



PO Box FM 648, Fomona. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Welfare No: W/0 30/94

NEWSLETTER 20 / DECEMBER 1998

1 - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was successfully held at the National Museum on 27 October, and whilst attendance was not as good as at some of our field trips, there was still a good representation of the Society's members. The formalities proceeded without incident, and were followed by an excellent presentation by Mr. "Woody" Cotterill. The presentation touched on the biodiversity of the hills, starting about 5 billion years ago when the granites of the hills were formed deep under the surface of the earth, and proceeding from the present geology to the smallest microbes! We say touched, for although the presentation was complete with graphs, tables and photo's, it could only serve as a mere introduction to a topic so vast - and as we learnt - so complex. The members present certainly enjoyed the evening, and it did serve to remind us of the scientific basis that should underlie our society and conservation strategies.

2 - NEW COMMITTEE

The outgoing committee was re-elected, and at the first committee meeting the following portfolios were agreed upon:

Gavin Stephens	Chairman/World Heritage/(Nat Museums)
Trevor Hemans	Secretary
Barbara Muchecheitere	Treasurer
Mary Friend	Field Trips/Events/NP Interpretive Centre
Derek Darby	Membership
David Erwee	Rock Art/Rhino Booklet/Education
Mike Phillipson	Lumane Tree Fern Project/(NRB)
Theresa Wami	Stream Bank Cultivation
Derek Gunby	Mtshabezi Valley Development Project
Roy Stephens	Exotic Plants/Matobo Committee/Byo Publicity Assoc/(Nat Parks)
Flora Sibindi	Communal Areas Conservation Initiatives

It is hoped that by identifying specific projects that in future newsletters we will be in a position to report on progress - particularly in those areas where there has been very slow progress to date. We will also endeavour to introduce each member and their specific projects in future newsletters.

The Chairman drew attention to the fact that the society does not enjoy a large, young membership, and with no disrespect to existing members, it is hoped that, with a little effort from all, that this can be addressed in time to come.

3- FATHER ODILO WEEGER ELECTED "HONORARY LIFE MEMBER"

At the conclusion of the AGM, Father Odilo Weeger was elected as an Honorary Life Member of the Society, in recognition of his contribution to the protection and conservation of the Matobo Hills. Fr Odilo becomes only the second such member Mr Peter Dunje was afforded this distinction in 1994. Fr Odilo continues to be very active in the Matobo Hills, and serves on the Matobo Committee.

4- NEXT FIELD TRIP

WHERE	Amadzimba Cave
WHEN	Sunday 21 February 1999
MEET	Churchill Arms Hotel, 9:00am
WHAT TO BRING	Lunch, Drinks Chairs, Tables-and don't forget your Hat

Amadzimba Cave is one of the great caves of the hills, but because of its remote and somewhat hidden location it is rarely visited. Consequently this is a unique chance for members to visit this fantastic gallery, which boasts not only good San art, but also significant early Bantu art. The route to the cave is particularly scenic, hence our decision to arrange the trip in the height of the rainy season, in the hope that the streams and waterfalls will be in full flow.

We will travel down the Old Gwanda Road, and then down the Sotcha / Dopri Road. Both these roads will accommodate ordinary vehicles. We will regroup and make use of 4x4 vehicles to proceed down a track for the last 2-3 Km's — so if you have access to such vehicles, please bring them on this trip.

5 - REPORT BACK

Our last field trip was held on 22 September. 36 Members of the Society visited Fort Mtshabezi (for which we are grateful to Mr. P Halsted and Royal Kingdom Lodge for allowing us onto the estate.) We proceeded to Matopo Mission, and then onto Morning Glory farm (to whom we thank Mr Chris Ferguson and Mr Fen Goodes for hosting us). Mrs Paddy Vickery maintained an interesting historical briefing as we visited each area, whilst Fen was able to brief us the planned development of a "Christian outward bound school". For more information, Fen can be contacted as follows; Beyond Horizons, PO Box AC292, Ascot (Fax 09-44260; E-mail amalundu@acacia.samara.co.zw)

6 - ROCK ART COMPETITION

The MCS sponsored, and organized, a rock art competition amongst schools in the Matobo region. The exhibition was hosted at the National Gallery, and was opened on 2 December. Awards were made for those participants whose work was judged to merit special recognition. The Chairman, who spoke at the opening, paid tribute to the effort that had been put into the art work, and recognized the attention to detail that had gone into some of the work. It is hoped that the competition will become an annual event, and will thus raise awareness amongst the rural students to the rock art heritage around them. The competition was part sponsored by Rotary and the National gallery, whilst special appreciation is noted for the effort of Mr David Erwee in initiating the competition.

7 - CLEAN-UP OPERATION - OLD GWANDA ROAD

Members travelling out on the Old Gwanda Road will have noticed that recently the verge has become little short of a city dump. This litter has been dumped for about 15Kms from the city limits, and ranges from garden rubble to car wrecks! The Society has taken this up with the City Council, but a recent initiative by the Rhodes Estate (Research Station) will result in a clean-up operation on Wednesday 22nd January 1999. Companies have been approached to assist, but members who wish to take part are more than welcome.

**WE TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WISH YOU ALL A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS, AND A
WET AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.**

Quote for the New Year — "The economy can only look up. Its flat on its back!"