

NEWSLETTER – May 2007

Volume 21, Number 1

Patrons: *The Lord McAlpine of West Green, David Gower OBE, Bryce Courtenay AM, Nick Price*

RHINO POACHING ON THE INCREASE!

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In this, our twentieth year, we committed to raising at least \$200,000 during the financial year, to make it our biggest year since inception. We are delighted, and proud, to be able to report that we have easily surpassed that figure, and have broken through the magic **\$2 million dollar** mark since our beginnings in June 1987.

The main highlights since our last newsletter have been two fully-booked safaris and a fantastically profitable dinner/auction with David Gower that raised over \$150,000.



The Zimbabwean economy is in total free fall and it is hard for us to understand how people try to cope with an inflation rate of somewhere between 2,000 – 3,000 % per annum!! Here is a simple example that explains it all.

The official bank rate of the Australian dollar to the Zimbabwe dollar is 200 to 1. On 12 January this year the unofficial/parallel rate was 2,300, on 17 January it had fallen to 2,600, on 28 January it was 3,850, in early February it was 4,250, and now it is at 20,000 !!!

Had the Government not wiped three zeros off their currency it would be 20,000,000. When we started 20 years ago, it was a mere 1:3 ratio. Wow!

It's totally impossible to keep the wages up to date and we have tremendous admiration for the ordinary Zimbabwean people doing their level best to make ends meet, and we commend all those of them who are striving so hard in the field of wildlife conservation in these terribly difficult times. *Thanks to you all. We commit ourselves to continuing to help you all through these troubled times, so that your wildlife can remain part of your national heritage in the wonderful country that you occupy, Zimbabwe.*

We hope you will attend our AGM on 24 July at the Perth Zoo, where a comprehensive overview of the situation will be presented as well as a video from our next trip at the end of May/early June. See you there!

Nicholas S. Duncan

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Twentieth Annual General Meeting

of the

**SAVE FOUNDATION
of Australia (Inc.)**

will be held on

Tuesday 24 July at 7 pm

in the

Education Centre, Perth Zoo

Labouchere Rd, South Perth

Nomination forms for positions on the Executive, together with proxy forms, are available by telephoning 9272 4666 (ask for Kim).

Nominations should be lodged at 229 Oxford Street by 7.00 pm on 19 July 2007

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be available.

ZIMBABWE UPDATE

During the past two years there has been a notable increase in rhino poaching and the tremendous rhino population growth of the previous 12 years has certainly slowed down to a slight deficit. These illegal killings are occurring in different parts of the country but most notably in the Midlands Conservancy, Matusadona, Sinamatella and Save Valley Conservancy. We will indeed be tackling these problems in a more determined manner in the future and improving the resources and manpower in these areas.

People often ask why we continue in these difficult conditions and the answer is very simple - we do it entirely for the animals, particularly the rhinos, and we try not to be embroiled in the political situation.

There have probably been close to 100 rhino deaths in the last three years or so, particularly in the areas mentioned in the previous paragraphs. The gangs appear to be well informed and with known exit routes, and somehow, they avoid capture! Fortunately, rhino births are continuing, with one calf being born last January in the Midlands when we were there, and another last week. We also hear evidence

of new tiny footprints in Matusadona and we are expecting two births at Imire, and this will be happening everywhere else as well.

This year's Rhino Management Programme will be concentrating on the de-horning of as many of the animals as possible in the targeted areas, as well as translocating others from where their numbers are becoming unworkable. In addition, some may well be exported to a neighbouring country to initiate a breeding programme there.

So, we are constantly being updated on the trends and happenings within the rhino world and our commitment in our twentieth year is to make the biggest difference and impact so far since 1987. To this end we have recently purchased the following items, some of which have already arrived, and others are on the water:



*Three two-tonne trucks and one mini bus
Lots of field kit for patrol work
Landrover spare parts for the rebuild of six vehicles
Fuel and tyres for these vehicles
Tracking and veterinary equipment
Metal detectors for bullets and wire snares*

*Cameras for field work
Wages for anti-poaching units
Educational projects
Two-way radios and spare batteries*

In the next few weeks, our Vice-President, Mike Palmer, is very generously donating \$25,000 towards the purchase of a Super Cub plane for aerial rhino work, and we are also contributing 10,000 pounds to the running expenses for a micro-light in Hwange National Park, particularly for lion research and rhino monitoring. We also have US\$10,000 on standby for some additional anti-poaching patrols along the eastern edge of Hwange.

TRIXIE WALKS ON THE WILD SIDE!

One of our members, Trixie Rhodes, has recently returned to Zimbabwe for her second spell of voluntary work at Bally Vaughan. It's an animal sanctuary for sick and injured animals, orphaned and abused ones, and even former pets. Having worked there for two months at the end of last year, Trixie realised that there was more to life than high heels, glamour and a stable job.

A couple of years ago, sensing that there was something missing from her life, Trixie did a Landmark Education course which she says transformed her way of thinking and helped her believe in creating possibilities for herself. And the possibilities started opening up when she saw an advertisement for a fundraising dinner with Bryce Courtenay. "He was a lovely, sincere person and what he said just blew me away," she said. Hearing about a Foundation that was committed to helping endangered species, especially the black rhino, was enough for Trixie to want to get involved.

Her volunteer experience began with a 16-day safari with the Foundation last September. Nicholas arranged for her to stay on and work at Bally Vaughan. This meant diving head first into a culture and lifestyle unlike anything in Australia.

Trixie had to overcome a number of cultural differences,



from language problems, to the way animals are regarded, to unreliable power supplies - "It gives a whole new meaning to candlelit dinners" - to a country torn apart by political strife.

While at the sanctuary, Trixie looked after owls, marmosets, vervet monkeys, servals, civets, hyaenas, leopards, crocodiles, antelopes, lions, donkeys, geese, chickens, ducks and turkeys. There was no job description - she simply did what had to be done on the day. "I had to put fly smear on the lions' ears, I came face to face with a cobra and I fed the hyaenas. I traded high heels and designer labels for khaki boots, and I can't wait to do it again!"

Visit www.ballyvaughan.co.zw for more information.

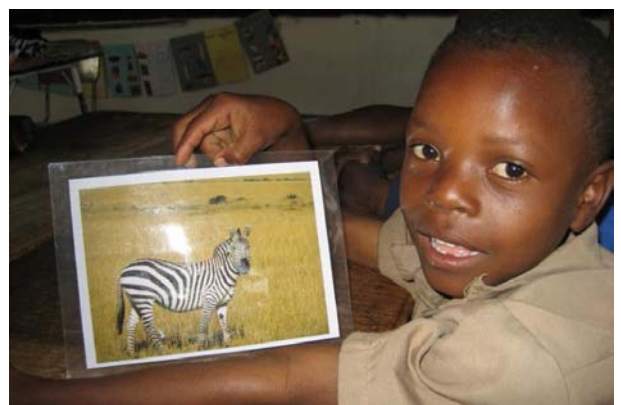
AUSSIE TEACHERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

We were invited by Lisa Hywood of the Tikki Hywood Trust, to assist with airfares for two Australian educators, Rachel Lowry and Katie Pahlow, from Discovery and Learning, Werribee Open Range Zoo, Melbourne, to introduce an environmentally aware style of teaching to three junior schools in Zimbabwe over a four-week period. We donated the tickets and are very happy to have done so.

Werribee donated some visual aids, school books and training material and more will be on its way soon. Here is Rachel's initial feedback.

The teacher training went exceptionally well. The teachers and students are thrilled to be part of an *insitu* education/conservation program that incorporates learning with real outcomes and brings learning to life.

Phase 1- Chidziro (Developing Connections) was incredibly new to the teachers for many had not thought about environmental education from this perspective. However the teachers applied themselves well and the children's response to the activities and teaching techniques consolidated the concept and was motivation in itself.





Katie and I visited Zimbabwe National Parks with Lisa to share the vision of the project and we articulated the need for them to ensure that the students involved in the program have access to nearby national parks and game reserves at affordable prices. National Parks understood the value of our request and have agreed to allow students from Siya Lima into a nearby game reserve once a year for free. This will now become an annual trip for Grade 3 students involved in the project. The other two pilot schools are able to visit the private game reserve located at the animal release sites at no cost. The Tikki Hywood Trust education representatives at each site will also use these sites to enhance teacher workshops in the future.

We found that most of the teachers have the skills needed to implement Phase 2 Kudzwa (Developing Understandings). The visual aids and other resources donated to the schools will now make this phase more achievable and effective. At each school Katie and I have also arranged for a local game scout to visit the school fortnightly to conduct regular wildlife workshops that will continue to motivate teachers and increase their own knowledge base.

Lastly, the final phase, Phase 3 Kurangarira (Developing Sustainable Behaviours) was established in each school. Each of the three pilot schools has begun a market garden, and we have secured funding for fruit orchards. Year 7 students are learning how to make use of the fuel briquette machines and within the next few months the chicken, rabbit and guinea pig breeding will be introduced. I will begin fundraising in a few weeks to make this a reality.

Overall the trip was incredibly inspiring. Thank you for your support and involvement in the project to date. Lisa is such an incredible motivating force behind this project. The Kusanganisa project now has momentum and we look forward to sharing further information with you as it arises.

**Hunter Hall International Limited
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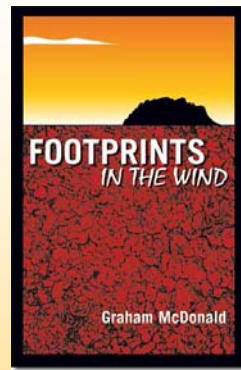
Hunter Hall is an ethical investment company that is committed to supporting environmental, social and humanitarian problems in today's world. They have assisted various organizations over the years in a number of different ways and are proud to be involved with rhino conservation.

**Find out more about Hunter Hall by calling
1800 651 674.**

FOOTPRINTS

IN THE WIND - a mystery novel by West

Australian author, Graham McDonald (a proud sponsor of this newsletter and one of our members).



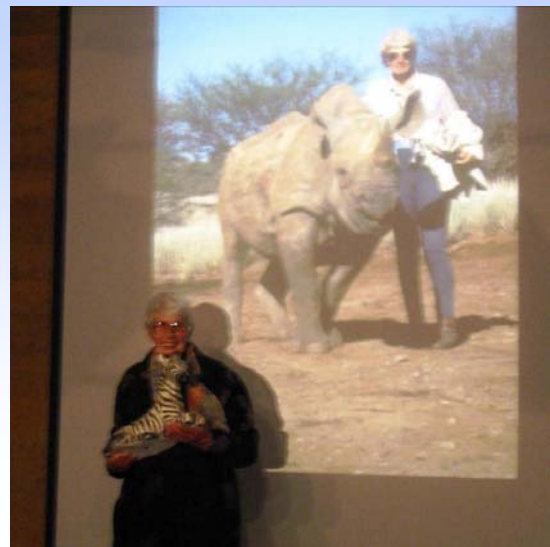
A rugged, haunting and compelling tale from the Western Australian goldfields; of gold lust and murder; of searching and reckoning and the spiritual awakening of a man and a boy.

Visit www.trafford.com for more information about this book. Copies can be purchased for \$22.95 incl. postage, via Money Order or Cheque, from:

Graham McDonald
PO Box 786, Denmark WA 6333
Contact: Tel. 9848 2259 or
Email gracor@inet.net.au

**\$2 of each copy sold will be donated to the
SAVE FOUNDATION of Australia Inc.**

RHINO LEGEND COMES TO PERTH



The Zoo theatrette was packed to capacity as 95 members and guests were enthralled by Anna Merz and her views on animal extinctions and her rhino sanctuary. Anna first went to Ghana in 1958 and worked tirelessly in opposition to the bush meat trade. Then, in 1977 she retired to Kenya, found out about the plight of the black rhino, and opened the Lewa Downs ranch as a rhino area in 1982, later becoming a wildlife conservancy.

There are now 80 rhinos there and Anna has become a roving ambassador for all five rhino species - Javan, Sumatran, Indian, black and white.

Thanks, Anna for all that you've done for the rhinos and for your inspirational speech, resulting in \$2,800 being raised for Lewa Downs and Zimbabwe's rhinos.

\$150,000 RAISED with DAVID GOWER!

This was an all-time record for our fundraisers and what a night it was! On Tuesday 12 December, 628 members, guests and the general public squeezed into the Grand Ballroom, Hyatt Regency Perth, for an amazing evening of fine dining, drinking, entertainment and fundraising. *And why so many for such a small, unfashionable Foundation for the rhinos?* Simple - to see, hear and pay their respects to the legendary David Gower, one of the finest batsmen of all time, and one of our Patrons.

Our goal was to have 600 people attend, a full house, to be achieved by a three week campaign in August to sell 300 seats, followed by a further three weeks in November for the other 300. How about this - the first promotion achieved 570 bookings and the rest just came in through the momentum already achieved. Such was the pulling power of David and the Ashes Series. Thank you all for your support, especially the 52 tables of ten, mainly corporates and members. An all-inclusive price of \$900 for a table made this one of the best valued dinners of the year.

A specially big acknowledgement again goes to our corporate sponsors for the evening; *Westwide Financial Services*, 'your financial coach', *Nederburg* for their red wines, *Leaping Lizard* for the whites, *Hahn Special Dry premium lager*, *Gage Roads Pilsner Mid Strength* and *Chris Shellabear* for his auctioning marathon.

Most of all we sincerely thank *David* for being such a fantastic Patron and for his continued generous and stylish assistance of all for which we stand. Without you, David, none of this would have been possible!



The four course dinner was of the highest quality, the best we've ever enjoyed, and congratulations to the Hyatt banqueting team for this. The Nederburg and Leaping Lizard wines, and Hahn and Gage Roads beers, provided fabulous liquid refreshment throughout the long evening, from 6.30pm to midnight! Thanks to you all for your responsive support when asked.

In between the courses we were visually informed by our President, *Nicholas Duncan*, of all that *SAVE FOUNDATION* stood for and had achieved, and he set a target of \$100,000 for the evening. We viewed the outstanding array of 56 highly collectible pieces of sporting memorabilia (expertly framed by *Angelo* from *Annalice Framing*), prints, paintings and safaris, the main part of our auction, with a further 30 items in the silent auction. These were sold off either side of our celebrity guest's superbly entertaining speech. *David* exuded all the same qualities and talents that made him so spectacular on the playing field, a sense of style

and fine timing. And his delivery was the equal of all the world class bowlers he faced in his illustrious career. The story about the late Malcolm Marshall and Graham Gooch will long be remembered by all who heard it!



Roll on the next Ashes series in Australia when David will be back again to delight us all.

Inspired by all that they witnessed, we received *two incredibly generous donations on the night of \$10,000 each*, from our longstanding New South Wales member *Karin Keighley* (who flew here specially for the day), and *Mrs Mac's Pty Ltd*, our local corporate donor. *Wow—thank you both so much!*

Some of the more memorable moments from the auction included; an intensive bidding dual between two local business identities for a cricket ball signed by Don Bradman and beautifully framed and presented with a facsimile letter from Sir Don, eventually purchased by *Chris Bonwick* of *Independence Group* for \$7,400; a signed and framed jersey from the winning West Coast Eagles team going to *Dawn and Sylvester Zammit* for \$7,000; top price for the night being for a 16-day African safari to four exclusive locations, purchased by *Sam Mangione* of *Instant Waste* for \$11,500 (our thanks to *The Hide*, *Makalolo Plains*, *Victoria Falls Hotel*, *Chobe Safari Lodge* and *Xakanaxa Camp* for their very generous donations of accommodation and activities to make up this package); *John Lewins* from *Platinum Australia* bought a bat signed by the seven top order Australian batsmen, together with five balls autographed by each of the bowlers, all magnificently framed with photos, for \$5,500; the winning World Cup soccer squad, Italy, a signed shirt by 24 players, bought by *Gino Salomone* of *Tiles Expo* for \$3,700; a signed and framed cricket bat by Bradman for *Cornelius Geers* of *Geers Sullivan Financials* for \$4,100; and two places on our May behind the scenes trip to Zimbabwe for twelve days was purchased by *Sue Taylor* for \$7,000, after strong bidding. Thanks also go to *Acacia Africa* for donating a 19-day Desert Tracker Safari and to *Makutsi Safari Springs*, South Africa a 7 day/6 night holiday.



Chris Shellabear of *Shellabear's Real Estate* was our incredible auctioneer for the whole series, hardly pausing for a glass of water and successfully moving all the items before our midnight deadline. Thanks so much, Chris - your hard work, plus the generosity of our bidders, resulted in a profit from the auction and the ticket sales of *\$130,000*, which, together with the two donations of \$10,000, pushed us past the *\$150,000 grand total, a new record!* Elsewhere, you'll read how these funds have been wisely spent, so far.

And we have now broken the **two million dollar mark for funds raised since inception!!** Not bad for a small group of volunteers tucked away in little old Perth!



Nick Gee was the lucky winner of the \$2,000 Financial Plan so generously donated by Peter Gangemi and Westwide Financial Services, the group who hosted David for the evening.

We are planning to hold a similar extravaganza whenever the next test match is played in Perth and hope that you will continue to support these events, please.

being a part of the vastness of this untamed land, rather than merely observing it from the back of a landrover... camping on a cliff top overlooking a dry riverbed, in which elephants dug to miraculously find water and cheeky baboons capitalised on their find... having the privilege to walk the paths made by the magnificent animals to whom the country once belonged, standing in their tracks and sharing the bush with elephant and lion – on their terms (sometimes at a distance of only a few metres)...

... Sleeping out at Masuma waterhole, taking in the sights, sounds and smells of the African night... Sharing the give-aways we had brought with the people of Sinamatella – an experience that touched all of our hearts...



THE SEPTEMBER 2006 SAFARI TO ZIMBABWE AND BOTSWANA

Neither a book full of words, nor thousands of photos could truly capture the experiences we enjoyed during our 18 days in Africa. How could I possibly begin to describe our Safari in the 500 words I've been allocated.

I did write a diary for the first seven days, vainly attempting to record each highlight, but they were so many and diverse, and came at such a pace, that I gave up on my jottings and resigned myself to simply absorbing every moment.

The trip did begin with a bit of a hiccup – upon safely landing in Harare (with some degree of trepidation) and making it through the visa checks fairly smoothly, we found that seven of our 34 pieces of group luggage were missing. Some were give-aways, but Maree, Monika, Allan and Nicholas were without a change of clothes (apart from contributions from the remainder of the group) for the first couple of days.

After strict warnings about locking our bags and carrying our valuables with us at all times – the highlights began...

The kilometres of cars queued up for fuel in Harare and surrounds, because petrol stations were all closed – unable to afford to sell fuel at the prices set by the government... The primary school on the way to Imire, where the most gorgeous children greeted us singing their National Anthem, to which we reciprocated with a somewhat scratchy rendition of Advance Australia Fair... An escorted tour around Imire Farm, and a chance to get up close and personal with rhino, giraffe, eland and elephants... The Imire school, where children once again performed for us, but this time were outdone by Nicholas and his version of 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes'...

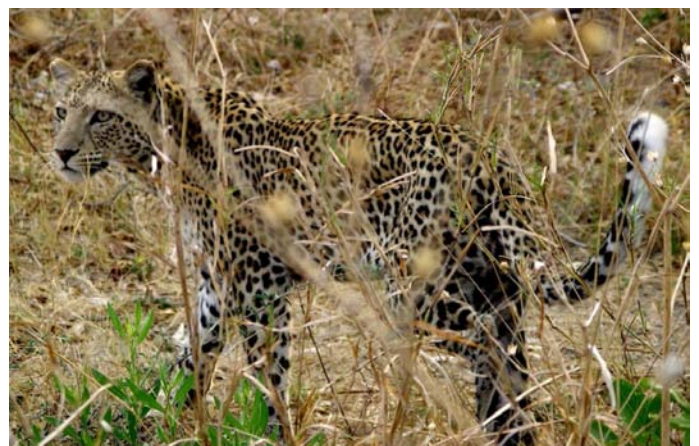
... The rare opportunity to see Painted Hunting Dogs and their puppies near Hwange Safari Lodge on the way to The Hide... Luxurious nights at The Hide, and exciting days spent on morning and afternoon game drives (seeing everything from baboons, giraffe, wildebeest, elephant, waterbuck, banded mongoose, buffalo, zebra, impala to abundant bird life), sipping gin and tonics while watching the sun set over a waterhole, and eating sumptuous fare in a beautiful setting that oozed everything African...

... And for me, the most special and unforgettable experience of all – the opportunity to walk in the wilds of Africa as part of a 3-day walking Safari with Andy, as our guide...

... The magnificent Victoria Falls – 'the smoke that thunders' – truly an awe-inspiring spectacle, and the many adventures we experienced there... walking with the lions, riding elephants, canoeing the crocodile and hippo infested mighty Zambezi, bird's-eye views of the Falls and surrounds from a helicopter, and for some (well one), even a bungee jump from the Vic Falls bridge...

... The complete change of scenery as we went from a very dry Zimbabwe to the watery paradise of Chobe in Botswana, with more wildlife than you could possibly imagine – hippo, crocodile, hundreds of elephant, hyeana, giraffe, and of course impala and an abundance of bird life...

... And finally on to Xakanaxa Camp in the Okavango Delta, with its candle-lit tents set on the banks of a tributary... The opportunity to view the amazing landscape of the Delta from both land and water, and to marvel at the beauty and majesty of groups of lions, the grace and stealth of a leopard... Gliding silently through the water on a Makoro, serenaded by the sounds of the Delta as the sun set on our African experience...





Twenty-one individuals, drawn from places as diverse as New Zealand and Brisbane, departed Australia – each with their own motivations and expectations regarding the safari on which we were embarking. Some had visited Africa on previous occasions, for others, it was a journey into the unknown – the ‘dark continent’. We returned 18 days later sharing a common bond of deep respect and love for the ravaged country of which we had been fortunate enough to catch just a tiny glimpse, and for the magnificent array of beasts and birds that had joined us on our journey.

Regina Gaujers

WOW, WHAT AN ADVENTURE! ASPIRE Safari 11-22 October 2006

This was an unforgettable African experience for 19 adventurous people from Perth with a common interest in real estate: Aspire co-founders Craig Turnbull and Michelle Carden, ten Diamond Masters and partners and two youngsters, Olivia Hood, 15, and Kennedy Logan, 12. Thank you to Nicholas Duncan and Maree Wrack for creating this fabulous trip for us.



As a group we all visited Imire Safari Ranch, The Hide, Victoria Falls and Camp Okuti on the edge of the Okavango and Moremi wildlife area in Botswana. Some of us stopped over in Mauritius, some discovered Chobe and some stayed with friends in Harare. These are their most memorable moments in their own words.

Shirley Hood – “Each place we visited was a different and unique experience which made this trip so special. I loved the Victoria Falls Hotel and the feeling of going back in time.”

Jenny Hough – “being charged by an elephant in Chobe while on my first ever game drive! It eye-balled me! It was terrifying but exciting and I couldn’t wait to go out on my next drive.”

John Dumancic – “seeing my first leopard in a tree near Main Camp and seeing how it was as interested in us as we were in it...after more than 20 game drives throughout Africa the leopard had remained elusive and now I had seen all of the ‘Big Five’ in the wild. Unforgettable!”

Chay Egan – “the openness, the freedom to be out in the wilderness, to jump in the back of a vehicle and view animals is so different than driving to and from work. I absolutely loved it.”

Kate Egan – “sitting near an anthill watching a herd of buffalo in the field, the stillness... experiencing the rugged, natural beauty was really special. It’s not a normal experience in my life to be free from all distractions and to experience that moment in time.”



Sandro Bombardieri – “when I went on an early morning walk with five others and Andy (guide) and we followed lions.... there was a massive roar and they were behind us... a huge adrenaline rush and an experience and a half.”

Kim Radbourne – “the school kids... seeing the looks on their faces... seeing them face to face. When I give a dollar it will be for the education of the kids so they’ll learn about looking after their animals and the environment.”

Jon Edenburg and Kennedy – “that night at The Hide...the buffalo stampeding and the lions roaring. At Okavango when a lion approached the vehicle and Shirley ended up on the guide’s lap! The lion got up, came over to the vehicle, pulled the dragging stick out from under the vehicle and took it back over to the wheel ruts where it went back to sleep. We were in the back row and in front of us Michelle was nearly on top of Olivia and she was nearly on top of Craig! Time slowed down considerably during this event!”



Olivia Hood – “*all the game drives, the elephants, Okavango and the lions, being at The Hide and going walking, the staff, the giraffe room where I stayed, the night drives, and hearing, from my room, the buffalo stampede.*”

Craig Turnbull – “*experiencing the rawness and primeval nature of Africa... coming back to nature and a real feeling of freedom. My fist sighting of a leopard I called Princess Di and the night of the buffalo stampede at The Hide... extraordinary!*”

Rob Oliver (spent his childhood in Zimbabwe) – “*thoroughly enjoyed my time at The Hide...walking with Andy (guide) was sensational, especially the early morning encounter with the lions. And the night when the buffaloes stampeded... that was my best ever night!*”

Kaye Ruttledge – *what a night it was at The Hide waterhole... the lions and cubs came down for a drink, as did a couple of leopards, the elephants were play fighting in front of us and then they got serious.*”

Declan Ruttledge – “*the buffaloes charging beyond the waterhole... I thought the whole place would be destroyed, they'd do so much damage but in the morning there was hardly a trace, a couple of broken branches although I couldn't really see where they'd been. I remember it so vividly.*”

Brenda James – “*the night at The Hide when the buffaloes were stampeding... the mere sound of it and being part of it...hearing the lions roaring and a buffalo wailing... it was surreal - you're there but you're not there. Being so close to animals and flying in small planes put me outside my comfort zone.*”

Michelle Carden - “*outstanding!*”

From all of us, our heartfelt thanks go to:

Everybody at Imire – owners John and Judy Travers, lodge managers Mike and Sheila Thompson and all the fantastic staff for their outstanding hospitality. We visited Numwa School where the students performed songs and dances for our entertainment. An update from Judy said the borehole at Numwa School (donated by Monika two weeks earlier) is working a treat, and our help was very much appreciated...it has certainly made a huge difference to the lives of so many people.



Lisa Hywood, founder of the Tikki Hywood Trust and breeder of endangered small mammals for introducing us to serval, genet, African wild cat, aardwolf, hedgehog and civet and allowing us the privilege of seeing these animals in her breeding program.

Gordon Puterill and staff at Bally Vaughan game sanctuary for their generosity and a very quiet game drive – an elephant pulled our trailer!

Barry and Bridget, managers of The Hide, their guides and staff who did the most magnificent job caring for us and for somehow creating ‘the night’ of a lifetime! Hollywood couldn’t have scripted it better!

Katie and her staff at Camp Okuti for sharing their amazing knowledge and enthusiasm for the Okavango.

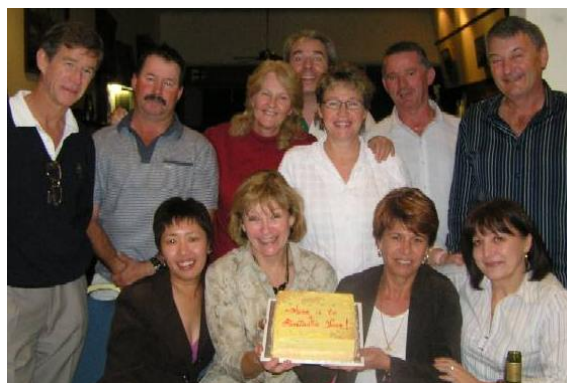
And from me, **Miriam Bauman**, happy memories, and I leave you with these words of wisdom.

“*What is man without the beast? If all the beasts were gone man would die from great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts soon happens to man..... All are connected*”. – Chief Seattle



INTERNATIONAL RHINO FOUNDATION VISITOR

Susie Ellis (second from left, front), Executive Director of the International Rhino Foundation, recently paid a flying visit to Perth to brief the committee on IRF's current involvement worldwide and, in particular, in Zimbabwe.



FUNDS SPENT SINCE JULY 2006

4 WD purchases	35,567
Tracking & specialist equipment	24,896
4WD parts and fuel	23,321
Midlands conservancy	13,606
Two way radios	13,299
Hwange water pump fuel	11,423
Tikki Hywood Trust	6,246
Education projects	6,101
Veterinary products	4,829
APU wages, National Parks	4,245
Save the Rhino Trust, Namibia	3,685
Field kit	3,603
Miscellaneous goods and projects	11,750
TOTAL	\$162,571

JANUARY FACT FINDING TRIP

On 16 January 2007 I departed Perth for an experience of a lifetime, accompanied by Steve Harrison and committee members Evelyn Wong and Miriam Bauman.

On arrival into Harare we were met by Nicholas and Mike Palmer and taken to our overnight accommodation. I stayed with James and Janine Varden who generously offered their house for the night. The next morning at 5.30 we left for our five hour drive to Kariba where we spent the next two nights. Esme Gulliver had flown from the UK to join us so in total we had a group of seven. We stayed at Rhino Island Safari Camp where we were accommodated in a lovely rustic thatched safari camp on stilts situated right on the edge of the Matusadona National Park.

We were very disappointed to learn that only 15 of an estimated 40 rhinos still remain in Matusadona. We were also horrified to find only one vehicle and one boat in working condition, with only five litres of fuel on station. Not surprising there are not many rhinos left! Steve Harrison inspected the vehicles that had mechanical problems.



After spending another night in Harare we drove to Kwekwe, gateway to the Midlands Conservancy for two nights which was a new experience for me. We stayed on Ken King's property where we were looked after exceptionally well. We were taken on game drives by Keith and Norman and we also went rhino tracking but unfortunately didn't see any. During our stay at the conservancy a rhino did give birth but sadly we were unable to see her. We were briefed on the recent land grabs by unauthorised settlers.

After our stay in the Midlands we headed to Bulawayo to meet Verity Bowman at the Dambari field station for lunch and to see the duikers she is breeding in captivity. We only had a brief time with Verity as we were on our way to Hwange National Park, where she joined us later.

At Hwange Main Camp we visited the Painted Dog project and the Lion Project. We were very lucky to see cheetah, painted dog, lion and roan antelope during our two day stay.

We then drove to Makalolo Plains Camp for two nights of luxury. Makalolo Plains is built on elevated timber walkways with the bedrooms built on raised wooden platforms. We witnessed truly spectacular sunsets with the elephants and a herd of 100 eland, a rare sight.

On the road again and onto Sinamatella for an overnight stay. We met with the men from the rhino monitoring unit and it really was very moving to see how very proud they are of what they are doing to protect the rhino. We handed out some kit to each of them. They were so enthusiastic and were all immaculately dressed in their uniforms.

We also met the school teacher Jean, sponsored by some of our members, and her pupils. Gorgeous children. Over dinner we discussed the rhino situation with the three officers in charge, Moses, Hilary and Cephus.

I have been fortunate enough to travel to Africa on numerous occasions over the past 20 years but this was probably one of

my most memorable. I now have a better understanding of what the FOUNDATION is all about and the people they support and work with in Zimbabwe.



Nia Carras



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