

## Burglary; Talana Museum (Dundee, KwaZulu Natal). November 2015.

Dr Adrian Greaves

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Talana Museum at Dundee, the museum nearest the battlefields of Rorke's Drift and Isandlwana, was recently burgled by thieves who clearly had knowledge of the layout of the building. Entry was gained through the roof over the kitchen that is adjacent to the conference room which was being prepared for the annual Creations Craft Show due to open the following week. The alarm system's control box was ripped out and thieves got into the archives where a safe was toppled over.

Curator, Pam McFadden, said it is unclear if any valuable Anglo Boer War medals or medals from the First or Second World War had been stolen as staff were warned by police not to touch anything until fingerprints had been taken.

The firearms safe was also opened but no arms taken. A data projector and a laptop – on which there is 15 years of archive work – was taken. Pam's office was also broken into and the drawers opened and the contents strewn around.

Rosalind Selepi's office, adjacent to reception, was also broken into and the thieves made several attempts to open the large safe. Broken drill bits were found on the floor along with knives and even forks. A carry trolley, also from the Museum, had been placed under the safe as if the thieves were preparing to take it with them before realising it was too heavy.

They even had the temerity to take with them a stock of cold drink and drink several bottles. Pam said she was worried that the police took nearly two hours to respond and that the fingerprint unit even longer. She commented,

“With days to go to *Talana Live*, we really did not need this drama. I am also concerned that if medals were stolen these will be quickly sold on the blackmarket. The thieves appeared to know exactly what to look for and where the security control panel is.”

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### Isandlwana casualty medal: Pte. Meredith, 1/24<sup>th</sup>

Several Society members recently alerted me to the forthcoming sale of this medal by DKN auctioneers. These members knew that this medal, previously authenticated by Spinks, was in my safe and wondered if I had been burgled, again. Or was I selling it?

I am pleased to say this medal is still in my safe along with the authentication letter from Spinks. Therefore I presume the medal being offered for auction is a duplicate.

I know this second medal has been around for many years and researchers cannot find any evidence of it having been officially issued; whilst the medal could be genuine, its existence is a mystery and seems to lack any paperwork.

This just goes to show how diligent one must be when buying valuable medals. As this goes to print, the second medal appears to have been withdrawn from auction.