



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 latest issue of Nyika-Vwaza News.

Damp and drizzly weather may have characterised Easter for most of us in the UK - but at least we have not had the unrelenting rain that the Nyika has been experiencing. However, our Trust staff are back in action preparing for the season ahead, suitably kitted out in new boots and raincoats, thanks to your donations - see the photo below.

Since our last newsletter, Nigel Hawker has left Chelinda after a short but productive tenure as volunteer trust manager. He has passed the baton to Jerry Kent and Lisa Holyhead, who took up their posts just a few weeks ago. Find out more about them, and Nigel's legacy, in this issue of Nyika-Vwaza News.

Back in the UK, we have the wheels in motion for our RGS Evening on 9 December (more details below) and we are also excited at the prospect of Drew Williams running the London Marathon to raise funds for us.

For a small charity, and despite tough economic conditions, we are making great strides in our conservation and community work in Northern Malawi. We are determined to continue doing so. Without you, this wouldn't be possible so, as always, our sincere thanks for your support.

Jane Gallacher (Editor)

Our Marathon Man—Drew Williams

Last year, you may recall, Paul Langton ran the London Marathon to raise funds for the Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust. That was a first for us and, with your support, Paul raised £2,500. This year, another of our long-term supporters, Drew Williams, has taken up the Marathon challenge.

Drew was bitten young by The Africa Bug. He spent a year as a boy living in Kenya and, on his return to the UK, always dreamed of going back. Twenty years were to pass before he realised that dream. On leaving the Household Cavalry in 2002, where he had served with the Blues and Royals, Drew took up the position of manager at David and Robyn Foot's stables on the Nyika Plateau.

Returning to the UK in 2005, Drew has been a staunch supporter of NV(UK)T ever since. And now he is undertaking perhaps one of the ultimate tests of devotion to a cause by running the London Marathon for us on 26 April.

If you would like to support him and us, you can do so by going to his Just Giving donation page - www.justgiving.com/drewwilliams - or by sending a cheque to Harry Foot (Harry's address is at the back of the newsletter).

In these very uncertain times, we appreciate that everyone is tightening their belts. But, however small, any donation you can give makes a difference in northern Malawi.



Drew ready for a training run



Ready for work

Jerry Kent reports "this photograph was taken on the first day that it was not absolutely pouring down!"

Tractor and trailer funded jointly by Tusk Trust, The Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation and NV(UK)T with employees' raincoats and remuneration funded by NV(UK)T from donations by individual supporters. Grateful thanks to all.

Animals, Anthu and Ancestors - RGS, 9 December 2009

Please make a note in your diaries of the date for our annual fundraising lecture. On Wednesday 9 December 2009, at The Royal Geographical Society in London, Professor Brian Morris PhD will give an informal event entitled **Animals, Anthu and Ancestors: Relationships between Malawians and the World of Wildlife**.

Prof. Morris first set foot in Malawi as a young man in February 1958, sitting with his rucksack on the back of a pick-up truck as it passed through the Fort Manning (Mchinji) customs post. He had spent the previous four months hitch-hiking around Southern and Central Africa, mostly sleeping rough. He became so attracted to Malawi and its people that he decided to give up his nomadic existence and for the following seven years he worked as a tea planter in the south of the country. There he spent many of his spare time hours with local people in natural history pursuits - digging up mice being a favourite! - and this led to the publication of his first article in 1962 on the ecology and behaviour of the rare pouched mouse, *Beamys hindei*.

Brian writes: "Since those days I have regularly returned to Malawi to undertake ethno-biological studies. I thus have a life-long interest in Malawi - in its history, in the culture of its people, and in its fauna and flora. Some of my most memorable life experiences have been in Malawi, and many of my closest and cherished friendships have been with Malawians, or with 'expatriates' who have spent their lives in Malawi. Altogether I have spent over ten years of my life in Malawi, and apart from Chitipa and Karonga, I have visited and spent time in every part of the country, having climbed or explored almost every hill or mountain - usually with a Malawian as a companion, and looking for birds, mammals, medicines, epiphytic orchids or fungi, whichever was my current interest".

As this newsletter goes to print, Brian is in Malawi conducting five months of fieldwork research into the landscape history of the Shire Highlands.

Today, just over 50 years after Brian arrived in Malawi, he holds the post of Emeritus Professor of Anthropology at Goldsmiths College, University of London where his subjects embrace ethnobotany, ethnozoology, folk classification, herbalism, medical anthropology, and psychology, human, East and Central Africa, South Asia, hunter gatherers, environment, education and philosophical anthropology.

Brian has written 20 books. He has also published many articles, most of which have been published in the biannual journals of The Society of Malawi.

This informal lecture promises to be lively, fascinating and should help to inform non-Malawians of the forces that motivate Malawians in their relationships with, and attitudes to, the wildlife around them. More information on the evening, including how to buy tickets, will follow in the Autumn issue of Nyika-Vwaza News. We do hope you will be able to join us.

Changes and challenges: an update on recent activities in Northern Malawi

Looking back over events in the past year, for the UK trustees in particular, the depth of our dependence on David Foot's leadership, along with the logistical support of The Nyika Safari Company, in the early years of our Trusts has become very evident. David and Robyn's departure in May 2008 was a defining moment: for both the UK and the Malawi Trusts, it marked the passage from their founding era into a period of new challenges. This time of transition has required a fresh commitment from the trustees, particularly those in Malawi, to become more directly involved with day-to-day issues on the Nyika and in Vwaza.

In the Autumn issue of Nyika-Vwaza News, we published a report by Nigel Hawker, our volunteer trust manager, describing various new initiatives with which he was involved, including several to improve the living conditions of the resident community at Chelinda. This worthy cause has added an extra dimension to our work, together with the need to resource additional finance. As with everything we do, these important projects - domestic water, health and education - have the approval of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife, and we are committed to continuing them.

Nigel had grown up in Malawi and his love of the country and its people was a powerful force that motivated his relationships with all with whom he worked. The environment in which he operated was at times extremely challenging. Anyone who has visited the Nyika, let alone lived there, will appreciate these challenges - and Nigel, unlike other volunteer trust managers, was working with his team pretty much alone and without logistical back-up during the time he was in Malawi. Through all the frustrations, he worked tirelessly and with dedication to build on the foundations that he had inherited. Nigel had hoped to serve for eight months although, for family reasons, he left the Nyika after six months to return to Ireland. We are grateful to Nigel for having kept the work of the Trusts going forward during this transition period.



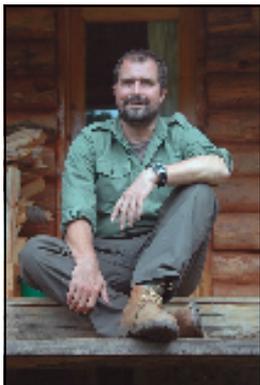
Relaying water pipes at Chelinda

Recruiting Trust Managers takes time and an inevitable "interregnum" followed. With funds tight and routine work

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winding down as the season of rains approached, the Malawi trustees made the sensible decision to release the workforce whilst retaining in post the Trust Supervisor, Mr. Joe Kapira, and the other key personnel who care for the Trust's property - buildings, vehicles, workshops, stores and equipment, office and so forth.



Jerry Kent

The "interregnum" ended as abruptly as it began. Jerry Kent and Lisa Holyhead, both former members of the legal department of HSBC Bank, were travelling through Africa and spotted an advert in the Mulanje Golf Club for the volunteer Trust Manager post. After a fortnight's recce of the Nyika (which they loved) in company with Joe Kapira, and following a meeting with Mr Paston Simkoko, Chief Park Warden, they presented the Malawi trustees with an impressive and well- documented report of their assessment of the "state of play" on the ground. They were swiftly offered the post, which they took up at the beginning of March 2009. The workforce returned to work in the middle of April, freshly equipped and ready to commence the annual early burn programme.

In the meanwhile, Mrs Catherine Chinula, a long-time and well respected resident of Mzuzu, had joined the Board of Malawi trustees. Catherine will be easily accessible to guide and assist Jerry and Lisa, whilst liaising with her fellow trustees including Chris Walker and Carl Bruessow.

Mindful of the difficult operating conditions in which Nigel Hawker had to work during his time as volunteer trust manager, a "new" (by African standards - in other words, second hand but in very good condition!) Toyota Land Cruiser Pick-up has been acquired for use by the trust managers and as directed by them, along with various items of office equipment. We are confident that improved transport and communications on the Nyika will get Jerry and Lisa and the rest of the team off to a flying start in 2009.

And so the challenges of this transition period have been met. Of course, there will be further changes and challenges as time goes by - but there is now a fresh confidence about the future as our work goes forward with renewed vigour.



The Toyota pickup

Serendipity: a new trust manager's first impressions

Lisa Holyhead and Jerry Kent have recently arrived on the Nyika as new volunteer trust managers. Lisa explains how it all happened and what her initial impressions are...

As I sit writing this, Chelinda pine is crackling away in the grate of the trust manager's house and out of the window a family of bushbuck is grazing just beyond the khonde. It's a long way from our home in a Birmingham suburb where we have an M & S food hall, a Waitrose and 13 pubs within 10 minutes' walk of the front door. So how did we end up here on the Nyika?

For the last 14 and 11 years respectively Jerry and I have both worked as lawyers for an international banking group. Then a couple of years ago we began to wonder if there wasn't more to life and started to plan our escape. We paid off mortgages, sold shares (thankfully before the markets crashed) and bought a Land Rover which we fitted with long range fuel tanks, on-board water, a roof tent, fridge and a whole lot more.

Jerry finished work in June and took the car on a test drive to Morocco whilst I worked out my notice. Then finally last September we put the car on a ship to Namibia and a month later we flew out to meet it. We spent the next few months exploring Namibia, South Africa and Mozambique. And having a fantastic time.

We ended up in Malawi very much by accident. Our plan was to travel up the east coast of Africa to Kenya but as we were heading up the Mozambique coast towards Tanzania word reached us that the ferry across the Rovuma (currently the only means of taking a car from Mozambique to Tanzania) had sunk. A bridge is under construction but still some months, if not years, from completion. So we turned back and headed cross-country to Malawi planning to head north from there.

Finding out about the post at Nyika was equally serendipitous.

After a long hard day travelling on bad roads we crossed the Mozambique/Malawi border later than we'd hoped. Realising we wouldn't reach our planned stop for the night, we ended up in a dismal hotel in Mulanje. Our dinner that evening was pretty grim so the next morning we decided to skip breakfast there and instead ended up at Mulanje Golf Club, where, whilst waiting for our food, we noticed an advert for a temporary trust manager based in Nyika National Park.



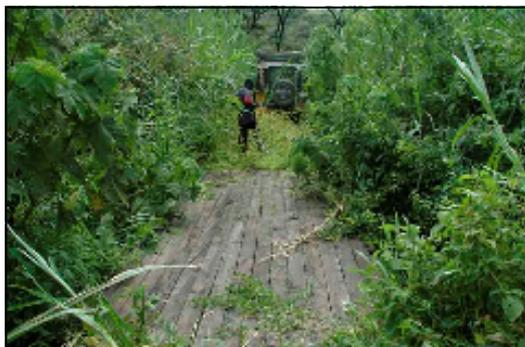
Lisa Holyhead

(Continued on page 4)

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We had always hoped our trip would lead us to an opportunity to get involved in something where we felt we could make some kind of contribution and this seemed ideal. And a few weeks later having flown back to the UK to tie up some loose ends (and pack some warm clothes!) here we are.

It's probably a little premature for a progress report as at the time of writing we have only been here for 3 days but it is plain to see there is a lot of work to be done. Along with Malawi trustee, Chris Walker, we have already had productive discussions with many of the key stakeholders in this part of the world - so we now have a feel for the relationships that exist here and what we need to build on in the months ahead. Once the rain stops, field work will begin with road maintenance and firebreak cutting in preparation for the start of the early burns programme when the first frosts arrive. There are some very exciting plans and we can't wait to get stuck in!



The work never stops—the bridge at Bindi needs clearing after the rainy season



Blocked drainage channels needing attention

Venture to the Interior Revisited

Very many thanks to those of you who were able to join us at the RGS in November last year for our 2008 promotional and fundraising event. All in all, the evening raised over £3,000 for our work.

Over 250 of you came to listen to Carl Bruessow discuss the conservation challenges to Mount Mulanje and the Nyika Plateau sixty years after Laurens van der Post. First and foremost, we must thank Carl for travelling to London from Blantyre to deliver the lecture. We are also very grateful to the Malawi High Commissioner in London, H.E Dr. Francis Moto, for attending the event. We were particularly delighted that Lucia van der Post was there to support us.

Our thanks must go to the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) for its sponsorship of Carl's lecture. By happy coincidence, 2008 was also the 60th anniversary of the founding of the CDC and it was a pleasure to welcome to the RGS a number of people who were associated with the CDC.

Our sale of paintings by Malawian artists was as popular as ever - many thanks to the artists and to Robyn Foot and the late Anne Hyatt. The chitenjis were a new and popular addition to the items for sale on the evening. Thanks to Mrs Angela Kilner who chose them in Malawi and transported them to England.

As well as delivering the lecture, we must thank Carl for acting as a courier. He brought with him from Malawi printed versions of his lecture for sale on the evening (with proceeds to NV(UK)T (there are a few still available if you missed out on getting a copy)) along with 100 (very heavy) WESM 2009 calendars.

Final thanks must go to the RGS House Manager, Mrs Denise Prior, and staff.

Legacies

It is understandable that, in the current financial environment, many people are reducing their financial donations to charities. But there comes a moment when one's own need for money ceases. We greatly appreciate your generous support whilst you are alive but, if you haven't already done so, please consider continuing to assist the work of the Trusts after your death by bequeathing a legacy in your Will to the Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust. Under present legislation legacies to charities are excluded from inheritance tax calculations and can take the form of cash or stocks and shares or property and so can be of great value to the charity. The postal address of this charity is The Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust, Stowford Farm, Harford, Ivybridge, Devon. PL21 OJD.

Malawiana

Harry Foot has donated to NV(UK)T a number of second hand books about Malawi from his personal library for sale at the Royal Geographical Society Evening on 9 December 2009. We expect these to be popular and an opportunity for purchasers to treat themselves to a Christmas present! Should you have one or two books (duplicates perhaps?) that you no longer want, or should you be wondering what to do with your own collection, please consider donating them to the Trust for sale on 9 December.

Please provide Harry Foot with details of books that you donate - your name, book title, author, condition and your recommended selling price, allowing Harry to set the actual selling price. (Email stowfoots@southdevon.org Tel: 01752-892632).

Books may be brought to the RGS on the 9 December or delivered to either Harry Foot in Devon (that could be expensive!) or to Miss Pip Hayes at 70 Engelburgh Street, Battersea, London SW11 4AR. Tel. (Evenings) 0207 2286598. Offers by other people around the country to be "points of delivery" would be greatly appreciated.

RGS Lectures : Printed Versions

The lectures delivered at the Royal Geographical Society in 2007 and 2008 have been published in booklet form. They are:

1. Prof. Colin Baker's 2007 lecture "By Water to the warm heart of Africa - The role of Lake Malawi and the Shire River in the history of Malawi". Price £7 plus £1.30 p+p.
2. Carl Bruessow's 2008 lecture "*Venture to the Interior Revisited - Conservation Challenges to Mount Mulanje and Nyika Plateau sixty years after Laurens van der Post*". Price £6 plus £1.30 p+p.

Both booklets contain interesting photographs, several from a bygone age.

Please send your orders with cheques payable to 'Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust' to Harry Foot, Stowford Farm, Harford, Ivybridge, Devon, PL21 0JD.

Making Donations to the Trust - guidance by our Hon.Treasurer

Our work depends on your continued generosity. You can make a donation:-

- by using the forms attached to this Nyika-Vwaza News; or
- via our website www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org (click "Support Us" on the tool bar or the orange oblong that invites you to donate); or
- by completing the donation form at the back of our information leaflets; or
- by posting a cheque to us at the address at the end of this Newsletter.

Gift Aid

A donation given by a UK taxpayer can be increased by the donor completing a "Gift Aid Declaration". This authorises the Trust to recover from the Revenue the amount of tax at the applicable rate that the donation attracts.

Types of donation

- **One-off donation**
This can be by cheque or CAF or by credit or debit card via our website.
- **Regular donations, usually via banker's orders or CAF**
You instruct your Bank or CAF to make regular payments to the Trust either monthly, quarterly, half-yearly or annually. Regular, on-going gifts assist the Trustees to plan ahead.
- **Income Tax Overpaid**
UK taxpayers can instruct the Revenue to credit to the Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust the whole of, or part of, any overpaid tax which is due to be refunded to the taxpayer. For this purpose, in respect of the tax year 2008-09, the Revenue provides form SA100Charity2009. On page 2 of that form you will be required to insert our charity's unique code which is BAR31JG. Those who have donated this way tell us that it is 'painless' as the money has already left them, having been paid to the Revenue!

The Trust depends upon you

Every donation that is given to the Trust supports our work in assisting the Government's Department of National Parks and Wildlife with the conservation of The Nyika National Park and Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve and with the involvement of the local communities. Your support is our lifeblood. Thank you for your generosity.

The Nyika-Vwaza Trust
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Working for environmental and wildlife conservation in northern Malawi.

The Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust
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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.
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(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. 1205669, 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.