



Dear All

My header is from the Zambian border of the Victoria Falls. The baboons have taken over the place. They are great entertainment but are a menace. Surely something should be done. Can you imagine our guests at the UNWTO running the gauntlet of this wildlife?

---

### A Trip to Hwange National Park

It's not far to Sinamatella Camp in Hwange National Park from Victoria Falls Town – just about 2 hours. So after meeting up with Josh and 7 of his family from England we set off in two cars at around 1pm. After Hwange Town there is a turning south towards Sinamatella. The road is in reasonable condition as it is used by the mining company which is extracting coal near to the park. The mine is open pit and ... like all mines is ugly and not a good advert for Hwange Park.



I had packed my borrowed car (thanks to Lucy





from Kubu Crafts) with all the basics like blankets, towels, pots, plates and cooking utensils. The last time I had been to Hwange the equipment left a lot to be desired and I felt that it would still be the same. You can imagine my pleasure when we were shown to our chalets with new fridges, cookers, glasses, pots, plates ... everything you could want. Well done, ZimParks.

We had some great chalets overlooking the valley below. Some of us sat and watched the animals below and others started to cook. Great fun for our English visitors who haven't had much practice with open-fire cooking ...

The following day was a drive to Main Camp, we thought, stopping off on the

way at the dams and pans to see the animals. Our first stop was at Mandavu Dam which had plenty of water and a vast array of animals drinking. A large herd of buffalo came while we were there. I counted about 50 in the herd.

Mandavu is known for its hyrax or dassies and they were all out sunning themselves on the rocks by the hide.

Next stop was Masuma Dam which looked very sad with only a little water for the animals.



Elephants like to drink nice clean water so a bunch of them were drinking from the trough as the water came up from the pump. The giraffe was more nervous and preferred a spot on his own.



Our next stop was Kapula, a new lodge which I wanted to check out. We had a quick tour and then set off again. Not far from there disaster struck and one of the wheels on the Land Cruiser came undone so that one was pointing in one direction and the other had skewed in the opposite direction.

A bolt had come off something and searching through the grass it was found. With the aid of some English bush mechanics and a hairgrip the wheel was put back so that it faced the right direction.

Now we made Plan B. Main Camp was still 100 km away but Kapula was just 10 km behind us. We about turned and gingerly took the road to Kapula. Edmore the manager welcomed us and said he could accommodate us all and could also (the main thing), do some African bush mechanics.

Kapula Lodge is a self-catering lodge with four chalets and a main building with kitchen, lounge and dining area. We made ourselves at home and relaxed, cooked some food, ate and then relaxed by a campfire.

The chalets were perfect and the duvets were for snuggling under and not getting up. We heard lots of night noises including hyena and lion. Some baboons were screeching nearby so I assume a leopard was on the prowl.

In the morning Edmore worked his magic on the car, replacing the hairgrip with a nail ... and we departed Kapula.

Kapula Lodge has constructed a waterhole in front of the Main area but it was still too new to be known



much by the animals. It will, however, become a much needed source of water in the future so animal sightings will be much improved. Definitely a place to go back to.

---

## More changes at the Top

This government is going to be known for many things and one of them is the constant changes at the top. Ministers come and go with regularity.

According to the *Zambian Watchdog*, along with other movements of Ministers, Professor Nkandu Luo, has recently been taken from Local Government and Housing and gone to Chiefs and Traditional Affairs. But, the report also says that she has decided to go on indefinite leave ...

Nkandu Luo was trying to remove the street vendors from our streets even though government had decided that they could stay. She wanted the streets to be clean and knew that street vendors and clean streets did not go together. According to the report this was the reason for her removal from Local Government and Housing.

So it looks like we are to continue with our messy pavements and drains filled with rubbish for some time to come. Yes, we all feel sorry for the poor people who are just trying to make a living by selling a few tomatoes along the streets but legitimate shop owners pay rates and taxes for the privilege of trading in their shops ... street vendors pay nothing. Maybe we should grant all shop owners tax-free and rates-free status so that we have a level playing field.

---

## Victoria Falls Safari Club

Victoria Falls Safari Lodge is one of Victoria Falls Town's most popular lodges. For the past 8 months they have been building an extension to the lodge which will be called Victoria Falls Safari Club. It has 20 rooms spread along the hillside with own main area. Tucked between the main lodge and Lokhutula Lodges, the Safari Club overlooks the valley below with miles of Africa in front and the Zambezi River in the distance.

The lodge was designed by Josh Ward who designed the original lodge and built by the same construction team – the Kiggen family.

As the construction is just about completed and the Kiggins will soon be moving off site, there was a bit of a celebration. The wheelbarrows have been carting cement for the past months but this afternoon were filled with beer and ice blocks and became the fridge. The car park was the place for a party.

The Safari Club will be ready in a couple of weeks when the furniture arrives and the interior designer has done her bit.





In the meantime, the Main Lodge – Victoria Falls Safari Lodge – has had a makeover. The interior designer has gone for muted colours of beige and grey with splashes of vibrant colour.



All, of course, are ready and waiting for the UNWTO next year.

---

## ZIM-ZAM

### UNWTO

And, what of the UNWTO? Well, it seems as though things are moving on both sides ... in one way or another ...

In a report this week the Permanent Secretary, Sylvester Maunganidze, who made the rather shocking statements in Zimbabwe's parliament about Zimbabwe lying about its ability to host the UNWTO has been moved to another department. Sylvester Maunganidze told parliament: *If certain things do not happen, it is because we have a Siamese twin (Zambia) who is handcuffed across the river and we breathe the same oxygen unfortunately.*

Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) chief executive officer Karikoga Kaseke told the media that Zimbabwe is quite capable of hosting the UNWTO and that preparations are underway: *The main event in Victoria Falls will be housed in a modern marquee that would be erected on the Elephant Hills golf course with a sitting capacity of 2 000. The issue of us building a convention centre is our own initiative, it was not put in the bid, it was meant to be a legacy building.*

Zimbabwe aims to make Victoria Falls Town a hub for conferences so all the facilities for the UNWTO will be used long after the event.

In one report the preparations for the UNWTO were dubbed 'The Peacock Project'. It doesn't mention why it has been called this, but I assume it has something to do with the way a peacock struts around.

Zimbabwe is just coming out of the cold and wants to show itself off as a premier destination, hence their commitment to improving the facilities in Victoria Falls.

Meanwhile in Zambia, our latest Minister of Tourism, Sylvia Masebo, has said that she wants the borders cleaned up and that Victoria Falls, Kazungula and Katima Mulilo borders should be open 24 hours.

And ... The Road Development Agency has been allocated K33billion to rehabilitate 30km of urban roads in Livingstone. Work should begin in November.

---

## ZIMBABWE

### Victoria Falls Marathon 26 August 2012

The Victoria Falls Marathon will be held on 26 August.

Last year the event was won by Zimbabwean Michael Ngaseke in a time of 2 hours, 24 minutes and 31 seconds.

The Victoria Falls Marathon is a fun day for everyone and attracts competitors from all over the world.



---

### New Low-Cost Airline for Zimbabwe

1time has joined forces with a local Zimbabwe operator, Nu-Aero to launch a new airline to be called Fresh Air. The airline will start flights in September between Johannesburg and Victoria Falls Town. It is hoped that the new airline will eventually be allowed to cover domestic routes which are chaos at the moment with Air Zimbabwe being off and on ... mostly off, these days.

---

### HWANGE REPORT PUMPING LEGS FOR WATER 2012

Well, the year has come around again and the weekend of 27, 28 and 29 July saw Hwange Main Camp full to the brim with riders, families, friends and organisers for the annual Pumping Legs for Water fundraiser. Not only was Main Camp bustling with PLW participants, there were several busloads of school children



coming and going throughout the weekend. The vibe around camp was wonderful and its always heartening to see the camp chock-a-block. It would appear that the water woes in camp of last year have been remedied and everyone could enjoy a hot shower or bath, with water AND electricity available throughout the weekend. Well done, Main Camp.

On our way up to the Park, near Gwaai River, we passed Rodney Spencer, a delightful young man, who had taken it upon himself to cycle all the way from Bulawayo to Main Camp for the ride. He managed to get an amazing amount of sponsorship for his incredible feat! He and his back up team had left Bulawayo at half past four on Friday morning and finally arrived to a rousing welcome at Main Camp at about half past seven in the evening. AND Rodney was cheerfully back in the saddle the following morning! The rest of Friday evening was given over to completing the registration of riders, handing out ride packs, receipting sponsorship, briefing the escort drivers and giving everyone a general run down of the following day's events, making sure that everyone knew which group they would be riding with, who their captains were and their start times. We had 85 riders register and 83 turned up to ride,



with riders from all around the country as well as Zambia, South Africa, Botswana as well as a Canadian from Tanzania! Despite the early morning chill, camp was abustle again by quarter past six on Saturday morning with the restaurant providing tea and coffee along with egg and bacon rolls. We left just before seven as the first group of riders were gathering at the gate and believe that the first lot of riders got away on time. Once again, we were in charge of the halfway water stop, which was based at the Kennedy One picnic site. This year, all four groups got to see some game



during their ride on the first day which was great with one team having a bit of a close encounter with an irascible elephant bull. Fortunately, the female scout on the back of their lead vehicle very calmly loosed a few rounds above his head as he rattled his ears, bellowed and threatened to charge, which sent him dashing off into the bush. With that bit of excitement out of the way, the riders could safely let out their breath and continue the ride! The first two groups of riders got through to Ngweshla fairly comfortably but the second two groups, particularly the last, got down to the camp later than anticipated. However, all was well and no one had any serious spills in the thick sand. As always, there was plenty of banter and ribbing and although there were some fairly sore muscles and bottoms, everyone was in good spirits. Prize giving and the evening around the braai at Waterbucks Head was well attended and full of chat, laughter and camaraderie although most folk didn't linger too long, heading for bed in anticipation of another day's riding.

Sunday morning was again pretty chilly as participants began gathering. We set off for our water stop which we were setting up once again in the teak forest just beyond Dopi pan. On our way through, we spotted a leopard slouching along a game trail at the top end of the Dopi vlei. A beautiful animal which sat a while, quite close to where we were stopped, glaring at us with its penetrating yellow gaze before moving off, deeper into the tree line. The first two teams came through earlier than we'd expected and were soon moving along. The second two groups were a bit behind but came in together and were not too long getting back to Main Camp for the final prize giving at lunch time. While some of the participants and

followers had to leave for home, a fair number of people stayed on for another night, with most going off for a late afternoon drive around the park ending up gathering at the Nyamandhlovu platform. It wasn't too long that evening, however, before everyone was bedded down for the night and camp was pretty quiet – everyone exhausted!

While in the park during the weekend, I took the opportunity to take a look at some of the water points. The park is desperately dry and already looking like the end of the dry season almost. Everyone is struggling to keep up with the pumping and keeping the engines up and running. The main pan at Ngweshla is dry now but the pan near the camp is holding good water despite endless problems with the pumping there. It sounds as if the pipes need replacing in the borehole. It was so disappointing travelling through the Mangas after the ride on Saturday, to find the pump at Manga Three silent. Although there was a bit of water still in the pan, there were several herds of elephant hanging around and more pouring in as we drove up to and away from the pan. Apparently, Somalisa, who oversee this point, were expecting a part for the engine and pumping was to resume soon. There was no pumping going on at Manga One either and no water in the pan. There was fair water at Jambile. Dopu was up and running again with nice water in the pan and the trough at Caterpillar was full and overflowing into the pan. Unfortunately, Makwa is at a very low ebb at the moment although pumping continues 24/7 and there's an excellent flow of water into the pan. Sinanga is also pretty low but the trough was full and spilling down into the pan. Kennedy One held good water. Kennedy Two was also a bit of a disappointment as the solar unit continues to struggle along but the diesel engine on the new borehole was out of fuel. I took the opportunity on Sunday afternoon to drive down with Gary to refuel and get the engine started up again. It wasn't long before three old elephant bulls appeared out of the bush, went straight up to where the fresh water comes out and helped themselves, right next to where we had parked to inspect the flow! As we had been a bit late leaving, we were passing Makwa enjoying a spectacular sunset over the pan when a pride of seven lion appeared! A wonderful sighting in that late, dusty afternoon light.



On Monday morning after packing up our chalet, we decided to go and have a look at Matoa ruins now that most of the road has been graded. Along with two other vehicles we got to see the ruins before heading on to Inyantue where pumping had only just been resumed after a few problems. There was quite a bit of water in the pan and while there, we watched one of the research units setting up a camera trap over the pan. We didn't see much game while travelling on through to Shumba but did come across two gorgeous cheetah, one of which appeared to be chasing our vehicle as we came round the corner. Unfortunately, they didn't stick around for a photo shoot! As the wind was blowing great gusts, the windmill at Shumba was certainly doing its stuff and there was fair water in the pan. Martin Peters at Nehimba, has started pumping water into Danga pan so we nipped in there to have a quick look. The water flow looks good so hopefully that will continue. The windmill at Shapi was also working flat out and although the trough was full and overflowing, there isn't much water in the pan itself. There was not much water at Guvalala but pumping was in progress.

The weekend was a huge success in terms of enjoyment and as a fundraiser and the organisers must be commended on another sterling effort, not only for all the hard work involved over many months but also the excellent sponsorship they had managed to secure for this year's event. Grateful thanks to National Parks, Area Warden Jura, for allowing WEZ to hold this event, the Waterbucks Head staff and chefs for their efficient and friendly service, keeping everyone fed and watered over the weekend and the scouts that accompanied the riders each day. Many, many and grateful thanks too, particularly to the riders and those who came along as back up as well as to the escort drivers for the hours they put in and without whom the teams could not head out in the first place.

John and Jenny Brebner.

---



### Kasane has Traffic Light too ...



I popped over to Kasane for the day and I thought you might like to see that they have traffic lights too ...

---

### From the Ngami Times

#### Sailing across the Makgadikgadi pans

Former Zimbabwean commercial farmer Ben Freeth and his two sons will attempt the first crossing of one of the world's largest salt pans in a homemade, kite-powered go-kart this month to raise funds for the recently formed Mike Campbell Foundation. The wooden craft, known as the "Mike Campbell Dune Dancer" was designed and built by Campbell's grandchildren as a go-kart, originally with an Optimist dinghy sail. It can also float on water.



The body of the craft is lightweight, with wheels large and wide enough to go over the pan's thin crust as well as clearance to allow it to run over tussocks and rocky areas. For the expedition it will be propelled by a five-metre kite. The craft will sail approximately 150 km across the Makgadikgadi Pans, covering a vast area of more than 6 000 sq.km.

The pans are home to the second largest migration of zebra and wildebeest in the world with up to 75 000 animals crossing them each year.

Ben, Joshua and Stephen Freeth (Mike Campbell's son-in-law and grandsons) hope to raise P100 000 to aid the work of the Foundation, which is lobbying to re-instate the SADC (Southern African Development Community) Tribunal which was dissolved illegally in May 2011. The Tribunal was the only regional court where victims of human rights abuse could go when justice systems failed in their own countries.

The work of the recently launched Foundation includes providing assistance to those who have lost everything through political violence and are forced to live in extreme poverty. It currently provides training and survival skills, medical assistance and educational support to a number of destitute Zimbabwean farm worker families and is endeavouring to extend this support.

---

## SOUTH AFRICA

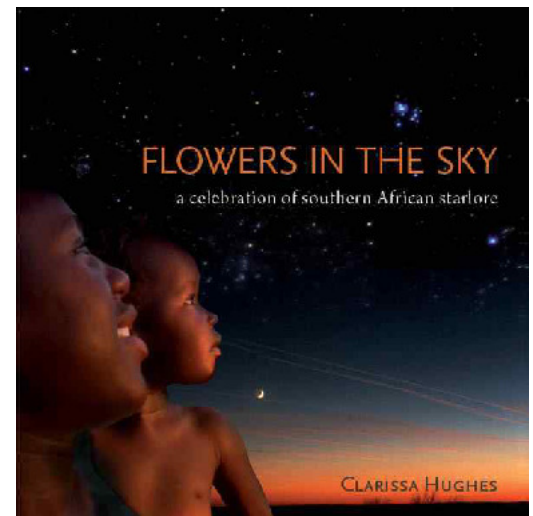
### FLOWERS IN THE SKY a celebration of southern African starlore

Clarissa Hughes

THE NIGHT SKY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA offers some of the best stargazing on the planet.

Consequently, the indigenous people of the subcontinent have been exposed to a cosmic clarity since time immemorial, developing complex knowledge systems in the process. Flowers in the Sky is a collection of stories that provides insight into our traditional cosmologies.

Legends of failed hunts, of Lynx losing her jewelry and moonwater pouring out of the sky are interspersed with common practices such as: why the Chief awarded a cow to the first person to see Canopus, and why Achenar's rising was a time to avoid getting married.



The introduction of a child to the moon exhibits the kind of intimacy that existed between people and the celestial bodies and highlights the sense of participation in universal events that our forebears acknowledged – one that the author, Clarissa Hughes, maintains is useful in facing the challenges of the twenty-first century .

Why are the Digging Stars called by that name? Why was their dawn rising a significant event on the annual calendar? What do they represent in the minds of the people? And how does this relate to scientific discovery? These are some of the questions the author tackles in this sensitive and timely work.

Told in an empathetic style, the explanation of the symbolism is often inspiring, at times confirming scientific discoveries in the exquisite language of metaphor. Flowers in the Sky is essential reading for anyone interested in astronomy and indigenous cultures, and the links they share.

#### About the author:

Born and bred in southern Africa, Clarissa's fascination with Africa's wild places began at an early age. Naturally interwoven with this enchantment was the experience of African culture. Cape Malay, Ndebele, Bushman and Zulu. From the sweet singing of a domestic servant and the patient instruction on how to tie a little girl's shoelaces, to the vibrant, awe-inspiring power of Johannesburg's mine dances on Sunday afternoons – together they form part of an old memory bank in Clarissa's mind of her growing exposure to Africa's different cultures. A 25 year career in ecotourism took her from South Africa to Botswana to Zambia, Zimbabwe and back, and enabled Clarissa to interact with the indigenous people of southern Africa on a daily basis. With this exposure came a growing appreciation of the different cultures she encountered. As a co-founder of the Nhaba Museum in Maun, a town on the edge of the Okavango Delta, she hoped that the showcasing of African culture would open it up to others and provide a worthy platform for the region's indigenous people.

Researching this title entailed scouring academic records, reading widely and interviewing traditional healers and members of numerous indigenous societies. Over the years an idea that started out as intuition has slowly taken form in her mind. African culture reveals an intimacy with the natural environment that can provide an essential key to retrieving a global sense of kinship with nature. In other words, the sense of disease that results from a spiritual separation from the cosmos may be repaired by exposure to these cultures.

For all media enquiries, review copies or interview requests please contact:

Clarissa Hughes

[clarissa@clarissahughes.com](mailto:clarissa@clarissahughes.com)

---



### INTERNATIONAL ELEPHANT CONFERENCE PLANNED FOR JULY 2013 AT ZULU NYALA LODGE

An international elephant conference has been convened to discuss the plight, and future on the continent of Africa, of the remaining elephant herds, which are increasingly endangered and pushed into ever smaller habitats with ancient migration routes being cut off by fenced farms, ranches and housing to cater for massively expanded populations.

The dates now given for the planned international elephant conference are July 03rd to 07th next year, according to one of the main promoters of the idea to give enough time to key speakers, international elephant experts and globally renowned conservationists to schedule an attendance or else be available for a speaking assignment.

Never before was the plight of the African elephants greater as across the continent a mass slaughter continues, driven by the greed and endless hunger in China and some other East and South Asian nations for ivory carvings.

In Cameroon were earlier in the year hundreds of elephant mowed down with automatic weapons, the carcasses stripped of the tusks and often parts of the tail with the equally valued elephant hair, and then left to rot.

In Southern Africa but increasingly also in Eastern Africa have the elephant become targets for gangs of commercial poachers, equipped with sophisticated communications gear, often using silencers for rifles or resorting to using poisoned spears and arrows to avoid alerting the anti poaching units.

As an added component have in Kenya gangs of brainwashed Masai criminals taken their own rage, or often rather their masters' instructions, out on wildlife, killing lions indiscriminately and only recently a nearly tame elephant, whom they speared to death, exploiting the trusting nature of Ezra, one of the patriarch elephants of Amboseli National Park. Enough has been said elsewhere, in the Kenyan media and in the columns of the social networks, but the fact nevertheless remains, that Africa's wildlife is under assault like never before for their trophies, the medicinally absolutely useless rhino horns and the tusks, much of which ends up smuggled to the East to be turned into quack medicine or carved seals, chop sticks or figures.

In South Africa the rhino deaths over the past three years stand at over 1.000, alarming by any standard and putting the survival of the entire species at risk, and in comparison, over the past 100 years have the great herds of elephant been decimated to less than 5 percent of what they used to be. Growing populations are now pushing into previously unproductive or the least productive agricultural areas in countries across Africa, especially East Africa, causing conflict with wildlife previously left alone and having wildlife managers reeling under the sudden onslaught of violent reactions by people, who should not be in such fringe areas in the first place.

Said Mandy Young, one of the promoters of the international elephant conference, when asked about the purposed but also the shift of dates from what was initially scheduled to be September this year: *'The vision for the International Elephant Conference arrived because of the challenges Land Owners of Small Game Reserves face with Elephant Management. In addition the Elephant Norms and Standards for Elephant Management became a part of the National Environmental Management of Biodiversity Act in February, 2008.*

*[But] I think there needs to be an [intensified] build up to the International Elephant Conference in order to get the right participants there [not only from South Africa but from the entire continent, wherever there are issues with poaching and management of the herds]. You can see some information leading to the conference on the following links: Beuga, the Matriarch of an Elephant Herd I researched between 2002-2005, an elephant herd I often took people to observe when facilitating Wisdom of Elephant self-discovery wildlife experiences, was shot on 31st October, 2011, the last day before her Destruction Permit would have ended. Her death has not been in vain and I think it would be a good time to relate her story and the good consequences that have been the result of action taken since her death. One of those actions has been the establishment of the International Elephant Conference [www.elephantconference.co.za](http://www.elephantconference.co.za) where prominent speakers like Gay Bradshaw, author of *Elephants on the Edge: What Animals Teach us About Humanity*, will establish the vision of the Conference to influence elephant management in a way that will hopefully*

*minimize human-elephant conflict and ensure 'transfrontier' [as well as domestic and regional migration] corridors to make biodiversity and elephant survival possible.*

*Please will you tell this story and inform your readers about the up and coming International Elephant Conference in the build up to the Conference which now takes place from July 03 – 07, 2013. The dates were changed to accommodate speakers who were not able to make the dates earlier given.'*

Gladly done, from one conservation friend to another, to ensure the widest possible publicity and eventual participation in this important African meeting, where the conservation fraternity can also map out a new approach and strategy towards the increasingly unsustainable and barely understood policies of CITES vis a vis the trade in wildlife products, in particular ivory. Watch this space.

---

## THE SMILE

# HIV epidemic blamed on 'beautiful women'

## HARARE

A ZIMBABWEAN politician says women should be forced to bathe less and shave off their hair to make them less attractive to men and help curb the spread of HIV.

Senator Morgan Femai said he believed the killer disease had spread because men found it difficult to resist attractive and well-dressed women.

The politician said new laws should be drawn up compelling women to make themselves less attractive to save men from

themselves, the New Zimbabwe website reports.

Addressing a parliamentary workshop on HIV awareness, Senator Femai compared his plan to certain Christian sects.

"What I propose is that the government should come up with a law that compels women to have their heads clean-shaven like what the apostolic sects do," he said.

"They should also not bathe because that is what has caused all these problems."

Mr Femai, of Zimbabwe's

main opposition party the Movement for Democratic Change, laid out his plan before other politicians last week in the country's parliament.

Zimbabwe has suffered a major HIV crisis in recent decades, with about 14 per cent of the population believed to be living with the sexually transmitted disease.

Recent studies have suggested a decrease in the rate of infection — however hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans are still believed to be HIV-positive or suffering from AIDS.

Mr Femai gave his bizarre opinions at a parliamentary conference on future health policy.

The politician compounded his comments by explaining his belief that moisture inside women's bodies made them more vulnerable to the virus.

"Women have got more moisture in their organs compared to men, so there is a need to research how to deal with that moisture because it is conducive for bacteria breeding," he said.

"There should be a way to suck out that moisture."

---

Have a good week

Gill