



# National Trust of Zimbabwe

ESTABLISHED 1960

**Mission Statement**

‘To act as custodians of those properties of cultural heritage and natural beauty held in trust and maintain them for the benefit of the people of Zimbabwe as a legacy for future generations’.

NATIONAL TRUST OF ZIMBABWE

HERITAGE NEWS

VOL 3 OF 2016

NOVEMBER

NTZ tribute to Mr Darrel Plowes



It is with the deepest regret that we note the passing of Darrel Plowes, in Mutare, on Wednesday 19th October 2011 aged 91. Darrel has been an invaluable friend of the National Trust of Zimbabwe for a many, many years and a great source of information and of assistance through his long friendship with Sir Stephen and Lady Virginia Courtauld of La Rochelle when he worked with them on many projects in the early years of La Rochelle. His knowledge of the La Rochelle property was a great help to the Trust during the recent refurbishment programme and we will be eternally grateful for his precious input over the years.

Darrel's long career before retirement was in agriculture, natural resource management and extension where his contributions were substantial. His extensive interests covered an incredibly wide range of subjects in the fields of natural history, agronomy, entomology, botany and ornithology, to name just a few. The Trust was truly honoured and fortunate to have as an active member, one of the greatest all-round naturalists of Zimbabwe.

Darrel was an authority on stapeliads, orchids, butterflies, birds and bird's eggs. Several new species have been named in his honour; these include grasses, aloes, a butterfly, legless lizard, mole-rat and a new sub-species of birds. His plant specimens at the National Herbarium are among the best preserved described and recorded. We are all richer for having known Darrel Plowes and we give thanks for the wonderfully inspiring life of this man and his love of all creation. Even in the last few weeks of his life, when Darrel was in great pain while sitting at the computer he took the time to write to the Trust on matters which were of concern to him.

On behalf of our Executive Council and members of the Trust, we extend our deepest sympathy to all Darrel's family and to his companion, Nina. We will ensure a suitable tribute is recorded for Darrel as an acknowledgement and appreciation for all he has done and achieved in his lifetime.

Here are some of our Executive Committee members' comments:

Darrel will be sadly missed and leave a big void in our community. Darrel was an incredible font of knowledge in many areas scientific, historical, and archaeological, in fauna and flora and this list is by no means exhaustive. He was extremely passionate about Zimbabwe and the Trust and its activities and especially its Mutare properties and the La Rochelle Estate, having known the Courtaulds personally. Our thoughts and prayers go to all his family and close friends at this difficult time.

David Scott

He was one of Zimbabwe's botanical giants and one of the most knowledgeable all-round naturalists I have ever had the pleasure and honour to meet. He may now have ended his never finishing work but will always keep on inspiring me and many others for the remainder of our lives. Whether professional scientist or amateur enthusiast we owe a great debt to his unrelenting search for knowledge and understanding of the natural world.

Rob Burrett

Darrel was also a key link between the present and past of La Rochelle both with the Courtauld Family and the botanicals, particularly the orchids. It was perhaps symbolic that the Lady Virginia Orchid which last flowered in 1973 just after Lady Virginia's death, came out into flower just before Darrel passed away some 43 years later! Fortunately, Jannie Martin took the orchid up to show Darrel in hospital.

Harvey Leared

Darrel was an incredible man and a true gentleman, he was an inspiration to us all and he will sorely missed not least by myself. I was so privileged to have

spent time with him over the years and to have been part of the interview and video event that we undertook with Roger Fairlie a couple of years back at La Rochelle. It is our intention to make a film on La Rochelle with Darrel's interview included. It will be a fitting tribute.

Sharon Waterworth

Darrel, as David and Sharon have noted, had so many and varied talents and achievements some of which may not generally be known. My brother in Australia wrote that he first knew Darrel as Head of Agricultural Extension for communal areas in Manicaland before he became senior in the Dept. of Agriculture in Mutare. Later he rose to a senior level in the Ministry. When he went overseas to do a Masters in Ecology Darrel gave him a number of slides showing trials on soil and water conservation, and trials and demos in communal and commercial farming areas. These always impressed the viewers and I am reminded of the brilliant photographer he was.

Darrel told me how he taught the first groups of Nyanga Weavers the various plants to use for the natural dying of wool. We are all the richer for having known Darrel and give thanks that he was able to share his knowledge and love of this country and of nature to so many.

Edone Ann Logan

We have been so honoured to have had Darrel as a friend and mentor; he was a man of many parts and always with the Trust at heart. So very sorry Nina for your loss. We are all the poorer for his passing. My condolences to all his family and friends, he will be sorely missed

Fira Bache

What terribly sad news. Darrel will be sorely missed and leave a deep void in the field of ornithology and botany, two of his many passions. What an amazing font of knowledge he was and such a highly respected expert in these fields he dedicated his life to.

Lin Gonçalves

I write to convey my condolences to you, the family members, on the passing on of Darrel Plowes. I came to know him in person in 2014 and always kept in touch by email. On 8 April 2016 we sat at the same table at La Rochelle and touched on many issues including my request for him to bring back on the market an authoritative book on 'Gardening in Zimbabwe.' His response was in the affirmative. God has his way of doing things! Darrel will certainly be remembered and missed by the NTZ Community. May His Soul Rest in Peace.

Elliot Mugamu

The NTZ have happily accepted Darrel's family request that a memorial bench be placed in the orchid area at La Rochelle. The bench will allow visitors to pause and reflect on the beauty of the orchids. The orchid area was a place that had special significance to Darrel since it was Sir Stephen who inspired Darrel's fondness for orchids, and in turn Darrel has very kindly donated the balance of his small collection back to La Rochelle. This is wonderful news for the NTZ and typifies Darrel's love of La Rochelle and a sign will be erected to indicate the "Kind donation of these orchids by Darrel Plowes".

The NTZ is also planning for a small memorial stone to be placed at La Rochelle as a specific tribute to highlight Darrell's incredible commitment and contribution to the NTZ and especially to La Rochelle, not just lately but over many decades. The stone will be unveiled in December 2016.



\*\*\*\*PLEASE SUPPORT THE NATIONAL TRUST +++++ DIARISE: - Thursday November the 24th  
– a gala fundraising event at Ster Kinnekor movies!\*\*\*\*

– The National Trust of Zimbabwe will be holding a gala fund-raising event at the Ster-Kinekor cinemas at Sam Levy's and enjoy cheese and wine served before the film where you will be given the chance to meet the Committee and to support the work of the NTZ. There will be an opportunity to buy raffle tickets and win some great prizes including a weekend at the stunning La Rochelle country boutique hotel and gardens and at a lodge at the spectacular located Wild Geese Lodges, Ster Kinnekor movie tickets and lots more. You will be also able to buy a copy of the recently published 'Nyanga's Rich Heritage' publication plus the lovely newly produced NTZ bags.



All this for only USD15 per ticket!

Then enjoy the film called 'Me Before You' a 2016 American-British romantic drama film directed by Thea Sharrock and adapted by Jojo Moyes from her 2012 novel of the same name. The film stars Emilia Clarke, Sam Claflin, Jenna Coleman, Charles Dance, Matthew Lewis, Ben Lloyd-Hughes and Janet McTeer.

Don't miss out, please send a RSVP email to: [info@ntoz.org](mailto:info@ntoz.org) with your name, telephone number and number of tickets that you would like to reserve your tickets. Then please deposit the ticket money into the following NTZ account:

NATIONAL TRUST OF ZIMBABWE

C.A.B.S. ACCOUNT NUMBER 100 2855 012

Please put your name on the deposit slip as reference.

We will send confirmation of your payment and your tickets will be ready for you to collect on the night at the box office.

#### LATEST NEWS :-

On the 30th August 2016, the National Trust of Zimbabwe hosted a prestigious event to launch the publication of 'Nyanga's Rich Heritage', a booklet by Rob Burrett and Edone Ann Logan. Rob and Ann worked tirelessly on compiling this valuable little publication which will be a constant companion for those who hold this area of Zimbabwe near and dear to their hearts. Covering the early pre-colonial history as well as more recent subjects, it is a great addition to the enthusiast's collection

Diplomatic Guests included the European Union Ambassador, Mr. Philippe van Damme, The Canadian Ambassador, Kumar Gupta and his wife Nadira,

the Indonesian Ambassador and his wife, the South African Ambassador, as well as guests from DFID and the British Embassy. Also present were guests from some of Zimbabwe's top corporates, businesses and local societies such as Delta, Safeguard, Standard Chartered Bank, BAT Zimbabwe, the History Society of Zimbabwe, the Pre-History Society, the National Gallery, Dairibord, the Thomas Meikle Trust, Inns of Zimbabwe and CBZ.

Rob and Edone are both well-known historians in Zimbabwe. Rob hails from Bulawayo and Edone is living in Nyanga and is Chair of the Rhodes Nyanga Historical Exhibition. Both have gathered an extensive knowledge of this beautiful area of Zimbabwe and published this new booklet for visitors and friends of Nyanga. Books were on sale at the event and Rob and Edone Ann were available to speak to guests and to personally sign copies of the booklet.

The event was held at the elegant residence of the British Ambassador, Catriona Laing, for which the Trust is most grateful. Entertainment was provided by the Embassy marimba band.

The National Trust flagship property, La Rochelle was represented by Harvey Leared of Acumen Africa and Luke Ngwerume who is the La Rochelle Centre Chairman.

Wine and snacks for the event were generously sponsored by Stables Winery and Supreme Butchery.







We received news that our past Chairman, Tim Tanser, was recently been gored by a rhino whilst on holiday with his family in South Africa. We have recently heard that he is back in Zimbabwe after a stay in hospital in South Africa and we all wish him a speedy recovery!

Rare Orchid blooms first time since 1973

We have the exciting and much longed for blooming of the Lady Courtauld VANDA orchid at La Rochelle. It will bloom till early December, so if at all possible, do try to go up to La Rochelle and witness this spectacular bloom – as it has bloomed only twice before now.

The orchid was found by Sir Stephen Courtauld on one of the eastern Java Islands during his travels there sometime before the start of the second world war. It is thought to be a natural hybrid as there have been no others like it found. It is a unique Vanda orchid different to other *lombokensis*.

Sir Stephen named the orchid, *Vanda lombokensis* Virginia Courtauld. It was taken by Sir Stephen back to England where it was kept in a glass house at Eltham Palace. It flowered once, then during the second world war the glass house it was in, was bombed. A small piece of the plant was recovered and re potted. It was then brought to Southern Rhodesia when Sir Stephen and Lady Virginia moved to La Rochelle near Umtali present day Mutare. It has only flowered on two occasions before whilst it has been at La Rochelle, with the last being in 1973. The present flowering will be the third time in October 2016.

Enquiries within the international Orchid Forum lead us to believe that it is likely to be a hybrid of *Vanda florens* or *V. floresensis* – or a hybrid of the two, and our quest for the definitive hybrid and name continues! We can only assume that there have been some name changes within this species since Sir Stephen acquired it.

It IS a stunning specimen and this year's blooming can only auger well for La Rochelle!

It is also important to note that the orchid was taken to Darrel Plowes while he was in hospital and before he passed away, for him to see it in flower. Our thanks to Jannie Martin for doing this!







## 1. MEMBERSHIP

In an attempt to make life easier for you and to give you more choice, we are pleased to tell you that you can now renew your membership, during normal working hours, at the Acumen office located at 28 Kent Road, Highlands, Harare, mobile number 0778 072 140.

## Membership and reciprocity

Total NTZ membership now stands at 186 and increasing!

**\*\*Members, please do not forget that you are welcome at the Tree Society meetings, as well as Birdlife Zimbabwe meetings/outings following our reciprocity agreements with both Societies. The two Societies newsletters will also be forwarded to our NTZ members. All dates/times and contact details are published in the Ndeipi magazine.\*\***

**\*\*Members are also very welcome at History Society meetings, venues and topics/presenters are advertised in the Ndeipi magazines.\*\***

These Societies are made up of very knowledgeable and interesting folk whose combined interests will have something for everyone, so please, get out there, introduce yourselves and enjoy everything our beautiful Zimbabwe has to offer!

## 2. UPDATE ON LOCAL PROPERTIES

### LA ROCHELLE

The property continues to attract many visitors and the comments are very encouraging to all who have been involved.

The dell area and the shade houses are still receiving the much needed attention and are looking fantastic, thanks to a very generous benefactor who has enabled the Trust to make the necessary improvements to the water reticulation systems and shade houses.

There have been a number of functions and workshops taking place at La Rochelle and it remains high on our agenda as our main attraction for National Trust visitors.

Whether your interest is trees, birds, roses, orchids or if you just need a quite ad relaxing weekend away, La Rochelle has everything you need to satisfy you!

Contact details: Angela Hama, mobile 0714 610 803 or 0773 064 994 - email:

reservations@larochellecentre.com

## WORLDS VIEW

Comments from recent visitors to make us proud and happy:-

Sunday August 14th – From Chris and Pam HALSE – “Just to say my wife and I went to World's View this week after having not gone for three or four years. The landscaping is great and the additions to the building very welcome and they blend in well with the older part of it. The toilets were spotless and a very welcome addition. The road seems to be much better than we recalled it to be. It was a glorious day as well. We have decided that on our next visit to take a picnic lunch and stay and enjoy it all for a bit longer. Congratulations to all those involved with all the various improvements.”

## Rhodes Nyanga Historical Exhibition

Report for RNHE November, 2016

The most exciting and recent news from RNHE is that we now have a wheelchair ramp! Organised by Area Manager, Onias Bepe and built by the Parks carpenters and builders, the wooden ramp leads from below the Grainger Reading Room to the side door of the main display area. A concrete path runs from the car park to the ramp. The wooden railings protecting the wagon shed have been replaced, which has enhanced the appearance of the area. We are indeed grateful to Parks for these improvements.

News on displays : A concise History of the National Federation of Women's Institutes of Zimbabwe and the Development of Homecraft and associated Women's Clubs, with special reference to Manicaland, is now complete. Due to the incredible amount achieved over the past 90 years by women in this country, the task of choosing what could be displayed in a limited space was extremely difficult, but we hope that the display will serve as a lasting reminder of the dedication of thousands of women to the improvement of Home and Country.

It is planned to host the last meeting of the year of the Heads of Nyanga Schools at the RNHE, and include a tour of the Exhibition, particularly the work done by the children during the course of the Heritage Project last year. With the new schools curriculum coming into being next year there is increased interest by the schools in culture and heritage education, and we are keen to be of assistance in this respect.

Edone Logan



Chairperson

Rhodes Nyanga Historical Exhibition.

MURAWHA'S HILL – Nothing to report

MABUKUWENE – On-going work to maintain the site and keep it clear of lantana remains a priority and we have recently been approached by the Museum regarding an archaeological 'dig' which will be taking place shortly.

Ndeipi and Nzira

Please be sure to buy the Ndeipi and Nzira magazines as we have articles published in both editions for October.

### 3. INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

The NTZ is hoping to send delegates to the International National Trusts Organisation (INTO) Conference which is to be held in Bali in September 2017.

Both our FACEBOOK page and website are quite active with up to date news and photographs, and we encourage those of you with FACEBOOK to like us.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/National-Trust-of-Zimbabwe/340040082696277?ref=hl>

<http://www.ntzimbabwe.org>

If you are visiting any National Trust properties, please be generous with photographs of your visit and share them with us for inclusion on our Facebook page or website with names and comments! If you have the time and are able to print an A4 sheet with "THIS PLACE MATTERS" on it, we would love the photographs of you at any one of the NTZ properties you may be visiting, holding the sign, which we will put on our website and Facebook to share with our National Trust friends the world over!!





Top photo: National Parks carpenters work on the wheel-chair ramp at RNHE

Above: Mrs Denise Gaisford, Woman of the Year in the 1990s visited the RNHE recently from the UK and was pleased to see the new display on the history of NFWIZ.