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Flowers for Pathisa

At this year's BZS Research Day it was announced that the BZS inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award is to be bestowed on 9 October to the Bulawayo-based writer and historian, Pathisa Nyathi. Philani Amadeus Nyoni assesses his life and work.

Pliny the Younger has bequeathed to us a fantastic legend from antiquity: the story of a stoic philosopher, Athenodorus Cananites and a ghost.

Athenodorus found a house whose owners had abandoned to a ghost and put up for sale at a delectably low price – to Athenodorus's delight.

One night, while he sat in his new-old abode, consumed by his letters way into the witchy hours, a jingle of metal approached.

Athenodorus looked up and saw a ghost, bound in chains. Athenodorus was not bothered one bit. Instead, he raised his hand, instructing the spectre not to interfere while his pen raced to finish a thought.

I was reminded of this anecdote when I read about a news crew that visited Pathisa Nyathi in his Gwabalanda home. They found him mid-stroke and, like the ghost, they had to wait while he wrote those pesky words onto paper.

They had found a man possessed by the past, in the middle of a trance. No stranger to ash and decay,

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Pathisa Nyathi – photograph © Mgcini Nyoni

Pathisa Nyathi: continued from previous page

a sexton, the seance-artist summoning age and epoch long gone, trapping, bottling it for the thirst of the future, and surely entombing his own name within.

A bold legacy

It is unusual for a marginal field of study, such as history, to bring one a great name outside the hallowed halls of academia. (I have yet to meet the name of the 20th-century English historian George W. Southgate, for example, in casual conversation.) There is something that strikes similar between Pathisa Nyathi and Peter Ndlovu. Both have thousands of namesakes, but there is never any confusion on the subject when either is mentioned by their first name. Perhaps that alone is worth a thousand praises: how a man turns something so obscure and provincial into fame and bold legacy.

Room for superstition

Perhaps there is more to it than meets the eye; aye, let me conjure. In the study of culture and history, particularly the African variety, there is always room for superstition.

By his own confession, his birth was unlikely. While he was the first child to his parents in a polygamous household, he was not their first conception. His mother had carried others but none would be born to breathe air, until his father went to plead with the oracle of Njelele, the rainmaker's shrine. And so, in 1951, Pathisa was born to the Nyathi clan. And the legend began.

What is a calling? To be tied to the world of indigenous knowledge, spirituality and practice before he was born and as a boy, to sit at the feet of experience regaled by tales of ancient times? Was he a child or a changeling sent by The Elders to keep their stories alive in the next and the next generations?

Perhaps both. Perhaps this is what marks Pathisa from his contemporaries (not peers, for he has none). Some have written for material gain, some for political manipulation (departed, not to be missed). Many understand the need to tell the stories of our people and tell them right for posterity, but few have pursued with as much conviction.

Is it because his very existence is testament to the power of our indigenous practices?

Thus some are born great. They also achieve greatness by the sleepless pen.

The Sunday News

For a lot of writers of my time who grew up in Bulawayo, *The Sunday News* ranked quite high on the

bucket list of a literary career. There I made my bones as a fictionist in February of 2012. What was not to die for in *The Sunday News*? The most popular newspaper piece of press in the city, neatly sprinkled with something for everyone: a pinch of humour from Christopher Mlalazi, some spirituality from Reverend Paul Damasane, musings about the arts from Raisedon Baya; hell, even babies got pale art to colour in, right under the poems and short stories.

Then there was Pathisa Nyathi and his column which comforts me to speak of in the past tense, although there will be something to read about this weekend as he has made sure since 1995.

If you want to think too hard about that you might burn some mental circuits. Some of us, now published and even greying, were still forbidden to use ink back when he started; still training on pencil and crayon. So the streets call him 'Dr Pathisa' in sheer astonishment and respect of the knowledge he generates in his historical articles, biographies (mostly of liberation war heroes) books about stone ruins, fallen civilisations, wandering tribes, a bit of advice on a rain dance or two, African spirituality, cosmology, dangerous and intriguing women like Lozikeyi ... He is a madman, a madman!

Too busy to look back?

How much has he actually written?

Well, in 2014, Pathisa was introduced at an event as having written over fifty books. His version of modesty was acting surprised and confessing that he was glad someone was counting because he wasn't.

Well, I suppose if the man doesn't sit around with tea in his lap waiting for news crews to show up and ask him about his writing, if he has been writing a column for twenty-six years of his seven decades and doing other things along the way – like qualifying as a science teacher in 1973 and practising until 2008; receiving a BA from UNISA in 1985 – he must be pretty busy; too busy to look back at his mighty work and tremble, too busy to iron and tuck in the khaki shirt he wore to the Bulawayo Arts Awards ceremony to receive a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2021.

Recently, more awards and honours have been coming in. Mr Nyathi believes that's an omen of his time coming to a close, and he has finally decided to write the one biography he is most qualified to write: his own. Theoretically he's right about impending doom: 70 is closer to the end than most years. But, I suspect, there will be more honours before his night.

In 2021 he was among forty arts legends honoured by the National Arts Merit Awards. Pathisa is an

Pathisa Nyathi and BZS member Marieke Faber Clarke collaborated on the following titles:

Lozikeyi Dlodlo, Queen of the Ndebele: 'A very dangerous and intriguing woman' (Amagugu Publishers, Bulawayo, 2010) Lozikeyi Dlodlo was the senior queen of King Lobhengula, the last king of the Ndebele before Conquest, and reveals that hers was the intellect behind the 1896 Revolt that nearly drove the white settlers out of Zimbabwe. The work also shows how Lozikeyi's leadership kept the Ndebele together as a nation.

Welshman Hadane Mabhena: A voice for Matabeleland (Amagugu Publishers, Bulawayo, 2016). Welshman Hadane Mabhena, named 'Welshman' after the Reverend Bowen Rees, was a nationalist icon in Zimbabwe's fight for independence. He served time in both colonial and post-colonial prisons but never abandoned the principles he had set himself to achieve on behalf of the people. He was Governor of Matabeleland North province for eight years, becoming the godfather for Matabeleland and a favourite of the people.

Reverend Bowen Rees: A missionary for Matabeleland (Amagugu Publishers, Bulawayo 2017). Rees and his wife Susannah worked for London Missionary Society at Inyathi Mission from 1888 –1918. He told his family that he had 'loved King Lobengula from the bottom of his heart'. After Conquest, Rees worked with Queen Lozikeyi and leading Ndebele to help deal with the disaster that had befallen the Ndebele people. The schools and churches in they developed, unlike many other institutions of the time, trained girls and women as well as boys and men, contributing greatly to the Zimbabwe liberation struggle.

A Cradle of the Revolution: Voices from Inyathi School (Amagugu Publishers, Bulawayo, 2018). After leaving the LMS secondary school at Inyathi, 50 miles north of Bulawayo, many of the students joined Zimbabwe's freedom struggle. The book is an exposé of the colonial conditions and efforts to achieve independence and dignity for the black majority.

All titles are available from the African Books Collective.

exceptional historian, researcher and time's favourite stenographer in these-here-parts.

Honour in his own house?

In all this truth, it would have been sacrilegious to not recognise him for his contribution to knowledge in some shape or form, yet in trying to honour we exposed ourselves for what we have always been: a society whose holey hands cannot accept gifts for what they are. As long as we are using state institutions, why is he not honoured in the house he has built: academia and cultural heritage?

It is not enough for a president to commend him in speaking; let us drag him from his Amagugu Heritage Centre in Matobo and give him tenure; after

all, many fundis have already been born of his ink. Give him a grant, throw him into a dark office in the museum and let him toil like Rumpelstiltskin until he emerges with the gilt face of God!

Let us name a scholarship after him; so that the next child who would be a custodian of our intangible heritage finds space to grow even in this world so obsessed with technology and futurism.

Let him one day receive that doctorate that so far has been the preserve of functionally illiterate vice presidents, or the express kind bestowed upon first ladies besieged by revelatory visitations of genius like 'girls are more likely to fall pregnant than boys'; not least because of his talents and how they have been employed; also because of his restraint: in all our sordid history, he has remained apolitical and unaligned.

Learning from history

Ah, had I failed the *sensei* of history? There must be a Pathisa Nyathi book I could have quoted, one that tells of pre-colonial Nguni societies where the poet was Shakespeare's jester: the one man who had the right and prerogative to admonish the king. I suppose if history teaches us anything, it's that history teaches us nothing. A man who perceives time on his side is so deeply lost in his own voice he will reinvent the coital act that brought him to being.

Yet one day the elders will wither into the ground, none of us is immortal. There will be no one to advise when the world and time elude. And what we forgot to take from them will be decayed with them.

Let it not be so, Pathisa said, I will leave you with tomes, tomes and tomes that thou might know thine-selves long and far; hear the voice of the past to guide you to reason.

And we thank you, let more honours come; more greatness be thrust upon you.

Philani Amadeus Nyoni is is an award-winning Zimbabwean author

Pathisa Nyathi: biographical facts

DOB: 1951 in Kezi, Matobo district, Matabeleland South.

EDUCATION: Sankonjana Primary School in Matobo 1958 to 1962; Mazowe High School in Mashonaland Central from 1967 to 1970; A levels in Geography and Biology through distance education at Mzilikazi High School 1976; Gweru Teachers' College majoring in science from 1971 to 1973; BA Geography and Development Administration, University of South Africa (UNISA) 1978-1982; BA Honours, UNISA 1983

Forty Years On: Looking back with Diana Jeater to the BZS's founding in 1981 and the changing face of the BZS over the years

On 12 June, the BZS celebrated its 40 years of existence with an online event with an emphasis on arts and culture – with contributions from writers, poets, musicians and film-makers. It opened with this summary, by former Chair Diana Jeater, of the history of the Society and the changes it has undergone both in its function and membership since its creation in 1981.

The BZS was just one year old when I joined its Executive, under the then chairmanship of Richard Gray.

Its leadership was largely male and largely white, though Edgar Moyo, Percy Murombe Chivero and a young accountancy student named Everest (who returned to Zimbabwe when his studies were finished) were all on the Executive at the beginning.

There were several business people amongst the founding Executive, including the publisher, James Currey (then still at Heinemann), along with journalists, academics and activists. One of these was Mercy Edgdale, a former Secretary to the Royal African Society (which she had left in 1978 over a difference of opinion about the illegal regime in what was then Rhodesia, and apartheid in South Africa).

The Society's early public meetings attracted anti-apartheid activists, along with members of NGOs, British teacher-returnees from a scheme to attract young British graduates to teach in Zimbabwe's many new schools, and staff from the (then) Zimbabwe High Commission. Members received a regular mailing with a listing of upcoming events and copies of the reports issued by the Zimbabwe Project Trust, the co-operative movement for veterans founded by Judy Todd, as well as the series of pamphlets, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, co-ordinated by Roger Riddell.

The BZS and politics

Our early years coincided with the Gukurahundi.

Following a front-page expose by Godwin Matatu in *The Observer*, at that time owned by Tiny Rowlands, the events were better reported in the UK than in Zimbabwe itself. The Society did not campaign over this, however, as most members interpreted the events as responses to South African destabilisation of the sort seen with UNITA in Angola and RENAMO in Mozambique.

Terence Ranger subsequently profoundly regretted this decision – but he did observe one positive outcome, noting that it was at this time that the executive passed the resolution which has stood the Society in good stead ever since, that it exists to represent the best interests of the people of Zimbabwe – not any particular government or party.

The first Research Day

In 1984, Terence Ranger took over as Chair from Richard Gray. He introduced his *Review of the Press*, based on

newspapers sent by post to him from Zimbabwe: an invaluable resource in pre-internet days. *The Review* was regularly mailed out to members, and attracted many high-rate subscriptions to the Society from institutional libraries. He also initiated a 'research day', to bring together the large number of young (and almost entirely white) doctoral students then working on Zimbabwe in the UK. The day was a huge success and, the following year, was repeated with invitations to other members of the Society to attend and learn about the range of research underway. Somewhat to everyone's surprise, the day attracted a lot of interest, and actually made money (an achievement that became harder to repeat in later years, when keynote speakers were brought over from Zimbabwe). It rapidly became established as an annual feature of the BZS calendar.

A difference of opinion

In the late 1980s, the Society underwent a 'schism', and, for perhaps the only time in its history, a hotly-contested vote at the AGM. It was a struggle between those members, led by Percy Murombe-Chivero, who wanted the Society to be more business-orientated, comparable to the then Britain-Kenya friendship society; and those who were more interested in grassroots development, wanting to become an umbrella group for networking and back-channel communications. It was this latter group, led by Terry Ranger, that won out and made the Society what it is today. Sadly for the Society, Percy then resigned from the Executive. For many years thereafter, the Society and its Executive remained a very white organisation.



Guy Clutton Brock 1906–1995: the first president of the Britain Zimbabwe Society. Picture taken at St Faith's Mission. Photograph with permission © Sally Roschnik



The then Chair of the BZS, Professor Terence Ranger (1929–2105) speaking at the 2007 (30th anniversary) dinner of the Journal of Southern African Studies. Photograph © Dr Billy Frank.

In keeping with Terry's vision, the late 1980s and 1990s saw many forms of NGO and development initiatives coming under the BZS umbrella, including town-twinning, which still survives in the form of the highly successful and lively Stevenage-Kadoma group. Also during this time, BZS Executive members were invited to regular meetings with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and with the Zimbabwe High Commissioner and staff.

Day-schools and the Research Days

Meanwhile, Margaret Ling had become an active member of the Executive, and helped to initiate the annual day-schools, which brought together many diverse groups to share ideas, showcase their work, and enjoy Zimbabwean food and music. There were some notably memorable and successful day-schools over the years, on the arts, local government, sustainable agriculture, and health. Building on this experience, in 2000 BZS worked with SOAS and Chartwell Dutiro to stage the wonderful Kusanganisa /Inhlanganiso Festival of Performing Arts.

In 1997, Terence Ranger retired from his post at Oxford and went to Zimbabwe for a four-year secondment. Margaret Ling took over as Chair. David Maxwell and I kept the Research Day going in his absence, and started trying to attract Zimbabwean students in the UK, as well as British doctoral students. Zimbabwean student numbers were growing in the UK, but they had not previously been engaged with the Society.

The 1998 Research Day, focusing on development, attracted the largest number of participants to date, including many UK-based black Zimbabweans – a trend that continued thereafter. Also at this time, Oliver Philips and

I launched the BZS research register, which for several years provided an invaluable resource for discovering who was working on which Zimbabwean research topics, both in the UK and more widely. Meanwhile, our indefatigable information officer, Sara Rich Dorman, ensured that the Society's new email distribution list received a steady supply of information from Zimbabwe.

Further changes

The 2000s saw yet more change, especially with the rise of the MDC in Zimbabwe. The 2000 Research Day, taking place just before elections that MDC were expected to win, attracted an unexpectedly high-powered audience, and acted almost like a think-tank for the anticipated new administration.

However, the years of upheaval that followed brought many more Zimbabweans to the UK, with significant numbers making asylum claims. The BZS research register was replaced by a register of 'expert witnesses', and many of us wrote hundreds of reports for asylum seekers during this period.

BZS members, notably Terry Ranger, JoAnn McGregor and I also helped to establish case law and generate official information that was used by HMG and the British legal system to assess Zimbabwean asylum cases. The Executive gained several more active black Zimbabwean members at this time, including Millius Palayiwa, Angelous Dube, Mutsai Hove, and Yvonne Mahlunge, to join the ever-steadfast Edgar Moyo. The late Richard Brown (see page 9) developed a website for the Society, and Iain Whyte established the Scotland-Zimbabwe Society as an affiliated national organisation.

The day-schools were gradually replaced by the Open Forums, tirelessly co-ordinated by Margaret Ling, that addressed the many concerns facing this new Zimbabwean diaspora. In 2001 the Society launched the *BZS People to People Contacts* directory, a listing of links between towns and cities, communities, church groups, schools, universities and in arts and culture, ably edited by the Reverend Peter Ashby.

I took over as chair in 2002. By then, the Executive had acquired several Anglican clergy, as awareness developed in the church of the problems facing a large number of Zimbabweans settling in provincial towns such as Nottingham and Luton. By the mid-2000s, anti-British rhetoric dominated in Zimbabwe's state discourse, and

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40 years on: continued from page 5

many NGOs could no longer operate. Over the years, we had worked with teachers' organisations, town twinning groups, youth organisations, church groups, water projects, organic farmers, drama groups, musicians, film-makers, academics, tour operators, small businesses, medics, and many others.

Exposed and vulnerable

By 2003, we saw that organisations in both UK and Zimbabwe that had previously been keen to publicise their links, were becoming more circumspect. Grassroots links with UK left partners in Zimbabwe feeling exposed and vulnerable, and many ceased operating.

DfiD appeared no longer interested in grassroots development and Clare Short, then Minister for Overseas Development, had been publicly rebuked by the Society in 1997 for a letter advising the Zimbabwean government to 'get over' colonialism and accept that New Labour would not honour the Lancaster House commitment to support compulsory land purchase for resettlement.

We rebuked the UK government again in 2002 for cutting off aid in an attempt to exert pressure on the Zimbabwean government and, the following year, felt obliged to rebuke the Zimbabwean government over its NGO Bill. It was becoming clear that the established BZS role of providing an umbrella to link NGOs, grassroots development organisations and back-channel links to both UK and Zimbabwe government was no longer sustainable.

The Society began to take on a new role, catering more to the Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK. These changes were overseen by the new Chair, Knox Chitiyo, who took over in 2008. By now, widespread internet access to Zimbabwean news sources meant that the Society's own news service was largely redundant. However, the Society consolidated its production of a thematic *Review*, to be mailed to members alongside the newsletter, both edited for many years by Marieke Clarke. At a time when London was

becoming known as 'Harare North', the Society had become an umbrella group for Zimbabweans in the UK rather than predominantly for native British people.

New partnerships

Under Knox's leadership, continued by Pauline Dodgson Katiyo, who became Chair, with Knox becoming President. Chair, the Society developed new partnerships. These included an initiative to present lectures by Zimbabwean lecturers via internet from the UK, to students in Zimbabwe; support for the Zimbabwe Achievers Award initiative; and assistance to the welcoming committee for the Zimbabwe team to the London Olympics in 2012. Knox and Pauline also initiated the Young Researcher's Award, first presented at the 2018 Research Day to Simukai Chigudu and then to Roselyne Masamha the following year. The newsletter and *Review* were combined into a single newsletter, very ably edited by Jenny Vaughan and still mailed out in hard copy to all members, as it has been since the Society's start.

Scope for new directions

Recently, the chair has been passed from Pauline to Kathy Mansfield Higgins. With a group of young Zimbabweans based in the UK now involved in the Society's Executive, there is plenty of scope for new directions and new initiatives. In 2021, the Research Day took place online for the first time, in response to COVID-19, and attracted a global audience. The Society has recently instituted a Lifetime Achievement Award, which will be presented to Pathisa Nyathi later this year. Expertise-sharing, and keeping members of the diaspora in touch with each other and with events at home, remain priorities for the Society. It seems that the BZS is set to continue to offer support, inspiration and networking for many years to come.

Diana Jeater is a former chair of the BZS and a member of the current Executive.

A recording of the 12 June 40th anniversary event will be available on the BZS website.

Film

Transnational Cinema in Southern Africa 1977-2000 – a buried history: Simon Bright follows up the talk he gave to the BZS 40th Anniversary event

When I returned to Zimbabwe in 1982 to work in the audio-visual unit of the Ministry of Agriculture, I wanted to help develop a new film industry in Zimbabwe.

The Rhodesia I had grown up in had hardly been a hotbed of avant-garde film-making (with the notable exception of Mike Raeburn's clandestine film *Rhodesia Countdown*). The moving image landscape I found in Harare was *Baywatch* on ZTV and the shooting of *King Solomon's Mines*, including the famous scene of Sharon Stone being boiled in a big pot, surrounded by dancing semi-naked villagers. The first big feature film shot in the

new Zimbabwe, sanctioned by the Ministry of Information, was a caricature of colonial adventurism. As Kedmon Hungwe noted¹, the new government had little idea of local film-making.

Transnational film-making

'Transnational filmmaking' is production by film makers from two or more countries working together. The growth of Southern African transnational film making and of festivals like the First Frontline Film Festival – a meeting place and creative cauldron for film makers from all over Africa – has never been told. In the context of burgeoning nationalism and xenophobia globally, as well as its violent

explosions in Southern Africa, I believe it is worth rediscovering this buried history.

What follows is a brief history of cinematic collaboration, working across national ethnic boundaries and cultural differences to create a dynamic synthesis embodied in Southern Africa transnational films made during the 1980s and 1990s, and is focused on Zimmedia's work. Other companies sprang up during this time, but films like *Marracuene*, *Borders of Blood*, *Jit*, and *Africa Dreaming* are, sadly, all but forgotten.

The first transnational Southern African film production was *Pamberi ne Zimbabwe*, made by crews from Angola and Mozambique and given to the new Zimbabwe as a record of the ceasefire and first election in 1980.

Pamberi set us on the road to regional co-production and it showed me how to make films with a strong Southern African perspective. Media representation was a battleground in the apartheid years of the 1980s. Sue Onslow referred to it as a weapon of war², and we knew that our stories would be distorted if shown through the lenses of Western broadcasters.

In the early 80s, just after the country finally became Zimbabwe, we needed ideas of how to develop a film industry. Together with the late Wilson Katiyo and Bev Mathison, I organised the First African Regional Film Workshop in Harare. Seeking the advice of Pan African filmmakers, we invited Djibril Diop Mambety from Senegal, and Pedro Pimenta from Mozambique.

Corridors of Freedom

Out of this seminal encounter came resolutions that laid the basis for the First Frontline Film Festival and the subsequent Southern African Film Festivals in Harare in the 1990s.

But before any festival could take place, we needed some of our own films to show.

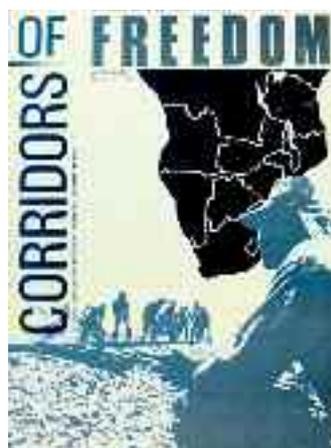
I started working with Ingrid Sinclair on *Corridors of Freedom* and we formed Zimmedia. Most anti-apartheid films being made at the time showed black South Africans as victims. I felt strongly that a story must be told of the successful resistance to the destructive wars apartheid was waging in the region's black majority-ruled states. We wanted to show that apartheid would lose.

The crew was chosen from the Frontline States of Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Angola and Mozambique. The idea of combining film crews stemmed from an ideological principle; the first film about SADCC (The Southern African Development Coordination Conference) region, the southern African countries which had come together to resist apartheid. By combining the best filmmakers from the region with international finance, I believed we could make a film that would be screened all over the world. No single country in the SADCC had the equipment, skills or finance to sustain a national film industry and this recognition was an important driver in the development of our transnational filmmaking.

In practice it worked out far better than I had expected. Each crew member had unparalleled expertise in manag-



The crew of corridors of Freedom: l to r: Martin Mhando – Tanzania; Simon Bright – Zimbabwe; Ingrid Sinclair–UK; Joao Costa – Mozambique; Jascinto Bie Bie – Mozambique. Crouching, Gabriel Mondlane – Mozambique. Photograph © Simon Bright



ing their own country's tricky security and bureaucracy, which made it almost impossible for foreign crews to work around the war-torn region.

Thus, if a Frelimo soldier stopped us at gunpoint at a road block, Gabriel Mondlane, our Mozambican sound recordist, would talk our way free using their shared dialect. In Angola,

Carlos Henriques secured us a vital helicopter to film the offshore rigs in the Gulf of Cabinda – for free!

The impulse behind this collaboration was a desire to experiment with what the British/Jamaican sociologist Stuart Hall has called 'cultural hybridity'. I want to work across linguistic, cultural, racial and national barriers because I believe therein lies the spark of new creation.

Film-making was just one art form that exploded in Zimbabwe during the 1980s and 90s, a period of brilliant creativity in all artistic fields fuelled significantly by the cross pollination between the different cultures of the Southern African Development Community.

Corridors of Freedom was distributed on TV stations from East Germany (GDR) across Europe to Canada and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) in the US. It sold all over the world, opening up the potential for international distribution of African cinema. Other Southern African producers followed us.

A creative forum

We still needed a creative forum to meet, watch and discuss films and develop new projects. So together with

Continued on next page

Transnational film: continued from previous page

Steve Chigorimbo, we set up the Zimbabwe Film and Video Association, led by the late Stephen Chifunyise, which organised the First Frontline Film Festival in 1990.

Many great names of African cinema attended: Gaston Kaboré, Soulemane Cissé and Djibril Diop Mambety as well as film-makers from the SADCC region, the ANC and PAC. For many South African filmmakers, it was their first experience of African cinema.

The Festival established transnational film in Southern Africa and Harare became a centre for the new cinema of Southern Africa as directors and producers from North and West Africa and the Caribbean arrived to film in Zimbabwe: *Aristotle's Plot*; *Kini and Adams*; *Dry White Season* and *Lumumba* were all made there.

Flame

Inspired by these encounters, Zimmedia embarked on an ambitious new feature film project: *Flame*. The brainchild of Ingrid Sinclair who wrote and directed it, *Flame* was the first film about the liberation war in Zimbabwe and it was the first Zimbabwean film to be selected for the Cannes Film Festival. The US distributors, California Newsreel, said it was 'perhaps the most controversial film ever made in Africa – certainly the only one to be seized by the police during editing on the grounds it was both subversive and pornographic.'

But when it was released in cinemas in Zimbabwe, it broke box office records, became number one film of that year, even screening on ZTV for Independence Day.

Flame extended many of transnational elements of previous Zimmedia films as a three way co-production with Onland Productions from Namibia and JBA productions from France. The crew came from Mozambique, Tunisia and France, with the key creative positions being Zimbabwean.

There is not space here to list all the film-making that developed during this period. But to give an idea of the scope and range of activity, some of the key companies that emerged were Ebano – Mozambique; Eye to Eye – Swaziland; Framework International and Media for Development Trust – Zimbabwe; and Onland Productions – Namibia.

Mama Africa and afterwards

In 2001 Zimmedia made the *Mama Africa* series of six fiction films by different African women from Tunisia, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. This was the highest level of transnationalism that Zimmedia achieved, with investment from South Africa, USA, France and the UK. It sold well worldwide, accomplishing its Pan African objectives of collaborating and foregrounding the skills, story telling prowess and diversity of African women film-makers.

But with the first decade of the millennium, as a narrow nationalism became entrenched in Zimbabwe and xenophobia broke out in Southern Africa, Zimmedia moved to the UK, where we started the Afrika Eye film festival in Bristol to keep the spirit of African cinema alive. I went on to make two investigations into leadership and the dynamics of power: Robert Mugabe and King Mswati III of Swaziland.

Today we see the new work of Joe Njagu and Tomas Brickhill, who found brilliant new approaches to financing and making films, and are travelling around the world and reviving international support for Zimbabwean cinema. Meanwhile I am working on developing a Southern African film archive with the National Archives of Zimbabwe and the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa.

I believe the slogan that originally inspired me from my days as a student demonstrator is still worthwhile: 'Black and White unite and fight'.

Simon Bright is Zimmedia's producer.

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See also:

Macbride, S. 1980 *The Macbride Report Paris Unesco International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems*

An appreciation – Ivan Murambiwa (1965–2021)

Diana Jeater and Violet Matangira remember the Director of the National Archives of Zimbabwe

Ivan Murambiwa, who died on 7 August, was widely known and highly respected across the world as an archivist and record keeper, who could articulate the specific challenges facing archives of colonised countries with an unmatched clarity, logic, calm and charm. He will be very much missed.

Ivan was an exceptional leader and champion of good archival practice and global accessibility, through 20 years

of consistently challenging political and economic environments. He was an unfailing patriot, writing insightful historical articles (under a pseudonym) for the newspaper *The Patriot*, for many years. But he was also an internationalist, who welcomed foreign researchers.

An outstanding diplomat, Murambiwa was able to consistently and gently nudge foreign researchers into understanding how they could support projects that would strengthen the National Archives, while also steadfastly

resisting inappropriate attempts by well-meaning outsiders to set the Archives' agenda.

Understanding global trends

Murambiwa had a deep understanding of global trends in archives and records management. His interventions at international conferences demonstrated an ability to get to the heart of the problem and to advocate powerfully for the needs of post-colonial archives. Notably, he served as both a board member and president of the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA) to which his contribution put Zimbabwe on the map and became a significant participant in regional archival matters.

He never spoke on a topic without having first considered it carefully. He had an outstanding awareness of political sensitivities and a superb ability to explain these in a non-threatening way that enabled everyone to move forward towards a constructive outcome for all concerned, but most especially for the Archives.

This was particularly important when discussing the Archives relating to the period of Ian Smith's illegal regime and the liberation war.

In the face of heavy criticism from both sides, he carefully negotiated the Archives' relationship with the Mellon Foundation-funded Aluka project, *Struggles for Freedom: Southern Africa*, which sought to digitise archival material from the liberation struggles of the region. Throughout, his focus was on what would be good for Zimbabwe, rather than on the amount of cash that was associated with the project. He understood fully the dangers of allowing external institutions with a potential to control access behind their own firewall but equally, appreciated the importance of Zimbabwe's perspectives being available on a global stage, and never ceased to keep the door open for appropriate collaborations if this would benefit the Archives as well as the world of global researchers.

Global archives

Murambiwa was equally alive to the need to negotiate where necessary to enable access within Zimbabwe for expatriated archives. A recent major achievement was the return of the Ian Smith papers from South Africa. In 2008, Murambiwa visited the UK as keynote speaker for a workshop on expatriated archives at the University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol. His tact, intelligence and charm impressed representatives of the British South Africa Police association, creating the seeds for an idea to incorporate the materials they held into the Zimbabwe National Archives catalogue.

This was part of a wonderful vision that Murambiwa developed at this time, well ahead of his colleagues in the world of global archives, regarding a global catalogue of Zimbabwean archives. The catalogue would include materials held outside the country owing to decades of removal, both legal and illegal, by colonisers and expatriates.

Continued on next page

Richard Brown

14 September 1931 – 12 June 2021

Margaret Ling remembers one of the founders of the Britain Zimbabwe Society

When his daughter Zoe gave me the news of Richard Brown's death, I dug into my files and found a great swathe of emails from him.

In 2004, I became the nominated person from the Executive to keep Richard, as our website manager, supplied with news and information. Richard always kept it up to date with BZS activities. He had previously served as BZS Treasurer and was a steadfast and greatly valued member of the BZS Executive.

Richard was born in 1931 and graduated from Cambridge with a First Class degree in History. He worked briefly for the History of Parliament Trust before going to Salisbury, Rhodesia, in the late 1950s, with his wife Lyn, to help establish the history department at the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

He joined a group of liberal-minded expatriate academics who became a constant irritant to the university elders and the white Rhodesian community. Their support for the emerging African nationalist movement was viewed as threatening the very foundations of society. Probably the most irritating of them all was Terry Ranger who was eventually deported in February 1963.

On his return to the UK with Lyn, Richard took up a post at the University of Sussex in the newly established Department of African and Asian Studies (AFRAS). Sussex, one of the new universities of the time, was built around a 'Schools of Study' model with the aim of fostering an interdisciplinary environment. AFRAS, founded in 1964, united different disciplines in a focus on Africa and Asia. Richard ultimately became the Dean of AFRAS, now the Africa Centre at Sussex. He was a regular contributor to the *Journal of Southern African Studies*, among others.

After retirement, Richard set up his own IT consultancy, Abartis Computing, volunteered for Computing for Labour, and set up the BZS website. He also served as Treasurer for the John Conradie Memorial Trust (JCMT), set up in memory of the Zimbabwean former teacher, political prisoner and liberation hero John Conradie, who died in 1998. The JCMT raised funds to support the continuation of John's work in innovative education and development projects, especially for pre-school children, and to provide scholarships for Zimbabwean students at Rhodes University in South Africa.

Sadly, the last years of Richard's life were dogged by ill health. He died on 12 June 2021.

Margaret Ling is a former Chair and currently Treasurer and Membership Secretary of the BZS,

Ivan Murambiwa: continued from previous page

The vision included a joint training project for archivists in both Zimbabwe and the nations where the expatriated archives were held.

Let us hope that, thirteen years on, this vision may finally be realised in his memory.

Work within Zimbabwe

But Murambiwa was not only superb at dealing with the global contexts of Zimbabwean archives. Within Zimbabwe, he worked tirelessly through continuing economic challenges, to try to protect the materials he held – a very difficult task in the face of electricity cuts that affected ventilation, damp protection and lighting, all of which damage paper holdings. He also introduced digital catalogues, enabling far more effective research and records keeping. This was a huge achievement at a time when the economy was in free-fall.

Strategically, Murambiwa prioritised work that would be good for development and wellbeing. He mainstreamed gender awareness and community building in his acquisition directives. And he was fully alive to the need to capture the ‘Intangible Cultural Heritage defined by UNESCO’ (<https://ich.unesco.org/en>)

He was actively supportive in enabling projects to build up the oral history collections and the film collections, and established protocols for access to and preservation of materials in a world of fast-changing technologies and global and national regulations.

Over the past two years, he actively enabled one project to gather data about diverse traditions of spirit-led reconciliation and another to preserve the history of Zimbabwe’s key role in developing a regional film industry and aesthetic.

Both these projects involved innovative real-time stakeholder collaborations in the archival research; and, in both cases, the projects have undertaken to provide resources that will permanently enhance the Archives’ infrastructure. He was passionate about preserving culture within the context of distortions of colonial narratives which tend to dismiss the good parts of Zimbabwe’s diverse indigenous heritages. He was also zealous about liberation stories and always felt that the stories of the regular war participants have not been documented enough and was already mooting ideas on this.

The power of wisdom

Throughout his many years of public service, he never was one to show or seek ‘power’ but when you engaged him, you could quickly realise the power of his wisdom. Indeed, the saying ‘Our greatest strength is not in the example of our power but the power of our example’ truly describes him.

His death is a huge loss to Zimbabwe, but thankfully he has trained up a good team of young archivists to follow in his footsteps.

Let’s hope that they can continue his tradition of tactful, respectful but determined advocacy for archival management and accessibility in Zimbabwe.

Diana Jeater, a member of the BZS executive and former Chair is based at the University of Liverpool and Violet Matangira is archivist at the University of Namibia.

Additional tributes from around the world:

I first met Ivan in 2010 or 2011 at the International Council on Archives (ICA) meeting in Oslo, and since then came to know his serious dedication to Zimbabwe’s national collection, his sagacity and diplomacy through the Eastern and Southern Regional Branch of the ICA and his wonderful sense of humour.

The Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers made him an honorary fellow in recognition of his leadership under very difficult conditions in Zimbabwe ... Ivan really fostered his young staff. Alfred Chikomba is now doing his PhD in New Zealand, and I frequently see Sindiso Bhebhe and Livingstone Muchefa’s names in journals and other forums these days. Ivan has had a lasting impact on the National Archives of Zimbabwe and the archival profession in his country and region, and I will miss him

Dr James Lowry, Assistant Professor, Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, Queens College, City University of New York (CUNY)

Ivan Murambiwa was an active member and ex-Chair of the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council of Archives. He was very supportive of the Africa Programme, mentoring recruits to the New Professionals Programme and bidding for the Annual Conference. It is a sad loss not only for the Zimbabwe National Archives but also for ICA.

Margaret Crockett, International Council on Archives

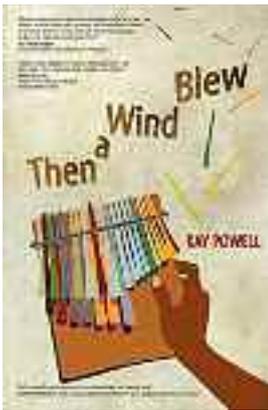
Ivan was such an energetic and enthusiastic advocate, and very generous in his support for the archival community. He was also great company; a very decent and genuine friend and colleague. Very sadly missed.

David Fricker, Director General National Archives of Australia

The SCOLMA (UK Library & Archives Group on Africa) committee was very sorry to hear the sad news that Ivan Murambiwa has passed away and we send our condolences. ... He made an enormous contribution to archives and heritage in Zimbabwe and beyond and we had great respect for his hard work, persistence, and diplomacy during difficult times in his country. We plan to publish an obituary in SCOLMA’s journal, *African Research and Documentation*.

Lucy McCann, SCOLMA Chair, Senior Archivist, Special Collections, Bodleian Libraries

Readers – should novelists protect them? Kay Powell considers the questions she faced when she was writing Then a Wind Blew



Someone once told me, ‘A good writer cannot protect their readers or their characters.’

At the time, I was working on the story that became *Then a Wind Blew* (see the June issue), which is told by three women caught up in the final brutal years of the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe war.

I was new to fiction and had no concept of ‘protecting your characters’. I didn’t know they can evolve in ways you hadn’t planned, and that you have to let them.

Protecting readers

But ‘protecting readers’ was something I had thought about. I wanted to tell a story I knew well: it would be difficult to read in parts, but would be as true as I could make it.

Of the potential readership, some had been caught up in the war as fighters, supporters, victims, onlookers. Others would know little about it or the country where it happened.

Also, the knowledge held by those who’d been in or close to the war would, as always in wars, have been coloured by propaganda: not only the propaganda of the Smith government and its opponents, ZANLA and ZIPRA, but also that of foreign media. For years afterwards, many people on all sides had (and some still have) difficulty separating fact from propaganda fiction.

Eventually, I’d read all that the British Library had to offer, and other sources, including memoirs of people from both sides. I felt as certain as I could be that I could put flesh on the factual bones I had gathered and create a credible plot and characters. Here, I drew largely on first-hand experience.

I set out to tell the truth, but I started asking myself whether I should compromise on this character or that fact, to paint a less painful picture. But if I tried to temper events or dilute characters, the prose rebelled, sounded contrived.

I had to rise above ‘protecting’ my readers and stay true to my characters and the time and place they inhabited – knowing that if/when the novel was published, some would find in it much they knew but

would have preferred left unsaid, others would learn things and either wish they hadn’t or be glad they had. And some, inevitably, would dispute the facts: ‘There was no sexual harassment in the camps.’ ‘We never distributed lethally poisoned clothing.’ ‘Cutting off the lips and limbs of our own people? Not our way.’ And so on.

A balanced picture?

War creates a culture that infects everything, including truth. For some, as Brian Chikwava noted in his review of *Then a Wind Blew*, ‘coming to terms with the realisation that the capacity for brutality is not an exclusive feature of one group of people can be overwhelming’.

Readers who knew little about the background found it educational. Some, who’d been close to the war, asked why they hadn’t known more. ‘It should make us uncomfortable. It should be harrowing. Why didn’t we know more about what was happening?’ wrote someone who’d assumed she’d known quite a lot.

Matthew Parris (correspondent for *The Times*, brought up in Rhodesia) wrote: ‘We ... saw the Zimbabwean conflict as a man’s war. There is no such thing, and Kay Powell has channelled the voices to tell us so: women’s voices, with sad, brave, moving songs on their lips. How did we not hear them?’

Among other readers for whom Zimbabwe was – or still is – home, the main issue was whether I’d offered a balanced picture.

Some said ‘no’. ‘I got the impression that you “had an agenda” to present the colonisation of the country as a Bad Thing, ... that all the blacks were subjugated into poverty’. ‘She calls the whites “settlers” – you can tell what side she was on.’

Some said ‘yes’. ‘Fiction is often a better vehicle than history books if it can get it right.’ Some (interestingly, all women) couldn’t read the book because going back to those times was too distressing.

The truth can be difficult to absorb and to tell. But I had a good feeling when I’d finished writing. And it has stayed with me.

As Iris Murdoch wrote, ‘Art is the telling of truth and is the only available method for the telling of certain truths.’

See: <https://kay-powell.net>

For a short video on the book, input *Then a Wind Blew, Kay Powell* – YouTube.

Cooking traditionally in Zimbabwe Ravayi Marindo rediscovers her mother's recipes

My return home from diaspora was fuelled by a lot of nostalgia for all things Zimbabwean, particularly the local foods from Masvingo, the region where I grew up.

I had spent years teaching at universities in the US, UK, South Africa, Australia and Senegal and, in 2018, decided to go back to Zimbabwe. I jokingly told my friends that I was going back home because I missed my mother's cooking. There was some truth in that.

However, the reality of the Zimbabwe I found was very different from my imagination. I had acquired foreign tastes too – champagne, oysters, sushi, Parma ham and other delicacies. I liked them better than bland Zimbabwean food. And I had also become addicted to coffee and to dining out.

During my first few months in Zimbabwe, I tried to replicate my foreign lifestyle. I went out for coffee; I went to different restaurants for meals – and I avoided my mother's cooking.

Then my mother – who is in her eighties, and had always been independent – moved in with me. We were now three generations under the same roof: my mother, my son and me. My mother watched my dining habits with alarm. She also watched as I downed my blood pressure and cholesterol tablets daily – all foreign to her. She didn't say anything, but neither did she eat the food we ate, choosing to eat her usual traditional meal of millet and sorghum sadza with traditional vegetables.

Misplaced confidence

I had been confident of getting a university teaching job back in Zimbabwe – I had, I thought, vast experience and qualifications. But the reality was the exact opposite.

Prospective employers looked at my CV and asked, 'Why did you come back from diaspora?'

Without a job, I began to notice just how expensive life was in Zimbabwe. I had never looked at the prices in supermarkets before. Now I was reeling from shock. My coffee dates dried up and the restaurants visits dwindled to a halt.

My mother watched me juggle my finances, the frown on my forehead getting deeper. Then one day I came from the health food store in a filthy mood.

'You can't believe what I paid for that small packet of stoneground wheat flour! I mean how is

anybody supposed to bake bread in this country?' I shouted to nobody in particular.

My mother looked me in the eye and said 'Mbare musika (a large market in Harare). Buy wheat there. It's cheap. Grind it on my grinding stone, or take the wheat to a grinding mill. It costs a very small sum for a whole bucket!'

Then she continued 'While you are at Mbare musika, buy sweet potatoes, pumpkins, sesame seeds, dried groundnuts and other vegetables. I will teach you to make your own peanut butter. Pass through my old house and pick up the *duri nomusi* (the wooden mortar and pestle); a *guyo nehuyo* (an abrasive grinding stone) and a *musero* (winnowing tray). I will teach you to cook properly.'

Return to the old ways

My mother reintroduced me to the old ways of cooking. It definitely made economic sense. My son and I shopped at Mbare musika market (before COVID 19). We also started an edible plant garden at my house. My mother had also reminded me of the pleasure of cooking simple wholesome food. Cooking became a way to reconnect after so many years apart.

Cooking with her was love personified. My son, a film maker, started taking photographs of our work in the kitchen. In re-learning the old ways, using *duri nomusi*, or *guyo nehuyo*, I reconnected with a part of myself which I had been running away from for a long time.

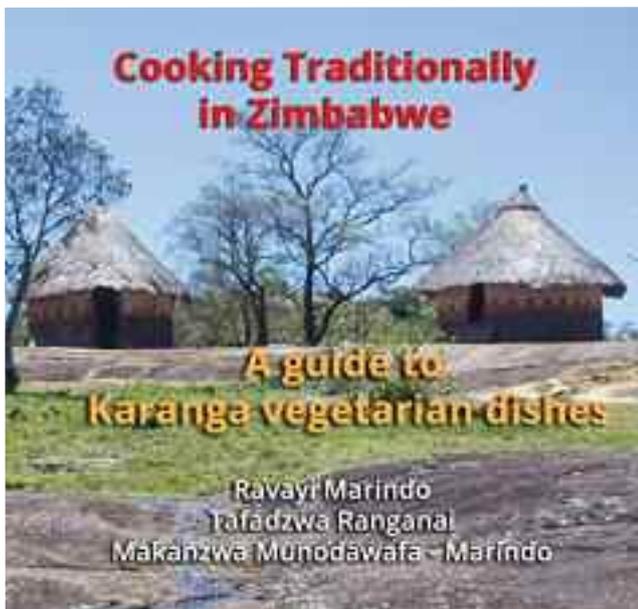
In cooking with my mother, I found my inner child. My son and I then decided to write a small book to remind my siblings who are in diaspora of the foods they were missing.

The result was a small book: *Cooking Traditionally in Zimbabwe*. We hope other people will enjoy some of the simple recipes there. My mother brought her wisdom and knowledge, my son took the photographs and I wrote the words. Any errors in the book are mine.

Cooking Traditionally in Zimbabwe: a guide to Karanga vegetarian dishes, by Ravayi Marindo, Tafadzwa Rangani and Makanzwa Munodawafa-Marindo, published independently in 2019

ISBN-10: 1710523220

ISBN-13: 978-1710523225



Here's a recipe from Ravayi Marindo's book:

Roast cow peas and peanut butter pudding

Ingredients

- 1 cup cow peas (*nyemba*)*
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 3 cups water

1. Roast the cow peas in a heavy pan at a low heat until they turn golden brown.
2. Remove the skins. You can do this in a mortar and pound them slowly, making sure you don't break the peas too much. Or you can use an electric grinder, but avoid over-grinding.
- 3 Our way of removing the skins is to put the roast peas in a large, flat tray. I use a rolling pin to roll over the peas and then blow away all the skins in a *musero*. You need patience for this step – you may have to do it several times to get rid of all the skins.
4. Put the peas in a large pot, cover with water and cook until they are soft.
5. Mash the peas until they are smooth.
6. Add the peanut butter and cook for 5 minutes.
7. Add a little salt and mix well. As you cook, stir the mixture to make sure it doesn't stick to the bottom of the pan. Now it's ready to serve.

* *There are several kinds of cow-peas, but those most commonly found outside Africa are sold under the name of 'black-eyed peas (or beans)'*

A Journey to Queensdale School Hosea Tokwe delivers much-needed books to a rural school, and sees hardship on the way

For six months, boxes of books had been gathering dust in our bedroom.

They'd come from the International Books Project (USA), and I needed to find a home for them – and to get them there.

There were others, too: 200 novels for teenagers and adults (from Australia) and two huge boxes of over 200 books from a local publisher, College Press.

Today, I was breathing a sigh of relief at the thought of finally getting them to Queensdale Secondary School – not an easy journey. I set off by car with a friend to Kadoma – 45 minutes away from the school – stopping there to buy refreshments, as the school didn't have the funds to supply these. In fact, I'd had to raise money from the diaspora even to make an 'occasion' of the book presentation. Such is the way things are today in Zimbabwe.

Mr Zvisinei Jongwe, the School Head, was delighted to see me and the books, which we loaded into his van. Then I climbed in too, and off we went.

Along the way, the Mr Jongwe pointed to a mound of earth.

'Do you see that?' he said. 'That's the Rio Tinto

Mine ... used to mine plenty of gold, but it's now a white elephant.'

Over the years, Kadoma had been known to have a rich reserve of gold enabling Zimbabwe to earn foreign currency. 'But with subsequent political interference in private companies, the lack of modern equipment and the gradual loss of foreign investment', he said, 'mining companies began to experience a huge loss in production.'

'Put your mask on, Hosea,' he then advised.

I soon saw why. The road was so dusty that, when another vehicle approached, the cloud behind it was so thick that would otherwise have choked, and we had to pull over to wait for it to settle.

Digging for gold

After another five kilometres we made another stop. I saw a compound of pole and dagga huts teeming with people. I could hardly believe my eyes. Some of the people's heads were caked with mud.

'This is Etina Mine,' said Mr Jongwe. 'Those men are busy burrowing – doing alluvial mining ... Call it the hard way to search for riches.'

Continued on next page

Queensdale School: continued from previous page

Progress after that was slow. Some bridges had been swept away and rivers became part of the road detours.

Eventually, as it began to get dark, we reached a settlement, where there was a small shopping centre.

‘We’ll get something to eat here,’ said the Head. We locked up the van and made our way through a small crowd of drinkers and dancers.

Mr Jongwe introduced me to a tall man, Mr Tachiona, the Head of a local primary school, who had been invited to the Book Presentation Ceremony. He told him, ‘Hosea Tokwe is our book donor.’

‘Welcome to Gweshe, a meeting place where gold diggers enjoy their short-lived wealth,’ said Mr Tachiona.

As we shared a meal of sadza and meat with vegetables, Mr Tachiona said, ‘Hosea, this place is rich in gold. Beneath the surface right where we are, now, there is great wealth. But you know what? These young men do not know how to use money. They don’t use it to further their education, they spend it buying fancy cars and running after young girls.’

It was well after eleven-thirty before we reached Queensdale Secondary School, where we mapped out the programme for the next day and, at last, went to bed.

The Book Presentation Ceremony

Next morning, the students carried desks and chairs to an open space, and some of the influential members of the community began arriving as well as members of the School Development Committee, along with two Heads from local schools – one of whom was Mr Tachiona, who we had met the night before.

Later on we were taken on a tour of the school. We saw how, with help from UNICEF, what had once been a 24-hectare tobacco farm had been converted into a school, using barns and other buildings to make a Staff Room, School Head’s office and a makeshift Library.

At the Book Presentation, we all stood as the school choir sang the National Anthem. The students seemed to struggle to sing, and I just thought to myself possibly they were hungry.

An introductory speech was made, followed by some excellent poems and traditional dance.

Mr Jongwe gave his speech.

‘Queensdale Secondary School dates back to 2005,’ he told us. ‘Land invaders had attempted to

vandalise the former farm house, but the farm workers resisted and decided to convert it into a school.

I learned that before Zimbabwe’s independence the then colonial government had crown land in each district. Hence Queensdale Farm was owned by the Queen’s family. Even one of the buildings was in the shape of a crown.

The school had added more classrooms and, despite a lack of books, some students had performed very well. However the school enrolment is low because most students come from poor families, who cannot even afford US\$5.00 per term for school fees. The result is that boys run away to be gold diggers, whilst girls get married at a young age.

After Mr Jongwe had spoken, I made a short speech, in which I urged the school to have a proper library so that students would find time to read books and do homework. Then it was time for Book Presentation. The students stood up to pose, holding the textbooks. Those students who had done performance poetry were given bags and books. Later the Head Girl gave a token of appreciation speech.

All invited schools heads, and local community leaders were treated to a sumptuous traditional meal of rapoko, meat and vegetables and peanut butter.

Home again!

I was then driven back to the city of Kadoma to meet my , who would drive me home. Once again, we passed through Gweshe Rural Shopping Centre where I met Mr Tachiona, who urged me to see the Primary School on my next visit.

I will look forward to that.



Some students pose for the camera, holding their new books. Photo © Hosea Tokwe.

Research Day 2021

Zimbabwean Migration – People and Ideas in Motion

Our first ever online Research Day was a great success, drawing in participants from across the world, and particularly from southern Africa.

Its theme was migration and we plan to make the entire day's proceedings available on the BZS website: <https://www.britainzimbabwe.org.uk/>

Because we have a full recording available, we have, this year, not included summaries of the papers in this issue of the *Zimbabwe Review*.

The event examined the issue of migration from many different angles – the Zoom format allowed for speakers and attendees who would never have been able to be there in a 'real life' meeting.

At the end, Professor Jeater pulled together the different threads: a full version of her concluding summary will be available in the next BZS Newsletter.

Summary

In that summary, Professor Jeater highlighted some of the themes and synergies that had emerged during the day. These included:

History: the historical contexts for visibility of migration and the words used for it; how the questions that historians (and others) ask about migration influence what we are able to see; and what can be traced about the past with

the sources available to us.

Methodology: including binary narratives that frame what we see, such as opportunity/desperation, gone/away, burden/resource, affective/socio-economic, home/network; categories absent from analysis, such as the 'left behind' and returnees; and units of study, such as geography, identities, life stories, statistics, or push and pull factors (including, importantly, the climate emergency). Lloyd Nyakidzino of the Zimbabwe Theatre Academy reminded us to challenge the 'single story'.

The ties that bind: Some of the ties that bind include social media, remittances, care responsibilities, love.

Keynote address

Our keynote address from Ethel Kuuya reminded us that weak communities can facilitate strong ties across the diaspora. This is the potential power and creativity associated with movement and dispersion.

Professor Jeater left us with the question of whether there is a distinctively Zimbabwean experience of migration, or whether there are many resonances with other diasporan/émigré groups, that researchers might draw upon.

Diana Jeater is a former chair of BZS and a member of its Executive.

News

Rhodes is still here!

Richard Pantlin writes: In the March edition of the *Review*, we covered the Oxford Rhodes Must Fall campaign and the response proposed by the Oxford Zimbabwe Arts Partnership (OZAP) – a team between Oxford and Harare / Chitungwiza. In April the report was issued by the Commission set up by Oriel College to consider the future of the Rhodes statue that overlooks the High Street, and the wider issues regarding his association with the college.

It includes:

- Six recommendations concerning educational equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)
- Twelve recommendations that relate to distancing the college from Rhodes' political views and encouraging more academic work and resources for Black and African history, including a scholarship for students from Southern Africa

- Six recommendations for 'contextualisation' of the Rhodes statue and other memorials
- Considerations regarding removal, which a majority of the Commission recommended.

Emeritus Professor of History at St Antony's, William Beinart, conducted a thorough review of material relating to Cecil Rhodes' impact on racial segregation in southern Africa and violence in the wars in Zimbabwe. This is included in the Commission report in a 28-page Appendix. It is worth quoting the summary conclusion in the main report:

Evidence shows that Rhodes ... supported developments that intensified racial segregation at the Cape in the late nineteenth century. To a limited degree a pragmatist in Cape politics, prepared to work with a range of people who would be useful to his interests, Rhodes was a deeply committed British imperialist, convinced about racial superiority.

He ... advocated a racially restrictive franchise, punitive Masters and Servants legislation, a labour tax for African people only, a segregated local government system and segregation in the South African cricket team. He was involved in the beginning of coercive compounds for black workers and other racially restrictive practices as an employer.

... Rhodes and his Company were responsible for great violence in attacking the Ndebele kingdom in 1893 and in suppressing resistance to their rule in 1896–7. The Rudd concession concerning mining rights in what is now Zimbabwe was overridden; unbridled use was made of the Maxim gun; cattle were looted ... grain stores, crops and gardens were destroyed over a sustained period during the 1896–7 war; many Ndebele soldiers were shot in flight; supposed rebels were sentenced and hanged or shot without due process of law. ... men, women and children sheltering in caves were blown up ... Rhodes

was aware of these practices, present ... while they were taking place ...

Sadly, Oriel College has decided not to remove the statue. This is in the context of a Conservative Government that seems to be looking for any opportunity to exacerbate the so-called Culture War and has introduced legislation to make it more difficult for such controversial statues to be taken down. Instead, Oriel College is committed to contextualisation with a task force being set up to make further recommendations. However, its failure to contextualise effectively after the 2015 protests does not inspire confidence.

One option would be to establish a statue in the grounds of the University Church opposite. This could, for example, represent the resistance to

Rhodes's violence in Zimbabwe and the eventual liberation of its people. It would be appropriate for such a statue to be designed by a respected Zimbabwean sculptor such as Norbert Shamuyarira. OZAP will explore this possibility as a next step to redress the Rhodes legacy.

The Commission report is available at: <https://www.oriel.ox.ac.uk/about-college/news-events/news/decisions-made-college-following-completion-in-dependent-commission>

Support for OZAP and sculptor Norbert Shamuyarira

If you would like to support the aims of OZAP, the best way is to purchase a statue from Norbert Shamuyarira at a special discounted rate. A wide range of his unique creations is available.

The Harare organiser and

photographer, Lorraine Muwuya, can be contacted on WhatsApp on +263 71 325 8372 to make a selection according to your budget. She can arrange shipping to the UK or other countries.

Norbert is a respected global sculptor so readers would be getting a good and unique deal! But he is not well at the moment and has almost no sales at all and needs to buy medication for his hypertension – the fund that I set up as Oxford Zimbabwe Medical Aid Fund has not really been successful.

More details on OZAP here:

<https://www.facebook.com/OZAP-world>

Richard Pantlin is Project Co-ordinator of The Oxford Zimbabwe Arts Project (OZAP)



Contact the Britain Zimbabwe Society

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The Stevenage-Kadoma Link Association

Vacancies exist on the BZS Executive.

If you are interested in joining the Executive, please contact Pat Brickhill at zimgekko@aol.com.

Britain Zimbabwe Society Membership Form

To join and receive your regular copy of the *Zimbabwe Review*, postings on the members e-mail discussion forum and WhatsApp network membership, please print and send the completed form below with your subscription cheque to:

Margaret Ling, BZS Membership Secretary, 25 Endymion Road, London N4 1EE

Please enrol me/us in the BZS at the following annual rate (tick relevant box).

(You may also join the BZS online, payment by credit/debit card, via our website:

www.britainzimbabwe.org.uk/join-bzs-today)

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