

MATOBO



SOCIETY

PO Box FM 648, Famaona. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Welfare No: W/O 30/94

NEWSLETTER 29 / OCTOBER 2000

1 - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Following difficulties in obtaining a venue and reconsideration by the committee (in light of the fuel crises) it has been agreed to hold the AGM on FRIDAY 10th NOVEMBER at Mabukuweni at 5:00pm. Please note the change from our earlier notice, and we hope that given the "Bulawayo venue" we will enjoy good support. We will provide braai sites, please bring your own food, drinks and chairs. We hope that members are giving some thought to Committee members for the 2001 year. The guest speaker will be Dr J Timberlake, who is an internationally recognised expert on Biodiversity.

2 - MCS HATS AND SHIRTS

The Society hats and shirts will be available at the AGM.

3 - SUBSCRIPTIONS

We appreciate all those who have paid their subscriptions. This is a reminder to those of you who have overlooked this small matter.

However, there was an error in the Corporate Rates shown on the last newsletter. The rate went down 50%, and not up by that rate! We do want to help business in Zimbabwe at this time - but this error is not in either party's best interests! We apologise for the error. Corporate members do receive official invoices from the MCS as we know that this is required for their accounting records - and the invoices have been corrected.

4 - WORLD HERITAGE

National Museums and Monuments, the sponsor of the World Heritage Application, have advised us that the submission will not be ready for this year. However, a committee has been set up by the World Heritage Bureau to ensure that the submission is ready for 2001, and a generous amount has been made available to ensure that this happens. NMM's have already started to get the ball rolling in so far as the presentation is concerned, and will be holding a meeting of all stakeholders in the near future. Your Society will be represented at this meeting, and we are confident that it will yield positive support and results for the NMM's efforts.

At the same time, the Society was invited to attend a meeting of the UNESCO Commission for World Heritage Sites in Zimbabwe. This meeting, held in September was to set up a management forum for the existing World heritage Sites (Victoria Falls, Mana Pools, Great Zimbabwe, and Khami). Whilst the Matopos is not yet such a site, we have been included as it is known that the Hills are on the tentative list, and it is intended that the Matopos will be listed in 2001. It is also our intention to ensure that this forum will be able to assist with the present application.

5 - SUMMER HOLIDAYS

The Society has been made aware of a number of lodges offering special rates to Zimbabweans at the present time. It is a good opportunity for Bulawayo citizens to get out and enjoy facilities which, due to price, are usually beyond our reach. There are also a couple of newly established, self-catering, facilities at very reasonable rates, and ideal for a short break during the summer holidays. These will also offer visitors the chance to see parts of the hills not usually open to the public.

Interested? Please contact 091 21 1156 for more information.

6 - NEXT EVENT

Date	November
Venue	Umzingwane Survey
Meet	To be advised
Travel	Participants require own 4x4 vehicles
Details	Provide own camping equipment, meals and drinks.

This project, delayed first due to the rains, then due to the unstable security situation, will now be held over a weekend in November. It is a working trip, aimed to provide a catalogue of historical and natural sites within the Eastern Matopos for the URDC. Teams will be sent to various pans of the hills.

Those persons who responded earlier this year have been contacted, but if you would like to participate or have not heard from us, then please contact Miss Bobby Hogan on 241701(h)

7 - REPORT BACK

Thirty-five members were able to find sufficient fuel to meet at Ascot Service Station and travel out to Diana's Pools. On arrival we were met by Pete and Inge te Velde, who spoke about the work being carried on in the area. We visited the orbicular granite site, as well as the sand traps that were under construction when we last visited. It was heartening to see that Diana's Pool itself was largely sand free, full of clean water, and spilling! In the afternoon we visited the newly completed dam further up the river, and visited both grain bins and rock art. The trees were simply magnificent - not the spring colours any more, but heavy with fresh green foliage.

Later in the afternoon some members visited the Lumane tree ferns. The site was adversely affected by the heavy rains, with some banks having been washed away. Colony A has suffered a 16% loss in the number of plants. It was also noted that trees in the area had recently been cut, there was cultivation well within the 30m limit, and heavy cattle pressure around the site. All this has been conveyed to the NRB and the Umzingwane Rural District Council.

8 - PROPOSED MTSHABEZI PIPELINE

The Society is in communication with the Dept of Water development regarding the proposed route for the pipeline that will carry water from the Mtshabezi dam to Umzingwane dam. We have asked for the environmental assessment study, but the route appears to lie outside of the immediate hills, following the road from Mawabeni. There will be only one pumping station, situated at the dam.

9 - BOOK REVIEW

A number of members will by now have read Prof. T Rangers recently published book on the Matopos "Voices from the Rocks". This is certainly worth reading, and provides a source of interest for those wishing to learn more about the cultural history of the hills. Reference is made to the MCS. However, our members should be aware that at no time was the society approached for approval regarding the references made of the Society, nor was permission given to quote from our minutes or presentations. Furthermore the position taken by the Society on World Heritage is not that as presented in the book.

10 - PUBLICATIONS

The Bulawayo City Council conservation booklet "GREWIA", initiated by David Erwee and supported by a number of bodies including the MCS, has continued to be produced since David's departure. The society has provided financial and material support to the magazine, as well as editorial assistance!

The MCS assisted with the distribution in the Matopos of the children's conservation magazine BUSHBEAT, produced by the Wildlife Society of Zimbabwe.

Any person wishing to assist with either articles of interest, editing, or distribution of these publications should contact Mrs Pam Birch, 67049 (h), or 71963 (w),