MATOBO CONSERVATION SOCIETY
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NEWSLETTER 98 / OCTOBER 2016

1 – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

It's that time of the year again. Please support your Society and your hard-working Committee by attending the AGM at Nswatugi Site Museum on 27th November, 2016. As we do every year, we appeal for new members of the Committee – not as any form of censorship of the current team, but because it's always good to get fresh input. We are also quite busy, so as much help as possible is always welcome.
Please see details contained elsewhere in this newsletter.

2 – NEW TREE RECORDED; FICUS SANSIBARICA

During our field trip of 11th September, 2016, a new tree was recorded in the Matopos Hills.
Ficus sansibarica is well recorded elsewhere in Zimbabwe, and appears to straddle the highveld, even if it is more synonymous with the low veldt, but has never been recorded in the Matopos before.
Afternoon tea was held in the shade of a magnificent grove of *Brachystegia tamarandoides* and from a distance it appeared as though a creeper had got established in the tree which had lost its leaves. So, after refreshments, an inspection was made that showed the "creeper" was in fact the fruit of the fig, located along all the branches and stems. Quite a distinctive feature and so making identification relatively easy. A quick check through our records showed no previous recording – even though it is just off the Heritage mountain bike route – in summer it looks like any other *Ficus ingens* as the fruit would have fallen, and be obscured by leaves.

3 – LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

We have revamped our Facebook page, and pictures are being posted regularly. Pictures from each outing are posted, and it is intended to post past outings as well. Any interesting news or updates are also posted. So go to "Matobo Conservation Society" on Facebook, and "like" the page to ensure you get regular updates.
As we are unable to distribute pictures with our Newsletter, this is an ideal forum to share our photos and activities. There have been a number of posts already.

https://www.facebook.com/Matobo-Conservation-Society-903474063116692/

Whilst you are there, also visit "Matopos Heritage MTB Challenge" and "Matopos Heritage Trail Run".

4 – MATOBO ENDURO

There has been lots of debate in Bulawayo about the hosting of the Castrol Matobo Enduro, an event for trail motor bikes that was held in the Matopos (Gulati Communal Lands) on Saturday 8th October.
The event was brought to the attention of the Matobo World Heritage Management Committee in June and a meeting was held on 27th July at the Natural History Museum. It was apparent that preparations were well advanced, but that a number of permissions were outstanding. The Committee were particularly concerned about:

- Environmental damage, particularly on dwalas (to lichen) and in wetlands
- Damage at, and visits to, historical or culturally significant sites (monuments)
- The impact on the local community
- Access to the National Park where motor-bikes are largely banned

The Organising Committee undertook to attend to these and other matters.
By mid-September no report back had been received, and no permissions had been obtained whilst publicity of the event was now increasing. The Matobo World Heritage Management Committee wrote

to the Organising Committee on the 13th September advising that they could not endorse the event. This resulted in a meeting on 20th September where some documentation was produced.
A further meeting was held on 29th September at which time significant route changes were agreed, and it appeared that National Parks had consented to the use of Sandy Spruit. After receiving further undertakings, the Matobo World Heritage Management Committee agreed to withdraw its opposition, and under protest, the event took place. National Museums provided marshals along the route to ensure that no bikers transgressed the agreed route – and though two did ride up Ntunja, they were chased off by the local community. Your Society is undertaking post event environmental assessments and will report in due course.
The Matobo World Heritage Management Committee encourages the sustainable use of the Hills, and would welcome recreational activities. However, such activities have to be appropriate within a cultural landscape.

5 - NEXT EVENT

Date	27th November 2016
Venue	Nswatugi Site Museum (and cave)
Meet	8:15am to leave by 8:30am, Cresta Churchill Car Park
Travel	All vehicles
Details	Provide own chairs, tables, meals and drinks
	Don't forget your hat and umbrella!

Our Annual General Meeting will be held at 10:00am at the newly refurbished Nswatugi Site Museum. This museum was refurbished by YOUR Society, so come and see where our funds have been spent. We have also rebuilt the road to the museum – another MCS project.
Dr Moira Fitzpatrick will be our Guest speaker following the AGM. She will be talking about the development plans for Nswatugi and other Monuments in the Matopos area – there is a lot going on!
Our member guides, Rob and Paul will happily take members to the cave after the meeting for an introduction to this special site. At one time the cave was the second most visited National Monument in the country, second only to the Victoria Falls. There is an incredible heritage in this cave.

6 – REPORT BACK

A small group of members met at Ascot for our date with the *Brachystegia* on 11th September. Unfortunately, it seems that our secretary forgot to tell the *Brachystegia* as they had not yet put on their finery! Never mind – some trees were out in all their glory, and perhaps as they stood alone, they were all the more spectacular.

Our first stop was near Rhodes Indaba Site, so we covered both history and botany in one walk! Then onto a lunch site, beyond Shale School. At the top of a high valley, we found an ideal site – under the shade of impressive *Brachystegia tamarandoides*, catching a breeze as it blew through! We enjoyed a delightful walk before lunch – for once Gavin did keep his word and we were not marched across the hills. Rather moving from spectacular view to equally glorious tree, we explored the area around our picnic site even if the heat haze did limit the expansive views. There were a surprising number of *Cussonia spicata* in the area, and some *Erythrina lysistemon* in bloom – both typical Nyanga trees. After lunch we travelled down into a nearby valley, where we found for the first time *Ficus sansibarica*, which was most interesting. More wonderful *Brachystegia tamarandoides* were found, and then a lazy return home to Bulawayo. Once again, a wonderful day out – but a pity not more members braved the heat and joined in.

It was agreed to visit again on the 25th September, and this second visit was just as enjoyable. An excursion was made to view the *Ficus sansibarica*, and lunch was held at the same location as two weeks previously. After lunch and a brief walk, we visited the magnificent grain bins of Nyunteya. A truly remarkable site.
However, again not all the trees were in full glory, so next year we will try again in October! But it was a great outing, and the botany was delightful all the same.

7 – TREES

In this edition, we focus on a number of articles regarding our trees. Apart from the exciting find of *Ficus sansibarica* in the Matopos, the deforestation continues, with areas being cleared for new fields,

or brush fences being erected. The ongoing loss of vegetation is tragic – and will be hard to replace in tough drought years such as that just experienced. Somehow this year, it seems worse than usual.

8 - FORESTRY COMMISSION ALLAYS FEAR OF DESRTIFICATION

The Forestry Commission has allayed desertification fears in the country saying it has managed to strike a balance between deforestation and afforestation. Source: NewsDay Zimbabwe September 1, 2016

BY Stephen Chadenga

The commission's spokesperson, Violet Makoto, yesterday told Southern Eye that they were always monitoring the situation to ensure the tree cutting rate does not exceed reforestation programmes. Over the years, there have been fears from different stakeholders that parts of the country, particularly the southern region would turn into a desert. "We have two different extremes, one where people are aware of the importance of trees and are actually planting them," Makoto said on the sidelines of a consultative workshop for the first draft of the National Forest Policy in Gweru yesterday.

"On the other hand, we have economic hardships forcing people to resort to forests as sources of energy. But whatever is happening we are managing to strike a balance between what we are losing (through deforestation) and what we are putting back into the environment."

The forestry policy seeks, among other things, to provide a basis for the crafting of forestry regulations that are consistent and comprehensive for the long-term sustainable use of forests and for the participation of people who depend on forests for their livelihoods. Makoto said a major factor, contributing to deforestation were energy challenges the country was facing, which forces the majority of people in urban and rural setups to resort to firewood as a source of energy. She also said the rise in tobacco farming activities and clearing of forests for settlements also caused deforestation, although she pointed out that there were programmes for the different sectors on how best to combat the cutting down of trees. "There is little investment towards alternative sources of energy, people talk of solar energy, but how many access that energy for domestic use and so people will resort to the nearest solution and that is cutting down trees for domestic consumption," she said. "But all the same we are working very hard to make sure that we don't reach that stage we can be said to be a desert."

Zimbabwe loses about 330 000 hectares of forests every year due to deforestation.

9 – FORGIVING FORESTS OF AFRICA

Article supplied by kind permission of Zambezi Traveller and Meg Coates Palgrave. This article first appeared in issue 25 of the Zambezi Traveller.

Statistics make wonderful stories over which we can exclaim in horror, but they don't really paint a picture. Driving anywhere in the region, the picture becomes very clear that we are losing our forests and woodlands at alarming rate.

In this issue of *Zambezi Traveller* the proactive tree planting initiatives of Friends of the Environment are highlighted as well as other programmes in Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia – they are all doing a wonderful job, educating the youth, creating a tree planting ethos, setting up tree planting initiatives, creating nurseries in an effort to get the tree population to catch up with the people population. But seedlings do need to get established and need looking after in the initial stages.

There is an alternative, because the trees in Africa are generally speaking very forgiving. When they have been cut down they just grow again, sprouting and producing what are known as coppice shoots from the cut or broken stump, or shooting from the roots.

Managing coppice growth and root-shoots provides a much faster way of restoring the woodland than seedlings. The young tree already has a root system and, furthermore, the roots already have the essential fungus necessary for their survival. Most of our soils are poor in nutrients and the trees all have a fungus assisting the roots to absorb the food and water underground. In return, the tree supplies the fungus with carbohydrates manufactured in the leaves above ground, a true symbiotic relationship. Mushrooms, the fruiting bodies of the fungus, are the bonus.

Furthermore, growth of coppice shoots is fastest in the first two years and stems can reach a height of 4 or 5m in 15 to 18 years. It makes so much sense to manage the regrowth as a means of restoring the woodlands.

Lands cleared for cultivation exhibit the problem of weeds which are really trees re-sprouting from root-shoots. If subsequently abandoned, the field will revert to woodland, regenerating from roots still present underground. Trees are aggressors. They will come back if given half a chance. They must be encouraged to do so.

Cattle, goats and, above all, fire are the enemies of both woodland regeneration and newly planted trees. In some areas burning is part of the culture. "We burn every year," they say, but they can't tell you why. Fire must be controlled.
The concept and the system of coppice and root-shoot management known as FMNR (Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration) "*began in Niger during the 1980s and has revegetated three million hectares of arid land in that country alone – bringing back biodiversity in flora and fauna, increasing soil humus (and thus carbon) content, improving water retention and microclimates, and dramatically improving the health and viability of local communities."* Tony Rinaudo, World Vision (2008).

FMNR is now also being successfully practised in other parts of Africa and in tiny islands in the region. But it must be introduced at a national level, which requires education and changing the mind-set all the way from government ministers to the grassroots. Funding is, as always, the problem and this is an appeal for corporate involvement and finance for this essential initiative to restore our woodlands and forests.

10 – BRACHYSTEGIA FACTS
With appreciation to Meg Coates Palgrave.
I am always happy to talk about Msasas. The whole subject is very exciting and I hope the following answers your questions. The trees lose their leaves, sometimes for only a matter of days and then burst into new leaf. The colour of the new leaves varies from pale pinkish fawn though all the shades of pink, orange and red to deep maroon and the woodland is a wonderful sight especially with the sun shining through the leaves. And being a scientist, I have to tell you the reason.

Normally leaves absorb red light and reflect green light, the complimentary colour but when the light is very intense and the tissue very soft, as it is when the leaves first open, they could get burnt, so they have a built-in sun screen, a pigment called anthocyanin that colours them red and protects them. As the leaves expand and harden, they no longer need protection and change to green.

One of the interesting aspects of leaves that flush red is that they are still able to photosynthesise and produce food. The experiments done on the Msasa *(Brachystegia spiciformis*) showed that they took 25 days to become mature and fully expanded and further that the chlorophyll content of the leaves increased steadily for those 25 days. Whereas the anthocyanins also increased, but only for 23 days and then rapidly decreased. The articles from which I have obtained this information, mention that anthocyanin is water soluble, so presumably it dissolves and fades away. One therefore assumes that the tree should have at least some colour, other than green, in their leaves for over three weeks. The leaves then turn a lovely soft gentle green and at the same time the Msasa come into flower.

One question, which always arises, is why are the leaves different colours? The answer is that trees flush at different times and so start red at different times, therefore becoming green at different times and secondly, of course, there is genetic variation. We have different colour eyes and different colour hair, why shouldn't the plants have different colour leaves?

Throughout the year if you are in the bush and look around you will see pink growing shoots on saplings which periodically produce new shoots.

What is amazing is that the trees all come into new leave well before the rains.

EDITOR – The above information would apply to our *Brachystegia tamarandoides* in the Matopos, whilst *Brachystegia speciformis* are found in isolated pockets in the hills.

11 – FIRES
It appeared that in 2016 efforts to curb veldt fires had been largely successful, and indeed there were far fewer fires than in past years. In particular, the National Park appeared to have been spared.

Sadly, as this newsletter was being prepared, we received news of a substantial fire that had burned from approximately the Fort Usher area across to the northern parts of the National Park, destroying the upper Mtsheleli valley, and no doubt the area where most rhino are found. This will have severe consequences. A fire was also burning in the Nswatugi area at the same time.

Your Society, along with other NGO's helped sponsor a fire prevention poster that has been distributed widely in the Matopos, and across Matabeleland. We can only hope that the promised rains fall within the next day or so to help contain the blaze.

12 – RHINO NEWS

Zimbabwe to dehorn 700 rhinos to shut out poachers

HARARE, Aug 30 (Reuters) - Zimbabwe plans to dehorn its 700-strong rhino population to discourage poaching after 50 animals were illegally killed last year, a wildlife conservation group said on Tuesday. Rhino horn is prized in Asia for use in traditional medicine and surging demand has led to more poaching. A record 1,305 rhinos were killed illegally in Africa last year, most of them in South Africa, according to conservation groups.

Lisa Marabini, director of operations with Aware Trust Zimbabwe, said the organisation was one of two groups helping the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority remove horns. "We want to send a message to poachers that they will not get much if they come to Zimbabwe. The park's policy is to dehorn all the rhinos," Marabini said. It costs $1,200 to dehorn a rhino, Marabini said, adding that 100 animals lived in state-run game parks, while the remainder were in private-owned wildlife sanctuaries. Buying and selling rhino horn internationally was banned in 1977. In Zimbabwe, killing a rhino carries a mandatory nine-year sentence. The World Wildlife Fund said in January 50 rhinos had been killed in Zimbabwe in 2015, double the figure for the previous year.

EDITOR – All the rhino in the Matopos were dehorned during an exercise in late September.

13 – RHINO POACHING DECLINES IN SA IN 2016

Wim Pretorius, News24, 26 September 2016.

Johannesburg – Rhino poaching in South Africa is on the decline while elephant poaching has shown an increase in 2016, Environmental Affairs Minister Edna Molewa has announced.

In the period of January until August 31, a total of 458 poached rhino carcasses were found in the Kruger National Park, compared to 557 in the same period last year. This is a decline of 17.8%.

"We are pleased to announce yet again, as we did in January and May, that poaching is on the decline in the Kruger National Park – the area hardest hit," Molewa said.

Nationally, 702 rhino were poached since the beginning of 2016 whereas between January and July 2015, a total of 796 rhino were poached.

According to the review, poaching rates (the number of carcasses as a percentage of the number of live rhinos estimated the previous September for each year) decreased by 15.5% compared to 2015's 9.6%.

These figures come amidst a 27.87% increase in the number of illegal incursions into the Kruger National Park – a worrying 2 115 from January to August this year.

The number of rhino poached has, however, increased in KwaZulu-Natal, Free State and the Northern Cape, but the total number still adds up to a national decline.

Although rhino poaching shows a decline, 36 elephants have been poached in the Kruger National Park since January.

A total of 414 alleged poachers have been arrested in South Africa since January. Of these, 177 were made in Kruger and 237 in the rest of the country. A total of 94 firearms have been seized inside the park.

14 – RUN RHINO RUN

Just come back from a very interesting ride in the Matopos, writes Rob Smith, on 8th October 2016.

A fully grown rhino came out of the bush like a freight train at full throttle 30 metres behind me and another rider!!

The sound of his breathing was as loud as steam train. A mixture of very loud snorting and grunting. He proceeded to follow us about 25m off the road but parallel to our road. Luckily, we were on a tar

road and tried our best to get away. This rhino got closer and closer to the tar road and was gaining on us. There was a slight incline that was not helping.

Next thing I looked round and this monster was in the middle of the road with his head down and we were definitely in his sights. Its front legs were like huge pistons thumping the ground. At this stage we were flat out and we were on a part of the road which had now just started to go downhill. We had already done about 6-700m and I was beginning to tire.

I worked in my fuzzy brain that most dangerous animals can do around 40 km/h and I knew that I could not ride at this speed. This prehistoric animal was on the perfect road and on a slight downhill. The noise levels were incredible. I noticed at this stage that I was about to pass a small kopje (4m high). I made the decision that my best chance was to get up this kopje as I thought rhinos could not climb kopjes. I immediately turned off the road and headed into the bush at full speed. I threw the bike down and ran behind a rock not knowing if this giant was following me.

I had to know where this rhino was. Within half a second, I heard this one tone animal made of stone barrelling down the road galloping and snorting loudly. The sound of his legs thumping the tar road was something I have never heard before. They have a mixture of big pads and nails. I had only made it 1 m up this kopje before he passed me. He must have only been 3-4 seconds behind me when I left the road.

Meanwhile I had left Bryan a very fit 74-year old, to do his very best trying to outride this boulder down the incline. Luckily the road had got steeper. He tells me that it got quite close to him and later on when he looked down, he was doing 45 km/h!!

The rhino who must have been exhausted and left the road as we did not see him again .... not that we wanted to see him!! Something to put in the memory bank, wished I had a GoPro. Since when can rhinos run that fast for 800m?

This evening I heard that the Rhinos had being dehorned in the past 2 weeks which could have led to this aggressive outburst.

EDITOR – The rhinos had been dehorned, but two weeks earlier. Whilst their family groups had been disturbed, it is more likely that the Matobo Enduro, being held that morning at Sandy Spruit dam, just three kilometers away and right in the middle of the rhino habitat, had caused unnecessary additional stress resulting in the event. This particular male rhino is called "Grumpy" – for good reason it seems! Luckily no injuries! This is the first such incident in over ten years of cycling in the Matobo National Park, but a good reminder that wild animals can be dangerous.

15 – RAINFALL

Some light rain was recorded in the eastern hills in July, but it was in early October that significant, if violent falls, were recorded across the Matopos. The western hills received 44mm, the central areas 24mm and the eastern Matopos 24mm. Strong winds damaged trees in certain areas, and hail was recorded in parts of the Matopos – though luckily not too heavy!

At the end of October the rainfall for the new season was as follows:

Eastern	36mm
Central	24mm
Western	44mm

16 – WEATHER FOECAST PREDICTS GOOD RAINFALL

Admire Ndhlovu, 13 September 2016.

The forecast for the 2016/17 cropping season in Southern Africa indicates that most parts of the region can expect adequate rainfall after two successive years of debilitating droughts.

In the period October to December most of the region is expected to receive a high amount of rain, characterised as "normal to above normal" rainfall, and this is expected to continue in most parts of the region in January to March 2017, according to a statement by the 20th Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF-20).

However, the northern part of the region can expect “normal to below normal” rainfall at the beginning and end of this period, comprising northernmost Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), northern Angola, most of Tanzania, northern Mozambique, the island states of Seychelles and eastern Madagascar. The period November to January may see a reduction in rainfall in some parts of the region, including western Botswana, eastern DRC, northern Mozambique, western Zambia, and southern Tanzania. It is during this period that the region often experiences a dry spell, but the coming season is expected to be characterised by a short dry spell this season in most parts of the region.

During the period of January to March 2017, the rainfall will decrease in the northern part of the region, as well as the southern parts of Zimbabwe and Mozambique, eastern Botswana, northern and central South Africa.

The forecast was formulated by climate scientists from the National Meteorological and/or Hydrological Services in the 15 Member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the SADC Climate Services Centre, with additional inputs from other global climate prediction centres.

17 – CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change threatens to double malaria risk from African dams, say researchers

LONDON, Sept 5 (Reuters) - The number of Africans at risk of malaria who live near dams will nearly double to 25 million by 2080 as areas where the disease is not currently present will become transmission zones due to climate change, researchers said on Monday. Without prevention measures, the number of malaria cases associated with dams could triple to nearly 3 million a year over the same period, they said in a study published in Malaria Journal.

"While dams clearly bring many benefits ... the role of climate change on malaria around dams will fundamentally alter the current impact," said Solomon Kibret of the University of California and the paper's lead author. "Accurately predicting the impacts of such changes is critical to planning effective disease control," he said in a statement. Malaria is transmitted by mosquitoes, which breed in stagnant water such as shallow puddles along dam shorelines.

The disease kills around 400,000 people a year, the vast majority of them children and babies in sub-Saharan Africa. World Health Organization (WHO) data show there are around 200 million malaria cases a year. More than half of dams that are located in malaria-free areas that will turn into transmission zones as temperatures rise due to climate change are mainly found in the east African highlands and southern Africa, the study said.

In those regions the impact of dams may be especially harsh because of lower immunity among people who have not had to deal with the disease before, it said.

18 – CLIMATE CHANGE

Malaria stopped with single dose of new compound

By Michelle Roberts Health editor, BBC News online, 7 September 2016

Scientists say they have found a new compound that stops malaria in animal studies with a single, low dose. Tests in mice showed the one-off treatment prevented infection for the full 30 days of the study. The chemical compound fought early infection in the liver, as well as malaria parasites that were circulating in the blood. The researchers hope their early work, published in the journal, Nature, could lead to new drugs for people. Malaria is spread to humans by the bites of infected female mosquitoes and it is estimated that about half of the world's population is at risk of catching the disease.

In 2015, there were 214 million new cases of malaria and 438,000 malaria deaths, according to the World Health Organization. Aside from avoiding bites by using insecticides and bed nets, people can protect themselves against malaria by taking antimalarial drugs. But existing treatments are less than perfect - people have to take repeated doses and the parasites that cause malaria are developing resistance to these drugs.

Along the Cambodia-Thailand border, one type of malaria parasite - *P. falciparum* - has become resistant to almost all available antimalarial medicines. Dr Nobutaka Kato and colleagues, from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard, searched a library of more than 100,000 compounds for a new treatment. They were hunting for something that would work in an entirely new

way to existing drugs. The compound they found targets an enzyme called phenylalanyl-tRNA synthetase and appears to wipe out parasites before they can multiple in the liver and be released in bigger numbers into the bloodstream.

Lead researcher Prof Stuart Schreiber hopes the findings will lead to the discovery of better antimalarials in coming years. He said: "We invite the scientific community to use this database as a jumping off point for their work developing antimalarial therapies." The work was funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Prof David Baker of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine said the findings were exciting. "The advantage of a single dose antimalarial is that it potentially reduces costs and removes the issue of patients not completing the course of treatment. "One of the safety tests they ran on the new compounds gave results suggesting that there may be a degree of toxicity in human cells, but hopefully the chemists will be able to modify the compounds to remove this issue."

19 – NEW MATOBO HILLS GUIDEBOOK

The Matobo Hills, Zimbabwe's Sacred Landscape.

This new booklet, hot off the press, will be launched at the Natural History Museum on Thursday 10th November at 1pm. This is the next in the Heritage series with 88 pages on our favourite place! Written by Rob Burrett, Moira FitzPatrick and Julia Dupree, you are assured of finding something new and interesting as it covers both the natural and cultural history of the Matopos.

This would make an ideal Christmas present!

20 – CALENDAR 2016 / 2017

Herewith the proposed dates for the 2016/7 events – make a note in your diary!

26 November, 2016	AGM

Other dates

8 – 12 March 2017	Matopos Heritage MTB
17 – 19 March, 2017	Heritage Trail Run
1 April 2017	Matopos 33 Miler
6 – 10 April, 2017	Zimbabwe Ironwill (in the Matopos)
25 – 27 August, 2017	Matopos Classic MTB

21 – MCS APPAREL

You are reminded that the Society has a stock of fleece sleeveless jackets, in olive green with orange MCS logo. They are ideal for the cool mornings and evenings. These are available at $20 each. And if you have forgotten what cool mornings and evenings feel like we have a range of wide-brimmed hats and caps to protect you from the endless sunshine (at $10 each). CD's are also available.

22 – HAVE YOU PAID YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?

You are reminded that subscriptions for the year 1 October 2016 to 30 September 2017 fell due on 30 September 2016. Please ensure that your subs for 2016/17 are up to date. There has been no increase in rates.

US$ 20	Individual/Family
US$ 5	Special Member (Pensioner/Student)
US$100	Corporate

23 – www.matobo.org

The web-site for the Society has been updated, so make some time to visit the site. Contributions are welcome. We have also revamped our Facebook page "Matobo Conservation Society".

24 – MALEME DAM DRIES UP

Following the severe drought last year, Maleme dam has all but dried up. There is a small puddle of soupy mud left against the wall, in which the catfish struggle. We appreciate the work done by different groups to transfer fish from the rapidly shrinking waters to other dams. Of course, the question is why? Siltation has removed up to 50% of the potential volume, the Maleme catchment was particularly dry, and perhaps the eucalypts and bottle brush have had an environmental impact. We have never seen Maleme dry up.

25 – NATIONAL PARKS NEWS

The Area Manager (Administration & Tourism), Sharon Musakwa, has been transferred to Lake Chivero, and the new Area Manager, Nomusa Moyo took up her duties from 1 October. Whilst welcoming Nomusa and looking forward to a mutually beneficial relationship, we would also like to thank Sharon for all her hard work. In particular, much of the refurbishment of the Maleme Rest Camp took place under her stewardship, and we enjoyed a positive relationship during her short tenure. We wish her well in her new posting.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS

This will be the last Newsletter for 2016, so we take the opportunity to wish our members a blessed Christmas, and best wishes for the New Year.

DON'T FORGET THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON SUNDAY 27TH NOVEMBER.