

HERITAGE of ZIMBABWE

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Editor's Foreword

This is the 41st annual volume of *Heritage of Zimbabwe* journal and our 81st volume since publication began in 1956, (following formation of the History Society of Zimbabwe in 1953).

We kick off with leading historian Professor Ray Roberts' fascinating article on Lobengula's "War Doctors", (the Mzizi Family). Their wagon drivers who accompanied Lobengula wherever he went were "... all dressed in the highest European fashion and were the greatest scamps in the country — idle, vain, insolent and vicious". They "doctored" the *Impis* before going to raid and upon their return, gradually making themselves indispensable to Lobengula. This information was wholly unknown to your Editor (and to most I suspect) and provides a valuable addition to the story of our heritage. Later in this edition Ray makes a second related contribution in the form of the story of Elsa Godwin Green (nurse to the wounded settlers and militiamen in the Jameson Raid and the First Chimurenga/ Umvukela). This brave woman came from the ranks of ordinary Britons who did not hesitate to serve in dangerous situations and on distant frontiers.

Ray demonstrates the depth of his research and knowledge in explaining in yet another article the lead-up to the assumption of power in Rhodesia by the British Crown. This account should be read in conjunction with the article by Adrian de Bourbon at page 115. Ray observes and concludes that Southern Rhodesia was "annexed as a colony but ... was soon treated as a Dominion. Northern Rhodesia was different (administered) ... as a protectorate. Had the BSA Company given up its pre-occupation with its indifferent assets of gold and land in (Southern Rhodesia) and developed the copper reserves (of Northern Rhodesia at the beginning of the 20th century) ... the outcomes could have been very different". Food for thought.

Veteran pilot, lawyer and aviation historian John Reid-Rowland contributes a most interesting article on what it took to reach southern Africa by air in the 1930's (an exercise involving many days of perilous flying and many crash landings along the way). The writer Elspeth Huxley flew 6½ hours from Entebbe to Croydon in 1933. She said her journey was bumpy, hot and stuffy with passengers getting airsick. Her breakfast in the Sudan was "repellent". We have less to endure in comparison today, but the luxuriously appointed passenger cabins and lounges of those days put modern equivalents to shame, as will be seen from the photos accompanying the article, certainly as far as flying economy class is concerned, (albeit at five times current prices).

Anthony Stidolph's memoir of growing up in the "back of beyond" of Inyanga North follows. It is a beautifully written tribute to his family and the area by a prolific writer and well-known cartoonist for the *Natal Witness* and other publications. He writes that "no other place has affected me so deeply or had such influence on my imaginative development or provided me with such a rich vein of memories. Living there, imaginative doors were opened, creative juices started to flow, ways of seeing begun". Anthony's other works can be seen by Googling Stidy's Eye. There must be many other similar stories of the early days out there

amongst our membership and members who have a story to tell, but are reluctant to do so for whatever reason, are encouraged to put pen to paper and submit your drafts to your Editor (who will be happy to assist with editing and polishing up). Long or short, erudite or written in simple terms — all are very welcome.

The Meikle family are amongst the most renowned pioneer families and made massive contributions to the development of our country for the benefit of those who came after. Quoting Kingsley Fairbridge in part: “we wrought in death and hunger, we fought the veld, we few, behold the effort of our hands, this road was built for you”. In this edition Barbara Meikle writes of her grandfather, John Meikle who arrived in Rhodesia in 1892 with wife Sarah and four young children, including John, her father, aged 9 months. A Family Tree is provided and useful complementary notes on the border question with Mozambique (see also Mike Tucker’s article on this subject in *Heritage* 39).

The late great Professor Michael Gelfand wrote an article in the 1950’s about one of the earliest “heart of darkness” type trips by naval officers, by canoe up the Zambesi into Portuguese territory (in this case in 1823). We are pleased to be able to reproduce it here. It describes slavery, jungle fever from “swamp vapours” and privation and deaths, all in the name of exploration.

Transport fundi Robin Taylor weighs in next with a thoroughly researched and well-illustrated article on public transport in the 1890’s. Robin’s writings on transport in Zimbabwe deserve publication in book form (just as do those by Peter Fey on geological matters) and it is hoped that this might one day become a reality, perhaps a coffee table book in co-operation with Jono Waters? In this article Robin describes coach services in Rhodesia before the construction of the rail network and the final blow to coach and wagon transport (certainly by the end of the Great War) from the arrival of lorries and motor cars.

A most interesting (and very amusing account in the case of the opening ceremony at the bridge) follows next from Billy Moubray (with informative notes from regular contributor Rob Burrett) on the 1935 opening of Birchenough Bridge, another illustration of the amazing early works from which people in this country are still privileged to benefit. Thanks are also due to Stuart Beverly who found Moubray’s notes in old papers held by Stuart’s family.

Renowned author and geologist Peter Fey continues his deeply-researched history of the Geological Survey of Zimbabwe with three articles, on widely-travelled geologist Francis Keep (who arrived in Rhodesia in 1926 via England and Canada), on Euen Morrison (the 9th Director, until 1989, of the Geological Survey) and on the discovery of one of the world’s largest deposits of Lithium in a tinfield discovered in 1909 in Bikita. Peter’s articles never cease to illustrate the highly-educated, competent and conscientious men who staffed this country’s Geological Survey.

A labour of love follows from new contributor Adrian de Bourbon renowned Advocate and defender of rights in Zimbabwe for most of his working life, (and keen philatelist now resident in the United Kingdom). Adrian deals with the winding up of the BSAC administration in Zimbabwe in 1923 in a well-researched, comprehensive and most informative article. He concludes that, with the benefit of hindsight, the end of Company administration of Southern Rhodesia was “dealt with in a businesslike manner, obtaining what in the result was a substantial commercial

and financial advantage for the Company and its shareholders”.

Well-known and well-respected Veterinary surgeon, the urbane and articulate Charles Waghorn, kept a large attendance of members enthralled in a talk in 2019 on the early veterinary history of Zimbabwe and we reproduce that excellent talk in this edition. In 1981 Charles implanted Danish Red embryos, imported in a thermos flask flushed from two cows in Denmark and sped by plane to Harare. Five pure Red Dane calves were born 10 months later. This made history as Charles was the first to achieve this success in Zimbabwe.

Keen member Mike Barter and well-known historian Rob Burrett’s article on Frank Oates (adventurer, naturalist and uncle of the Antarctic explorer), who first arrived in Zimbabwe in 1873, is a gripping tale of the stubborn and determined Oates’ exploits in Zimbabwe, in particular his fatal determination to reach the Zambesi and Victoria Falls, and in later years an account of the search for his grave (only discovered in 1955 in the wilds of north-eastern Botswana near the Tati Concession).

Part 2 of the irrepressible Marcel Mitton’s entertaining story describes, inter alia, his marriage and rise to wealth (in part due to his introduction of the credit system No Deposit No Interest associated with Radio Limited, with which most of our membership will be familiar). Feedback on Part 1 has been very positive and Noeline Barry deserves congratulations on recording his memoirs.

The knowledgeable and super-efficient Chris Halse provides a sequel to his well-received article in *Heritage* 40 on the ferry *Seaflight*, with a detailed history of the Lake Shipping Company and the vessels (*Seaflight*, *Seahorse* and *Sea Lion*) operated by the admirable entrepreneurship of the founders of that company in the 1970’s (until its final liquidation). Chris is also working on an update of the hugely popular *Index to Heritage of Zimbabwe*.

A tribute to Chris Andersen follows (written by his wife Anne and with a note from our member and retired lawyer Richard Wood). Chris was a man of many talents – Advocate, politician, Member of Parliament, Government Minister in the Smith, Muzorewa and Mugabe administrations (prompted in all three cases by a remark by Ian Smith that “if one cared for one’s country one should get involved”) and a skilled squash player, avid fisherman and loving family man.

We are grateful that prominent guide and historian Paul Hubbard has provided a valuable bibliography of the 31 issued journals of the *Pre-history Society of Zimbabwe*, over 60 years of its existence, which every historian, amateur or otherwise, will treasure as a handy guide to the contents of the publications of that society. Paul has a complete set of the journals — the first was published in 1959 — but there is another full set at Arrupe College in Mt. Pleasant (and partial sets elsewhere in Harare and Bulawayo). Incorporating the Pre-history society into our Society has been mooted and this may or may not happen in the future.

We close with the usual Annual Reports.

Your National and Branch Committees are most grateful to:-

- a. our Sponsors (who, along with sales of *Heritage* to members, provide the necessary funds, approximately USD\$4 000 per annum, to produce each new annual edition of *Heritage of Zimbabwe*);
- b. the members who attend our talks, buy the journal and donate to the ice-cream box at our talks to cover venue hire costs;
- c. our authors for their skills and hard labour in producing articles of great merit and interest;
- d. my secretary Felicity Naidoo for her typing skills and general assistance in putting together the journal over many years;
- e. our wonderful type-setter Rhona Chapman who expertly guides your Editor through the process of finalizing each edition of *Heritage* and getting it to print;
- f. John and Anna McCarthy for additional proofreading.

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD	
BY FRASER EDKINS.....	VII
THE MZIZI FAMILY: WAR DOCTORS TO LOBENGULA	
BY R. S. ROBERTS.....	13
LONG HAUL DOWN AFRICA IN THE 1930's	
BY JOHN REID ROWLAND	17
DOWN THE OLD DUTCH SETTLEMENT ROAD – A BOYHOOD MEMOIR	
BY ANTHONY STIDOLPH.....	31
JOHN MEIKLE 1892 PIONEER	
BY BARBARA MEIKLE	65
THE ASSUMPTION OF LEGAL POWER FROM THE LIMPOPO TO THE ZAMBESI	
BY THE BRITISH CROWN, 1888–1891	
BY R. S. ROBERTS.....	71
THE CANOE EXPEDITION UP THE ZAMBESI (1823)	
BY MICHAEL GELFAND, OBE, MD, FRCP	75
PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN THE LATE 1890'S IN RHODESIA	
BY R. D. TAYLOR	79
THE OPENING OF A BRIDGE	
BY W. 'BILLY' MOUBRAY	103
FRANCIS ERIC KEEP D.SC, 1897–1974 ITINERANT MINING GEOLOGIST	
BY PETER FEY.....	109
THE END OF BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA COMPANY ADMINISTRATION IN SOUTHERN RHODESIA	
BY ADRIAN DE BOURBON	117
A ZIMBABWE VETERINARY HISTORY. TRANSCRIPT OF A TALK GIVEN IN MARCH 2019	
BY DR CHARLES WAGHORN	131
FRANK OATES AND HIS GRAVE SITE ON THE OLD WESTBEECH ROAD	
BY M. A. BARTER AND ROB. S. BURRETT.....	141
ELSA GOODWIN GREEN. NURSE TO THE INJURED DURING THE JAMESON RAID AND THE SHONA RISING	
BY R. S. ROBERTS.....	147
EUEN RITCHIE MORRISON BSC (HONS), MSC THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY'S NINTH DIRECTOR 1978–1989	
BY PETER FEY.....	149



CONTENTS

FROM TIN FIELD TO LITHIUM MINE – THE DISCOVERY AND EVOLUTION OF BIKITA BY PETER FEY	161
SIXTY-SIX OF THE BEST – THE FRENCHMAN WHO BECAME A RHODESIAN: PART II BY NOELINE BARRY, FURTHER EDITED BY FRASER EDKINS	183
LAKE SHIPPING COMPANY (PRIVATE) LIMITED: FROM INCORPORATION TO LIQUIDATION BY CHRISTOPHER HALSE	195
JONAS CHRISTIAN (CHRIS) ANDERSEN 14 DECEMBER 1935–12 JULY 2017 BY ANNE ANDERSEN	219
AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE JOURNALS OF THE ZIMBABWE PREHISTORY SOCIETY, 1959–2012 BY PAUL HUBBARD	229
MASHONALAND BRANCH CHAIRMAN’S ANNUAL REPORT PRESENTED TO THE 50TH AGM	260
THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN’S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021–22	264