



Dear All

My header is from Mongwe, Zimbabwe, on the Zambezi River between Chirundu and Mana Pools.

I must apologise about the lack of a Weekly last week. I arrived home from a trip to Mongwe, Gwabi and Lochinvar on Sunday, too tired to even contemplate a Weekly. You will find out why when you read my report on Lochinvar in a couple of weeks.

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### Livingstone in Joyous Mode

When I returned to Livingstone after a couple of weeks away, I could feel a positive vibe in the air. The roads are being done, there is work going on at a new bus terminus along Nakatindi Road and the new market, I assume, is being worked on. Some artists are erecting a statue on a roundabout between Kabompo and Kombi Drive.



On the radio I am listening to the daily countdown to the UNWTO, about the garden competition which has been initiated by the Livingstone City Council and about the directive from Council to 'get your buildings painted'.

It would appear that Livingstone has come alive and really wants to show itself off for our visitors during the UNWTO. We still have lots to do but if we can keep up the momentum, Livingstone will become a fresh new city with a happy atmosphere in August.

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## Alberta Oilsands eyes eastern Zambia rift basins

From Oil & Gas Journal

Alberta Oilsands Inc., Calgary, has agreed to acquire an 80% interest in petroleum exploration licenses covering three rift basins in eastern Zambia.

Subject to TSX Venture Exchange approval, Alberta Oil Sands would acquire blocks 42, 44, 52, 54, 55, 57, and 58 which total 18 million acres, and a pending application on Block 25 in the Lake Tanganyika basin, Luangwa Rift, and the Cabora Bassa (Lake Kariba)/Mid-Zambezi trough.

Sellers are British Virgin Island and Zambian entities, and local partners will control the remaining 20% of the licenses.

Alberta Oil Sands said the acquisition would give it a presence in three new rifts and critically a full license on Lake Tanganyika. Block 54 is adjacent to Tanzanian lake acreage held by Beach Energy Ltd., Adelaide, which is concluding interpretation of a major seismic program.

## ZIMBABWE

### Mongwe

I had decided that I wanted to go and see Mongwe and planned a trip around travelling between Harare and Livingstone. The plan was to go via Chirundu border thereby being able to visit Mongwe and then into Lochinvar National Park. It was supposed to be a short trip but ended up being longer than expected as my car broke down in Lochinvar ...

Mana Pools National Park, Sapi and Chewore Safari Areas form the World Heritage Site in Zimbabwe. Over the river in Zambia, Lower Zambezi and Chiawa are hoping to be included in the World Heritage Site. The whole area is part of a Transfrontier Conservation Area in the making. I wanted to have a look at Mongwe which is in Hurungwe Safari Area, next door to Mana. Mongwe is well known for its fishing. In fact, it only advertises fishing as its attraction. I wanted to see if there was more to it than fishing.

Mwinilunga Safaris had offered me a camping spot at Mongwe. They also have a house which was booked up, but I am always happy to camp, so off we set ... tent and camping gear piled up on the car ...

We had left Harare late-ish which is pretty normal for Josh and I as we never seem to get ourselves organised. The Harare-Chirundu road was not pleasant with a lot of traffic, especially trucks. The road is not very wide and the hard shoulders have not been repaired for many years so the road seems to drop off at the edge. Although Zimbabwe seems to be much better than Zambia at maintaining its roads by filling in



potholes they neglect the hard shoulder and this is leading to the breaking up of the edges and narrowing of the drivable surface.

Anyhow, we arrived at the Mongwe Road sign 6 km before Chirundu and took a very nice dirt road through the bush.

The roads winds through the woodland and jesse bush. Jesse bush is a mixture of thicket trees, mostly Combretum, which form dense foliage much loved by animals. It is common in this area and in Mana Pools.

We easily found Mongwe 18 km down the road but, by this time it was getting late and the sun was going. We needed to find our campsite for the night and to get the tent up.



Mongwe has several camps and campsites. Some years ago the camps were sold off to individuals and companies; there didn't seem to be much order. We drove around trying to find a sign to tell us which was ours. We found some men working and asked them but they didn't know. As we were leaving, one man carrying a fishing rod shouted at us to stop. We said we were in a hurry, he shouted: *You will talk to me. Where is your permit?*

His name was Josiah and he was the game scout for Mongwe on duty at the time. I told him that we did not have a permit, but would get one from him in the morning. Now, we just needed to find our campsite and get the tent up before it was dark.

*You will talk to me like a human being*, he said. *I am in charge of this area. You were supposed to get a permit at Marongora before entering here.*

After explaining that we had not been informed about the necessity of paying park fees at Marongora and doing a bit of groveling, Josiah allowed us to leave to find our camp. Eventually with a bit of help, we did, and, of course, now it was dark.

We put up the tent with the aid of the car headlights, ate a sandwich and went to bed.

The morning dawned beautifully with kingfishers and fish eagles chattering to each other. The Zambezi River was high and I sat with a cup of coffee by the water watching the river change colours as the sun rose. A croc patrolled the water's edge. The escarpment on the Zambian side lightened with the sun, showing up all its ridges. Stunning.



Josiah arrived at some point, now in his Scout uniform and had replaced his fishing rod with an AK47. He sat down to chat and seemed much more amenable than the previous day. We talked about the problems he faced at Mongwe; he mostly complained about Zambians coming over to the Zimbabwe side to fish illegally and to poach. I asked him if there was any cooperation between the two countries and he said that he didn't know of any.

He also told me that I could pay my park fees in Chirundu and gave me directions to the parks office. He left.

The camp has its own ablution block and kitchen so when the chappie came to clean around the surroundings I asked him about some hot water. He said that as we had not paid park fees we were not allowed to have any firewood to heat the water ...

The camp was quite pleasant but without hot water we were a bit stuffed. I know I will want to revisit Mongwe when the bush is less dense and I have paid for firewood and park fees!

We decided that we would pack up, take a slow drive through the bush and cross the border at Chirundu. We knew Chirundu was going to be a nightmare – it has that reputation.

In the meantime we met Rod Huck who also has a camp at Mongwe and he said we could go and have a shower at his place, which we did. This camp has, I think, 8 tented ensuite chalets and a main boma. Very nice. Contact Rod for details on 0772 239197.

My thoughts on Mongwe: I love rivers, especially the Zambezi, but I am not a fishing fanatic. Mongwe now has a 5 km exclusion zone. Being within a hunting area, this is for safety reasons. I wondered if the Mongwe experience could be improved by some roads through the bush to view the wildlife. For me, it certainly would have improved it. I think, though, that our stay there was spoilt by the attitude of Josiah. I really wish that Wildlife Officers were given some guidance on how to deal the people as well as how to



deal with animals. I was to find out a few days later that Zambian Wildlife Officers have the same lack of tuition ...



The drive through the bush was really pretty – we saw one ele and some impala too. And then we headed to the Chirundu border and the much-feted One Stop Border Post.

Before going to the border we toured Chirundu to find the Parks Office to pay our park fees. We went along every road and found no office. So, knowing that I owe ZimParks US\$25, I think, I gave up and decided that I would pay next time I go to Vic Falls.



The approach road to the border was littered with trucks. We did not know where to go and there were no signs. After taking 2 wrong turns we found the right road which led onto the old bridge. We were the only ones crossing at the time but a man sitting on the bridge had his sign which told us to “Stop”. We did. As soon as we had stopped he swiveled the sign round to say we could “Go”. The importance of being a Sign Swiveler ...

We arrived on the Zambian side which acts as the entry into Zambia. We found ourselves behind a bus-load of people and there was only one Zimbabwe Immigration official and one Zambia Immigration official. So although the buildings were very smart, the efficiency left a lot to be desired. We had to get a visa for Josh and were taken to a small office at the side of the main entrance where the Zambian Immigration officer neatly wrote out a whole-page visa and pasted it into the passport. Altogether we spent about an hour getting through ...



I thought about our UNWTO and wondered how long it was going to take to process all our visitors during that time when they wish to cross between Zambia and Zimbabwe. If our experience at Chirundu is anything to go by, the delegates, media and visitors during the UNWTO will be spending half their time in queues as they wait for their visas. I am assuming that the Zambian and Zimbabwean governments have got a solution to this ...

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### **New Victoria Falls City**

During a ceremony at Victoria Falls Airport, Walter Mzembi, Minister of Tourism, stated that land had been allocated for a new Victoria Falls City. The city was to be modeled on Niagara Falls City and be home to hotels, theme parks and casinos. 1,200 ha has been allocated to the project on the road to the airport. There are also plans to develop Kariba and Masvingo for tourism.

I think we have heard all this before. When the UNWTO meeting was announced to take part at the Victoria Falls, to be shared between Zambia and Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe government pledged to build massive infrastructure. It didn't happen. It didn't happen for two reasons. Firstly the government has no money and secondly the private sector would not take on the challenge. The situation has not changed.

Until Zimbabwe sorts out its political situation and tourists feel comfortable visiting Zimbabwe, the tourism industry cannot be revived. So, the plan to build a new Victoria Falls City will be a pipe dream and maybe is just being mooted for political means.

Meanwhile Victoria Falls Town is gearing itself up for the UNWTO. According to reports, the private sector has spent around US\$16million in upgrades for their hotels. The government is working on the airport and roads; electricity and waterworks have been improved, as has internet connection and medical facilities.

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### **Air Zimbabwe on the move**

Air Zimbabwe, according to reports, has resumed its daily flights to Bulawayo and Victoria Falls as well as flights to Johannesburg.

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### **Painted Dogs on the increase in Hwange?**

From Painted Dog Foundation

While Greg and I were travelling the world searching for much needed funding to keep PDC moving forward, Jealous, Mary and MK were searching Hwange National Park for dogs. They discovered a "new" pack of nine dogs (five adults and four pups) in the western region of the park. It's great news and with the rains ending, the team are able to increase the time they spend in the bush and thus will be even more active, searching for this pack and others in the region.

Jealous also had to intervene to save a dog we know as "MK". During one of his early morning searches for the Kutanga pack, Jealous saw that "MK" had a snare cutting deeply into her neck. Greg and I were away so he called on our friend and neighbour Brent Stapelkamp to help him. Thankfully Brent was able to dart and anaesthetise "MK". They took "MK" to our Rehabilitation Facility and removed the snare, cleaned



the wound and gave her an injection of long-acting antibiotic. After a few days rest and lots of food she was successfully released back into the wild to re-join her pack.

Greg and I were thankfully successful on our fundraising trip in the USA and Europe. It is your continued support and generosity that will help this pack and many more survive and thrive. We really cannot do this without you and thank you again for caring as much as we do.

### **The Annual Wildlife and Environment Quiz**

Wildlife and Environment Zimbabwe (WEZ) run this National event. PDC promoted the local schools' involvement as a way to further expose our local students to issues affecting local wildlife and to assist in improving the Science pass-rate in the Grade 7 General Paper in the schools within our core operating areas. The quiz has gained public attention in recent years and "quiz season" kicked off with great excitement.

The 15 participating schools in our core operating area were grouped into three clusters according to geographical locations. PDC vehicles then drove the cluster winners to the finals venue in Dete over a distance of more than 200km. The finals have become a hugely popular event attended by hundreds of people. This year, the children from Sir Roy Welensky School won for the second time in a row, and the children from Ndangababi School were runners up. Both Schools will represent the area at the Provincial Wildlife and Environment Zimbabwe Quiz in Bulawayo later this year.



We are particularly proud that this year children who had attended our special 2012 Kids for Science Bush Camp represented all of the Schools. This is, indeed, evidence of the impact of our education programmes and their effectiveness in increasing knowledge and awareness about wildlife, conservation and broader environmental issues.

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### **ZIMBABWE'S WETLANDS (INCLUDING MANA POOLS): A FIRST STEP TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION**

From the Zambezi Society

Eight of Zimbabwe's wetland areas (including Mana Pools) are soon to be officially included in the RAMSAR Convention's List of Wetlands of International Importance.

The following was posted online in RAMSAR News on 28th January 2013:-

Zimbabwe's accession to the Ramsar Convention

The Ramsar Secretariat is delighted to welcome Zimbabwe to the Ramsar family as its 164th Contracting Party.

UNESCO has confirmed that the instrument of accession and the names and maps of seven Wetlands of International Importance (Victoria Falls National Park, Mana Pools, Monavale Wetland, Lake Chivero and Manyame, Driefontein Grasslands, Chinhoyi Caves, and Cleveland Dam) were received on 3 January 2013, so that the Convention will come into force for Zimbabwe on 3rd May of this year.

The Ramsar Information Sheets for these new sites are still being prepared by the government, and we will be posting more details as soon as they are made available. ...

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## **POACHERS KILL RHINO NEAR MAUN**

From the Ngami Times

Rhino poachers have struck within 30km of Maun. Four of the five men who killed and dehorned a rhino at Tsotsia cattle post near Nxaraga settlement have appeared before Maun principal magistrate Clifford Foroma.

The four - Morafe Disalahoo aged 61. Jacob Thabare (43), Keorapetse Itheetseng (34) and George Thimbumburu (38) - have been granted bail on condition that they report daily at Maun Police. The fifth man, who is said to be in possession of the missing horn, is still at large. ...

The rhino that was poached was over the buffalo fence at Nxaragain the company of two others which had some years ago been relocated to the Moremi Game Reserve. It is the first known incident so close to Maun.

Maun Police Station Commander Kenny Badumetse said they, with the assistance from members of Botswana Defence Force (BDF) and officials from the Department of Wildlife, launched a massive manhunt for the people who killed the rhino. He said the killing, in which both horns were removed, was reported on April 3. He said poaching has become rife in the district as most animals roam freely from the parks and other neighbouring wildlife areas.

The incident was also confirmed by Ngamiland Regional Wildlife Officer, Bolt Othomile, who said investigations into the matter are still ongoing, and that they are hopeful that arrests will be made. He said the Nxaraga killing is the first ever in Ngamiland - a region with insignificant rhino population.

Like the police, Othomile has appealed to members of the public to assist with information that could lead to the apprehension of the suspected poachers.

## **Kasane Elephants**

Meanwhile, relations between humans and elephants have taken a nose dive after yet another bloody encounter in Kazungula over the weekend. This comes in the wake of another brush with death scenario in which an elephant left a young man with broken limbs in the Plateau area of Kasane. The latest confrontation involved another man who had gone to help chase away elephants that were damaging crops at Tshenyo Solomon's farm.

"One of the elephants got angry and started charging at us and the gentleman immediately shot at the elephant with a rifle but it did not die," Solomon told BOPA.

The elephant battered the man, breaking the rifle in the process before leaving the scene oozing blood from gun shots.

This latest attack did not only worsen the conflict between humans and elephants, it also aggravated the already fragile relations between Solomon's farm and the tourism sector, which relied heavily on elephants' availability to entertain tourists. To demonstrate their displeasure, two of the neighbouring lodges pulled out of his supply list and they were threatening to lobby other lodges to follow suit. Solomon said that elephants wreak havoc on his farm almost every day –

"In fact, it is not just the elephants, but baboons and warthogs also play their part," he said.

However, when he did the seemingly reasonable act of fighting back with a rifle, he encountered friction with lodge owners who complained that he was scaring away and unsettling their customers who loved the place primarily for its elephants.

“There are two lodges which have complained about this to me but I also have my business interests to look after. Their business should not come at my own expense,” he said.

Grant Nel, of Enviro 911 Neighbourhood Watch, attributed the economic success of the Chobe region on its reliance on elephants. It is estimated that there are about 71 000 elephants in the Chobe region, according to the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP).

“Even the farmers' business would not be doing well if this place was not so rich in elephants and wild animals,” Nel said.

He explained that his organisation mainly deals with illegal environmental issues such as poaching, but of late the human-wildlife conflict had taken priority. Nel said chasing elephants with rifles and firing gunshots was not solving any problem and he anticipated that things were going to get worse with drought expected in the region this year. He called on farmers to adequately protect their farms against elephant invasion but Solomon felt that they were doing enough, having electric fences around their farms and even going as far as trying out the chilli-pepper pilot project, which is said to keep elephants away. Even though it was still at pilot stage, some farmers had already dismissed it as “useless” as elephants still managed to make their way into the farms. Nel said in future when allocating land, wildlife corridors must be considered – “Farms should be allocated away from wildlife corridors and there is need for education on the importance of wildlife in this region,” he said and emphasised that commercial farmers and tourism enterprises must not infringe on each other's business.

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## NAMIBIA

### **An Expensive Borehole Repair for Namuntoni**

From Informanté

THE Namibia Wildlife and Resorts, has been duped into paying over N\$500 000 for repairs done to a borehole at Namutoni in the Etosha National Park. The Namibian learned that the tourism parastatal spent N\$560 000 on ‘quick fix’ repairs to the borehole at Namutoni.

Sources from the company told The Namibian that the amount has come under scrutiny after the company recently received another quote to fix the same borehole and the new quotation is 16 times less than what the company initially paid.

The borehole started overflowing in 2010 and as a result the resort area was flooded. The company then called in the services of a company called Rich Enterprises CC, to do a ‘quick fixing’ job to stop the borehole from leaking and overflowing.

Documents seen by The Namibian state that the NWR board was advised in 2011, that work done and time spent working on the borehole does not justify the N\$560 000 paid to the company. The board was further advised to call Rich Enterprises back, so that the company rectifies and re-does the work properly or pay back the money.

The board is said to have ignored the said advice.

Interestingly, by July last year, the borehole started leaking again.

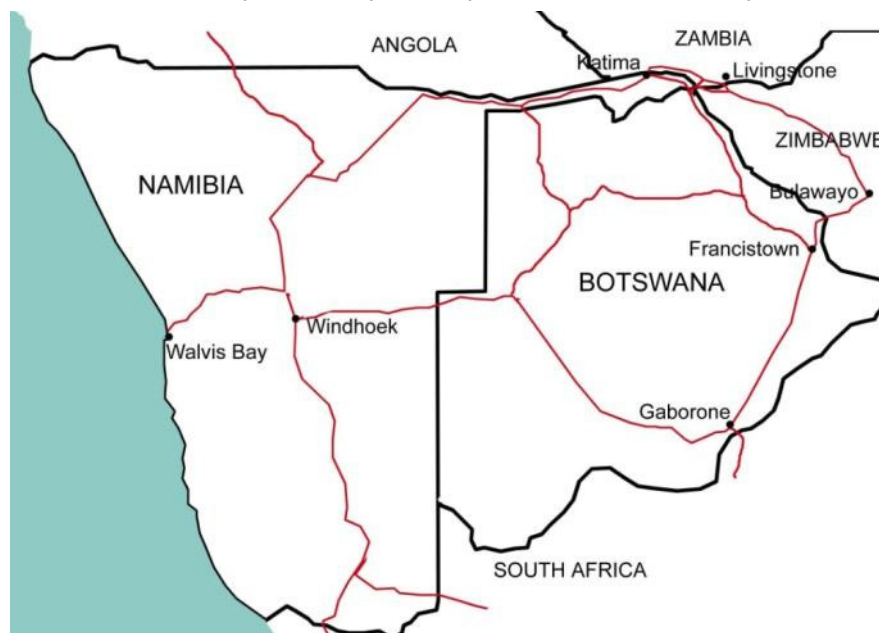
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## Trans Caprivi Corridor

Namibia is working on its infrastructure from Walvis Bay to the Caprivi Strip and Katima Mulilo to promote trade in the region.

There is already a well-used TransKalahari Highway between Walvis Bay and Gaborone, Botswana. Now Namibia is concentrating on the TransCaprivi Highway to Zambia.

In a recent report, Namport has donated N\$700,000 for construction of a school hall at a local school in Katima Mulilo. *Namport said it is committed to capacity building and skills development since a country can only be as developed as the capacity of its human resources.*



As trade improves between African countries and we all become richer there is going to be more trucks plying these major routes. My main concern, of course, is that all these trucks on the TransCaprivi Highway are going to come through Livingstone. We really have to have a ring road to save our town.

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## WOLFGANG'S COLUMN

### KENYA NABBS MORE BLOOD IVORY SMUGGLERS

A Vietnamese national was arrested earlier in the week at Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, when he was found with nearly 34 kilogrammes of carved and cut up ivory. Reports from Nairobi speak of almost 500 pieces of ivory, painted brown to look like soap stone, detected by security officials as the culprit tried to board a plane to fly to Bangkok and on to Vietnam. ...

### CONTROVERSIAL GOLF COURSE PROJECT BACK IN THE NEWS

When presiding over the passing out of over 400 new Uganda Wildlife Authority rangers last week, President Museveni again let fly over his disappointment, if not outright anger, for having been defied in the past by UWA, NEAM and the conservation fraternity at large, to give permission to a lodge operator in Murchisons Falls National Park for the establishment of an 18 hole golf course. ...

Tourism Minister Maria Mutagamba was quoted in local media to have responded to President Museveni's demands by stating that an agreement was recently reached with the company to establish a golf course outside the park, where land will be availed to them, reportedly at the Karuma side of the wider area.

*'Why these people continue to demand for such lunatic projects defeats any normal thinking person. It is contrary to conservation and they know it. They got to the president but at least UWA and NEMA dug in their heels and made it clear it is not possible. ... conservation is not a toy for corporate giants in Uganda. We are watching them'* ranted a regular source with links to both conservation and safari operations, when discussing the matter yesterday.

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### Niumbaha Superba: New Genus Of Bat Identified In South Sudan

From Science 20

Researchers visiting South Sudan identified a new genus of bat after discovering a rare specimen and determining the bat was the same as one originally captured in nearby Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1939 and named *Glauconycteris superba* but that it did not fit with other bats in the genus *Glauconycteris*.

They placed this bat into a new genus - Niumbaha. The word means "rare" or "unusual" in Zande, the language of the Azande people in Western Equatoria State, where the bat was captured. The bat is just the fifth specimen of its kind ever collected, and the first in South Sudan, which declared independence in 2011.



## THE SMILE

### Elephant rescue in Namibia

By Jana-Mari Smith

“Images of an elephant being rescued from a potentially fatal set of circumstances in Damaraland on Sunday 17 February have captured the hearts and minds of Namibians and animal lovers the world over.

A few brave souls struggled for hours under the searing African sun to rescue an adult female elephant trapped for more than 11 hours in a drain at a campsite in the vicinity of the Burnt Mountain. “It was clear that she realised we were helping her,” said Archie van der Merwe, one of her rescuers, after the time. The elephant remained calm for most of her ordeal, patiently going along with the game plan devised to release her from her predicament.



Fears that the elephant would die from heat and stress spurred the Good Samaritans on, despite several obstacles, such as waiting for officials from Windhoek to arrive and come to her rescue. When the Samaritans realised that the officials would not arrive in time, and that the elephant would have to be shot if she remained caught in the drain, they dug their heels in and began the long process to free her.

As told by Archie, a sea safari guide at Laramon Tours in Swakopmund, a herd of elephants had



entered the White Lady Lodge at about midnight the previous night.

Several campers reported the next day that they had heard a commotion around that time, but thought it had been caused by one of the donkeys roaming the area. The next morning, at around seven, an employee told Archie about the elephant trapped in the drain.

On inspection, it emerged that she had stepped onto a drain cover, which had broken under her weight. Her body was stuck solidly in the 1.6-metre hole and she could barely move. By that time she had already been trapped for seven hours.

Despite nature conservation personnel saying they were unable to help until assistance from Windhoek arrived, Archie and other campers from South Africa and Namibia decided to take action immediately, knowing full well that on a Sunday the likelihood of help arriving in time was slim. Their plan was to gradually fill the pit with sand and stones, 20 centimetres at a time, to enable the elephant to manoeuvre herself step by step onto higher ground.

Once she had eased her large body onto the higher elevation and had calmed down, they would add the next layer of sand and rocks. Every few minutes, someone would carefully hose water over the pachyderm, to ensure that she remained hydrated. In view of the searing heat, the stressed animal was most certainly kept alive by these thoughtful actions.

And so they continued patiently under the blazing sun for the next three hours, the distressed elephant only centimetres away from them. Eventually, when she was standing about 70 centimetres deep, she was able to heave her tired body completely out of the drain that had become her living hell.

Just a little rest – which lasted an hour Archie said she was clearly exhausted and deeply stressed by the circumstances. At one point, with two legs out of the hole, she sat down and rested for an hour. Her rescuers remained close to her, dousing her with water every now and then. Then, a mere two steps later, she was free! A member of the Elephant Humans Relations Aid (EHRA) organisation, Wayne, who had also assisted with the rescue operation, later told Archie that the herd had remained in the vicinity.



They saw her standing on her toes – an elephant ‘smoke signal’ – to let her family know she was fine. These foot-induced ‘smoke signals’ can be heard up to 10 kilometres away.

In the afternoon, before Archie and his family returned to their home in Swakopmund, they took a last photograph of Ollie standing peacefully in the nearby bush, grazing as if her ordeal had never happened.” – Travel News Namibia

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Have a good week

Gill

### **Business Directory**

The Business Directory is ready. The cost is K20 retail, K15 wholesale (10 or more). There are some at Falls Park Service Station and I will deliver to Kubu Café and other outlets during the week.



If your passion is cycling, you love the bush and you need a weekend away, you can combine all three and take part in the exciting, second Kasanka Challenge on the 25th of May in the surrounds of Kasanka National Park.

Whether you are a Racing Snake and want to do the 52 km Challenge, or a Weekend Cruiser who will be happy to complete the 22 km intermediate race, there is something for all and even a kid's race to keep it all in the family.

Accommodation and entries can be booked at  
[wasa@kasanka.com](mailto:wasa@kasanka.com)