



Dear All

The cold, dry weather is with us. Temperatures are ranging between about 15-24°C. The birds are back in the garden, there being little water out in the bush for them.

LIVINGSTONE

Airport

The new airport terminal is coming along a treat. I assume that we can expect it to be ready for August. It is a cavernous building ... modeled on Heathrow?

In the meantime there is a new rule at the old terminal building and all the tour operator 'meet-and-greeters' have been asked to stand outside to relieve congestion in the arrivals hall. Normal Joe Soaps coming to meet a friend or relative are allowed in.

I assume this will all be over when the new terminal is active. In the meantime, the meet-and-greeters' are in good humour – at least there is no chance of rain ...



Batoka Mortuary

I drove along the road by Batoka Mortuary the other day. There is a brand new road connecting the roundabout to Kombe Drive, but the mortuary road has not been done. I stopped to ask the attendants if the road was to be tarred. They said they had been told that all the hospital roads would be resurfaced. I hope that is right. This is a nasty place in the rains as vehicles struggle to load coffins ... surely their time is sad enough without a bad road to cope with ???



Dogs

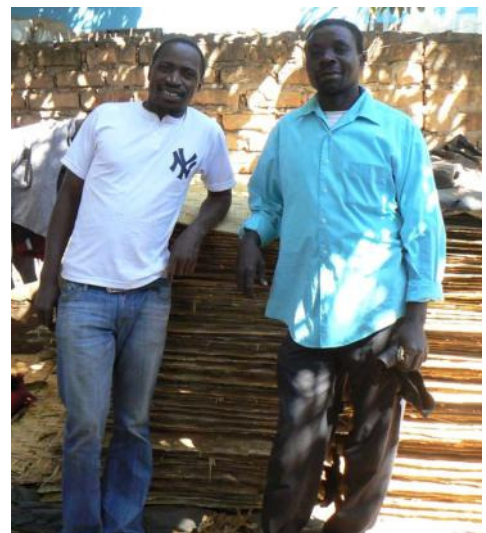
The number of dogs in Livingstone is becoming out of control. All night the dogs bark and run around the streets. Daytime is bad too with dogs running across the roads. I was surprised to hear on the radio that around 7 people per day go to one of the clinics in Livingstone with a dog bite. Now is the time of year when we get rabies in town. It is not a major issue but now and again dogs get rabid.

Surely something should be done. I know that they have had campaigns in Lusaka to rid the town of this menace. I am an animal lover but when I see these dogs in a terrible state, I feel they are having horrid lives and it is better to put them down rather than continue their sad existence which is also a threat to people.

In Botswana they used to set up satellite clinics to inoculate dogs against rabies. Once injected the top of heads of each dog was painted in red. A couple of days after this, all those dogs running around without a red head were shot. I don't know if this is the answer, but maybe the re-introduction of a dog licence??? Any ideas?

Lozi mats

I needed to buy some of the Lozi mats for my ceiling and found two chappies selling them near Maramba market. I know that people often want these mats so I thought I would let you know where to find them. If you go to the old Maramba walled-in market, go to the entrance and then look on the other side of the road you will see an alleyway – find them there.



New ZAWA Gate

I was told during the week that the new ZAWA Gate along Sichango Road has not been put in place to charge fees, which is a great relief for the businesses in the area and for all of us who go to the lodges, Boat Club, etc, within that section of the park.

I was not told why the gate has been constructed and can only assume that it is meant to beautify the area.

Also in the news this week was the pledge by ZAWA to restock the park. This is good news. According to a report in the Daily Mail:

Guy Robinson, ZAWA Board Chairman: *We are busy maintaining and erecting the last part of the fence in the park and we will soon be introducing some more animals into the park. We want to bring about 100 species just to boost the animal population in the park.*

Within the ZAWA game parks, we are building some camping sites and trying to sort out some places where our visitors can make stop-overs and have a meal. We will also put up some picnic spots because you can't camp in the park. These will be ready by the time we host the UNWTO general assembly.

Elephants

This week a team of three from Kenya has come to Livingstone to help control elephants with lights! This system has been in place in areas of Kenya for the past year and is working well. Not only does it stop elephants but lions too. Not that we have a lion problem but they do in Kenya.



It was found that if small flashing lights were fixed on trees or poles about 25 metres apart, elephants will not cross the invisible boundary. This is what is being done around the Mosi-oa-Tunya Park to stop them moving into town and farmland. Already lights have been put around farms in Linda which have been constantly hammered by elephants to the extent that the farmers have given up farming. Now, though, although the elephants appear around the farms they will not cross between the lights. Lights have also been put up near the Kazungula Road ZAWA Gate to stop them crossing into the Nakatindi Compound.



When I found the team on Saturday, they were looking at where to erect a 'barrier' to stop the elephants from encroaching on Livingstone from the park near Courtyard Hotel.

The team is heading to Victoria Falls Town during the coming week to help the people there too with keeping elephants where elephants should be and not in the town.

The lights have come from America where they have been used for years to control wildlife from entering towns. They are solar powered. The units are being nailed to trees and electricity poles.

From Acacia Parent Teachers Association

A huge thank you to all who attended and helped at the Acacia International School Bollywood Fundraising night. The event was a great success and helped to complete the funding towards a swimming pool at the school. This could not have happened without the wonderful support received.

From the Friends of Acacia fundraising committee.



International Cultural Arts Festival

21/22 June

Rhythm, music, arts and drums are coming to Livingstone Zambia to mark the Bicentenary of the birth of Dr David Livingstone, born 200 years ago. ...

The renowned UK Caribbean Steel Orchestra – The Melodians – will be coming to Livingstone to take part in the Festival. This will add a very different lively rhythm and beat to the Festival, yet one which also has its roots in Africa. ...

Sorry, but all I know of activities during the week is that The Melodians will be playing at the Waterfront on Thursday. The first session will be at 5.30pm with a second at 6.30pm. Entrance is free, so come and enjoy a sundowner with entertainment at the new Waterfront bar ... don't forget to have a look at the sacred ibis flying overhead just as the sun sets ...

Sex workers heading to Livingstone for the UNWTO

In a report in Mmegi, a Botswana newspaper, there was a report that Livingstone is the destination of choice for Zambian sex workers at the moment because of the up and coming UNWTO. From the report:

Lately, the Victoria Falls city of Livingstone is said to have become their destination of choice. Its new magnet status has all to do with it being one of the venues. Sex workers apparently see a lot of prospects and want to be well in position before it opens...

A sex worker who spoke anonymously in the mining city of Kitwe confirmed that the professionals have the upcoming conference on their radar and are eager for the pickings. "Most of our friends have gone to Livingstone to look for

accommodation as they prepare for the event," she said. Others were reported to be preparing to go and "work" from the Zimbabwean side to take advantage of the goings and comings between the two venues, which are being spruced up...

Police have now served notice that they will have none of it. ...

Events on the Way

21-22 June: Livingstone Festival

22 June: Kasane Music Festival

25 June: Put Foot Rally.

18-21 June: Southern Tourism, Agriculture and Commercial Show

21-22 June: International Cultural Arts Festival

29 June: Book Sale in aid of LAPS at Kubu Café. 9am

24-29 August: UNWTO

11-16 August: Cycle Zambia.

26 October: Zambezi Kayak Festival.

ZAMBIA

Shooting incident on Lake Kariba

During the week, according to reports, a tourist from Lusaka, shot at the lights of a kapenta rig. The tourist was annoyed with the noise from the kapenta rig which had positioned itself close to the house where he was staying with his family.

At first he got in his boat and went over to the rig to ask them to move but when they told him that the rig could not move and continued to fish, the man went back to his house and got a gun. He shot at the light, thereby disabling their ability to fish.

Although he was arrested he spent only a short time in cells and was then released.

Money Release for UNWTO Preparations

In a report this week the Zimbabwe government is to release funds for the UNWTO. The Minister of Tourism Walter Mzembe has requested for US\$6.5million but the report did not say if the total amount would be made available. Tendai Biti, the Minister of Finance, has mentioned previously that his government has many pressing demands on the Treasury; demands which needed to be tackled urgently.

However, having decided that money will be released, the UNWTO will be positive marketing for Zimbabwe. Tourism which used to be one of the mainstays of the Zimbabwe economy but dived into obscurity with the land invasions, has seen a comeback in certain areas, Victoria Falls Town being one of them.

Elections

According to many reports in the newspapers, the date for Zimbabwe elections will be 31 July 2013. However, many people outside Zimbabwe have said that the timing is wrong and that more needs to be done before they can take place. In an interview with the president, Robert Mugabe, he said that the opposition parties were scared because they knew they were going to lose ...

Zambezi Explorer

The Zambezi Explorer is a new boat on the Zimbabwe side of the Victoria Falls. Following in the heels of Livingstone, Zambia, where we have 4 large boats plying the river, Victoria Falls Town has also opted for a similar-sized boat. Up until now, many small boats have popped out of the banks of the Zambezi River on the Zim side at sundowner cruise time to beetle around the river.



Zambezi Traveller

So, is big better? I think both have their place. Big boats are good because they have proper toilets; passengers can walk around and chat to different groups of people instead of being stuck with one or two companions for the whole trip. Big boats too are taller therefore giving a better view. Small boats, though, can sneak into the gullies between islands finding wildlife, especially birds. And, for those who want to fish or have a more personal experience small is better.

Above are three of our large boats – Lady Livingstone and the African Queen and African Princess. They were all out on the river during the rowing regatta in 2011.

Below is the Makumbi, Livingstone's first large boat. It used to belong to Eagle Travel but was sold when companies were privatized in the 1990s to Safari Par Excellence.



Flight costs reduced

Information from Zim Newspapers ... (prices differ, so check it out for yourself)

Air Zimbabwe has reduced fares between now and 31 July.

Harare-Bulawayo (return) was US\$300 and is now US\$105

Harare-Vic Falls (return) was US\$420 and is now US\$180

Harare-Johannesburg (return) was US\$420 and is now US\$275

Don't Eat Elephant Meat

Public Relations Manager, Caroline Washaya-Moyo has warned people against eating elephant meat because poachers have turned to poison in order to kill them for their tusks.

Caroline Washaya-Moyo: Poachers have of late resorted to poaching elephants through the use of poison such as temick and cyanide. This unethical method tends to wipe out anything. The poison is either placed in water bodies and/or food.

Caroline Washaya-Moyo made this statement after three men were sentenced in Tsholotsho for poaching with cyanide. They were found with 162.5 kg of ivory, 1.5 kg of cyanide and a leopard skin. The men were sentenced to two years in prison and fined US\$100,000 to be paid to ZimParks as restitution.



Ester: Alpha female of the Kutanga pack

From The Painted Dog Foundation

"Jealous I'm tired. I'm actually falling asleep. I need you to drive, my friend."

Our day had started 17 hours earlier at 4am. We were now driving the 300km from Hwange to Bulawayo with Ester, the alpha female of the Kutanga pack, in the back of my Land Rover. Her leg was broken and we were taking her to Dr. Stevenage, the veterinarian in Bulawayo. It was 9pm.

The story really started three weeks ago on May 18th, when Jealous located the den of the Kutanga pack. He came to my office that morning with news that Ester had denned on the fringes of Dete Township. I looked at him with a mixture of disbelief and dismay.. I did not doubt Jealous for one second, why would I? My disbelief and dismay stemmed from the fact that the location was perhaps as poor a location as any painted dog could select to den. Dete is the main centre of human population in our core operating area and anywhere within five kilometres is often riddled with snares on any given day, despite the best efforts of Forestry Commission and our anti-poaching units.

Jealous and I drove out together that afternoon. We stopped first at the Forestry Commission office. I wanted to inform them that we would be active in the area for the next two months and also make plans for joint anti-poaching patrols with them. After this we drove the short distance towards the Kutanga den.



The road network allowed us to get approximately 500m from the den. We sat listening to the beep, beep, beep of the protective collars fitted on all four adults. Jealous and I discussed the situation with the same mix of disbelief and dismay. The den was no more than two kilometres from the centre of Dete. The chances of them surviving unscathed in this area, hunting day after day to feed rapidly growing pups, was slim indeed. There was nothing we could do now though.

Jealous monitored the pack daily, counting them out and counting them in as they hunted. On Monday June 3rd, sixteen days after locating the den, he saw Ester with a broken leg. The knee jerk response was obvious and we all talked about poachers and snares. Jealous worked around the clock to locate the dogs. On Thursday June 6th he detected the adults back at the den and that same evening he watched as the two males, Surf and BT, hunted down a kudu, feeding on it frantically as only painted dogs do, before the bigger more powerful predators can muscle in. With bulging stomachs they raced back to the den to feed Ester and her pups.

Ester joined the two males on Friday afternoon as they hunted again. This was the first opportunity we had had to take a good look at her since the initial incident and we were horrified by what we saw. She did the best she could to keep up with the males, her right hind leg terribly deformed with the bone exposed, and swinging loosely as she held it off the ground. She was terribly thin even by painted dog standards and I knew I had to get her to a veterinarian, and quickly. We called Dr. Stevenage who agreed to be on standby. Surf and BT failed to make a kill that evening and we located them again at 4am on Saturday morning. The males soon gave chase, racing into thick bush with Ester trailing far behind. I looked at Jealous; no words were needed as I drove my Land Rover off the road into the thick bush. Only four punctured tyres could stop us; physical damage to the car was of no concern. We located the dogs approximately 800 metres from the road. They had killed a duiker and were busily consuming the remaining morsels.

We were close and it would have been an easy shot to dart Ester with immobilizing drugs, but her distended stomach indicated that she was already very full of meat. Immobilizing her in such a condition was not an option, it is too dangerous for her, and so we simply watched them melt away into the bush. Our concern now switched to the pups. Painted Dogs with pups feed as quickly as they can and then race back to the den to feed the pups. Instead, Ester, Surf and BT walked slowly away before settling down to sleep beneath the leafy shade of a teak tree. With alarm bells ringing we raced to the den. After extensive searching our worst fears were confirmed.



We walked away speculating on what fate had befallen the pups after finding only a few small pieces of fur. We prepared ourselves for the evening, knowing that Ester, Surf and BT would visit the nearby waterhole. They did, and chased a herd of Kudu before separating out a sub adult female, who promptly took refuge in the waterhole. Ester eventually caught up and lay down as Surf and BT circled around and around the waterhole. As Ester had now digested her morning meal, I took aim and darted her. She hardly moved and quickly succumbed to the immobilizing drugs. As we got out of my Land Rover to get Ester, the kudu made a break for freedom but was caught by Surf and BT. We were happy that they would feed well and thus not move far away, making it easy for us to locate them again in the morning when we would return with Ester, who was now our absolute priority.

I phoned Dr. Stevenage to alert him and predicted that we would arrive in Bulawayo at 10pm. Thus we set off on the road to Bulawayo. At 9pm I pulled over to the side of the road, feeling tired. Mary Phiri sat in the

back of my Land Rover keeping a watchful eye on Ester, while Jealous and I swapped places and he drove us towards Bulawayo, handling the Land Rover well when we got a puncture! We quickly changed the wheel while Ester slept in the back of the Land Rover.

We arrived at Dr. Stevenage's surgery at 11pm. He was equally shocked by Ester's condition. Her broken leg was rotten, the flesh decomposing, septicaemia had set in and she was little more than skin and bone. Her body displayed all the signs of her brutally tough life in the wild. He estimated that she only had a day or so left to live and that her only chance of survival was if he amputated her leg, adding that she may not survive the operation. I looked at him and nodded, giving him my consent and so we took her life into our hands.

We watched him work, as tired and exhausted as we were. Drinking coffee and talking of the drive back and how we would care for Ester. Dr Stevenage worked quickly and professionally, removing Ester's leg and sewing her up. The surgery took a little more than two hours and we started to prepare the Land Rover and ourselves for the drive back.

Jealous and I talked about putting the collar back on Ester so that we would be able to monitor her once she was released back into the wild. We knew of an alpha female in Mana Pools, who had survived for three years after losing a leg, and we hoped Ester would survive as long.

As I fitted the collar and Dr. Stevenage began cleaning up, Ester stopped breathing. Emergency procedures, CPR and an adrenaline injection brought her around briefly, but she died on the operating table. Subsequent efforts could not bring her back.

We looked at each other, what could we say? After all of that effort we had failed to save her. With heavy hearts we placed her body into the transport box and left the surgery with quiet words of thanks and condolences exchanged.

It was 2 am; there was no need to make the long, dangerous drive back to Hwange now so we drove the short distance to Mary's home. I lay awake thinking about the drama of the day and our failure to save Ester, gaining a little comfort from the effort we had made. I thought about the dogs whose lives had intersected with mine over the years.

Eyespot, of course, Hamuka, Pelota, and Mashambo. I thought about the enormous contribution people like Jealous, Forggie and Wilton have made towards PDC. They are not the only ones of course; the list is too long to name everyone here. I thought about Dr. Stevenage and his staff who had dedicated their Saturday night to saving Ester and would not even consider charging us for his services and expertise. I thought about you, our supporters who provide so much. Your support buys the Land Rover I can rely on in such emergencies, it provides the diesel and even the dry Marie biscuits that were lunch and dinner on what had been the longest of days. Not exciting or romantic aspects of conservation work, but vital elements none the less.

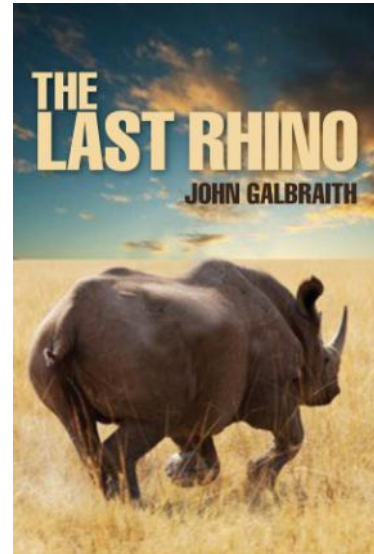
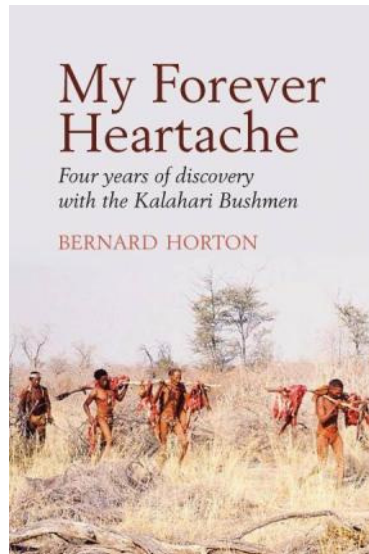
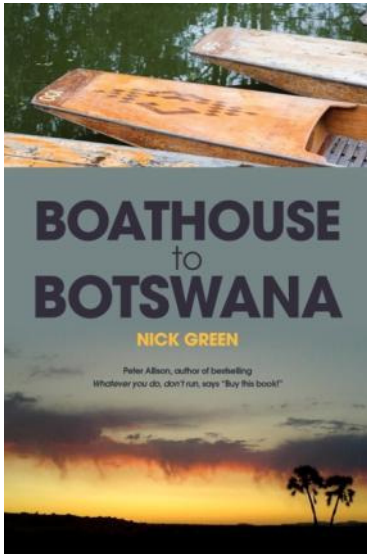
And so the healing began, though the scars will always remain.



New Publishing Company in Maun

Black Crane Books has just started operations in Botswana. The aim of the company is to promote local writing. Nick Green the owner of the company says, according to an article in Ngami Times, that there is a book in all of us.

Some of the books from the company:



NAMIBIA

Termite tech shapes new buildings

WRITTEN BY CHRIS BIRKLE

Researchers are investigating how termite mounds can be used to shape future buildings which feature walls that breathe as part of a major new international study involving Nottingham Trent University.

The N\$12,8 million (U\$1,35m) three year project will examine how the unique structure of the termite mound enables stale and fresh air to be exchanged while maintaining a comfortable level of temperature.

Described as a lung by the researchers, the termite mound is the only habitat known in the animal kingdom to have been proven to exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide without losing heat, which enables termites to live in harsh climates they could not otherwise inhabit.

One of the ultimate aims of the project is to create buildings which feature walls that breathe in the same way and reduce the need for central heating or air conditioning. ...

Read more on:

http://www.informante.web.na/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12039:termite-tech-shapes-new-buildings&catid=23:environment&Itemid=111

Poachers are well connected, says Kagasheki (Tanzania)

By Rodgers Luhwago

The presence of a sophisticated network of rich people and fear by the public to engage in the practice of 'naming and shaming' of individuals engaging in poaching fuel illegal hunting in the country, the government has admitted. The minister for Tourism and Natural Resources, Ambassador Khamis Kagasheki mid this week put this point blank at a seminar for senior media personnel who attended a workshop in Iringa, organised by the Tanzania National Parks (Tanapa).

"Poaching is depleting our valuable natural resources, especially elephants and rhinos in our game reserves and national parks. Very unfortunately, this business involves rich people who have formed a very sophisticated network," the minister told news editors. The ministry was determined to combat poaching, including taking punitive measures against individuals suspected to be involved in the malpractices, irrespective of their social status, he stated.

If deliberate, concerted efforts are not taken by stakeholders, including the government, the media and the general public to expose individuals engaging in poaching, elephants and rhinos will be facing extinction in the nearest future.

Ambassador Kagasheki who was vividly angered and pained by experts' reports on poaching of elephants and rhinos in the country, said it was high time the media and the general public named and shamed individuals engaging in poaching without fear. "It's now time to name and shame people engaging in this menace. Even if it is me, say it. We must fight against this scourge at all costs," Kagasheki stressed. The minister also raised concern on incidents whereby containers loaded with ivory are shipped to the Far East through the Dar es Salaam port in the presence of government-trusted officials.

"It is unconceivable for a container loaded with elephant teeth (tusks) to pass through the port in the presence of Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA), customs and port officials undetected," he said. ...

WOLFGANG'S COLUMN

BUDGET RESTORES VAT ON HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

The budget announcement yesterday afternoon, made by Uganda's Finance Minister Maria Kiwanuka, that the VAT exemption for hotel accommodation will be withdrawn, has sent shockwaves down the spines of the hospitality industry. VAT in Uganda presently stands at 18 percent and if the proposal is passed by parliament into law, the cost of hotel accommodation in the country could rise by a corresponding figure. This would translate into significantly higher cost for tourists visiting the country as well as for conference organizers and conference participants. Combined with a further tax increase on petrol and diesel by 50 Uganda Shillings per liter which will undoubtedly find its way too into quotations for transport, the net result will be that visits to Uganda will become even more costly.

In addition was VAT introduced on the supply of water, again impacting heavily on the cost of running restaurants and hotels, as will the introduction of VAT on wheat flour, hitherto exempted as a basic necessity. ...

NAIROBI COMMUTERS GET WIFI IN THEIR MATATUS

Kenya's leading mobile company, Safaricom, has yesterday launched another innovation, when they introduced WIFI for commuters in their 'matatus', a widely used form of transport by Kenyans not owning cars or not wanting to sit in the notorious traffic jams wasting their own petrol. According to information received from Nairobi, some 20 commuter vehicles have already installed a router through which passengers can now connect through their 3G enabled smart phones or tablets, staying connected with friends on Facebook or ranting about traffic problems on Twitter. ...



HAVE THE GAMEKEEPERS TURNED POACHERS?

News broke yesterday evening that the Kenya Wildlife Service has suspended at least 32 senior personnel, now suspected to have participated in poaching or aided poaching gangs through various means across Kenya.

KWS Executive Director William Kiprono confirmed the development when presiding over the annual Mt. Longonot Wheel Barrow Race and reaffirmed that should the internal investigations now underway find those accused guilty, they would be dismissed and charged in courts of law to face justice.

Kenya's elephant and rhino population but also other species have come under increasing threat in recent years, when poaching was re-kindled to levels last seen in the late 1970's and 1980's. In recent weeks have several massacres among the elephant population, and the killing of several rhinos in one single week, raised public alarm and triggered action on several levels, including on the political front.

Kenya's cabinet last week sanctioned a package of measures to introduce to parliament for amendments to the Wildlife Act, aimed at increasing fines and raising jail terms for those found poaching, trading and otherwise being involved in illicit trade of rhino horns, blood ivory and other trophies. ...

AROUND THE LODGES

Kaingu Safari Lodge, Kafue National Park

Burning firebreaks around the lodge tonight. Bo (3rd from left and team leader) has been on a four day fire management course with ZAWA and has come back fired up to demonstrate his knowledge.



Kariba Bush Club, Siansowa

Getting up close and personal on our legendary tour of the local crocodile conservancy !!



Leopard Lodge, Kafue National Park

Rangers Diary 27th May – 2nd June 2013

On Monday early in the morning a lion walked from our restaurant, growling as he went in the direction of Chalet 1. There he turned and walked down to the river for a drink. He then strolled up to Chalet 2 where he lay down for a couple of hours before moving into the bush.

A male and 3 female lions also visited the lodge on numerous occasions during the week.

Ginger, our resident lion, gave guests a fright of their lives, as just as they pulled up from a game drive; he let out a mighty roar. He moved towards the vehicle and stood about 8m away from it before moving off and walked past all the chalets. He lay down at Chalet 5 where he spent most of the night.

On another night I woke to a purrrrrrrrrrrrr purrrrrrrrr. I got my torch and shone through the window; there they were. Ginger outstretched some 4 meters from my door and a lioness one meter from him cleaning her fur. They stayed there until 05h45 before moving off. ...

Elephants have been regular visitors to the Lodge this week. They are doing a lot of destruction of our trees.

We also had a lovely sighting of a large herd of elephants with babies, 3 of which were only a few days old, drinking from the river just across from the lodge



Royal Zambezi Lodge

Wishing all their friends 'Happy Fathers Day'



THE SMILE

From Ngami Times

As Maun is an aviation town, here are a few jokes about flying (localised, of course):

"Weather at our destination is 50 degrees with some broken clouds, but they'll try to have them fixed before we arrive.

Thank you, and remember, nobody loves you, or your money, more than Air Botswana.

As you exit the plane, please make sure to gather all of your belongings. Anything left behind will be distributed evenly among the flight attendants. Please do not leave children or spouses.

Last one off the plane must clean it.

And from the pilot during his welcome message: "We are pleased to have some of the best flight attendants in the industry ...Unfortunately none of them are on this flight...!"

Have a good week

Gill