

**MATOBO**



**SOCIETY**

PO Box FM 648, Fazona. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Welfare No: W/O 30/94

**NEWSLETTER 16 / DECEMBER 1997**

**1 - COMMITTEE REPORT**

Following our successful AGM on 17 October, the new committee is as follows:

Chairman	Gavin Stephens
Vice-Chairman	-
Secretary	Trevor Hemans
Treasurer	-
Events / PRO	Mary Friend
Membership Sec.	Dereck Darby
Education	David Erwee
Committee Members	Mike Phillipson Teresa Wami Florence Sibindi Dereck Gunby

As can be seen above, we have yet to find a member (or non-member!) willing to serve as treasurer. The task is not onerous as our accounting affairs are not complicated at all. But it is a key function if we are to manage our society successfully - so please, all those with some accounting back-ground, give your society some serious thought and volunteer your help.

The position of Vice-Chairman will be elected in due course.

Whilst it is reassuring to see continuity in the committee, new faces would be appreciated to bring fresh ideas and a change in direction. Any member wishing to become more involved in the activities of the society should please let us know. We would welcome new committee members. At the same time, we extend our appreciation to those members of the committee who served in the year just passed, and did not stand for re-election, or have subsequently resigned:- Roy Stephens, Barry Knight, Clare Flannegan, Jason Davis.

The Society marks with regret the passing of MR JOHN BISHOP earlier this month. John was not only a regular participant in our quarterly outings but was also a member of the Committee for years, during which time he assisted with the preparation of this newsletter. The Chairman, Committee and Members convey their sincere condolences to the Bishop family on their sad loss.



**2 - SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Have you paid your subscriptions! A large number of members are outstanding. As advised previously, we will not be issuing statements.

Members \$60

Special (Pension/Scholar) Members \$30

Corporate \$200

### 3 -NEXT EVENT

WHERE	Social trip to EMADWALENI VILLAGE, Whitewaters
WHEN	Sunday 25 January 1998
MEET	At Churchill Arms Hotel 09:00am for 09: 15am departure
WHO	All members and friends
WHAT	Bring own lunch, deck chairs, drinks. Don't forget your hat!
WHY	This is a new tourist facility, focusing on Eco-tourism and culture

Emadwaleni lies just south of the Matobo National Park, along the Kezi road. It has been established by Mark Ncube, a member of this Society, who has invited us to visit the site. In his words, "I decided that satisfying the desires of eco-tourists could be combined with efforts to preserve my own culture", so you can expect an interesting outing. There are fine views across the south western Matopos, and in particular of Mt Njelele (though this site will not be visited). Please drive carefully on the Kezi road, as road works are in progress from the 85Km peg.

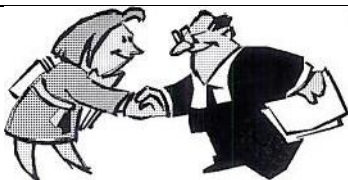
### 4– REPORT BACK

We again enjoyed a successful social outing on 28 September, visiting the Matobo Communal Lands, not far from the Matobo Mission. The group of nearly forty members passed the attractive, and at that time still spilling, Sotcha dam, before embarking on a climb up Sotcha hill to the rarely visited Sotcha Cave. The climb was gradual, and leisurely, and every member made it without getting out of breath! (Well not too much out of breath!) At the cave, a talk was given on the features of the rock art, and examples of some of the damage being inflicted on our rock art were illustrated. The group then split up, with some continuing to the summit of the hill, possibly the highest point in Matabeleland at over 1560m (5160 ft) above sea level, and the rest continuing directly to visit two additional cave sites, one containing grain bins in good condition, though sadly, the mouth of the cave bore the scars of damaged trees, cut down no doubt for fire wood. Before leaving Sotcha, the Chairman presented 150 MCS Conservation booklets to Mrs Ndlovu of Dopi Primary School for distribution amongst the pupils.

The group continued south along the Sotcha Loop road and had lunch within a grove of magnificent *Brachystegia glaucescens* (Mountain acacia) trees, not far from Sibazwe hill. After lunch, the more well-known Gulubaghwe cave, on the Old Gwanda Road was visited where again rock art was discussed - and the inevitable damage examined. Members made their way home along the Old Gwanda Road, after a comprehensive day.

### 5 - RAIN!

Despite early rains, and some exceptional falls in the western hills in October, the Matopos is generally some 60 – 80% of average at this time. With the threat of El-Nino looming we can expect a hot dry summer - so please help prevent veld fires.



**WE WISH ALL OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS  
A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS, AND ALL THE  
BEST FOR THE NEW YEAR, 1998.**