



NAMIBIA SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

64: 1–12
January–December 2023

Dear members and friends,

As the year 2023 comes to an end, we are happy to look back on another successful and busy year.

Since our online presence was considerably strengthened with various social media pages and our blog, it was decided to publish the *Newsletter* only once a year. Social media platforms such as Twitter and LinkedIn have been included as marketing and information distribution platforms and a WhatsApp channel created.

Included in this *Newsletter* are the various reports and minutes presented at the Annual General Meeting, as well as several reports on activities hosted by or in connection with the Society.

We are delighted to welcome a new team member, Malilo Limbo, who will be assisting us with events reporting and marketing.

During the year our librarian Johannes Willibard completed a three-year Diploma in Library and Information Science. We congratulate him heartily and hope to have him as part of our team for many years to come.

Our two big excursions in June (Zambezi region) and August (Rote Kamm Tour) were once again a great success. In addition, the Bird Club, amongst other bird count and atlasing activities, held a successful atlasing weekend at Farm Donkerhuk, and the Astro Group organised stargazing evenings and the 16th Southern Star Party at Gross Barmen. The Astro Group also enjoyed a generous donation of two MEADE telescopes and accompanying equipment from Robert Johnstone. Another exciting event was the official opening of the Oryx Observatory of Clyde Foster.

Several books were published by our Kuiseb Publishers in 2023. The first was an anthology of stories about the pandemic in collaboration with the Goethe Institute. This was followed by a biographical narrative about the professional hunter Volker Grellmann, compiled by Wolfgang Brune. In July the book *Painted Stories* by Peter Breunig, about the rock paintings in the AiAiba area, finally became accessible to the public. The final new publication this year was *Katima*, which reached the market in November.

During the year we strengthened many existing relationships and were fortunate to build some new ones. Several meetings with ambassadors, stakeholders, and other like-minded people, such as the teams from the Franco-Namibian Cultural Centre, the Namibia Trade Forum, the National Library and Archives Services, the National Arts Council, and the Museums Association of Namibia, to name but a few, have resulted in many fruitful collaborations.

The Board and staff of the Namibia Scientific Society would like to thank all existing members and friends for their support as well as welcome the many new members this year. We wish you all a wonderful festive season and invite you to visit us in the new year to find out what great ideas and plans are in the pipeline.

NEWSLETTER
NAMIBIA SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY

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The opinions expressed in the articles do not necessarily represent the views of the Namibia Scientific Society.

Helmut zur Strassen

The story of Helmut's life, as told by his wife Alrun

Manfred Goldbeck

Helmut was born in Frankfurt on 17 February 1929 to Emma zur Strassen and Dr Otto zur Strassen, a zoology professor.

The family later moved to Kronberg, where he grew up with his two brothers and a sister and attended primary and secondary school.

As a teenager in war- and post-war times

In September 1944, at the tender age of 15, Helmut was drafted into the army and shortly afterwards, at the beginning of January 1945, he was sent to the front. On 10 May he was captured by American troops in the Bohemian Forest. He was released on 26 May with some of his comrades near Passau, in Lower Bavaria, on the border with Austria, and together they walked home to Kronberg.

By the end of 1945 he was able to continue his civilian life and began work as an agricultural apprentice in Bad Soden. After passing the examination with good grades in 1950, he worked as a volunteer administrator on an intensive vegetable farm in Niedererlenbach and volunteered on the 900-acre Rheinfelder farm near Gross-Gerau until the owner's son returned home from the war.

He then worked for the structural and civil engineering company, Heinrich Borsch, in Kronberg, learning the basic concepts of the masonry trade.

In all his training and employment from 1945 to 1952, Helmut excelled and was always described as a friendly, willing and helpful colleague and co-worker.

Off to South West Africa ...

When Helmut's grandfather died, he met an acquaintance of his who told him about a farmer, a Mr Forster, who lived in what was then South West Africa, now Namibia, and who was urgently looking for a caretaker for his farm 'Franken', near Kamanjab. Helmut applied and was accepted for the position. He had no idea what to expect. At the beginning of April 1953 he took passage by ship via Southampton to Cape Town. He continued by train to Kranzberg, by narrow-gauge railway to Outjo, and from there by ox-cart to the Franken farm. He stayed there for two years. From the end of August 1955 to the end

of January 1957 he would gain even more experience, standing in for the farm manager at Onguma Farm, Peter Stark.

Helmut married Hannah Falckner, who had also emigrated from Germany, on 23 February 1957, and they had four children: Gabriele, Birgit, Günter, and Andreas. The couple was granted a divorce on 1 March 1966 and Hannah returned to Germany with the children.

From 1 August 1959 to 15 January 1964 Helmut worked for Unie Vleis and was responsible for the districts of Outjo, Otjiwarongo, Omaruru, and Windhoek. At his own request, he moved to Karroo Vleisbeurs and remained there until the beginning of August 1964. He was hardworking and honest and an asset to the companies. During these years he travelled between 8,000 and 10,000 kilometres across the country, mainly to convince farmers to sell their cattle to South Africa. He also assisted in vaccinating the animals. His thirst for knowledge was boundless and as he was fascinated with the natural world, paying attention to what he saw around him, he got to know the country and its people very well during these years.

In 1961, after years of drought, Helmut lost his herd of cattle, which he had been carefully building up from the time when he worked as a farm administrator. He took up employment with Unie Vleis once again and also worked as an insurance agent for Prudential at Shield Insurance until 1969.

Tour guide – His vocation becomes his profession

Helmut's knowledge of the country and its people stood him in good stead, as did his friendliness, and people began to ask him to accompany them on trips through the country. His first trip was to the Brandberg and the 'White Lady' in 1964. This was the beginning of his love for tourism. Whoever wanted to use his services and knowledge invited him along as their tour guide, as did a theatre group of students from the German School in Lüderitz in April 1969. In the same year Helmut joined an American tour group, booked through Oryx Safaris, which was later renamed Springbok Atlas Safaris. This led to Helmut's twenty-year tenure with the company, first as a tour guide, and then later as manager and director, ending in February 1989. Afterwards he continued to offer his services as a tour guide for groups on request.

In July 1969 Helmut was recognised as an Honorary Conservationist by the Director of the SWA Conservation and Tourism Authority.

In early 1994 Helmut began to offer four tour guide training courses, in collaboration with TASA. Four days of seminar (at our home), followed by four days on tour, and the exam on the final day. Then, in August 1994, NATH was



Helmut zur Strassen (Photo: Namibia Scientific Society Archive)

launched by Ingrid Klein in cooperation with Helmut, with the support of the Namibian government. From the beginning Helmut was a lecturer, responsible for the evening courses in fauna, flora, ornithology, geology, and astronomy. At the end of 2010 Helmut ceased his work for NATH. During his time with them, he completed all the courses required for NATH: Badge 1, 2 and 3, as well as 'Train the Trainer'.

Helmut always liked to get involved in everything that concerned nature. He was a member of the World Wildlife Fund based in Johannesburg,

and later chairman of the Namibian Environment & Wildlife Society - NEWS, the Geological Society of Namibia (we participated in several very interesting camping tours), and the Botanical Society. For many years he was on the board of the Namibia Scientific Society, and we took part in many of their tours.

Helmut's many hobbies

Stamps always interested Helmut, so he was a member of the Stamp Club. At the end of the 1970s a friend encouraged him to start collecting more seriously. He gradually built up an extensive stamp collection, especially of the postal history and under-franked covers of South West Africa. When a particularly rare stamp was offered at auction in South Africa, he either bid by telephone or flew to Johannesburg or Cape Town. He won several awards and medals at exhibitions in Windhoek, Pietermaritzburg, Durban, and Cape Town. In 2010 he sold his collection to a well-known local collector.

Helmut was also very interested in geology and especially minerals. Over the years he amassed a valuable collection of Namibian minerals. When good pieces were unearthed in the mine at Tsumeb, he drove there to have a look, as he did for valuable finds in other parts of Namibia. In October 2015 we handed over this collection to a dealer in mineral specimens.

Whenever we travelled we would stop in places where there were interesting rocks. The collection grew considerably and was well-used. For his NATH lessons, the most diverse rock compositions were trimmed by hours of painstaking work into 'hand pieces', which he used as illustrative material for his students. The most impressive pieces remained unprocessed and were kept on shelves, carefully labelled with the place where they had been found.

Another hobby, which also proved useful for his NATH lessons, was his collection of molluscs, snails, and mussels. He used them to explain the difference between sea and land molluscs to prospective tour guides. An extensive assortment is carefully stored in a series of drawers, all sorted and labelled with their place of discovery.

Helmut carefully tended his succulent garden, which gave him great pleasure. In 1996, to much excitement, welwitschia seeds germinated in the rock garden, of which six plants sprouted, but they unfortunately gradually died off, mostly due to too much rain. One plant survived the weather and even flowered several times from 2006. However, the heavy rainfall in 2011 with about 1500mm and the subsequent very cold winter was too much for it to endure.

Already in his Springbok Atlas days Helmut had started to create a herbarium for his tour guide colleagues. After many years of collecting and pressing plants, a collection of folders fills a cupboard, all sorted and labelled by plant genus.

Helmut's camera was his constant companion and was used everywhere he went. He developed the photographs himself in the early years. The selection of photos was so large that he used them to illustrate his books:

- 1965 Game Trails in South West Africa / Wildspuren in SWA
- 1971 Land between two Deserts / Land zwischen zwei Wüsten
- 1972 The Fur Seals of Southern Africa
- 1973 Namib. Portrait of a Desert / Namib. Porträt einer Wüste
- 1974 Etosha Image / Vision Etoscha
- 1975 Windhoek / Windhoek
- 1987 Magic of the Multitude / Zauber der Vielfalt

Thousands of slides and negatives are stored in folders in our library, sorted by subject. At his NATH evening courses Helmut would often use slides to illustrate his explanations.

Helmut climbed the Brandberg twice with friends and like-minded people, but not as far as the Königstein. He climbed the Moltkeblick and together we walked the Gamsberg to the plateau at least three times (the last time on 1 January 2006) and also drove up three times.

Helmut and I got married at the end of January 1987 and spent many fulfilling years together.

In the early hours of 6 February 2023 Helmut lost his bitterly-fought battle against cancer. This marked the end of his varied and interesting life, in which he was always eager to explore and discover.

New Team Member: Malilo Limbo



My name is Malilo Stacey Limbo, born in the mighty Zambezi region but bred in Windhoek. I completed high school at Concordia College and graduated from the University of Science and Technology with a Bachelor's degree in Communication. I worked as a Communication intern for an international development agency called CHEMONICS INC under the USAID GHSC-PSM project before acquiring the position at the Namibia Scientific Society. I pride myself on being a 27-year-old with a genuine enthusiasm for the world of marketing, public relations, and communications.

Beyond my professional pursuits, I'm an avid writer, finding solace and expression in the written word. I also have a keen eye for photography, working and engaging on social media, and creating content. When not immersed in career-related endeavours, I relish the outdoors, where I find a sense of serenity and a chance to recharge through various outdoor activities such as hiking, swimming, and playing sports.

As the newly appointed Events and Marketing assistant of the Namibia Scientific Society, I am overly excited and eager to learn and gain in every aspect. This position will give me an opportunity to apply the knowledge and experience I have in the world of marketing. The Scientific Society promises to be a great platform to grow and engage with individuals from different walks of life and will provide me with a better perspective for an upcoming professional such as myself.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting for the 98th Business Year 2022/23

on Thursday, 7th September 2023 at 19h00
at Namibia Scientific Society, 110 Robert Mugabe, Windhoek

- Present: Forty-three member attendants, six Zoom participants (members); the register is available for inspection in the NSS office.
- Apologies: Twenty-seven members and invited guests sent their apologies. A list of apologies is available in the NSS office.
- Minutes: Ruth Moldzio

1. Welcome

Board member Frank Wittneben gave a warm welcome to all members present, especially welcoming corporate members, representatives of study and regional groups, as well as representatives of partner organizations.

He stated that notice of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) was sent to the members as stipulated in the Constitution and that more than 15 members were required for quorum, which clearly had been reached. The meeting could therefore proceed.

He asked for a moment of silence in honour of all the members who had passed on this year, especially the longstanding board and later honorary member Helmut zur Strassen.

2. Additions to the Agenda

The following are to be added under Miscellaneous:

Corporate Membership - 13.1

Honorary Membership - 13.2

3. Discussion and Approval of Minutes of AGM held on 22nd September 2022: Minutes were sent with the second *Newsletter 2022* and were also available to those attending on their way into the hall. The minutes were approved without changes, as proposed by Dieter Ludwig and seconded by Bertchen Kohrs.

4. Annual Report of the Chairperson

The Annual Report of the Chairperson was prepared by Theo Schoeman and Kai Kleingünther and presented by Frank Wittneben.

The Chairman mentioned several highlights in his report, such as constructions and renovations to the society building; member numbers; new internal



Dr Roger Swart (Photo: Berndt Schneider)

Alfred Schleicher presented the Annual Report of the **Herpetology Working Group**.

Dr Roger Swart, on behalf of Ester Gustavo, President of the **Namibian Hydrogeological Association (NHA)**, presented the Annual Report of the NHA.

All presenters were applauded and reports were noted. The Reports will be published with AGM Minutes in the *Newsletter 2023*.

6. Annual Reports by the Regional Groups

The **Tsumeb Museum** could not deliver an annual report as no quorum was reached for their AGM.

The report of the **Grootfontein Museum** was presented by Antje Rahn. She presented a PowerPoint presentation of the happenings of the last year. Great applause was received as the Grootfontein Museum had drastically increased its visitor numbers and offered numerous, very successful activities and events.

Guido Röschlau read the 2023 Annual Report of the **Lüderitz Museum**, submitted by Gisela Schmidt-Scheele.

All reports of the regional groups were acknowledged and will be published with the AGM Minutes in *Newsletter 2023*

systems; KOHA database development; publications; presentations; and excursions.

The comprehensive report will be published with the Minutes in the *Newsletter 2023*.

The report was acknowledged by the attending members and accepted by Prof. André du Pisani, seconded by Dr Robert West.

5. Annual Reports by the Study Groups

Standing in for Prof. Michael Backes, Heike Uhrich presented the Annual Report of the **Astronomy Working Group**.

Gudrun Middendorff presented the Annual Report of the **Namibia Ornithology Group (Namibia Bird Club)**.

7. Presentation, Discussion and Approval of Financial Report

The Annual Financial Report for the financial year April 2022 – March 2023 was presented by Luzane Bock from Beancounter CC, our bookkeeping company. Mrs Bock highlighted that:

- an overall increase in income has been recorded
- the highest source of income for the society remains donations
- the operational costs have decreased
- the investments of the society

recorded an interest received of over N\$850,000 for this financial year.



Luzane Bock (Photo: Berndt Schneider)

She concluded that the cashflow position was strong, positive growth had been recorded, and she was confident of the positive financial growth of the Society in the years to come.

The Annual Financial Report was accepted unchanged, proposed by Hanjo Böhme, seconded by Diana Thompson.

8. Appointment of a Bookkeeper: Frank Wittneben suggested that the Society's financial matters remain with Beancounter Financial Services CC, as reliable and good service had been received over the past year. This was approved by the members present.

9. Stipulation of the Membership Fees: The Board proposed that membership fees be increased, as the last increase was implemented in 2017. After some discussion among the members present it was decided and unanimously agreed that membership fees would be:

N\$ 400.- for Namibian members

N\$ 3500.- for corporate members

and € 25.- for foreign members

50% rebate to be offered to pensioners and students.



Ruth Moldzio (Photo: Berndt Schneider)

mented that it was a great honour for him to do so for such a reputable and well-managed Society. He listed the current board members including those who would be leaving the board and those who had been nominated to join the incoming board. Afterwards, he put it to the members that what had been presented during the meeting confirmed that all actions had been transparent and had been duly recorded and thus proposed that the current board members be relieved of their responsibilities. This was proposed by Hanjo Böhme and seconded by Dieter Ludwig.

12. Election of Board Members:

Frank Wittneben thanked Prof. André du Pisani for his kind words and informed those present that for the past year the following members had served on the board:

- Kai Kleingünther (Chairperson, Co-opted),
- Prof. Michael Backes (Vice Chairperson),
- Theo Schoeman,
- Michael Hasheela,
- Helke Mocke,
- Alfred Schleicher,
- Heike Uhrich,

10. Amendment to the Constitution: The board suggested point 6.3, which currently reads ‘... shall be given either in writing or by way of publication in two newspapers approved by the Committee’, be amended to read ‘... shall be given in writing (e.g. e-mail, messenger services) and publicly announced on various official Namibia Scientific Society online platforms’.

This was unanimously approved by all members present.

11. Approval of Actions of the Board:

Prof. André du Pisani had offered to attend to the approval of the actions of the board. He commented that it was a great honour for him to do so for such a reputable and well-managed Society. He listed the current board members including those who would be leaving the board and those who had been nominated to join the incoming board. Afterwards, he put it to the members that what had been presented during the meeting confirmed that all actions had been transparent and had been duly recorded and thus proposed that the current board members be relieved of their responsibilities. This was proposed by Hanjo Böhme and seconded by Dieter Ludwig.



Prof. André du Pisani (Photo: Berndt Schneider)

- Frank Wittneben,
- Guido Röschlau,
- Dr Roger Swart,
- Ivor Lesley Aib (Co-opted).

During the year, Ivor Lesley Aib and Kai Kleingünther had resigned as members of the board.

In line with the constitution, the two-year terms of office of Alfred Schleicher, Michael Hasheela, Michael Backes, Helke Mocke, Heike Uhrich, and Frank Wittneben had come to an end. While Helke Mocke was not available for re-election, all other members listed had been nominated and were available for re-election. A nomination for Zandré Duvenhage had been received. As the acceptance of all nominations would bring the total number of board members to the maximum of nine members (as allowed by the Constitution), Frank Wittneben suggested that no voting take place. All members present agreed.



Nadine Kohlstädt, CEO Scientific Society Swakopmund and Frank Wittneben (Photo: Berndt Schneider)



Frank Wittneben and Gunter von Schumann (Photo: Berndt Schneider)

13. Miscellaneous

13.1 The new corporate member, Swakopmund Scientific Society, represented by Nadine Kohlstädt, received their membership certificate.

13.2 Honorary Membership: Frank Wittneben stated that according to the Constitution § 4 *The Committee shall have the right at each AGM to propose Honorary Members to be elected, who shall have to be approved by the voting members present at such Meeting by simple majority ...*

The Board accordingly proposed that Honorary Membership be granted to Gunter von Schumann, for his outstanding work for the Namibia Scientific Society for over 50 years. Members applauded and unanimously accepted the proposal. Gunter von Schumann was pleasantly surprised and gratefully accepted the honorary membership certificate.

Frank Wittneben thanked all members and guests for their attendance and invited all for an informal get-together.

He announced that Board Members would decide on the positions of responsibility of the various board members during the next board meeting, and declared the AGM closed at 20h30.

Annual Report of the Namibia Scientific Society 2022/23

compiled by Chairperson Kai Kleingünther

Dear members and friends of the Namibia Scientific Society—a warm welcome to all. Thank you for attending our Annual General Meeting!

Our business year runs from 1 April to 31 March. At the end of March 2023, we completed our 98th business year.

The following report however is for the period from the previous AGM until today.

Our highlights are as follows:

- A Our members
- B Adapting to and using new technologies
- C Renovations
- D The Library
- E The Publishing Committee
- F Presentations
- G Events
- H Excursions
- I Other matters
- J Finances
- K The future

A Members

As this is a members' association, our members come first. We wholeheartedly acknowledge and thank those who loyally stayed associated with us over the last year. Once again, we can announce that we have an increase in members.

At present, we have:

Total members: 823

Corporate members: 24

Local members: 588

Pensioners: 91

Foreign members: 66

Students: 42

Honorary members: 12

We welcome our new corporate member, the Scientific Society of Swakopmund, who will receive their certificate later this evening.

B Adapting and using new Technologies

The Society has now gone green. As some of you may have noticed, the Society has installed a solar system to reduce its carbon footprint and to minimize electricity expenses. The installation has been completed and the Scientific Society has been running on solar power since 24 July 2023.

The Society continues to offer several of its presentations via a hybrid system, allowing our members to follow proceedings from the comfort of their homes or at a more convenient time. Furthermore, our social media platforms, including Facebook and YouTube, keep on growing. We currently have 4,700 active Facebook and 113 YouTube followers.

C Renovations

As the library continues to grow and expand more and more space is needed.

The search for an architectural company to assist us in expanding started last year under the professional guidance of Andy Chase, and is currently in full swing. A total of eleven Expressions of Interest were received, from which four companies were shortlisted. These underwent a stringent grading according to a system established by the building committee. The result was that Kerry McNamara Inc. was found the most suited company for this endeavour.

Furthermore, the building plans were updated, and the office space beneath the library was renovated for the new tenants, NATH.

D The Library

Our in-house library staff continues to work around the clock to process various materials including books, photos and maps. Next to scanning and cataloguing these materials on KOHA, they assist with the day-to-day running of the library, including attending to walk-in clients and collecting donations.

The adoption of the KOHA software allows for easier access to all books, photos, and maps via a digital platform. This also allows the Society to reach a wider audience. Additionally, the database was upgraded in order to accommodate the Albert Viereck Stone collection.

Armin Jagdhuber, as the dedicated head of the library, also supports the planning of tours and manages the day-to-day tasks of the team.

Annegret Enengl mainly catalogues new books, magazine articles, and photos.

Hanna Iitula oversees the classifying and cataloguing of all donated books on KOHA, and assists Armin with walk-in clients. She is currently studying



Frank Wittneben (Photo: Berndt Schneider)

toward a certificate in German A1 language at the International University of Management.

Johannes Willibard has obtained his degree as a Librarian from UNAM and assists Hanna in sorting donated books while overseeing all scanning of slides, and digitizing of books and other materials.

Over 2,200 books were donated to the library last year. We would like to thank our members for their continued support and contributions towards the library.

May I ask for a big hand of applause for our team of librarians for doing an excellent job in cataloguing all the material as well as promptly assisting with any queries coming their way! THANK YOU!

E Publishing Committee

We would also like to thank the members of the Publishing Committee for their dedicated work. This committee consists of the following members:

Heike Urich (who is also a Board Member),
Ingrid Kubisch,
Marika Reiff,
Sylvia Schlettwein,
Helen Vale,
Erika von Wietersheim,
Gunter von Schumann,
Charmaine IGamxamûs,
Chantel Visser,
and Miriam Hutterer.

They all spend many, many hours evaluating, editing and proofreading new manuscripts. Many flyers, Facebook announcements, Newsletters, Journals, and more, have been and are being processed. We would like to take this

opportunity to wholeheartedly thank Dr Robert West for his ever-kind proof-reading! His English is impeccable and this service is greatly appreciated! Applause!

F Publishing

Several new books were published:

- *Berthold Deimling* – Hans Hilpisch & Hans-Joachim Liedtke
- *Rocky Point* – Peter Bridgford
- *In Times of Pandemic* – Goethe Institute
- *Der Bart des Elefanten* – Wolfgang Brune
- *Painted Stories* – Peter Breunig

Reprints:

- *Skeleton Coast* – John Marsh
- *Duwisib* – Harald Nestroy

Other publications:

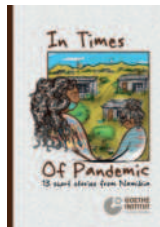
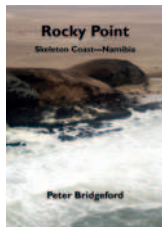
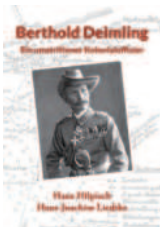
- Mitteilungen/Newsletter 2022-02: You received this at the end of last year.
- Journal 69 – 2022 (special edition for the 60th anniversary of Gobabeb)
- Kolmannskuppe Broschure

The following E-Books are now also available on Amazon:

- *Are you a Person or a Ghost?* – Andrew Niikondo
- *How the Port of Walvis Bay became Namibian* – Nils Bruzelius

The following publications are still planned for this year:

- Newsletter 2023
- Journal 70 – 2023
- *Omuntu nenge Oshiluli?* – Andrew Niikondo
- *Katima* – Sylvia Schlettwein
- *The Scattering* – Lauri Kubuitsile



New books published during the year

G Events

Behind me is the list of the events offered in 2022 and 2023 respectively:

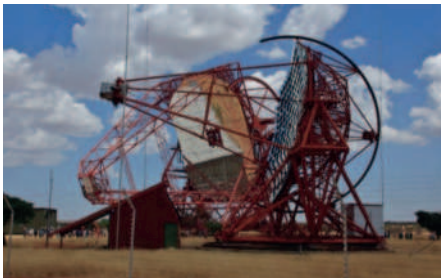
As you can see, this is a considerable number of events and just too many to mention individually.

H Excursions

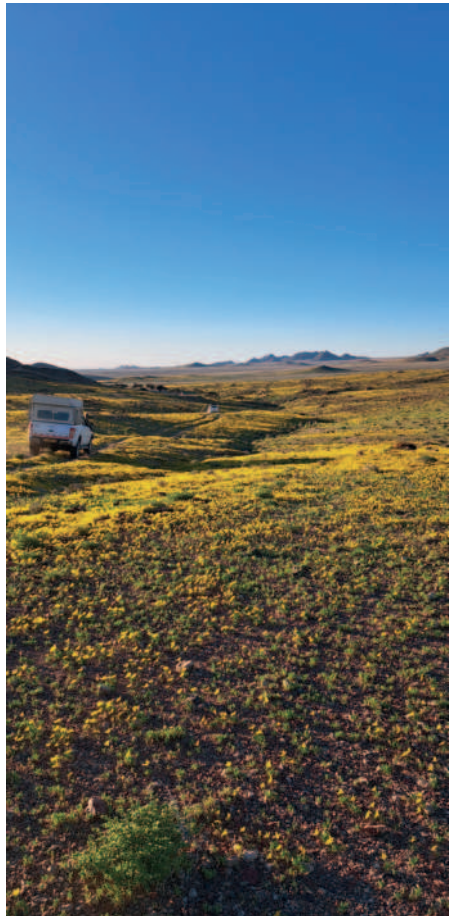
Due to their scientific nature, our excursions remain popular, and several tours and excursions were again organized.

- Namibia de Luxe:
Erkundungsreise in den Süden
Namibias
- HESS Open Day
- Namibia de Luxe: Tour to the
Zambezi Region
- Annual Southern Star Party
2023
- Star Gazing at Cuno Hoffmeister
Memorial Observatory
- Roter Kamm – ‘Saddle
Hill’ – Dicker Wilhelm –
Koichabpfanne – Spencer Bay
– Lüderitzbucht

I am happy to report that all tours and excursions were a great experience, even though the participants sometimes had to endure harsh weather conditions.



H.E.S.S. Open Day
(Photo: Ruth Moldzio)



Rote Kamm Tour
(Photo: Ruth Moldzio)

I Other matters

1. Last year the Society was asked to assist with a development program for Namibia's youth. In collaboration with MindsinAction and Exxon Mobil, over 60 girls in the Kunene Region were exposed to STEAM education modules. These modules are specifically designed to introduce children to Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics.

Due to the success of this project, a second phase was announced and is currently in full swing. This time several regions are targeted and well over 100 children will be exposed to robotics and programming.

2. In May 2025 our Society will celebrate its 100th anniversary. A Centennial Celebration Committee has been established to organize various events for this achievement. If you would like to sponsor, have ideas, or would like to assist, please contact us.

J Finances

Our Finances were in the capable hands of Ivor Aib, who unfortunately had to resign due to work commitments. The Financial Report will be presented by Luzane Bock later this evening. Once again substantial donations were received, which will enable the Namibia Scientific Society to continue functioning.

K The Future

Ruth Moldzio has effectively taken over the position of the CEO of the Society. She is doing a really great job, putting her whole weight into managing and overseeing the Society and its team.

Frieda Mukufa has resigned and is about to embark on new ventures.

A new staff member has joined the team. A hearty welcome to Malilo Limbo, who has been hired as Marketing Assistant as of 7 August 2023.

The team consists of:

Library staff: Armin Jagdhuber, Annegret Enengl, Gunter von Schumann , Hanna Iitula, and Johannes Willibard.

Office staff: Ruth Moldzio, Elfi Schneider, Malilo Limbo, and Rosalia Nangolo.

As already mentioned, the Namibia Scientific Society is now 98 years old, which was only possible due to the adaptability and foresight of the various boards. In order to face current and future challenges, strategies need to be formulated and regularly revised. As in any other successful business, this



The Board of the Namibia Scientific Society (Photo: Ruth Moldzio)

has been and will remain an ongoing process.

A big Thank You goes to my fellow board members. Thank you for all the effort and the many hours you contribute without remuneration attending to NSS matters! I believe they deserve a big hand of applause!!

Thank you also to the staff of the Society who never shy away from any task!

Last, but surely not least, a big thank you to the members and friends for assisting us, including:

- embassies,
- corporate members,
- colleagues at various NPOs and NGOs,
- foundations,
- companies,
- Pointbreak and WMS,
- other societies,
- various working groups,
- the media and press,
- book shops,
- and all the others that I have failed to mention.

Final words from the chairman:

As the chairman of the Namibia Scientific Society, I am very proud of what the Society has achieved and continues to achieve. Unfortunately, as life has it, things change, and I have had to resign as chairperson.

Please be assured of my appreciation for the time I have spent with the Society. I have thoroughly enjoyed it. Convey my appreciation and best wishes to all the worthy members of the association and the Board.

Thanks very much for listening!

Kai Kleingünther

Annual Report Grootfontein Museum

(September 2022 – August 2023)



Dear stakeholders, supporters, and friends of the Grootfontein Museum,

We are pleased to present the annual report covering the period from September 2022 to August 2023. This has been a transformative year for the Grootfontein Museum, marked by resilience, growth, and innovation.

Reopening and Visitor Engagement

Since June 2022 we have adopted a flexible approach to opening, allowing visitors to pre-book their visits by calling the museum number. While this approach allowed us to welcome many visitors, we acknowledge that some guests who spontaneously visited missed the opportunity due to the sporadic nature of our operations.

In January 2023 we commenced operations in full swing by reorganizing our interior space, introducing Wi-Fi access, and conducting a thorough spring cleaning. Our efforts were greatly bolstered by the invaluable support of the Reiter family, who have generously sponsored Ashati's salary, providing a consistent helping hand to the museum.

Enhancements and New Offerings

In March 2023 we took a bold step forward by opening a small, charming café on our premises. This addition allowed us to offer light lunches, coffee, and delectable cakes, enhancing the overall museum experience. To promote these new offerings, we intensified our advertising campaigns within the tourism sector, engaging tour operators and various tourism groups.



Antje Rahn (Photo: Berndt Schneider)

Visitor Growth and Outreach

Our aggressive marketing initiatives paid off as we welcomed larger groups, notably those organized by ATC Namibia, with approximately 20 persons per visit. This contributed to a steady increase in our visitor numbers over the past year: 38 visitors in January 2023, 55 in April, 82 in May, 132 in June, and an impressive 169 in July. Thus far in August we have received 144 visitors. We are aiming for 300-450 visitors per month.

Collaborations and Expansion

We are proud to share that our museum community has grown with an increasing number of members. Collaborative discussions are underway with various institutions to secure funding for much-needed renovations, particularly focusing on restroom facilities and upgrading to energy-efficient LED lighting to reduce our carbon footprint and minimize fire risks.

Upcoming Initiatives

In our pursuit of excellence, we are diligently working on establishing a souvenir shop within the museum premises. A big THANK YOU to the Namibian Scientific Society who have been patiently waiting to get our list for books we would like to offer for sale in the Souvenir shop.

Negotiations for an extended rental agreement with the Heritage Council are in progress. The Grootfontein Show will see us showcasing the new Café 'Vergissmeinnicht' (Forget me not) at the show grounds, further promoting our offerings and the museum itself.

Educational Outreach and Branding

We are excited to play a pivotal role in Heritage Week, where we anticipate hosting around 150 to 200 school pupils for educational tours from the Grootfontein surrounds. Our efforts in branding and outreach continue with the creation of a new museum logo, website upgrades, and active engagement on social media platforms. We encourage patrons to share their experiences and reviews on platforms such as Google. Thus far our reviews have been positive and strong engagement comes from the Grootfontein community, who are all very devoted and enthusiastic to see the Grootfontein Museum thrive.

Operational Enhancements

During this period we made strategic adjustments to our operations, including revised opening hours and updated admission rates. We are aware of the need for improved signage at the entrance, including the reinstallation of historical road signs that were removed during road construction. Ensuring visitor and staff safety remains paramount, and we are actively addressing entrance gate and road fence upgrades for this purpose. We are seeking funding and are hoping to receive these before the end of the year.

Past events and happenings: We had a few breakfasts at the museum, offering local produce and entertaining approximately 15 to 20 people at a time. At the Easter Market we had approximately 150 to 180 visitors purchasing regional products from our stalls. Fifty-five children participated in the Easter egg hunt.

We had eight Berge & Meer groups at the Museum from ATC Namibia. A further ten are booked during the next few months. We offered a Champagne Breakfast, with 25 participants. We had a Sip & Paint event at the Museum on Saturday 5 August with 40 participants. We also hosted the Confirmation 'Golden Anniversary' for the German Evangelische Kirche. We are also catering more frequently for Light Lunches for pre-booked groups.



We now sell cakes daily and will have a Mimosa Fruit Salad Day on 1 September for Spring Day. For Heritage Week we will offer 200 pupils from different schools in Grootfontein an opportunity to visit the museum. Planned is a conference

of the Heritage Council Namibia for 23 September. We also have 45 students of the Maria Bronn School visiting us towards the end of September.

We are thinking about planning a Gala Dinner in November for the 40th Anniversary of the Grootfontein Museum. Details will follow shortly.

The Grootfontein Museum's aim is to put Grootfontein as a town, its community, and the museum and neighbouring municipal ground back on the map and cater for a huge variety of visitors, local and foreign.

We are still in need of funding for flyers and posters to distribute to lodges and hotels. We are also in need of a new entrance gate, new signage, and a fence. Any recommendations are welcome.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our patrons, sponsors, and supporters who have played a crucial role in our journey. The Grootfontein Museum's growth and success would not have been possible without your unwavering commitment. As we move forward we remain dedicated to preserving our heritage, providing enriching experiences, and making positive contributions to the community.

Sincerely,
Antje Rahn, Manager, Grootfontein Museum

Tsumeb Museum

Message for 2023 from Anneliese Bruns

“On July 8th, we had a meeting. Since there were only five of us, we did not hold a general meeting. We discussed the renovation of the museum, repairing, painting and anything else needed to be done.

Visitor numbers are up a bit and we think it will get better.

We appreciate any help and thank everyone for it.

Thanks also to the Namibia Scientific Society for the books.”

Annual Report Lüderitz Museum

by *Gisela Schmidt-Scheele*



Guido Röschlau (Photo: Berndt Schneider)

The new year carried on with disappointments – NO TOURISTS.

We had a lot of repairs to be seen to. The main circuit-breaker tripped often. We requested the town council's electrician to come and check. Also, security to keep an eye on the property. The electrician replaced some of the lights and checked the plug bases but still found no fault. We asked a private electrician to check again, as the problem had not been solved. Some switches and plugs have been replaced, also the circuit-breaker on the mains board. Finally, everything

was in working condition again. The costs were covered by the museum.

Later, we had to call in a plumber, seeing that taps started leaking. We hope that no further repairs will have to be done.

Due to all these repairs and no income, we closed the year with a loss.

Our hope is that the new year will bring us passenger ships again, which we are expecting from January 2023.

I wish to thank the Scientific Society and the ladies for their help and advice.

Annual Report Astronomy Working Group

by Prof. Michael Backes

The year 2022/2023 was a successful year for the Astronomy Working Group. Altogether 13 public events were organized; and also, in terms of public outreach, continued success can be reported.

Star Gazing/Astronomical Events

Several fully-booked star-gazing evenings were organized at the Cuno Hoffmeister Memorial Observatory (CHMO) of NSS Honorary Member Sonja Itting-Enke, just south of Windhoek, in 2022 and 2023. These were led by Lutz von Dewitz.

24/09/2022	Star gazing (Cuno Hoffmeister Memorial Observatory)
23/06/2023	Star gazing (Cuno Hoffmeister Memorial Observatory)
24/06/2023	Star gazing (Cuno Hoffmeister Memorial Observatory)

Public Lectures

During the year we were able to offer eight different presentations, including several shows in the UNAM/AMT mobile planetarium. For the event with Prof. Heino Falcke the hall of the Windhoek Afrikaanse Privaatskool was utilized, and more than 200 tickets were sold.

10–11/02/2023	The Universe at the Namibia Scientific Society (planetarium)
24/02/2023	Prof. Heino Falcke: The first image of a Black Hole
25/02/2023	VIP event with Prof. Heino Falcke
23/05/2023	Clyde Foster: The planets up close and personal
19/06/2023	Prof. Heino Falcke: US\$25-million facility in Namibia will be Africa's first millimetre-range radio telescope
23–24/08/2023	The Universe at the Namibia Scientific Society (planetarium)

Excursions

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the High Energy Stereoscopic System (H.E.S.S.) close to the Gamsberg, an Open Day was organized. More than 220 tickets were booked for the trip to H.E.S.S.

The 16th Southern Star Party was organized from 16 to 18 June 2023 at Gross Barmen. With about 60 participants, this was again a success. Further, this was the first occasion that showcased the UNAM/Africa Millimetre Telescope planetarium to the public.

23/10/2022	H.E.S.S. Open day excursion (H.E.S.S. telescopes)
16–18/06/2023	16th Southern star party (Gross Barmen)

Cuno Hoffmeister Memorial Observatory

We are truly grateful for the donation of astronomical equipment by Rob Johnstone, including:

- 14" Meade LX200 GPS telescope with tripod, mount, field de-rotator, and accessories.
- 12" Meade LX200 GPS telescope with tripod, mount, and accessories.
- 2 Celestron Sky Scouts.
- Boxes of star chart disks and solar eclipse shades.

Outreach

The website (www.astronwg.wordpress.com) as well as the Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/astro.nwg>) of the astronomy section have been regularly contacted. To date, 5,706 visitors have seen the website (compared to 5,236 last year; +9%). The Facebook page has 1,499 regular followers (compared to 1,422 a year ago; +5%) and is especially useful for promoting events. Certain contributions have an active reach of more than 1,600 visitors.

Further, many thanks go to Wolfgang Paech and Franz Hofmann, Team Chamäleon - Onjala & Rooisand Observatory for providing the Astro news, and Irene Bader for the translation into English, so that a monthly Astro-newsletter can be distributed via email and is regularly highly commended by the recipients.

Clear skies!

Annual Report Reptiles and Amphibians Working Group

by Alfred Schleicher



Alfred Schleicher (Photo: Berndt Schneider)

As in previous years, the annual report of the herpetological working group for reptiles and amphibians covers the events of the second half of last year (2022) and the first half of this year (2023).

Again, the report this year is brief. The annual Reptile Day, last held before the Corona pandemic, could not even take place in the past rainy period due to personnel re-orientation at the Farm Hohewarte.

In the past years, we also had requests from interested parties to do the reptile day. However, during the Corona pandemic these requests were non-existent!

For the coming rainy season, a reptile day in the usual form should be possible again.

The research project around the tortoise species of Namibia continues unabated. Likewise, the cooperation with corresponding further projects in South Africa.

During my stay in Germany and Switzerland this year I was again able to give lectures on Namibia and reptiles.

As usual, I would like to take the opportunity to express my special thanks to the NSS staff for the good and always enjoyable cooperation.

I would also like to thank the members of the Namibia Scientific Society for their interest in Namibia's reptiles and amphibians.

Annual Report Namibian Hydrogeological Association

by Ester Gustavo

This report captures activities that the Namibian Hydrogeological Association (NHA) undertook during the period 2022–2023.

The council met several times during this period (inclusive of virtual and face to face meetings), the meetings were well attended, and a quorum was always achieved.

The activities undertaken are as follows:



1. The NHA AGM

- The AGM was held on 11 March 2023.
- The meeting was held both virtually and face to face, at the Kubata Conference Hall.
- At the AGM the new council was elected via nominations by fellow members. In line with the NHA succession plan and capacity building, the NHA has re-introduced the shadow council, aiming at a smoother annual transition.
- The council for 2023 comprises:
 - Ester Gustavo (President)
 - Dr Josefina Hamutoko (Vice President)
 - Josephine Amushila (Secretary)
 - Bertram Swartz (Treasurer)
 - Mike Ndongo (ordinary member)
 - The shadow council for 2023 comprises:
 - Gettie Shiinda (Shadow President)
 - Anna David (Shadow Vice President)
 - Reginald Joseph (Shadow Secretary)
 - Abednego Shinana (Shadow Treasurer)
 - Pierre Botha (Shadow ordinary member)

At the end of 2022 the NHA had 31 paid-up members, a welcome increase from the meagre number of 20 in the previous year.

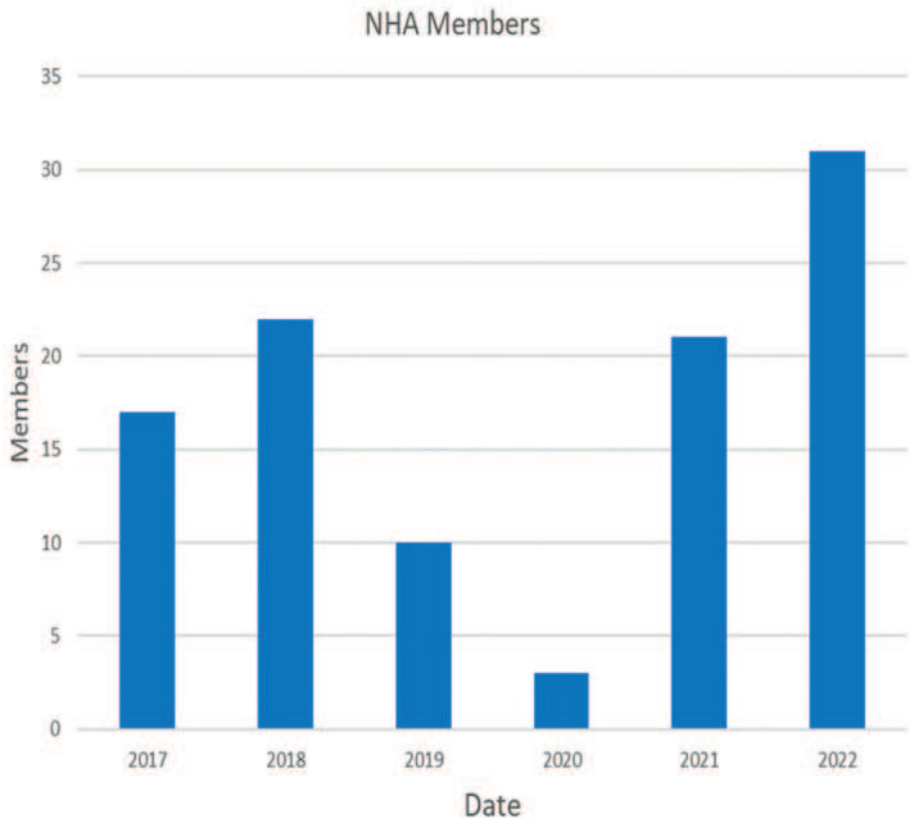


Figure 1: NHA Membership over the years

2. Women in Geoscience Night of Acknowledgement

Ada Lovelace day is a day to celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). In October 2022 the NHA joined the international community in celebrating this day by hosting a night of acknowledgment for the women in Geoscience in Namibia. The event had 50 women in attendance. The event was refreshing, inspiring, and provided a networking platform for the those present. The event was jointly sponsored by NAMDEB, Debmarine, Osino Gold Exploration and Mining, Pioneer Oil and Gas, SLR Environmental Consulting (Namibia), and the Nondo, Akwenye and Prada Families.



Figure 2: Group Photo of the Women in Geoscience Dinner, 2022

A second highlight of the evening was the launch of the LEGACY Magazine, a collection of biographies of women in Geoscience Namibia. The magazine features 45 women and also serves as a networking tool, promoting collaboration and sorority.



Figure 3: Women in Geoscience enjoying a read of the NHA Publication - Legacy Magazine

3. World Water Day 2023

For this year's World Water Day, celebrated on 22 March 2023, the NHA teamed up with the Ae-Gams Sports Club, and joined Mina Guli in a World Water Run. The event was hosted by the Elisenheim Lifestyle centre. Several NHA members and members of the public joined the walk.



Figure 4: NHA members that took part in the Hydrogeological World Water Run/Walk (group photo)

4. Career Fair

The Every Nation Church Dorado, as part of building socially responsible churches, held a career fair. The NHA was happy to showcase and introduce the world of Hydrogeology to high school learners from schools across Windhoek.



Figure 5: NHA's Hydrogeology Stand at the Career Fair, ENC

5. Khomas Regional Science Fair

The Khomas Regional Directorate of Education hosted a Regional Science Fair Competition from 31 July to 3 August 2023. The Directorate reached out to the NHA to avail subject experts as adjudicators at the Science Fair. The NHA in collaboration with SLR Environmental Consulting (Namibia) were happy to

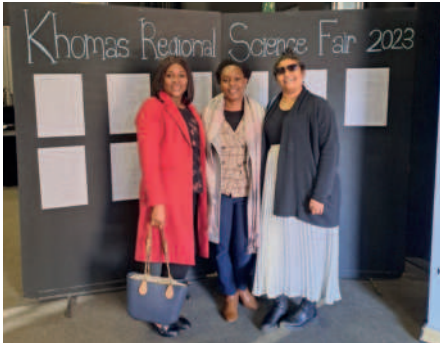


Figure 6: Hydrogeologist and Environmental Management Expert judges at the Khomas Regional Science Fair, 2023

oblige and send judges to assist at the Science Fair.

6. FORECAST

6.1 Conferences

6.1.1 International Association for Hydrogeologists

Members of the NHA will be taking part in the International Association for Hydrogeologists Congress, in mid-September 2023. This is an opportunity to meet with global hydrogeological experts; and as per

our objective to further the study of Hydrogeology and Hydrology, NHA has fully funded a student and professional to present their work at the Congress.

6.1.2 CAG 29

The 29th major bi-annual Geology Conference will be taking place in Namibia. Twenty-eight of these conferences have been held previously, 18 in Europe and 10 in Africa. The 29th will be the first in Southern Africa and in Namibia. The NHA has supported CAG 29 by being part of the Local Organizing Committee (LOC). In addition, a short half-day workshop for women in Geoscience will be hosted by the NHA, and the women will be addressing the topic: Why Women can't have it all.

6.2 Managed Aquifer Recharge Seminar

A one-day seminar will be held by the GCS in collaboration with the NHA. The seminar will tackle to subject of managed aquifer recharge and the associated technologies.

7. Conclusion

These activities have sparked interest in many people, and this has culminated in the growth of the number of paid-up members of the association. This is something to be grateful for, as it is a reflection that we are succeeding at promoting the study and science of hydrogeology and hydrology.

Your truly

Ester Gustavo / President of the NHA

Annual Report Namibia Bird Club

by Gudrun Middendorff

Good evening members, ladies and gentlemen,

A hearty welcome to our 37th Annual General Meeting on 2 March 2023 here at the Namibia Scientific Society. February has been a rather dry and hot month, different from most years, where it has been the rainy month. A few days ago a welcome rain shower cooled off the heat wave we had been experiencing for three weeks. We are hoping for more rain as our main storage dams had little to no intake.

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Namibia Bird Club a big outing was planned for the first weekend in May at the Namib Naukluft Lodge. The soft adventure camp was booked and catering was taken care of by the staff of the lodge. On the first day a surprise visit was organised to Tsondap valley. This was a very special outing as the valley is closed to the public. The ancient camelthorn trees, moringa trees, the dunes, and plentiful game made this outing unforgettable. The second day was used for atlasing outings further afield and some found the illusive black-eared sparrow-larks.

During 2022 a number of events were organised. Ten morning walks were conducted, alternating between Avis Dam on the eastern side of Windhoek and Gammams Water Care Works in the western suburbs. Outings on the fourth Sunday of the month went to Moonraker, NARREC, Farm Heimat, Bobbejaan Dam behind the Otjihavera Mountains, farm Smalhoek, farm Drie Krone, and Ombo Rest Camp outside Okahandja. At Ombo, participants stayed for lunch and enjoyed the hospitality. Long weekends away took members to the Brandberg White Lady Lodge, Kaliombo between Wilhemstal and Karibib, and farm Hexenkessel east of Rehoboth. The summer and winter wetland counts were held in and around Windhoek with counting at Avis Dam, Gammams and Goreangab, Monte Christo farm, Heja Lodge, and Otjivero dam at Omitara.

I want to thank all participants who spent so much time and fuel for the common goal of collecting valuable data.

The Biomarket coffee shop is a good way to meet our people who do not come to our outings. Often we get asked a lot of questions and many just want to tell their story about the birds they encounter in their own garden. Our information table has attracted interested people and some of them have signed up to become members. By hosting the coffee shop this Saturday the bird club gets exposure to the general public.

A new year has started and we would like all hobby photographers to submit their photos for our next calendar in 2024. You are welcome to send up to five photographs in low resolution and do not forget to add the location. Once your



Gudrun Middendorff with the Namibia Bird Club Calendar 2024 (Photo: Berndt Schneider)

photo has been chosen you will be asked to resubmit in high resolution. The educational value of the calendar is not to be underestimated.

A series of radio interviews was conducted on the German radio service to tell our listeners about the many fascinating facts regarding our feathered friends. The theme for the different sections was chosen randomly, mostly tagging on to what happened on the ground such as wetland count talks featuring water birds, et cetera.

The City of Windhoek has opened a museum on Robert Mugabe Avenue, aiming to present the history and reflect the identity of the city. One gallery concentrates on the environment, showcasing birdlife and plant life and water management. We have been contacted to provide recommendations and support. Some specimens have been included in the display cabinet.

Education is the best way to protect our environment and our rehab centres are doing just that. We believe in supporting these entities by way of an annual donation. Liz Komen – NARREC Rehabilitation Station at Brakwater, Dr Sandra Dantu – Penguin Rescue Swakopmund, and Dr Jessica Kemper – Penguin Rescue Lüderitz will once again receive their donations.

Do you enjoy birding? Do you like being out in nature and seeing our beautiful countryside? How do you plough back or how do you contribute in exchange for the satisfaction you get from birding? The best way is to become a Citizen Scientist. We have the knowledge to identify birds; some clever people have created a free app to Atlas – what is keeping you from actively participating? By making pentad lists wherever you go and uploading and submitting your data you contribute to the Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2. The main aim is to map the distribution and abundance of species throughout the southern part of Africa. The data collected will be used to determine the conservation status of species, amongst others. If we know what we have, only then can we make proper environmental assessments.

I would like to extend our good wishes to Gertrud Piek, our previous treasurer, hoping for a speedy recovery. Lastly, I would like to thank my committee for the hard work, time and effort. A big thank you goes to you - our members - for making this bird club a success. The Namibia Scientific Society allows us to use this venue free of charge – thank you.

Some of the Events in 2023



Prof. Heino Falcke talks about the first photo of a black hole



65th birthday of the Windhoek Buchhandlung



Dr Getzin and Dr Jürgens talk about fairy circles

January

February

March



Visit of the African Milimeter Telescope (AMT) mobile planetarium at the Namibia Scientific Society (Photo: Barbara Kerkhof)



Radio interview with Wolfgang Brune and Jasko Rust from Hitradio Namibia on the occasion of the book launch of *Der Bart des Elefanten*



In Times of Pandemic Launch (Photo: Helen Vale)



Discussion with the KAS Germany Scholars' Delegation

Launch of phase 2 on STEAM Education in rural areas of Namibia



Prof. C. Mayer-Bonde gives a talk on *Tourism and Resilience: How tourism destinations can position themselves resiliently for upcoming crises*



The 16th Southern Star Party in Groß Barmen

April

May

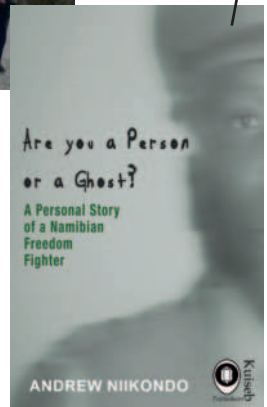
June



Participants of the Zambesi Tour



Presentation on *20 years of the CDC in Namibia*



The E-Book of *Are you a Person or a Ghost?* available on Amazon

Events

*Partnerships
of the Future:
Forgoing
US-Southern
Africa
STEM and
Educational
Networks*



Rote Kamm
Tour



New team
member

National Heritage
Week in the FNCC



Painted Stories launch



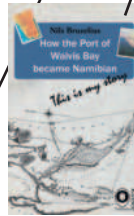
July

August

September



Meeting of
the Namibia
Trade Forum to
promote books



Some new
e-books are
available on
Amazon



The Universe in our Hall, some pupils visiting us



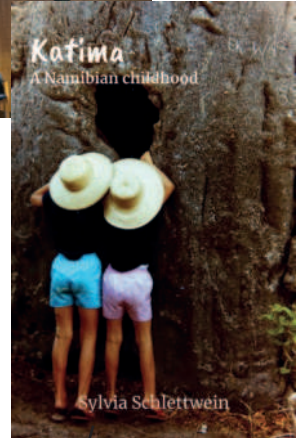
MAN capacity building workshop



Graduation Ceremony
Johannes Willibard



Space Talk about Cosmic
Rays with Mathieu de
Naurois at the FNCC



Katima
by Sylvia
Schlettwein was
successfully
launched

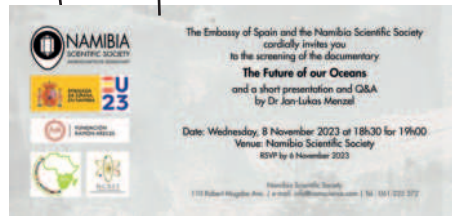
October

November

December



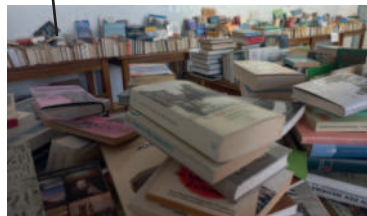
World Space Week



Science Week 2023: Screening of the
documentary *The Future of our Oceans*



"Omusimabekwa
John" Exhibition
at the National
Art Gallery of
Namibia



Jumble Sale/Flea Market

Namibia Scientific Society Tour Wonderful Zambezi: 2–12 June 2023

Ellen Gudde

Fourteen active and jolly pensioners (13 ladies and one gentleman) had the great privilege of joining the Tour Wonderful Zambezi presented by the Namibia Scientific Society in collaboration with Sense of Africa. Tour leader, Armin Jagdhuber, confidently, and with much humour, took tight control, though he showed some sympathy when early morning departure times were considered. The always helpful assistant, Jose Loch, was a great support.

The tour introduced participants to the history and culture of the people of the Zambezi region; visited the age-old, and still active, mission stations; allowed participants to understand more about the border or bush conflict and more recent history and politics. We also experienced the hospitality of Namibians and their accommodation establishments. The company on the bus provided for interesting discussions and mirth; so did Margret's unlimited supply of cookies, biltong, and other goodies that were distributed by other participants.

The tour overnighted at well-established lodges, known for their Namibian hospitality:

- Roy's Rest Camp, with its quirky surroundings and bush chalets, the sounds of the bush, very 'gemütlich' and with an obligatory braai;
- Divava Okavango Resort and Spa (3 nights), along the Kavango River; idyllic and romantic, with a sundowner river cruise and a walk on the white sands of Popa Falls; good food, even though the lunches seemed somewhat scanty;
- White Sands, for lunch – the best pizza in the region – and to see the Popa Falls from their better side;
- Namushasha River Lodge Gondwana Collection (2 nights), with its rustic chalets along the water's edge of the Kwando River, and excellent food;
- Zambezi Mubala Camp Gondwana Collection (2 nights), – an exquisite 'younger' Gondwana lodge, modern in design, along the mighty Zambezi with access by boat; and very good food;
- Nunda Lodge, for lunch on a beautiful stoep, complements of Namibia Scientific Society;
- Hakusembe River Lodge Gondwana Collection (1 night), along the Okavango River with a beautiful 'garden' atmosphere; a wonderful buffet dinner and breakfast; and finally
- Ghaub Lodge, in the Otavi Mountain Region, 'heavy' with Rhenish mission station history, and colonial and WW1 history, and now a guest farm with beautiful 'old' farmhouse-style rooms.



Lodges along the river offered relaxing sunrise or sundowner cruises, showing off the prolific birdlife, hippopotamus, crocodiles, and otters, as well as rock and water monitors. An early morning champagne cruise on the Okavango River provided much amusement when Angolan time (daylight saving) messed with Usch's and Undine's cell phone alarm clocks – Undine, shocked by her own lateness, arrived with all her luggage for the boat cruise, and Usch missed the early morning boat – to be transported by special delivery, compliments of Hakusembe Lodge, to the group already on the river.

We travelled along interesting roads with constantly changing vegetation and 'new' trees for Luise to identify. It was easy to identify the diagnostic silver cluster-leaf (*Terminalia sericea*) and the Kalahari omupanda (*Lonchocarpus nelsii*) on the Omitara to Otjinene road. From Otjinene to Grootfontein and beyond the palms (*Hyphaene petersiana*) deposited and 'planted' on old elephant routes are an interesting characteristic of the landscape. It did not take long for the group to recognize the magnificent and iconic baobabs (*Adansonia digitata*) scattered here and there along the trip. Along the 'Caprivi strip' we encountered the *Burkea*–*Combretum* woodland, with *Terminalia sericea*, *kiaat* (*Pterocarpus angolensis*) with its beautiful fruit pods shimmering in the sunlight, the impressive mangettis (*Schinziophyton rautanenii*) and ushivi trees (*Guibourtia coleosperma*), also known as 'false mopane', which I feel is a very unfortunate name! How can a tree be false? Of course, this refers to the similar look of the leaves to mopane leaves. Pod and fruit-bearing trees were easily identifiable at this time of the year. In Kavango East the rain-tree (*Lonchocarpus capassa*); the *Albizia harveyi* in full brown pods; and even



Acacia nigrescens, which is easily recognized by the knobs on the stem, and *Acacia erioloba*, easily recognized by its earlobe pods, were easy ‘finds’. After long deliberations Luise identified a beautiful tree at the terrace of Divundu Lodge as the mobola plum (*Parinari curatellifolia*) – its berries not yet ripe. We learnt about the ‘ombe’ – bird plum (*Berchemia discolor*) with its characteristic herringbone structure on the leaf, and saw the fruit for sale at the Katima Mulilo market. The visit to the same market also introduced us to the many plants (and species of fish) the locals use, for example, the bulbs of the water lily. Along the waters we saw the majestic jackalberries (*Diospyros mespiliformis*). Other characteristic trees were the purple-pod *Terminalia prunioides*; and various fig tree species and Combretum species. A most striking tree in the landscape of the Zambezi remains the *Burkea africana*, recognized by its striking yellow autumn foliage and its ‘Pierneef’like (well-known SA artist) characteristic growth. The A35 (Kongola to Katima Mulilo) took us past many rural homesteads, very basic, very neat and clean, free from litter, with sturdy fencing and houses, and only a few visible she-beens! Life in remote rural Namibia is ‘poor’ but seems to be free from the clutter of ‘civilization’.

We crossed four mighty rivers: the Kavango (Okavango at Rundu) (with a lower water level than usual for this time of the year), the Kwando, the Zambezi,

and for those who participated in the optional extra excursion to the Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, the Chobe River with its spectacular wetlands.

The visit to three national parks reminded us of the great privilege we have in being able to experience nature in such pure form. We saw black-faced impala, zebra, kudu, blue wildebeest, lechwe, tsessebe, roan and sable antelope, red hartebeest, elephant, crocodile, slender mongoose, vervet monkey (Grünmeerkatze), hippopotamus, and a great number of warthogs – adults and piglets – and 28 bird species in the very short time.

Sadly, the Mahango Core Area shows severe signs of drought, as the area did not get much rain during the season. The following day our safari experience was continued with an open-vehicle game drive to the Bwabwatha Core Area. We admired the many very young kudu calves and wondered whether the calving season had changed. Added to our already impressive mammal list from the Mahango Core Area were bushbuck, tree squirrel and banded mongoose. A visit to the horseshoe bend in the Kwando River in the Mudumu Park was another spectacular safari experience – it started with the transfer by boat across the Kwando River and then a drive in game viewing vehicles. We could add to our already impressive mammal list the following: hyena, buffalo, giraffe, and chacma baboon. We learnt about the practice of early vegetation burning to safeguard the grazing, animals, and people from wildfires. In fact, along the entire route, we could witness a number of burning sites, the smoke of which resulted in spectacular sunsets. Special sightings of birds included the many different species associated with the proximity of water – the different species of herons and egrets (striated heron, squacco heron, black-crowned night-heron, grey heron, purple heron, goliath heron, cattle egret, little egret, intermediate egret, western great egret); the stork species (saddle-billed stork, marabou stork, yellow-billed stork, African openbill); great flocks of white-faced whistling duck; African jacana; African skimmer; the pied and malachite kingfisher; Senegal coucal; white-fronted bee-eaters at their nesting sites; lapwings (blacksmith lapwing and white-crowned lapwing); and, of course, the African fish eagle.

We saw and experienced history in the north of Namibia!

A visit to the recently re-opened museum at Grootfontein with interesting exhibits on Grootfontein's history and her people was a welcome stop after the long drive from Windhoek. We were introduced to the enthusiastic manager, Antje Rahn, who also supports the Khoe Living Museum near Divundo. Coffee and cake were offered – and it was delicious!

Armin Jagdhuber introduced us to the history of the Roman Catholic mission stations in the north, and their incredibly difficult beginnings. One cannot but admire the perseverance of the early missionaries in the 1800s. We visited one of the mission stations – Nyangana – a mission station with a clinic. Sadly, the church and other buildings were not open to visitors; however, we could



admire the old marula trees (*Sclerocarya birrea*), obviously planted over 100 years ago, and a strangler fig (*Ficus burkei*) smothering a palm.

From the Divava Okavango Resort and Spa we visited another mission station, Andara, which houses a school for 1200 children, of whom 420 live in the hostel. Vegetables are planted, and animals are kept to supply food to the hostel children. We witnessed youngsters cutting aloe leaves to use to ease the irritation caused by the outbreak of a skin condition amongst the pupils. The knowledge of the soothing and healing characteristics of plants is still there.

The visit to the cemetery at Andara was also most interesting. As the cemetery is not that easy to locate, a pupil showed us the way. The cemetery extends over a vast woodland area and has the graves of the many early pioneers, missionaries, children of Dorslandtrekkers, as well as, more recently, of important local people. The cemetery seems to be in regular use. By now everybody on the bus was able to recognize a baobab – which is also a landmark of the cemetery.

We marvelled at the early technology used by the missionaries to create electricity, channeling the flow of water of the river to drive a huge wooden water wheel. The system is not in use at present. We saw the house which was occupied by Maria Fish, a well-known doctor and ethnologist of the north. Her

books on the Mbukushu are most informative. Apparently, she (now 96 years old) is working on her last book – her life story!

After the Mahango Core Area trip the bus needed urgent repair – an amazing feat was performed sourcing spare parts from Windhoek, 900 km away, and fixing the problem in just one afternoon and a night. The journey could continue uninterrupted!

The Bwabwatha National Park area and Buffalo Core Area featured prominently in the South African bush war, before independence, and much damage was inflicted during those times on wildlife and the environment, together with the obvious displacement of the people. Evidence of occupation, war, graves and cemeteries, and crumbling military infrastructure can be seen everywhere. We wondered about the unnamed graves marked only with circled crosses – most probably the cross represents Christianity and the circle represents eternity. I could not but feel grateful to experience that peace had come to the area; the wildlife has returned and does not fear man and cars, which also suggests that poaching seems to be well under control.

We learned about the many and intriguing agreements and treaties which created the borders of Namibia in the previous century, including the somewhat strange appendage, the ‘Caprivi Strip’, without any consideration of the consequences for the local populations.

A visit to the Khoe Living Museum 15 km outside of Divundu gave a short, basic, but interesting introduction to the San culture and beliefs. We were amazed to learn that women are acknowledged for doing 90 per cent of the work! Another living museum of interest near Namushasha River Lodge was visited. The vibrant and energetic culture of the Mafwe with their friendly disposition, sturdy houses, interesting musical instruments, weapons, and hunting implements was most insightful.



On the road we learnt more about the secessionist movement just after independence, its consequences and outcome.

Those who opted for the day excursion to Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe left at six in the morning via a shuttle, through eight border posts to the impressive and awe-inspiring Victoria Falls; the water level of the Zambezi was high and the haze over the falls very dense and wet from viewpoint 5; however, it was a wonderful experience and sight. Trumpeter hornbill and chacma baboon were also sighted

at the Falls. Travelling to and from the Falls took six hours plus the border crossings; only the ones in the know are able to pass through quickly! Lunch was had at the Victoria Falls Safari Lodge – an impressive lodge with the most magnificent view over the vast bushveld, a wonderful waterhole, and vultures feeding every day at 13:00 on the scraps from the kitchen. The vultures know this – white-headed vulture, white-backed vulture, and marabu sit in the trees and wait. We saw elephant, sable, impala, zebra and waterbuck on the drive through the Chobe National Park in Botswana.

The harmony of the tour was marred by an incident where a credit card disappeared in the ATM – within minutes criminals had withdrawn €1000 from the account. This serves as a stark reminder to all visitors and tourists to be always vigilant and alert. A visit to the crowded police station followed and the incident was solved amicably.

Our wonderful tour was rounded off with a visit to Ghaub, the guest farm in the Otavi Mountains Region. It is a place with ample water, and with a rich history of the Rhenish missionaries, colonial occupation, and the end of WW1. Sadly, not all places of interest could be visited due to the limited time and difficult access. A braai rounded off a successful, interesting, and fun-filled tour.

And the bus took us full circle and gave its last gasp at the final parking lot in Windhoek – to be picked up by a mechanic!

The Tour of extremes

Ruth Moldzio

This tour had been carefully crafted by the Namibia Scientific Society to offer participants a mixture of ‘just recently opened sites’ in the Tsau!Khaeb park with areas not included in any of the previous tours. Three different concession areas were involved to ensure the best possible route. A bonus was the exceptionally good winter rains in the south this year, which promised a visual treat, and the excitement and suspense in the week leading up to the tour was palpable.

At the briefing a couple of days before the tour it became apparent that a mixture of ‘newbies’ and well-experienced ‘Dünenhasen’ with a vast and greatly differentiated knowledge of the area, would form a great group of people.

The official start of the tour was scheduled for the 25th of August at the rustic camp ‘Treckpoort’ on Farm Wittpütz, but several participants opted to begin their adventure a day or two earlier. This turned out to be a very wise decision, as the floral splendour surrounding Farm Wittpütz was extraordinary, leading to many pitstops and, of course, the first photos to be taken. The little river and hill just behind the campsite made every photographer’s heart beat faster, as the usually dry and dull-looking area was transformed into a zone of the brightest colours. The hairy caterpillars were having a feast and every plant was trying to outshine its neighbour and prepare for growth and the spreading of seeds.

Writing about extremes, I should now mention that arrival at Camp Treckpoort, approximately 40km from Rosh Pinah, was in rainy conditions, and the





first night would test the sleeping bags on their promise to keep the user warm at zero degrees outside temperature.

As was to be expected, we were greeted by the Desert Magic team in a fantastic holiday mood and, of course, were provided with a fantastic dinner. At the short evening meeting, all participants introduced themselves and the tour was officially launched.

Under the guidance of Bernd Römer, guide and concession holder of our first concession area, the tour kicked off the next day. Frank Wittneben, an agricultural expert as well as tour guide specialized in the flora and fauna of the desert, gave a short presentation on the general conditions of the area we would be travelling through over the next few days, as well as some dos and don'ts and general advice. The first stop was the small miners' town of Rosh Pinah, where all the cars were refuelled and a short tour was given. The town was vibrating with sporting competitions and celebrations for the Heroes' Day public holiday, while a dust cloud whirled up by the south-westerly wind over the debris of the mine and excavated ground covered the town. Then it was time to enter the restricted area, the concession area of Mr Römer. We passed the currently dormant Scorpion mine and were exposed to ever-changing landscapes. From plants flowering amidst the red dune sand to the differently coloured huge piles of mined sand (due to its different mineral composition) beside the Scorpion mine, to areas stripped bare of any vegetation, we had it all. After the cold had tested us the previous day, it was now the wind blowing its heart out.

Unfortunately, the *Roter Kamm* meteorite crater could not be enjoyed for long as the wind had become so strong that clothes had to be worn to protect every part of the body from sandblasting. The *Roter Kamm* crater is intriguing



in more ways than one. Not only would you not be able to recognize it from ground level if you did not know what you were looking for (though due to its size, it is clearly visible from a bird's eye view), but also, the body which caused this great hole has not yet been identified. Although there are various theories ranging from an asteroid made of ice, to the Hoba meteorite having jumped after impact all the way to Grootfontein, or simply to the meteorite having pretty much disintegrated on impact, none of the theories has been proven to date.

Finding a place to camp for the night proved a bit challenging, as the team tried to find a spot where we could enjoy a meal protected from the wind and the resulting sand in the food. While this endeavour was successfully managed for the evening, the wind shifted during the night and caused some havoc in the camp in the early hours of the next morning (Note to self – make sure all your belongings are properly secured, as the wind can change by 180 degrees in a matter of minutes.).

Travelling to the Aurus mountains took us through very different landscapes once again, and even some signage from the mining era could still be seen. To reach the top of the Aurus mountain, we practically had to drive around the entire mountain range.

This is one of the world's top 25 Biodiversity hotspots. The Succulent Karoo of the Namib Desert, in which the Scorpion Mine is situated, is also unique in being the only hotspot listed in one of the world's most arid zones. A total of 4,849 plant species in the Sperrgebiet have been documented, of which about 1000 have been documented as endemic. Of the 472 species of birds, mammals, reptiles, beetles, and amphibians, 45 are found nowhere

else on the planet. Winter rainfall, together with regular sea fog rolling in from the Atlantic with its cold Benguela Current, support an extremely rich succulent flora with a botanic diversity unparalleled by any other region on the planet.

Much to everyone's surprise, we had to drive through watercourses created by the recent heavy rains. And where there is water there is life, and in abundance. Once again, every shade of purple, red, yellow, and orange could be seen as far as the eye could reach, and dozens of bird species were identified. The closer we got to the western slopes of the Aurus mountain, the lusher the vegetation became. Considering we were in the middle of the desert, where the average rainfall rarely exceeds 20mm per year, the sheer abundance of vegetation and wildlife was beyond comprehension. To quote Mr Römer: 'In all my life, I have never seen this mountain range this lush and colourful'. As had been promised by Dr Antje Burke, 'The sight will be a once-in-a-lifetime event, enjoy it while you can!'

It is difficult to comprehend, but several species of endemic plants grow only on this hillside and, unfortunately, they are in great danger. The poaching of succulents seems to have become a sport, and, of course, the presence of tourists unfortunately though unintentionally endangers all of these plants which, for obvious reasons, grow very slowly and are also sparsely distributed, making them incredibly vulnerable. As we were told on several occasions, and hence I repeat in this report, 'Be careful where you step, enjoy the beauty only with your eyes, and under no circumstances ever remove any plant or rock'. One could have spent many more hours enjoying the sheer beauty of the landscape and vegetation, but time was pressing, and the group had to drive some distance to reach the next campsite.

We passed the eastern border of the Sperrgebiet, receiving a lot of information on the vegetation, history, and the wild horses.

We saw many herds of oryx and dozens of ostriches on the unbelievably vast plains ... and of course, all of this with either a green or yellow glow. What was striking was that some areas seemed to go through a vegetative explosion, while others were as barren and dry as if not a drop of rain had fallen for years. According to measurements taken though, most areas had received a similar amount of rain. People travelling through the area during the extreme east wind, which had blasted through much of Namibia after the winter rain, had reported sightings of 'wind corridors'. It was hence suggested that the seedlings that were trying to grow in these corridors were simply sandblasted out of existence.

The third evening was spent in a riverbed, among barking geckos, hawks, and several horned adders. We had to say goodbye to Mr Römer and would meet up with Mr Jahnke the next day.

After a short presentation by Prof. Demhardt on the history of the area illustrated by various maps he had brought along, Garub and a refueling trip to Aus were on the agenda of the third day. The wild horses were occupied foraging the freshly growing grass and could thus not be seen; so the convoy continued past Borehole 3 (one of the water sources for Lüderitz) and the Dicker Wilhelm Mountain (yes it was named after Kaiser Wilhelm) to the Koichab Borehole. Unfortunately, the vegetation here seemed to have been detrimentally affected by the east wind, as there were barely any plants visible.

As we drove into the second concession area, along the Koichab River and along the camelthorn tree forest, the view once again changed drastically. Lush green camelthorn trees,



the typically reddish dunes, peppered with *Stipagrostis sabulicola* ‘grass bundles’, formed a completely different picture to the landscapes of the previous two days when we were driving over the gravel plains. One of the participants remembered a humongous camelthorn tree that he had seen standing close to one of the boreholes many years ago. After some driving on various side roads, it was discovered that said tree, though still existing, had broken apart and thus greatly decreased in size. Nonetheless, the sheer size of this tree is evidence of considerable age and resilience to extreme weather conditions.

The east wind, so common in this area, had been with us for the past few days but had been tolerable until then. A great windless evening had the participants ‘cradled in safety’ and nobody was prepared for what was about to ‘hit’ us around 3 o’clock in the morning. To cut a long story short, layers of sand were swept into the tents (no matter how closed up or where they were positioned). People moved into and around cars and buildings to escape the blasting conditions and the morning breakfast had to be cancelled, but yet all participants were in good spirits and happy to continue along the Koichab Pan to Saddle Hill. The sunrise had the same colours as the sunset of the evening before.

The drive through the coastal dune belt gave the newbies a chance to practise their dune driving skills, and the repeat ‘offenders’ an opportunity to compare the area with what they had witnessed several years before. It was astonishing to see that this part of the desert now has considerable growth of the *Stipagrostis sabulicola* grass and some impressive !Nara plants. Whereas, a few years ago, the ‘dune road’ could be travelled at speeds of between 60 and 100km/h, the speed limit was now barely more than 20km/h due to the millions of ‘grass humps’ growing so close to each other, that driving over them was inevitable.

As the vegetation blossoms, the remains of the machinery and structures of the diamond area are slowly but surely disappearing. The borehole and small camp of Mose Kahan are by now largely covered in sand or simply non-existent and so the last traces of an era of riches and intensive labour amidst the harshest of conditions are being erased. An old Jeep engine, facing the prevailing south-westerly winds, stands in the middle of nowhere, its fan still turning nonstop where it was abandoned after the diamond mining stopped in that area.

After the sandblasting of the previous nights, all participants sighed with relief on reaching the fixed camp at Saddle Hill. Now we had entered the third and final concession area of the trip. Renovations of this old miner’s camp of Mose Kahan were well under way, allowing all to sleep in a room. Dinner inside the

big hall made all laugh and reflect on the trip so far, and some special liqueurs appeared during the late evening.

Well-rested and excited to spend a day on the coast, the group set off for Spencer Bay, Clara Hill, the shipwreck of the *Otavi*, and the remains of the *United Trader*. Apart from the fact that the landscape had once again changed completely and we were now driving over and around hard rock mountains, the amount of history associated with this place is too much to cover in one day. The remains of the police station at Spencer Bay bear witness to the hardships that needed to be overcome during the mining era. The small jetty on Mercury Island was briefly visible as the fog and sun battled for the upper hand. During lunch, all participants had the opportunity to climb over a rocky hill to get a closer look at the *Otavi* shipwreck, which could not be salvaged after it ran aground in 1945. A large colony of seals had decided to call this bay their home and bobbed around in the soft sea, while the jackal in the distance waited for his chance.

The original plan was to visit the Saddlehill South diamond camp that afternoon, but this had to be postponed as the sea was too rough and too close to the dunes to allow passage. It was decided to turn in early and have a relaxing afternoon. Historian Prof. Imre Demhardt took the opportunity to lay out several copies of maps of the coastline and the diamond fields.

The evening had a sad note to it, as this would be the last night together with the team of Desert Magic. A few toasts followed, together with some recollections and farewell speeches in which the Desert Magic Team was highly praised for once again guiding a magnificent tour with wonderful food under adverse and extreme conditions.





As we had not managed to get to the Saddlehill South Diamond Mine the previous day, it was unanimously decided to start our last day very early. Driving along the beach at low tide, it seemed fairly easy to travel, until we came to a point where dunes and rock met the sea. To cross this obstacle at low tide, part of the dune had to be moved, which was no problem for the group and was done within minutes, before the tide should rise again. But passing this obstruction proved to be a test for several drivers. With some delay, we finally reached the dilapidated and rapidly decaying old town of Saddlehill South. Once again, this had been a diamond mining area of Mose Kahan, which also included an airstrip and several mining machines and vehicles that had simply been left behind when the camp was vacated. The strength and power of the wind were once again evident as we unexpectedly received a message over the radio telling us to keep to the left of the track ahead as our guide had ‘most probably just driven over one of the living quarters that was now covered completely in the sand, as the driving suddenly sounded hollow’.





Regulations regarding the neighbouring concession area forced us to leave the Saddle Hill camp the same way that we had come, over the coastal dune belt. With all the dune driving we had already done on this trip, we had enough experience to cope with this tricky task without too many problems.

All participants were deep in their thoughts, when, out of the blue, a valley opened up before us. A valley where the dunes of the Namib are infused by rocky outcrops. Due to our delay in the morning, we were lucky enough to see this in the perfect light of the afternoon. What a great end to an unbelievably beautiful and varied trip, rounded off by a lovely dinner and a freshly made bed at the Lüderitz Nest Hotel.

New Communication Channels with our Members

Ruth Moldzio

Blog

Since the beginning of the year we have been publishing a blog on our website (www.namscience.com/news). Here we report on happenings relating to the Namibia Scientific Society. These may be events we have participated in, such as the capacity building workshop organised by the Museums Association of Namibia (MAN), recordings of presentations that have taken place in our hall, or announcements of upcoming events, such as our adventure excursions or the visit of the Africa Millimetre Telescope (AMT) mobile planetarium.

We also provide a platform for our working groups to announce their events and report on their activities. In particular, we would like to highlight the interesting monthly Astronews, which provides information on the exciting starry skies during the month.

The blog allows us to keep you up to date with what is happening behind the scenes and to share important information with you on time. We publish new articles several times a week as there are so many things we want to share with you.

WhatsApp Channel

The Namibia Scientific Society has created a WhatsApp Channel. This will only be used to inform members and friends on Society-related matters.

Everyone is welcome to join:



Please note that this channel does not cater for any personal comments or chats.

Harnessing the sun's energy for a brighter Namibia Scientific Society

Ruth Moldzio

The world is at a critical stage in its pursuit of sustainable and clean energy sources. As distress about climate change and environmental degradation mount, the need for alternative energy solutions becomes increasingly pressing. The Namibia Scientific Society has aimed to be ahead of the concerns and opted to go green with respect to its electricity needs.

Solsquare Energy (Pty) Ltd, a provider of renewable energy solutions for all sectors of life and all over Namibia, installed our solar system mid-year. It became fully functional at the end of July 2023.

Besides being regarded as green energy, solar energy installations of course have the benefit of reducing electricity costs. It is estimated that our small system, which already provides us with more energy than we need, will have exceeded the investment costs in savings within the next three years. Of course, our reliance on Namibia's power delivery system is also drastically reduced. While the Namibia Scientific Society is currently still running on a grid-tied system, provision has already been made to allow complete energy independence, should the need arise.



Robert Johnstone donates two telescopes to the Namibia Scientific Society

Malilo Limbo



Rob Johnstone

In the vast expanse of the Namibian night sky, a dream was born. Robert Johnstone, a passionate amateur astronomer with a vision, set out to introduce the people of Namibia to the wonders of the cosmos. With the appearance of Halley's Comet in 1986, Johnstone was hooked. The astronomer founded Space Observation Learning Namibia in 2009, offering stargazing and astronomy education that showcased the wonders of the Namibian night sky. He wanted to inspire youngsters to 'look up'.

Robert Johnstone tremendously enjoyed spending time in the Namib Desert, as here the population density is thinnest and thus the night sky is incredibly dark. It is these traits that make Namibia one of the most sought-after locations in the world for observing the night sky and stargazing.

With unwavering determination, Rob Johnstone travelled far and wide, lugging telescopes that would become a gateway to the stars. The moon, planets, and even entire nebulas came into sharp focus for those fortunate enough to peer through these celestial lenses.

On Rob's decision to emigrate from Namibia, it became clear that the telescope equipment needed a new home. Keeping in mind that this equipment was meant to educate the nation on the night sky, the Namibia Scientific Society with its Astronomy Working Group came to mind for Robert Johnstone.

Under the watchful eye of Robert himself, Alex Arnold and Lutz von Dewitz set up the 14" Meade LX200 GPS telescope with tripod, mount, field de-rotator, and accessories, as well as the 12" Meade LX200 GPS telescope with tripod, mount, and accessories, and received a short introduction to the operation of the equipment. With the words 'enjoy the equipment and have fun', Robert



Johnstone officially handed over the equipment to the Namibia Scientific Society in 2023.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Robert Johnstone for entrusting us with these valuable assets. You can remain assured that this equipment will only be handled with the utmost respect and that hundreds of people will get to see through the telescopes in the future.

A Cosmic Odyssey: Exploring the Africa Millimetre Telescope's Mobile Planetarium

Malilo Limbo

In the vast expanse of the universe, where stars twinkle and galaxies swirl, lies a world of wonder waiting to be discovered. The Africa Millimetre Telescope (AMT) has embarked on a mission to bring the mysteries of the cosmos closer to home, and this through their fascinating creation, the mobile planetarium. On the 23rd and 24th of August 2023, the Namibia Scientific Society once again had the pleasure of hosting the planetarium in their hall, for visitors from all walks of life to come and explore.

The planetarium came with an energetic and knowledgeable team led by Mr Zandr  Duvenhage, the project liaison officer for the Africa Millimetre Telescope. Mr Duvenhage gave us a broader insight into the creation and all its attributes.

The story of the mobile planetarium began in 2019 when Dr Marc Klein Wolt, the Director of AMT, had a visionary idea. He brought the first dome as a test run, curious to see how schools would receive this immersive cosmic experience. To his delight, it was a resounding success. The planetarium, in simple detail, is a celestial theatre where visitors can journey through the night skies and the universe. However, what sets the AMT planetarium apart is its mobility. It can be transported in the back of a pickup truck and set up almost anywhere with a power source. This 'upside-down jumping castle' has been brought to life through NOVA, which has been the driving force of the mobile planetarium for the past thirteen years in the Netherlands and is now operating in collaboration with the University of Namibia (UNAM) and Radboud University.

Inside the dome one will find a powerful projector and a high-performance laptop equipped with specialized software. This software, known as DIGI, holds the key to creating this unique experience. But it takes extensive training to master. The presenters, all students from UNAM, bring their knowledge of the universe to control the software and guide visitors on their cosmic journey.

The primary mission of the AMT's mobile planetarium is to inspire the next generation of scientists, mathematicians and problem solvers. By collaborating with schools and teachers, the planetarium sparks curiosity and broadens horizons. One of the mobile planetarium's strengths is its adaptability. The content isn't static; it's a dynamic, controlled experience. Whether one is a learner at school or in the corporate realm, the planetarium can cater to one's level of understanding. It extends its reach to parents, community, and industry experts to emphasize the importance of science education.

Visitors leave the mobile planetarium with more than just memories; they leave with a transformed perspective of how they view the galaxy. At



Nkurenkuru a young boy mentioned how much water the Earth held but he had no knowledge about it, an insight he gained by being enabled to see the globe from space; in contrast, a girl from a school in Windhoek realized that the night sky wasn't as intimidating as she thought.

Yearly updates keep the software in sync with the latest astronomical discoveries and, additionally, content updates can be tailored to specific regions or industries, making the experience relevant and engaging. This ensures that all discoveries and developments are incorporated into the various shows, and hence the latest information is provided.



The AMT's mobile planetarium team doesn't just visit schools; it engages with the broader community. Collaborations with local champions of education ensure that the magic of the universe touches more lives. Various community centres, lodges, and organizations have to date benefited from this cosmic outreach.



However, some challenges do come with the project of the mobile planetarium, as it is an educational

outreach project which is fully donor-funded and relies on other institutions and projects for funding. Mr Zandré Duvenhage reports that the support of Namibian companies and various industries has been immense. The tourism company Gondwana, for example, offered accommodation for the team to bring the planetarium closer to more remote schools and areas, while other companies like Perfect Glass catered for a two-week-long trip to Swakopmund.

The Africa Millimetre Telescope's mobile planetarium is more than a travelling show; it's a vehicle of inspiration. It inspires curiosity and sparks interest in science and exploration. So, if you ever have the opportunity to step into this mobile marvel, be prepared to be amazed. The universe is vast, but with the AMT's mobile planetarium, it's right at your doorstep.

Official Opening of the Oryx Observatory

Miriam Hutterer



The official opening of the Oryx Observatory took place on 7 October 2023 on Farm Goellschau. Ruth Moldzio, CEO of the Namibia Scientific Society, and Prof. Michael Backes, acting chairperson of the Namibia Scientific Society and Head of the Namibian H.E.S.S. group, said a few words to ceremoniously open this small, private observatory.

Clyde Foster, a South African amateur astronomer, moved to Namibia in 2022 with his wife Marina, to pursue his passion for planetary imaging. It only seems fitting that this observatory has also been constructed near the world-renowned H.E.S.S. telescopes.

Perhaps one of Clyde's most widely recognised astronomical achievements was the discovery of a convective storm on Jupiter in 2020, now known as Clyde's Spot. As he discovered it whilst imaging in support of the NASA Juno mission, he was fortunate that the Juno spacecraft made a flyby over the region two days later and was able to capture amazing images of the storm. Storms on Jupiter are often short-lived, but what makes the storm discovered by Clyde special is the fact that it developed through a folded filamentary region stage into an extended, dark, turbulent segment of the South Temperate Belt, which is still active, and observable, over three years later.

The first images from his new observatory were captured in April 2023. Just before sunrise, Saturn rose in the east and some very promising images could be obtained. Although some fine-tuning is still required, the critical systems are already fully operational. Having dismantled his original observatory in Centurion in South Africa and rebuilt it here, he has been able to make some modifications and improvements which include a new control and operating room.

Naming the observatory was an easy choice for Clyde as the beautiful Oryx antelope is a regular sight on the farm and their spoor can often be seen close to the observatory.

Clyde gave his first presentation at the Namibia Scientific Society in May 2023, to share his planetary imaging journey and to inspire others. We look forward to more exciting discoveries from Clyde and related talks.

Book published this year

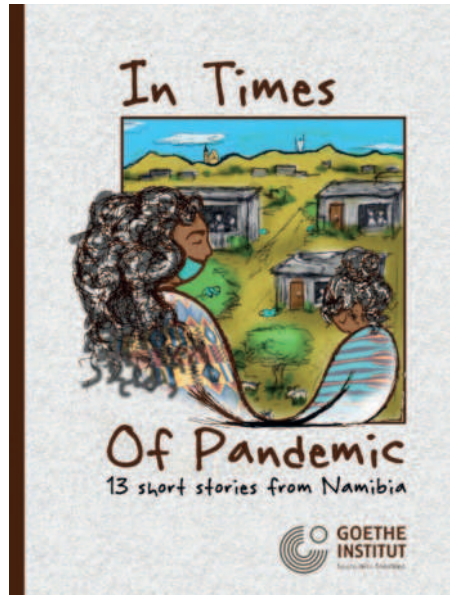
In Times of Pandemic
13 short stories from Namibia
by Goethe Institut

This collection of thirteen short stories distilled from a competition call-out from the Goethe Institut Windhoek to share experiences of lockdown and the pandemic through creative writing, is both wide-ranging and thought-provoking.

The issues dealt with include psychological trauma, identity, disruption to family life, sexual abuse, loss, fear, and grief but also endurance, hope and coming through stronger. Many of the stories are written from a young female perspective, and it is as though the reader is allowed to page through an intimate journal. Two genre fiction stories further enrich the experience of good and evil during the pandemic.

This anthology gives a deep insight into the loss and grief experienced by individuals and families during the pandemic in Namibia, and yet there is a sense of survival against the odds, renewed identity and resilience.—An enjoyable showcase of the raw talent of several new authors in Namibia alongside the sophisticated writing of experienced authors.

English • 148 p. • ISBN 978-99945-76-82-1 • 148 x 210mm
Price: N\$180 • Price for members: N\$150



Der Bart des Elefanten
‡oa-ka-gyani
Eine biografische Erzählung über das Leben
des Berufsjägers Volker Grellmann
von Wolfgang Brune

Dieses Buch erzählt von den außergewöhnlichen Abenteuern und Erfahrungen eines Mannes, dessen Tatkraft und Zähigkeit dazu beigetragen haben, die Grundlagen für die professionelle Jagd und einen nachhaltigen Natur- und Wildschutz in Namibia zu legen.

Volker Grellmann war zehn Jahre alt, als er mit seiner Familie kurz nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg nach Namibia auswanderte. Dieses Land sollte seine Heimat werden. Er machte eine Kürschner-Ausbildung, um eines Tages das Geschäft seiner Mutter zu übernehmen, doch schon bald drängte es ihn in den Busch, zur Jagd und zum Naturschutz. Zahlreiche Jäger und Gäste aus fernen Ländern, unter anderem den berühmten deutschen Boxer Max Schmeling, führte er auf den Pfaden der Wildnis. Er wurde einer der ersten und besten professionellen Jagdanbieter Namibias, Schutzpatron der San-Buschleute in den ihm anvertrauten Jagdgebieten sowie engagierter Naturschützer im Damaraland, Buschmannland und Kavango. Volker Grellmann war temperamentvoll, aber auch verletzlich und verletzbar. Autor Wolfgang Brune beschreibt seine Erfolge und auch seine Niederlagen und setzt ihm ein Denkmal als einem der »Großen« im aktiv gelebten Jagd- und Naturschutz.

Deutsch • 364 Seiten • Fotos & Karten • 148 x 210mm
ISBN 978-99945-76-83-8 (Hardcover)/978-99945-76-85-2 (Softcover)
Preis 350N\$ • Preis für Mitglieder: 295N\$



Painted Stories

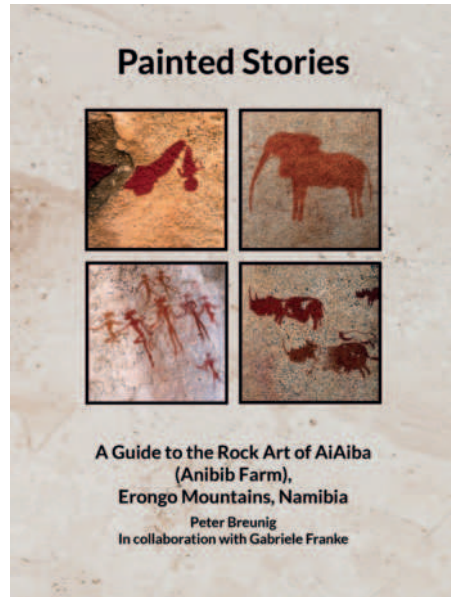
A Guide to the Rock Art of AiAiba (Anibib Farm)

by Peter Breunig and Gabriele Franke

People interested in rock art often ask the same three questions: How old is it? Who created it? What was its purpose? Archaeologist Peter Breunig investigated the rock art of AiAiba (Anibib farm) in the Erongo Mountains, one of the richest rock art areas of Namibia. In *Painted Stories* he closely examines those rock paintings, using them as an example of the prehistoric treasure trove which can tell us about the world view of Namibia's ancient hunter-gatherers. While renowned archaeologist Henri Breuil counted 344 paintings in the mid-20th century, Breunig, using modern digital methods, makes the invisible visible and recorded 4,914 paintings in 208 sites, 14 times the number known in Breuil's day. He addresses the above questions and gives valuable insight into the representational world of Namibia's prehistoric peoples in a fascinating reader-friendly way.

This book is extremely important and valuable because, as Breunig writes, «there is a simple reason for urgency in rock art research. Rock art is exposed to natural and human influences which are inexorably leading to its disappearance. In many cases on AiAiba, the paintings are already so faded that they can barely be perceived with the naked eye. For now, they can still be recovered using digital technology. But here, too, we will eventually reach a point beyond which they are lost forever.» The many photographs, digital drawings and descriptions in this book will preserve the rock paintings for generations to come.

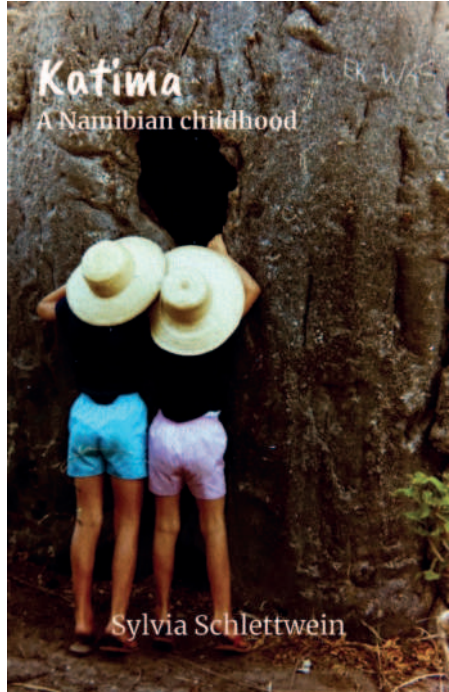
English • 228 pages • ISBN 978-99945-76-84-5 • 170 x 240mm
 Price: N\$450 • Price for members: N\$380



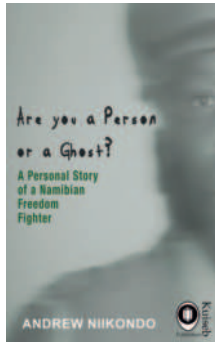
Katima A childhood in Namibia by Sylvia Schlettwein

Sylvia Schlettwein, Namibian author and daughter of Minister Carl-Hermann Calle Schlettwein, recalls her childhood in Katima-Mulilo, in what was then called the Caprivi Strip in north-eastern Namibia. In 16 enchanting stories she opens a window on everyday life in pre-independence Namibia from the perspective of a family that became involved with SWAPO at an early age. Told through the eyes of a child, we experience the magic and ruthlessness of Africa, the sober reality of everyday life between German tradition and commitment to Africa, and much more. *Katima* is a literary journey back in time to the Caprivi in the 1980s and a declaration of love for the beauty and diversity of Namibia's land and people.

English • 88 pages
ISBN 978-99945-76-92-0
120 x 190mm
Price: N\$180 • Price for members: N\$150

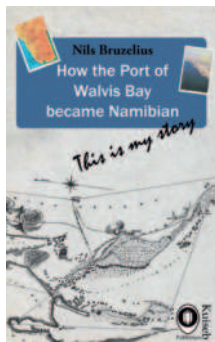


E-Books published this year on Amazon



*Are you a Person or a Ghost?
A Personal Story of a Namibian Freedom Fighter
by Andrew Niikondo*

The author was born in 1962 near Ondangwa. He joined the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) at the age of 17 and received his military training in the Tobias Hainyeko Training Centre (Lubango) in 1979. He wrote this story to recall the hardships experienced by the Namibian freedom fighters and to illustrate that the life of a person is a journey with ups and downs.



*How the Port of Walvis Bay became Namibian
This is my story by Nils Bruzelius*

The Walvis Bay enclave remained under South African control in 1990 when Namibia obtained its independence. This gave South Africa considerable advantage in a situation still characterised by conflict. As South Africa moved towards majority rule, tensions eased and the enclave was integrated into Namibia. The transfer was by no means easily accomplished. This book is the only written document on what actually happened when Walvis Bay became Namibian.



*»Wo sind die Herero geblieben?«
Neue Erkenntnisse und Theorien zum Rückzug der Herero
in die Omaheke 1904/1905 von Hans Hilpisch*

Was veranlasste den Oberbefehlshaber von Trotha nach den Gefechten am Waterberg in sein Tagebuch zu schreiben: »Wo sind die Herero geblieben?« War die Omaheke wirklich so wasserlos, wie einige Historiker sie beschreiben?

In dieser Auflage gibt der Verfasser einen Einblick in moderne geo- und hydrologische Forschung und stellt die Ergebnisse neuerer archäologischer Untersuchungen vor.

Museums Association of Namibia

33rd Annual General Meeting, Conference, & Capacity-Building Workshops Report

Johannes Willibard

The Museums Association of Namibia, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, was able to facilitate and host the 33rd Annual General Meeting, Conference, and Capacity Building Workshops from 28 August to 5 September 2023.

Participants included representatives from museums, cultural villages, art galleries, libraries, archives, heritage sites, and companies, and individuals who are passionate about heritage, art and culture. The Namibia Scientific Society as an institution and associated member also sent some of its staff to attend this conference.

The workshop was facilitated by the Director and Museum Development Officer, Ndapewoshali Ashipala, and Tuuda Haitula of the Museum Association of Namibia, together with other topic-specific guest speakers.

The first week of the conference started with a skills mapping and needs assessment exercise for Namibian Museum professionals and information practitioners under the theme: The identity of the Namibian Museum.

All workshop participants were asked to present their SWOT Analysis, highlighting the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats in their organizations or individually. The following points were repeatedly raised:

- Many institutions are struggling with funding and limited spaces in their respective museums and libraries, including OvaHimba Living Museum, Bwabwata Living Museum, Onandjokwe Medical Museum, Okavango East Museum, Twyfelfontein Damara Living Museum, Zambezi Museum, and National Museum of Namibia.
- More collaboration opportunities in future endeavours, projects, research, or other initiatives with fellow participants or organizations are sought.
- Professional development is needed, i.e. opportunities for career growth, certification, and becoming specialized within the field.

In the discussions during the week it was repeatedly said that information presented at museums was often orally sourced but not documented. I invited all participants to visit the Namibia Scientific Society Reference Library, as it was founded close to 100 years ago and has since collected, catalogued, and readily made available a great variety of information relating to Namibia, from the past to the present day. Possibly undocumented information at museums could, with our records, be confirmed.



Workshop participants (Photo: MAN)

The second week was dedicated to capacity-building workshops.

The following topics were presented by specialists and discussed among all participants:

- Education on Museum management, governance, and ethics
- Conservation of Museum artifacts
- Documentation of Museum artifacts

Overall, the 33rd Annual General Meeting, Conference, and Capacity-building workshops were a great success, as I was able to gain insight into various museums and their problems. This workshop has empowered me with knowledge enhancement and understanding of new concepts, theories, best practices, and currently emerging technologies related to museums in a broader context. At the same time, I got to learn more and understand better the shortcomings of museums and related institutions in Namibia.

The workshop was a success in enlightening participants and enabling further application of their new-found knowledge and skills in their work or profession.

I also gained insights into cultural and historical aspects relevant to the field, while making many connections with museum representatives from across Namibia.

It is said that ‘Umbrellas, books, and minds only work if they are frequently opened’. With that said, it was a fruitful engagement workshop and an eye-opener.

Gunter von Schumann

Heike Uhrich

This year Gunter von Schumann was awarded honorary membership of the Namibia Scientific Society in recognition of his many years of exceptional and tireless commitment and assistance.

Gunter was born in Omaruru in 1939. After attending school at his birthplace, and later in Swakopmund, he went on to further his education at the Technical Colleges in Pretoria and Johannesburg in 1958 and completed an internship in data processing and coding at Siemens in Munich. His interest in ships and shipwrecks became apparent early on, so he studied part time to earn a degree in British Naval Archaeology.

In 1964 Gunter married Julia Arendt, and the couple became the happy parents of two sons.

A position at Telecom in Windhoek (from 1969) was followed by his appointment as Secretary for Telecommunications Equipment on the Government Tender Board in 1980. Ten years later, as manager at Namibia Post, the task of setting up a separate philatelic department was placed in his capable hands. As a representative of Namibia Post he attended several international congresses: on the Isle of Man in 1992, in Hong Kong 1993, and in Singapore 1996. In September 1982, a Commonwealth Distinct Order of Philatelists was awarded to Gunter.

Between 1994 and 1997 Gunter von Schumann represented Namibia on the Executive Committee of the Southern African Development Community Association of Museums and Monuments. He retired from this position in August 1997.

His ties to the Namibia Scientific Society date from 18 June 1976, when he joined as member number 443. Having served as a member of the board from 1984, his position changed to that of being employed as a librarian at the Society in 1997. The Publishing Committee of the Society's in-house publishing department, 'Kuiseb Publishers', has relied on his valued input since 1985.

As a historian and researcher Gunter has taken every opportunity to conduct extensive research in and about Namibia, and his expert advice is indeed highly sought after and has been instrumental in solving many mysteries. Numerous articles on the history of Namibia have been published under his name dealing with,



but not limited to, the missionary and postal history of the country. However, his great passion has always been, and remains to this day, marine archaeology, especially relating to Namibia.

Foxi, a nickname earned by his running around from one beached piece of history to the next, has not only been active in the Telecommunications and Philately sectors, but is also a founding and honorary member of the Museums Association of Namibia (MAN), an honorary member of the Diving Club, and has been a member of the Scientific Committee of the Monuments Council since 1990. Further activities include work for the Hospice Association and the Mountaineering Club.

The team and Board of the Namibia Scientific Society are grateful and proud that Gunter has dedicated his time and energy to the benefit of the Society for the better part of the last 40 years. Without Gunter von Schumann the Namibia Scientific Society and its library would not have been the same. Gunter's extensive knowledge and his never-ending patience have been an important pillar of our work.

We do hope that Foxi will continue to share his knowledge and inspiration with us for many years to come, and we look forward to the publication of his book on Namibian maritime history.



Visit of the German Ambassador, Norbert Harald Nestroy, to the Namibia Scientific Society: The computer was donated by the German Embassy, Gunter von Schumann explains the ISIS programme (Photo: Namibia Scientific Society Archive)

Congratulations Johannes Willibard



We congratulate our librarian Johannes Willibard on completing his studies at the University of Namibia (UNAM).

The qualification he obtained is a three-year Diploma in Library and Information Science (NQF level 6), fully funded by the Namibia Scientific Society.

After a long, hard, time-consuming three years, the librarians welcome Johannes back into our team, but this time as a fully-qualified librarian.

Viereck Stone Tool Collection

Armin Jagdhuber

Around 1977 the Namibia Scientific Society received the Stone Tool collection of the amateur researcher Albert Viereck. This collection consists of 253 boxes with stone tools from around Namibia.

In June 2023 we were approached by a professor from an American University, who is researching on Early Stone Age and cultural transmission throughout the archaeological record in Namibia. It was decided to catalogue and to digitize this collection while also translating the very important information provided by Albert Viereck from German into English to ensure access to researchers worldwide.

This is a huge task for our small library, but has allowed the librarians unprecedented insight into the material, as we opted to not outsource this task.

Before starting, a plan was drawn up on how to:

- digitize these stone tools,
- visibly differentiate between the various
- time periods (including cultural stages),
- techniques applied and
- material used

A colour and marker strategy was devised and the different tools currently are being marked on a 1966 South West Africa map, which will accompany the digitized collection to clearly portray all this information.

This collection as well as the rest of our digitized library collection can be seen on our website.





The comprehensive collections of our library and our archives are vital pillars of the work of the Scientific Society.

Donations of *Namibiana* (books, maps, photos, and other documents relating to Namibia) to the library are indeed always welcome and highly appreciated.

In this context the Society would like to thank all donors for their ongoing support.

Scan your Slides or Photos for Storage as Digital Data

Dear members and friends of the Namibia Scientific Society,

Contact our library when you think of scanning your slides and photos for digital data storage.

Our colleagues in the library will assist you by appointment.

Cost per slide is N\$ 3.00 and members' price is N\$ 2.50 per slide.



STEAM Education Project, Namibia

Mindsinaction

Executive Summary

The STEAM Education Project is a collaborative effort between ExxonMobil, the Namibia Scientific Society and Mindsinaction. It aims to provide hands-on learning experiences in integrated Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) fields, while raising awareness about 21st-century skills within Namibian communities. After a very successful pilot project in 2022, funding was offered by ExxonMobil for an even bigger scale program. This time 100 learners from 3 different regions of Namibia were to be introduced to STEAM education. At the official launch on 28 March 2023 the key stakeholders, Ms. Ruth Moldzio (CEO of the Namibia Scientific Society), Ms. Taimi Itembu (Manager for Public and Government Affairs at ExxonMobil), and Mr. Ndaudika Mulundileni (CEO of Mindsinaction) expressed the urgent need for this initiative as well as reiterating the success of phase 1.

The following report presents an overview of the project's implementation insights from raising awareness in the communities, to hands-on exposure, and observed outcomes.

Raising Awareness

Raising awareness about Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) education in rural areas is a crucial step in ensuring that children in marginalized communities have knowledge and access to the educational and career opportunities offered by STEAM fields. A major concern is lack of accessibility and inconsistencies in school attendance as children often have to miss school and some eventually drop out to attend to house chores such as looking after goats, and fetching firewood. During the STEAM Education



Figure 1: A group of learners from the Himba community in Kaokoland, north-western Namibia, Kunene region

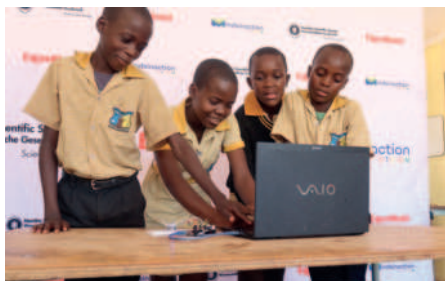
Project, we engaged children, parents and community members to expose them to future possibilities related to their children’s involvement in STEAM education at an early stage of their education. We encouraged parents to allow their children to participate in the STEAM modules we brought to their local school and are happy to report, that the children in these communities demonstrated great eagerness to learn, especially when it came to hands-on skills.

Hands-on Exposure

A total of 100 learners were exposed to 5 modules of STEAM education covering coding, robotics, electronics, machine tooling, 3D printing and science experiments. In module 1, learners were introduced to hands-on skills, involving the creation of mechanical models that could be coded/programmed to perform simple tasks like obstacle avoidance, color sensing and “pick and drop” tasks. This module exposed participants to real-life components such as gears, motors and sensors and encouraged critical thinking as well as logic to write functioning codes/instructions for their robot models. In module 2, participants built upon the foundation laid in Module 1. They deepened their understanding of electronics, circuits design, sensors, motors and their practical applications. It could be clearly seen how this module enhanced their ability to comprehend problems they wished to solve in their communities.

Impact and Outcomes

The STEAM Project has achieved a multifaceted impact, bringing immediate functional gains to participants, including proficiency in utilizing computers to perform useful tasks. It has introduced learners to the world of computers, coding, and electronics while fostering a comprehension of digitalization. The project has furthermore laid crucial foundations for digital education and basic digital competence amongst the participants. On the cognitive and attitudinal





front, the project has encouraged scientific thinking, sparked curiosity and cultivated a heightened interest among beneficiaries in science and mathematics beyond the classroom. It has also emphasized the value of STEAM subjects in the school thereby hopefully reinforcing and supporting learners' educational and career choices. At the personal level, participants' self-esteem clearly has been boosted, and they have experienced a newfound sense of competence within a specific knowledge domain, along with the ability to persevere and see tasks through to completion. They have also developed the capacity to set their own tasks, assess and evaluate their own progress, and initiate or enhance their understanding on how to learn skills. Looking ahead, the project has laid the foundation for further steps towards digital competence and literacy, which can potentially improve participants' prospects in the job market, leading to enhanced life conditions. Moreover, the project, for the participants involved, has significantly contributed to overcoming the “digital fear” in Namibia, taking the first step towards creating more equitable opportunities and promoting social equality on a socio-political scale.

Recommendations and Conclusions

In order to build on the project mission, which is to expose Namibian learners to STEAM educational activities and to raise awareness about adopting a culture of innovation, it is advised for the STEAM Project to reach and expose far



more learners in all regions. Due to the vast distances in Namibia the idea of a mobile “STEAM BUS” is beginning to develop. This bus could travel through different regions, therefore reaching much more remote and larger audiences, while greatly decreasing the individual project effort and costs of logistics.

In conclusion, the STEAM Education Project, with its successful pilot in 2022 and now the successful 2nd phase in 2023, has made significant strides in promoting STEAM education and 21st-century skills in Namibia. The collaboration and community engagement have been instrumental in achieving its goals and has ensured maximum success.

For more information: www.mindsinaction.com.na

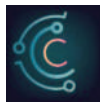
Events 2023

- 01.02.2023 Goethe Institut and Namibia Scientific Society: Stefan Bollmann: *The Breath of the World. Johann Wolfgang Goethe and the Experience of Nature*
- 09.02.2023 Dr Stephan Getzin: *Plant Water Stress, Not Termite Herbivory, Causes Namibia's Fairy Circles*
10. & 11.02.23 *The Universe at the Namibia Scientific Society*, Star Gazing at (inside) the UNAM/AMT Mobile Planetarium
- 14.02.2023 NEWS Talk: Kelsey Prediger, Director of the Pangolin Conservation & Research Foundation: *Pangolin Conservation*
- 24.02.2023 Prof. Heino Falcke: *The First Image of a Black Hole*
- 09.03.2023 Goethe Institut and Namibia Scientific Society: Book launch: *In Times of Pandemic*
- 14.03.2023 NEWS talk: Dr Dipanjan Naha (Ongava Research Centre): *Living on the Edge – Human-carnivore Interactions along the Northern Border of Etosha National Park*
- 22.03.2023 Prof. Norbert Jürgens and Felicitas Gunter: *Fairy Circles – Subterranean Oases in the Namib Sand*
- 23.03.2023 Book Launch with Author Wolfgang Brune: *Der Bart des Elefanten – Eine biografische Erzählung über das Leben des Berufsjägers Volker Grellmann*
- 27.03.2023 Afternoon Coffee with Crispin Clay: *Stories, Poems and Anecdotes out of his Life*
- 11.04.2023 NEWS Talk by NEWS Chairperson Reinhold Mangundu: *Rural Revive: Building a Desert-based Economy*
- 20.04.2023 Prof. Conny Mayer-Bonde, Tourism and Hospitality Expert: *Tourism and Resilience - How Tourism Destinations can Position Themselves Resiliently for Upcoming Crises*
- 25.04.2023 Dr Brian Baker, CDC Namibia Country Director: *Twenty Years CDC in Namibia*
- 09.05.2023 Upper Swakop Basin Management Committee (USBMC): *Short- and Medium-term Water Management Challenges for the Central Area of Namibia (CAN)*
- 23.05.2023 Clyde Foster, Planetary Imager: *The Planets Up Close and Personal – An Amateur Astronomer's Journey into the World of Pro-Am Planetary Science Collaboration*
- 29.05.2023 Dr Guy Preston: *Working for Water program, South Africa*
- 15.06.2023 András Zboray: *Prehistoric Rock Art of the Sahara*
- 19.06.2023 Prof. Heino Falcke: *US\$ 25-million Facility in Namibia will be Africa's First Millimetre-range Telescope; Why, Where, When and How*

- 21.06.2023 NEWS Talk: Dr Julian Fennessy and Dr Michael Brown (Giraffe Conservation Foundation): *How to Create a Movement: Saving Africa's Giraffe*
- 28.06.2023 NEWS Talk: Tobias Kambongi: *Local Perceptions about Pangolins*
- 05.07.2023 Namibian Academy for Tourism & Hospitality (NATH): *On and off the Beaten Track: NATH Short Courses and Apprenticeship Programs*
- 11.07.2023 Dr Antje Burke: *The Plight of Sperrgebiet Endemics – Do They Have a Chance in the Face of Multiple Threats?*
- 18.07.2023 Book Launch: *Painted Stories – A Guide to the Rock Art of AiAiba* by Peter Breunig & Gabriele Franke
- 08.08.2023 NEWS Talk: Dr Mark Jago: *UNAM School of Veterinary Medicine*
- 10.08.2023 KAS and NWG in Collaboration with Mindsinaction STEAM: *The Constitution of Namibia, Celebrating the Availability of Our Constitution over the Mobile App, in Braille and Several Local Languages*
23. & 24.08.23 Africa Millimeter Telescope and Namibia Scientific Society: *The Universe at the Namibia Scientific Society, Star Gazing at (inside) the AMT Mobile Planetarium*
- 31.08.2023 Namibian Environment & Wildlife Society (NEWS) Annual General Meeting
- 19.09.2023 Alumni present IPS: *The International Parliamentary Scholarship (IPS) Programme of the German Parliament*
- 27.09.2023 Namibia Bird Club: *Danke Kanada für 34 Jahre Abenteuer und Inspiration*
- 28.09.2023 Upper Swakop Basin Management Committee (USBMC) *Position Statement on Water Management in Central Namibia*
- 04.10.2023 International Space Week: *Learn more about Saturn*
- 19.10.2023 Franco-Namibian Cultural Centre and Namibia Scientific Society: *A Space Talk on Cosmic Rays* by Mathieu de Naurois
- 07.11.2023 *Western Sahara – After Namibia, the Last Colony on African Soil* by Prof. Manfred O. Hinz
- 08.11.2023 *The Future of our Oceans: Documentary and Short Presentation* by Dr Jan-Lukas Menzel
10. & 11.11.23 *View the 4 Gas Giants (Planets)* at the Cuno Hoffmeister Memorial Observatory with Dorothea von Dewitz, Simon van der Lingen and Lutz von Dewitz
- 23.11.2023 Book Launch with author Sylvia Schlettwein: *Katima. A Namibian childhood*

Corporate Members/Korporative Mitglieder

Corporate Membership was introduced for businesses and institutions wanting to support the Namibia Scientific Society in its mission to promote education, scientific research and public awareness with regard to current and cultural issues in Namibia. Credit is given to the following businesses:



**The Board and Team of Namibia
Scientific Society wish all members
and friends a Merry Christmas
and a prosperous New Year!**

**The Namibia Scientific Society will close on
Friday, 22nd December 2023 at 13h00 and
reopen on Wednesday, 10th January 2024.**





**Namibia
Scientific
Society**

If undelivered please return to:
P.O. Box 67, Windhoek, Namibia
Tel: 061-22 53 72
E-mail: info@namscience.com
www.namscience.com