



Dear All

My header is the Red Nose Team passing Kayube Estate on Wednesday. They were having an easy day after tackling the rapids upstream.



Karien and Peter from Wild Side Tours had erected a sign along the river bank informing the expedition that there were hippos ahead but that the crocodiles had been gagged. The staff and some friends entertained the boaters as they paddled past with some drumming, singing and dancing.

My plan was to find them later in the week at The Waterfront, but my son brought home a nasty virus which he happily passed on to all and sundry, leaving me, 'man down' until today.

Nunda River Lodge

Continuing our trip to Botswana and Namibia ...

(I left off a couple of paragraphs in my story of Ngoma Lodge last week. You can find it all on: www.storiesbeyondthevictoriafalls.wordpress.com)

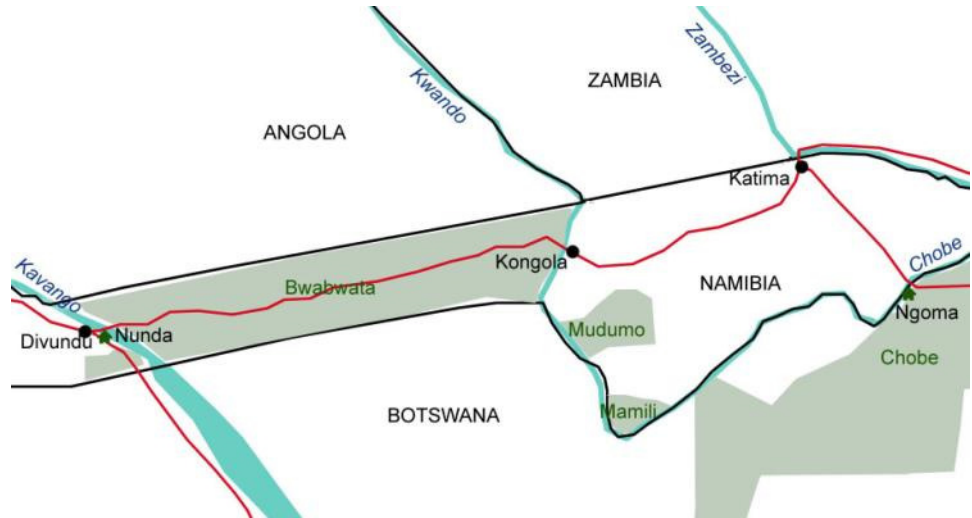
We left Ngoma early-ish and headed to the Ngoma Border with Namibia. This is a very quiet border and the officials are friendly and efficient. We did have to undergo a rather thorough search but I didn't mind –

the officials are searching all vehicles for rhino horn and elephant tusks. We were to go through a few of these roadblocks in Botswana and Namibia.

A bridge takes the road across the Chobe Floodplain and there are a couple of picnic spots in No-Man's-Land to enjoy the view.

The view at this time of year is a confusing one because whereas the Batswana are banned from fishing in the river to allow the fish stocks to breed and regenerate the river, the Namibians have no such ban and are all out in their makoras with nets strung along all the reedbeds ... surely something is wrong somewhere. As far as I

am aware, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia all ban fishing on their rivers for the first three months of the year to allow for breeding ... so why not Namibia? It seems very unfair ... According to information on the internet, Botswana is having meetings with Namibia through Zambezi Watercourse Commission and the Okavango Watercourse Commission to harmonise the situation. It seems to me quite obvious that the ban has to apply to Namibians as well ... we owe it to the life of the rivers ...



I digressed ...

Katima Mulilo is about 70 km from Ngoma on a tar road. It is a good shopping centre, but there are no bureaux de change, only banks to change money – and banking hours are short. We changed some money, did some shopping for essential supplies. There was no camping gas in town – we went all over – so we would have to rely on charcoal. We set off west to Kongola and Bwabwata National Park. All along the road through Bwabwata there are signs telling drivers to beware of elephant. I had never seen one ever on my journey through the park, but today we were lucky. I was very happy and excited.



There is also a project on hyena within Bwabwata and it was good to see signs up warning drivers of hyena on the road. This road is a main road and although signs tell drivers to keep to 80 kph, few do so. At night when the hyena are more active, the signs are a good reminder to motorists.



I had decided to stay at Nunda River Lodge instead of Ngepi, where I had stayed before. I had enjoyed Ngepi but wanted to see a different place. Nunda was not far down the road from Divundu, so we made it in good time to get the tent up and make supper before it got dark.

The campsites are all individual, each with its own bench, table, electric point and tap. It is a real treat

to have everything nearby and makes camping much easier. We were to find that most campsites were much the same – an indication that tour operators in Namibia are busy and have listened to the needs of their guests.



I didn't have much of a look around Nunda because it was an overnight stay only. The main buildings were full of interesting stuff like books, maps and traditional crafts. The deck overlooked the Kavango River and we could hear Popa Falls in the distance. In the morning we had a quick chat with Cameron, the owner, who told us a bit about the history of the lodge – old farmland which had been lovingly planted with trees and shrubs to make it green, shady and inviting. Definitely a good place to stay.



We were on our way early ... off to Etosha ... 600km away ...

Red Nose Day

Every year on March 15th, it is Red Nose Day in UK. Red Nose Day is one of the projects of Comic Relief a British charity set up in 1985. The claim of the charity is that all the money raised by donations is spent on charities – the administration is all done through corporate sponsorship.

Photo from the website



This year 6 personalities from UK arrived in Zambia to take on the Zambezi River. They canoed or rafted over 100 km of the river. From Mambova to the Victoria Falls they canoed and then they descended down to the gorges for a whitewater trip. All survived ...

The whole adventure was a bit 'top secret', I was told, because the BBC documentary of their exploits is to be shown on 15th March on British TV. Before that, it was to be kept under wraps. I was closeted in my house, anyway, with flu ...

According to the website, www.rednoseday.com, the expedition has so far raised over £590,000. The target was £1million, so there is a way to go, but I am sure they will achieve it.

Cycle Zambia

Game Rangers International which runs Camp Phoenix and Lilayi Elephant Orphanages are raising funds through a Cycle Expedition. It will start in Livingstone; reach Lusaka and then join the Elephant Epic, a cycle rally from Lusaka to Lower Zambezi. I cannot find a date for this ride but it would seem to be in August.

The team will be made up of Andrew White and his cousins Seb and Dom Loram. They are hoping to raise £20,000 for the elephant orphanages.

Keep Livingstone Clean Campaign

The Livingstone City Council has launched a Keep Livingstone Clean campaign. With the help of Zambezi FM Radio, Livingstonians are being bombarded with messages about not dropping litter. Meanwhile, Inyatsi is busy on the roads filling in potholes and resurfacing. I even saw some workers clearing the drains along Kombe Drive and gave them a wave and a cheer as I drove past the other day!

We also need some education on hoeing and slashing. Many Livingstonians like to hoe their road frontage and gardens because it looks clean and tidy. But, without the grass and weeds, the land is bare and suffers from erosion – one of the

A photograph of the Kubu Cafe entrance at night. The cafe has a sign that says "KUBU CAFE" above the entrance and "KUBU COFFEE" on a smaller sign. There are people sitting at outdoor tables under a large white umbrella. The text below the photo lists the cafe's offerings and location.

KUBU CAFE

For coffee, snacks, breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea ...

Open daily except 'quiet' Sundays

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Toasted chicken or tuna mayonnaise sandwiches
Look out for our daily specials on the blackboard

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(minimal charge)
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**Find us in
The Mosi-oa-Tunya Square**



reasons we have sand all over the road. Surely a bit of advice to residents on a better way to keep their environment healthy is to slash the grass.

Of course, we are all excited to see these developments, but really this is what we should be doing as a matter of course. I really hope that all these initiatives do not come to an end after the UNWTO.

ZAMBIA

Zambia out of AFCON

During the week I watched as people gathered around large flat screen TVs throughout town to watch Zambia in the Africa Cup of Nations. During the matches it was a real joy to drive round town or go shopping because everyone, it seemed, was watching the matches; the streets were empty of cars and the shops were empty of shoppers.

Each match Zambia played was a draw – against Ethiopia, Nigeria and Burkina Faso. So we were pipped at the post and sent home.

It made me smile to watch everyone glued to the TVs. One of the tour operators in town mentioned that the only topic of conversation was about football – it made a difference from politics.

I wonder why government does not capitalise on sport for the people. All our football and netball teams struggle for funding to buy kit and travel to venues. With so much unemployment, much of it in the youth, surely sport which teaches teamwork, discipline; keeps people fit and healthy, should be promoted more in Africa.

We are a nation (and continent) of talkers, hence the boom in cellphone sales. I must say that the constant chatter about politics, to me, is unhealthy. We talk and talk until we can't see the wood from the trees; even little things are blown out of proportion. So, football would fill a conversation gap too ...

ZIMBABWE

AFRICA ALBIDA TOURISM DONATES GOODS TO THE MOTHER AFRICA TRUST

Press Release

Africa Albida Tourism continues to reach out to the community, and has recently donated crockery, bedding and other equipment (list appended) to the Mother Africa Trust (MAT). These essential items will be of invaluable use in three projects MAT supports in Hwange, Bulawayo and the Matobo Hills.



Africa Albida Tourism (AAT) is a grouping of Southern African tourism offerings, with the award-winning Victoria Falls Safari Lodge as its flagship. It operates three divisions, namely AAT Hospitality, AAT Restaurants and AAT Parks.

The Mother Africa Trust, with its combination of volunteer-driven tourism and donor support for various projects aims to assist people to live better lives.

Paul Hubbard, project manager for MAT delivered 3 mattresses, 3 mosquito nets, 6 pillows, 6 sheets, 3 bath mats, 6 towels and 3 duvet covers to the clinic at Mabale in Hwange. This formed part of a consignment to furnish a new wing at the clinic intended for expectant mothers. The donations of goods have enabled MAT to finish equipping a room that will make a real difference to the health and well-being of the local

community, especially expectant mothers and babies as the clinic staff now have a comfortable and hygienic place in which to look after patients.

The rest of the donations were divided between Ethandweni Children's Home in the Matobo Hills and The Haven, a home for abused women and their children in Bulawayo.

Mother Africa works in partnership with three safari lodges owned by the Amalinda Collection in three very different environments in Zimbabwe. Camp Amalinda, situated in the majestic Matobo Hills World Heritage Site, Ivory Lodge on the doorstep of the rugged and wild Hwange National Park and the Bulawayo Club, located in the City of Kings, Bulawayo. Each lodge supports a variety of projects adapted specifically to the



needs of the area, ranging from environmental research to community support and development. Each lodge contributes to the projects run by MAT financially, supporting research and conservation efforts and practical measures such as anti-poaching and hosting visitors while each also provides logistical support in the form of labour and equipment.



Ross Kennedy, chief executive of Africa Albida Tourism said “It is an essential part of our operation to give back to the community, and by aligning ourselves with excellent partners such as the Amalinda Collection and Mother Africa Trust, we look forward to continuing to give back to the Zimbabwean community.”

Africa Albida Tourism and the Amalinda Collection work closely together to promote their ‘Best in the West’ package, offering great accommodation options in the Victoria Falls, Bulawayo and Hwange regions.

Poachers in Hwange

Three poachers were caught in Hwange National Park with rhino horn and elephant tusks. They were found in the Sinamatella area driving a Toyota car. All are in cells awaiting trial.

NAMIBIA

From the Namibia Cheetah Conservation Organisation

The Cheetah Conservation Fund's Livestock Guarding Dog program is a successful, innovative program that has been helping to save the wild cheetah in Namibia since 1994.

Working with local farmers and their livestock, this program is one of several non-lethal predator management strategies that CCF has developed.

In addition to directly saving the cheetah from indiscriminate removal from the farmlands where they live, this program also fosters goodwill between CCF and the farmers, thus improving the cheetah's chances for survival.

...

CCF started the Livestock Guarding Dog program in 1994, by capitalizing on the special characteristics of Anatolian Shepherds, and more recently, Kangal Dogs. Originally from Turkey, where the dogs are used to protect livestock against wolves and bears, CCF saw the potential these dogs could have in CCF's efforts to minimize conflict with predators on Namibian farmlands. The dogs' natural instincts to protect the flock, paired to the cheetah's natural flight vs. fight instinct, made these dogs the ideal choice...



Both the Kangal and the Anatolian Shepherd are bred to be working dogs, and thus are very attentive to their herds. The goal of CCF's Livestock Guarding Dog (LSGD) program is to raise the young pups with the herd, so that they bond with the livestock, instead of humans, and thus assume the role of protectors. This program is an extension of a livestock management practice already used by Namibian farmers. Some farmers have used other breeds of smaller dogs to protect their livestock, so introducing these breeds was a logical extension of the practices already utilized by Namibian farmers of the region.



Read more about this project on: www.cheetah.org/?nd=guarding_dog_program

Solar power to the people

WRITTEN BY AUGETTO GRAIG in Informanté

With the hot sun beating down upon their necks, men in harnesses have been toiling on blazing roof tops all over Windhoek city for months, their gloved hands hard at work installing solar power generating cells in rows and rows upon rows.

The harsh reality of Namibia's precarious energy supply situation has finally brought big businesses, government ministries and parastatals to install permanent solar photovoltaic (PV) panel-arrays, on northward fa-cing rooftops in particular.

Leading the corporate charge to take advantage of the abundant supply of fierce sunlight, Woermann Brock has committed over N\$100 million to install solar generated power at its branches all over the country, starting with the capital where N\$13 million is going into its first phase roll-out.

Already the giant retail group boasts the biggest solar plant currently on the national grid (302kWp - kilowatts-peak), located on the rooftop of their new multi-coloured outlet in Khomasdal.

Installed by Swiss company HopSol AG, through new subsidiary HosSol Africa (based in Namibia) assisted by HopSol SA in South Africa, the Khomasdal plant is only one of several projects run by Woermann Brock's managing director Jesko Woermann.

He said Woermann Brock hopes to gain as much as 40% savings off its considerable electricity bills. Woermann is also working closely with Solar Age Namibia and SolarWorld Africa, a subsidiary of SolarWorld AG, having just installed 237kWp at the chain's /Ae//Gams outlet in Klein Windhoek.

Solar Age Namibia has also recently completed installation of 259 solar panels on the roof of NamPower headquarters in Windhoek, able to generate about 120kWp and 833 panels on the roof of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism able to kick out about 212kWp.

Solar Age company founder and managing director Conrad Roeder said the time has come for serious demand side management when it comes to electricity consumption.

"How much do you use, how much do you need?" Roedern asked, explaining that his company often analyses client's energy bills and designs installations that help avoid unnecessary consumption, increase efficiency, optimize time-of-use patterns and avoid peak-demand situations.

Taking the holistic view Roedern is passionate about the opportunity presented by embedded solar generation. "Solar power is taking off and the public is also starting to notice it." Roedern went as far as to say that client-produced power could become a real "game changer" for Namibia's electricity industry.

The electricity produced is always consumed first by the loads on the premises. If electricity from the solar system is not sufficient for the loads on the premises, then additional electricity is drawn from the grid.

Overflow of electricity is fed to the public grid. However, the absence of a regulatory framework allowing for small-scale power generators to be credited for feeding power into the national grid is a glaring problem.

Roedern and Woermann are both now joining the growing chorus calling for the urgent introduction of net metering to address the issue.

OTHER STUFF

American Politics

John Kerry has just been made Secretary of State for the US, taking over from Hilary Clinton. John Kerry is passionate about climate change, so, in his influential position, let's hope that America can clean up its act. The US is in second position, after China, in the pollution league.

From Business Week:

A television ad in China for Nestlé's (NESN) Pure Life brand of bottled water shows children making unhappy faces after tasting water. One child pours his glass into a fish tank instead of drinking it; his face lights up when his mother offers Pure Life instead. Water quality is a big concern for Chinese consumers. They're turning to bottled water as a safer alternative, and that's bolstering Nestlé's bottled-water sales. "You don't dare drink the tap water in China," says Hope Lee, a Euromonitor International analyst in London. Sales are also up because "so many people are moving from rural areas to work in the cities," where bottled water is more common, she says. ...

Nestlé's water business in China climbed 27 percent last year, reports Euromonitor. The Swiss company was China's ninth-biggest seller of water in 2012, with 1.7 percent of the market by value, up from 0.7 percent in 2009. Local rival Hangzhou Wahaha Group is the leader with 14 percent. Says Gilles Duc, the head of Nestlé Waters in China, "China is a key priority for us. The market is increasing a lot, and we want to participate in that growth." ...

About half of the water Nestlé sells in China is delivered in five-gallon jugs. In Shanghai, Nestlé has opened 12 water stores where customers can phone in orders. Tucked between a pharmacy and a beauty salon, a store in the affluent Lujiazui district sells 400 to 500 containers daily. On the busy street outside, workers stack about two dozen bottles onto electric tricycles for delivery to homes and offices. "People would have considered it OK to just boil tap water a few years ago, but consumption is changing because of environmental concerns," Duc says. About 70 percent of China's lakes and rivers have been polluted by power plants and chemical, paper, and textile factories, reports Worldwatch Institute, an environmental research group. In Shanghai, the city's Water Authority says "almost all" surface water has been polluted and doesn't meet drinking standards.

Even water that's been purified at treatment plants is often recontaminated en route to homes. About half of tap water suppliers provide substandard water because deteriorating pipes harbor contaminants, sediment, and bacteria, according to China's Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development. ...

From Top 25 Photographs of the Wilderness

National Geographic

Tsessebe in the mist, by guide Brendon Cremer. Photographed at Wilderness Safaris Duba Plains in the Okavango, Botswana. Early mornings on the plains in the cooler months often produce some great opportunities to photograph animals in the mist. The tsessebe is considered by many to be the fastest antelope in Africa (Brendon Cremer / brendoncremerphotography.com)



Balancing act, by Singita guide Marlon du Toit. Photographed at Mana Pools, Zimbabwe. "The Mana elephants are well known for this kind of behaviour. I have always wanted to capture this moment, and this image portrays the power and agility of these big creatures. It was a dream come true." (Marlon du Toit / marlondutoitphotography.com)

Taken at Wilderness Safaris Duba Plains in the Okavango, Botswana. "A lioness chases and leaps on a buffalo cow after a 2 hour long stalk. Unfortunately for the lioness the buffalo got away." (Brendon Cremer / brendoncremerphotography.com)



Elephant charge, by guide Marius Coetzee. Photographed in the South Luangwa, Zambia. 'We were slowly driving along the banks of the Luangwa River when a young elephant bull unexpectedly charged our vehicle. I focused low to portray the impact of the pachyderm's feet stomping the African soil below it' (Elephant charge, by guide Marius Coetzee.



©Gavin Lautenbach



Desert patterns, by guide Gavin Lautenbach. Photographed in Deadvlei, Namibia. Only a few hundred years ago millions of migrating springbok formed herds hundreds of miles long. These were the largest herds of mammals ever witnessed.(Gavin Lautenbach / mammothsafaris.com)

Cheated, by Dana Allen, photographed in Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe. "Had this cheetah been born a hundred years ago his chances for survival would have been much better. The worldwide cheetah population has declined by nearly 85% in that short time span." (Dana Allen / photosafari-africa.net)



African wild dog, by Singita guide Marlon du Toit. Photographed in Mana Pools, Zimbabwe. "It was an exhilarating experience spending time with this pack on foot. The alpha male pictured here ventured right up to us for closer investigation, leaving me with wide eyes and a thumping heart! The intensity in his actions are evident in this portrait."

This photograph appeared on the 4x4 Community Website, labeled 'Kgalagadi Traffic Jam'. It was taken near Nossob in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. Nice photo, but ... thank goodness our parks are not so populated with vehicles ...



Have a good week

Gill

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