

**MATOBO**



**SOCIETY**

PO Box FM 648, Famona. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Welfare No: W/0 30/94

## **NEWSLETTER 28 / AUGUST 2000**

### **1 - SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Unfortunately, this newsletter starts with the dreaded topic of Subscriptions. We hope that you will however continue to read the rest of the newsletter despite this ominous start!

Your committee has felt it necessary to increase the subscription rate by 50% - it goes without saying that the present economic environment pretty much dictates this necessity, and in all honesty, the actual subscription rates remain very modest. However, if we are serious about maintaining the viability of the Society, then we must at least keep up with the inflation rate.

Subscriptions fall due for all members on 31 July. Members must be paid up, to vote at the AGM.

Consequently, the bottom of this newsletter comprises a tear-off slip with details of the new subscription rates. Corporate members will receive statements with this newsletter.

### **2 - MCS HATS AND SHIRTS**

The Society have hats and shirts in stock. The wide brimmed hats, in Khaki or Jungle green come with the Society logo in Bushman Orange, and have been designed to ensure maximum protection from the sun. The cotton shirts, in both Khaki and Jungle Green, and in short and long sleeve, also carry the MCS logo in Bushman Orange over the pocket. The sizes are medium, large and extra-large, and retail at a price of \$450 each (short sleeve). The hats are sold for \$75 each. Support your society, and carry our logo out to the public eye.

To order, please write to the Members Secretary, with payment for the items ordered. The stock will be available for sale at MCS field trips, and at the AGM.

### **3 - NATIONAL PARKS**

The Society has still received no report back from the RMNP Planning Meeting held a year ago.

It has been learnt that the building of new lodges on the west bank of the Maleme Dam has proceeded without a formal Environmental Impact Study. Your Society has been very opposed to this project for a number of reasons, but obviously to no avail. Our objections, apart from the environmental impact, follow:

- A. The original concept of the Maleme Rest Camp was to keep the structures concealed. The new lodges have been positioned to stand out, and in so doing have spoilt the natural vista across the lake.
- B. The Maleme Rest camp has in recent years come close to closing for lack of water. The Maleme Dam cannot support additional water demand. Additional staff facilities are also under construction.
- C. Maleme Dam already suffers from an excess of visitors in relation to the Park as a whole.
- D. The new lodges require an entire new infrastructure in so far as water supply and purification is concerned. This investment could have been better installed at a new site where a whole number of lodges could have benefited (and such alternatives have been identified) than at Maleme Dam.
- E. The lodges will be high class exclusive luxury facilities. This is an area of the tourism industry not suited to National Parks, and certainly not core business. Monies could have been better spent on existing infrastructure, which is in need of repair and maintenance.

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Details of your subscriptions are contained overleaf.

Please cut off this slip, complete the details and return it with your payment.

The Society AGM will be held on the afternoon of Saturday 28 October. Details will follow in the next Newsletter.

#### 4 - NEXT EVENT

Date Sunday 8 October, 2000  
Venue Diana's Pool, Eastern Matopos  
Meet 8:45 for 9:00 departure, from ASCOT Service Station.  
Travel Trucks preferred, but cars with a good clearance will manage.  
Details Bring your own picnic lunch, drinks and chairs. Don't forget your hat!

We have been invited to visit Diana's Pool by Mr te Velde. This will afford members to see the progress made in conservation works since our last visit 18 months ago, as well as visit a new lodge in the Matopos.

#### 5- REPORT BACK

Forty-five members enjoyed a superb outing to Silozwane Cave on Sunday 16 July. The chilly weather gave way to a cloudless day, though there was still a cool breeze on the summit of Silozwane, the valleys were wonderfully warm.

Silozwane Cave is one of the great caves of the hills, indeed one of the premier rock art attractions in Zimbabwe (though one would not think so given the sad state of the access roads!) and is a site that is particularly interesting because of some rare subjects included amongst the rich gallery of artwork. Barble feature as a subject, and even a magnificently detailed flying ant has been captured on the walls with transparent wings. There are a number of "snake drawings", though none as detailed as that of Gulubaghwe, and lovely drawings of family activities, including detailed miniatures. The site is also interesting for its solid rock floor, allowing one to fully appreciate the geology of the cave. After visiting the site, the group continued to the summit, and enjoyed a panoramic view of the hills with hill and valley names detailed for interest.

An enjoyable picnic lunch was held at the foot of the hill, amongst lovely trees, and even the stream running past. Yes, even though it was mid-winter, the stream was still flowing well, and gurgled over its various obstacles. In the afternoon the party walked down-stream to a point at the foot of the massive western face of Silozwe - one of the largest rock faces in the Matopos. After tea, members made their own way home at their leisure. All in all, a great success - all the more blessed in this environment of anarchy that had prevailed in the country for the past few months.

#### 6- UMZINGWANE PUBLICITY ASSOCIATION

The URDC has established a Publicity Association to market the Eastern Matobo Hills. Your Society has been involved with, and supports, this initiative. Of course, tourism is not doing too well at present, but it is gratifying to see the Council put in place the correct marketing tools.

The Society still intends to complete the Survey of the Eastern Matopos for the URDC before the end of the year. This exercise will also assist with the marketing of the region.

#### 7- RAINFALL

As at the end of June, (the end of the rainfall year), the position was as follows:

The eastern Matopos (Matopo Mission) has recorded 1562.5mm (62,5") and the western hills (Kezi Rd) 1100mm (44"). Average rainfall is 850mm and 600mm respectively. Bulawayo measured 1,000mm (40"). Contrary to the met office the rain and hail experienced in June (aprox 75mm) is not normal for this time of the year. Severe frosts were experienced in the hills during the week 14-20 July. Even this late in the year, all rivers and most streams continue to flow well.

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#### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Member (Individual / family)	\$150.00	NAME	
Special (Pensioner / Junior)	\$ 75.00	ADDRESS	
Corporate	\$375.00	CHEQUE No	CASH

Please tick class of membership