

**MATOBO**



**SOCIETY**

PO Box FM 648, Famona. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Welfare No: W/O 30/94

## **NEWSLETTER 55 / DECEMBER 2006**

### **1 – AGM**

The Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2006 at Granite Ridge, with the committee being re-elected with one exception. Miss Carolyn McDowall joined the Committee, and Miss Alison Moon stepped down for family reasons.

The Committee for the next year is as follows,

Chairman	Gavin Stephens
Vice -Chairman	Bobby Hogan
Secretary	Carolyn McDowall
Treasurer	Barbara Mucchetere
Members	Shelagh Adams, Norman Scott, Roy Stephens, Judy Ross and Mike Phillips

Mrs Leila Hunt spoke to the members after the AGM on the Matobo Volunteer Programme, and answered questions raised. Members were also taken on a short walk on the Granite Ridge estate, before a picnic lunch on the lawns at the Camp. The rain, which had threatened earlier, cleared, and we enjoyed a lovely morning. We record our appreciation to Granite Ridge and staff for their hospitality.

### **2 – SECRETARY**

Allison Moon has been our efficient and dedicated Secretary for the past five years. However, due to personal reasons she decided to step down from the Committee. The Chairman paid tribute to her contribution over the past five years, and thanked her for her service. Allison promised to remain an active member!

Carolyn McDowall was elected the new Secretary. Carolyn has a CIS and is the Accountant at Colbro. She has been steadily indoctrinated into the Matopos over many years at the hands of the Chairman and others!!! We welcome her to the team.

### **3 – AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

The following amendments were approved by the members at the Annual General Meeting:

#### **Para 6 Annual General Meeting**

Para 6.1 The society shall, not later than 30 November in each year, hold an Annual general Meeting.

Para 6.5 Notice of the Annual General Meeting shall be given in the local press, which may include any local electronic newsletters. The notice shall be included in a newsletter to all members at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.

#### **Para 5 Finance**

Para 5.4 The accounts may be audited by any appropriately qualified person, and in the event that an independent auditor cannot be appointed, the committee shall appoint an auditor from amongst its members who shall report at the Annual General Meeting, disclosing that there was no independent audit, and the reason for such procedure.

#### **Para 10 Appendix**

A Chairman

A-2 The Chairman may serve no more than five consecutive years in office.

### **4 – DRAMATIC START TO THE RAINY SEASON**

Wednesday evening, 26<sup>th</sup> September, lightening, high winds and heavy hail opened the 2006 / 2007 season, with 84,5mm falling in just 40 minutes at Camp Dwala, in the north-eastern Matopos. The hail stones, in an area measuring about 1 km by 6km in length, were larger than hockey balls, and cleared

trees and bushes of all their leaves, flattened grass, and was so intense that it stripped lichen from the dwalas, leaving them with a dull grey overtone. It seems strange to say, but the dwalas actually had a different colour after the storm, like old clothes that have been washed too much and are now faded. The hail covered the area in hail up to 30cms in depth, and was still visible under the trees, in thickness of about 5cm to 10cm some four days later, whilst the force and the pounding splattered walls 2m high. The hail left a trail of dead birds, snakes, and small mammals, but fortunately missed both Matobo Mission and Mbezingwe schools where it would have caused untold damage. Coming in the evening, the hail also caught families at home so no injuries have been reported. The same storm resulted in up to 60mm of rain falling in a heavy downpour across the western hills. The storm produced small hail across much of the Matopos, and a good, if dramatic start to the season.

## **5 - NEXT EVENT**

Date	21st January 2007
Venue	Pata (Mazhowe) Hill, Ntazi and Lumane Valleys
Meet	8:15am to leave by 8:30am, Ascot Parking
Travel	All vehicles, but trucks preferred.
Details	Provide own chairs, tables, meals and drinks. Don't forget your hat!

During 2006 reports were made on some special botanical finds in the eastern Matopos. The objective of this outing will be to visit these sites, but also to climb the hill Pata, the highest point in the far eastern hills. The views are spectacular, and we will also walk in the Ntazi valley and the Lumane River. We hope to picnic in the shade of the lovely Mountain Acacia (*Brachystegia glaucescens*) forests of the area.

## **6 – REPORT BACK**

Following the AGM, members drove across to Bambata and walked to the magnificent cave. Recent rains had the veld bursting with fresh green foliage, whilst the rain earlier in the day was still oozing out from the rocks. The streams had not started to flow, but the scenery was, as always, spectacular. On the walk back from the cave, the late afternoon sun set the orange rocks aglow! Bambata Cave is one of the most significant archaeological sites in the Matopos, and our members enjoyed the wonderful rock art in the cave, and a discussion about the site and its importance to the understanding of the Matobo Hills.

## **7 – RAINFALL**

As at 10th December 2006, the eastern Matopos had received 245mm of rain, and the western Matopos an amount of 115mm.

## **8 – SCORPIONS OF THE MATOBO HILLS**

The articles on Scorpions in the Matobo Hills written by Moira FitzPatrick, Principal Curator of Arachnids, Natural History Museum, Bulawayo, have now been completed. We hope that members found these both interesting – and possibly useful in the event of any scorpion sting. We thank Moira for the articles.

## **9 – TICK REMOVAL**

We received the following information that may be of use to members during their rambles in the hills. The best way to remove a tick, because it works in those places where it's sometimes difficult to get to with tweezers: between toes, in the middle of a head full of dark hair, etc. is to apply a glob of liquid soap to a cotton ball. Cover the tick with the soap-soaked cotton ball and let it stay on the tick for a few seconds (15-20), after which the tick will come out on its own and be stuck to the cotton ball when you lift it away. This is much less traumatic for the patient and easier for parents with children (unless someone is allergic to soap)

## **10 – NEW ANTI-LITTER LAWS**

The Herald reported that Environment and Tourism Minister Francis Nhema announced that from 17 October, people found throwing litter in public places would be prosecuted to help keep cities clean. He added that that bus operators will also be required to place bins in all their buses - if implemented and enforced, this should assist in keeping the Matopos clean as a number of bus routes pass through

the hills, and passengers routinely throw litter out the windows. Members seeing such behaviour should report the details to the Society so that we can forward this to the authorities.

### **11– MATOPOS GRAND CHALLENGE ADVENTURE RACE**

This premier three-day event is scheduled for 9 - 11 February 2007. Any members wanting to participate should contact Des Stephens on 091 211156.

### **12 - MEMORIAL SERVICE; Fr ODILO WEEGER**

The candle lit memorial service for Fr Odilo was held at the Gordon Park Chapel on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2006. The simple but moving Mass included the dedication of a memorial panel to the memory of Fr Odilo, in recognition of his service to Scouting.

### **13 – CALENDAR 2007**

Please find below our calendar of events for 2007. Whilst we will endeavour to keep to this schedule, the Committee reserves the right to make amendments should the need arise.

21 January	Pata (Mazhowe)
04 March	Mshashasha Falls
17 June	Malindidzimu (World's View)
26 August	TBA
25 November	Annual General Meeting, Gordon Park

### **14 – BLACK EAGLE WEEKEND**

#### *EXTRACT FROM BABBLER (BIRDLIFE MATABELELAND)*

“Penny has done an excellent report in the current Babbler, but I just wanted to say a couple of things. Over this weekend there were only two incidents that were not enjoyable. The first was that our UK guest and eagle expert, Jonathan Stacey, stepped into a snare (but luckily stopped before being garrotted) while walking along a ridge - we think it was probably designed for a kudu rather than a piggy. The other was that on Sunday we lost half our party - the half that didn't want to climb to a beautiful nest site in the Game Park but preferred to sit by the dam looking for Pygmy Geese. Brownie points gone there, I'm afraid. Anyway, in both cases things came right in the end - Jonathan eventually emerged from the snare and from the darkness to arrive safely back in camp, and the missing half-party was found when we met up at the most beautiful nest site of all en route for home.

It was very good to see Paul and Beryl Tubb, our members from South Africa, and thank you Paul, Vernon and Rusty for traipsing around some of our far-flung territories and up impassable kopjes to check out the more inaccessible nests. Everyone seemed to enjoy the weekend, even though on Saturday we were made to work pretty hard in the heat and dust, looking for evidence of eaglets, the tops of whose heads we had definitely seen the previous weekend. What we found very rewarding were 6 other brown eaglets, all of an age, which either had or were almost ready to head off. Everything being equal, 11 eaglets will probably fledge this season - compared to 10 last year and 7 the year before. If we can soon climb back to 2003's total of 15, we shall be mighty chuffed!”

### **15 – NATIONAL PARK NEWS**

The Society has written to the Warden, Matobo National Park, to enquire about the use of motorised boats on dams within the Park. Park regulations do not permit motorised boats, but this requirement seems to have been overlooked at such places as Mtshelili. With due respect to motorboat enthusiasts, the Park is not the appropriate place for this kind of disturbance, which not only produces an unwelcome noise, but disturbs aquatic life and water fowl. At the same time, we have enquired as to the condition of ablution blocks throughout the Park as there seems to be no water available. Members planning on camping over the holidays should keep this in mind - at present only ablution blocks at Maleme Dam have water.

We have been invited to attend a meeting with the Department, and with representatives of WEZ, to discuss matters affecting the Matobo National Park. The meeting is likely to take place in early 2007.

### **16 – PARK FEES**

We have been unable to ascertain the new Park fees, which are likely to increase on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007. Members are reminded that they may be asked for proof of residence / citizenship during the holiday period, and should plan for a hike in fees on 1<sup>st</sup> January.

## 17 – MTSHABEZI PIPELINE

The MCS made representation to the Bulawayo City Council on the Environmental Assessment Study for the proposed pipeline to convey water from the Mtshabezi Dam to Umzingwane Dam. A proposal to pipe the water through the hills, (and this would mean along the Lumane Valley) was shelved in favour of proceeding south from the dam, along the road, and around the eastern hills along the World Heritage Boundary. By arguing for this latter route, the MCS was hoping to maintain the integrity of the hills, and particularly preserve the Lumane valley (even though we acknowledge its current poor environmental status at present). The MCS did draw the attention to the planners of the importance of Dondorio Hill which lies south of the dam, but the pipeline should not interfere with this sacred place. The MCS is pleased to see that its concerns were taken into account in planning the route.

## 18 – SUBSCRIPTIONS

As agreed at the AGM, the Society will levy a supplementary subscription, to be paid by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2007. There is no supplementary subscription charged to corporate members. This shall be as follows:

Ordinary members	(single or family)	\$2,000.00
Special Members	(pensioner)	\$ 400.00

Please complete the remittance attachment overleaf.

**WE WISH ALL OUR MEMBERS A MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY NEW YEAR AND SAFE TRAVELS!**

## 19 - INTEREST

Xinhua, [www.chinaview.cn](http://www.chinaview.cn) 2006-11-07 07:53:14, LIVINGSTONE, Nov. 6 (Xinhua)

### UNESCO censures Zambia, Zimbabwe over Victoria Falls management

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is concerned that Zambia and Zimbabwe have allegedly failed to follow laid down recommendations on the management of the Victoria Falls as a world heritage site. UNESCO Commissioner Felistus Chiyanda said Monday in Livingstone, the capital of Southern province of Zambia, that the two countries have failed to effectively implement agreed protocols relating to the management of the 30 km radius of the Victoria Falls, which located in Livingstone. Chiyanda said the two countries have particularly, failed to control the new tourism developments around the 30 km radius. Speaking at a stakeholders meeting on the management of the world heritage site she warned the two countries to reverse the trend by ensuring that no more developments are put up in the restricted world heritage site radius or risk having the status given to the falls withdrawn by the UN agency. She said in the event of withdrawing the status, Zambia risks losing the improved tourism inflow, hence the need to institute and implement measures that would ensure effective management of the site. Chiyanda reminded the government departments involved in managing the world heritage site of the obligation to safeguard the site against encroachment and that they should be mindful of the repercussions for allowing any more developments around the agreed world heritage boundaries. *"We have a lot of encroachers, noise pollution, and poachers involved in contravening the guidelines on how best to manage the world heritage site, this should come to an end,"* she said. She said that UNESCO was prepared to mount a vigorous campaign internationally against Zambia or Zimbabwe as no-go areas for tourists, if they fail to maintain the Victoria Falls site. *"It means there will be serious campaigns to discourage foreign tourists from visiting Zambia as a tourism destination because the one site that the world body thought could attract more people was mismanaged, there is no ways after failing with one site will UNESCO consider other areas we have applied as world sites to be approved,"* she said. UNESCO chairperson for cultural sub-Committee Mulenga Kapwepwe emphasized the need for the two countries to regard the Victoria Falls as a significant site for the global community. At the meeting she said at the moment, Zambia and Zimbabwe are merely managing the site on behalf of the world and any form of violations would be taken into account to the disadvantage of the two countries. *"We are currently in the intensive care unit as Zambia on this subject, since 2002, we have failed to implement, let alone come up with what UNESCO a world body that funds a lot of our programs wants on Victoria Falls, we stand to lose our status and in the process the income that we so badly want,"* Kapwepwe said. Meanwhile despite the overwhelming rejection of Zambian residents from all walks of life in the area of the world-famous Victoria Falls, the construction of two hotels and a golf course in Mosi-Oa-Tunya National Park, part of which is the falls is still going on. Citizens for a better Environment (CBE) Executive Director Peter Sinkamba said recently that erecting the two hotels and golf course in the park will not only affect

passage of elephants from Botswana and Zimbabwe, but also other animals in the game park. *"There is a danger that these animals would find another corridor, which may not be Zambia and this could ruin Zambian tourism,"* he said. Tourism in Livingstone with entire infrastructure, would be dead without animals and that this should be everyone's concern, he said. Sinkamba urged the government to find another area to allow for the building of the hotels. This is the second time UNESCO warned the two countries over the falls this year. In April UNESCO warned that the falls may be downgraded and lose its world heritage status due to environmental pollution.

*Editor: Gao Ying*

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**20 – SUPPLEMENTARY SUBSCRIPTIONS 2007**

Due by 31 January 2007. Changed Address? Please update our records

NAME	ADDRESS
MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	
AMOUNT <span style="float: right;">Cheque / Cash</span>	
EMAIL	

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