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# SEBAKWE NEWS

Editor : John Gripper

[www.blackrhino.org](http://www.blackrhino.org)

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## Rhino Update

The good news is that so far this year we have had no further deaths of black rhino from poachers in the Midlands Conservancy. One of our black rhino was killed by an elephant and one white rhino in Iwaba has been killed by poachers. Two rhino poachers have been arrested. We have had two rhino births this year and now have 22 black rhino in the Conservancy.

I am pleased to announce that we have been awarded a euro grant from the European Association of Zoo and Aquaria. We have also received a grant from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Trust Fund – both these grants are to help improve the protection of the black rhino.

On our recent visit to Zimbabwe in July we agreed that the most urgent need was to upgrade our security by the recruitment of a small number of rhino guards who would be trained as a rapid response team under Norman English, our Conservator for security. These guards will be in addition to the rhino guards on each farm, who are provided by the land owner, and the existing team of monitors under the control of Keith Pilz, our Conservator for monitoring.



We are trying to resolve a problem that has arisen with the Army who are the new unofficial stakeholders for three farms to the North West of the Conservancy. At our meeting with Hon F. Nhema, the Minister of Environment and Tourism, the Conservancy again offered to provide protection for the rhino and other wildlife on these three farms and talks are now continuing to try and resolve this issue for the welfare and safety of the rhino and other wildlife.

The serious economic situation in Zimbabwe with acute hyperinflation is making life very difficult and we now have to review all our staff wages and salaries on a monthly basis. The shortages of fuel, basic food and commodities are affecting all the people.



# CONTAINER T

A forty foot container was organised this Spring by Greg Rasmussen of the Painted Dog Conservation Project to be sent out from the UK to Zimbabwe. The costs were shared between the Painted Dog Foundation, School Aid, Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust and the Tariro Project in Zimbabwe of which Rudi Gray is the co-ordinator.

The container was loaded in Essex by a group of volunteers and then shipped via Harwich to Durban in South Africa and trucked up through Johannesburg to Bulawayo where it was unloaded and checked by Customs.



Thank you School Aid for packing and delivering your boxes containing games and sports equipment which were soon sorted out at the Educational Centre and then distributed to the 900 children in the six schools we support. Some of the reference books were kept at the Educational Centre to form a school library. We are also most grateful to the schools in the UK who donated the books and all the volunteer helpers who packed the boxes and helped load the container.



# O BULAWAYO

This container included two Land Rovers for the Painted Dog Project, as well as school chairs and furniture, computers, games, crayons, school textbooks and reading books for primary and secondary schools.

The two vehicles and other goods for the Painted Dog Project were unloaded in Bulawayo and taken to their base headquarters at Hwange; the remaining contents were taken by truck to The Sebakwe Education Centre near Kwe Kwe. Rudi hired a lorry and came to collect the goods for her Tariro project, based some 80 km north of Harare.



Discussions and plans are now taking place to arrange for the loading and sending of another container on a joint basis this autumn, but this time it will go to Harare. This is more central for distribution to the schools that we support. We are arranging to hire a warehouse in Harare where the container can be unloaded, checked by Customs and then distributed to local schools, through our Sebakwe Educational Centre, near Kwe Kwe and the Tariro Project north of Harare.



# Rhino Darting

by Nigel Overall

I was certainly in the right place at the right time I told myself as we bounced around in the back of the pick-up on our way out into the bush to meet up with the group of rhino scouts who had been tracking Tembinkodi.

Several days earlier the monitoring guards had reported that Tembinkodi's radio collar had come partly dislodged and had appeared to have caused her an open wound just above the left ear through rubbing.

It had been arranged that wild life vet Chris Foggin would stop in at the Midlands on his way to Matopos and examine Tembinkodi. However in order to do this she would first have to be tranquillised by darting, (an operation that is best done from a helicopter), and using a fixed winged light aircraft as an initial spotter plane. Carl Van Der Reit had made one of his light aircraft available but as no helicopter could be arranged the darting operation had to take place on foot by a ground crew who were to be directed in by the spotter plane from above.

Within a few minutes of meeting up with the scouts in the bush we heard the buzz of the plane above. Piloted by Chris Moore with Normal English as his spotter.

As the plane was searching for Tembinkodi Chris Foggin prepared his tranquilliser darts and Keith Pilz briefed the back up crew on how the operation was to be conducted, and reminded us of some tips and advice, like make sure you always keep a climbable tree within your sight !!

Being winter time there was less growth on the trees and the air crew had soon located Tembinkodi in the bush. By radio communication they started to guide the ground crew in through the bush to where Tembinkodi was quietly browsing on some bushes.

Once the ground crew had themselves got a visual on Tembinkodi, in order not to cause her any unnecessary disturbance, the plane gained a bit of height. The radio then fell silent as the ground crew worked themselves into a close enough position to fire a dart.

The first dart failed to take but she must have felt it because she set off at some speed further into the bush. It was by now mid afternoon and if this operation was to be successful she would have to be located again fairly swiftly as it would be getting dusk in a couple of hours.

Whilst waiting I produced some spare past copies of Sebakwe News from within my ruck sack and handed them round to the guards. They were delighted to see pictures of themselves and their friends and delighted that they could keep them to show around to the others when they got back to their camp.

Suddenly the radio came to life – the second dart had taken, the chase was now on !!





It was essential that we got to Tembinkodi as soon as possible after she had been tranquillised and without the use of a helicopter it was down to the back up ground crew to get there.

The spotter plane had kept a good visual on her as she ran further into the bush and Norman up in the plane had the task of directing both us in the vehicle and the on-foot darting crew to where she was heading.

With Astrid Huelin, (Chris Foggin's assistant vet), at the wheel we set off at great speed, violently bouncing along very rough bush tracks and then crashed our way through into the bush towards where Tembinkodi was heading. For a brief moment I thought to myself now would not be a good time to break a half shaft or get a puncture !!

Even though Tembinkodi had come to a stop wedged between two trees it was quite evident that not all the tranquilliser had been administered as she was still quite lively. Not being sure precisely how much had been administered, Chris Foggin was reluctant to give her more. He swiftly cut off the radio collar, cleaned out and inspected the wound before spraying it with some antiseptic and then instructed us each to retreat to safety up a tree before he administered the antidote.

Within a very short time we could hear Tembinkodi snorting as she crashed her way off into the bush none the worse for her ordeal, but hopefully a lot more comfortable without the radio collar rubbing any more.

Chris Foggin was satisfied that the wound was not too bad. Being winter it would not be so affected by the fly strike and now that the collar was removed it would heal fairly swiftly on its own.

To retrace our tracks back out of the bush in the pick-up we had to cut down some of the tree growth that earlier on our way in we had just crashed on through - still we were in a hurry then !!

Having returned the scouts back to their camp we made our way back to Nyangombe lodge. After Chris Foggin had repacked his vehicle for the next days onward journey down to Matopos we showered and refreshed with a cold beer and something to eat.

In the bar we were joined by Norman English who had safely landed again on the new air strip at Pitscottie Ranch. By the light of the log fire we discussed the pros and cons of the afternoons exercise.

Evening meal was taken under candle light again, not by choice but out of necessity as once again there was no electricity. In fact the power had been off for most of that day. The lack of power and bottled gas was something that had become normal in Zimbabwe these days and the staff at the Lodge had learned to live with it. They still provided us with a tasty meal followed by a scrumptious dessert.



## **Mahewu Drink**

We are still providing this high protein drink to all six of the schools which we support. Supplies are now sourced in Kwe Kwe, and are then transported to be stored and distributed to the schools through the Centre.

In many cases this drink is the only food that the children will receive during the day. Below are just a couple of photos showing a few of the grateful children at the Poledale School receiving their daily ration.



## **New Vehicle**

Clayton Zazu recently took delivery of the Education Centre's new vehicle, a Ford Ranger pickup, which Ray had organised in Zimbabwe. Pictured here outside the education Centre is Clayton together with John & Ray Gripper and the new vehicle.



## **Sebakwe C a Education**



As well as fulfilling its educational use, this estate is an essential facility to the surrounding area and community.

## **Satellite Image**

As can be viewed from the satellite picture the Sebakwe Conservation and Education Centre can be viewed from out in space. The square office building, the round dining room, the classroom and the dormitory blocks with their wash rooms can all be clearly identified together with the managers cottage and the two accommodation bungalows. The 5 white roofed buildings in the compound are the staff accommodation.







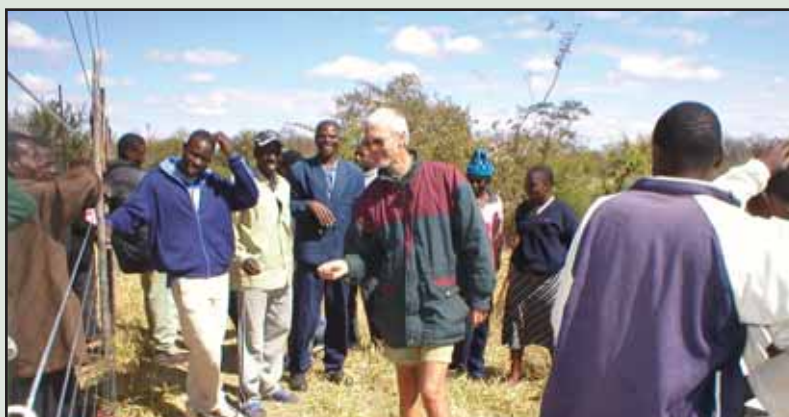
## The Community Outreach & Awareness Projects

This is a sensitisation and awareness activity where the Education Centre have collaborated with National Parks, Zimbabwe Republic Police, Environmental Management Agency, Black Falcons theatre group and the MBRCT Conservator. As a team, through a mix of presentations, drama, demonstrations and teaching, the group raise awareness in the communities in and around the conservancy addressing diverse issues such as poaching, human/wildlife conflicts, veld fires, land degradation etc. The strategy employed will target all 12 communities within the year.

## Conservation and Education Centre



It's originally intended establishment has become a focus for the surrounding area in many ways.



## Palloma Pachiti - Assistant Programme Manager

Palloma is just 23 and gained a BSc in Geography & Environmental Studies in 2006. She spent the 3rd year of her 4 year course working at the Education Centre gaining practical experience. On re-joining the staff team again earlier this year she has focused on the Community Outreach Project. This work involves interacting with the local communities that surround the conservancy. Having previously worked at the centre meant she was a familiar face to many of the local councillors, village leadership and grassroots groups. She is also involved in trying to sustain and improve the livelihood of various community members and has coordinated the setting up of a bee keeping project. A piggery project is currently being appraised.

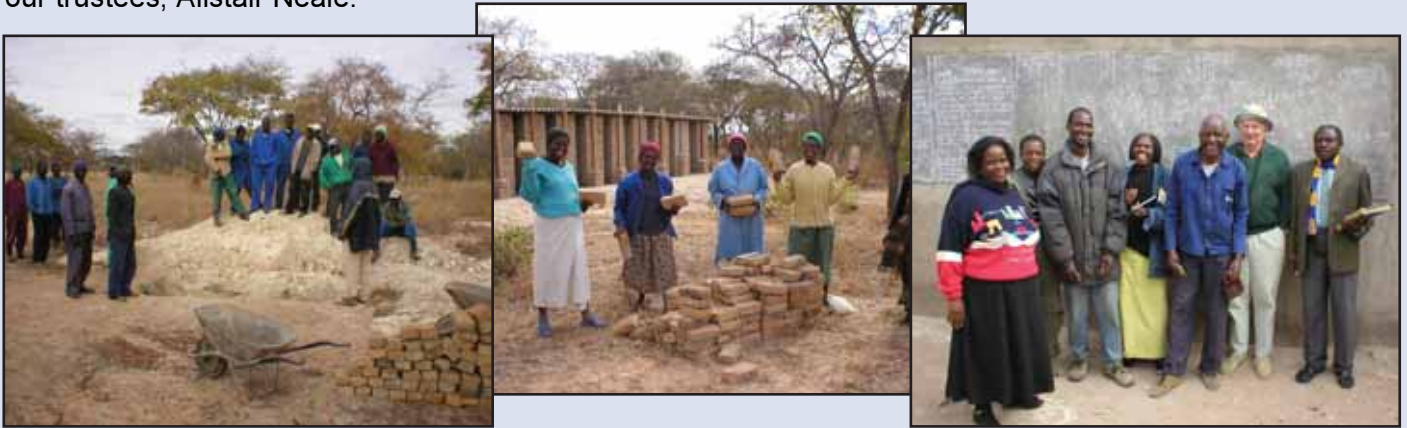


# Schools Report

## Poledale School

During their visit in July, John & Nigel were able to visit Poledale School and found that the teachers and parents had continued their school building programme. They were now up to roof level on two of the classrooms and toilet blocks and with some staff accommodation. The villagers, who are doing all the building work themselves, have not been able to afford to purchase all of the building materials they need to complete the works.

The Trust was able to give them some money to go towards buying some roofing materials. This money was raised by St George's Church, Pontesbury and school children and work colleagues of one of our trustees, Alistair Neale.



We have since received a letter from the Governors Committee of Poledale school saying that they will need about 3,000 US\$ to purchase more roof sheeting, 22 wooden trusses, 40 ridges and 50 beam planks in order to complete the roofs on the rest of the buildings.

The pictures on the right show a computer generated image of what the completed roof on the classroom block is expected to look like.

When we next visit this project we will take a real photograph of the completed work to see how they compare !



## Rockvale School

This school started teaching lessons in an empty concrete water tank – which they could only use in the dry weather. They next built a classroom using wood and timber, which as can be seen below has since fallen into disrepair.

The staff and parents all helped to build the new brick classroom block and have already built an extra outdoor classroom shelter on one end and dug the foundations for a new brick extension on the other as well as some staff houses. They also need some new toilets. The new classrooms built last year have been a great asset and are well used. These village communities are to be congratulated on their progress they have made towards the children's education.

From this.....



.....to this

Outdoor shelter



New toilets needed



# Sebakwe Medical Clinic

Thanks to the support of Centaur Services of Castle Cary and the dispensary of our local GP, combined with an extra baggage allowance from British Airways, we were once again able to take out more medical supplies to the Sebakwe Clinic. This clinic is staffed by Sister I. Moyo, the nurse in charge and Sister Sophie Mafata, who were very grateful for the supplies of cotton wool, bandages, rubber gloves, surgical gowns and wound dressings which we brought out and we were able to stock their empty shelves and cupboards. Sister Moyo has written an appreciative letter of thanks to Centaur.



The nearest hospital is at Kwe Kwe, which is 40 kilometers away, so the local clinic deals with most of the maternity cases, children's illnesses and minor medical ailments. The hospital handles the emergencies and serious accident and illness cases.



Top left - Staff receiving donations of medical aid  
Top right - View of the medical clinic  
Centre left - A queue of waiting patients  
Centre right - Mothers and a baby waiting to be seen  
Centre bottom left - 3 young patients

We have also been able to help veterinary surgeon Chris Foggin MRCVS by taking out some veterinary supplies which he is unable to obtain locally. On our recent visit we were able to deliver on behalf of Save Australia, veterinary transponders, centrifuge, haematocrit reader, capillary tubes and haemoglobin microcuvettes as well as a selection of bandages and dressings which will all be used for his veterinary work with the rhino and other wildlife in Zimbabwe.



# Scholarships

At the July meeting of the local Scholarship Committee we heard positive progress reports on the current students which we are sponsoring through secondary education.

A proposal was put forward from one of the local representatives that if additional scholarships were to be made could it be considered offering some to send students to one of the local day secondary schools. This would be cheaper and hence we would be able to support a greater number of students. There are now three local schools offering secondary education on a day basis.

This proposal was accepted and it was decided that the management of these local schools scholarships could be organised directly by the local scholarship committee through the Education Centre administration. Arrangements were made for us to visit one of the schools to look around and meet the headmaster and his staff team.



# Books

Within the container recently sent out to Zimbabwe was a good selection of school books that had been collected and packed by the UK charity School Aid.

On arrival at our Education Centre the books were sorted by one of the local schools representative in order to best match the requirements of the local schools that we are supporting. Some books are to be kept at the Education Centre and added to the reference library.

During our recent visit we made time to deliver some of the books to the schools ourselves. They were greatfully received by both the staff and the children.





# Rhino Website – [www.blackrhino.org](http://www.blackrhino.org)

Our rhino website has used the same format for a number of years but has recently been given a new look by David Gripper. The opportunity provided by adding a more modern style, has been used to review the site's organization and not simply change appearance. At the time of writing, the final touches are still being made. New photographs are to be added and the Education Centre and the 'Adopt a Rhino' scheme will be getting their own sections.

The final version will be more user-friendly and should be quicker to load with more use of thumbnail pictures. Navigation is simple by clicking on photos or text links and the main menu is always visible so you can find your way back easily.



We think the new format is both clean and informative but we're biased – so tell us what you think.

## New Computers for The Education Centre

Thanks to the generosity of one of our supporters in Banbury, who gifted us two modern computers, we were able to send these out in the 40 foot container and were delighted that they arrived in good working order.

If we could get further modern computers donated, then we would like to start computer courses at the Education Centre.

Here is a picture of your editor teaching Palloma how to play spider solitaire on the new computer !



### SBRT Trustees

John Gripper  
Peter Borton  
Annie Gripper  
Nigel Overall  
Paul Holmes  
David Gripper  
Dr Alastair Neale

### In Zimbabwe

Ray Gripper  
David Ellman-Brown

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Dr Willie Nduku  
Malcolm Penny  
Julian Pettifer  
Greg Rasmussen  
Tony Soper  
Robert Swift

### The Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust Accounts

	2005	2006
<b>Income</b>	£	£
Donations & Covenants	32,355	36,396
Memberships	1,111	1,418
Adopt a Rhino	1,500	925
Gift Aid Refund	1,702	1,890
Quiz	173	215
Dividends & Interest	4,445	4,486
SAVE Foundation Australia	2,817	3,710
Scholarship Fund	2,213	1,585
<b>Total</b>	<b>46,316</b>	<b>50,625</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Printing, Postage & Tel	2,449	2,753
Legacy Advertising	280	350
Travel	1,375	2,221
Transfer to Africa	45,484	38,222
Miscellaneous	65	139
Transfer to Reserves	0	5,000
Surplus for year	-3,337	1,940
<b>Total</b>	<b>46,316</b>	<b>50,625</b>



