



Dear All

They were playing polocrosse this weekend so I went down to take a look. It is being held at Chundukwa where the club is based.

Lots of fun for all the family.

There are four teams playing: Livingstone, Choma, Leopards Hill and Lusaka South. These are the main teams in Zambia. The Zambia Police used to play but have not been joining in for some time. Come on, Zambia Police, get your team going again – it is good for public/private relationships.

Zambia has a national team which recently played in South Africa. Since that time our team has been recognised internationally and we are now 8<sup>th</sup> in the world.



## Livingstone Airport

Our town is looking very smart. Work continues on the roads and other facilities. The airport is due to be completed by August 13<sup>th</sup>, according to George who showed me around the other day. However, according to a report in the press, the work was supposed to have been completed by 1 August. Transport, Works, Supply and Communications Minister Yamfwa Mukanga, on a visit to the airport: *I don't want to be coming here and waste my time just to see uncompleted structures. I am giving you 10 days to complete the structure.*

## Events on the Way

11 August: Half Marathon. Kariba Town  
 11-16 August: Cycle Zambia.  
 12-22 August: Mzanzi Trophy – Etosha to Livingstone.  
 21 August: Zambezi Classic Fishing Competition. Katima Mulilo  
 24-29 August: UNWTO  
 2-4 October: Fishing Competition. Kariba Town  
 26 October: Zambezi Kayak Festival.  
 26-31 October: World Adventure Travel Summit. Windhoek

*You must finish the remaining works by August 10, 2013. I will come back to inspect on August 12 and 13 and I should find the entire structure completed.*

It is a cavernous structure which is going to allow for a lot of growth. It is all smart and shiny, too.

The main concourse has wide staircase leading to a viewing area overlooking the runway. George told me that there will be a restaurant there too. Either side of the concourse there are shops waiting for their tenants.







**5-door Rav 4 looking for a new home!!**

**K32,000 o.n.o-no time wasters please**

**Call or sms 0977-781215 for viewing in Livingstone**

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### News from Safari Par Excellence

At Zambezi Elephant Trails one of the female elephants is pregnant. Her name is Mashumbi and she is the matriarch of the herd. It was Mashumbi who was kidnapped several years ago (2003) by a wild herd of elephants. She went off with them only to return several months later carrying her first calf, Chavuruka. Mashumbi will have her new calf in June next year.

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### New Tour Guides

Libes – The Livingstone Institute for Business and Engineering Studies – has recently graduated 99 tour guides after the 3-week course.

The interesting thing about tour guiding is that you never stop learning. So these new young graduates still have a long way to go, but if they are willing to keep learning, there are jobs waiting for them.

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### Mulobezi Railway Line

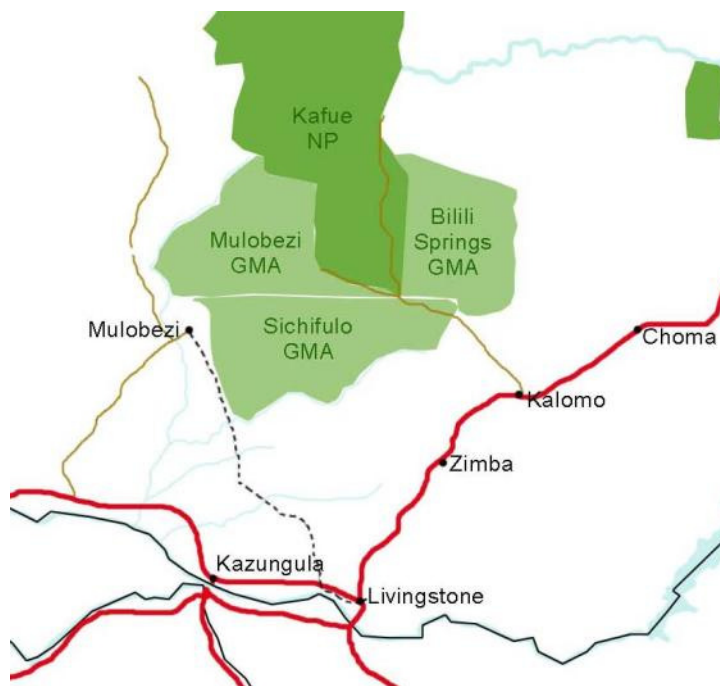
There are more discussions on the way forward for the Mulobezi Railway Line. This line was constructed in the early days to bring timber from Mulobezi to Livingstone. It was the longest private railway in the world at the time. At Independence the railway line was nationalized and it has had little TLC so is in a dreadful state. For a number of years the line has been under private management but still is in a bad way and the government is thinking that it should take back the line to bring it back to life.

The Zambian government is keen to rehabilitate its railway network in order to reduce road transport. The Executive Officer, Muyenga Atanga: *The key issue about Mulobezi is that everything available in terms of equipment, machinery and the train is provided for by Zambia Railways. The cardinal issue is the track that needs to be rehabilitated; it's in a bad state and takes time to reach Mulobezi*

Of course, I have a bit of a Gill Comment: The Mulobezi Line was put in place for business reasons. The timber from the forests had to be brought to Livingstone. Mulobezi used to be a thriving town; now it is not. The people there do not have work; they do not have money. And there are lots of them – it is a large community, a large poor community.

Any business, Zambia Railways being a business, has to look at its income and expenses. The cost of rehabilitating the Mulobezi Line and the cost of maintenance far outweigh the income from poor villagers in Mulobezi.

We have to look for a business to provide income for the people and the railway in Mulobezi. Can the forest and sawmill be revitalised? Is tourism a contributor to the income?



On the tourism side, the income will be small, but it can help. The railway runs through some beautiful countryside; it is a must-do for steam enthusiasts and Mulobezi is not far from Kafue National Park. Could we provide carriages to take vehicles so that cars could be taken by train to Mulobezi and then de-bus from there for a trip into the park? There are probably many opportunities, but surely we can look at those before we go to the expense of rehabilitating the line. Just because it is there now, does not mean that it is good for us now ...

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**Kabula Lodge**, on the way to Ngonye Falls, where I was staying the other week.



### **Wilderness Safaris**

Busanga Plains (northern Kafue National Park)

*If there's a better way to start your morning, we'd love to hear about it!*

*Hot air ballooning at Shumba and Busanga Bush Camps is included on a complimentary basis from August through October, providing a very different perspective of Kafue.*

*The giant 8-person balloon floats for approximately an hour above this unique landscape with uninterrupted views of the floodplains and its game...*



## Victoria Falls Town

I went over to Victoria Falls Town during the week and had a look around to see how things were going on in preparation for the UNWTO. The town was still rather tatty round the edges and it appeared that not much work had been going on to clean up the town. I did see some street lights being fixed and the Conference Facility at Elephant Hills was just being started. This facility is to the right as you enter Elephant Hills. I think it used to be tennis courts(?) I am sure it will be up in time as it is one of those 'flat pack' varieties of construction.



On the way to the airport I found the road was being worked on. It has been widened and resurfaced. That too will be finished. The airport itself was still boarded up so I didn't see much except that the lounge/concourse had been extended by covering part of the front.



Zimbabwe, of course, has had its mind on elections for the past few weeks. Robert Mugabe was complacent about the outcome stating that he would step down if he was beaten in the polls. It was no surprise to anyone that the results stated that he had won.

Now, I am sure that the town of Victoria Falls will be cleaned up. It is only a small town and was not in such a state as Livingstone, so it shouldn't take time. Robert Mugabe is sure to be at the UNWTO conference and he will make sure that he shows a side of Zimbabwe which is rarely seen in other towns of the country.

Meanwhile ...

At the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe the trucks continue to block the roads. I thought we had a system that the trucks were not supposed to come to the border until their loads were cleared through Customs???? Obviously that system has stopped working.





## PUMPING LEGS FOR WATER 2013

HWANGE NATIONAL PARK

26 to 28 July

(with some photos from Facebook)

Pumping Legs for Water 2013 started off with several riders undertaking to ride from Bulawayo to Hwange the day before official proceedings. Congratulations to those who rode all the way either in their relay teams or individually and well done to their respective back up teams.

July in the park is one of the better times to visit. There are some natural pans still holding a bit of water, the pumped pans bumble along, the bush has died down some so viewing is easier, colours in the bush are stunning with the trees and bushes out in their winter coats, there is still sufficient browse and grazing, the landscape is not yet lunar-like, the animals don't yet have a desperate air about them and the sun rises and sun sets are unimpeded by dust and smoke from veld fires.

After registration of all the riders and the usual briefing on Thursday evening, the Waterbucks Head was soon abandoned as



everyone took to their beds. However, all was not quite quiet as Colin, Adele and Gael, having finished their dinner, strolled over to their vehicle only to be confronted by an enormous ellie, who, having just shaken an erioloba tree with mighty force, showering Colin's vehicle with pods, proceeded to calmly vacuum up the pods quite unconcerned about the three humans wanting to escape! By six fifteen on the chilly Friday morning, Waterbucks Head was again beginning to bustle as riders and organisers started arriving for coffee or tea and their egg and bacon rolls. Being in charge of the half way watering points, we left the gate at six thirty and at Makwa watched as four daggaboys plodded into the pan for an early morning drink. Further along the way, near Kennedy One, we disturbed a cheetah on a kudu kill. The animal streaked away, closely pursued by a spotted hyena but when we went back to look at the kill, we could just make out a second cheetah slinking away in the bush on one side of the road while another spotted hyena was obviously waiting to dash in to rob the kill.

The Kennedy One water point was a welcome break for the riders who, unknowingly, still had a tough ride ahead of them. Unfortunately, since the reconnoiter team had driven the route, part of the road between Kennedy Two and Ngweshla had been recently graded so the riders had another sticky parch of sand to contend with, making it pretty tough and tiring going, particularly at the end of the day's ride. We believe the break at Ngweshla went well and some of the participants were lucky enough to see gemsbok amongst a small herd of sable. When we got back to Main Camp after being down to Guvelala there were several "happy" folks enjoying their relaxing time. On Friday evening, most gathered back at Waterbucks Head to listen to Brent Staplekamp who is with the Lion Research team. He gave us a very informative and interesting talk on just a small part of what they are trying to achieve with the lion population in Hwange, mainly on how they are working with the communities on the boundaries and what they are doing to try and chase marauding lions back into the park.

Early Saturday morning was a ditto of Friday morning, with folks gathering again early for breakfast. We headed off as soon as the gates were open and the ride for that day was down to Guvelala and back with our water point at the platform before the turn around. As the second group of riders prepared for their start, they were temporarily delayed by a pack of wild dog chasing after a hapless kudu through the Main Camp lodge area! It was, apparently, quite spectacular as they watched the dogs racing up and down the

fence trying to get at the young kudu that had jumped the fence. The third group of riders then actually witnessed the dogs take down the kudu just near the administration offices. All that was left was a bit of skull and four hooves which all disappeared overnight. What a lot of excitement! The only other “kill” that was observed that day was a poor frog who’s back leg was clamped firmly in the jaws of a variegated bush snake underneath the eaves of the Guvelala platform. Whether or not the snake won, we will never know as both creatures disappeared into the roof.

On Saturday evening everyone gathered for the prize giving and final speeches and to enjoy the braai that had been laid on by Waterbucks Head. Amongst other awards, a ride medal was presented to a delighted Lonely, the waiter. The story goes that a bicycle had been given to the Main Camp community after last year’s event, on condition that one of the staff ride in this year’s ride. Well, Lonely the waiter was the designated rider! The first day of the ride he’d actually ridden in his waiter’s outfit of white shirt, black trousers and highly polished black shoes. Fortunately, by the second day, he’d been kitted out with a PLW T shirt and various other passed on bits of clothing more suited to bike riding. Lonely was on duty first thing each morning and was back waiting tables as soon as each day’s ride was over – with a huge smile on his face! Well done, Lonely.

Well done, indeed, to all the riders who rode in the spirit of the ride and who raised the much needed funds. Some riders brought in significant sponsorship which is very much appreciated - thank you. Although the number of riders was down this year – 61 riders in all - we are hopeful that once again a significant amount has been raised for the water project. We anticipate another hard dry season and every dollar is precious. Of course, an event of this nature could not take place without all the wonderful sponsors, all of whom will be contacted individually but a HUGE thank you to you all. Thank yous go to the Parks staff and the staff and chef of Waterbucks Head as well and to all the support teams. A BIG and special thank you though must go to the main organisers – Adele, Colin, Mark and Colin. Well done you guys.

On Sunday morning several riders took the optional extra of a leisurely ride from Main Camp to Safari Lodge and back, while we set off down to Ngweshla for the morning. We came across a herd of about 700 buffalo in the vlei between K1



and K2 – quite a sight! At Ngweshla we saw plenty of animals – elephant, wildebeest, roan, giraffe, zebra, sable, hippo, kudu, impala and waterbuck. In the afternoon we had a quick visit to Caterpillar but apart from some elephant and a naughty tag team of baboon teenagers playing around on the corrugated iron roof of the pump attendant’s hut, there was nothing else around. On Monday morning, before departing the park, we had a quick drive to Ngwenya pan and were lucky enough to come across a mother cheetah and her three grown cubs – these animals having been seen fairly regularly around the place. Beautiful animals. At Ngwenya we were visited by a stately old elephant and three, rather skittish kudu bulls before heading back to Main Camp and then home.

Grateful thanks to all who made this year’s ride the success it was.  
John and Jenny Brebner

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**Gache Gache**, near Kariba Town and a favourite spot for fishermen ...

*Many thanks for a wonderful few days at Gache Gache Lodge, the game drive, the river trip, and most of all the hospitality we received from all your staff.  
With all good wishes*



## BOTSWANA

### Orient Express

*Picture of the day: "Family time"  
It's the week-end ! A good time to spend with family...  
Here we see the alpha female from our pack of 7 busy nursing the little pups... We watched her stalk the pups from a distance: they did not know what was going on! Eventually she ran at them and finally greeted them with beautiful vocalizations. After she nursed, the rest of the pack all came to greet those cute little babies. A truly memorable experience for our guests! — at Khwai River Lodge.*



### Desert & Delta

*The famous fishing leopards of Savute!!*



### Chobe Safari Lodge





## Seal Culling

From Informanté

CONSERVATION pressure groups call it culling, but according to Fisheries and Marine Resources minister, Bernard Esau, Namibia is harvesting seals.

These groups allege that the seal harvesting in Namibia is inhumane and can never comply with the domestic regulations or the international standards. However, according to experts who observed the first harvest in 2010 of 260 pups, not a single regulations was breached and they were satisfied that the slaughter was as humane as that of slaughtering cattle in an abattoir.

According to an investigation on the seal debate, which raged for the past 20 years, by the Ombudsman, Adv John Walters, the South West African seal industry dates back to 1884 when it was the monopoly of the Deutsche Kolonial-Gesellschaft who held all rights to capture and kill seals along the coast between the Orange River and the Kunene River.

The first measure to control sealing and to protect seals was introduced by the Government of the Territory with the enactment of Proclamation No 18 of 1922, which prohibited the pursuing, capturing or killing of seals except under a licence.

After independence, Namibia became a signatory to a number of international instruments on responsible fisheries, hence it was necessary to update its legislation pertaining to fisheries management.

As a result, the Marine Resources Act, 2000 was promulgated in December 2000 and repealed both the Sea Birds and Seal Protection Act 1973, and the Sea Fisheries Act, 1992. A year later the regulations relating to the Exploitation of Marine Resources were made under Section 61 (1) of the Marine Resources Act.

It is against this background that an annual quota for the harvesting of seals was determined to ensure that the industry stays sustainable. The quota for the next three years is 80 000 pups and 6 000 bulls.

Taking into consideration that the current seal population is estimated at 1,2 million, only 7,2% of the seals would be harvested during the next three years.

The estimated number of pups is AT 254 554, the male seals 350 000 and the female seals 600 000. This means that 31,4% of the pups and 1,7% of the bulls are earmarked for harvesting annually. Another bone of contention for Esau is to ensure that there should be a balance in Namibia's ecosystem.

"The seals are consuming 700 000 tonnes of fish annually, which is far more than the fish caught by the fishing industry."

The total allowable catch (TAC) for hake for this season is 140 000 tonnes, while that of horse mackerel is 350 000 tonnes, which represents 42,8% more than the annual TAC's.

Despite the 129 years of seal harvesting, which at times was not even regulated, the seal population is still stable and increased to the estimated 1,2 million since 1972.

It is also against this background that the Ombudsman found that seal harvesting in Namibia is sustainable and thus not contrary to the Constitution and the Marine Resource Act, and not in contravention of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) either.

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**Nunda River Lodge**, Bwabwata, on the Kwando, near Popa Falls

*We had our second annual wetland bird count on Sunday. Guides from Divava Lodge as well as Shametu and Nunda River Lodges participated in the count. What a great experience as the three trainee guides from Shametu as well as Eric from Divava, this was their first time birding on the river. What a great time and their enthusiasm was in leaps and bounds, so much so, they want to do a bird course in November on the riverine/forest and inland birds!*



*241 birds and 25 species were counted. We have reason for concern as exactly a year ago we counted 653 birds. Egyptian and Spurwing geese are being poisoned and their carcasses are often seen floating down the river. We are monitoring the situation.*

**Ichobezi River Lodge**, actually reached from Kasane but in Namibia

*Malcolm Meintjes with his recent catch on fly on his Tiger Quest at Ichingo Chobe River Lodge...*



## OTHER STUFF

### Ground Hornbills



Photographer : Alan Knott-Craig

In South Africa, conservationists are seriously concerned about the fate of the Ground Hornbill. The ground hornbill is a very odd bird; we all love to hear their booming in the dark early hours of the morning, but it seems that they are in decline. From Mabula Ground-Hornbill Project:



*It is estimated that there are only about 1500 Ground-Hornbills left in South Africa, of which half are safe within the protected areas of the greater Kruger National Park. The birds live in social, cooperatively breeding groups that consist of between two to nine birds (mean group size 3.6), but with only one alpha male and one breeding female per group and the rest of the group as helpers. This means there are only an estimated 417 breeding groups in the whole of South Africa, while data from the Kruger National Park shows that, on average, only one chick is raised to adulthood every nine years.*

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## THE SMILE

A dwarf goes to a very good but very busy doctor and asks "I know you are busy but do you treat dwarves?" The doctor replies "Yes, but you will have to be a little patient".

A government survey has shown that 91% of illegal immigrants come to Britain so that they can see their own doctor.

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Have a good week

Gill

Don't forget your ads ...