



PO Box FM 648, Fazona. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Welfare No: W/O 30/94

NEWSLETTER 10 / MAY 1996

1 - COMMITTEE NEWS

It is with pleasure that we advise that Mrs MARY FRIEND has joined the committee and has taken up the responsibility of arranging our Social Events and Functions.

Miss PAULETTE O'HARE sends her warm greetings from London to all the members,

2 - ERROR : MEMBERS

Our previous newsletter referred to total membership as being 67, when in fact by adding the detail, it should have read 77 members. We apologise for the error.

3 - MEMBERS

We have extended Associate Membership to the following societies, most of whom have joined, and invited reciprocal membership from the MCS - Environment 2000, Ornithological Association of Zimbabwe, Mabukuwene, Aloe Society, The Tree Society, The Orchid Society, The SA Botanical Society, the Wildlife Society of Matabeleland, and the IUCN. The Black Eagle Survey has previously joined as an associate member.

We hope that this will mean that we shall be involved in a wider view of nature and the environment, that we may share activities and functions from time to time, and that we shall support each other's efforts in the Matopos area.

4 - SHELL ZIMBABWE (PVT) LTD SPONSORSHIP

In an effort to make visitors to the Matopos more aware of the important Rock Art Heritage of the area, and so hopefully prevent damage to the sites, your committee is in the process of preparing a pamphlet in association with National Museums and Monuments to be distributed free at all National Park entry points and at the major cave sites.

This whole exercise has been generously sponsored by SHELL ZIMBABWE (PVT) LTD, and would not have been possible without their support. Details of the pamphlet will be found in the local press once they have been distributed.

5 - COURIER TRAINING

Our "Adopt a Cave" effort has been abandoned as we were unable to raise the necessary corporate sponsorship. However, in conjunction with the Bulawayo Publicity Association, a training course will be held in June so as to ensure that all couriers in the Matopos are aware of the threat to our rock art, of preservation measures, as well as gaining information generally on the hills.

6 - VOLUNTEERS

We are appealing to members that have both time and vehicles available to offer their assistance to the society. We find, all too frequently that if we require Government Bodies to take action, that we are called upon to provide transport. Mostly this has to be during office hours which makes it particularly difficult. The staff involved are very motivated, and interesting to be with, and are just as frustrated by their transport constraints as we are. If you are able to help in anyway (the society will provide fuel) please write to the Secretary.

7 - NEXT EVENT

We have arranged the following all-day function for the Society:

WHERE	Entumbane and Fort Mshabezi on Boomerang Farm
WHEN	30 June 1996 MEET Churchill Arms, 9:00am
WHY	To visit places of interest usually closed to the public
WHO	Mr Mark Ncube will speak on Mzilikazi, Paddy Vickery on Fort Mshabezi
WHAT	Bring your own chairs, tables, packed lunch, HATS and WATER, etc.

8 - REPORT BACK

Our last field trip, attended by over thirty members and friends, proved to be most interesting, and by all accounts was enjoyed by all. We successfully located the Second Indaba Site, and visited the ruins of Usher's house (cica 1875) near Fort Usher. The afternoon was spent at Zindele Safaris Shumba-Shaba Lodge. Mrs PADDY VICKERY provided fascinating details.

9 - OPERATION RALEIGH

The Operation Raleigh exercise was successfully concluded, though the task of clearing exotic plants proved to be a greater problem than first anticipated! It is hoped that Raleigh shall return to not only continue this effort, but also to start with various other initiatives. The Venturors went on two treks, the first a one-day visit to Inange Cave, and the second a two-day hike to the Mshashasha Falls (Cascades) and Mtshabezi Valley, whilst Committee members conducted occasional evening discussions around the campfire. Local youngsters, between 18 and 25 years old, who may want to join such expeditions should contact the Chairman.

10 - WATER UPDATE

All dams, with the exception of the Matopos and Mtshabezi dams, are spilling, though sadly the Toghwana Dam has developed yet another leak in its wall. A Hippo has taken up residence in the Maleme Dam. Unfortunately, the Azolla fern weed is on the increase again on Maleme.

11 - MTSHABEZI VALLEY

Those who joined us in moving flora from the "lake bed" of the Mtshabezi dam will be pleased to know that this dam is now 40% full and is still filling. When full, it will hold 50 million cubic feet of water, and has tremendous potential as a new leisure area for those who enjoy a day in the country. The blue stretch of water is already impressive, whilst the transplanted flora, including the Osmondo regalis ferns, are flourishing.

12 - RAILWAY TERMINUS

We have now re-installed the Railway Terminus sign "The Matopos" following restoration work carried out by the society some time ago.

13 - EDUCATION

We shall be purchasing and distributing sets of Bundu Books to various School libraries in the Matopos area, using the funds received from the Rotary Conservation Award last year.

Please contact us if you have any conservation literature that may be useful for schools' libraries.

14 - MATOPOS RECORD?

We report that at the end of the season the Eastern Matopos recorded a total of 1 450 mm 58", and that Goertz Observatory has confirmed that this was the third highest rainfall in the country for the 1 995/1 996 rainy season.

15 - VANDALISM

We have reported to the Regional Inspector of Museums and Monuments, the vandalism of Fort Umlugulu and the Great Indaba Site, as well as the sad desecration of the graves within the Military Cemetery at Fort Umlugulu, where name markers have been torn from the steel supporting crosses. No doubt all done to provide the scrap metal market.