

NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the Third edition of the Manda Wilderness Newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading our updates and anecdotes, and that we will see you again soon!



WINNER!!

The Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards 2008 - Nkwichi Lodge declared "Best Small Hotel Worldwide".

Read on to find out what has been happening recently.....

Lake Niassa Dugout Regatta

Fast becoming one of the most anticipated dates in the Manda Wilderness calendar, and following on from last year's successful event, the 2009 dugout canoe race got off to a fantastic start. On a bright and calm March day on the lakeshore, the contestants and supporters from nine villages gathered to watch the fun unfold in Cobué bay. The event was generously sponsored for the second year by Nkwichi resident Gerard Van Dyke who provided all the prizes. The Chef de Poste, the region's chief government representative, as well as the Immigration Officer, the Police Commissioner and Customs officials took on the roles of contest judges.



The traditional dugouts are made from the trunks of hardwood tree, and are often seen on the lake paddled by a solitary boatman fishing with nets. For the races however, a team of two powered each boat to achieve maximum speed and manoeuvrability.

This year saw two more villages in the Manda Wilderness area enter the men's competition. The ladies event had double the entries compared to last year, with six teams entering the fray. The races were hotly contested with two heats for the men providing an exciting spectacle over a 700-metre course

that stretched from the shore edge, across the bay and back to the judges' table.

All the winners received 10,000MKW, the equivalent of a local monthly wage. Second places gained prizes of 5000 MKW, and those in 3rd won 2500 MKW. In addition the villages of the winning teams also received \$100 USD towards community development. Last year the winnings were used to purchase seats in the church of one village and tables and chairs for the school teachers in another. We wait with interest to see how this year's beneficiaries choose to spend their prizes to help their local communities.

The New Songea Chalet

Songea Private house is under going some radical changes and extensions. The most exciting of which is the new chalet.



A short walk away from the main communal area, the new chalet is built beneath a canopy of trees and has a private path leading to the beach. Enclosed by beautiful natural

vegetation, the chalet blends into the bush and is constructed in such a way as to have minimal effect on its surroundings. The house now has three double bedrooms with options of adding single beds. This extension to Songea Private House makes it the perfect place to have a private but fully catered holiday for a small party or family.

Wining and Dining - Makolo's New Kitchen



Makolo Private House has had the exciting new addition of a brand new kitchen. Sumptuous meals can be cooked on site by your very own personal chef, to all

your personal needs and requirements. This means that the divine secret that is Makolo Private House will really feel like

a secret, secluded and completely independent of the main lodge.

Makolo Private House offers the ultimate private retreat, located deep in the African bush. Hidden from view amongst the trees the house overlooks the lakeshore and offers complete peace and relaxation. The house is cleverly designed using natural local materials and has two en-suite bedrooms with a high thatched roof providing a wonderful feeling of absolute space. There is an upstairs platform which is the perfect place for hanging out, or relaxing and watching the sunset over the lake. The location is ideal for taking walks out to explore the bush, and there is a private access down to the lake for swimming and snorkeling. Makolo Private House is just a ten minute walk from the main lodge - where one can take full advantage of all the facilities.

Oriental Flavours from the Farm

New and exciting things are happening in all areas and the Manda Wilderness Agricultural Project is not about to be left out of the excitement.

The taste of the Orient is making the first of its delicate leaves visible above the rich compost mixed earth. The miniature leaves smile upward to the sun as if children basking in the beaming pride of the Great Mother Sun. Only to be plucked and added too delicious salads. The introduction of three types of Thai basil, Thai eggplant, and the delicate scented caffir lime tree will launch a new side to the already diverse and delicious 'Nkwichi menu. With these new ingredients we will be able to offer a real authentic taste to oriental cuisine in the surrounds of the great continent of Africa, what could be more exotic?



COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Back to School

As we near the completion of Mala School the air of excitement builds, buzzing around as if the lake flies have come early this year. After starting the project in 2001, eight years of honest sweat and hard work, the help of many volunteers and the generous donations received, as well as overcoming multiple challenges, the final touches are being added.

Brand new furniture, a swanky black board and the final lick of paint will be the defining moment. The Mala community Nkwichi Lodge staff and numerous volunteers are all thrilled to see that this interesting and involving project is coming to an end, or the beginning. The question that will arise is what to do next?

This is a question never left long unanswered as there is



always something new and interesting to focus ones energies on here at Manda Wilderness and the Umoji lands. Mandambuzi School is a similar project high on the list. With Mr. Peter Mandala heading the project it is coming together wonderfully. The largest of the school projects; it has three classrooms and caters to a huge number of knowledge hungry students. The last strokes of paint were added by Jules and Will, two volunteers from the UK, and Mickey, Nkwichi Manager.

A Time for Learning

Nkwichi Lodge is proud to announce its first scholarship is underway. Francisco Indiano, 23, is officially the first student sent to school aided by Manda Wilderness. Francisco has been working in the Nkwichi Kitchen for the last two years and was kindly sponsored by a past guest, Beverley Abbot, to attend school in the regional capital of Lichinga. He has been there since February and is keeping in good contact with the his roots at Manda Wilderness; the last we heard of him was that we was enjoying school (some of the teachers are nice, and some not so nice), and during his spare time is working at the Girassol Hotel; learning about how the kitchen in a big hotel runs.



Volunteering at Nkwichi

The Nkwichi volunteering program continues to provide additional skills and manpower to projects around the reserve. Two recent occupants of our Volunteer Village were UK ecologists keen to support the ethos of Manda Wilderness, whilst discovering more about the wildlife. It is almost certain that due to the size of the reserve, and the relatively limited scientific studies carried out to date, new species of animals and plants are awaiting discovery in this remote corner of Mozambique. The volunteers were particularly keen to gather records for some of the less obvious wildlife such as amphibians, reptiles, water beetles and bats, as this is where their specialised experience lay.

As a Nkwichi guest in 2008, during a visit to the Mandambuzi marshes, William Watson discovered a water beetle that is possibly new to science! This has been submitted to a world expert and is awaiting verification. In 2009 more marshes were surveyed and additional species gathered for assessment. This important reserve habitat is of excellent quality and may well be as good as some of those designated for protection under international conventions in other countries. The bats proved trickier to locate as there is so much good available habitat, but several roosts have been identified including a *Nycteris macrotis* colony in a lodge out-building. Recordings have been made of local bat ultrasonic sounds for subsequent computer analysis by Jules Agate of the Bat Conservation Trust, UK. The work will make a small but useful contribution to the data gathering process.

The volunteer's aims were to improve knowledge of the local species and also to contribute their expertise and time to local people and staff. They will formulate ideas to feed into reserve management



plans and help devise proposals for future conservation work. GPS mapping of important habitat features and biological records has also begun and all information will be submitted to relevant organisations to improve knowledge about this wonderful and unspoilt wildlife haven.

- Establish a responsible tourism lodge of high quality, Nkwichi Lodge, on the white sandy beachfront of Lake Niassa (Lake Malawi)
- Set up a viable conservation area in the name of and for the benefit of the local communities
- Encourage the communities to work together on small development projects such as building schools, which they themselves select and in which they play the lead role

Nearly 10 years on great progress has been made. The lodge is well established, has won awards for responsible tourism and is listed in the Lonely Planet Guides and with well respected travel agencies

In 2005 Manda Wilderness secured funding from the Swedish Co-Operative Centre to establish the community-owned reserve, and to create a community association (called Umoji) to manage it. In 2007 further funding was gained from the US Ford Foundation to create the Management Plan for the conservation area covering 120,000 hectares, 15 villages and 20,000 people.

Meanwhile an extensive community development program is in place, raising funds through a combination of applications to official donors and private donations to the UK-registered charity Manda Wilderness Community Trust (MWCT). All projects are managed as a partnership between the community committees and Manda Wilderness. Both sides contribute to the project: for example with schools, Manda Wilderness provides materials such as cement and communities make bricks and take responsibility for construction.

Intensive work has also been carried out with small-scale farmers to improve nutrition, horticulture and introduce new crops. An agricultural project started in 2001 set up a demonstration farm, where training is given on soil conservation methods, irrigation, organic compost, crop processing and marketing.



GET INVOLVED: The **Manda Wilderness Community Trust**, a registered charity based in the UK, is working hard to raise funds for our community projects. If you are interested to get involved then please do get in contact with them at MWCT@mandawilderness.org. Small monthly donations by direct debit are one of the easiest and most effective ways to help, but we welcome all contributions - from one-off donations to fund-raising events. Please find on the back of this newsletter a donations form, which can be used to make contributions to the projects.

We would like to thank all our friends and donors for their continuing support and generosity. Special thanks are due to William Garnett and his family and friends who sponsored his Iron Man Challenge, Aspect Capital, Leaden Hall School, the Ridley Family, Sarah and Francis King and Mr. and Mrs. Meek. The work of the trust is solely reliant on guest contributions, and one-off donations of friends of Manda. Our next focus is raising money for school desks and chairs. Thanks to some recent generous donations (including Leaden Hall School which raised a very impressive \$2,000) we hope to get the first two schools fully furnished within the next year.



MANDA WILDERNESS COMMUNITY TRUST

Reg Charity no (UK): 1110563

Email: MWCT@mandawilderness.org

Contact Address: Lucy Varcoe, Demelza, Easton, Hampshire, SO21 1EF

BANKER'S ORDER

(for UK residents only)

To:-Bank Plc
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(Please insert the name and address of your Bank in the space above)

Please pay to Charity Aid Foundation Bank, Ac Name:
Manda Wilderness Community Trust, Ac No. 00013425,
Sort Code: 40-52-40

£.....on.....

(Please insert date above)

And thereafter every month / quarter / six months / year
(delete as appropriate) until cancelled by me in person

Name of Account to be debited.....

Account Number.....

Sort Code.....

Signature.....

Date.....

Please return the completed form to:-

Lucy Varcoe
Chairperson
Manda Wilderness Community Trust
Demelza
Easton
Hampshire
SO21 1EF

(Please note donations can also be made by internet transfer)

Friends of the MWCT Donation Form

PLEASE PRINT YOUR DETAILS IN CAPITALS

Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other:

Forenames:

Surname.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Postcode.....

Telephone no.....

Email.....

I enclose a donation of:

OR: I have completed the Bankers Order Form.

UK taxpayers only, please sign below if applicable:

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

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

Signature:

Date: