

Memories Chapter 3.

Written by Clive Horner
Monday, 14 February 2011 11:44

Chapter 3

I suppose in some ways we still could hardly believe that we were finally on our way home. It had taken many months to settle in Zambia and although we enjoyed our new life. I think we had to return before we would really be sure that we had not made a mistake. We are now on our way to Mombasa in Kenya for a week's holiday before continuing our journey to England. On the way to Mombasa the flight landed at Kilimanjaro airport in Tanzania for a two hour stop. As we approached the airport the captain announced that we would be passing Mount Kilimanjaro and if we looked out of the starboard porthole we would be able to see the mountain. All that we could see was the base of the mountain, then we all looked up. It was unbelievable, we were actually flying round one side of the mountain well below the peak. It really was an awe inspiring sight, we were looking up at the peak half obscured in the early morning mist, with the sun just coming up over the horizon. As I said we had a two hour wait at Kilimanjaro airport, I still remember sitting outside with Jan and the lads and watching the sun climb over the mountain. It was a lovely sight and I am sure that we would never live in a more changeable, interesting and more romantic place than Africa which seemed to have a magical charm that was forever changing. From Kilimanjaro we flew on to Mombasa airport and were taken to our hotel which was on the edge of Diana Beach. The town of Mombasa is an island, linked to the mainland by a bridge and a causeway, our hotel was actually on the mainland. The setting was ideal, white sandy beach, light sea breeze barely moving the palm trees and a coral reef. All this only a two minute walk from our room which was on the ground floor of the hotel.

We had decided what we wanted was a relaxing holiday which would give us time to adjust before travelling on to England. Having arrived at the hotel we wandered outside for a walk around to see what there was to do and see, it was quite impressive, there was a great deal to see and do. It was the right kind of place for the children. They were going to have fun of that I am sure. This holiday was also our first experience of German package tourists, they are so selfish and arrogant, it is beyond belief. They make it quite apparent that the German people feel they are the superior race and all other races are scum in comparison. However we had by now travelled a fair amount and made sure they would not spoil our holiday which we and the children had been looking forward to. When we left England Gary was 20 months old, although he had spent many happy hours on the beach, he could remember nothing. This was to be the first beach holiday that either of the boys would remember. This holiday we thought would be special for them and a holiday they would remember. There was a tourist bureau in the hotel foyer where we were able to obtain information about Mombasa and the surrounding area. About 100 yards from the beach was the coral reef, and at low tide we could swim out to the reef, and walk along the top. The sea life was fantastic, there were sea urchins, hermit crabs and a large variety of small colourful fish darting about in the rock pools. The variety and colours of the star fish and sea shells was quite unbelievable. Most evenings after dinner we would walk along the seashore. It is a little difficult to describe the feeling one gets when walking along a soft sandy beach at night. The moonlight reflecting off the water. Soft sand sliding under your feet. The warm breeze against your body, taking away the heat of the day. Plus the feeling of isolation, as though you are in a world of your own. We swam out to the reef whenever possible,

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there was so much to see that we never tired of searching for new creatures and still found those we had already seen fascinating. One morning we went out to the reef at high tide in a glass bottomed boat. This time we could see a much greater variety, many of which were much larger than we had yet seen. We could not only see the reef but also the area around the reef. The water was crystal clear and we could see right down to the seabed which was of course white sand. There were octopus and squib, some of which were quite large, they lived at the edge of the reef and were difficult to spot. All along the reef and on the surrounding seabed were enormous sea slugs. The boat anchored over the reef and both Jan and Gary went snorkelling while I looked after Craig, they had great fun and were sad when it was time to go.

We walked from our room one morning and through the palm trees on our way to the beach. As we were walking through the trees we saw a Kenyan climbing one, naturally we stopped and watched to see what he was doing. When he reached the coconuts he stopped, cut one off and brought it down with him. Once on the ground he chopped the kernel from the coconut with a machete, it took some time as the kernel is thick and quite tough, also he did not want to damage the nut inside the kernel. Once he had removed the kernel he cut the coconut into halves which he gave to Gary and Craig, who were thrilled and couldn't wait to get their teeth into it. After this we would often see him early in the morning working in the gardens. The next time we saw him climbing a tree to get a coconut we took a cine film, which seemed to please him. When he came down from the tree he cut open the coconut and gave it to Jan. After two days spent on the beach we decided to go into Mombasa, the hotel ran a free bus service every hour throughout the day. Mombasa is a town in two parts the old town and the new town. That day we decided to spend time in the newer part of the town which is where the shops, street markets and caf  s are located. As we walked along the main street we saw a huge archway crossing the street. It was two enormous artificial elephant tusks, stretching out and up forming an arch across the road, apart from the size they were also very realistic in colour. They were known as the gateway to Mombasa. We wandered in and out of shops, around the street markets, not looking for anything specific, just enjoying the atmosphere although we did want to buy gifts to take with us to England. Just as in Zambia everything had to be bartered for in the street markets. Bartering is not just something that Jan was good at but also seemed to enjoy, at times it would seem to take forever to buy goods that were worth only a few pence. It often seemed such a waste of time to me but Jan enjoyed it. I have known Jan barter for 10/15 minutes and then walk away with nothing, Jan would say its fun, although I can't agree, it does add to the atmosphere surrounding the markets.

Mombasa had been a large Slave Trading port in the past and therefore had a varied population, there were many Arabs and people of Arab descent plus many of mixed races. The slave trade in Mombasa had been controlled by the Moors. There is such a wide range of souvenir goods for sale at the street markets from wood carvings to Moorish silver, many interesting hours were spent looking round the street markets. Gary and Craig were too young

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to have much interest and appeared to be bored for a large part of the time. That is until we came across a stall selling African drums, which they were both determined to have, they did get them although I am not sure it was a good idea. The highlight of their day was probably when we stopped for lunch at a pavement café and they had a coke float with their lunch plus the opportunity to play their drums.

The old town is situated around the port, which is where the slave market was, at the entrance to the port is Fort Jesus which was built by the Moors in the slave trading days to protect their interests. It is a massive fort and must have taken a lot of labour to build (probably slave labour) it was obviously built to last as even today it is in very good condition. Along the waterfront there are still signs of the slave markets and warehouses built and used by the Moors. The streets in the old town are much narrower than the newer side of town. The Moors knew how to build as most of the buildings are still in good condition and are being lived in today. Walking around the old town there is a feeling of going back in time, it is as though the slave trade never stopped. We were fortunate when we visited the old town to find a young Kenyan student who was studying English at the local college. To earn the money he needed for his studies, in his spare time he worked as a guide for English tourists. His fee was quite reasonable and without his knowledge and assistance we would have missed many parts of the town and known very little of the town's history. Although we had spent some time in town which we found very interesting, the main purpose of the holiday was to give the children a holiday to remember, therefore most of our time was spent on the beach and out on the coral reef, which is what they enjoyed the most.

One incident I remember well was England Playing West Germany in a World Cup qualifier. During our stay in Mombasa this match took place. We had become friendly with an English couple staying at the same hotel, there were also a large number of German tourists at the hotel. Before the evening of the match there had been some good natured banter between us and the Germans. The evening of the match arrived and we decided to form a group, we went to the hotel lounge to watch the match (praying that England would win). It was a tough match and kept swinging each way, then the Germans started to cheer, Germany were in front and the match was nearly over. Suddenly they went quiet, England came from behind and took the match at the last minute. It was a great evening, we all had a good time and when the match ended the Germans came over and congratulated us on winning the game.

Our holiday in Mombasa was nearly over, and we are once again looking forward to reaching England and meeting our families again. We flew from Mombasa to Nairobi where we would have an overnight stop before flying to England early the following morning. The airline had booked us into the Hilton Hotel for the night which we were looking forward to, it's not often a family

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such as our €™s would have the opportunity to stay in such luxury even though it was only for one night. Unfortunately it went wrong from the start, when we landed at Nairobi airport the hotel was not there to meet us as had been arranged. We were standing outside the airport when a university professor arrived, he had just brought a friend to the airport. He asked us why we were waiting, he then said he would give us a lift to the hotel. He did explain that they would not be happy about us arriving in a beat-up land-rover. He was of course right, when we arrived at the hotel they made their views known. Talk about attitude after all it was their fault that we had arrived in the manner we did. However things went from bad to worse, the rooms were hot and airless, sleep was impossible and the food not of the kind of quality we would expect from a hotel of this class. In all honesty we would rather have spent the night in the bush with a tarp, a good fire and food cooked on a braai. It was a relief to leave for the airport the next morning. The drive to the airport was very interesting, the driver was knowledgeable and proud of his City and since we had time to spare took us on a tour of Nairobi on the way to the airport.

We had booked our flight from Nairobi to London with Lufthansa and when we went to the airport check-in to confirm our booking, were amazed to find we had been allocated seats in the first class cabin. I asked the clerk to check our booking as we had booked tourist class. He checked and said there was no mistake, that we would be flying first class to Heathrow. He then explained that the tourist class had been fully booked by package tour companies and therefore all full fare paying tourist class passengers had been transferred to first class. Although we were travelling first class we did not expect to receive the service provided to first class passengers, however we were wrong as we were treated in the same way as all other first class travellers. We all enjoyed the flight and never in the past had we had the service and luxury that we had on this flight. We had contacted our parents before leaving Zambia to give them our travel itinerary. After arriving at Heathrow we would have had to travel to Great Yarmouth by train. Our parents had other ideas and decided to drive to Heathrow and meet us there on our arrival. We had quite a re-union at the airport and then set off on the drive to Great Yarmouth. Our parents had hired a mini-bus as they felt it would be more practical than driving to the airport in two cars. By the time we arrived in Great Yarmouth we were worn out we had been travelling for about 17 hours.

Once again my memory has temporarily let me down, Gary was attending a crÃ“che in Kitwe and one day we received a letter from the owner of the crÃ“che asking us to attend a meeting at the local school. When we arrived for the meeting we found that other parents who had children at the crÃ“che were also there. It was only then that we realised something was wrong. The woman who ran the crÃ“che had a cat which had died suddenly and no reason for the sudden death could be explained by the vet. Since there was a slight possibility that the cat might have died from rabies, it was decided by the health authorities to hold a meeting and explain the implications to us the parents. They explained that although the cat had been sent to the research laboratory for tests to be carried out, the results of the tests would not be known for about 3 weeks. That was too long as inoculation against rabies had to start within 10 days after being in contact with the animal, otherwise it would not be effective. We were then told that

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although the injections could begin immediately, there could be possible side effects which we needed to know about before giving our consent. Although it rarely happened, there had been the odd occasion when a patient had re-acted badly to the drug. If that happened then brain damage could occur and the patient would spend the rest of their life, like a cabbage. It was a difficult decision to make, do you subject your child to the slight risk of rejecting the drug or do you sit back and wait for the test results by which time if the tests came back positive it would be too late to start the treatment. There was a lot to discuss but we had little time for discussion, so the decision was made. The children would have to have the injections. The side effects were minimal to most people, whereas if the cat had died of rabies then anyone who had been in contact with the animal would die.

At this time the injections were given in the stomach, not in the arm as they are given now. They are without doubt the worst injection a nurse can be asked to give and are very painful for the patient. There were about 20 children all between 3 and 5 years old. Although there was a lot of crying and screaming, I have a lot of admiration for these children. They would have put many of us adult to shame. In all Gary would have to have eleven injections, nine were given in Zambia and the last two would have to be given in England. The vaccine had to be kept chilled or it would be ineffective. The only way we could keep the vaccine chilled was to put in a flask and pack the flask with ice. This worked while we were travelling but we had to rely on the hotel to keep it chilled while we were there and the airlines to supply ice when we needed it. Needless to say everyone did their bit and we arrived at Heathrow with the vaccine still packed with ice. Before our arrival in Great Yarmouth we were not too concerned about Gary having the last injections in England, as our doctor here was German and we felt sure he would manage quite easily. We were wrong, our doctor was on holiday and the doctor standing in for him had no idea how to give the injection. Eventually after reading the instructions and listening to us he managed. I am glad he had to give two injections and not all eleven. Having watched him did make us realise how good the nurses were in our own hospital.

When we left England in 1972 we rented our bungalow out and since we would only be in the country for six weeks, did not really want to ask the tenants to leave. Somehow we felt it wouldn't be right. My parents had offered to put us up for the duration of our visit, an offer we gladly accepted. I also think they had an ulterior motive as it meant they would see much more of Gary and Craig. We felt slightly strange and bewildered for a day or so, we had been gone for almost three years and lived a different way of life. We were told by my parents that there had been many changes in the town since we went away, somehow we expected everything to be the same as when we left. The first day we spent most of the day meeting relatives who had waited a long time to see Craig and now had the chance. For us it was a chance to relax and catch up on all the local gossip. The only decision we made that day was to find a car as soon as possible. The first few days were quite hectic, we seemed to have very little time to go round the town or visit the places we had waited to see for some time. After the

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first week, things calmed down and we were able to buy a car, it was a Cortina 1600cc Estate in reasonable condition and about the size we had been looking for. It is strange how when you live in a town from childhood, how little you really know about the town, and seem to take everything around you for granted. Having left the town for some time and then returning, we saw the town in a different way. Probably through the eyes of a tourist rather than a resident, as we walked through the town and along the promenade we noticed many buildings and features that were there long before we left. Yet until now we were unaware of their existence.

When we left Great Yarmouth in 1972 there was no one-way system. On our return the area around the Haven Bridge was all one-way, this did confuse us for a time as it had also apparently confused many of the residents, when the system was first introduced. The market in the town centre was still the main attraction for Jan as it had always been when we lived here. In the winter it was quite a small market which sold a range of goods from fruit and vegetables to hardware and clothing. In the summer it doubled in size and an even greater variety of goods were to be found. It was paradise for Jan who could wander round a market all day and often buy nothing. The boys and I soon got fed up with the crowds all pushing and shoving, and having walked round once would arrange to meet Jan later. Gary and Craig much preferred to walk around the shops and stores, in particular the toy shops which they had not seen before. Most of the shops at the time were situated around the market which was convenient. I am sure that many people must have thought they were deprived or a little crazy, their antics and excitement were amusing to watch. They had never seen such a variety of cakes, sweets and ice cream. Like most children they wanted everything at once, we had told them about England and how there were no shortages. I am sure until now they were not sure whether to believe us, fortunately for us the novelty did wear off although it was fun while it lasted.

We were walking along the beach one morning when we saw a sign advertising boat trips to Scroby Sands, it is a sand bank about 2 miles off the beach. On the sand bank there is a large seal population. We decided to take the trip as in all the years we had lived here we had never before thought of going, we were also sure that the boys would enjoy the trip. It was a bright sunny day, the sea was a little choppy and there was a fine spray blowing in over the bows which added to the fun for the boys. As we left the beach and headed out towards the sand bank, we had a great view of the beach and seafront over the stern. It looked completely different when viewed from the sea. We reached Scroby Sands and trolled around the sand bank which appeared to be completely covered with seals. There were so many it was hard to see any sand. I had no idea that seals could be so noisy, we were about 300 yards away and had difficulty in hearing one another speak. I didn't realise that the seals were so many different shapes and sizes. Not only did we all enjoy seeing the seals but the boat trip was also quite an experience, especially for the boys who had never been out to sea before.

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There were so many places along the seafront which we had known about when we lived here but until now they were of no interest to us. Now that we had the children we saw things in a different light and began to enjoy what was available. We stared at the Britannia Pier and walked along the north drive, having passed the bowling greens and tennis courts we came to the waterways which is a small park with a canal round the outside edges. There were boat rides along the canal from which could be seen a variety of plants, shrubs, flower beds and small trees all beautifully laid between rockeries and pagoda™s and in the centre was an open air café. Along the banks were Disney Characters and fairy tale figures plus a number of bridges. During the day the park was very pleasant and picturesque, at night the figures and bridges were colourfully lit and there was subdued lighting among the plants and bushes around the park. We took a trip round the waterways during the day and then returned at night when the lights were on. Both trips were worthwhile and enjoyed by the boys. Just past the waterways there was a boating lake with rowing and paddle boats for hire, this the boys had to try. We kidded ourselves that we were doing these things for the boys and although they had fun, I am sure we had just as much fun as they did. The marine parade which we had found to be Garish and Tawdry in the past was different now we had the children. They loved the atmosphere and the hotdog stalls plus the amusement arcades also the variety of souvenir shops. The candy floss stall was Jan™s favourite, she loved the stuff, and soon had the boys eating it as well. We also took the lads to Gorleston sea front, which was much the same as Great Yarmouth but on a smaller scale. The main reason for crossing to Gorleston was because there were far less people and it was nice to watch the ships coming into harbour. There was a nice beach and the cliffs which were nice to walk along and a good area for the children to play. The lifeboat shed was also on that side of the river, and open to the public. We took the lads round the lifeboats, there were two boats, one inshore boat and one deep water boat. I am not going into detail regarding the town and amenities as I have done so earlier.

We also had days out around the broads, one of the places we went to was Wroxham. It has always been a favourite of ours, the river runs through the centre of the village and then on into the broad. There are many good pubs, and restaurants along the river one of which we went to for lunch. It was nice to sit by the river and watch the children feed the ducks and swans on the river, something they couldn™t do in Zambia. Our main purpose in going to Wroxham was the large store in the centre, in the summer they sold a large variety of summer clothing for both adults and children at reasonable prices. This gave Jan the chance to buy most of the clothing we would need in Zambia for the next two years. We also took the boys on a broads cruise from there, we went down river, through Wroxham Broad and then to Salhouse Broad where we spent a little time going round the broad and then returned to Wroxham. It took about two hours for the round trip which was fun and also interesting. Salhouse Broad that we have been to many times by car, is isolated and a really pretty place. We would park at the side of the road and walk for about 15 minutes through a tree lined track to reach the broad. Once we reached the broad we would wander along the bank and look at the flora which in spring was really colourful. Usually we would take one of our parents dogs with us, they were Kim and Duke, both German Shepherds. We also took the boys to other places around the broadland area that we enjoyed including some of the villages, Horning, Loddon and South Walsham to name just a few. Where-ever we went the boys had fun particularly when we took one of the dogs with us.

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I have mentioned Framlingham Castle before but as it is a place we enjoy, we naturally took the boys there for a day out and a picnic. Having walked round the castle we sat on the grass area around the moat for our picnic and to give the boys a chance to run around and play without offending anyone. Towards evening we packed our picnic away and walked down the road from the castle, at the bottom of the road is an old English pub, we stopped and sat outside for a cool drink, it had been a really hot day. It was a nice way to end the day which had been enjoyable but tiring. While we sat outside the pub we talked of relatives and friends and the way everything had changed in the time we had been away. Once again the conversation brought back forgotten memories.

When I was a child about 10 or 11 years old, I had an uncle who kept a boat on Breydon Water. Breydon Water is a large expanse of water surrounded by marshland. Three rivers flow into Breydon Water, they are the Yare, Bure and the Waveney. It is very well known for its mud banks and in the summer many cruisers run aground or drift onto the banks. My uncle's name was William Gates or Billy to his friends, he was the tow-man for the Great Yarmouth Yacht Station at the time. During the school holiday's we would go with him in the boat for a day out, and help get the stranded cruisers off the mud banks. As a child it was always a good day out and a lot of fun. His other income came from catching eels. He would put the eel pots out early in the morning and go back in the evening to lift the pots with the day's catch which he would then take home. The only problem was that the eels had to be kept alive when sold. This meant keeping them in large steel tanks until he had enough to sell. This may have been where his nickname came from as he was known locally as Skins. He was a well known character around town and could often be seen riding a carrier bike with his dog Trixie sitting in the carrier. I can remember going to my grandmother's house after school one night, and there was this enormous gun leaning against the wall. It was so long that the butt was in the bottom left hand corner of the wall and the end of the barrel just fitted in the top right hand corner. It was a punt gun, these guns were mounted in punts, and ropes were attached to the mounts to absorb the recoil when one was fired. Before the floods of 1953 my uncle made money from wild fowling on Breydon Water. Unfortunately the punt was washed away in the flood and smashed to pieces against the banks of the river. The punt gun was being sent to London to be sold.

Twenty miles from Great Yarmouth is the City of Norwich, which is the largest city in Norfolk. We had been there in the past for shopping and to visit places such as the Cathedral, Castle and other places of interest in the City. We had spoken about Norwich to the boys and thought now would be a good time to take them there, and show them some of the places we had spoken of. Craig was still a little young to understand, but we were sure he would enjoy the shops and a tour round the castle, especially the armoury. Norwich Castle is built on a large

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mound and from the ramparts there is a fantastic view right across the City. We took the boys on a tour round the castle, which is also a museum, and they both enjoyed the tour. The Cathedral is close to the market so we took them there on our way to the market. Norwich market is mostly under cover and the stalls are crowded quite close together. As usual we were still wandering round the market at lunchtime, not buying much, just looking. After lunch we went for a walk down Grapes Hill, which is part of the old city and still has a cobbled street and small old town shops, a real blast from the past. As we were leaving Norwich and driving through Thorpe, Jan spotted the Railway Station and asked the boys if they would like to go back to Great Yarmouth on the train. They both said yes in the way only children can, so I left the three of them at the station. I then drove to Great Yarmouth station to meet them on their arrival. When they arrived at Great Yarmouth station, Jan said that they had enjoyed the journey back and chattered none stop all the way. It was the first time either had been on a train and their excitement was evident.

We have always had an interest in wildlife even before we left England, and would often spend a day at one of the local wildlife parks. One of the parks that we really liked was at Kessingland near Lowestoft, we first went after it had just opened to the public and over the years watched it grow in size. One Sunday it was a bright sunny morning and so we decided to take the boys there for a picnic, my parents decided they would also like to come with us. We packed a picnic for lunch and off we went, there was always lots to see and do, we were of course pressured into going to the children's corner first. There were the usual hamsters, rabbits, goats, sheep and chickens plus many more small animals which appeal to children. There were also aviaries with a variety of birds, parrots and macaws and many more. It took quite some time to get away from the children's corner as every time we tried to leave, we were pulled back to look at something else. We did eventually make our escape and began walking through the main park. There were a large number of animals in the park, timber wolves, deer, llama, buffalo and many more. Walking round the park we came across a paddock which had donkeys in. Jan decided to show Gary and Craig the correct way to feed the donkeys, having fed the first she was watching Gary feed the next. Suddenly there was a Yell! The donkey she had fed earlier decided to show his appreciation and gave her a love-bite on her arm, this naturally gave us all a laugh, though she did have a nasty bruise for some days after. We all had a great day out, however I think we were a little spoilt since we moved to Africa, where we saw the animals in the wild, living in their natural environment.

We have now been back in England for over a month, bought most of the stuff we will need to take back to Zambia with us, and are now starting to feel restless. We have really enjoyed our holiday, visiting familiar places and meeting relatives and friends but feel the urge to return to Zambia which is of course our home now. Perhaps our outlook on life has changed and we have become accustomed to the simple life.

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Before leaving Zambia we had booked a week's holiday in Nairobi as a stop-over on our way back to Zambia. We are looking forward to our holiday in Nairobi which we have heard a lot about, but not yet had the opportunity to visit apart from the one night we spent there on our way to England. Our departure is now just days away and the children are getting excited at the thought of going home, they are of course eager to return to see their friends and Smoky, plus Fred who they are quite attached to. Nairobi is the capital of Kenya and quite a cosmopolitan city by African standards. We had booked accommodation at the New Stanley Hotel, which we had not seen but proved to be the best hotel we could have chosen as they catered for children and our two loved it. We had learnt in the past that when visiting a foreign country to find the tourist bureau first as the information they could supply was usually very helpful. We then went to a local tour company and arranged trips to a Masai Village in the Rift Valley and Nairobi Game Reserve. As we were about to leave the receptionist suggested we should also visit Lake Nkuru which was a bird sanctuary. The thought of spending time at a bird sanctuary really did not appeal to me, however Jan wanted to go and so we booked a trip out to there also. To reach the Masai Village we had to drive part of the way into the Rift Valley, where we stopped at intervals to look at the scenery which was quite outstanding.

We arrived at the village and walked around the huts, which we learnt were built from a mixture of cattle dung and mud. It does seem an unusual mixture however it is right for the climate. It is very waterproof and surprisingly very strong. The temperature outside was really hot but inside the huts the temperature was quite cool and pleasant. The huts are built around the centre of the village which is a compacted area of dried earth. As we walked around we noticed that many of the villagers kept touching Gary's hair as they had done in Zambia. We now knew that it was because his blond hair was quite unusual to an African and fascinated many of them. The men of the village were dressed in loincloths and had dyed their hair with red ochre, unfortunately when they ruffled Gary's hair they left red ochre in his hair. It was not long before his blond hair was almost as red as theirs. The highest honour that a Masai Warrior can achieve is to kill a lion without assistance. Having killed a lion by himself gave him the right to wear the mane as his head-dress. The women and young girls wore grass skirts with strings of colourful beads around their necks. They also wore beaded earrings and had beads woven in their hair, they were really quite colourful. The women and girls had a variety of beaded items for sale, which they had made themselves. There was a large herd of cattle at the edge of the village, the more cattle a Masai had the larger would be his standing in the community.

The Kikuyu tribe are cousins of the Masai and although the Masai are a warrior tribe the Kikuyu are a farming community. The Kikuyu gave an exhibition of tribal dancing while we were there, the dancing consists of jumping in the air to the beat of the music. It is quite amazing to see the height they can achieve when dancing. They wore colourful clothing and appeared to be a

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happy race. The dancing was very entertaining and ended a very enjoyable day out.

Having been into the rift valley and seen the Masai and Kikuyu, we decided that a trip to Nairobi Game Park was a must. The New Stanley Hotel had an open air café near the hotel entrance, it was quite unique as there was a cherry tree growing through the centre, which gave plenty of shade. We often sat there and had coffee in the evening before dinner, it was a nice place to sit and watch the world go by. I don't really need to say it was called "The Cherry Tree". The next morning we took a bus to the Nairobi Game Reserve where we intended to spend the day, as was usual at this time of year it was a hot sunny day with hardly a breeze. We always enjoy going to the game parks whenever we get the chance and tend to turn our visits into a game the children can play. Which is of course who can spot the most animals and what are they. It also means we get some peace and quiet as the boys know that to spot the animals they need to be quiet. We always enjoy looking for game in the parks as we like to see the game but time spent in the parks is always peaceful and quiet the only sounds to be heard are those made by the wildlife around. It is like being in a different world. We visited the park twice in the time we were staying in Nairobi and enjoyed both visits. There was an abundance of deer, troops of baboons and monkeys which was no surprise, as they are generally prolific anywhere there are wooded areas. The giraffe and zebra were quite easy to find but not so easy to approach, the giraffe has to be one of my favourites. They are so well camouflaged for an animal of their size and yet move through the bush with long graceful strides which seem to barely touch the ground. It is quite common to see some of the larger animals as they have no fear, a little care was needed to get close but many were so impressive we never tired of watching them. Wherever we have been we have looked for but never seen a pride of lions. Would we be lucky this time, no! we tried but it was not to be. Lions are difficult to find as they sleep during the day and hunt at night. A pride had been seen the evening before, so we had a point to start looking, however we were still unlucky.

We still had two days left so decided to take the tour to Lake Nkuru which was the bird sanctuary I was not keen to visit. It would have been a big mistake if we had not gone there, once again we drove into the rift valley. I don't know how far it was from Nairobi but it took about three hours to get there. On the way we stopped for a break at a colonial ranch, and then continued. Once we arrived and looked across the lake, the sight that we saw was unbelievable, really hard to accept. Lake Nkuru is home to many water fowl but the main attraction is the Flamingos. The lake was a sea of pink, there were so many flamingos they would be impossible to count. It is said there are 5 million flamingos on the lake, a figure I can believe as they cover the entire lake. Well I did say that going to a bird sanctuary would be a waste of time, it is now time to eat my words, it was unbelievable. We spent the last day around the city but really we were just killing time, we were ready to go home. We flew from Nairobi Airport to Lusaka and then on to Kitwe where we were picked up by Keith who then drove us home.