



The newsletter of the Nyika-Vwaza Trust and Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust  
*"working for the environment and wildlife conservation in northern Malawi"*

Welcome to the Autumn 2011 issue of Nyika-Vwaza News.

As always, we've been busy over the last months. On the Nyika, as you'll see from our field report, we've done everything from relocating a leopard to planning an indigenous tree nursery. In the UK, over the summer, we launched a major fund-raising initiative (more on this on page 2). Now, we're gearing up for our annual RGS lecture, when Professor Jeff Burley will talk about why trees are important for Malawi. More details, including how to apply for tickets, are below. Please do join us if you can.

We're delighted that Isobyl la Croix, acclaimed botanist, orchid expert and one of our distinguished Patroni Naturae, has contributed our main feature article for this issue, on the orchids of the Nyika. We hope you'll also enjoy reading about how a canine personal trainer helped enable our supporter, Jeanette Robinson, raise an enormous £2,800 for our work on the Nyika and in Vwaza by running this year's London Marathon.

A recent editorial in Nature magazine suggests that "humanity at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is better at violent conflict than planet management"<sup>1</sup>. Certainly, governments spend more money on making war than on saving trees. This is deeply troubling, and it's easy to conclude that the odds are so heavily stacked against the natural world that there's no point trying to save it. That's where people like you and us come in. Break the problem down and we can, and do, make a difference. Cut a firebreak around a piece of Nyika forest and you save an epiphytic orchid from destruction by fire. Build a barrage at the outlet of Lake Kazuni in Vwaza and the hippos have a home throughout the dry season. Do all the other basic things we do and before long they will add up to a major conservation success story. By continuing to support the Nyika National Park and Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve, and the communities that surround them, through your generous donations, you are helping the people of Malawi to protect their precious wildlife heritage.

Thank you.

**Jane Gallacher (Editor)**

## Why trees are good for Malawi – 2011 RGS Annual Lecture

A reminder that our 2011 annual lecture and social evening will take place at The Royal Geographical Society in London on Tuesday, 8 November. Doors open at 6pm and the lecture begins at 6.45pm



Prof Jeff Burley

Our lecturer this year is Professor Jeff Burley, CBE. Jeff has worked as a UNESCO expert in forest genetics for the Agricultural Research Council of Central Africa, living in Zambia while assisting with Government research programmes in Malawi and Zimbabwe. He spent his subsequent career at Oxford University as Research Officer in the Commonwealth Forestry Institute, University Lecturer in Forestry, Director of the Oxford Forestry Institute within the Plant Sciences Department of the University and Professor of Forestry.

Jeff's lecture, "The changing role of forestry in conservation and development: why trees are good for Malawi", will consider the evolving role of forestry in the country. The Nyika provides a prime example of how forestry policies and management strategies have developed over the last 50 years.



Juniper Forest, Nyika National Park

Before Jeff's lecture, our chairman, Tom Lupton will update us on the Trusts' work over the last 12 months. Drinks will be available both before and after the lecture in the Map Room, where five floral paintings by David Kelly, along with David Kelly cards and WESM calendars, will be on sale. All profits will support our work in the Nyika National Park and Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve.

For tickets, please fill in the application form at the back of this newsletter or contact our Hon Secretary and Treasurer, Harry Foot on 01752 892632 or e-mail [stowfoots@southdevon.org](mailto:stowfoots@southdevon.org).

We look forward to seeing you there!

## Supporting our projects

Many of you will be aware that, earlier in the summer, the UK Trust launched a prospectus, "[Supporting our Projects](#)" which contains detailed funding proposals for numerous essential projects in the Nyika National Park and Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve. We are seeking initially almost £102,000 for these projects, excluding the Endowment Fund, challenging but with your help it is achievable. The full list of projects that require funding can be found at [www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org/support/Projects-Funding.html](http://www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org/support/Projects-Funding.html)

A project of special importance is the building of our [Endowment Fund](#). This is to ensure that we have the financial resources and security with which to guarantee funding the annual operational costs of our work in Malawi without disruption to that important programme. We are grateful to those of our supporters who have made donations specifically for the Endowment Fund and we would welcome other donations whether small or large.

If you can contribute to one of these projects, or know of others whom we might approach, please contact Harry Foot, our Hon Secretary and Treasurer at Stowford Farm, Harford, Ivy-bridge, Devon, PL21 0JD; 01752 892632; [stowfoots@southdevon.org](mailto:stowfoots@southdevon.org). Similarly, if you would like to know more about our Endowment Fund, please do contact us. Thank you.

## Orchids on the Nyika

*Isobyl la Croix is a botanist who is married to an entomologist and lived for many years in various African countries, finally spending 10 years in Malawi. While there, she developed a particular interest in the country's native orchids and has written many books and articles about them.*

*Isobyl is also one of our Patroni Naturae and has written the article below to highlight the great diversity of orchid species that can be found on the Nyika. When Isobyl and her husband lived in the South, they visited the Nyika at least once a year but, after they moved to Mzuzu in 1985, they went there almost every month. Like all great orchid hunters, however, one or two species have eluded Isobyl ...*

When my husband Eric and I first visited the Nyika in 1981 we were living in Bvumbwe, between Thyolo and Limbe, and it seemed a long way away. At that time the tar stopped at Kasungu, and there was one place not far past there where the soil seemed to be particularly fine. In the dry season, it found its way into the car whether windows were open or shut; in the rains it formed a fine mud that clogged up the tread of tyres so that, if a vehicle had to leave the crown of the road, it would slide slowly sideways into the ditch. This then involved cutting grass and branches to give some grip so that we could get underway again. Luckily we never met many other vehicles. We always broke the journey at Chikangawa. David Cornelius was then the Forestry Officer and the forestry resthouse was a haven, with the plentiful supplies of hot water heated in a drum outside.

Once we passed Rumpi and turned off on the approach to the Nyika, the road began to climb and there were new orchids to look out for. One interesting species that occurred there was *Polystachya holmesiana*, with orange flowers with the lip tipped with magenta. It grew on trees by the roadside, both before and for a short while after the entrance to the National Park at altitudes between about 1600-1920 m – as far as I know, the only place where it occurs in Malawi. The species was described from Zambia in 1977 and is known only from these two countries. The name was in honour of the original finder, Wilf Holmes, a forestry officer in what was then Northern Rhodesia. Other epiphytic orchids that were common in this area of woodland included *Cyrtorchis crassifolia*, *Bulbophyllum rugosibulbum*, *B. josephi* and the little pale pink-flowered *Polystachya bras-sii*.



*Bulbophyllum josephi*



*Aerangis montana*

Soon one comes out of the woodland and the rolling grassland opens up, with patches of evergreen forest in the folds of the hills. Several of the woodland species also occurred in the woodland by the path leading to the Chisanga Falls, but most of the Nyika epiphytes were found in the forest remnants as well as the larger forests. One of the most interesting of these was *Aerangis montana*, described in 1979 from a plant collected in southern Tanzania. The name is appropriate, as it rarely grows below 2000m. We first found it in a patch of trees beside Lake Kaulime, where it grew low down on the trunks. The leaves were dark green, short and almost fleshy. In the Juniper Forest it grows in heavy shade, standing out like brackets from the trunks, with much longer and narrower leaves. The flowers were always the same, though, attractive white saucer-like blooms with long, slender spurs. It could be found in almost all the forest patches, usually in shade.

*Cardiochilos williamsonii* is a small species with straw-coloured flowers that grows sunk in moss

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and lichen on montane trees in and near Kasaramba Forest at about 2300m. It was described from the Nyika and was originally thought to be endemic but it has since been found in southern Tanzania.

One tiny epiphyte that took up a lot of our time was the plant originally described in 1977 as *Holmesia parva*. It then became *Microholmesia parva*, because the name *Holmesia* had already been used for an alga. It finally migrated again and settled as *Angraecopsis parva*. It was the only epiphyte recorded from the Nyika that we had not been able to find – nor could several other people who became intrigued by this elusive little plant. A sheet in the Kew herbarium with plants collected by Wilf Holmes (the same person commemorated in *Polystachya holmesiana*) included a note saying it had been found in Malawi, in a forest patch near a waterfall. No-one we asked could think of a forest patch with a waterfall, although some had small streams, and we finally had to accept defeat.

Fast-forward over 20 years – I was in Dundee, where I was giving a talk about plants of the Nyika Plateau to members of the Scottish Rock Garden Club. I was told that someone who had visited the Nyika many years ago would like to speak to me. I could hardly believe it when this turned out to be Wilfred Holmes! This was too good a chance to miss and I asked him if he could remember finding *Holmesia parva*. He could indeed, and the mystery was solved. It had not been collected in Malawi at all, but in Zambia, in a patch below the Zambia resthouse.

I have written only about epiphytes so far, but the real glory of the Nyika lies in its terrestrial orchids. From September, before the rains, when the sky-blue flowers of *Disa baurii* appear from the dry ground, until late March when the deep rose-pink flowers of *Satyrium princeae* appear, the montane grassland and dambos produce a wealth of colour. *Disa* and *Satyrium* are probably the most colourful genera.



*Disa baurii*

There are 26 species of *Disa* in Malawi (including species previously placed in *Herschelianthe* and *Monadenia*) and only four of these do not occur in the Nyika National Park. One, *D. praecox*, is a Nyika endemic, occurring in both Malawi and Zambia but nowhere else. Another species, *D. caffra*, occurs in several Africa countries and in Madagascar, but has only been collected once on the Nyika or anywhere else in Malawi, in 1966. It is a beautiful plant and it is surprising that it has not been seen again, despite much searching. There is photograph of it in Williamson (1977). One of the most striking species is *D. ochrostachya*, whose tall, slender golden candles light up the montane grassland. It has also been recorded from Mulanje and is widespread in Africa, but still seems to be one of the Nyika's most distinctive plants. Other species of *Disa* are among the most brilliantly coloured of all orchids, such as *D. welwitschii* and *D. ornithantha*, both of which can be found in the Nyika bogs. *D. hircicornis* is another that likes marshy ground, its flowers are rich purple with a grape-like bloom.



*Disa ochrostachya*



*Disa hircicornis*



*Disa welwitschii*



*Disa ornithantha*



*Satyrium buchananii*

The related genus *Satyrium* is another that gives colour to the grassland and dambos. Twenty-eight species are known from Malawi, with 21 species recorded from the Nyika NP. These are distinctive orchids with twin spurs on the lip, which unusually is held at the top of the flower. Three species, *S. princeae*, *S. monadenum* and *S. microcorys*, are known only from the Nyika and southern Tanzania. The reddish-orange *Satyrium sceptrum* (formerly known as *S. acutirostrum*) is frequent in the montane grassland, usually occurring as scattered plants rather than in colonies. *S. buchananii*, a bog dweller, is not so colourful as it has white flowers but makes up for that with its strong, sweet scent.



*Satyrium sceptrum*

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Habenaria praestans

The largest orchid genus in the Nyika is *Habenaria*, with over 40 species recorded. Most have small green flowers but some, such as *H. praestans* and *H. insolita*, are large, handsome plants. Many of the *Habenaria* species are found in the woodland areas but others occur in bogs and montane grassland. *H. nyikensis*, described by Williamson in 1980, is one of the strangest. This species has a single round, fleshy leaf, bright green with a whitish edge and, in places, these leaves form a carpet on the montane grassland. Yet in all our visits to the Nyika, we never saw it in flower, or saw signs that plants had flowered. Williamson collected the type specimen in 1968, when he found several plants in bloom, but no-one has apparently seen it flowering since. It is difficult to think what combination of circumstances could trigger flowering—it cannot be fire, as the montane grassland is regularly burnt. Plants form such large colonies that they must spread vegetatively, so flowering



Habenaria insolita

must be rather a luxury.

There are over 200 species of orchid known from the Nyika National Park, so this article barely scratches the surface. Some of the smaller species, such as *Disperis* and *Holothrix* are just as beautiful on close inspection as the big, showy species -- it is worth looking out for them all.

### References

**Burrows, J.E. & Willis, C.K.** (eds.) (2005). *Plants of the Nyika Plateau*. SABONET Report No.31, Pretoria.

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**la Croix, I.F. & P.J. Cribb** (1993). *Orchidaceae* part 1, in *Flora Zambesiaca*, vol. 11, 1, ed. G.V. Pope. RBG, Kew.

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*Our thanks to Isobyl's husband, Eric la Croix, for the superb photographs that illustrate her piece.*

*We have recently received news from Geoff Wooles, one of our volunteer Trust Managers, that there is a worrying increase in orchid poaching on the Nyika. The Department of National Parks and Wildlife has, we understand, apprehended some poachers and there have been successful prosecutions. Most poaching appears to be taking place far from Chilinda camp; at least our strong presence in this central area, which is funded by your generous donations, offers some of these precious plants some protection.*

### Vacancy for new Honorary Secretary and Treasurer of UK Trust

After many years of dedicated service, Harry Foot wishes to step down as our Honorary Secretary and Treasurer by the end of 2012. The Trustees of the Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust are looking for a replacement, and would like to hear from anyone interested in filling either both or one of these roles.

The Trustees are keen that adequate time is allowed for a proper handover period, and the intention is to make appointments by the end of January 2012, with functions being handed over during the course of 2012.

Detailed Job Descriptions are on our website:

[www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org/support/Vacancies.html](http://www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org/support/Vacancies.html)

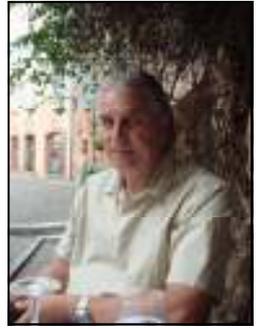
Anyone interested should contact Tom Lupton ([tomlupton@btinternet.com](mailto:tomlupton@btinternet.com) or 01580 291658) or Harry Foot ([stowfoots@southdevon.org](mailto:stowfoots@southdevon.org) or 01752 892632). We would be grateful to receive applications by 31st October 2011.

## New UK Trustee appointed

The trustees of the UK Trust are delighted to announce that Richard Kettlewell has become a trustee.

Richard's work in the Fairtrade oilseeds and nut trade involves frequent visits to Malawi. This will enable him to meet with the Malawi trustees and visit the Nyika National Park and Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve.

These contacts will help to reinforce the strong relationship between the two Trusts.



Richard Kettlewell

## LA, our new Landcruiser

Thanks to funds generously donated by the Rufford Foundation (£5000 in 2009 and £5000 in 2010), together with £3670 from the UK Trust, the Malawi Trust now has a second, also second hand, much-needed Landcruiser. One of our volunteer Trust Managers, Geoff Wooles, reports on what it has been up to.

The beige Toyota Landcruiser has become an essential item of Trust equipment here on the Nyika plateau. Not a day goes by without our commissioning the sturdy vehicle to carry out any number of tasks.

The Nyika plateau is approximately 120 km along its north-south axis and 74 km in width. LA, as she is known, is a robust workhorse. She can happily transport a full complement of twelve to fifteen workers anywhere on the plateau.



Nya Rubwe release at Chowo Forest

An interesting range of project tasks ensures that LA is never idle. So far this year, she has been used for road improvements, controlled burning (pasture control and rejuvenation), poacher apprehension, the reconstruction of two of the plateau bridges, transporting supplies, showing visitors around, road upgrades, and, her piece de resistance for 2011, the capture and release of 'Nya Rubwe', our former Chilinda camp resident leopard. In all of the above tasks, she has proved to be a road worthy warrior!



Patsy Wooles behind the wheel of LA, the new Landcruiser

*Our sincere thanks to the Rufford Foundation for providing the bulk of the funds for the purchase of LA, she is proving a real asset to our team.*

## News from the field

*Geoff and Patsy Wooles, our volunteer Trust Managers, update us on their work on the Nyika over recent months. Everything they do is possible only because of your continued support.*



The changing colour of the grasses

The rainy season finished rather late this year. We were intrigued by the mild transformation of our surroundings. The initially warmer air was pleasant to move about in, and a few gentle breezes began to slip in through the Chilinda Forest. Much of the montane grassland 'warmed up', as soft shades of green gave way to softer shades of gold, pink, and russet brown. The flowering meadows also changed; massed drifts of Lobelia began to fade, as did the long-lasting Clematis and Gladiolus species. These were replaced by other grassland species. Perhaps most noticeable was the blossoming of many of the medium-sized shrubs such as the native Hypericum species.

## Burn programme

Three weeks into the dry season, we began our controlled burning and grading programmes. Geoff was astounded by the power and speed of the strip burns - a typical roadside margin could be 'done and dusted' in minutes. The men are adept manipulators of the burn and, in cooperation with the prevalent breeze pattern, are able to channel the movement of a particular burn with skill. Joe Kapira, our team leader, is knowledgeable about the wind patterns and the best time to commence the burn each day. The plateau



Final controlled burn

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burn programme is now completed.

### Road grading

Road grading has now been completed for 2011. Many of the popular tourist routes have been upgraded, along with some essential repairs to the main road. Of particular note is the restoration of the alternative main route, via the Runyina River. This drive gives visitors a more intimate connection with the bush and meadowlands. Many animals can be seen near the road at the moment; klipspringer, roan, duiker, zebra are all plentiful here. Several leopard sightings have recently been made from Chosi to the Dam Three turn-off. The zebra in the photo opposite were found just down from Chosi view. The photo was taken from the newly graded alternative main route.



Zebra at Chosi viewpoint

### Invasives

Invasives are being removed during quiet spells. The species targeted are mainly black wattle and the three varieties of wild Rubus.

### Bridge repairs

Five more bridges have recently been repaired.

### Workshop

The workshop staff continue to churn out a steady flow of repaired vehicles. Included in these are our own vehicles.

### Staff

We have just said farewell to one of our permanent staff. Lameck Gondwe is well known at Chilinda, as he has been the vehicle workshop supervisor for nearly four years. Wishing to further his career, he has made the decision to move to Mzuzu. He will be missed for his skill, and his ability to communicate easily with the customers and the other stakeholders up on the plateau.

## "Life at Chilinda" – an article by Yobe Nyelemu



Yobe Nyelemu

*Periodically, we ask one of our local Malawian Trust workers to tell us about life on the Nyika. This is what Yobe Nyelemu, our driver/assistant mechanic, had to say ...*

My name is Yobe, I am married and have got five kids. I have been working with Nyika Vwaza Trust for 5 years as driver/assistant mechanic.

Apart from the above duties, I do clean at the workshop, driving the boss to the town, washing cars, fixing the cars etc. Beside this I am the captain for both Chilinda football club and NVT football club.

My first born son is also a player for Chilinda football club. His name is Blessings. All of my teams are very good, only that I don't have the required materials for sports. The team manager (Geoff) is also aware of this issue.

Apart from sports there is nothing that people does here at Chilinda, except those that have got TVs/videos to watch. But for me, I like listening to music from the radio during weekends. Mainly off hours.

*It is worth noting that, through your generous support, our work in conserving Nyika and Vwaza's delicate ecosystems also provides much-needed employment for local Malawians.*



Yobe ready to play football with his son at Chilinda football ground

## The novice marathon runner and her dog

Over the years, a number of dedicated supporters have run marathons, half-marathons and triathlons to raise money for the conservation of the Nyika National Park and Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve. Jeanette Robinson is another in that distinguished line, having run the 2011 London Marathon on our behalf. If you would like to appreciate the highs and lows of training for, and running in, a marathon, just read on ...

A beautiful hot summer's day in 2010, 'braai' going and wine flowing, good banter with great friends ... serious talk, trivial talk, sharing dreams and aspirations. A loose mention that, some day, preferably the younger side of 50, I would like to run the London marathon. In our company were our dear friends, 'The Langtons'.

Three months later I received an email from Paul Langton telling me there is a place on the 2011 London Marathon, if I can raise £2000 for the charity he supports in Malawi. Born and bred in South Africa, Africa has always been close to my heart. My husband's business connections and my dream to accomplish a marathon seemed perfect reasons to go for it!

One major factor that I wasn't going to dwell on was fitness ... I wasn't in the physical shape I was in 25 years ago! However, I have always maintained good health and fitness, and enjoy playing netball, tennis, swimming, going to the gym and doing a little running.

On 5 November 2010 at 6am, I woke up in a cold sweat, thinking: "If I don't get up now, put on my trainers and attempt my first jog in years, my commitment to Paul will not materialise". It was dark, wet and cold. If it wasn't for our Red Setter, Tara, wagging her tail with sheer delight when she realised what I was contemplating, I think I might have crawled back into bed. I returned 40 minutes later having covered no more than 4km.

Every day from then on until New Year 2011, I continued my little run through our village three or four times a week, alternating on the other days with a work-out at the gym or a swim. Come year-end, I was comfortable running through our village and reduced my time to 30 minutes. Tara continued wagging her tail!

It was our eldest, in January 2011, who began asking: "Shouldn't I be increasing my distance with the London marathon only 3 months away?" She was right. My husband stepped in and got me in touch with a personal trainer. We discussed what I wanted to achieve: "to train adequately in order to run all the way on the day of the marathon and above all to enjoy the day and not hurt".

By now, I was officially registered to run the London Marathon. Pressure was mounting to make my 'Justgiving' page, set up by the Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust, live. I pressed the button and within minutes received a response from a few faithfuls! I had also received a "Twelve week count down programme to a successful Marathon". At a glance, the running required over the next few weeks seemed impossible! I decided not to study it too closely. I had committed myself to a charity that was relying on me to raise £2000+. I looked at my canine friend, who looked at me with those big brown eyes and we both knew exactly what to do ... pound those country roads!! I highlighted the first week of our official training programme.



Ready for a training run with the personal trainer

Being a full-time Mum of four and having an understanding husband all assisted with the stringent discipline of training ahead. A few domestic necessities accomplished, my personal canine trainer and I would set off at 9am every week day to face the physical challenge set out for us ... hills, distance, speed work, interval training, more distance. Every week was a challenge but it proved immensely satisfying when we ticked the week off satisfactorily, knowing we had stuck to our programme. I speak in the plural as it was Tara and I following this intense programme ... I would never have been able to do it without her!



Praise from 'personal trainer' after a good training session

A few days before the marathon, together with my four young children and husband, we ventured down by train to London from York. Sadly it was impossible to bring Tara with me but she was in good care while I was away. The unconditional love of the rest of my family illuminated those few days. They were so excited for me, at times announcing to complete strangers that 'our mum' was doing the London marathon. These are moments I treasure.

The big day arrived. At 7am on Sunday 17 April, I tip-toed out of our hotel room to catch the Tube to the start line. I wasn't quite sure where I was going but no sooner had I stepped outside than, from all different directions, other runners began to appear with the red 'Virgin' bag in one hand, banana or water bottle in the other.

The build-up to the start among the runners is indescribable. I was lined up in

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Zone 'M' with thousands of runners before me. The elite runners were well on their way, setting off promptly at 9am. Then the commentator gave us our run-down over the PA system. It was around 9.40am when Zone "M" began slowly to move forward. Adrenaline was pumping all around. We were moving and now breaking into a jog; it was around 5 minutes later when my foot crossed the official starting line. The race was on!

The atmosphere was truly amazing. There were spectators six to ten deep lining the entire route, little groups that had formed their own street parties, bands playing, constant cheering. As a runner you are on an all-time high. I knew my steadfast supporters and close friends were somewhere out there in the crowd ... The Langtons, The Lowings with Bev, the Naishes, and of course my number one fans ... my family! Where?! ... I had no idea but I could sense their presence. I enjoyed counting down the miles as they were displayed at intervals, watering points were plentiful and welcome, and the half way mark was most inviting. My deepest admiration goes to the fantastic crowd; each cheer sounded as if it was dedicated to you and how encouraging that was, especially in the final few miles.



A job well done—congratulations!

I was going strong, my time at the 17-mile mark was good. I knew I didn't want to run for more than four and a half hours, anything less would be a bonus. I hit the 20 mile mark. The cheering crowds were now a drone, my upper thighs for the first time were beginning to ache, but there was no way I was going to stop or even walk, as I knew my family were out there and I hadn't seen them yet. I was playing mind games, convincing myself that all I had left was equivalent to running through our village and back, wasn't that easily attainable?! At this point I thought I heard my name being called out, encouraging me to keep going. I raised my hand in acknowledgement, feeling feeble as I realised I couldn't raise it with the same enthusiasm as earlier. I later learnt that it was my family calling out ... how could I have missed them?! Perhaps it was a blessing as sheer emotion and exhaustion might have resolved me into a heap!

I could now see the finishing post and a couple of runners were sprinting to the end. I made one huge last effort and crossed the finish line 'running'. I had completed the 2011 London Marathon in 3hrs 48min 19 secs.

My sincere gratitude goes to Paul Langton and The Nyika Vwaza (UK) Trust for giving me this one-off opportunity. I would also like to thank all those who supported me in their own special way. This and your most generous donations were a major factor in fulfilling my dream to complete the London marathon!

*We, in turn, must thank Jeanette enormously for raising almost £2,800 to support our work on the Nyika and in Vwaza.*

### **The passing of two Nyika pioneers**

We were saddened to learn of the deaths of two eminent foresters whose work in Malawi laid foundations that subsequently influenced the Nyika Vwaza Trusts.

**Frank Dorward OBE**, who died in May at the age of 92, was part of the small team who planted the pine plantations at Chilinda on the Nyika plateau and developed the infrastructure. The team was led by John Chater, CDC's Head of Forestry and consisted of a syndicate of three organisations, the Colonial (later Commonwealth) Development Corporation, Albert Reed and Co, and the Imperial Tobacco Co. It was formed in 1952 and known as the Nyika Forestry Development Syndicate (NFDS). This was to be a three year (later extended to five year) forestry softwood pilot project to assess the suitability of the plateau for pines and as an environment in which Malawians could live and work. Frank and Rosemary Dorward joined the team from Tanganyika in March 1955, two and a half years after work had begun, having first learnt of their appointment from their house servant towards the end of 1954! They stayed happily until the project was suddenly terminated in 1957 due to "political imponderables". The syndicate left behind some 500 ha of pine plantations, three major loop roads with bridges, firebreaks, kikuyu grass planted around Chilinda camp and spread beyond by game animals through their droppings, rainbow trout in the Chilinda river, and semi-permanent housing which lasted for many years. Responsibility for the care of these assets was passed to the Government's Forestry Department.

In 1961 Frank returned to Malawi as General Manager, Viphya Tung Estates, Mzuzu until 1967, when he moved to Swaziland.

In 1990 Frank was asked by the Mzuzu Branch of the Wildlife Society of Malawi to compile a his-

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tory of the Nyika National Park and this took the form of six personal memoirs under the title "The Nyika Experience" edited by Frank and Rosemary and with a Foreword by Carl Bruessow, who was at that time Executive Director of the Wildlife Society of Malawi. Now out of print, the memoirs continue to be an invaluable source of information for all who wish to know about the early history of the Park.

**Jim Chapman** died in New Zealand in April aged 93. He worked as a Forest Officer in Malawi for 13 years from 1952 to 1965. On arrival Jim was appointed to the Northern Province as District Forestry Officer for Rumph/Karonga and he and Betty were allocated a house alongside the Rumph Boma. The Nyika towered above them.

In a letter to the Trust, Jim wrote "Burning the very first trace of the Juniper Forest was my introduction to Africa, in 1952. A scary job indeed with about four helpers and had the fire got away, as it very nearly did one evening, when I had to throw myself on the flames (not quite as bad as it sounds!) the entire plateau grasslands would have gone up". And in another letter he wrote "Lions were often around and we had a visit from one when burning the Juniper firebreak in 1953. The Phoka people thought nothing of the lions".

During this period of 13 years Jim visited nearly all the evergreen forests in Malawi collecting almost 3000 specimens. Returning one day from a field trip to his overnight accommodation in a Government Rest House, Jim met a stranger to whom he explained that he was collecting plants to send to the Oxford University Herbarium, whereupon the stranger responded: "Then they will come to me." Thus began Jim's friendship with Dr. Frank White, Curator of the Forest Herbarium, University of Oxford. In 1970 they published jointly "The Evergreen Forests of Malawi" based primarily on Jim's collections and knowledge of Malawi's forests. This was the first comprehensive account of the forests, providing a much needed base for scientific management and comparative studies. The book also contains a thorough description of the natural features and vegetation of the Nyika.

Jim returned to Malawi in 1982 as Acting Curator of the National Herbarium of Malawi and Lecturer in Botany at the University of Malawi, both in Zomba. This enabled him to continue his field studies.

We were greatly honoured when, in October 2010, Jim accepted our invitation to be amongst the earliest of our team of distinguished Patroni Naturae.

We extend to both Frank's and Jim's families our sincere condolences. We hope that they will all derive some comfort and pride from the knowledge that Frank's and Jim's love of the Nyika, and their contributions to its health, are shared and valued by those who now follow where they pioneered.

## Apology

In Issue 11: Autumn 2010 of this newsletter we published a photograph of the butterfly Gaudy Commodore (*Precis Octavia*) and also a photograph of the Nyika Dwarf Toad, both of which had been made available to us by Mr. Quincy Connell for a different purpose. We apologise unreservedly to Mr. Connell that we neither sought his permission to publish the photographs nor did we mention that they had been taken by him.

## Offers invited

The Society of Malawi Journals contain a rich treasure trove of articles of historical, scientific and cultural importance and interest. They are published biannually. The UK Trust has received a generous donation of 46 second hand volumes commencing with Vol. VIII January 1955 through to Vol. XXXI January 1978, excluding only July 1956 and January 1972. A single loose copy, July 1987, is also available. Offers are invited either for individual copies or the set. To make an offer, please contact the Hon. Secretary, Harry Foot by telephone 01752-892632 or email [stow-foots@southdevon.org](mailto:stow-foots@southdevon.org).

## Readers' Corner

*Harry Foot, our Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, recommends two new books, one a biography of an almost forgotten man who had a major impact on the early conservation of Malawi's wildlife, the other on the ending of the slave trade.*

**African Naturalist - the life and times of Rodney Carrington Wood 1889-1962** by Dr. David Happold is a "must" for all who are interested in the conservation of Malawi's wildlife.

Rodney Wood, was posted by the British Cotton Growers Association to Port Herald (now Nsanje)

(Continued on page 10)

*(Continued from page 9)*

in 1912. With the exception of a few short periods, he spent the rest of his life in Malawi until his untimely death in the Seychelles shortly before Malawi's Independence. He was a free spirit, living in an era when Malawi was abundant with wildlife and the hunting of game was an uncontrolled past-time. He devoted himself to the collection of specimens of small mammals, birds, fishes, insects, and above all, butterflies. His thousands of collections are preserved for posterity principally in the British Museum of Natural History and the Natural History Museum in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. His skills in bushcraft were so well honed that for a period in the early 1920's he accepted an invitation from Lord Baden-Powell to teach bushcraft courses at Gilwell Park. David Happold tells us that in 1929 he was appointed by the Government as Malawi's first "Game Warden" and during his 20 month tenure he "set up the embryonic Game Department which, in future years, became the Department of National Parks and Wildlife; he organised bush clearing as a means of controlling the spread of tsetse flies; he collected blood samples from game animals, which assisted in assessing the role of game animals as host of trypanosomes; and he was a catalyst for the legislation of the Game Regulations of 1927 which disallowed the wholesale shooting of game. Three of Malawi's National Parks were established as conservation areas during (or just after) the time when he was very active in influencing public opinion and when he was Game Warden." The parks today are Lengwe, Kasungu and Lake Malawi.

This is a well researched book in which David Happold, one of our own eminent Patroni Naturae, has brought to our attention the important contribution to the preservation of Malawi's wildlife heritage made by Rodney Wood, a talented and passionate naturalist, a loner and a wanderer, who, with the passage of time, might otherwise have been forgotten. We thank David for this valuable record of one man's part pioneering wildlife conservation in Malawi.

*Published by Book Guild Publishing, Pavilion View, 19 New Road, Brighton, BN1 1UF. ISBN 978-1-84624-555-8.*

**The Last Slave Market – Dr. John Kirk and the struggle to end the African Slave Trade** by Alastair Hazell is a compelling story that is difficult to stop reading.

The story may be well known but, as Alastair Hazell unfolds the details, surprise follows surprise, starting in the Prologue and only ending with the Epilogue. The existence of the Zanzibar Slave Market is central, but the story covers a much wider canvas involving the whole complex operations of the Central and East African slave trade from the sources of the supply of slaves to the demand for them both in Zanzibar itself and in Arabia and Oman.

Although the slave trade had been officially abolished by Britain in 1807, and in 1833 slavery itself was forbidden throughout the British Empire, Alastair Hazell reveals the intrigues and laissez-faire attitudes that kept it going in Central and East Africa until in June 1873 John Kirk persuaded Sultan Barghash and his council to submit to the demand from the British Government's Special Envoy Sir Bartle Frère, that trading in slaves be forbidden throughout the sultan's dominions. In that month, the Zanzibar slave market was closed.

But still trading persisted on the mainland. As David Stuart-Mogg records in his book, "Mlozi of Central Africa", this self-styled Sultan of Karonga ruled until his defeat in December 1896. It was the Scramble for Africa that inflicted the coup-d'état. The vital role that John Kirk played through his deep understanding of Arab customs whilst he was in and out of office as British Consul (mostly "acting") in Zanzibar, unappreciated by his employers, is a revelation. It was a remarkable achievement by a man who started his African career as botanist and medical officer to the ill-fated Livingstone expedition of 1859-63 on the Zambezi and Shire Rivers. This is fascinating history vividly described.

*Published by Constable. ISBN 978-1-84529-672-8.*

**Wanted – a Society of Malawi Journal**

Prof. Colin Baker would be grateful to hear from anyone who would be willing to pass on to him a copy of The Society of Malawi Journal Vol. XXXIII No. 2 July 1980. Email: [cabaker@glam.ac.uk](mailto:cabaker@glam.ac.uk) or telephone 02920616661 or write Mpemba, 55A Lon-y-Deri, Rhiwbina, Cardiff, CF4 6JP.

## The UK Trust Book Collection

The UK Trust has been fortunate to have been given a number of books for sale, mostly second hand and in good condition, to raise funds for the work of the Trust. Do spend a moment casting your eye over the list, which is priced, and is on our website [www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org](http://www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org) under the "Merchandise" button. You may find a gem - and at a bargain price!

### Late News

#### Indigenous Tree Nursery

As many of you may recall, a substantial pine plantation was established at Chilinda, Nyika National Park back in the 1950's which is now being cut for commercial timber use. This is leaving acres of unsightly ground full of tree stumps. If left unattended, these areas will quickly be overgrown with non-indigenous species, specifically bracken.

We are fortunate to have a botanist, Geoff Wooles, as one of our current joint Trust Managers and he is keen to ensure that these areas are re-established with indigenous plants. To do this, he has suggested starting an indigenous tree nursery at Chilinda. The UK Trust trustees recognise the importance of this project; since it requires implementation immediately they have advanced the Year One costs to NVT Malawi pending a donor coming forward. This initiative chimes well with Jeff Burley's lecture at the Royal Geographical Society on 8th November this year.



Hypericum, one of the many plants found naturally on the Nyika and familiar to gardeners in the UK

#### Legacies

Leaving a legacy is one of the easiest ways to make a gift to charity and is a good way to make a significant donation and help secure the charity's long-term future. Please consult your solicitor on making a will or to make an adjustment to include The Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust, or alternatively visit the "Remember a Charity" website for a step-by-step guide at:

[www.rememberacharity.org.uk](http://www.rememberacharity.org.uk)

If you decide to include The Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust in your will for a legacy, we would be grateful if you could inform us of your decision.



Sunset over Nyika National Park

The Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust registered in England and Wales Reg. charity no. 1105105  
The Nyika-Vwaza Trust registered in Malawi

**The Nyika-Vwaza Trust**  
Registered in Malawi

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Website: [www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org](http://www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org)



*Working for environmental and wildlife conservation in northern Malawi.*

**The Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust**  
Reg. charity no. 1105105

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Website: [www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org](http://www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org)

The Nyika-Vwaza Trust can only continue with the vital task of helping to conserve the Nyika and Vwaza Marsh with the continuing support of generous donations. We welcome further donations from current Friends of the Trust but we also endeavour to widen our scope for funding so please pass on copies of the newsletter to your friends and relations.

**BANKER'S ORDER**  
*(for UK residents only)*

To: ..... Bank plc.  
.....  
.....  
.....

(Please insert the name and address of your Bank in the space above)

Please pay to Lloyds TSB Bank plc, 40 High Street, Alton, Hants, GU34 1BQ (Sort Code 30-90-15), for the credit of The Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust's Account No. 01205669, the sum of :-

£ ..... on .....

(Please insert date above)

and thereafter every month/quarter/six months/year (*delete as appropriate*) until cancelled by me in writing.

Name of Account to be debited .....

Account Number .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Please return this completed form to:-

Hon. Treasurer,  
Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust,  
Stowford Farm,  
Harford,  
Ivybridge, Devon.  
PL21 0JD

for registration and onward transmission to your Bank.

**Friends of the Nyika-Vwaza Trust**  
**Donation Form**

PLEASE PRINT YOUR DETAILS IN CAPITALS

Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Forenames: \_\_\_\_\_

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a donation of:

Or: I have completed the Banker's Order Form.

I am a UK taxpayer and want the Charity to treat this donation and all subsequent donations I make as Gift Aid donations until I notify the Charity otherwise.

I am aware: -

1. that I must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the amount of Basic Rate tax that the Trust will reclaim on my donations; and
2. that if I pay tax at the Higher Rate I may claim further tax relief through my Self Assessment tax return; and
3. that I can cancel this declaration at any time by notifying the Hon. Treasurer in writing.

Signature:

Date:

UK taxpayers are asked to send donations to the UK Hon. Treasurer, other donors either to the UK Hon. Treasurer or to The Trust Manager, Box 577, Mzuzu, Malawi.

# Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust

**Promotional Evening with Lecture by Professor Jeffery Burley CBE  
at the Royal Geographical Society,  
Exhibition Road entrance, London SW7 2AR on Tuesday 08 November 2011**

**“The changing role of forestry in conservation and development: why trees are good for Malawi”**

## Application Form for Tickets

Admission tickets are £18 per person or £9 per student.

I would like to apply for \_\_\_\_\_ tickets to the Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust fundraising party on 8th November 2011 for the people named below.

I enclose my cheque for £ \_\_\_\_\_ made payable to the Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust.

**(Please complete in block letters)**

Name of Applicant:		Ticket No:
Organisation Name: <small>(if applicable)</small>		Date Issued:
Address:		
Contact Tel. No:		
Email Address:		

Names of other people for whom tickets are requested ( see also Continuation Sheet ):

Name:		Ticket No:
Organisation Name: <small>(if applicable)</small>		Date Issued:
Address:		
Contact Tel. No.		
Email Address:		

Please return this form, with your remittance, a.s.a.p. to Harry Foot, Stowford Farm, Ivybridge, Devon, PL21 0JD.

**((Please complete in block letters))**

Name of Applicant:		Ticket No:
Organisation Name: (if applicable)		
Address:		Date Issued:
Contact Tel. No:		
Email Address:		

Name:		Ticket No:
Organisation Name: (if applicable)		Date Issued:
Address:		
Contact Tel. No.		
Email Address:		

Name:		Ticket No:
Organisation Name: (if applicable)		Date Issued:
Address:		
Contact Tel. No.		
Email Address:		

Name:		Ticket No:
Organisation Name: (if applicable)		Date Issued:
Address:		
Contact Tel. No.		
Email Address:		