



## NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2025

As we move into the holiday season and there is a festive sparkle in the air we would like to share our news with you, our valued members, supporters and friends.

We have some exciting updates on what our dedicated team of volunteers have achieved this year at our properties around Zimbabwe and proud to share some of our exciting plans for 2026.

There is reminder of your local and global benefits as a member.

We would like to introduce you to our unique historical books that you can purchase for yourself, family and friends. There is also an invitation to join us for Christmas carols on Christmas Eve.

We are always looking to elevate and the improve the visitor experience to our properties so we invite you to send in your stories and experiences of your visits, we would love to hear your feedback together with any suggestions that you may have as to how we can improve. Please kindly email: [ntzimbabwe@gmail.com](mailto:ntzimbabwe@gmail.com)

### Donations

We would like to give a huge shout out to the following very generous people who have kindly donated funds to the NTZ: Mr and Mrs Jordan and Nicky Sayer, Wendy Wood, The Clarke family (life members), J.Macintosh, Brian Heathcote, Emily de Beer, Birdlife of Zimbabwe, Alice St Aubin, and all the bell ringers: Stanley Dube, Phineas Tawodzera, Dorothy Pasipanodya and Linda Hyde.

We would like to extend our huge appreciation to Mr Brendan Riley of Machinery Exchange, a leading service provider to the Construction,

Mining, Earthmoving and Agricultural Industries based in Msasa, for his ongoing contributions over several years specifically for the Nyanga Historical Exhibition. Mr Riley's generous monthly donations are so important to the sustainability of the Museum and its staff.

### **Exciting news: A new forum for Heritage, Horticulture and Hope: INTO Tropical Gardens**

We are thrilled to announce the formation of a new International National Trusts Organisation (INTO) Community of Practice focused on Tropical Gardens. A vibrant, cross-continental initiative bringing together INTO members who are passionate about gardens, climate resilience and cultural heritage.

This new group emerged from a rich and inspiring virtual meeting held in March 2025, where members from Sri Lanka, Thailand, India, Malaysia, the Maldives and St Helena shared

stories of their landscapes, challenges and aspirations. From desert parks to rainforest sanctuaries, each site is unique - but all are united by a shared commitment to sustainability, community engagement and the preservation of tropical biodiversity.

See

<https://www.into.org/introducing-into-tropical-gardens/>

The idea was sparked by Soham Kacker, plant ecologist and horticulturist who is the Curator of Living Collections at the Lunuganga Trust, at the gardens of Geoffrey Bawa Trust in Sri Lanka <https://geoffreybawa.com> who saw the potential for collaboration among INTO members working in tropical environments. The group identified common themes:

- Climate change adaptation and resilience
- Shared colonial legacies and heritage
- Urban green space and community outreach
- Revitalisation of native and ethnobotanical plant knowledge

Participants have expressed a strong desire to learn from one another, share best practices and explore how gardens can be tools for education, healing and cultural revival.

INTO have just granted funds for this new network and the NTZ is proud to announce that we have been selected to host one or two colleagues in Zimbabwe.

This is a fantastic opportunity for the NTZ to host our INTO colleagues and to showcase the work that is happening here.

#### **Brand New: Instagram**

The NTZ insta page has been set up. It is called:

[Nationaltrustzimbabwe](#)

The idea for this initiative is to engage with the younger generation who are all potential supporters, donors and members. This is a perfect platform for the NTZ to show and share the heritage work that we are undertaking here and the stunning

landscapes of Zimbabwe. Please like the posts, follow, tag and invite your family, friends and business colleagues to do the same.

Please send engaging videos and photos via whatsapp to: Bronwyn Gray +263787359559. Huge thanks go to Bronwyn Gray for supporting the NTZ and managing the platform for us.

#### **Also New: Digital membership cards**

The NTZ is looking at the possibility of introducing electronic membership cards: digital versions of physical cards that are stored on a smartphone, offering members convenient access, save money on printing cards and be more time and management efficient. It will enhance member convenience with instant access via smartphone, and increased engagement via real-time updates and communication. The electronic cards are also more environmentally friendly and secure,

eliminating the need for physical cards and allowing for features like biometric authentication.

## The latest news from our Properties: What's happening

### La Rochelle Country House, Penhalonga



We have some very exciting news to share with you! You can now travel to La Rochelle much faster and easier with a 'fly in and switch off and soak it all up' brand new service that has just been launched and available with Air Zimbabwe. The perfect escape where luxury meets tranquility! For bookings please contact: 08688 007 303 and +263 714 610803  
Reservations: [reservations@larochellecountryhouse.net](mailto:reservations@larochellecountryhouse.net)



The extensive grounds and landscapes of La Rochelle are looking magnificent. The ground staff have been working tirelessly to keep them in such a great condition especially for your delight, the array of colours is glorious.

A new conference/breakaway space has been created and the floor of the dining room has been renovated and looking super smart. You can reconnect with nature and rejuvenate your mind and body on the scenic hiking trails that were recently added to. The beauty spa is using locally produced organic products for all the treatments.



The new boardroom/breakaway conference room



The Dining Room Floor Renovation







Organic Africa has demonstrated consistent commitment to the La Rochelle Centre, not only by maintaining the lease agreement in full compliance with the terms set out by the NTZ, but also by continuing to invest strategically and operationally into the site. La Rochelle is a hub for sustainable agriculture, ecological regeneration, and community-based learning.

They are taking the opportunity to restore, demonstrate, and disseminate sustainable land use in Zimbabwe and their agricultural operations are aligned with regenerative principles, and strong collaboration with key stakeholders.

Three fields are actively under stinging nettle cultivation, ensuring continuity of production and income.

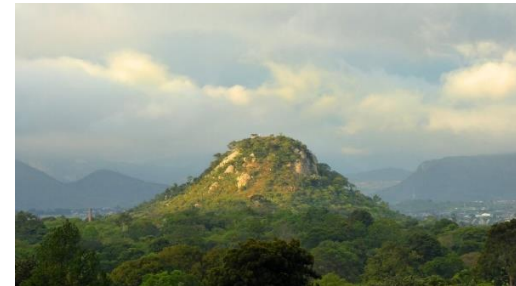


*Stinging nettle ready to harvest with cattle in the background as part of the soil regeneration approach*

The remaining fields are currently under regeneration to rebuild soil health following years of intensive cropping. High-density rotational grazing with cattle is being implemented. Supported by electric fencing, this practice enhances nutrient cycling and strengthens soil microbiology. The pack shed is operational, processing herbs from current fields and supporting quality assurance systems. Organic Africa have begun producing biochar which will play a key role in their regenerative plan. The biochar is

intended for compost enrichment and field application, increasing carbon sequestration and soil fertility.

### Murahwa's Hill, Mutare



Murahwa's Hill is a natural conservation area of 153 acres of great biodiversity entrusted to the NTZ by the Mutare City Council.

The newly built frontage perimeter wall put in by Jackson Njunga is looking strong and secure.



Everyone is excited and very much looking forward to the opening of the long awaited interpretative, /education centre, toilets and a new perimeter fence at Murawha's Hill. The property was always dearly supported by the late Helen Hyslop who joined the Council in 1993: her dedication to the NTZ was exemplary.

The 'Helen Hyslop Fund' was created at the bequest from the Hyslop Estate. The fund is to assist in building the new interpretative, education centre in honour of the late Helen Hyslop.

Once all the details have been finalised the construction will commence after the rainy season circa April 2026.

Lloyd, the caretaker, has been cutting walking paths on the hill, making clearings for picnic sites and planted gardens at the entrance of the site where the Centre will be positioned.

Three to four Picnic benches will be installed in the next few months.

Electrical wiring and security lighting have been installed at the caretaker's house.

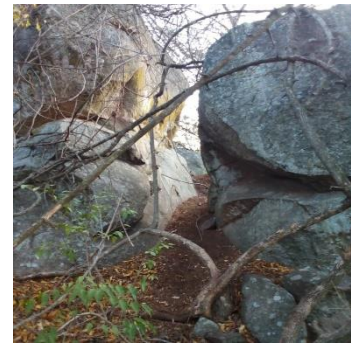
Painting will commence shortly. Lloyd Chidondo the caretaker who commenced in March 2024 has done an outstanding job to date



*Lloyd and Nolene*

An exercise is planned to identify and label the trees at the property

The clearing of pathways and the removal of alien plants continues.



### *Mabukawene, Bulawayo*

The property is open and available to educational, and specialist societies such as historical, ornithological, arthropod and nature groups and museums. Birdlife of Zimbabwe had an interesting and fruitful field visit.

Maintenance of the property continues following the rains. This was a big task cutting the thick bush grass, progress was good and the pathways were cleared. The fire breaks were also cutback.

The highly invasive *lantana* vegetation was cut and regrowth sprayed. Removing the actual roots manually was a massively tedious and time consuming task especially having to cover over 20 acres. An investment will be made



to purchase a tool to do this, more brush cutters will also be bought as the rains have commenced.

On a good note, whilst clearing was completed, a number of colourful aloes were uncovered around the property together with some beautiful wild orchids.



### Nyanga Historical Museum. Nyanga National Park

Under the broad theme of Zimbabwean Heroes the museum designed a series of posters. There

will be subgroups of persons ranging from politicians, musicians, sports men and women, chiefs etc. Each poster has a picture and four or five facts about the person shown. This dovetails with the demand of the new school Heritage Curriculum. The posters are displayed in the Museum.

We would very like to extend our deep appreciation for all the work that Nathan Machara, an intern from Bindura University, has contributed to the museum. Nathan was with us from September 2024 to July 2025, we wish you good luck with continuing your studies.

A successful combined Museum Fair and Garden Club Show was held on Easter Saturday on 19th April. The Museum provided the stalls to enable the sale of local crafts and farm produce and the Garden Club ran a Flower Show. The proceeds were shared between the museum and the garden club.

### Worlds View, Nyanga

Annually, World's view this property is consistently rated 5 star on 98% of google business ratings. This is no surprise as you can sit above the clouds and birds and gaze down from one of the highest points in Zimbabwe across the central plateau almost a kilometre below. The view is of a land of mystery, of peace and of extreme beauty and it seems endless.



The bird hide continues to be very popular with visitors.



We are eagerly awaiting a new treasure. The ground staff are busy clearing vegetation around an archaeological ruins site that was previously uncovered. Once the work is completed they will become a new attraction at the view.



*Mount Nyamatoro dominating the skyline behind*

Tony Martin, Geologist, is almost finished putting together a geological display which should be opened by March 2026.

### **Membership benefits**

Being a member of the NTZ has benefits both inside the country as well as globally:

### **Zimbabwe -**

Members enjoy the following benefits:

- Free entrance to NTZ properties in Zimbabwe
- Quarterly E-newsletter
- Discounted tickets for selected productions at Reps Theatres
- Free entry to National Gallery Zimbabwe;
- 10% off accommodation at La Rochelle Country Hotel and
- Reciprocal membership with Bird Life

### **World Wide**

NTZ is a reciprocal member of the INTO 'Passport to Places' scheme. Please see:

<https://www.into.org/places/>

This represents a considerable benefit to members as it allows, upon production of a valid NTZ membership card, free entry to various amazing and wonderful historic Trust sites worldwide. Become a member today please email: [ntzimbabwe@gmail.com](mailto:ntzimbabwe@gmail.com)

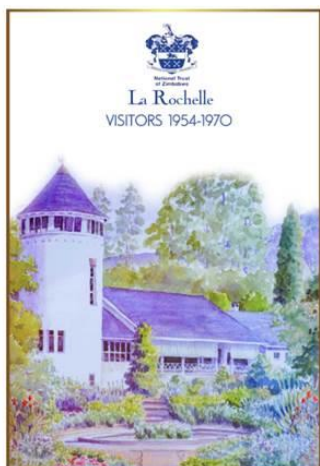
### **NTZ Publications**

After arriving in Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) in the early 1950s, British couple Sir Stephen and Lady Virginia Courtauld decided to make it their home.

Fabulously wealthy and with diverse artistic and humanitarian interests, the Courtauld's built a striking home and gardens which they called La Rochelle. They bequeathed the property to the NTZ in 1970.

At La Rochelle the Courtauld's hosted an extraordinary range of visitors from all over the world and from many walks of life. Visitors were invited to sign their names with a diamond stylus on several glass window panels, and the hundreds of inscribed signatures have intrigued more recent visitors to La Rochelle.

## La Rochelle: Visitors 1954-1970



Over the past seven years three volunteers have documented 898 signatures, aiming to learn a little about each individual - not an easy task given the problems of deciphering the signatures and the passage of time. The resulting publication provides a fascinating glimpse of signatories ranging from African nationalist activists, political figures from various parties, prominent musicians, dancers, actors and artists, historians, British aristocracy, local residents and more. A printed colour book is available in Zimbabwe only please email [ntzimbabwe@gmail.com](mailto:ntzimbabwe@gmail.com).

If you would like to purchase online please

visit:

<https://ntoz.org/publications-page/>

Your order will be processed through our website provider: Change Canada Consultants Ltd. When you click the link you will be taken to their secure website where you may process your payment via credit card. Then you will be given a link to download the publication from their server.



*Fira Bache our Membership Secretary at the Stables Market this month with a selection of books*

**Rob Burrett:**  
**Archaeologist,**  
**Historian and**  
**Environmentalist**

Rob Burrett is a well-respected author. He worked for and assisted the Zimbabwean Museum Authority for

over 40 years, and also worked in the education sector. He is passionate about heritage education and the need to share academic knowledge with the general public.

He is the author of many publications on a diversity of subjects in both scientific and popular format.

The NTZ proudly has the following books by Rob for sale that he has very generously donated the proceeds to the NTZ:

Bulawayo memories -  
David Livingstone  
African Odyssey Iron  
Spine and Ribs: brief  
history of railways -  
Masvingo memories -  
The Matobo Hills -  
Memories of Victoria  
Falls - Shongwe heritage  
of Livingstone and  
Victoria Falls

If you would like to purchase any these very interesting historical books please email [ntzimbabwe@gmail.com](mailto:ntzimbabwe@gmail.com).



### **Annual General Meeting**

After an absence of Annual General Meetings please watch out for your invitation to attend our AGM in the new year which will be held centrally in a beautiful location in Harare.

We will have an interesting guest speaker lined up for your interest and delight and refreshments too.

### **Fundraising activities**

Please watch out for details on our Fundraising days for 2026, we are planning various events around Zimbabwe with some exciting prizes to be won!

We will share our targets for each event and identify which property and project initiative the funds will be utilized for.

### **Happy Holidays**

The NTZ would like thank each and every one of you for all your valuable support this year, we could not carry on without your contribution.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very happy festive season, may it be a time of peace and celebration.

You are cordially invited to join our fantastic annual Christmas carol event which is being held at Worlds View on Christmas Eve by candlelight at 5.30pm.



Have a peaceful and adventurous 2026. We look forward to hosting you at our beautiful properties very soon.

