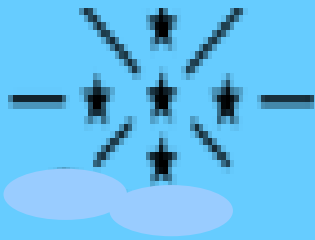
Straw 'bashers' were compulsory headwear for all pupils until shortly before Mr Hurworth retired. Founders' House pupils continued with 'bashers' as part of their uniform.



Maltese Cross - Mr Leo Boyd, M.E.C. for Education in the N.P.A at the time of the school's inception and ex-mayor of Durban was a Knight of da Game in the Roman Catholic Church. The cross was given to Boyd's House as their symbol.



Mr C B Downs, Mayor of Pietermaritzburg, was approached for permission to use part of the city's coat of arms – hence the Elephant – emblem of Downs House.



Mr Allison, three times mayor of Pietermaritzburg, M.P.C. and freeman of this city, as well as a neighbour of the school who took a great interest in Alex, had Allison's House named after him, and the Stars from the City's Coat of Arms formed the symbol of this house.



Shepstone House was named after Mr D G Shepstone, Administrator of Natal at the time of the purchase of land for the school, and as he had attended Queen Elizabeth's coronation, the crown was to be Shepstone's symbol.



Succeeding Mr Shepstone as Administrator, was Mr (later Senator) A E Trollip, who also took a keen interest in the school. He was approached for permission to use part of the Natal badge – hence the Wildebeest (provided they faced the correct way and had white manes and tails!). These wildebeest are the symbol of Trollips House.