

Memories Chapter 2.

Written by Clive Horner
Friday, 21 January 2011 15:05

Chapter 2

We arrived at Lusaka airport in Zambia at about 12.00 hrs. on the 12th November after a twelve hour flight. We had a two hour wait before our flight to Kitwe. I must admit we did again wonder what we were getting into. It was so hot that as we got off the plane the blast of heat took our breath away, we could see the heat coming off the ground in a haze and were dazzled by the glare. Lusaka is the capital of Zambia, a city we would become familiar with later. The airport was basic with few facilities not the place to hang around for two hours after a long journey, we had been travelling for about twenty four hours. We were therefore relieved when it was time to board the flight to Kitwe which is on the Zambian Copperbelt. The plane we flew in was a DC4 turbo-prop, the flight took about two hours, at first we could not help but stare at the terrain below. We began to wonder if there were any towns or villageâ€™s, all we could see was miles and miles of the African bush. We finally saw Kitwe airport in the distance, we came in to land and knew our journey was almost over. The airport was a runway in the bush and the only building was a metal prefab. There was no where to shelter from the heat, also nowhere to get a drink, we were by now hot and tired and just wanted to get to our new home so we could shower and change, also Gary needed a bath and some sleep. We had left Great Yarmouth at 09.00 the previous day and it was now 16.00 which meant we had been travelling for more than thirty hours with hardly a break in the journey.

We were to be met at the airport by a company representative who I would be working with. Unfortunately he was late, so we had to stand in the sun and wait, at the same time try to keep Gary cool. By now we were starting to feel the strain, after about an hour the company representative arrived and we drove to town for a quick tour and a promise that a proper visit was arranged for the following morning. Then we were driven to the house that the company had allocated us. The house was in Phillips Street in a district known as Nkana East. When we went inside it was obvious that the company had made every effort to help us settle in. The pantry and fridge were stocked with enough food for at least a week, the house was fully furnished including crockery, kitchen equipment, bed linen and towels etc. We have finally arrived, now we would have to see if we could settle, it would be down to us. After unpacking we showered and changed and then wandered round the house and garden, I think after all the travelling we were still in a bit of a daze. It was just after sunset when we first heard the sounds of the African night. The chirping of the crickets and croaking of the tree frogs broke the silence, seeming at the time quite loud. These were sounds that would over time become familiar and friendly night sounds, particularly when camping in the bush.

Next morning we were awake very early, the sun was streaming through the windows, the birds were singing and although it was only 05.30 it was already getting warm. Although it would be a busy day it seemed like a good idea to have breakfast outside on the stoep and then sit and

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enjoy a few moments just taking in the view. The day was organised by the company, there were many things that had to be done before I started work. We were picked up from the house and driven into town where we opened a bank account, registered with the immigration department and then had a conducted tour of the shopping centre. The afternoon was our time, most of our neighbours came by to welcome us and have a chat, which was nice as we didn't feel so isolated. Next morning I started work and Jan went into town with two of the women she now knew from the day before. We still found it strange to wake so early to bright sunshine and warm mornings. On the Friday morning I was informed that our packing cases had arrived and been cleared by customs. We arranged with the company to borrow a van on Saturday morning to collect the packing cases as this would give us the weekend to unpack and put things away. We were naturally quite excited at the thought of having our own belonging and could hardly wait for Saturday morning to arrive. Once we had our own stuff we felt much more at home and began to settle. The first two weeks I had to work a lot of overtime which made it more difficult to get organised, there were still a number of things to sort out but we just didn't have the time. Jan did find a house servant, looking after Gary and doing the housework plus the washing and ironing was hard in those temperatures. The house servant's name was Lamek, he seemed a really nice guy and stayed with us for some time. There seems to be a belief in UK that to employ a house servant is wrong however a good house servant soon becomes part of the family and is usually treated as such.

The first two/three weeks were difficult as we had still not managed to find a car, this was a real tie as we were restricted as to where we could go. The people we had met since we arrived were very good and with their help we managed to get about locally, but we still did need transport of our own. Although without our own car we were restricted, we still had a lot of fun. We did find a car and it was a Cortina MK3 1.3 litre. in the years to come we were to make good use of the car and its reliability was amazing. The company social club was in walking distance from our house and the facilities were many and varied ie. Nine hole golf course, tennis courts, bowling green and sports field plus the lounge and bar facilities. Friday evenings we would have a get together at the club, the kids would all charge off to play together while the parents would sit in the sun, have a drink and a good gossip. Usually about 18.00 we would light a braai (B.B.Q.) and start cooking, which was always good for a few laughs and generally a good time was had by all. There were a number of other activities organised from time to time, bowling matches, golf competitions and tennis matches in which most of us would take part. I suppose we were quite a close knit community, even so there were few problems we all seemed to get on reasonably well together.

I suppose the worst time we had in the early years was Christmas 1972 which was our first Christmas away from home, nothing seemed right, the weather was too hot, it was impossible to eat a hot meal at lunchtime and of course none of our friends or families were there. Christmas day if I remember correctly, we got up, had breakfast and opened presents. In the afternoon we

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went for a drive, then had dinner and went to bed. I am sure that Jan came close to leaving and returning to England, but once Christmas was over life started to improve and she once again looked forward.

At this time we had no maps or information about Zambia apart from what we learnt by speaking to other people. Most weekends we would drive out to a small town or village or explore some of the bush roads we came across, often not knowing where we were going. What we had seen as miles of scrub and bush from the plane was not so when seen from the ground. Around Kitwe there were a number of small townships such as Kalalushi and Mindola, these were mining communities. We had some nice times visiting the townships which all had nice swimming pools, golf clubs and areas where Gary could play. Most of the towns and townships had tree lined avenues which had to be driven through to reach the centres. In the spring the colours and smells were unforgettable particularly when the Jacaranda and Flamboyant trees were in flower. We also enjoyed walking through the Zambia villages and talking to the local people who we found to be happy and friendly and seemed to love children. One incident I remember is the time Gary was playing with a ball in the front garden, a youth jumped over the fence and grabbed the ball, then ran off. He was seen by a house servant further down the road and within minutes every Zambian within shouting distance was in hot pursuit. It did not take them long to catch him and when they did he was given a good beating they then let him go. Jan asked Lamek why they had given him such a hiding, he replied that although adults might fight and argue it was against their custom to interfere or steal from children. This is why they became so angry.

Arriving home from work one evening Jan was waiting at the door, which was unusual so I immediately thought something had happened. Jan had been driving into town when she saw a Zambian standing at the roadside, he was selling a small animal for meat. We had always been interested in wildlife, even in England and to see this small animal being treated in such a way was just too much. Jan bought the animal and brought it home, it was her intention to return it to the bush. Where wildlife was concerned Jan had a simple approach, save it then return it to the wild. Unfortunately life is not that simple, what species is the animal what is its natural habitat, I don't know Jan said, can't you find out. This meant we would have to keep the animal until we knew, we didn't believe in caging animals and so it had the run of the house until we could find out. We didn't even know what to feed it on, now the fun starts. We kept hearing noises in the middle of the night, but as soon as we switched on the light and checked to see where the noise was coming from there would be silence. After a few sleepless nights we found out that the animal Jan had rescued was a night ape, these are nocturnal which explained everything. It would run around all night but the moment we turned on the light it would hide. Now we knew what it was we only needed to know its habitat and we could then turn it loose. We did find out its natural habitat and so were able to return it to the bush, it seemed strange at first going to sleep without worrying about sudden noises in the night.

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We were driving around the bush roads one afternoon when we came across a mining shaft, it was the first time we seen it. It turned out to be Mindola Mine, in the distance we could see what looked like a small lake. We later found out it was mindola dam which can be reached from a turn-off from the road to Kalalushi. The amount of freedom from rules and regulations took a little getting used to, we could drive anywhere without hindrance or interference apart from the cities and towns. We did come across many roadside markets such as Fisenge and the Chingola/Mufurila turn off. We were told about a place called Tinker's Claim which was not far from Kitwe off the Ndola road. We drove about 3 miles down the Ndola road, we then turned right onto a dirt road for about 2 miles then turned right onto a bush track which took us to Tinker's Claim. There is little to see at the site, just a stone cairn and a small plaque, it is here that copper was supposedly found first, leading to copper mining in the Kitwe area. The largest mine near Kitwe is the Rhokana mine on the edge of town. The cairn is on a hill and at the top one can see for miles around in all directions. It is one of the few places to get a panoramic view of Kitwe and the Rokana mine. We returned to the site many years later and found the track so badly overgrown it was impossible to get through with a vehicle. The only way to reach the cairn was to walk, we had come back to see the site, so we walked. Although the track was almost impassable the cairn was still there and of course the view was still superb. There was very little information about Zambia at the time so many of the places we went to were found by talking to other people, many who had lived there for many years. We spent a lot of time driving off the beaten track where we came across rivers, streams and often local villages. It was quite common to come across women down by the rivers and streams washing clothes or getting a bath.

Driving out of Kitwe through Kalalushi we came to a place known as the 17 mile Dambo probably because it was about 17 miles from Kitwe. It is a wooded area with quite a large lake and occasionally a group of us would get together there for a day out. It was always nice to get together, have a braai and play with the kids. The fishing was quite good but it was necessary to have a boat and at the time we didn't have one. It was said there were crocodiles in the lake but although we went there many times over the years we never saw any. Another place we enjoyed was the Mufurira Rapids which were off the Kitwe/Mufurira road. The area around the rapids was rocky and the noise of the Kafue River flowing through the rapids was deafening when the river was in full flood. It is also a great place for bird watching and there are many varieties of flowers and shrubs along the banks of the river, below the rapids. We saw some of the most unusual butterflies in the shrubs in that area, many were so beautiful it was hard to believe they were real. In all our travels around Zambia we never saw such a variety and so many anywhere else. On the way to the rapids there was a small roadside market where we would stop so that Jan could buy her boiled ground nuts which she seemed to be addicted to. Usually whenever we came across a small market we would have to stop so that Jan could get her ground nuts. We enjoyed the roadside markets, there were quite a range of foodstuff that could be bought but of course only fruit and vegetables when the seasons were right. I think our biggest surprise were the mushrooms, there were two types. The first was similar to the British in colour but were the size of a dinner plate, the second similar to the size we had bought in

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Britain but reddish orange in colour and no matter how well they were washed always tasted slightly gritty, we preferred the large ones they had the right taste. There was also other fruit and vegetables that we could buy at these markets such as pumpkin, water melon, yams, oranges, paw-paw, mango and other fruit and vegetables. It was fun buying from the markets, everything was bartered for and there was always good natured banter and laughter. Driving from Kitwe on the Ndola road there was a village near the roadside and the villagers made cycles, motorbikes and other items from wire. They were well made and we often stopped to look at them, we bought some to take back to England as presents for our families. Jan decided she wanted a cat, so we then tried to find a kitten which was not as easy as one might think. I was in Luanshya one day and saw an advert, a lady's cat had a litter of kittens. I mentioned this to Jan and she replied, see if she still has any, she had two so we drove to Luanshya and brought one back with us, Jan named the kitten Smokey. Smokey made an impact with Gary right from the start. He was twelve weeks old, grey with black stripes and so full of fun.

It had to happen again, that's what life with Jan was all about, constant surprises. I arrived home from work, once again Jan was waiting for me at the gate as before. She had a smile on her face and said promise you won't get angry, come and see what I have got. I walked round to the back of the house and there she was, the most gorgeous and friendly little monkey I have ever seen. Needless to say Jan was driving into town and passed a Zambian at the roadside selling a monkey for food. Once again Jan couldn't let that happen, once again she bought it and brought it home. So we now had another addition to the family, the monkey was a green vervet which meant she wouldn't grow too large. Jan named her Cissy, she was quite young and soon settled in and began to drive Smokey wild. I remember one afternoon we were sitting in the garden under an avocado tree when all of a sudden we found we were under attack. We were being pelted with avocado pears, when we looked up there was Cissy high in the tree throwing avocados down on us, it would not have been so bad but she was laughing and shrieking with glee. On another occasion she chased Smokey up a tree and there he sat unable to get down, Cissy by then was back on the ground jumping up and down, laughing at him. I of course had to get him down, there were times when I could have throttled her. When they were together they were a riot, they both had the run of the house and garden. I won't say any more about the antics they got up to, let it suffice to say we did not dare to have ornaments in the house and the curtains got a lot of use. I am sure that by this time Smokey was half monkey, he had certainly learnt to hold his own whether in the air or on the ground.

It was about this time we had the opportunity to move house, we had never been to happy living where we were. However the main reason for moving was security, we would be moving into the company village which was very secure. Where we were living was an area well known for burglaries, which was a constant worry. Over the next few weeks we were quite busy working in the garden and doing odd jobs around the house, finally we had things as we wanted. This

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house had much larger grounds so we decided to employ a gardener.

This was a very busy and exciting time, we had wanted a second child for some time. After seeing the doctor Jan was told that she was pregnant and the baby was due in February 1974. We have now been here for a year which seems to have flown by it is now 1973. We were both pleased at the news. For some time we had wanted to see the Victoria Falls, so we decided to travel down before Jan became too uncomfortable, so we started making plans. It was the wrong time of year as we were well into the dry season and there would be very little water flowing over the falls. The Eastern Cataract is the only part of the falls on the Zambian side of the border and was the only part we could visit at the time. The border between Zambia and Rhodesia was closed due to the Civil War in Rhodesia, we decided to make the trip anyway as we knew that once the baby was born it would be some time before we would have another opportunity. Having made up our minds I took a week off and we left Kitwe for Livingstone. Kitwe is about 600 miles from Livingstone, so we had a good run to cover in a day. Our route would take us through Fisenge to Kapiri Mposhi which is the main railway link in Zambia, then to Kabwe which is in the Zambian lead and zinc mining area of the country. There is also a small amount of silver mining there. From there we drove to Lusaka the capital of Zambia and then on to Kafue to Mazabuka, both are large farming areas. We drove on to Monze, we could now see the deterioration in the state of the road. There were potholes across the road some of which were quite large, so we had to be careful not to drive through them at speed. We carried on through Pemba and Choma, from then on the road narrowed and became single tar, through Kalomo and Zimba and then on to Livingstone. The single tar did slow us down a little as we had to pull on to the dirt at the side to pass oncoming vehicles. The journey had taken 11 hours but we were there, we had not made any advance bookings so we now had to find a hotel. This proved to be much easier than we had thought, we drove through the main street and saw the New Fairmount Hotel. We went to the reception and booked immediately, probably because it was out of season. Although by now it was quite late, we dumped our gear in the room and though we were dirty and a little tired we drove to the Victoria Falls (the African name for the falls is Mosi-o-Tunya which means the Smoke That Thunders). This first visit was brief as it was getting dark but we knew we would not have been able to sleep without having a look. We returned to the hotel had a swim and then changed for dinner. After dinner we put Gary to bed and had a relaxing evening, making plans for the next day. Standing looking at the falls was just amazing. We had heard about the Victoria Falls while in England, never dreaming we would one day be standing here over-looking them. Next morning we drove from Livingstone to the falls, it was quite amusing to see road signs saying beware of elephants and hippos instead of cattle and deer. We also passed the railway depot and were amused to see steam trains still in use. From about 2 miles away we could see the spray from the falls, we parked near the falls and walked along the edge. It was a great experience and we were surprised to find the area around the falls in its natural state, just as they must have been when Livingstone first discovered them in 1855.

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We walked across the knife edge bridge, and then climbed down to the boiling pot at the bottom of the falls which is a drop of about 100metres. The Zambezi River starts in the north west of Zambia and travels about 1000 miles before cascading over the falls with a great deal of spray and a noise like thunder. Having returned to the top of the falls we went to a small souvenir market and then visited the field museum next to the market. The museum has a collection of artefacts found in the sand and gravel around the falls area in the Zambezi River, dating back to the Stone Age. This gives some idea how long the area has been inhabited. We drove from the falls along the Upper Zambezi where we saw many small islands scattered across the river. We came to a small restaurant and decided to get some lunch, we sat outside so we could look out over the river whilst having lunch. We had hardly started to eat when the monkey's appeared, by the time Gary had tired of feeding them there was little left for us. As we sat looking out over the river we saw a herd of elephants crossing the river in the distance. It was so pleasant sitting there over-looking the river we just didn't want to leave.

We had spent so much time around the falls that first day we decided to spend some time in Livingstone and visit the National museum and some of the local shops etc. We went to the museum first and found it fascinating, it was the first time we had been able to study the history of Zambia through the ages. We also gained a lot of local knowledge which was useful in helping us decide where to go and what we would see. Having spent time at the falls we decided to drive out and see the Gorges, the 2nd and 3rd Gorges are not accessible so we drove out to the 4th Gorge along a bush road, hardly more than a track. After spending some at the Gorge we carried on to the 5th

. driving to the edge of the Gorges isn't possible and so we had quite a lot of walking to do. The track to and round the Gorges is called the Manjalide Drive, from the 5th

. Gorge we took the Arthur Drew Drive to Sangwe Gorge. Although we were hot and covered in dust, the drive was worth it, Sangwe Gorge was the best of those we had seen. Driving back to the falls in a circular route we came across a giant baobab tree with a platform near the top and a ladder going up to the platform. From the platform we had a fantastic view of the falls and surrounding area. In total there are seven gorges we have seen most, the last is Senyatti Gorge, it is 35 miles from the falls. We were told that the road was in a really bad state, almost impassable, however we decided we would still try and get to the Gorge. We loaded drinks and food in the car and set off, we chose to leave early while it was still cool. By the time we finally arrived at the Gorge we were hot and covered in dust but the trip had been worthwhile it was the best Gorge of all. On the way back to the falls we took our time, we stopped for a picnic, climbed the lookout tree and enjoyed the freedom of being in the bush. By now some time has passed and there is still much we want to see and do. We had been so busy that we decided next day would be an idle one, a day in town seemed a good idea, the morning we spent looking round the shops and the afternoon we spent lazing round the pool at the hotel. A day or two earlier we had been talking to a Zambian at the falls who told us the falls were floodlit at 21.00 every night and were worth seeing. Having had a lazy day it seemed like a good idea to

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see the falls floodlit tonight. I expected the falls to be brightly lit up but the lighting was subdued and subtle, the lights were so positioned that they enhanced the falls and seemed to give the falls an aura that seemed to make them appear eerie and ghostly.

Along the Upper Zambezi is the Livingstone game Park which if we had the time would visit, we had some idea what to expect from having seen wildlife programmes on TV in the UK. It is very different being there and driving round the game trails looking for game than watching TV which give little idea of how vast the African Parks are. The best places to find game from midday to late afternoon is around the waterholes, unfortunately because it was late in the year many of the waterholes were dried up. There was as much game grazing in the bush as there was at the waterholes. We did see quite a lot of game, Zebra, deer, baboons, wild boar and rhino were numerous. It is impossible to find elephant as they walk in and out of the park whenever they wish. However we did see many elephants along the river just outside the game park. In the centre of the park there is a small café and animal orphanage, plus reptile house and snake pit. By the time we got to there we were gasping for a drink and the chance to get out of the sun for a while. After which we had a walk round the snake pit, reptile house and the orphanage

When we left the game park it was getting quite late, so we decided to park by the river and watch the sunset. We could already hear the sound of the crickets, and as the sun went down even further, other sounds could be heard. At the time we didn't recognise many of the sounds, we were still relatively new to Africa. We stood on the bank of the river until the sun disappeared and there was nothing but the sounds of the night. We were tired, dusty but happy as we drove back to Livingstone for the night. When we were in the Field Museum there was map that we had found interesting. According to the map the original Livingstone was built at the side of the river, a little further along just past the game park. The cemetery was still there as a memorial to the early settlers, it is called the Old Drift Cemetery. We still had a day before we had to leave and return to Kitwe, so decided to try and find the cemetery, we drove along the river and right past, as it was difficult to see while driving. We tried again and on our second attempt found it. It was not far from the road but just round a bend in the road which is why we had missed it on our first attempt. As we walked around the cemetery we could imagine why they chose that particular spot. They chose that location because it was close to the river at a place where the river was shallow and could be forded. It was a mistake, not long after the settlement had been established, out-breaks of Blackwater Fever started which they knew nothing about. In a very short period most of the settlers died, they had no means of treating the fever that was killing them. Walking through the cemetery was quite sad, most of the settlers who died were in their early twenties and thirties plus quite a number of children. It was because of the Blackwater Fever and Malaria that the town of Livingstone was re-established on the present site about 4 miles from the river. Most days when driving to the falls we would pass a steam engine standing at the roadside, Gary had never seen a steam engine so we stopped and took him to see it, we also tried to explain to him how it worked. The time had come to

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return home, however we knew we would return at some time in the future. The Victoria Falls are beautiful and awesome and we now had some idea of how Livingstone would have felt, seeing them for the first time.

Although we had enjoyed our break it was nice to get home and into a routine. I started back at work and Jan although six months pregnant got on with her usual activities. It was at this time that Lamek our house servant left, it was a company rule that the house servant only could live in the servants quarters, at our old house which was outside the company village his family were able to live with him in the servant's quarters. Once we moved it would mean him living away from his family, this left him with no option but to leave. We were sorry to see him leave as we had become quite fond of him and his family. Jan interviewed a number of people before offering the job to a man called Fred. Employing a new house servant is never easy as you need to get to know him and he has to have trust in you and feel comfortable. Fred settled in very quickly and soon became very popular with Gary who would insist on helping him with his work. At this time we did not employ a garden boy as both Lamek and Fred preferred to look after the garden themselves.

One evening Fred asked if he could build a rondavil for Gary and his friends to play in. Next day he disappeared into the bush and later returned loaded with branches and dried grass for the rondavil. It was surprising how quickly he built it, in about three days he had completed it. First he spiked the branches into the ground, he then bound them together with grass. Once he was satisfied with the walls he then tied branches to the walls and then tied them together in the centre of the rondavil to form a cone. Once he was sure it would be strong enough he thatched the walls and roof with dried grass, leaving a space in the wall as a doorway. It was surprisingly strong and also waterproof. Gary and his friends had great fun playing in it and before long both Smokey and Cissy decided to move in as well.

When we moved into this house the garden had been neglected, Jan had always been a keen gardener and with the help of Fred she soon turned it into a very pleasant garden for the children to play in and for us to spend time. We much preferred to be outdoors rather than inside, often we would have a braai in the evenings and after Gary had gone to bed we would occasionally have friends round for the evening, we always sat outside.

I think now would be a good time to explain the African Braai, there are two types of braai. One we call a wet braai, we would obtain a plough disc, weld the holes up, fit legs underneath and a long handle in the centre. A fire would be lit and we would place the disc over the fire, then we

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would fry a mixture of onion, mushrooms and tomatoes. We would then add vegetables and water and leave them to simmer, we would then place meat around the outer edge to grill while the vegetables simmered in the centre. Once everything was cooked we would thicken the water in the centre and use it as gravy. The second type of braai is a dry braai which is of course a mesh placed over a fire or charcoal. We would in both cases cook a variety of meat plus on the dry braai we would cook mealies (maize cobs). This was the most common way of cooking at home, also when camping or travelling through the bush. Most Zambian households had no other means of cooking, therefore charcoal burning was quite a large industry in Zambia. The charcoal was made by stacking wood into a pile, setting fire to it and then covering the pile with damp turf. The mound would be allowed to smoulder until the smoked stopped rising. Depending on the size of the mound this could take some weeks, the turf was then cleared away and the charcoal was then bagged and sold.

We are now well into December and preparing for Christmas, we brought some of our decorations with us from England. Other decorations we made ourselves which was fun as Gary was old enough to help. We went out to the Forestry Plantation and selected a tree, unlike the Pine trees we have in England the trees here are Spruce. We were determined that this would be a better Christmas than last year, we have now settled in and become accustomed to the climate. We also know many more people than last year, we were also good friends with Keith and Eileen who were the first couple we met when we arrived over a year ago now. We also had invitations to house parties and dinner dances. Christmas day was much better than last year, we had a buffet lunch at midday and a roast in the evening when the temperature was lower. We went to a buffet dance on New Years Eve at the company club which went on well into the morning. We celebrated the New Year twice, once at midnight and again at 02.00 which was midnight in England.

Jan was now 7 months pregnant and it was now time to discuss Cissy's future, we didn't want to part with her but we had known from the start that monkeys are jealous and possessive animals. Cissy had become very attached to Jan and Gary, even I had to be careful how I approached them if she was about. Although she was a very gentle and affectionate creature, we knew that when the baby arrived she could through sheer jealousy attack the baby and probably try to kill it. It was a risk we couldn't take, the real problem was that she was now so tame we could not return her to the wild. This meant we would have to find a family who would take her on, and give her the love and freedom she enjoyed while with us. Although it took some time we did find a family who we thought would treat her as we had, so with much sadness and regret we handed her to them. Over the years we did worry about how she was being treated and if she was happy, however we felt it would be wrong to contact the family she was now living with.

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I think now would be a good time for a brief tour of Kitwe and the surrounding area. The main town is centred in and around Kuanda Square, at one end is the public library, along each side are a number of small shops. At the other end is the main shopping area, ZCBC is the main store which appears to be full of a large variety of goods, until you walk around the store and find the shelves are stacked with large quantities of a very small range of goods. Opposite the store there is a row of smaller shops which are mainly Asian owned they tend to sell clothing or hardware, the post office is also on the same side. Further down is ZOK another state owned store, ZOK tends to sell a larger variety of goods but generally of poorer quality and little in the way of foodstuff. The banks and hotels are situated at the rear of the shopping centre. I don't remember all the districts but Nkana East is where we were living, at the bottom of which is the Kafue River. The Rokana Copper mine is situated in Nkana West and to the north of Kitwe are the industrial areas. We had not lived there long before we realised that when the main items of food were in stock we would have to bulk buy. Once they sold out it could be months before new stocks would appear again. The main items which always seemed in short supply were sugar, butter, cooking oil and flour. There was a fruit and vegetable market at the edge of the town centre which always had a good variety of both. There are butchers shops, though the meat was limited to beef and pork, chicken was available from the state stores or local farmers. There were also two bakeries which baked fresh bread daily. The train and bus terminus was to the west of the town centre. Kitwe was a pleasant place to shop as all the streets were lined with trees which were mainly flamboyant and jacaranda. It was also a town that was spacious and had plenty of parking, there were also many small parks scattered throughout the town. Just outside the town limits there were a number of shanty townships. These were mainly to the north and the houses were built with pieces of sheet metal, scrap timber and cardboard or any other material that could be used. The townships were mostly lived in by Africans who had left the rural villages to find work in the towns, unfortunately there was little work in the towns. Having left their villages and the rural life, they were reluctant to return. They came to like town life and to survive they would do whatever work they could find, which was usually short term and poorly paid. Most of the shanty townships were built near the rivers and streams, which is where they would do their washing and collect water for cooking etc.

At the bottom of Central Street is the Kafue River with a pontoon ferry and on the far side is a large Zambian village. The pontoon can carry about 20 people, one evening after work we decided to walk down by the river, seeing the pontoon we thought why not cross over the river. We had never seen a village this large, so thought we would cross the river and have a walk round the village. We were a little concerned about the way we might be greeted, but while waiting for the pontoon which was on the far side we got talking to an African who lived there. When we explained what we intended doing, he offered to show us round the village and said we would be made most welcome. On this first visit we spent about two hours looking round the village and talking to the people that lived there. Most of the houses were built with mud bricks, these were made by mixing mud and grass together into blocks and then leaving them in the sun to dry. With the making of the bricks, collecting grass for the roof and the collection of other materials needed it took some time to build a house. Around the village most families would

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clear a small piece of land, which they would use to plant maize, in most African countries maize is a staple food. As with most African villages this one had a beer hall (bar), the local beer is Chibuku, it looks like gruel, and I did try it once but found the smell and taste awful. As we walked round the village we couldn't help but notice the number of people who kept touching Gary's hair. At the time it seemed strange but we later realised that since all Africans have dark curly hair, Gary's soft blonde hair was a bit of a novelty. In the African villages and townships there are no tar roads so they are very dusty places to live. There are tar roads in the Towns and Cities and a tar road from the Zaire Border in the north to Livingstone in the south. There are also tar roads between towns that are grouped closely together, otherwise all roads are dirt in varying states of repair.

We are now well into January and the baby is due within the next two weeks, we have discussed whether or not I should be present at the birth. Jan is keen on the idea that I should, however I am not sure. However Jan got her own way as usual and I agreed to be there for the birth. The hospital where Jan would have the baby was the mine hospital in Nkana West. Jan went into hospital in the morning on the 1st. February and the baby was born at 21.00 in the evening. I was there for the birth and must admit it was an experience I shall never forget. The baby was a boy and weighed in at just over 8 pounds, we had already decided that if the baby was a boy his name would be Craig. Three days later Jan and Craig came home. I said earlier that it could be difficult to obtain essential commodities. About two months before Craig was born Jan saw that ZCBC had a large amount of baby milk in stock. We calculated the amount that Jan thought we would need, and then bought a large enough quantity to cover the period we expected Craig to be on baby milk. We already knew that Jan would not be able to breast feed. The next few days were quite hectic, Gary was over the moon, he had waited a long time for his little brother or sister to arrive and wasn't about to miss out now. Craig was the centre of attention, we lived in a small community and everybody wanted to see the new baby.

It was about this time that we decided to get a boat for fishing and reaching the places we couldn't reach by land and of course also for pleasure. Boats were hard to find, most people with boats were reluctant to sell them. One day I was talking to Bruce who was my foreman at the time, he said that he had a small plywood boat in his garden. We went to see the boat and found it was in very poor condition but were sure we could fix it. It would take time, we got it home and started working on it. First we stripped off the rotten plywood and cleaned the main frame. It was apparent we would have to remove sections of the main frame, then shape and fit new timbers. This done we then replaced the plywood and sanded it down after which we sealed the new timber, rubbed it down and painted the boat. We now had a boat but no engine or trailer. We started to look around for an engine, we realised we wouldn't find a trailer so decided to make our own. Although I had some knowledge of welding, I had never taken on a job as large as this. The wheels and stub axles we got from a car breakers yard. The stub axles we welded to a length of 3 inch water pipe. The frame I laid out on the garage floor and welded

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then made and fitted the spring hangers. Finally we fitted the springs and axle plus shock absorbers. We then fitted the wheels and tow hitch. We then painted the trailer and made a board for the lights which were then fitted and wired. In Zambia before a trailer is allowed on the road it has to be approved by an MOT inspector, even though it does not require road tax. We drove to the MOT station and had the inspection carried out and a registration book was issued. While this was happening we found an engine, the engine was a 4hp Anzarni, it was a bit old but would serve our needs. Now we finally have the unit ready we need somewhere to try the boat out. After some thought we decided to go out to the 17 mile dambo, where we could try the boat and at the same time have a braai with some of our friends. We intended going there on Sunday so Saturday afternoon we checked the unit over as we wanted no problems on the Sunday.

Early on Sunday morning with much excitement and anticipation we hitched the trailer up and drove round to our friends house, their names were Allan and Barbara, they also had a son Mark. Gary and Mark were of a similar age and often played together. We all then drove out to the dambo, part of our route we drove on tar and then went on a dirt road so we could see how the trailer would behave in the bush. When we arrived at the dambo and reversed down the slipway, there were so many hands around the boat, launching was easy. We had one or two teething problems none of which would spoil our day out. The boat was only large enough to carry two adults and two children, so we had to take it in turns to explore the lake. It was a great day out and we all had a lot of fun. About a week later we were at the company club talking to a couple that we knew. During the conversation we mentioned that we now had a small boat and were looking for places to go. They said that they were members of a fishing club at Mindola Dam. The dam was about a twenty minute drive from Kitwe off the road to Kalalushu, they said it was a good place to spend the day, there was a braai area and a bar plus a family room. There was also a play area for the children, they suggested we meet them there the following Sunday, spend the day at the club to see if we liked it or not. We arrived at the club on the following Sunday morning, launched the boat and then parked the car and trailer. We went fishing on the dam taking Gary with us, Craig came also but at 3 months old I think he probably enjoyed being in the boat but knew little else about the day. At lunchtime we cooked a braai and sat at the water's edge while eating, it was a nice relaxing day out. In the late afternoon we put the boat on the trailer, after which we sat on the veranda and watched the sun go down. I don't think any of us will ever tire of watching an African sunset, I don't think any of us have ever seen a more beautiful sight. The sunset lasts for about 20 minutes but the colours as they change from yellow through the deepening shades of orange to darkness is awesome.

It was about this time that we found the car petrol tank had a leak. Keith came round as I was removing the tank, after some discussion we decided to drain the tank, fill it with water and let it stand for a week. After a week had passed we checked the tank and couldn't smell any fumes, so we decided to weld the leak. All seemed well so we put the tank back in the car, we

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poured a gallon of petrol into the tank and once again checked for leaks. We found that our repair was good but another leak had appeared in a different place. We took the tank back out, drained the fuel and cleaned the bottom of the tank and found it had previously been repaired with soft solder which had melted when we welded the tank. We thought that since we had only put a gallon of fuel in the tank and then poured it out in less than 10 minutes the fumes would not have reached a dangerous level. We were a little wary but decided if we refilled the tank with water there should be no problem in repairing the second leak. I went to the house to get the water, while I was getting it Keith decided to melt the solder and clean the tank ready to weld. As I walked back down the drive there was an almighty bang. I can vaguely remember being hit by something flying through the air at speed. I was thrown back about 10 metres and quite dazed, I think I must have passed out for a short time because the next thing I remember was Jan screaming, but as I couldn't see I did not know why. As my mind cleared Keith explained that the tank had exploded and hurtled through the air as I was walking towards it. It was apparent that I had suffered an injury to my face as I still couldn't see, we went into the house and cleaned the blood away and I could then see which was a relief. Apart from some minor cuts and bruises there was one bad gash under my left eye. We went to the hospital and the nurse decided it needed stitches, she called the standby doctor as she felt that since it was so close to the eye it would be safer to have a surgeon do the stitches. After about 30 minutes the doctor arrived and checked the cut, he reeked of whisky and I remember thinking is this guy capable of stitching the cut. It was needless worrying, he was so good that the only sign today is a slight scar. The tank had now to be replaced so we toured the scrap yards to find another. We eventually found a second hand tank and bought it for 40 Kwacha. The currency of Zambia is the Kwacha and Ngwee, there are one hundred Ngwee to one Kwacha. We fitted the tank and there were no leaks.

Kundalilla Falls is a place we have been intending to visit for some time, it is situated off the Great West Road just past the turnoff to Serenge. We have heard that it is a good place to camp and the waterfall is one of the best in Zambia. It is about 5 hours drive from Kitwe and we would be travelling through country we had not yet seen. Allan and Barbara were also interested in going so we agreed to spend a weekend there with them. It is quite a good run but as expected the last few kilometres are on dirt roads. We left early on Saturday morning, travelled from Kitwe to Kapiri Mposhi where we took the road west. We reached the falls at about 11.00 had a quick look round and then set up camp. The falls are quite high and narrow at the top, widening out as they go down to a large pool at the bottom. It was a good climb to the top especially for me as I was carrying Craig in a sling. However the view from the top was well worth the climb in getting there, we could see for miles across the surrounding countryside. We then walked down to the bottom where the water cascaded into a pool, it was great swimming in the pool. The water was quite cold and crystal clear, we all felt much cooler and fresher after our swim, and even Craig got wet with a little help. That evening we were sitting by the fire and in the distance we could hear the sound of a troop of baboons. We noticed the noise they were making seemed to be getting closer, after about 20 minutes we realised they were heading for our camp. It was great as they came right into our camp. It was a large troop,

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there were females carrying their young babies plus many young baboons and of course the troop leader, who I must say was rather on the large side. We did wonder if they might become aggressive or cause some damage as they passed through the camp, since they had a number of young with them. We need not have worried as they just looked at us watching them and passed on through. It is this kind of incident that makes camping and travelling in the bush worthwhile.

Since we had first seen the Victoria Falls we had known that we would return when there was more water flowing. The rains had stopped a month ago, and we had also found out that it was possible to visit the Rhodesian side. We spent a few days on the Zambian side and of course the falls were much more impressive than on our first visit. The force of the water and the amount of spray was unbelievable and now we know why the Zambians call the falls Mosi O Tunya. The noise was deafening and the spray was shooting into the air many hundreds of feet. Last time we had walked across the knife edge bridge and were dry, this time even with raincoats it was impossible to keep dry however it was fun. Now we know why they call it the rain forest. From Livingstone we drove to Kazengula and crossed the Zambezi River on a pontoon ferry to Botswana and then through Botswana to the Rhodesian border and on to the Victoria Falls. When Zambia closed its border with Rhodesia, Botswana kept its border open as they relied on trade with South Africa and Rhodesia. Which is how we were able to drive to the falls on the Rhodesian side of the border. When we arrived at the Rhodesian border post instead of stamping our passports, they stamped a sheet of paper and inserted it in our passports. They told us to keep the paper while we were in Rhodesia and when we arrived back at the border post they would remove it. This way the Zambian authorities would not know that we had been to Rhodesia. Had they found out we would have been banned from re-entering Zambia. I am not going too deeply into our trip as I will be writing about a trip we made to Rhodesia a few years later. We made our first stop at Victoria Falls and then on to Wankie Game Park. We stayed a few days in the game park, then from there we drove to Bulawayo and out to the Matopos National Park which is where Cecil Rhodes is buried. The rocky outcrop where he is entombed is called World View, probably because of the panoramic view of the park in all directions. We visited some of the traditional villages and saw some of the tribal dances. It was a great holiday and we even managed to buy some pork pies which I am partial to and have not been able to get since leaving England. We were glad that we had now seen the falls in full flood. Although we were impressed the first time we saw them, they were much more impressive now they were in full flood.

After returning from our trip to the falls we spent some time at home and only went for odd days out locally. We continued to have the odd day out at the fishing club where we would spend a day fishing, also the 17 mile dambo but we had heard of other places which we wanted to see. One of those places was Rodwins (some knew it as Lake View). It was situated just off the Kitwe Mufulira road about 45 minutes drive from Kitwe. It was a small private lake surrounded

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by trees and a popular spot to spend a day or a weekend. There were braai areas, a small children's playground and paddling pool. It was also possible to hire canoes which were one of the main attractions for us. Although Gary was only 3 years old he was quite a good swimmer and loved canoeing, Craig was only 6 months old but still enjoyed being there. We would normally go with a group of friends and have a braai, it was a great place to go and relax with the children. It was about this time that I changed jobs yet again, a vacancy had come up in the transmission line township electrical section. I was asked to move across as assistant foreman. At first I said no as the transmission section was known for the trouble that could arise without warning. I should add here that many of the linesmen had at some time been in prison for various crimes such as murder, grievous bodily harm and other violent crimes. I was then asked if I would take the job for 3 months trial, after which if I wanted I could have my old job back. To be honest once I got to know the men and they got to know me, I didn't want to give the job up, they had a reputation they did not deserve. All they asked for was to be treated properly and not as misfits. We got on well, I treated them in the way I would treat any other person and they responded to that. Since we were constructing and maintaining transmission lines throughout the Copperbelt, it gave me the opportunity to meet a much wider variety of people. It also meant that I had to visit towns and copper mines throughout the copperbelt which gave me the chance to buy essential goods that were not available in Kitwe. Apart from this aspect I enjoyed the work, which interested me as I had never had the opportunity to work in this field before. One problem that was ongoing were copper thieves, even now I find it hard to believe that these people would steal copper from live 66kv transmission lines. The method they used was quite simple, although a little dangerous. They would climb to the top of a suspension tower and cut through the eyebolt holding the top insulator to the tower. The conductor would then fall to the ground and trip on earth fault protection, if the fault was still there after 30 seconds the line would lock out. The thieves would wait for the line to lock out. They would then cut the conductor into short lengths and disappear into the bush. On many occasions we tried to catch them but by the time we could get there, they would be long gone.

We are now coming into the rainy season and the weather has become very hot and humid, it is always a relief when the rains finally start and the temperature drops. On some occasions we have been known to run out into the garden and play with the lads, all of us soaked to the skin but cooling off. The rainy season is not quite what it seems, fortunately it rains mostly at night and only for short periods. Though when it does rain it is really heavy which is why we don't have gutters around the roofs on houses but storm drains in the ground, this is the only way the amount of rain that falls can clear. When the weather becomes really oppressive we know we are in for a good storm. Watching a thunder storm at night is an experience that few ever forget. The fork and sheet lightning light up the sky and the sound of the thunder causes the house to shake, I don't know anyone who can sleep through a thunder storm.

We are now well into December and looking forward to Christmas, this will be our third

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Christmas in Zambia and we are hoping it will be the best. We now know many more people and are much more organised than in previous years. Gary is now almost four years old and Craig is ten months old. As the lads have got older, Christmas has become much more fun. We have also got used to living in the sun and now organise our Christmas break in a different way to the way we did in the UK. This year we are taking the children to the Christmas Party at the fishing club of which we are now members. It was exciting for the boys and certainly different to see Father Christmas arrive in a power boat, it was a good afternoon out and a great start to Christmas. We also took the boys to the company Christmas Party where Father Christmas arrived on a sledge pulled by a fire engine with the siren going and the lights flashing. Before the party there was a fancy dress competition which the parents loved but the children hated. There are no costume hire shops in Zambia and most of the mothers put in a lot of time and effort in making the children's costumes. They were all hand made and material was limited to what was available at the time.

Christmas Eve we went to Carols by Candle-light in Freedom Park, this is a wonderful experience and what Christmas is about. The service is held in the open air, no one is allowed to light their own candle. The vicar lights the first candle and all the other candles are lit from there, it is quite amazing to see the night go from dark to an eerie glow slowly getting brighter as more and more candles are lit. The service was good and the atmosphere electric, we all enjoyed the evening and felt that Christmas had truly arrived. Half way through the service Father Christmas would walk through the congregation and collect gifts for the children in hospital. It was wonderful to see everyone giving gifts for the children who would be in hospital over Christmas. Christmas day we spent at home with the lads, Boxing Day we went to the fishing club, the lads played with the toys they had got for Christmas and we had a lazy day with a salad lunch of left-over's from Christmas Day. New Year's Eve seem to come around very quickly this year and instead of going to the company club we went to a house party. We had a really great New Year but still had to celebrate it twice. Shortly after the New Year I was asked by the company if I was interested in signing a contract for a further two years. Jan and I talked it over and decided we would stay for a further two years. By now we had settled in and were enjoying the life we had, the school was very good, we had much better hospital facilities than we would have had in England. However most of all we had so much freedom without the bureaucracy that the English have to live with. By signing a new contract we were entitled to go on leave six months earlier than we expected, so once again we had plans to make. We decided not to fly directly to England but make a stopover on the way. There were so many places that we wanted to see, however we finally decided to stay a week in Mombasa and a week in Nairobi. Kenya is a country we have heard much about over the years, so we decided that now we had the opportunity to spend a stopover there we would do so rather than in Europe. We went to the travel agent and booked the tickets, after which all we could do was wait

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In November last year we became involved in stockcar racing, Keith who I have mentioned earlier had built a stockcar and wanted to take part in the races. There is a suburb of Kitwe called Garneton, which is where the racing took place. In Zambia most of the activities that take place are organised and run by the participants. When Keith and the other people involved decided to take up stockcar racing they not only had to build the cars but renovate the track and clubhouse. It was quite a task and took months to complete, first the track had to be built, this was necessary as they could then start racing which would bring in the revenue they needed to improve the grounds and clubhouse. Race days were always well attended and great fun, even though by the end of the day we would all be covered in dust. The Africans loved to watch and would cheer and shout every time there was a crash, which of course added to the atmosphere. At the back of the track was a railway line and most afternoons when we had a race meeting the passing trains would stop. The driver, fireman etc would watch the racing for about thirty minutes before moving on. This must have created havoc with the time tables.

When Craig was born we bought a cine camera, by the time we returned to England he would be 18 months old and our parents had missed his early childhood. We thought it would be a nice surprise for them to be able to see him on film, it would make up in some ways for having missed his growing up. We spoke to Fred, who agreed to stay at the house while we were away and look after Smoky. Jan also cooked enough food for Smoky to last until we returned. We also arranged with Keith and Eileen to help Fred if it was necessary.

Before anyone can leave Zambia they must have a tax clearance certificate, as I was employed on a PAYE basis this was easy to arrange. Unfortunately the tax office can take up to 3 months to process the forms after the date they receive the application. We applied in plenty of time but unfortunately with only a week to go before leaving it had not come through. I phoned the tax office which was in Chingola and was advised to collect it from the office as they had mislaid the original application. Having driven to Chingola and collected the clearance certificate, we could now pick up our tickets from the travel agent. Next we had to go to the customs office in town to get customs clearance, for our camera and binoculars before taking them out of the country. If this was not done we could be charged duty for them on our return. Having now completed all the formalities we were then able to leave the country. We drove to Kitwe airport from where we flew to Lusaka and then from Lusaka to Mombasa in Kenya.