

## [Zimbabwe is all that!](#)

Posted on [December 21, 2010](#) by [Laura](#)

Two different friends who have recently travelled separately to Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Ethiopia returned with the same statement – Zimbabwe is first world compared to either of those countries!

We are so grateful that in Zimbabwe we have such excellent infrastructure. It may be crumbling but we are still open for business and able to accomplish a lot!

We have not had the chance yet to travel outside the city and so we can only comment on our local environment and there are potholes, there are few working street lights and many of them are so badly rusted that they have actually broken and fallen over. There is a lot of garbage lying around – A LOT – and this unfortunately had resulted in lots and lots and lots of flies! The City of Harare is valiantly trying to get its garbage collection programme working efficiently again but the challenges are enormous, and as usual it comes down to resources and the money to fund these.

The electricity supply is erratic and it is impossible to plan for it because there is no schedule for the load shedding. Over the last couple of weeks or so there have been 16 hour a day cuts two to three days in a row and sometimes the power can be off for a short a time as 30 minutes although this is far rarer than the 16 hour cuts! It does make it difficult to keep anything fresh and we have had to throw away food. We have now decided that for fresh food and vegetables we will buy on a daily, as needed, basis. You can buy fresh milk but unless you are going to drink it that day it is a waste of money so most of us seem to buy the UHT milk.

We are blessed to have a borehole at the Church, which is where we live, because the City of Harare is unable to meet the water demand but they too are continuing to do the best they can with the resources they are allocated. We attended a Waste Management meeting hosted by Miracle Missions at which the Mayor of Harare spoke and he said that ZINWA (Zimbabwe Water Authority) was producing 600+ mega-litres a day but the demand is for well over a 1000 mega-litres.

Despite these challenges business continues, households run as do schools, clinics and hospitals and people still greet you with huge smiles and the standard ‘hi, how are you?’ to which the standard reply is ‘fine, how are you?’.

Yesterday what an experience Nathan and I had when we accompanied a friend to the informal Mbare Msika market. Mbare is notorious – I suppose like the Glasgow Barras used to be. It is in a very industrial area, is home to those that would sell clothing ( new or second hand), muti – that is the medicine produced by witch doctors, and vegetables and fruit from the small peasant farmers.

The market is almost open air although there is corrugated asbestos sheeting as a roof and it is in a walled area. The sellers shout at the tops of their voices and the most common thing you will hear is ‘dorra dorra dorra’ meaning that they are selling their wares for a single US dollar. Sometimes, as your skin colour is clocked the price will swiftly rise from ‘dorra’ to

‘dorra fifty’ or ‘two dorra’. The number of people in the market is quite something but I never felt crowded and I was never pushed or shoved by anyone. If you hear whistling you get out the way because it usually means a guy is pushing a scotch-cart (trailer) loaded with bales of clothing from America and the UK down one of the walkways to their pitch.

You do not go to Mbare alone, You do not leave your vehicle without someone to stay with it to watch it is not stripped clean or vandalised and you do not take anything like a bag or a wallet. You have your money shoved down deep into a front pocket, wear a large t-shirt covering your pockets and you take your ‘Mbare bag’ which is a voluminous item into which all your bargains go!

I loved the experience, it was exhilarating and vibrant and dirty and smelly and full of life! Making our way through the mass of humanity we noticed the ‘muti’. The traditional healers or witch-doctors have a large section in the middle of the market place and you can view a fascinating array of items from snake skin to elephant dung to bottles of potions and all manner of other items. I would have been interested to stop and have a good look but unfortunately the resident ‘witch-doctor’ spotted the ‘marungu’ (white) and wanted to engage as I was not keen to do so I just kept walking this time.

As we are not able to take anything valuable along I did not have my camera and so was not able to capture the sights to share with you. Who knows, perhaps as we become more familiar with the way things are this may be possible in the future but for now it is far better to be safe than sorry.

Just in case anyone was wondering – today it’s HOT! Don’t know what the temperature is but it’s been a really hot week and it does drain energy levels. We are only one week away from Christmas and it is anything but Christmassy – well it’s just too hot to feel like Christmas! Most of the till operators in the supermarkets and other shops are wearing red Santa hats and you can see lights and tinsel around but the sense of Christmas just isn’t there and for those of you who know I don’t do Christmas this suits me fine – but for Colin it is really strange!

We don’t know what we will be doing on Christmas day as yet but I can tell you we are very excited for New Year as we are going on a houseboat on Lake Kariba for 4 nights! Will definitely have pictures of that to show you all and we will believe that Colin is will catch a huge Tiger Fish so that we can post a photo of him and his prize on facebook for proof!

## **It’s the Rainy Season!**

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After an extremely busy four months between end of July to end of November we finally got on the plane at Edinburgh airport and began our journey to Zimbabwe with a stop-over in Durban, South Africa in-between. The reason for stopping over in South Africa was to celebrate the centenary birthday of a wonderful woman named Dorothy May Costello – a woman I am so very proud to call my Grandmother.



We had a fantastic time meeting up with family from all over and reacquainting ourselves with those we hadn't seen for literally decades and then the day after the birthday party we took Granny down to Ushaka Beach and she stood in the Indian Ocean and laughed and shrieked with delight as the waves washed up around her legs.



What an awesome privilege to share a special moment with her.

We then all had a great lunch on the beach front at a funky restaurant called Moyo, where a lady painted our faces and we ate interesting and very delicious food like air dried kudu salad!





My Grandmother, tired but elated shared a poem she had been memorising and had us in tears as she spoke of the journey that is life and it was with deep sadness that we all said goodbye realising that we may never see her again this side of heaven and indeed this might be true of the other members of family who had travelled from as far as America, UK and Mauritius to honour a fine grand old dame!

### **Dorothy May Costello 100 years old and still amazing!**



Friday 26th November we began the last leg of our journey home to Zimbabwe. The details of how we got here are amazing and there has been such grace and favour afforded us as we managed to make our connections despite having too much luggage and our flight being delayed! As we descended toward Harare International Airport it was impossible not to recognise that deep sense of contentment that comes with knowing you are right where you

are supposed to be. We were greeted by the wonderfully warm sunshine, the happy faces and cheerful voices of Zimbabweans, and Dave and Maxine who were so kindly waiting to transport us to our new home!

When we arrived at the flat we were swept up by the incredibly joyous welcome of our precious friends who had worked so hard to get the flat in order for our arrival and had even stocked our fridge and cupboards! Tea, coffee cake, much laughter and the icing on the top – we had electricity too!

Since then we have settled in as though we have always lived here. There has been no sense of ‘adjusting’ and we take the irregular electricity supply in our stride – no doubt because we are hooked up to a generator when we need a bit of power! What a blessing to be where we are, it must be incredibly difficult for people who do not have access to electricity at all. We have had very little electricity this week so far and the cuts last about 16 hours. This is not conducive to keeping anything fresh in the fridge and sadly I have had to throw away vegetables which have grown green mouldy exterior!

Thank the Lord today it is much better. There are suburbs which seem to never have these cuts but unfortunately our particular one is switched off often and for very extended periods. We have been lent a gas ring and bottle so we are able to boil water for the ever important cup of tea!

On Sunday the 12th Dec. our friend Meck Sibanda arrived in Harare and stayed the night over with us. Meck is one of those inspirational people who are surely storing up much treasure in heaven! He administrates the fees for the 138 orphans in Lupane which A2ZWWW pays school fees for and A2ZWWW has also now been able to give him funding to help support 10 orphans for the next 4 months. A2ZWWW also gave him enough money to buy himself some new spectacles as his current pair has a nasty crack which extends across the entire width of the one lens.

We have spoken to Taison and Rosa in Victoria Falls and we hope that we will be visiting them soon in the new year. The container is still in transit although it did arrive in Port Elizabeth, South Africa on the 02/12/10. It is due to be in Beira, Mozambique on the 27/12/10 and so it should arrive here in Harare early in January 2011. We are really looking forward to that and to being able to sort out the school bags, etc. and begin distributing these. We will take a trip to Lupane to hand over those which were donated by Aglow International specifically for the orphans there.

**Thanks to all the amazing people who play a part in the work of A2ZWWW and our lives!**