Editors’ Preface and Acknowledgements

This volume had its origins in papers presented at a Britain Zimbabwe Society (BZS) research day, Displacement and Survival: Zimbabwe’s New Diaspora. We would like to thank the African Studies Association (UK) and St. Antony’s College, Oxford, for the support they provided for that event, which enabled us to bring over James Muzondidya from the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa. The day was a memorable occasion, indicative of the changing character of the Society’s annual research days in recent years, which have been enlivened by the growing number of Zimbabwean intellectuals based in the UK.

The BZS, which was formed in 1981, is a friendly society independent of governments of either country. It has promoted exchanges between Zimbabwean and British people, civil society organisations and academics, aiming to encourage open discussion and debate about Zimbabwe, within an overall framework of support for human rights and democracy, and a more just and equitable world order. In the light of these goals and the unfolding crisis and deteriorating relationship between Zimbabwean and British governments since 2000, the society has reoriented some of its activities, and has become engaged with the issue of Zimbabwean asylum seekers’ rights in the UK and supporting challenges to deportations. This volume reflects on the period of protracted crisis from 2000, but the BZS looks forward to a new era in Zimbabwe oriented around reconstruction, rights and democracy rather than displacement and exodus.

We would like to thank the BZS for electing us to serve as executive members at various junctures, and for the knowledge and experience that key members have shared with us. Many people have provided direct support and encouragement in the writing of this volume, have commented on draft chapters or have helped indirectly in furthering our understanding of Zimbabwean politics and society. Particular thanks are owed to BZS President Terence Ranger and the current Chair, Knox Chitiyo, Jocelyn Alexander and Stephen Chan, and to the many BZS members who made thoughtful interventions in the course of the BZS research day.