



NATIONAL TRUST OF ZIMBABWE

JANUARY 2011 NEWSLETTER

VOL. 1 OF 2011

1. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

It is a great honour for me, as the newly elected Chairman of the NTZ to write the introduction to this newsletter.

My appointment to this position arose as a result of the tragic death last year of Bob Stumbles, who had Chaired the NTZ for the last 3 years. What makes my appointment particularly meaningful, but also emotive for me, is the fact that Bob was a great friend over many years, and that tragically, Bob had the heart attack which led to his death whilst playing tennis with me.

Bob Stumbles' contribution to numerous aspects of life in Zimbabwe was immense. He was an outstanding lawyer who fought constantly against every kind of injustice. Above all, however, Bob dedicated himself to service to the community, his Chairmanship of the NTZ being but one of the many organizations he headed.

Whilst Bob was a great loss to our organization, we know of the even greater loss he was to his beloved wife Pam, to whom we extend our most heartfelt condolences.

I should also like to pay tribute to Mr. Mike Kimberley. Mike has been a member of the NT Council for 35 years, during which he Chaired the organization. Following the untimely death of Bob Stumbles, he once again stepped into the breach and did a sterling job .

As members all know, a great selling point for our organization is the reciprocity we have with the National Trust in the UK as well as National Trusts in Guernsey, Jersey, Barbados, Ireland, Malaysia, Bahamas, Bermuda and New Zealand and with the Australian Council of National Trust's, and the Stichting het Vrienden der Geldersche Kasteelen and Stichting het Geldersch Landscape in the Netherlands Trust and our members enjoy free admission to the numerous properties of the National Trusts in those countries.

I am sure that you, like me, have been entranced by some of the many exquisite homes, gardens, parks and walks, all beautifully maintained, overseas.

How do we rate by comparison? Whilst we have some magnificent properties under our auspices, the fact is that due to the ravages of our economy, we have simply not had either the financial or personnel resources to maintain, let alone improve these properties.

We have, however, been greatly uplifted recently by the visit of Mr. Oliver Maurice of INTO, on which extracts of his report follow hereunder. The very positive approach taken by Mr. Maurice will, I have no doubt, significantly benefit the Trust generally, and our flagship, La Rochelle particularly. Oliver Maurice, with the backing of INTO will endeavor to assist the National Trust of Zimbabwe, by sourcing experts from National Trust properties in the UK who might be in a position to travel to Zimbabwe to draw up detailed Management Plans for La Rochelle and the National Trust properties within Zimbabwe in order for us to improve and refurbish the sites and restore them to attract more visitors.

The Committee is in constant contact with Oliver in this respect and we look forward to being able to update our members with developments.

My special gratitude goes to Lin Goncalves. It was she who made the initial contact with Oliver Maurice, persuaded him to visit us, hosted his visit and together with her husband Jean and our excellent secretary, John Hyslop, transported him to the Eastern Highlands. Here Oliver was able to see for himself the properties under our Trusteeship in that area i.e. Murahwa's Hill, La Rochelle, and at Nyanga, World's View and the Rhodes/Nyanga Hotel Museum.

I am also indebted to the sub-committee at Mutare who have done splendid work in identifying areas which need attention, and then setting about overcoming any weaknesses and problems. The Eastern Highlands Committee comprises Bill Johnstone (Chairman), Darrel Plowes, Nina Bauer and Des Becker.

In respect of the Rhodes/Nyanga Museum, I am most indebted to the indomitable and most persuasive Helen Hyslop through whose efforts we have obtained a grant from the Beit Trust to effect vital repairs to the Museum.

In conclusion, many of you probably know nothing about me. I am a born and bred Zimbabwean with a passion for our land and its people. Both my wife Diana, a teacher, and I are proud that our family heritage pre-dates the Pioneer occupation of this country, so we have long roots here.

I am a legal practitioner by profession. Over the past 30 years or so I have been heavily involved in our excellent Trust Schools, and am currently the National Chairman of the History Society of Zimbabwe. I am greatly involved in Church work and run a course in Restoring Relationships at the Christian Counselling Centre

My wife and I have three children, all of whom are married and between them have six offspring bringing great joy to us as grandparents.

Our Council contains folk who have shown great loyalty and staying power over these past very difficult years. It is my hope that I might serve them and the membership of the NT in a manner that will be beneficial to all.

Tim Tanser

2. COMMITTEE REPORT:

The National Trust of Zimbabwe Committee has recently (22nd – 26th November) had the pleasure to welcome Mr. Oliver Maurice, Director for Membership and Development, to Zimbabwe, to visit La Rochelle at Penhalonga, Worlds View at Nyanga and the Rhodes Museum.

Olivier Maurice has had a long career with the National Trust of England and is presently with INTO, the International National Trust Organisation.

It was Oliver's first visit to Zimbabwe, after travelling to Ethiopia and Uganda to visit INTO AFRICA members in those countries, before continuing to South Africa where Mr. Mike Moriarty is very active in getting a South African National Trust formed.

One of the NTZ Committee members, Lin Goncalves, met Oliver Maurice in Dublin last year, at the 13th INTO Conference. The NTZ Committee is now actively endeavoring to have the La Rochelle property restored to its former glory, as the gracious home of Sir Stephen and Lady Virginia with its magnificent botanical gardens and orchid collection.

There is a lot of work to be done and if the whole refurbishment programme can be 'divided up' between the different sections of the property, it will be far easier to approach a number of benefactors, rather than one, which would be a bit daunting for even the most generous of donors!

In the New Year our Committee will start working on fund-raising projects for La Rochelle, as any prospective overseas donors would like to see us making an effort on our side as well, which is quite understandable.

Repairs and painting work are being undertaken at the Rhodes Museum at Nyanga, thanks to a generous donation from the Beit Trust to cover the material and labour costs.

The January edition of the Ndeipi magazine carries an article on La Rochelle. We are most grateful to Mike Garden, Julia Pierini and the team of Ndeipi for the valuable coverage. If any members have missed this particular copy, extra copies are available, please contact Lin Goncalves on linnybgood25@zol.co.zw

3. MEMBERSHIP

The NTZ is also in the process of updating the membership lists. If there are any members who have left Zimbabwe that you know about, please be kind enough to notify the Membership Secretary, Fira Bache, on email bachecp@hms.co.zw

We would also like to encourage new members to join the NTZ, please circulate this newsletter to your friends and family and colleagues who might be interested.

The NTZ properties consist of a number of sites of great interest to historians, ornithologists and tree-fundis – not to mention the magnificent orchid collection at La Rochelle, and the botanical collection – most of the original plants, cuttings and seeds came with Lady Virginia when the couple first arrived in this country in 1952.

If there are any members or friends who have any memorabilia relating to the Courtauld era and La Rochelle, such as maps, books or photographs, pictures or Art Deco bric-a-brac, any donations of such would be greatly appreciated as we intend to develop a small museum in the tower section of the property, once the refurbishments have been undertaken. Please contact either Lin Goncalves on linnybgood25@zol.co.zw or Helen and John Hyslop on hyslop@mango.zw

4. REPORT ON LA ROCHELLE FOR THE ZIMBABWE NATIONAL TRUST BY OLIVER MAURICE, DIRECTOR INTO – 25 NOVEMBER 2010 (edited to shorten)

Introduction

I was invited to visit Zimbabwe National Trust (ZNT) by Lin Goncalves when we first met at the 13th International Conference of National Trusts in Dublin in September 2009. The visit formed part of a tour of some of the African countries where there are members of the International National Trusts Organisation (INTO), namely Ethiopia, Uganda, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

I subsequently corresponded with Lin who produced a programme for my visit which included the ZNT flagship property, La Rochelle, built by Sir Stephen and Lady Courtauld in 1951, which lies in the Imbeza Valley, Penhalonga, close to the Mozambique border in eastern Zimbabwe.

The visit to La Rochelle took place on 23/24 November and I promised to produce my recommendations following the visit.

What follows is a summary of my thoughts with those recommendations.

The Visit

On arrival at La Rochelle, accompanied by Lin and her husband, Jean Goncalves and John Hyslop, I met with the new Chairman, Bill Johnstone, and members of the local Mutare Committee, a recently formed body which supports the various ZNT properties in the vicinity of that town.

It was a pleasant surprise to find the local schoolchildren from the school on the estate, also owned by ZNT, practising carols in the large lounge for their Christmas nativity play.

Following the meeting we were shown round the house, now a hotel, by the lessee, Simon Herring. After lunch we toured the gardens and other facilities and later that afternoon went to Mutare to meet the local committee to give them an early indication of my thoughts

Next morning before breakfast we took a longer walk around what were clearly magnificent gardens in their heyday before leaving for the Rhodes Museum

It was very encouraging to meet the Chairmen and members of both the Harare and Mutare Committees. Their enthusiasm remains undiminished despite the appalling financial and political constraints that have been imposed in the last few years. There is an undoubted sense of optimism that the future for Zimbabwe is brighter than the immediate past.



La Rochelle visit - L to R Des Becker, Lin Goncalves, Oliver Maurice, Nina Bauer, John Hyslop and Darrel Plowes

The recent formation of the Mutare Committee has clearly been of benefit to the morale of the staff at La Rochelle knowing that there is a 'presence' closer at hand than previously

However what also became apparent is that it is not feasible for committees to run properties on the scale of La Rochelle, nor indeed the whole portfolio, when most members are fully occupied with their own businesses and in many cases a long way from the properties. They simply cannot be expected to give it the time that is necessary.



Oliver visits Worlds View



Oliver is shown the Rhodes Museum by Edmore Nyamatowha

How can INTO help?

From these early thoughts above it is clear that what ZNT requires is not only funds but expertise in a number of different areas.

On the funding side INTO can certainly offer advice as to potential funders and may be able to assist in drawing up some proposals using our in-house expertise.

Postscript

My thanks are due to Tim Tanser, Chairman of the ZNT, Bill Johnstone, Chairman of the Mutare Committee and all their respective members for the warmth of the welcome extended to me. Particular thanks are also due to Lin and Jean Goncalves for their generous hospitality and for driving me across and around the country!

It has been an unforgettable trip and I will take home many very happy memories. I hope to return in the fullness of time to witness the progress that will surely come about when the overall political and financial environment improves.

My best wishes to you all for an exciting future!

Oliver Maurice

IF THERE ARE ANY MEMBERS WHO WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE OLIVER MAURICE'S REPORT IN FULL, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT ONE OF THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

Contact details:

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