



PO Box FM 648, Famaona. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Welfare No: W/0 30/94

NEWSLETTER 22 / MAY 1999

1 - COMMENT

The year is certainly rushing along its course. As the new millennium approaches, even our young society needs to stop and reflect upon our role. Each member needs to give some thought as to the future of our Society – are we fulfilling the objectives of our constitution, and satisfying our members' needs? Your committee would like to hear your opinion.

2 - NATIONAL PARKS UPDATE

It is probably some time since any of members stayed out at the Maleme Rest Camp, in the National Park. Having stayed out recently, we thought it a good opportunity to update our members on the rest camp. Unfortunately, the dam is pretty low due to the poor rains, and we understand a crack in the wall is not helping much either. Of course, the volume of water could be much more if the level of siltation was not as much as it is (perhaps we need to start pressurizing DNPWM to attend to this) and we would not be surprised to see some form of rationing at the camp towards the end of the dry season so perhaps this is a good time to plan a trip out.

Monies collected from the gate has been put to good use in the camp, with almost all the cottages being upgraded to lodges, with their own kitchens and bath rooms. All accommodation has been tastefully refurbished, and re-equipped, and along with a high level of cleanliness, the camp must easily rank as the best in the park system. Unfortunately, given the desperate water situation, the grass has not been able to recover. Accommodation rates at Maleme remain very reasonable, with the Fish and Black Eagle lodges charging \$375 per night, for five people. (We have been advised that rates will be increasing shortly.) The camp-site is in equally good condition.

The DNPWM have plans to construct additional, luxury lodges on the west bank of the Maleme dam. This is a development, which your society does not fully endorse given the water situation at Maleme. Further, the original rest camp was built so as to be nestled amongst the rocks, and so to be concealed. In this way the magnificent scenery was left undisturbed. Already, Black and Fish Eagle lodges are visible from the valley, and as a Society we would argue against similar development. (Of course, we enjoy the views from these lodges when staying there, but the Matopos should not be allowed to become an overdeveloped campsite impacting on the ancient scenery and chaotic grandeur of the rocks).

3 - BLACK EAGLE SURVEY

In our last newsletter we reported on the activities of the Black Eagle Survey, in the Matobo National Park. Unfortunately, our report contained some errors, and there have been further developments;

- i) The breeding success rate should read 0.34 and 0.1, and not 34% and 10% respectively.
- ii) The Survey teams are allowed access to nests within the park, if accompanied by a Parks Ranger.
- iii) With the assistance of the local DNPWM, an application for a research permit is being resubmitted.

We apologize to you our readers, and to the Black Eagle Survey for the errors.

4 - NEXT EVENT

Date Thursday 24 June 1999
Venue BAC
Meet 6:45 pm for 7:00pm

Details Mr. David Erwee will be giving both a talk, and slide show on the Rock Art of the Matobo Hills. David will shortly be leaving us for greener pastures (literally) and so this is a wonderful opportunity to share in his wealth of knowledge before he leaves.

5 - REPORT BACK

Twenty-eight members and fifteen visitors took part in our last field trip, which proved to be most eventful - and our longest outing yet finishing after 5:00pm. We were joined by Stanford Ngwane of the URDC, and Laila and Jorgen Einarsson, (Swedish consultants with the URDC) who updated members on the environmental reclamation work being undertaken at Diana's Pool. This has already shown some success, and we were able to enjoy a delightful picnic lunch at the Pool, and visit both environmental and developmental works in the area. Barry Knight accompanied the party and spoke to us about the battles fought in the area. We visited the actual sites, as well as the Great Indaba Site, Fort Umlugulu, and the Military cemetery there. Barry carried with him photos and turn of the century weapons which made the whole presentation that much more realistic.

6 - CONSIDERATION

When you understand something
 You love it

 When you love something
 You will protect it

 When you protect something
 You conserve it

 When you conserve something
 You learn from it

7 - SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for the 1999 / 2000 year have regrettably been increased by 33% in order to keep up with ever rising costs. Whilst this is much less than the rate of inflation, we have been able to realize a good income from investments, as well as give effect to cost cutting measures, and so have kept the rate down. We hope that our members will understand, and will continue to support us.

Subscriptions fall due on 31 July, so please make a note in your diaries.

FAMILY \$100
SPECIAL \$ 50
CORPORATE \$325

8 - USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

TREASURER Barbara Mutchetere 41396 MEMBERSHIP Derek Darby 44331

(Error! Our last newsletter was dated March 1998 - the post is not that slow! It should have been dated March 1999. Apologies)