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Welfare No: W/0 30/94
www.matobo.org

NEWSLETTER 116 / DECEMBER 2021

1 – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

It is that time of the year again when we meet to review the year past. It has been a busy, and successful year for your Society. Our Annual General Meeting will be held at Mtshelili Dam on Sunday 12th December. We hope to see you there.

Whilst we have benefitted from a hard-working committee, we always call for new committee members to bring in fresh ideas and momentum.

2 – MATOBO HERITAGE MTB CHALLENGE

Our annual Matopos Heritage MTB Challenge was successfully hosted with a full field at the end of March. This event takes participants on mountain bikes across the Matobo World Heritage Site, visiting points of interest via GPS tracks. It is intended to raise awareness of the World Heritage Site and raise funds for conservation projects. We greatly appreciate all those members who responded to our appeal and assisted at water points, or in driving of vehicles. Without you it would be very difficult to stage such a popular event, and the participants always appreciate the smooth logistics!

3 – MATOPOS HERITAGE TRAIL RUN

The 7th edition of the Matopos Heritage Trail Run was held over the weekend of 27-29 August 2021, with a record 55 athletes taking up the challenge. This event takes runners across the Eastern section of the World Heritage Site, using GPS tracks. Following the success of the event we plan some changes for the 2022 edition and again thank those members who volunteered to assist during the event.

4 - RAINFALL

Herald, Friday September 3

Prospects of good rainy season brighten hopes: A more detailed forecast has confirmed findings by the SADC forecast that all three Zimbabwean rainfall regions will have normal to above normal rainfall for the whole of the coming rainy season. But these are forecasts of total rainfall and farmers will need to follow later forecasts to see when there are to be wet and dry spells during the season. Presenting the more detailed national seasonal forecast yesterday, Environment, Climate and Hospitality Acting Minister Oppah Muchinguri Kashiri said all the three rainfall regions will experience normal to above normal rains from October this year to March next year but stressed that those planning farming operations had to look at the long-term averages for each district to find out what the normal was for that area. The three regions are:

- Region 1 encompassing Harare Metropolitan, much of Mashonaland East, Mashonaland West, Mashonaland Central, north-eastern Midlands and most of Manicaland;
- Region 2 encompassing the greater part of Matabeleland North, parts of Bulawayo Metropolitan, parts of Midlands and parts of Mashonaland West; and
- Region 3 that includes Masvingo Province, the bulk of Midlands, the bulk of Bulawayo Metropolitan, the extreme southern parts of Manicaland and the bulk of Matabeleland South.

5 - NEXT EVENT

Date	12 th December 2021
Venue	Mtshelili Dam
Meet	08:00am, Cresta Churchill Hotel
Travel	Trucks are preferred and if you have a 4x4 that may be helpful but not essential

Please note the earlier than usual start, as we expect delays at the Park entrance due to payment processing. Don't forget your picnic lunch and drinks!

We will travel out via Silozwane Business Centre, and Park entry fees will be payable. Following our morning tea, we plan to hold our AGM at 10:00am.

6 – REPORT BACK

Our last field trip was to Bambata Cave in the Game Park. After a pleasant drive out, we were somewhat inconvenienced by a slow entry fee process – a matter that has been taken up with the authorities. Finally, after clearing the gate we travelled to Lushongwe platform in the hope of seeing some wildlife, especially rhino but had to settle for just enjoying our tea. Thereafter we went on up the Whovi valley to Bambata Cave. The walk to the cave is always a delight, and a short talk was given by the Chairman in the cave in which he outlined the importance of this site, not just to the Matopos, but globally. The more energetic continued slowly to the summit of Bambata to enjoy the excellent views across the hills, before getting back to the cars for a late picnic lunch. Thereafter we travelled via Mpopoma Dam before returning home.

7 – VELD FIRES RISE BY 85% IN 2021

With acknowledgment to NewsDay, September 6th.

The Environmental Management Agency (EMA) has reported an 85% increase in veld fires this season compared to the same period last year. A total of 1,517 fire incidents, which destroyed 408,366.7 hectares of land, were recorded, with three people losing their lives. The veld fires have destroyed agricultural produce, equipment, household property and plantations worth US\$187,167, EMA reported. EMA environmental education and publicity manager Amkela Sidange said the majority of the veld fires had been recorded in the resettlement areas, which have 61.82% land destroyed by fire. Two minors, siblings aged three and six in Hurungwe lost their lives after a house they were in caught fire. In another incident, a veld fire claimed the life of a 59-year-old woman in Zvimba. Sidange said due to the loss of lives and environmental damage from veld fires, the agency had intensified implementation of measures to stop the practise, which include law enforcement and awareness campaigns.

8 – WHY DO ROADS CORRUGATE?

With acknowledgment to Larry Gedney

Washboard roads are a bane to travelers worldwide. This includes, of course, Zimbabwe, where the options for getting away from it all would be limited indeed if gravel roads are excluded from one's itinerary.

Corrugations that produce washboard roads are not limited to those with sand or gravel surfaces but are also found in asphalt pavements and even in railroad tracks, although on a less severe scale.

It would seem that such a common phenomenon should be readily understood and explainable, but the fact is that the process which produces them was a subject of controversy among engineers for many years. One of the most popular theories was that a tire, even as it rolls, pushes material ahead of it in a heap. Once the pile reaches a certain size, the tire rolls over it and starts the process again. As it developed, this is incorrect.

The January 1963 issue of Scientific American contains an article by Dr Keith B Mather, now Vice Chancellor for Research and Advanced Studies at the University of Alaska, which puts the matter to rest once and for all.

Working at the University of Melbourne, Mather observed that vehicles passing over the unsurfaced roads of Australia's "outback" did not produce dust uniformly even on uncorrugated roads, but rather in little spurts arising from rapid bouncing of the wheels.

This led to the construction of a laboratory apparatus which would permit the observation of wheel and road interactions under controlled conditions. The first experiments utilized a five-inch wheel mounted on the end of a shaft which pivoted about the center of a sand track 24 inches in diameter. Locomotive forces were provided by pushing the arm around the track with a finger. Unexpectedly, this soon produced little corrugations several inches apart in the sand.

Encouraged by these results, Mather then proceeded to construct a somewhat more elaborate system equipped with a variable speed electric motor, which drove the axle, a spring-mounted wheel, and a revolution counter. Parameters such as weight, size of wheel and stiffness of spring were made independently adjustable.

Among the more significant findings were that:

- If the wheel moves slowly, no corrugations were formed, but a deep rut instead.
- it did not matter whether the wheel was driving or idling, at sufficient speeds, washboarding occurred.
- the trough-to-trough distances between ruts increased linearly with increasing speed; and
- sand was not pushed ahead of the wheel and then overridden to begin another cycle, as had been commonly believed.

The most important contribution to understanding washboarding lay in the observation of how the corrugations are actually formed. When the wheel reaches a certain critical speed, it begins to move in short hops, bounding on random irregularities of the surface. Hitting an obstacle, even a small one, propels the wheel into the air for a certain distance. When it lands further down the track, it sprays sand forward and to the side, thus creating the beginning of a crater. Each time it digs itself in at a crater it has to ride out again and thus repeats the pattern. If traffic were to move at widely diversified speeds, different "hop-lengths" might tend to cancel each other out, but depending on road conditions, all traffic tends to travel in a rather closely constrained speed range, thus compounding the problem with each successive vehicle.

Corrugated roads would be all but eliminated if people followed three simple rules. First, they must lower their tire pressures (hard tires corrugate roads faster), second, they must be willing to travel at lower speeds, and third engage 4x4 this significantly assists in lessening corrugations on sand roads.

9 – OVER FIFTY ILLEGAL FIREWOOD DEALERS ARRESTED

With acknowledgement to The Herald, 16th August 2021, Conrad Mupesa Mashonaland West Bureau
The Forestry Commission has arrested 52 illegal firewood and charcoal dealers in six districts of Mashonaland West province since August 2. The offenders have since been fined under an operation aimed at curbing deforestation. This was after the provincial forestry managers joined the rest of the nation in an operation against illegal firewood and charcoal traders.

Forestry Commission acting provincial head, Mr Pardon Mukudo, said the operation had so far been carried out in Hurungwe, Chegutu, Makonde, Sanyati, Mhondoro-Ngezi and Zvimba districts. "We are working in conjunction with the Environmental Management Agency (EMA), Zimbabwe Republic Police, Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority and local authorities," he said. Mr Mukudo said 470 bags of charcoal and a large amount of firewood were recovered from the six districts while in Chinhoyi, there were five arrests on Friday leading to the confiscation of two trucks that were laden with firewood.

"We are also going to engage the Vehicle Inspection Department (VID) to check how roadworthy the vehicles we have impounded are. Most of the vehicles seem un-roadworthy and we have realised that huge volumes of firewood are used in the curing of bricks as opposed to coal dust," he said.

The blitz is also to be carried out in Mappinga, Kariba and Turf in Mhondoro-Ngezi, which are known hotspot areas for illegal firewood and charcoal dealers.

10 – NATIONWIDE BLITZ TARGETS FIREWOOD POACHERS

With acknowledgement to the Herald, Tuesday August 3

With close to 300 000ha of indigenous woodland and forest being lost each year to illegal wood cutting, the Forestry Commission, as the lead agency in a multi-agency force, has launched a nationwide blitz targeting illegal dealers in firewood and charcoal and has suspended the issue of permits to sell firewood. Lupane has become a hotspot of illegal felling of Zambezi teak, a valuable hardwood, and

Muzarabani is seeing swathes of mopani trees chopped down for firewood and charcoal. Firewood dealers throng major highways countrywide with their huge stacks of firewood for sale to motorists, most from urban areas. The blitz is a government initiative implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality with the Forestry Commission as the lead agency backed by the Environmental Management Agency, Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks), the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement, police, and local authorities.

11 – BULAWAYO TO MAPHISA ROAD TO BE DONE IN THREE MONTHS

With acknowledgment to The Sunday News, Judith Phiri, Business Reporter

Government through the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure Development has made progress in the rehabilitation of Bulawayo-Maphisa road, with authorities saying the project will be complete by November.

In a telephone interview, Matabeleland South Provincial Road Engineer Joseph Makokove said the project was progressing well, noting that they were within their set timelines.

“Much progress has been done and we are expected to be done in three months’ time. Various aspects have been done so far such as drain clearing, vegetation clearing, shoulder re-gravelling for 33 kilometres on that narrow mat, and pothole patching among other issues,” said Eng Makokove.

He said close to \$10 million was disbursed for the Bulawayo-Maphisa Road through the Emergency Road Rehabilitation Programme.

Eng Makokove said for the road development programme which was initially there before the declaration of the disaster, they had been allocated \$400 million in the 2021 National Budget of \$400 million.

“The \$400 million was earmarked for widening and upgrading of the Bulawayo-Maphisa Road, but that money has not been released yet. We are hoping that once it has been released it will assist in upgrading the roads to the expected high standards,” he said.

Matabeleland South Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution, Abednico Ncube said he was impressed with the progress which has been taking place in roads repairs.

“Our President Mnangagwa has ensured that funds are availed through the Emergency Road Rehabilitation Programme to make sure that nationwide roads are repaired. With the progress that has been done in Matabeleland South we are pleased,” said Minister Ncube.

He commended some of the projects that were being carried out such as the Tuli-Manyange Dam in Gwanda, saying that they will go a long way to turn around the lives of people once finished.

12 – LIVERPOOL STRIPPED OF UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE STATUS

With acknowledgment to the BBC; 21 July

Liverpool has been stripped of its World Heritage status after a UN committee found developments threatened the value of the city's waterfront.

The decision was made following a secret ballot by the UNESCO committee at a meeting in China.

UNESCO had said that the developments, including the planned new Everton FC stadium, had resulted in a "serious deterioration" of the historic site.

The decision was described as "incomprehensible" by the city's mayor.

"Our World Heritage site has never been in better condition having benefitted from hundreds of millions of pounds of investment across dozens of listed buildings and the public realm," Joanne Anderson said. She said she would work with the government to examine whether the city could appeal against the decision, which comes "a decade after UNESCO last visited the city to see it with their own eyes".

Liverpool City Region Mayor Steve Rotherham said the decision was "a retrograde step that does not reflect the reality of what is happening on the ground".

"Places like Liverpool should not be faced with the binary choice between maintaining heritage status or regenerating left-behind communities and the wealth of jobs and opportunities that come with it," he said.

Labour's Kim Johnson, MP for Liverpool Riverside, said she remained "proud of my city and what we've done".

"People come here because it's amazing city and, while I'm disappointed, as a city we are resilient, and we will always fight back."

The government said it was "extremely disappointed" and believes Liverpool still deserves its heritage status "given the significant role the historic docks and the wider city have played throughout history".

Liverpool becomes only the third site to lose its World Heritage status since the list began in 1978, the other two being Oman's Arabian Oryx Sanctuary in 2007 and the Dresden Elbe Valley in Germany in 2009.

Announcing the decision, the committee chairman said 20 votes had been cast, with 13 in favour of deleting the city, five against the proposal and two ballot papers being invalid.

The city was awarded the much-coveted title in 2004 in recognition of its historical and architectural impact, joining places including the Taj Mahal, Egypt's Pyramids and Canterbury Cathedral.

It recognised its history as a major trading centre during the British Empire and its architectural landmarks.

However, a report in June by the World Heritage Committee said developments on the city's waterfront had resulted in "irreversible loss of attributes".

It cited the Liverpool Waters project and Everton's new stadium, which is being built at Bramley Moore Dock.

Chris Capes, director of development for Peel L&P's Liverpool Waters, said he was disappointed "particularly given the considerable investment that the city has put into protecting and improving its heritage sites".

Everton have agreed to invest up to £55m to "preserve, restore and celebrate the heritage assets" of the area as part of its stadium plan.

The project was approved following two public consultations, with the second survey attracting more than 40,000 people.

The club found 98% of people supported the proposed design of the stadium, while 96% backed the club's plans for historic features on the site.

Analysis By Claire Hamilton, BBC Radio Merseyside political reporter

Liverpool has seen more peaks and troughs than most, and it's a city which has changed immeasurably since 2004 when the World Heritage Status was conferred.

Back then, there was no Liverpool One shopping centre, no hint that Everton would consider building a multi-million-pound waterfront stadium and its year as European Capital of Culture hadn't happened. The city has changed.

Today, there's a sense of defiance in some quarters about UNESCO's decision that the city doesn't need the title, especially if it sits in the way of progress for an area which has lain neglected and semi derelict for decades.

Critics argue the benefits of being a World Heritage status were never properly spelled out and there wasn't the political will in the city to address UNESCO's concerns until recently, when it was too late.

Many people argue that tourists visiting the Pier Head, St George's Plateau or Penny Lane are not coming because Liverpool is a designated World Heritage site - they probably don't even realise it is.

They're coming for the Beatles, the football, food, and the history but that history will remain.

Yet today's announcement worries those who fear that the ability to protect heritage, architecture and history is now diminished, that there will be a free-for-all of unsuitable, careless development.

The argument for the last decade has been presented as a binary choice: heritage or progress? The feeling in Liverpool is, couldn't we have had both?

Dr David Jeffery, who is a lecturer of British politics at the University of Liverpool, said he believed the decision would not have a "serious impact" on the city's tourism industry.

"I do hope this serves as a warning to the council to stop approving ugly buildings though," he said.

Wayne Colquhoun, who has campaigned for 15 years to keep Liverpool's heritage status, said he was "devastated" by the news.

"It's the status symbol that has put us up there with the Great Wall of China and the pyramids and now it has gone," he said.

"You've got to be clever being a World Heritage city and be able to take traditional materials and build them in a modern manner."

Richie Wright, 40, who has lived in Liverpool all his life, said the status had "on many occasions, hampered and restricted development in a city that is ripe for development".

"I hope that Liverpool and its wider city region now seizes this opportunity to make common sense decisions that make our city and the world proud," he said.

Liverpool's Heritage

Image caption World War One soldiers paraded outside St George's Hall in 1915

The World Heritage Site stretches from the city's famous waterfront, through the historic commercial districts, to St George's Hall.

The city's bid for the status was centred on its history as a major global port in the 18th and 19th Centuries, when it played a significant role in the growth of the British Empire.

It was a hub for the mass movement of people, including migrants from Europe to America, and had a key role in the transatlantic slave trade.

Liverpool was one of about 30 World Heritage Sites in the UK, along with Stonehenge and the Giant's Causeway.

After World War Two, the city's Royal Albert Dock became the largest single collection of Grade I listed buildings anywhere in the country

13 - PROFILE – HONORARY MEMBER

We feature our third Honorary member, Julia Duprée, who was elected in November 2020.

Julia Duprée



Julia Duprée was born in India, subsequently lived in The Gambia, Nigeria, Kenya, Botswana before retiring in Zimbabwe. She designed, edited, and published *Babbler*, the scientific journal for Botswana Bird Club. She designed and produced 27 issues of the *BirdLife Zimbabwe* international scientific journal, "Honeyguide". She edited and produced the first field guide on birds for Zimbabwe, titled Roberts "Waterbirds of Zimbabwe". This was the first publication in Zimbabwe ever sponsored by the influential John Voelcker Bird Book Fund of South Africa, Roberts. She edited and produced several illustrated educational booklets and leaflets on birds and the environment, in English and vernacular languages, which were donated to schools. She designed and produced the "Guide to the Natural History Museum" in Bulawayo. She continues work editing and producing a series of booklets on the history and archaeology of Zimbabwe for a professional author.

14 – NCUBE DEFIES SACRED SITE

With acknowledgement to – Southern Eye, Tuesday November 9

Finance minister Mthuli Ncube has been accused of building lodges on a sacred site reserved for cultural ceremonies in his rural home in Matobo district, Matabeleland South Province. The area is located in Chap village, a few kilometres from Matopo National Park. Villagers said the area is sacred, hence Ncube's project would defile it. "For thousands of years, the area has been known for its uniqueness and strange things that used to happen there. One could hear people speaking, cooking, and dancing, but if you reach the area, you do not see anything," Vusumuzi Dube, a villager said. "Because of such things we were told that no one has to build a house there. That is why none of the villagers decided to occupy that place. Do you think no one wanted to build or farm in that area?" Another villager, Sithandazile Dube said local traditional leaders raised concern over Ncube's project and appear to have been cowed into submission by government. "We tried to ask our leaders to stand up and fight for our heritage, but we yielded nothing. When people raised concerns about the Ncube's project in that area, we were told that he was given permission by government," Dube said.

15 – SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

12th December 2021

MCS Annual General Meeting

16 – MEMBERS NOTEBOOK

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for the year 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022 are now due. Please ensure that your subs are up to date. Only paid-up members will be permitted to vote at the MCS annual general meeting. There has been no increase in rates.

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

The last AGM resolved that 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 matoboconservationsociety@gmail.com

MCS BRANDED APPAREL

The Society has a small stock of sleeveless fleece jackets, in olive green with orange MCS logo, available at US\$20 each. They are ideal for the cool mornings and evenings. We also have stocks of hats and caps at \$10 each. CD's and shopping bags are also available at \$5 each. Additional branded apparel (such as khaki shirts, fleece jackets, golf shirts) can be ordered on request. Please contact the Secretary via Whatsapp +263 71 240 2341 for further details

WEBSITE

The MCS website www.matobo.org is updated whenever new material is available. A recent innovation has been the NEWSLETTER ARCHIVES page, which now has every newsletter since the Society's inception. The RESOURCES page has the following available for download:

- MCS Constitution
- Matobo Bird Checklist
- Matobo Butterfly Checklist
- Matobo Aloe/Grass/Orchid Checklist
- Matobo Tree/Shrub Checklist
- Matobo Herpetofauna Checklist
- Matobo Mammal Checklist
- Map of Rhodes Matopos National Park
- MCS Project List
- Bibliography of Matobo World Heritage Site (prepared by Paul Hubbard)

Member suggestions and contributions for the website are welcome.

Please email to matoboconservationsociety@gmail.com

FACEBOOK

We have 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.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE MATOBO HILLS

This MCS publication is available at the Natural History Museum, or from the Treasurer for US\$30. Arrangements can be made to send by registered mail anywhere in Zimbabwe for an additional US\$5, or outside Zimbabwe for an additional US\$10. Please email matoboconservationsociety@gmail.com

17 – CONDOLENCES

Oscar Nyathi

We are saddened to report the passing of Oscar Nyathi, former Area Manager (Enforcement) at Matobo National Park. Oscar was passionate about rhino conservation, and was a trustee of the Matobo Rhino Trust. Sincere condolences to the Nyathi family

18 – BEST WISHES

WE WISH ALL OUR MEMBERS, PARTNERS AND FRIENDS A BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND BEST WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR