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Welfare No: W/0 30/94
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NEWSLETTER 111 / JULY 2020

1 – COVID

We are only just past mid-year and it seems a whole era has passed by. We last met in mid-February when we enjoyed a superb outing to Sotcha cave. Little did we know that the gathering pandemic would soon reach us and that in March the country would be in lock-down. Only now on 1 July have the Parks been opened, some 3 months since being shut. We were all in shut down from the end of March for six weeks and are slowly returning to normal, or perhaps the new normal? Sadly, the pandemic has not fully broken upon the shores of this land; I fear that is still ahead, and that the actions taken so far have delayed the inevitable and bought valuable time for our health providers.

But the cycle of nature continued. Summer gave way to autumn; with glorious weather from April through May, and then onto a chilly winter in June. Plenty of frost in the old Hills, leaving the grass white and low bushes burnt. The autumn colour of the leaves has been spectacular as ever, whilst the star filled winter nights have been crisp and clear. With the park open we all long to get out to our favourite place. Whilst parks have been busy during the shutdown, we are sure that the wildlife will have enjoyed the relatively quiet spell.

2 – INDIGENOUS ORCHIDS FOR SALE. PLEASE DO NOT BUY THESE

During the months of May and June a number of vendors were noticed at Morningside, Hillside, Bradfield, Ascot and Khumalo shopping centres selling indigenous orchids. (*Ansellia africana* and *Eulophia petersii*). On questioning they claimed that the plants came from Chimanimani. We are greatly concerned with this practice and have twice posted pictures on our Facebook page to alert the public;

Firstly, the orchids on sale cannot survive in hanging baskets. That is not their environment.

Secondly, if the orchids are from Chimanimani, a market will soon be established in Bulawayo and the vendors will discover that the orchids can be located closer to home.

Thirdly, all indigenous orchids are specially protected species in terms of the law.

Fourth, if these orchids have come from Chimanimani then how many more have been sent to Harare, posing a very real threat to our environment.

Your society met with National Parks on 7 July and will be printing posters to be distributed to the various shopping centres. We urge members not to buy the plants (doing so is illegal) and to report the vendors to either the ZRP, National Parks or to EMA.

3 – RHODES STABLES BURN DOWN

The historic Rhodes Stables, built in the early 20th century adjacent to Rhodes Summer House, burnt down on the night of 31 May. This is the fourth national Monument to have been damaged by arson in recent years – Rhodes Summer House, KoBulawayo, Nswatugi Site Museum and now Rhodes Stables have all been destroyed or damaged by fire.

The damage has not been as severe as it could have been but restoration work will be required to prevent further damage. National Museums advise that investigations are underway with the ZRP, and that restoration work will be scheduled to take place.

4 – NATIONAL PARK

The Rhodes Matopos National Park reopened on Thursday 9th July. Currently this excludes overnight accommodation at Maleme Rest Camp, but does allow for camping and picnics. National Monuments, such as Rhodes Grave, are also open.

As expected, entry fees have been hiked (approximately US\$4 x auction rate)
Local adult ZWL 252 (children and pensioners ZWL 126)
Saloon vehicle ZWL 319

5 - NEXT EVENT

Date	26 th July 2020
Venue	Field Trip to Matobo Game Park
Meet	08:15am, Cresta Churchill Hotel
Travel	All Vehicles
Details	Provide own chairs, tables, meals and drinks. Don't forget your hat, sunblock and plenty of water! Sunny weather is forecast, but there is still a chill in the air, so bring something warm.

We plan to visit the game park, but with a difference. Permission has been granted to go off the beaten track and visit a new grove of *Brachystegia*, and this is to be followed by a visit to the orbicular Granite! We'll enjoy a picnic lunch at Mpopoma Dam, and then go onto Bambata in the afternoon, with a walk to the famous cave. So, something for everyone. Please note that Park fees will be payable. Watch out for a newsflash advising where Parks have network for cashless payments.

6 – REPORT BACK

A good number of members, and friends, set out on Sunday 16th February, for Sotcha and its main cave. Sotcha at 7km in length, is the longest hill in the Matopos, and at 1,564m is the second highest point. It boasts 6 caves with some fine rock art. The object of the morning walk was to visit two of these caves, including the Sotcha main cave with its great paintings. Despite some damage by local children, the more you study the rock surface, the more you see. The “Sunken cave” with its grain bins was also visited, before returning to the cars parked below Sotcha dam.

Lunch was had at Camp Dwala, and whilst some folk left early, others went for a swim or walk.

7 – RAINFALL

At the end of the season, 30th June, the totals are as follows – Eastern Hills 644mm (77% of average), Central Areas 459mm (76%), Eastern Hills 319mm (55%), whilst Bulawayo recorded 373mm (66%).

Whilst rainfall was higher than last year, it was still the third consecutive year of drought.

8 – SOCIETY PROJECTS

The MCS committee has continued to meet during the lock-down, with virtual Zoom meetings instead of face-to-face, and have identified our major projects for this year:

Conservation Booklet for Rural Primary Schools

This booklet describing principles of conservation in English and in Ndebele, was distributed over 15 years ago. Feedback from teachers was that it was useful as an aid to teaching about conservation and in teaching English. The content has been updated slightly, and your Society is looking for funding for a re-print.

Inanke Cave Directional Markings

We will help the Natural History Museum to re-paint the faded markings leading to Inanke cave, following a generous donation of road-line paint from a local supplier.

Nswatugi Facilities

We are working with the Natural History Museum to improve facilities at Nswatugi Cave, following the destruction by fire of the Nswatugi site museum last year. We have funded the re-production of the explanatory panels, and it is planned that these will be erected on open-air frames. The bricks from

demolition of the burnt site museum will be used to build long-drop toilet facilities, and we have already purchased cement for this project.

Whovi Urgent Fence Repairs

Matobo Rhino Trust, requested support for this, and the MCS has agreed to fund purchase of tools and fence tying wire. The MRT will do the work and one of the aims of our funding this, is that, in future applications for funding, we can leverage expenditure from our own funds.

Three Sisters Fence Line Phase One

Parks have expressed concern about the very real dangers to the rhinos that live in the recreational side of the park. They frequently roam out of the formal boundaries and have sometimes been seen on the main tar road. A long-term project to build a 1.8m Bonnox fence line from the Three Sisters kopje, was proposed primarily for rhino protection. The costings are far beyond MCS financial capability, and so the committee agreed to seek donor support. We have been successful, with a generous grant from Educasa Foundation. Parks are completely supportive of this project, and work is currently underway in clearing the fence line for the first phase of approximately 4 kilometers. We will be sub-contracting to specialists to do the work of erecting the fence. Subsequent phases to extend the fence line along the Gulati boundary will be dependent on future donor funding. If members have any ideas about possible donors that we could contact, we would appreciate feedback.

9 – CALL TO PROTECT ENVIRONMENT

With acknowledgement to The Herald, 23rd April 2020

Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry Minister Mangaliso Ndlovu has called for increased education on the African continent on the need to protect the environment. He said this in a statement on the 50th anniversary of Earth Day that was celebrated recently. Earth Day was first marked in the United States as a peaceful call for environmental reform, following a massive oil spill off the coast of California.

10 – FORESTRY COMMISSION ROPES IN POLICE TO CURB TREE-CUTTING

With acknowledgement to The Herald, 18th June 2020

The Forestry Commission has partnered police in Manicaland to curb illegal tree cutting, which has resulted in massive deforestation in areas such as Vumba and Christmas Pass. Despite the much-improved supply of electricity during the Covid-19 lockdown period by the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority, there continues to be demand for firewood as families say they cannot afford electricity as the only source of energy. Forestry Commission provincial manager Mr Phillip Tom expressed concern over rampant firewood poaching, which is threatening the environment.

EDITORS NOTE – Your Society makes regular reports to both the Forestry Commission and the EMA but it appears to yield little firm action within the Matobo Hills.

11 – VELDT FIRES CLAIM 2, DESTROY 1m HECTARES

With acknowledgement to The Herald, 3rd February 2020, Walter Mswazie, Masvingo Correspondent

Two people were killed while close to one million hectares of land were destroyed by veld fires across the country in 2019, an official has said.

Environmental Management Agency (EMA) communications officer Ms Joyce Chapungu said during a media tour of Driefontein Wetlands in Gutu North last week that a lot of land was burnt by veld fires last season.

“There was a decrease in the number of deaths as we recorded three deaths in 2018,” she said.

“These statistics were seen at the end of the fire season in October last year.”

Ms Chapungu said the most fires were in Mashonaland and Manicaland.

“I do not have the statistics for each province with me, but I can tell you that Mashonaland East, Mashonaland West and Mashonaland Central had the highest hectareage destroyed,” she said.

Ms Chapungu was speaking ahead of this year’s World Wetlands Day Commemorations that was held at Njovo Primary School in Masvingo District on Friday last week under the theme, “Wetlands and Biodiversity”.

12 – VELDT FIRES TO ATTRACT MANDATORY JAIL SENTENCES

With acknowledgment to Newsday. 27th January 2020, Veneranda Langa

The Forestry Amendment Bill, now before Parliament, seeks to impose mandatory sentences of up to five years for people who deliberately cause veld fires.

Chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Environment, Concillia Chinanzvavana, recently told NewsDay that the Bill, which will be subjected to public hearings, is being amended because the previous Act is archaic.

“The issue with the current Forestry Act is that it is too old and does not cater well for the country’s forest concerns,” Chinanzvavana said.

“The mischief to be addressed by the proposed amendments in the Bill will be the problem of veld fires which is now getting out of hand, and the nation is losing millions of hectares of forest to veld fires, including nationally gazetted forests,” she said.

Veld fires have killed 122 people across Zimbabwe since 2005, which has resulted in government declaring the period between July and October of each year a fire season to raise awareness on the dangers caused by veld fires.

She said the Bill will amend the Forestry Act (Chapter 19:05) to enhance the protection of forests from veld fires through introduction of mandatory and deterrent sentences, as well as to recognise the aggravating consequences of veld fires, such as death and damage to property and make provision for their prosecution in terms of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act (Chapter 9:23).

The clause seeks to remove the option of a fine in preference of a minimum mandatory sentencing system for wilfully lighting fires on State or private forests that cause damage.

“Clause 12 seeks to introduce a mandatory fine for fire offences resulting from smoking or negligent use of matches,” reads the Bill.

Section 78 of the Forestry Act will also be amended to include major offences by including sections which stipulate that where damage has been wilfully caused, imprisonment for a period not less than five years, or in any case, to imprisonment for a period of not less than one year will be imposed for causing veld fires.

“The court shall take into account such aggravating factors as loss of human life, livestock, wildlife and other property,” reads the Bill.

13 – ZIMPARKS STARTS UPGRADE DRIVE

With acknowledgement to The Herald; 22nd January 2020 Ishemunyoro Chingwere, Business Reporter

The Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks) has begun the first phase of an ambitious drive to upgrade all its facilities to between three and five-star status as the authority seeks to boost tourist arrivals and receipts.

The commencement of the renovations come on the back of the authority having successfully cleared a crippling US\$25 million legacy debt as at mid-December 2019.

Government has identified tourism as one of the key sectors which is expected to drive economic recovery together with other sectors like mining, agriculture and manufacturing.

In an interview with this publication, ZimParks public relations manager Mr Tinashe Farawo said the authority has started by closing the ungraded Rhodes Camp Nyanga which is being renovated in the next three months to a three-star hotel. The Camp which is in the precincts of Nyanga has an 80 bed capacity with provision for hosting conferences.

Nyanga itself is one of the major tourists’ attractions in the country and in 2018 it accounted for about 22 000 tourists with the number growing to 26 000 in 2019 and this is the market the authority is targeting to tap into and growing as well.

“It (Rhodes Camp Nyanga) will be closed for the next three months, this is part of improving our facilities throughout the country to between three-star and five-star status and this is the first phase,” said Mr Farawo.

“The upgrade is in line with the Authority’s five-year strategy drawn by our Director-General Mr (Fulton) Mangwanya and also approved by Government.

“So even as we are saying we are now on an upgrade drive, a sign that we have some money to invest, we are not oblivious of the need to have austerity for prosperity. So, to achieve this, the upgrade will be anchored on in-sourcing which will see us making use of our own artisans from within the Authority.

“We have the capacities within and there is no need for us to look outward when the solution is available. Once the improvements are done, we are confident we will see more tourists visiting the facility as well as registering more receipts which are quite key to our strategy,” added Mr Farawo.

ZimParks has three camping facilities in Nyanga with a total bed capacity of about 200.

The Authority advised that as soon as it is done with the Nyanga project, the next upgrade will move to its Lodge at Lake Chivero.

14 – “PABLO ESCOBAR OF EGGS” FACES JUSTICE AFTER 35 YEARS OF POACHING

22 January 2020; With acknowledgment to AFP.

The illegal trade in animals is worth nearly \$20 billion each year, according to Interpol Jeffrey Lendrum spent three decades living as the so-called "Pablo Escobar of eggs", smuggling the fragile shells from the nests of falcons and other birds of prey to wealthy international clients. His racket was smashed in 2018 when customs officers at London's Heathrow Airport found him in possession of 19 birds of prey eggs worth a total of £100,000 pounds (\$130,000, 118,000 euros). During a full search, he was found to be wearing a body belt made out of bandages concealing 19 eggs from vultures, falcons and kites as well as two newly-hatched African fish eagle chicks. His body belt was designed to "brood" his stash so the chicks would not die before he sold them.

A British court sentenced the 58-year-old Irish-Zimbabwean to more than three years in prison in January last year. But he now faces another court appearance on Wednesday, which could see him spend up to three more years in jail in South America, if Britain accepts an extradition request. He is wanted for skipping bail in 2016 after a Brazilian judge sentenced him to four and a half years for attempting to smuggle peregrine falcons out of the country.

Stealing bird eggs runs in the family: the veteran thief received his first conviction aged 22, when he and his father were found guilty of petty theft in Zimbabwe. He has since served time in Canada, Brazil and Britain.

The main drivers of egg poaching are wealthy clients in the Middle East, where peregrine falcons are in great demand for traditional falconry and can sell for thousands of dollars, according to the wildlife trade specialists Traffic. Illegal trade in animals is worth nearly \$20 billion each year, according to Interpol. But Traffic spokesman Richard Thomas said there are "fewer than half a dozen" reported cases of egg thefts around the world each year. However, the thefts are "not insignificant" and still constitute "serious crimes", he told AFP. "Some of the species involved are extremely rare and even small numbers (of eggs) illegally taken from the wild can have a significant impact on threatened populations," he added. The smuggler's 35-year notoriety is such that "Lendrum is a well-known name to conservation charities working on illegal bird trade issues", said Thomas. In 2010, he was stopped at Birmingham International Airport in central England with egg boxes strapped to his chest. Nicknamed "the Pablo Escobar of eggs" by the British press after the Colombian drug lord, Lendrum has amazed readers with the audacity of his crimes. He has been arrested five times on three different continents. Details of his crimes contrast with the grey-haired, potbellied man, half-naked and wrapped in strips of cloth, after his arrest. Lendrum, once a member of the Rhodesian army's Special Forces, even used a helicopter during a theft in northern Quebec, hanging from a rope to get close to the nest, according to Joshua Hammer, in "The Falcon Thief", the book he wrote about Lendrum's exploits.

The Financial Times called Lendrum "the world's greatest bird of prey thief" but Thomas warned against turning him into "an anti-hero". "Rather, I think the publicity around his regular convictions helps demonstrate that persistent offenders will be caught and receive increasingly more severe punishments," he said.

15 – ZIM WILL NOT PULL OUT OF CITES

With acknowledgement to The Herald, 12th March 2020

Zimbabwe will not pull out of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES) as this will hurt the country's capacity to trade with other members of the convention, Parliament heard Monday. This is notwithstanding that ivory trade is banned by CITES. Permanent secretary in the Ministry of Environment and Tourism Munesu Munodawafa told the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Environment and Tourism that coming out of CITES was not the best option for Zimbabwe. Meanwhile, a report presented to Parliament earlier this month by the Committee on Environment and Tourism called on the relevant authorities to expedite the resumption of elephant sales and ivory exports as this will benefit enhance ongoing conservation programmes as well as boost the wider economy.

16 – ZIM GAZETTES LAWS TO PROTECT ANIMALS

With acknowledgement to Sifelani Tsiko

Zimbabwe has promulgated new regulations to protect endangered animal species and curb illegal wildlife trade in animal and animal products.

The Government gazetted SI 72 of 2020 and SI 71 of 2020 recently as part of efforts to strengthen the Parks and Wild Life Act to deal with poaching and the illegal trafficking of endangered species that include pangolins, that have emerged as one of the most trafficked mammals in the country. These regulations were cited as the Parks and Wild Life (Specially Protected Animals) regulations of 2020.

The list of the Specially Protected Animals includes the Aardwolf (mbizimumwena in Shona or Inthuhu in Ndebele), bat-eared fox, cheetah, gemsbok, pangolin, rhinos, roan, wild or hunting dogs and the Lichtenstein's Hartebeest (a rare type of antelope).

"These are part of new measures to protect our endangered animals which include pangolins, which are one of the most trafficked animals," said Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority spokesperson Tinashe Farawo.

"The regulations seek to strengthen existing laws in the fight against poaching and the illegal trafficking of endangered animals.

"Pangolins are the most threatened and the laws are part of our new regulations to help prevent, detect and penalise wildlife crimes."

According to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), a leading organisation in wildlife conservation and endangered species, trade in the elusive pangolin mammals is now staggering with an estimated 1 million pangolins trafficked over the last decade.

The global animal agency reports that more than 195 000 pangolins were trafficked in 2019 alone.

Zimbabwe is moving to strengthen its legal frameworks to prevent and address the illegal harvest and trade of wildlife species.

Zimbabwe and most other African countries are facing an unprecedented spike in poaching and illegal wildlife trade, which is threatening to decimate the continent's rich wildlife resource base.

Poaching is threatening the survival of elephants, rhinos, cheetahs, lions, hippos and a whole list of other animals still found on the continent.

Wildlife crime is now prevalent across Africa with a complex web of highly dangerous international networks.

Wildlife and animal parts are being trafficked to various parts of the world.

The poaching of elephants for ivory and other wild animals for their skins and bones has taken on new and deadly dimensions, with poachers using chemicals such as cyanide to poison wildlife.

Countless other species such as turtles, pangolins, snakes and other wild plants and animals are being caught or harvested from the wild and then sold to buyers who make food, pets, ornamental plants, leather, tourist ornaments and medicine.

Tusk Trust, a wildlife organisation, reports that 100 000 elephants were killed in the past few years, leaving a population of about 400 000 — half what it was more than two-and-half decades ago.

Rampant poaching in the sub-Saharan range has resulted in the deaths of 100 000 elephants from 2011 to 2013, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Tanzania's elephant population plummeted by 60 percent to 43 330 in the five years ending in 2014, according to the Great Elephant Census, carried out by a coalition of wildlife groups, while Mozambique lost half its elephants in the same period, falling to 10 300.

Wildlife campaigners say the statistics "underscore the toxic mix of determined criminal gangs, corrupt Government officials and a strong market for smuggled ivory in Asia — particularly in China — which has deepened its economic ties to Africa in recent years."

More than 300 elephants have been killed due to cyanide poisoning since 2013 as Zimbabwe continues to battle with the worrying scourge of poaching which is threatening the country's wildlife heritage.

A total of 59 people have been arrested for poaching by the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Authority (ZIMPARKS) as from January this year to date.

Of the 59, nine have since appeared in court and sentenced to 9 years in prison.

Cyanide poisoning is the deadliest tactic used by poachers who place salt laced with cyanide near wildlife watering holes.

The chemical kills the body's cells by starving them of oxygen.

In mammals, the poison is most harmful to the heart and brain — organs that depend heavily on oxygen supplies.

Elephants die no more than 100m from where they drank poisoned water or used salt licks drenched in cyanide.

17 – SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

22 nd - 23 rd August 2020	Byo-Dwala Trail Run
26 th – 30 th August 2020	Matopos Heritage MTB Challenge
3 rd September 2020	Matopos Heritage Trail Run
27 th – 29 th November 2020	Matopos Classic MTB

18 – OF STATUES AND HERITAGE

Oxford University's cowardly surrender is a wilful vandalism of history, writes DANIEL HANNAN, an Oriel graduate who is tearing up his donations to the college. Daniel Hannan is the former Conservative MP for South East England

Yet again, the future of Cecil Rhodes hangs in the balance.

Intimidated by a delirious mob, the governing body of Oriel – his and my Oxford College – voted to remove the statuette of the 19th-century diamond magnate from its niche high above the city's high street.

Yesterday, the inevitable backlash began, as a former universities minister blamed 'culture wars' for the decision to topple Rhodes, while the Foreign Secretary warned against 'airbrushing' history.

I'm not sure which is more depressing – the anti-intellectual frenzy of the crowds who gathered outside the College on Thursday or the way Oriel's Fellows folded so cravenly.

Universities are supposed to elevate facts over feelings – but that principle sits ill with identity politics. Angry protesters have little interest in argument or nuance. Almost no one, in the current climate, wants to point out that by the standards of his era Rhodes was a liberal (as well as a Liberal).

No one likes to mention that, when Oriel's own students were polled four years ago, majorities in every ethnic group wanted to keep the statue.

No one dares correct the campaigners when they describe Rhodes as an 'architect of apartheid' – despite the fact that he died in 1902, while that monstrous system of formalised racial categorisation was imposed in South Africa in 1948.

In fact, far from facilitating apartheid, the wily nabob opposed the attempt to take away the vote from black men in Cape Colony.

'My motto is equal rights for every civilised man south of the Zambezi,' he wrote, referring to the great African river.

'What is a civilised man? A man, whether white or black, who has sufficient education to write his name, has some property, or works.'

The campaigners, naturally, don't want to hear this.

Nor do they want to be told that Rhodes was an early sponsor of Izwi Labantu, the newspaper of what became the African National Congress, the party of the late Nelson Mandela.

Nor do they care that, when Rhodes endowed the scholarships that have brought thousands of Commonwealth and American students to Oxford, he specified that: 'No student shall be qualified or disqualified for election to a scholarship on account of his race'.

Nor that, within five years, one of those coveted places had been won by a black American.

Nor that, as Chris Patten, the Chancellor of Oxford University, reminds us, Africa currently supplies a fifth of all Rhodes Scholars.

When Oriel's own students were polled four years ago, majorities in every ethnic group wanted to keep the statue

They don't want to hear these things because they are not interested in Rhodes as a human being.

They want him, rather, to be a target: a symbol of racist oppression that allows them to flaunt their indignation.

To be clear, Rhodes was no saint. His mines stood on land that he had arguably tricked out of the Ndebele people, who had not understood the implications of the contracts they signed.

That misunderstanding led to a brutal war.

Still, it is worth recognising that wars were pretty standard in Africa at that time. The Ndebele themselves, for example, had only recently acquired those lands by waging a far more gruesome campaign against the Shona.

That is not to excuse anything, simply to point out the difficulty of applying retrospective morality.

'The study of the past with one eye upon the present is the source of all sins and sophistries in history,' wrote the historian Herbert Butterfield. 'It is the essence of what we mean by the word "unhistorical".'

There is something narcissistic about judging historical figures purely on the basis of how closely their views resemble our own.

Winston Churchill was in southern Africa at roughly the same time as Rhodes. So was Gandhi. The first opposed Indian independence, while the second viewed black Africans as dirty and savage. Should we tear down their statues, too? Of course not.

Rhodes stands in stone because, having made a lot of money early in life, he did not spend it on himself, but gave it away to what he saw as deserving causes – including Oxford University, which he had first attended in 1873.

None of this becomes any less true because of a killing in Minnesota that everyone agrees was indefensible.

How the death of George Floyd at the hands of a white police officer three weeks ago led to the removal of an unrelated statue 4,000 miles away will one day have historians scratching their heads.

One thing, though, is clear: An institution that treats a benefactor like this – not in the light of new revelations but simply because of the self-righteousness of a pressure group – will struggle to persuade anyone else to donate to it.

I have, for what it's worth, cancelled my own small monthly debit to Oriel, and I'm sure others will do the same. Why give to an institution that displays such ingratitude?

Iconoclasm – the tearing down of graven images – is often a mark of a cult. Early Christians pulled down pagan statues, believing that in doing so, they were cleansing the world.

The Puritans thought in similar ways, as do Muslim fundamentalists.

Universities, however, are supposed to uphold the values of the Enlightenment. They are meant to teach people to disagree politely, to use logic rather than intimidation.

What we are witnessing is not an isolated act of cowardice, but a slow retreat from reason. That should worry us all.

19 – MEMBERS NOTEBOOK SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for the year 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021 fall due on 30 September 2020. Please ensure that your subs for 2019 are up to date. There has been no increase in rates.

US\$ 5	Pensioner Individual/Couple
US\$ 20	Individual/Family
US\$100	Corporate

The AGM resolved that from 2019 we will accept only US\$ but we will accept Zimbabwe Dollars at the bank rate on the day of payment. We would prefer the former if you are able to pay in US\$. However, we appreciate that the extraordinary rate of inflation may challenge many of our members and so we would ask you to please consult with the Treasurer if necessary. If you need any information, please contact the Chairman or Secretary on matoboconservationsociety@gmail.com

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. We still have stocks of hats and caps at \$10 each. CD's and shopping bags are also available at \$5 each.

NATURAL HISTORY OF THE MATOBO HILLS

This important record of an area of great biodiversity is available in hardcopy only for US\$30 plus packaging and insured postage. For orders of ten or more books the price is reduced to US\$25 each.

Publication was funded by the Matobo Conservation Society, and all proceeds go towards conservation projects in the Matobo World Heritage Site.

Information is available on www.matobo.org on how to purchase this book, or via email enquiry to matoboconservationsociety@gmail.com

WEB SITE

The website for the Society www.matobo.org has been updated, so make some time to visit the site. We recently uploaded checklists onto the website, and these can be downloaded from the 'Resources' page. Ideas for content improvement are welcome, and should be emailed to the Society.

FACEBOOK

We have also revamped our Facebook page “Matobo Conservation Society”. We continue to update our Facebook page; we welcome any contributions from Members. Go to “Matobo Conservation Society” on Facebook, and “like” the page to ensure you get regular updates. Over 1,000 people are following us on Facebook.

20 – CONDOLENCES

We were saddened to learn of the passing of Dennis Adams, a great supporter of conservation. We extend our condolences to Shelagh, a former committee member, at this sad time.