



the Mpingo Conservation Project

[Registered NGO No. 1739]

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Editor
Scotland on Sunday

Dear sir,

We were delighted to see our work featured in the article by Marc Horne on 2nd December 2007. However far from lambasting a symbol of Scottish tradition and blaming bagpipe manufacturers, we are enthusiastic to highlight the part pipers can play in protecting African heritage. Stocks of blackwood have declined due to wide-scale illegal logging, the amount of wood used to make pipes makes up a small but significant part of this. The Mpingo Conservation Project, supported by its UK partners Fauna & Flora International and the Environment Africa Trust, is helping Tanzanian communities to take control of their local forests and through sustainable management earn significantly greater sums. We will be embarking on an awareness raising campaign over the next year. This is not about making pipers feel guilty, but showing how – when they next buy an instrument – they can make a real difference to African farmers subsisting on less than £1 per day.

There were unfortunately a few minor factual errors which slipped in, for instance blackwood takes around 80 years to achieve a 40cm diameter trunk suitable for logging (not height as was suggested in the article). For more information please visit www.mpingoconservation.org. We are not connected to the Good Gifts Company that supports tree-planting in northern Tanzania.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Gordon-Maclean
Research & Communications Officer
Mpingo Conservation Project