

Manda Wilderness Nkwichi Lodge

NEWSLETTER

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



Africa's Leading Responsible
Tourism Company

World Travel Awards 2009 - Nkwichi Lodge declared "Africa's Leading Responsible Tourism Company"

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

Medics take to the skies!

Residing at Nkwichi always promises new experiences and surprises. In May the lodge was fortunate to host the [Trans-Africa Humanitarian Air Expedition 2009](#) or 'TAA09' for short. The TAA09 team, consisting of a mix of adventurous Portuguese doctors and pilots, had been distributing much-needed medicine to remote corners of Southern Africa in four small aircraft, and decided, literally, to stop in at Nkwichi for a flying visit.



Nkwichi staff were delighted to meet such intrepid travellers and showed them a true Nkwichi welcome. After settling in to their sumptuous chalets the crew were treated to an enchanting spectacle of Nyanjan culture. As the sun slipped below the mirror-still waters framed by a distant Malawian horizon, the Anglican Church choir from nearby Mala village sang melodies of local life, their harmonies creating a spell-binding atmosphere. The celebrations continued long into the night and enthralling stories of the team's expeditions, shared under a star-studded sky, warmed the heart as much as the



crackling fire warmed the toes. Having delivered over three tons of medical supplies to the Mozambican Ministry of Health the TAA09 team departed the following day but not before Nkwichi staff were treated to a low-flying farewell in squadron formation which buzzed over the verdant jungle and no doubt left many a confused Vervet monkey, monitor lizard and fishing owl!

After flying through Malawi, South Africa, Zambia, Botswana and Mozambique the team were continuing on with their humanitarian mission for a further three weeks. We wished them every success with this important, ground (and sky!)-breaking work and shall remember their visit with fond memories.

Another Accolade for Nkwichi...

Nkwichi Lodge was proud to collect the award for *Africa's Leading Responsible Tourism Company* this year. [The World Travel Awards](#) at the Indaba Travel Show in Durban, South Africa, proved to be a prestigious occasion and the award was won despite stiff competition from many high-class lodges from all corners of the continent.



Devon Concar, Nkwichi Manager, was delighted to receive the trophy from a stunning Miss South Africa (pictured left with a rather befuddled-

looking Devon!) in front of a large audience of envious travel industry peers. During his time at Indaba Devon was able to share ideas and experiences with travel experts from around the world and spread the concept of excellent service combined with responsible conservation that encapsulates the ethos here at Nkwichi.

Cooking for Conservation

The Manda Wilderness Agricultural Project, MWAP for short, is currently putting forth a new sales pitch to the people of Likoma Island.

Likoma Island has a high population and, due to historical deforestation, little in the way of trees and rivers. Such a lack of trees means that firewood is scarce and results in the majority of the fuel being brought in from mainland Mozambique. This practice comes at a great cost to the beautiful lakeside ecology, not to mention the detriment to over-stretched local incomes.



MWAP, with the expertise of a visiting engineer from the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, have created and implemented an innovative, yet

simple design to reduce such reliance on firewood. This design consists of a small clay cooking stove using minimal firewood (up to 70% less than traditional methods) but heating to high temperatures in short periods of time. Clay is collected along the river beds and fashioned by hand into cooking stoves on the MWAP farm. These are then fired in a bush-built kiln until set and ready to sell.

Nkwichi Lodge currently has six of these wonderfully efficient stoves installed into an outside kitchen area in the form of a giant cooking stove with multiple hobs so reducing the massive carbon footprint that is left by transportation of gas canisters. The kitchen staff, often supplied with fresh produce



straight from MWAP, cleverly and quickly manipulate the flames to conjure up delicious fare, for all the lodge's guests. With demonstrations held on Likoma by Emmanuel and Joyce Katemetcha from MWAP, a great deal of interest was shown and a number of stoves were purchased, depleting stocks back at the farm. An exciting order was put in for another giant stove by [Project Malawi](#), a resident NGO on Likoma - this will hopefully enable them to better provide nutritious school lunches for the island's children.

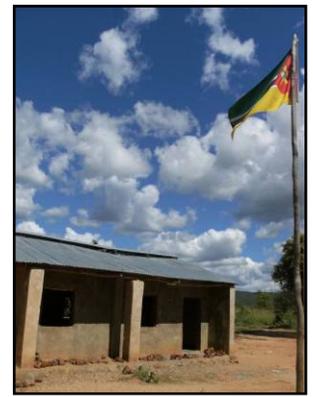
The spread of such a fuel-efficient method also bodes well for reducing deforestation on the Mozambican mainland, saving this wonderful resource for future generations to enjoy.

Community Projects - What's happening...?

Chigoma Community is delighted that work will shortly be starting on a second school block. Foundations have been successfully laid with the help of local builders and materials supplied by Manda Wilderness. The addition of three extra classrooms will accommodate many of the local children who currently learn in a grass-walled classroom.

The roof of Uchessi community school is soon to be replaced following substantial termite damage. This is a great example of the partnership between Manda Wilderness and the containing villages. Uchessi have organised a carpenter and

materials and only need assistance with covering some of these costs. Work has come on quickly in recent months and Manda Wilderness' northernmost school project (pictured right) will soon be ready for painting.



Mandambuzi School is fast nearing completion, school furniture has been sourced and it

anticipating delivery. The community have worked hard to ensure quick progress on their school project and, with help from Manda Wilderness in supplying cement, they are half-way through building a toilet block. This project will greatly improve conditions and contribute towards a better learning environment.

Nkwichi Snippets

- The rare and elusive Pel's Fishing Owl was sighted by two guests within the first five minutes of being at the lodge.
- A new Community Officer, Alexis Toye, has recently been welcomed to Manda Wilderness; with him joining the team the partnership between the local villages and the project will strengthen further.
- Nkwichi joins Ulendo collection, see it all at www.ulendo-collection.com
- Canoes make a comeback as beach furniture. Second hand canoes from surrounding villages are bought up by the Nkwichi to be shaped into furniture for the lodge.
- Bushfires are looming with the dry season settling in. Nkwichi staff have spent weeks ensuring the safety of the Lodge by putting fire breaks in place.
- Leopard sighting! On his way home from work James Chansa, guest management at Nkwichi Lodge, ended up sprinting back and spending a night at the lodge in June after spotting a leopard on the path to Mala Village.

Volunteering at Nkwichi

Lodge staff have always welcomed opportunities to improve their English language. This helps them in talking to guests, communicating with the mainly English-speaking managers, and simply in increasing their range of knowledge and interests. This summer the question was raised in the weekly managers meeting - will there be some more English teaching for us soon? The answer was fortunately in the affirmative - a teacher was due to come out from England, volunteering during her school summer holiday.

Trish Back has been to the Lodge as a volunteer twice before, and was warmly welcomed back by her old students. She says: "I love teaching here because the staff really want to learn everything I can pass on. Many of them were not able to have a full education when they were younger, but this has not



stopped them from becoming a skilled and dedicated work group."

Her background is in teaching English as a second language - for about twelve years she supported

refugee children newly arrived in the UK, from Somalia, Kosova, Afghanistan, and many other war-torn areas.

Trish has been teaching the different departments at daily fixed times, using fiction texts, conversation practice, games and role play. She has to think on her feet, and develop her own materials to suit learning needs as they arise. Since first teaching here in 2006, she can recognise the improvement in literacy and confidence among many of the long-term staff. "The guests are now able to have a much better understanding of the community and the Manda Wilderness project as a whole, through talking to the local staff and finding out about their lives in an informal way."

Although she is older than the average volunteer, she finds the life comfortable, healthy and refreshing. "It is easy to become attached to dozens of possessions as though they were essential - here you can remember what actually makes life feel interesting and enjoyable."

Background to the Manda Wilderness Project

The Manda Wilderness Project started in Northern Mozambique in 1999 with three aims:

- 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 programme 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 composting, crop processing and marketing.

Manda Wilderness AGM

Nkwichi managers and staff were happy to see the Manda Wilderness Investors again this August, who came for their AGM and also, with their family members, to enjoy life on the beach, including fierce volleyball competitions around sunset. After five days of looking into nooks and crannies, talking to groups and individuals, and poring over the paperwork, a full staff meeting was called to pass on their findings and plans for the continued success of the Lodge. The extended family finally had to break up with sad farewells at the harbour.





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, Mr. and Mrs. Meek, Toby Sawday, Bramfield PCC, Beverley Abbott, Marina Stone, Fiona McGuinness, Lee Middleton and Bruce, Debra Fletcher and the rest of Peggy's colleges at the Department of Haematology at the University of Cambridge and NHS Blood and transplant service. The work of the trust is solely reliant on guest contributions, and one-off donations of friends of Manda. Thanks to some recent donations from Leaden Hall School (which raised a very impressive \$2,000) and an extremely generous donation from Govnet Communications who gave £16,000 for school chairs and desks in March we hope to get the local community schools fully furnished within the next year. Also special thanks to Phillip Ashworth and Emma Stromberg who asked for donations to Manda Wilderness instead of wedding presents from their friends and relations.



MANDA WILDERNESS COMMUNITY TRUST

Reg Charity no (UK): 1110563

Email: MWCT@mandawilderness.org

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

BANKER'S ORDER

(for UK residents only)

To:-Bank Plc

(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: