

# HERITAGE of ZIMBABWE

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THE HISTORY SOCIETY OF ZIMBABWE  
Harare  
Zimbabwe



## MEMBERSHIP OF THE HISTORY SOCIETY OF ZIMBABWE

- ☆ The Society aims to unite all who wish to foster a wider appreciation and knowledge of Zimbabwean history.
- ☆ The Society encourages all readers and their friends and colleagues to enrol as members.
- ☆ Members of the Society are not, by any means, all historians. Among our members worldwide are collectors of Africana, libraries and learned institutions wishing to acquire background knowledge of one of Africa's key areas whilst the majority are ordinary Zimbabweans interested in the story of their own country.
- ☆ Outings to sites of interest with talks on related subjects and a national annual luncheon are part of the organised activities offered to members.
- ☆ The Society encourages historical study and research; and endeavours to record in interesting form the story of Zimbabwe in *Heritage of Zimbabwe*, the only publication devoted exclusively to this purpose.
- ☆ Membership is open to everyone and there is no joining fee.
- ☆ *Heritage of Zimbabwe* is published once a year and copies may be purchased by members from the Society. The articles will appeal to Zimbabweans as well as people beyond our borders who seek to understand our country.
- ☆ Each issue of *Heritage of Zimbabwe* contains a wide variety of articles on Zimbabwe's historic background: pioneering, military, transport, agricultural, political, biographical, literary, cultural and so on.
- ☆ History creates a sense of common purpose that develops into a healthy national consciousness. An active historical society can thus exert a tremendous influence for the good of our country.
- ☆ Your support would, therefore, be both welcome and worthwhile. Do join the Society now by sending your email address to [hszcomms@gmail.com](mailto:hszcomms@gmail.com) asking that you be enrolled. You will then receive notices by email of the Society's activities.



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## THE HISTORY SOCIETY OF ZIMBABWE

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For further information please mail [hszcomms@gmail.com](mailto:hszcomms@gmail.com) for the attention of Charles Castelin.

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*HERITAGE OF ZIMBABWE* is the journal of The History Society of Zimbabwe since 1980. It replaces *RHODESIANA* which from 1953 was the journal of The Rhodesiana Society which Society absorbed the National Historical Association and Heritage of the Nation, and later became the History Society of Zimbabwe.



*Edited by*

**FRASER EDKINS**

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*Authors are responsible for their own opinions and  
for the accuracy of statements they make*

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COVER DESIGN — *Front*: Zimbabwe Bird, from a cast in the National Archives of the soapstone original which was removed from Great Zimbabwe by the archaeologist Theodore Bent in 1891; masonry from a passage wall in the Great Enclosure, Zimbabwe (photograph c.1904). *Back*: Masonry with chevron decoration, from the outer wall of the Great Enclosure (photograph c.1894); Conical Tower (photograph c.1930) National Archives.

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## THE HISTORY SOCIETY OF ZIMBABWE

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FOUNDED: 1953

### AVAILABLE PUBLICATIONS

- A. The journal *RHODESIANA*  
(40 issues published from 1956–1980)  
A number of back issues are available from Jono Waters [jonowaters69@gmail.com](mailto:jonowaters69@gmail.com)
- B. The journal *HERITAGE OF ZIMBABWE*  
(Published annually since 1981.)

For *Heritage* issues 29–42 write to: [hsztreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:hsztreasurer@gmail.com)

For other back issues of *Heritage* and *Rhodesiana* write to Jono Waters at [jonowaters69@gmail.com](mailto:jonowaters69@gmail.com)

Every single edition of *Rhodesiana* and *Heritage of Zimbabwe*, save the most recent, and an updated index of *Heritage* are available online at [www.history.co.zw](http://www.history.co.zw).

An updated reprint of the very popular *Heritage Index* is also still available in hard copy.



## Editor's Foreword

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This is the 42nd annual (2023) volume of *Heritage of Zimbabwe* journal and our 82nd volume since publication began in 1956, (following formation of the History Society of Zimbabwe in 1953).

Regrettably, it emerges some months late, but the contents will hopefully prove worth the wait and we will “catch up” with the production of the 2024 volume (*Heritage* 43) later this year.

The opening piece from Society stalwart Chris Halse is his edit of the interesting story of the foundation and development of the famous tea estate, and popular Eastern districts getaway for so many Zimbabweans over the years, and of Bill Igoe, one of the main forces behind Aberfoyle. In response to your Editor's request for articles of varying length, Chris (who produced our updated Index in 2023) has also chipped in with an amusing short piece highlighting the importance of telling the truth, especially when dealing with a Vilensky!

The second piece is the text of an entertaining talk given in 2023 by longstanding member Doug McClymont, on the not so obvious question, as it turns out, of why our early explorers always walked. Doug also contributes a scholarly and valuable article on past experts in Rhodesian agriculture, a hugely-researched treatise which deserves wider publication and inclusion in any seminal history of the agricultural achievements of Zimbabweans, (and which gives the lie to his claims to be having trouble with his memory)!

Members are once again urged to contribute articles, of whatever length, and whether simple or expert, and regardless of writing experience, relating stories of the early days and personalities. The simple histories prove just as popular as the more erudite articles and your Editor will assist with pleasure with editing wherever necessary. Everyone of us has one story in them, if not many, and those are lost to posterity if not written down. So, please chat to your Editor at our meetings and then go to it.

Zimbabwe's foremost historian, Professor Ray Roberts, kindly emulates Chris Halse (as far as your Editor's request for shorter pieces are concerned), with a contribution on television personality Derek Partridge, but also a very substantial and well-researched story, reflecting Ray's skills as a historical detective, in getting to the bottom of who exactly was John Dryden Elstob.

Well-known expert on the ancient terracing of Nyanga, Paul Stidolph, (whose brother Anthony entertained us so well in his story of his Nyanga north upbringing in *Heritage* 41) provides a most interesting account (on a subject of which your Editor, for one, was ignorant) of the discoveries and locations of copper cross ingots which came with ancient traders from Zambia many hundreds of years ago – a fascinating story and a valuable addition to the tapestry of our heritage.

Regular contributor and world-renowned geologist Peter Fey has found time between writing a book on the work, over more than a century, of the Geological

Survey of Zimbabwe and a piece on his time at Prince Edward school, (to which we look forward in future) to favour us with an extensive history of Newby Tatham, miner, geologist and Mica King of Zimbabwe. A second, equally comprehensive, history follows of Willoughby's Limited, founded by one of our most successful pioneers in mining, ranching and property development.

The tremendous Robin Taylor writes at length of the Rhodesian Railways in Zambia in the earlier part of the last century and adds a shorter piece on a little-known High Commissioner of our country Stephen O'Keefe. Robin's regular contributions, full of mastered detail on his favourite subjects, in particular the railways, never fail to engross our readers.

W. B. (Basil) Deall, fighter pilot and farmer, who carved his Sipolilo farm out of virgin bush and was the older sibling of Zimbabwe's Air Commodore Johnny Deall, ("my little brother "as Basil once called him,) is paid affectionate tribute by his oldest son Graham in an article of great merit which explains in part why the agricultural development of our country was so successful *viz.*, due to the calibre of the many incredible people who worked and developed beyond recognition the land, under adverse conditions and following great trials serving their country in the conflicts of the 20th century, (one of whom certainly was Basil Deall).

F. C. Selous needs no introduction. In this edition leading historian and regular contributor Michael Tucker favours us with a short piece (a charming letter by Selous to his mother) and a detailed account of Selous' unfortunate death in action in WW1 in the then Tanganyika.

Hereunder we refer readers in some detail to the very best Zimbabwean field guide website ([zimfieldguide.com](http://zimfieldguide.com)) compiled by Mike Tucker and urge readers to go to it. It is only to avoid publication of Mike's articles in two sources simultaneously available that more of his work does not grace the pages of *Heritage*.

The website [www.zimfieldguide.com](http://www.zimfieldguide.com) started (by Mike Tucker) with the modest aim of broadening the author's knowledge of the history, culture and diversity of Zimbabwe's natural resources and the original articles were all about the places of interest that citizens and tourists might visit in the towns and countryside.

Gradually that mission expanded, but always the aim has been to inform the general reader, rather than the specialists or academics, who wanted to acquire some general knowledge of Zimbabwe's attractions. Hopefully the interest generated by the website may serve as an introduction to more specialized articles and books.

There are plenty of excellent articles in the academic press, but they are often unavailable to the general reader and for this reason the range of subjects covered on the website is a broad spectrum; the website divides the country into the ten provinces and there are now nearly 500 articles. Every province has its own distinct character and even the main cities, Harare and Bulawayo have their own very distinct style and characteristics.

As the website grew, the type of articles has changed to some extent. Many are broadly historical in nature. The author has an interest in present-day Zimbabwe prior to the arrival of the Pioneer Column in 1890. This includes the hunters, traders and explorers who travelled into the interior in the 1870-80's especially Thomas Baines, Henry Hartley, Selous and the concession seekers. Their interaction with the Matabele and their Kings, Mzilikazi and Lobengula, is fascinating.



The website does not delve into the despair of local people generated by the poverty, unemployment and healthcare system that is in crisis. This is led by local community action groups, that do a remarkable service, often at great personal risk.

Zimbabwe has an international reputation as an unsafe destination, but in fact is made up of peaceful, gifted people whose infectious sense of humour has carried them through both good times and periods of hyperinflation and drought. Visitors often remark that they take home with them images of those special smiles.

Zimbabweans are also mindful of their environment and how this relates to their lives. The range of wildlife is a blessing that has been bestowed on Zimbabwe. Thankfully there are organisations like ZimParks and a great variety of individuals and wildlife-facing charities that understand the importance of wildlife and its relationship to the wider community and get good support both locally and internationally.

The website will continue to focus on these subjects and hopefully contribute something useful.

Another regular contributor, Rob Burrett, (who unfortunately lives in Bulawayo and thereby deprives us of his oratorical skills), expertly adds to the history of Masvingo (complementing previous articles by him on that city) in a well-researched and well-illustrated account of some of Masvingo's early memorials.

We finish up with Professor Ross Cooper's examination of the human and/or animal damage to pioneer graves in the rural and farming districts. Ross, incidentally, (as appears from his source notes) found the [zimfieldguide.com](http://zimfieldguide.com) website of assistance in writing this article and has put together a most readable story (and a reminder of our duty to maintain and treat these resting places with care, respect and dignity).

The Annual Reports of your National and Mashonaland Branch Committee chairmen for the year 2023 conclude this edition, for the efforts of which committee members are, I am sure, grateful.

In turn, your committees and your Editor are very grateful:-

(a) to our sponsors and our major anonymous donors (anonymous at their request) who, (along with the proceeds of sales of this journal and the members' contributions at each of our talks) provide the essential funds to produce each new annual edition of *Heritage of Zimbabwe*;

(b) to the members who make the efforts of your committees so worthwhile through your regular attendance at our monthly talks;

(c) to the authors for their skills and hard labour in producing articles of such merit for readers' entertainment and edification;

(d) to our tireless and efficient type-setter Rhona Chapman who, notwithstanding her busy regular jobs in both her family business and for publisher Jonathan Waters, manages to find time to expertly guide your Editor through the task of putting to bed each edition of *Heritage* (and has done so now for nearly a decade);

(e) to the "find of the year" 2023/24, Harald Solberg for his great skills in adding to the quality of our Society website by placing online most of the back editions of our journal, for the enjoyment of members and the world at large

(and for the annual updating that he and David McAllister's will be undertaking, hopefully for many years to come);

(f) Anna McCarthy for additional proof-reading of *Heritage* journal and my secretary Felicity Naidoo for her typing of additional material of the journal.

Members, please enjoy this new edition and please do not hesitate to give feedback to your Editor with your opinions and constructive criticisms as to the content and calibre of the articles and as to particular, perhaps lesser-covered, subjects of which you would like to read more in future.

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Editor, *Heritage of Zimbabwe*

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