

MISSIONS

Introduction

The Eastern Cape was the scene of intense mission activity during the 19th century with the Wesleyans and the Glasgow Missionary Society being the most prominent. Other denominations were the Anglicans, Lutherans, the Berlin Missionary Society and Moravians. Mission churches also began work in East London and King Williams Town and started the first, and for many years, the only, schools for black children in the locations. The missions of the Eastern Cape have made a very real contribution to the development of the country, especially in the educational and health care fields. Many of the leaders in South Africa today were educated at well-known institutions such as Lovedale, Healdtown, Blythwood, St Matthews and Peulton. Fort Hare University, where many leaders in the African continent obtained their degrees, grew out of Lovedale. The influence of the missionaries is controversial and in many cases, was very short sighted, but they did introduce a high standard of education and were active in the health care field. In a world where the education of women was held to be second-rate and unnecessary, mission stations introduced schools and tertiary training for black girls. Mgwali (near Stutterheim) in 1861, the Lamplough Institute for Girls at Butterworth in 1867, the Girls Institution at Lovedale in 1868, Healdtown in 1872, the Augusta Memorial School for Girls (later All Saints) in Umtata in 1896 and St Matthews in 1904 all trained black women to be teachers. An important effect of mission education was that it inculcated their black pupils with a sense of personal identity and equality.

During the apartheid years, the mission influence was deemed to be unsuitable, subsidies were withdrawn from mission schools in 1957. The government took over control of black education, did not utilize the mission school facilities and the buildings were allowed to decay. The mission hospitals were transferred to the government from 1965 and by 1970, all mission schools had been transferred to the Bantu Education Department.

In recent years there have been moves to re-establish the missions as centres of learning.

Sites selected

Missionary Museum, John Brownlee's Mission - now The Residency, Peulton, Mont Coke, St Saviours, Pirie.

MISSIONARY MUSEUM:

Introduction

This was originally a Methodist Chapel with the foundation stone being laid by Rev William Shaw in 1855. It subsequently became a Baptist Mission Church. The building was finally handed over to the Amathole (then Kaffrarian) Museum to be administered as a Missionary Museum.

Description

This is an interesting building in the style of an early church. It houses, among other mission artifacts, the old Mount Coke printing press, on which the first Xhosa bible was printed.

Location

Berkeley St , King Williams Town

Access

Unfortunately, owing to staff shortages, there is no permanent curator. The museum will be opened on request with permission of the Director, Amathole Museum 043-6434506

**JOHN BROWNLEE MISSION STATION:
THE RESIDENCY****Introduction**

The original mission was established by the Rev. John Brownlee for the London Missionary Society in 1826 and was established to work among the Ntinde under Chief Jan Tzatzoe. The building was damaged in 1835, but was repaired and additions made. With the establishment of King Williams Town, Sir Harry Smith took it over as his residence 1836. Brownlee then returned but moved the station to his second station in 1847. The original building is now "The Residency" was proclaimed a National Monument in 1977.

Description

This is a stone structure set in pleasant surroundings. Additions have been made.

Location

Prince Alfred Square, King William's Town

Access

The exterior is open. Present owner unknown

Recommendations

This is the oldest building in King Williams Town and is well worth visiting.

PEELTON MISSION :**Introduction**

Peelton Mission was established among the Imidange people in 1848 by the Rev. Richard Birt, of the London Missionary Society. It was named for Sir Robert Peel, some time Prime Minister of Britain. The original church, mission house and eight cottages, built of wattle and daub, were burnt down in 1850. Birt returned in 1853 and had some success in the community. Some notable names among the first African Christians were Kazi, Timoti, Nyalashe, Bombo, Tembu, Stofile and Qela. In 1875 the congregation raised funds to erect the present church. Birt established a boarding school for boys and Peelton became famous as an educational centre. One of the prominent leaders to have been educated there was Dr W.B. Rubusana. Birt died in 1892. The Rev Zondeki assisted in restoring the church in the mid 1970s.

Description

This is a spacious church and has been referred to as the 'Cathedral of Kaffraria' It was restored by the local community in 1980.

Location

13 km from Bisho on the Komga road.

Access

Permission from the minister

MOUNT COKE MISSION:**Introduction**

William Shaw established the Mount Coke mission in 1825, in the territory of Chief Ndlambe. It was one of the chain of Wesleyan Methodist missions which Shaw started in the Eastern Cape and Transkei. It was burnt down during the frontier wars in 1834 and again in 1846, moving to the present site in 1848. The Rev J.W. Appleyard translated the bible into Xhosa. A printing press was purchased in 1849 and was used to print the first Xhosa bible and was published in 1853. (The press is in the Missionary Museum). Mount Coke became known for the hospital founded by the missionaries. Mount Coke was proclaimed a National Monument in 1959.

Description

Many of the original buildings still exist, the hospital, church and cottages. Many additions were made.

Access

Unfortunately most of the buildings are derelict and have been vandalized and this is not recommended that this be visited. A clinic of sorts might still exist and a small congregation struggle to keep the church going. This could be an excellent tourist site if the complex could be restored and developed.

MISSION CHURCH AT SOUTHERN WOOD (now St Saviours):**Introduction**

A mission school was started in North End in the 1890s by Anglican minister Rev. E. Place. Land became available in Southernwood and the site for a hall was purchased in 1899. The foundation stone was laid with full Masonic Honours, on 18 April 1903 by Dr C.J. Egan. Coins of the realm were placed under the stone. The mission work gradually ceased and by 1900 it was used as a church only. An apse was added in 1914 and in 1915 it became a separate parish. A new façade was constructed and a tower added in 1939. The original foundation stone was relaid in the porch and a corner stone laid by Mr B. Steer. Mr H. Cordeaux was the architect.

Description

The church has a Norman-style frontage, but the interior shows the early history. Of interest are the stained glass War Memorial windows, dedicated in 1922, the Bishops Chair installed in 1904 and the Baptismal Shell in 1900. A brass plaque in memory of Sir Charles and Lady Crewe is situated in the porch.

Access

By arrangement with the Rector. 043-722 3842, Home: 043-743 8155

PIRIE MISSION :

Introduction

This was established for the Glasgow Missionary Society by John Ross in 1830. The station was burnt down during the frontier wars in 1834, 1846 and 1850 but was rebuilt and is still in use. It was named for Rev Alexander Pirie, one of the founders of the Glasgow Missionary Society.

Description

The original church still stands, but the Bryce Ross church is in use. The cemetery is of interest as it contains the graves of the Ross family as well as the Ntsikana family, who were the first converts.

Location

Turn off the R63 just before Dimbaza. It is signposted.

Access

Permission from the minister