

# Sebakwe News

Editor: John Gripper

[www.blackrhino.org](http://www.blackrhino.org)

Registered Charity: 328461

Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust, Manor Farm, Ascott-under-Wychwood, Oxon. OX7 6AL

☎+44 (0)1993 830278

## Killing of Elephants

90 elephants were killed in August and September at Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe. They were cruelly poisoned by cyanide and their tusks hacked off. This Park is the third largest wildlife sanctuary in Africa and covers 14,650 square kilometres – roughly the size of Switzerland

Waterholes and salt licks had been poisoned with cyanide. It is not known what other animals died from drinking the poisoned water or how many animal predators such as lion, hyenas and vultures may have died from eating the carcasses. The full knock on affect from this despicable act will probably never be known. The Parks authorities have begun to burn the carcasses and detoxification of the salt licks in the contaminated areas.

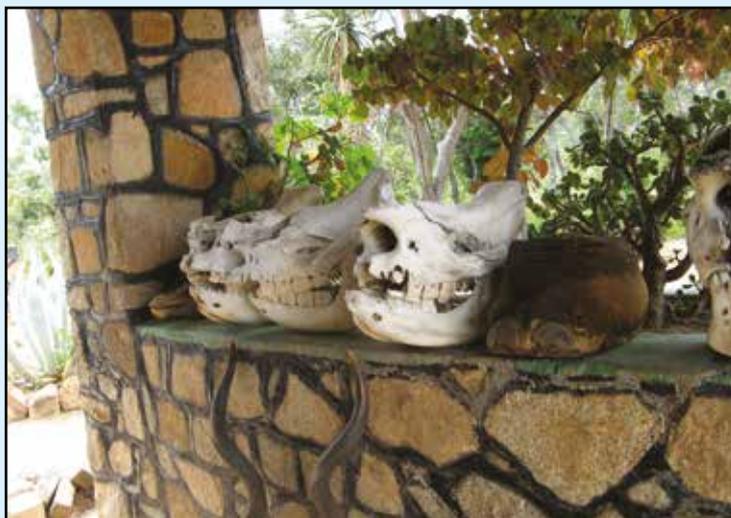


Cyanide powder is used in the gold mining industry and its sale is restricted to licensed mining companies. A search of the nearby villages found 240 kg of cyanide in one of the houses and some of the ivory tusks were recovered. 22 poachers have already been arrested and punished with up to 15 year jail sentences. However the “Big Fish” are still at large – these are the criminals who organise the poaching and arrange bribes for the illegal smuggling of ivory tusks and rhino horn out of the country for sale in China and Vietnam.

The ivory is used in Asia for making ornaments. The trade in ivory is banned under CITES regulations. The poachers themselves are paid a fraction of the value of the tusks but if caught pay the price of long prison sentences. The heads of the criminal syndicates responsible for organising the poaching and the transport of the illegal ivory always seem to manage to avoid prosecution

# Illegal Wildlife Trade

Wildlife crime now ranks high among trafficking in drugs, arms and humans. It is an economic crime perpetrated by criminal syndicates in remote regions exploiting local people and taking advantage of lax laws.



946 rhino were killed by poachers in South Africa for the rhino horn and last year thousands of African elephants were killed for their ivory tusks. The world's population of tigers has dwindled to around 3,000 animals, because of the demand for tiger skins and tiger parts.

The nature of wildlife crime has changed. Poaching of rhino is now carried out by marksmen with dart guns and modern automatic weapons supported by helicopters with links to sophisticated supply chains and modern technology backed up by bribery and corruption, which allows the rhino horn to be exported to the Far East

The annual global trade in wildlife trafficking is estimated to be worth \$10bn and the profits from the wildlife trade are very high and estimated at \$2.5bn. Rhino poaching is now highly organised by criminal individuals who have ample funding and resources but will often employ local people to assist them. Whilst the payment made to local poachers only represents a small amount of the potential value of the rhino horn, it is still far more than the local poacher can ever earn. If a poacher gets shot or arrested and imprisoned, there is always another person willing to take his place.

To combat this increase in poaching of these endangered animals there has to be stricter implementation of the law and more effective international enforcement of CITES regulations at border controls to prevent smuggling of illegal wildlife trade. Courageous but underpaid park rangers are often outmanned and outgunned. Greater resources are needed to recruit and train more rangers to improve security and protect the animals on the ground

The legalisation of trade in rhino horn has been proposed by some African countries - but this is not the answer. A reduction in the value of rhino horn would make it more affordable and would increase the demand from the end user. It is unrealistic to think that its value will drop low enough to stop poachers in Africa from making money from killing rhino.

Educational awareness campaigns should be encouraged with outreach programmes in the rural communities living close to the conservancies so that school children and young people can have a better understanding of the importance of the conservation issues and protection of the environment and its wildlife.

Educational publicity campaigns should attempt to reduce the Asian demand for the illegal products of rhino horn which is used in the Far East for Traditional Chinese Medicine and a so called 'cure' for cancer. In Vietnam the more affluent sectors of Asian society use rhino horn for 'bling'. The ivory is used for carved ornaments. It is encouraging that the consumption of shark fin soup has come down by 50% in the last two years due to the success of the demand reduction campaign by the Chinese Government.

At a meeting in Botswana in December 2013 thirty countries, including China, agreed to define the trade of elephant tusks as a serious crime and to co-ordinate their efforts to try to curb ivory trafficking and eliminate the trade. London will be hosting a summit conference on February 13th 2014.

**VERY SAD NEWS. TSAKA OUR ELDERLY MALE BLACK RHINO  
WAS KILLED BY POACHERS ON BOXING DAY**

# Microfinance

The objective of microfinance is to make small loans available to low-income individuals who do not have access to the ordinary banking systems.

The loan will be a small amount of money to encourage them to set up in businesses that will provide them with future income and play a role in lifting them out of poverty. Microfinance is based on the belief that low-income individuals are capable of lifting themselves out of poverty if given access to financial services.

The pioneering of microfinance is usually credited to Dr Mohammad Yunus who began experimenting with lending money to poor women in the village of Jobra, Bangladesh during his tenure as professor of economics at Chitagong University in the 1970's. He then went on to found Grameen Bank in 1982 and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006.

It has now been estimated that 160 million people in developing countries around the world are served by microfinance and we decided we would carry out a small trial to assess as to whether it would work in Zimbabwe. Our first rule was that loans would only be provided to women who lived or worked in the Sebakwe or Midlands Conservancy area.

Groups of 10 to 15 women would be formed, who will consider and propose personal applications for loan projects and these groups would provide help and support to the individuals seeking the loan.

The average amount of the loan would initially be around USD150.00 and repayments would be made over a period of six months to a year. Interest would be charged on the loan to cover normal loan interest, administration costs and any loan defaults. An example would be for a USD150.00 loan to have to make repayments of USD15.00 per month for a year.

Private funding has already been provided for a trial of the microfinance scheme which would provide the initial seed capital and would be set up as a 'not for profit' scheme, which if successful, would eventually grow as the loan repayments would be recycled into further loans.

In this trial a goat rearing project in Rockvale and a poultry project in Sebakwe have already been started with loans of USD 150.00. each



# Anti-Poaching Matthew Holmes

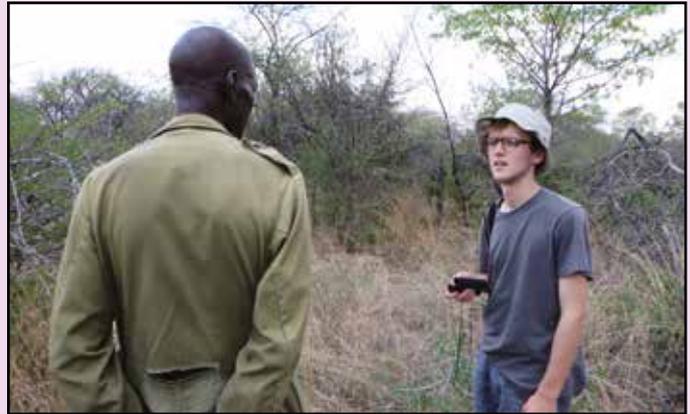
## All in a day's work – saving the black rhino

It's 7 am and we pull over on the main dirt road through the conservancy to meet Misheck, one of the top rhino monitors, my partner for the day. Straight away we head off into the bush. Today we are following the tracks of Tendai and her 8 month old calf Tafara. He is dressed in ex-army green overalls which are showing signs of wear and tear. The thorn bushes are constantly grabbing you as we walk through the thick undergrowth- a black rhino's favourite habitat. I soon realise that a short-sleeved top was a bad idea. It isn't long before Misheck is on to something. The first definite tracks we find are next to a small muddy waterhole. Here we can see that, unusually, the mother and calf had company - the father is also with them. Misheck turns to me and says: "The bull, Tangarira, is with them as well, this means it is very, very dangerous, dangerous", "So are we still going to follow them?" I ask apprehensively, to which he replies without hesitation: "Yes!". This was a little disconcerting to an Englishman from a place where the most dangerous animal is the next-door neighbour's Border collie.



Warning sign

The monitors know the area like the back of their hand. To be able to find the rhino everyday they develop a sixth sense for picking up the most subtle signs of a rhino's passing. What may just be a broken twig to the untrained eye, is information on the direction a rhino has been travelling and at what time. Misheck walks in front and I follow behind, he points to a spore on the ground which is incredibly difficult to see and whispers "We are very close". Very soon afterwards he spots it, the majestic bull having a rest amongst the thorns. This creature is huge, at first I think he is standing as his back is so high up, but in fact he is lying down. It isn't until he gets to his feet- which makes me jump - that I see the awesome scale of this rhino. It looks so indestructible and powerful yet its



Matthew receiving instructions before heading into the bush

fellow species is dwindling thanks to an unnatural predator, or should I say murderer- humans.

After seeing the bull we continue the search for the mother and calf who have wandered off. In total we spend 9 hours on our feet, for me it's a one off, but for Misheck, and the other black rhino monitors, it's all in a day's work. It's these men led by David Strydom who we are to thank for the survival of our now six rhino in the conservancy. Without them these beautiful rhino would surely have been poached.



Tafara, 8 month old calf, following her mother, Tendai in very thick bush

## Rhinos on the run – Paul Holmes

Guarding the black rhino involves hours of tracking, through rough terrain and thickets of thorn trees. Conditions can be extremely hot and dangerous. In very thick bush there is the constant risk of being charged by the rhino if the wind changes and they get your scent.



Tangarira photographed in the open



3 of the 9 rhino monitors

order to maintain his protection and keep him in the conservancy.

All leave was cancelled and two teams of monitors were deployed, tracking Rancy and leapfrogging each other to get in front of him. Then they would be able to try to head him off and turn him back. Five men had to camp out in the bush for several days continually looking for foot prints crossing the sand roads. This was hampered by torrential rain washing away the spore. After five days anxiously waiting we heard the news that, even though he had been charging angrily at the monitors, they had coaxed him back to safety. This episode illustrated the skill and dedication of the team who had almost certainly saved him from being killed. It required coordination with other groups including National Parks and farm guards, and a great deal of extra diesel, man hours, cell phone time, wear and tear on equipment and stress!

The black rhino in the Midlands conservancy do not realise how fortunate they are to have such a professional group of men watching over their every move!

Life can get even harder for the monitors if a rhino decides to move out of their usual area. Rancy, for example, a 9 year old bull, has made a habit of travelling great distances, often trying to head out of the safety of the conservancy.

In early November he was 'on the run' and we witnessed the 'well oiled' military style operation that swung into place in



Remains of an Eland found in a snare

## How to make a big impact on survival of the Midlands black rhino – Paul Holmes

Keeping the rhinos constantly protected is an ongoing battle led by conservator Dave Strydom. The logistics of managing the team of monitors and keeping them supplied with suitable equipment, rifles, ammunition, functioning radios, cell phones, food and transport, within a tight budget are daunting. Any help in keeping the monitors on the ground in the bush directly helps the day to day survival of the rhino and seems to me an excellent way of using a small amount of money to most effect.

### Please consider sponsoring the following:

Boots -	£25
Overalls (for protection from the thorn trees) -	£17
Rechargeable batteries for radios -	£10
Raincoats -	£20
Diesel and wages –	any amount welcome
An extra 4x4 –	(admittedly a large amount of the money required!)

### Poachers catch a heavy penalty



Removing a wire snare attached to a tree

Poaching of game is a constant threat. The rhino monitors and farm game guards are always on the lookout for wire snares set between trees along game trails. These are designed to ensnare the necks of antelope passing by. Poachers also use dogs to chase and wear down their targets. In November an exceptionally heavy penalty was given to a group of poaches caught in the conservancy. Rhino monitors gave evidence to help convict the men who were each fined USD 1500 and sent to prison for 8 months! – It is hoped that this will be a massive deterrent to other potential poachers.

# Sebakwe Conservation and Education Centre

## Learning and laughter at the Sebakwe Conservation and Education Centre: A primary school visits - Clare Holmes



Children learning about black rhino

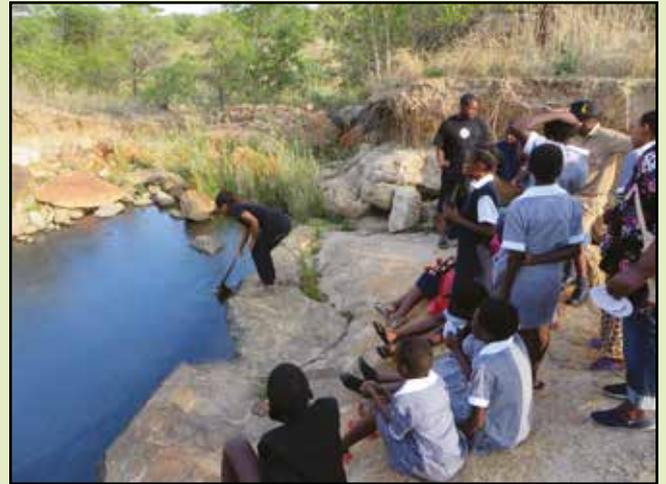
This year I was invited to join with my son Paul and grandson Matthew (with our combined ages 149 years!) on a trip of a life time to see for myself just how the Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust functions. I have been fund raising for the trust ever since Paul became a trustee in 2001 and heard so many fascinating stories that I was very keen to visit and see how the money is spent. It was a wonderful experience and I now see the value of the Education Centre and the outstanding efforts the monitors make towards the vital survival of the black rhino.

We were lucky enough to be at the Education Centre on the day that a primary school from Kwekwe arrived. They were to take part in a two day environmental camp arranged for them as a prize for winning an inter schools competition which had involved the children writing poems and performing a play, all related to the environment and conservation of the rhino.



Wildlife games

The 15 children arrived somewhat in awe of the Education Centre and ate their lunch in silence. However after we all had consumed a generous portion of chicken stew, four university undergraduates (on work experience) gave a presentation about the black rhino in the large lecture hall. This was followed



Water sediment sampling

by a question and answer session. The children soon relaxed and took an active part and really showed their knowledge of wildlife.

The excitement in the children was mounting and they were then taken into the bush in the back of the centre's pick-up truck to the nearby Shari dam. The school had been asked to re-enact their award winning play and this was performed on large rocks with a back drop of the dam waters, true open air theatre. This was followed by a practical session demonstrating how water pollution can be assessed by monitoring the animal population in sludge sediments. Water and animals are always fascinating for children and a lot of fun and laughter was had by all.



Looking for aquatic animals

Back at the centre on the lawn outside the dormitories, team games were organised and the volume continued to increase! The environmental and team building aspects to the games encouraged learning about sustainable use of resources, problem solving and a large amount of cheering!

The children were a delight and had obviously had an amazing time. It was a joy to see them benefiting so much from their experience.

## A small way to make a big difference – Paul Holmes



Team building

For many parents of the children at the more rural schools the possibility of their children attending and paying for a camp at the Education centre is just a dream. As we witnessed, when we visited several different schools in November, many of the families are not even able to pay the school fees of around USD 13 a term. The facilities at the Education Centre offer the chance for school children to learn about conservation and wildlife at the same time as having great fun and a memorable experience.



Staff and students of the Sebakwe Conservation and Education Centre

Having seen how the children from Kwekwe primary enjoyed the camp and activities, learnt through play and team games, we realised just how valuable and unique the experience is that the centre can offer to the local community.

The limiting factor, as is often the case, is funding. It costs around £5 to sponsor a child to visit for a 2 day camp.

Just imagine what fun and memories 10 children from a school environmental club could have from a £50 donation allowing them to experience a camp.

The Sebakwe Conservation and Education Centre was established in 2003. It was built by the UK charity,

the Sebakwe Black Rhino Trust (SBRT), and is run as a joint project with Wildlife and Environment Zimbabwe (WEZ). It relies predominately on the fundraising activities of the SBRT in the UK.

## Sebakwe Medical Clinic



New fridge freezer for medicines and vaccines

This medical clinic serves the local community and continues to extend and improve its range of services. They have recently received a large chest freezer and fridge, for storage of vaccines and medicines, and a separate freezer containing freezer blocks for use



Nearly completed maternity waiting rooms

during the not infrequent power cuts. Unfortunately electricity supplies can still be erratic. The maternity waiting rooms and new staff houses are nearing completion. These will allow expectant mothers to travel to the clinic several days before they are due to give birth so avoiding travelling long distances when in labour.



Donated supplies for the clinic

# Schools round up Paul Holmes

## Building bricks for the future: Termites help schools rise up from the earth

There has been a great deal of activity at the site of the planned Rhino Secondary school close to the conservancy. This lies adjacent to the Paudale primary school and at the moment the two schools share the primary school buildings. There are two classrooms with roofs and two without. We met some of the 15 teachers who told us how difficult it was to operate with the 463 children in these conditions.

In the Paudale area the parents have been busy building so called 'farm bricks' out of termite mound clay. This clay has special properties which make it especially good for brick making.



Termite mound - engulfing a Land Rover!



Impressive bricklaying at Chiwodza secondary school

How are farm bricks made? In brief: take clay from an old termite mound, add water, put in a brick shaped mould, dry, 'bake' in a kiln for a several days and you have the building blocks for a new school. So far very impressive toilets and some staff houses have been built. It is hoped that with extra funding they can make a start on the classroom blocks.

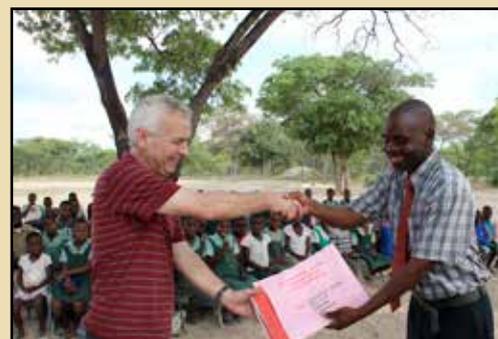
**Schools round up:** As the population increases in the resettlement areas surrounding the conservancy, the demand for secondary school places is increasing. We saw an impressive display of building at the **Chiwodza secondary school** where state funding had allowed contractors to make rapid progress; seven bricklayers had built a large classroom block up to the roof line in five days! Unfortunately, due to lack of funds, progress is slower at other schools. At **Messina primary** new brick staff houses were being built but the pole and mortar classrooms are deteriorating rapidly and they still have no water and many children sit on the rubble floors. **Mopane Park primary** uses the buildings from an old farmstead and have a borehole but the pump mechanism has broken and needs urgent repair. **Rockvale primary** children put on an amazing display of singing, poetry and dance. We delivered letters from **Lindridge Primary School**, Tenbury Wells, UK. One classroom still has no roof and there are only four toilets for 200 children and the staff. Sadly we arrived too late in the day to see the performance planned by Paudale children but **Sebakwe primary** put on a superb impromptu show of singing, drama and basketball (with the new ball we gave them).



Rubble classroom floors

The work of the Sebakwe Conservation and Education Centre was promoted and many schools have active environmental clubs. Not all are able to afford to visit the centre for educational camps.

We were struck by the warmth and enthusiasm of the school teachers, the beautiful singing voices of the children and their exuberance, especially when presented with shiny new footballs. Yet we were reminded of the harsh environment that the children and teachers face each day; with long walks to school, limited water supplies, many classrooms with no furniture at all, rubble floors and limited teaching resources, making learning and teaching an incredible task.



Exchange of letters at Rockvale school

## MIDLANDS BLACK RHINO CRICKET TOURNAMENT

This annual cricket competition was held on Africa Weekend - Friday 24th and Saturday 25th of May at Kwe Kwe Sports Club where the Dinner/Dance cricket function took place and great cricket was played by all.

The tournament was hosted by Kwe Kwe Sports Club and the Midwest Rhinos franchise, and professionally managed by the Cricket Tours Africa team. Eight teams from all over the country took part including a South African Team, Hornbills from Tzaneen, who having won the Limpopo league seven years running started the tournament as hot favourites.

Nicholas Duncan from SAVE African Rhino Foundation gave great support to the competition and brought a number of framed cricket shirts which were put up for auction. Nicholas came with a tour group from Australia and joined one of the teams and played cricket! Many thanks to members of his tour party and Nia Carras who donated money to children at less fortunate local schools.

Many famous names were in attendance including ex Zimbabwean captain Heath Streak along with fellow internationals John Rennie, Andy Blignaut, Greg Strydom, Andy Waller and Trevor Gripper. Bulawayo Busters emerged winners after an entertaining final against Midlands Old Boys.

A portion of the players entry fees goes towards the Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy and along with the gate money and the auction over USD 15,000 was raised to support the Conservancy.

This cricket competition was a great success and special thanks go to Ken Connelly, Bryony Pheasant, his assistant and Kenyon Ziehl, who all worked tirelessly to make this event such a great success. Thanks also go to Plaza Bakery for sponsoring a New Sign Board which is now on display outside the Sebakwe Education and Conservation Centre.

Next year it is expected that more cricket teams will be coming to Kwe Kwe to take part in this popular money raising event.





## RHINO WINTER QUIZ - Buildings

### Anagrams in capitals

1	You could get a sentence here	10
2	Move on snow, alright and mix	5
3	Animals last resting place	8
4	Information for a conservative	7
5	Public transport protection	3.7
6	Living near the clouds	4-4.5
7	Bovine shelter	4
8	A Bear, a swan, or a fox perhaps	6.5
9	A trio and thank you stirred	7
10	Ashes to ashes	11
11	Train Guide	6.3
12	HONES GIN RUN	7.4
13	Hatch, match and dispatch	8.6
14	Coming and goings	7.8
15	Thatched or cheese	7
16	Popular place for exercise	9
17	A male was bright	7
18	Children's Aladdins cave	3.4
19	Firewood, taxi is not out	3.5
20	Chess Piece	6
21	Early learning here	7.6
22	Shore residence	5.3
23	The core of well being	6.6
24	Mail, not on but cold	4.6
25	The side of the river	4
26	Kept in after school in the middle	9.6
27	Shortened church, sounds like fruit	6
28	Warm cold house ?	5
29	Animal with eye complaint	6
30	A friend with a top card	6
31	Lower limb with "Nat King" !	7
32	Save the PM	12
33	Educating old folks ?	7.6
34	Stationed troops	8
35	Sounds like a drop-off	4
36	Evil deed is eager to hear	9
37	Adorn clothes in a home	9
38	The whole world and knot	10
39	Animal care specialists	10.8
40	Is the lady weak and ill?	9
41	MUST AID	7
42	Leave in comfort	9.6
43	Not for stone throwing	10
44	Lay and rest	7.5
45	Some win, some lose	7.4

46	Steam engine with central hesitation	6
47	Painstaking care place	7
48	Giving and taking for good causes	7.4
49	Dead end for some	9.5
50	SPARE MUTREK	11
51	Chat swap	9.8
52	No Ground Floor	4.5
53	Inside four walls	6
54	May have worms	7
55	A stopper is down	8
56	A type of owl	4
57	For Bells or Ravens	5
58	A bit of currency goes adrift	9
59	Putting on the style	7.5
60	MY COURT MENT NICE	9.6
61	Entered but rearranged	6
62	Unscramble the front of your head	4
63	Chess piece outlet	4.4
64	Centre stage	5
65	Check In and out	7.4
66	Welcome members and players	9
67	To be born there perhaps	5.5
68	Clearing upper atmosphere	10
69	Local Government meeting place	4.4
70	Play and learn place	12
71	Teaching away	8.6
72	Coach and Australian sheep ranch	3.7
73	Almost a biting insect	6
74	Mull over with thoughtful sound	6
75	Grinding all the time	8
76	Fill up here	6
77	Bolt on all doors	6
78	End of line	7.7
79	Beam me off	10
80	Ending of a Mall	10.6
81	Isolate the boys to a T	9
82	Sounds like a finished fight	4
83	CRADLE HAT	9
84	Home of a Swiss maid perhaps	6
85	Full House on Saturday	9
86	A bit of a laugh with saliva	8
87	Home for water vehicle	9
88	EVE LENON PICNIC CUB	6.11
89	Penny house	6.7
90	Remember	8

Please return your entry by 28th Feb with £2 for each entry (cheques payable to SBRT) to Annie Gripper, Manor Farm, Ascott-under-Wychwood, OXON OX7 6AL  
If you would like a copy of the correct answers then please enclose a s.a.e.