

MERVYN MACIEL



BWANANA

KARANI

The Life and Times of a Goan in British East Africa

Bwana Karani:
The Life and Times of a Goan
in British East Africa

Goa 1556
1228

EBOOK FIRST PUBLISHED IN 2020

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Published by

Goa 1556
1228

Goa,1556, Saligão 403511 Goa. <http://goa1556.in>, goa1556books@gmail.com
+91-832-2409490

Goa,1556 is an alternative publishing venture, named after the year of the accidental arrival of Asia's first Gutenberg-inspired printing press in Goa. Today, more than ever, Goa needs a voice to understand itself and articulate its priorities.

Cover design by Bina Nayak <http://www.binanayak.com>. Typeset using L^AT_EX, <http://www.lyx.org> in Bitstream Charter Roman, 11/14.

Cover photos shows the author with a catch of Tilapia t Lake Turkana

First published in Great Britain by Merlin Books Ltd., Braunton Devon, printed by Maslands Ltd., Tiverton, Devon, and authored by Mervyn Maciel in 1985. (ISBN 0 86303 261 3)

This ebook edition digitised, edited (with additional photographs) and published by Goa,1556.

*For my Els
(b. Chorão, September 19, 1934 – d. Sutton, Surrey, UK on
April 10, 2020),
a true and dedicated partner
through most of this African journey.
With my love.*

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Acknowledgements

There are many who have played a part in this work – my wife Elsie, who helped with the checking and collating of the manuscript; our children (Clyde, Andrew, Josey and Pollyanna) who were extremely patient and understanding while I did the typing often at odd hours of the day; my cousin Jock Sequeira gladly did the proof-reading, while another cousin, Naty D'Sa and a relative Fiona Robinson, provided the sketches. To them all my very sincere thanks are due.

I am particularly indebted to Sir Richard Turnbull, GCMG, for his encouragement and continued interest ever since the idea of writing the book was first conceived. He has, very patiently and painstakingly, read through the many pages of the rough manuscript on more than one occasion, and offered some very valuable and helpful advice at every stage.

For the great interest he has shown, and particularly his willingness to write the Foreword to my humble effort, I can only say, *Asante Sana, Bwana.*

Foreword by Sir Richard Turnbull, GCMG

This is a book that is going to appeal to a wide range of readers. First, there will be those other ‘Mabwana Karani’ Mervyn Maciel’s fellow-District Clerks and Cashiers, who saw service in the Turkana and Northern Frontier Districts, or in any of the smaller stations of up-country Kenya. With them will be their many relatives and collaterals broadly scattered from Bombay to Birmingham; for the Goan people are a closely-knit community and with their long tradition of clerical service are to be found not only in the courts, offices and counting-houses of Goa and India, and a score of places in East Africa, but in this country as well; and, indeed, in any place where loyalty, industry and scrupulous dependability are properly valued.

Then will come those from whom Mervyn learnt his trade, and those that he, in his turn, instructed in the arts and crafts of the clerical side of the Provincial Administration: and, after

them, ex-Government Servants of Colonial days hankering for a detailed account of the routine of a District Office, and for a description of the everyday duties that fell to the charge of a District Commissioner in a small station. There will, too, be those that duty or relaxation have taken to the outlying parts of Kenya, and who still experience a nostalgic pang at the sound of place-names such as Wundanyi, Voi and Taveta; Amudat, Lodwar and Lokitaung; and Laisamis, the Kaisut, Gof Bongole and Loiangolani.

Finally, there will be those such as myself, eager to refresh recollections of earlier days, and to read of old friends, many, alas, no longer with us but still remembered with affection, who appear in Mervyn's narrative. If the introduction of a personal note may be forgiven, I should like to mention 'Miti' Wood, the guiding hand in all matters concerning personnel, and the author of Mervyn's Letter of Appointment; Ayub Ali, that great gentleman of the Establishment section of the Secretariat; Willie Perera, whom I first met at Garba Tulla close on fifty years ago; Germano Gomes, partner of many arduous fourteen-hour days when he and I were caring for that Ethiopian host which had sought refuge in Kenya from the Italian invasion, and Francis da Lima, a most valued colleague and companion to whom I am indebted for years of painstaking help in my Isiolo office. These and a dozen others all figure in the pages of the book.

From the first sentence of the Introduction to *Bwana Karani* until four-fifths of the way through the book, you will be reading about the Provincial Administration; and most of the characters

that you will encounter will have been members of it. So it is proper that I should give you a brief description of what it was: A Provincial Commissioner was, within the limits of his Province, the principal executive officer of the Government, and was personally and directly responsible to the Governor for the peace and good order of his Province and for the efficient conduct of all public business therein. It was his duty to supervise not only the work of his administrative staff but also what was done in his Province by all Departmental Officers. The Provincial Administration was the machine by which the Provincial Commissioner's responsibilities were put into operation; in addition it was both a chain of command and a service – a particularly élite one. Let me not forget, though, that twenty years and more have elapsed since the end of the Colonial regime, and in this time – amounting to four or five school generations – what were once the commonplaces of everyday living have taken on the aspect of legend; and it is not unlikely that the majority of those that read this book will know nothing of how the old Colonial machinery of Government worked, or of the people whose efforts kept it ticking over.

I spent such a large part of my life being a District Commissioner, and sharing the problems and the shop of other District Commissioners, rejoicing with them in their triumphs and condoling with them in their disasters, that it is, I suppose, not unreasonable that I should devote a paragraph or two to explaining what a District Commissioner was and what it was he did.

In his particular area a District Commissioner was the senior

representative of the Central Government and, under, of course, the general supervision and control of the Provincial Commissioner, was responsible for the peace and good order of his District, and for the preservation of law and order within it. By the expression 'good order' I have in mind the co-ordination, in the field, of the activities of the various Ministries, and the fulfilment of the functions of those Ministries that had no representative in the District. A District Commissioner had to ensure the effective execution of the Government's policies by making certain that the representatives of the Ministries concerned were working smoothly together, and that progress was not being hindered by Departmental rivalries or by the personal idiosyncrasies of individual officers; and, as I have indicated, he had through his own District staff to undertake the duties of those Ministries that had no staff of their own in the field.

As you will see from what I have written, it was necessary for a District Commissioner to have a good grasp of the technical problems facing the various Ministries, and to be able, by the exercise of tact and diplomacy and by a well-informed and sympathetic approach, to bring about a harmonious dovetailing of the various aspects of the Government's activities.

He had, further, a whole range of routine responsibilities, such as the preparation of annual estimates of revenue and expenditure for his District, for the control of expenditure, and the bringing to account of public funds, and for the development and control of African Local Government bodies. He also had to be a practical man, for in a small station he had to supervise the

siting, construction and maintenance of the Government buildings; to purchase station stores; and to oversee the rationing arrangements for the Tribal Police, the Prison and the local school. He might, too, have had to select suitable runways for emergency air strips and to supervise any construction work that was necessary; and hold himself in readiness to conduct, in cooperation with the Locust Directorate the campaigns that had so often to be undertaken against this scourge. These internal administrative duties when added to his more general commitments, such as liaison with the Ministries, made up a corpus of widely diversified responsibilities, scarcely one of which did not involve, in its handling, clerical work of one sort or another; and rare was the District Commissioner who could not congratulate himself on having at his call a clerical staff that was both professionally expert and personally dedicated to the efficient and punctual completion of the tasks with which they were concerned. Court records had to be maintained, prison registers kept up to date, cash books and vote books meticulously entered-up, any number of returns submitted, papers properly filed, and a seemingly endless flow of correspondence maintained with various headquarters offices. It would be tedious to itemize in detail all the duties that fell to the District Clerk and the Cashier; it should be enough to say that, although these small stations may have appeared to be quiet backwaters as far as the flow of work was concerned, the clerks would, as often as not, find themselves at work in their offices long after they should have been relaxing on the tennis court or in their homes.

Yet not once, in all my experience in the field – and, equally, in the offices of the Central Government – did I hear even the hint of a murmur or criticism, let alone an expression of discontent on the grounds of an excess of unrequited overtime. What gifted and conscientious men they were that we had working with us!

It was indeed a splendid service – a service to which one is proud to have belonged; and how gratifying it is to hear our author rejoicing at having been a member of it.

In the larger sort of District, such as Kisii, where Mervyn served before he was transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture, it was unusual for the various Ministries not to be well represented; and the District Commissioner himself would have had the support of several District Officers. In such circumstances, the business of co-ordinating departmental activities presented no major problems.

The normal procedure was for the senior Departmental Officers to organize themselves into what was known as the District Team, under the Chairmanship of the District Commissioner; and it was in this forum that the proper handling of matters affecting more than one Ministry was debated. By the exercise of common sense, and the adoption of a series of readily acceptable, interlocking compromises, potential difficulties could, as a rule, be satisfactorily side-stepped. There was, of course, enough staff, administrative and clerical, to ensure that any scheme that was embarked upon could be properly supervised and properly maintained.

Elsewhere, although the one-man stations that had been fairly common in pre-war days had, by Mervyn's time, virtually ceased to exist, the remote stations of Turkana and the N.F.D. were still run on a shoe-string of manpower. For the administrative philosophy that underlay the governance of these northern areas was based on two principles, neither of which demanded much in the way of technical staff; first, to prevent the weak from being oppressed by the strong, and secondly, to protect the grazing ranges, the well systems and the man-made water pans against destruction by over-grazing and undisciplined usage. In the Frontier Province what mattered was security and the preservation of a proper ecological balance, not for the fulfilment of a conventional urge for economic and social development. As a result Ministerial representation in places such as Lodwar and Marsabit amounted to little more than occasional visits; and the District Commissioner had to make do with his own efforts and those of his District Officer, if he had one, and with what help he could reasonably expect his clerical staff to give outside the scope of their usual duties. It was in circumstances such as these that, during his time in Marsabit, although officially the District Clerk/Cashier, Mervyn found himself taking charge of tax collection and pay safaris, supervising stock sales, and, during the absence from the station of both District Commissioner and District Officer – from time to time unavoidable – carrying out inspections of the gaol and performing other duties that would normally be undertaken by an Administrative Officer. The reader will quickly see that Bwana Karani is by no means

wholly devoted to descriptions of the business conducted in a District Office, and of the hour by hour activities of a District Headquarters, from the pre-breakfast inspection of what one might call the domestic economy of the station to the close of public business at whatever hour the climate and local custom and usage dictated, and, in the case of Lodwar and Marsabit, to the sounding of Retreat and the lowering of the standard at sunset. He will find, as well, generous character sketches of local worthies resident in the various Districts in which the author saw service, and of his wide circle of friends both in the small up-country townships and the larger centres such as Mombasa, Nakuru and Kitale; and, amongst other topics of interest, accounts of the long journeys by night that characterized travel in the N.F.D. and Turkana – incidentally, one is amazed that Mr Kaka's vehicles ever contrived to stay on the road – and of the landscapes that distinguished places such as Fergusson's Gulf, the Chalbi and Mount Kulal.

There is something of romance, too, with the story of Mervyn's long courtship, chiefly by letter from Lodwar and from Marsabit, of his future wife, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs Hermenegildo Collaço of Kitale. They were formally betrothed shortly after the Christmas of 1951, and the wedding held in August of the following year. Their married life began at Marsabit, the bride coping bravely with the problems created by being so very much at the end of the line. It is interesting to reflect upon the extent to which the pair, both individually and together, had benefited from the friendly offices and the staunch reliability of

old-fashioned 'transport riders' such as A. M. Kaka, the Pathan, on the Kitale-Lodwar route, and G. H. Khan, the Kashmiri, (affectionately known by us all as 'the Safe Driver') between Isiolo and Marsabit.

The Marsabit days which had started with such high hopes were to end under as heavy a cloud as one can imagine; for Conrad, Mervyn and Elsie's second son, was found to be suffering from a heart condition that condemned him to the life of an invalid, and which made it necessary for the parents to seek a posting to some place where medical facilities would be more comprehensive and more easily available than they were at Marsabit.

They were loath to leave, but as Mervyn says, "we simply could not afford to risk Conrad's life by remaining in an area which was miles away from a hospital proper." And so, cast down at having to move from a place to which they had become so attached, and burdened with anxiety over Conrad, Mervyn and Elsie made their farewells to the Northern Frontier Province.

Mervyn's departure from Marsabit may be said to have ended the days of his *Karaniship*; for after a brief spell in Kisii – a spell which sadly saw the death of young Conrad – he applied, successfully, for the post of Executive Officer with the Ministry of Agriculture; and having achieved this very real measure of advancement, was appointed to be the Provincial Office Superintendent at Machakos, the duties of which post he combined with those of Personal Assistant to the Provincial Agricultural Officer.

He was, as can be imagined, distressed at leaving the Provincial

Administration in which he had hoped to remain until the time for his retirement; but it was not long before he came to recognize how substantial were the advantages that attended his new appointment. Being at the Agricultural Headquarters of a populous and rapidly developing Province meant that he came in contact with the Provincial Commissioner and other Administrative Officers of the area, as well as with senior members of the various Departments. He was no longer tucked away at the end of the line. And nobody could fail to be impressed by the quality of the men that headed the Department of Agriculture; it was generally accepted that the Ministry had in its service some of the most brilliant men, in that particular field, in the whole of the Commonwealth. As for the activities of the Department, how could one describe them better than to say that the economic future of the new Kenya depended more upon the policies devised by the Ministry and the efficiency with which they were put into execution than upon any other factor? And Mervyn became as proud of his position in the Ministry of Agriculture as he was of having served in the Provincial Administration of the Northern Frontier Province.

Jedburgh, Roxburghshire, Scotland

*Richard Turnbull*¹

¹ Richard Turnbull held several distinguished positions in East Africa – Minister of Defence & Internal Security, Chief Secretary and Acting Governor of Kenya, Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Tanganyika, and first Governor-General of independent Tanganyika. He was also Chairman of the Land Board of Kenya, and latterly British High Commissioner in Aden (now in Yemen).

Introduction

It has always been my wish to write about my experiences in Africa; this, not so much out of pride for having had the good fortune of working in Kenya's Provincial Administration, an opportunity I often think of as extraordinarily rewarding, but more in an effort to share my experiences with the reader, and with those of my colleagues who may have, like me, enjoyed the delights and varied attractions of a district life.

Why the title *Bwana Karani* you may well ask. To the reader who is familiar with the *lingua franca* of East Africa, i.e. Ki-Swahili, this will not present any problem. For the benefit of the others, however, I have to explain that the Swahili word *karani* means 'clerk', and it was in this humble capacity that my working career with the Provincial Administration began. It seemed fitting therefore that this book should bear the title of my very first job. While the literal translation of the title would read 'Mister Clerk', a term which certainly doesn't sound right in English, the courtesy title *Bwana Karani* was an accepted

one, and extended to all such personnel in the civil service and other commercial quarters too. In the Marsabit district of the Northern Frontier Province for instance, one was often referred to as *karani guda* (senior or chief clerk) or *karani dikka* (junior clerk).

Working in the districts of Kenya was, I must admit, not everyone's cup of tea whereas, working in the N.F.D. (Kenya's lonely and uncompromising Northern Frontier Province) was worse still. Although climatic conditions varied in this vast region of some hundred thousand square miles (twice the size of England), the mode of travel, especially during the period I was stationed there had improved considerably from that obtaining during the time of my predecessors. Some of these journeys were made on foot like the one undertaken by the first Goan District Clerk, a Mr John Fernandes who, Sir Richard Turnbull tells me, marched up with Mr G.F. Archer from Naivasha in 1909! These officials, and many like them who served in the frontier in those early and pioneering days, were almost certainly a special breed of men. The N.F.D. had a certain appeal – an attraction more easily experienced than expressed. It was a compelling place for some of us, undoubtedly a land of scorching heat and inter-tribal hostility, but none of these considerations could dampen my desire to be part and parcel of this Province which had its own mystique.

It is as well to explain here that the life of a Goan (there were more Goans serving in the districts than other Asians) clerk in the Provincial Administration, especially in the N.F.D., was not

all honey and highballs; it was tough and uncomfortable, and lacked the variety of a safari; there were the unhealthy climatic conditions that one had to endure in some regions, and many areas were not without their dangers. A former Provincial Commissioner, and one of the 'grand, old men' of the N.F.D., Sir Gerald Reece, once said that it was in this Province that 'real life' was to be found. How right he was. For me, the attraction of the N.F.D. was that great feeling of freedom, the sheer vastness of the districts and general spaciousness of the areas. I was also fascinated by the customs and colourful life-styles of the extraordinary tribesmen who inhabited this Province, and quite prepared to leave civilization behind.

Despite these considerations, however, many of my friends considered me 'crazy' for volunteering to serve in this remote and, as they termed it, God-forsaken region. Some even felt that it was a sort of punishment to be posted to the N.F.D; but then, does one volunteer for punishment? Be that as it may, I have no regrets. My wife, who shared part of this frontier experience with me, and enjoyed every moment of it – despite having a child with a congenital heart condition to look after, has been very keen all along that I should tell the story of my life in those outlying areas. It is an area which, like the peoples who inhabit it, is fast vanishing. Our children, who have listened to the many accounts of our life in the wilderness, have also felt that the story should be told, if only for the benefit of many who, like themselves, will never experience such a life in today's highly civilized world. With their encouragement and interest,

and the backing I have received from many friends and former colleagues, I have finally taken the plunge!

The book has a frontier bias, and an Administration bias at that. I make no apology for this, since the best years of my life were spent in the N.F.D. Since part of my service career, especially during the latter years, was with the Agricultural Department, a period which I also enjoyed, I am including a note of the time spent there.

I sincerely hope that those of my colleagues who may have at some time or another served in this harsh and rugged corner of the African continent, will be able to relive some of their own experiences of bygone days. For others who have not ventured beyond the 'civilized' shores of Mombasa or the attractions of that great metropolis, Nairobi, I sincerely hope that these pages will provide some insight into the life and conditions under which some of us chose to serve. The book is a collection of real life experiences as far as I can recall these, although I am aware that the picture is by no means complete.

I am very conscious of the debt of gratitude I owe to the tribesmen of the various districts I served in. Without them, these pages could never have been born.

Mervyn Maciel
'Manyatta'
Sutton, Surrey (England)

PART ONE — The Early Years

1. From Student to Kenya Civil Servant

East Africa, and particularly Kenya, has always occupied a special place in my heart.

The fact that I was born in Nairobi, and spent the early years of my childhood there is perhaps significant. This is why I lost no time (even before the results of my Matriculation examination were known in 1947) – in writing to my late father’s boss, Capt. R. C. M. Wood (a most lovable man, known to his friends as ‘Miti’ Wood), to ask if he would be willing to offer me employment in his office.

I should explain that my father worked in the Kenya Secretariat for many years until his untimely and tragic death during the war, when he, my step-mother and three very young children (two step-sisters, one aged three and the other a babe of a few months, and a step-brother who was just one year old) were lost at sea in November 1942, when the ill-fated passenger liner, the

SS Tilawa was torpedoed by the Japanese a few days after she had left Bombay for Mombasa. As far as I can recall, this was the only passenger steamer that was destroyed on the India-East Africa route during the war. (See 'In Memoriam' in the Appendices to this book – a tribute to my parents composed on the second anniversary of their death.)

My father was highly regarded by his superiors and colleagues alike, and friends and relatives always spoke in glowing terms of his simplicity, courtesy and unassuming manner. He was, as I was to hear on numerous occasions later, very efficient at his job, and because of his sheer dependability, always in demand. A first class stenographer (combining the role of Stenographer/Secretary/P.A. in the days before the birth of the female Secretary we now know) he was, at one time, attached to the Governor's Conference Secretariat in Nairobi.

Being orphaned at a very early age, and having a younger brother who was still at school, I felt that it was all the more important that I should take on employment as soon as possible. My elder brother Joseph, two years my senior, had also been very patient in delaying his decision to join the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) until I had first secured gainful employment. Wilfred, my younger brother, who was three years my junior, was fully aware that as soon as I found employment, he would have to move from the school we had both attended in Goa (in the village of Aldona), to one in Bombay where he could be nearer to my elder brother and other relatives.

Within a few weeks of my writing to Capt. Wood, I received a

very encouraging reply offering me employment at the Kenya Secretariat, as a temporary clerk, at a salary of £120 per annum! (For the benefit of the reader, I am reproducing the original letter I received – see Appendices). At the time, this salary sounded very decent and some of my friends in India, who were receiving a far lower wage, soon set about to calculate the amount I should be able to save on this seemingly ‘fat’ salary. I was delighted with the outcome of my application and even felt a trifle flattered!

The fact that Capt. Wood had requested the Kenya Government Agents in Bombay (Messrs. Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co) to arrange a sea passage for me helped matters no end. There were no ‘middlemen’ or a host of other obstacles for me to go through. All I had to do was find the fare. The Kenya Government had awarded my brothers and myself, and my paternal grandmother a military-type pension because of my father’s death on active service. This pension, together with other assistance provided by my maternal grandfather (a retired official of the Zanzibar Treasury), and my paternal grandmother, went a long way towards helping me in meeting the cost of the passage and other incidental expenses. An uncle from my father’s side (Ignatius Sequeira) was a great help in attending to some of the other arrangements. There were many others including my two brothers, and a host of relatives and friends who played a part in my move. Without their assistance (for which I am deeply grateful), the outcome could never have been so smooth. There is an old saying in my native tongue, Konkani, that those who

are orphans have ‘a hundred mothers and fathers’. To all those who helped, in however small a way – relatives and friends, and particularly to those who were ‘mother and father’ to us during those difficult and fateful years, I would once again like to record my deep gratitude.

I set sail for Kenya in late September 1947, having spent a few weeks prior to my departure, with members of my immediate family in Goa and latterly in Bombay. Words of advice and caution were given by my grandparents and elder brother too. I was going to Africa where they all hoped I would uphold the good name of my late parents. The parting from my brothers and close relatives and friends was certainly a sad occasion. I was a deck passenger on the B. I. liner, the *SS Aronda*, a ship which had been converted to a passenger steamer after her previous mission as a troopship during the war.

Initial emotions melted away after we left Bombay harbour, and before very long, the impressive gateway of India had faded almost into obscurity; we were now on the high seas with nothing but an endless expanse of ocean all around us. Not another vessel in sight – just miles and miles of deep blue sea.

I enjoyed the voyage immensely. I am fortunate in that I am a good sailor who rarely suffers from any form of sea-sickness. I was therefore able to do justice to the mouth-watering and tempting Mohammadan-style menu on board the ship. Being deck passengers, we were not allowed to use the main dining saloon reserved for cabin class passengers. I did not mind this in the least, especially since, as deck passengers, we had

the choice of spicy vegetarian or non-vegetarian meals, both of which I enjoy. My appetite throughout the voyage was terrific; here, I must admit to being saddened by the fact that a friend of mine (who was returning to Kenya to take up an appointment as an industrial chemist), was so sick during the voyage, that he often had to spend the greater part of his time in bed. For Joe Sequeira, the very thought of food was revolting; neither could he tolerate the rich spicy aroma of the food which seemed to fill the whole area around the deck. There were times when he would find it difficult to retain even a mere Jacobs cream cracker biscuit! The poor man – I felt truly sorry for him. Late at night I would encourage him to come to the upper deck so as to take in as much of the fresh sea air as possible. Although this little exercise did him a world of good, he never felt strong enough to face a real meal. He would eat morsels of whatever suited him best, and I felt he was wise in sticking to this meagre diet.

The voyage took eight days and included a few hours stop-over *en route* at the delightful island of Mahe in the Seychelles. As our ship anchored at Mahe, small fishing craft raced towards it, almost submerged under the weight of the heavy loads of various curios they were bringing for sale on board the ship. With the Captain's approval, they ran a sort of mobile shop, displaying their varied wares on hastily mounted trestles and tables on the upper deck of the ship. The curios consisted mostly of stuffed tortoises, a variety of sea shells, some very attractive curios made from tortoise shell and an assortment of walking

sticks. The fisher folk also did a brisk trade during the few hours that the ship had docked in their waters. Some of the deck passengers were even able to buy fresh fish, and that evening, the whole air around the deck area was laden with the smell of fried fish!

On October 6, 1947 we docked at Kilindini harbour, Mombasa. Here I was warmly welcomed by my cousin (Jock Sequeira) and his wife Beryl. They had been in Mombasa for a year, having made the big decision to move out of the Bombay they loved and grew up in — to start a new life and better their prospects in Africa. I felt very comfortable in their small but homely quarter situated at Ganjoni. This house was shared with another Goan family (Mr and Mrs Albert Pereira — the late Albert Pereira, a very likeable person, who worked for Smith Mackenzie & Co).

From the time of landing at Mombasa, I became an official of the Kenya Government — at least so I was told! Little did I appreciate the implications of this position at the time, and a friend of my father's — a Mr A. B. Rego, who worked at the Government Coast Agency, felt that I should be 'entitled' to a free railway warrant for the onward journey to Nairobi. I knew nothing about these 'service entitlements'. I was absolutely green from school, and it seemed as though I was entering a new world altogether. As he was not entirely certain about my entitlement himself, Mr Rego cabled the Secretariat in Nairobi; meanwhile, I was asked to postpone my departure from Mombasa until an official reply was received. This suited me fine,

and my cousin Jock was happy that things had turned out this way, since he was busy organizing a Variety Show in which he wanted me to take part. *HMS Nelson* had docked in Mombasa, and several of her Goan crew, whom Jock had previously met would also be taking part in the show. One of the songs they would be singing was Jock's own composition in Konkani, in which he extolled the contribution made to the Merchant Navy by Goan seamen. A Goan Petty Officer from the flagship – a Mr Nazareth, would also be taking part.

As it so happened, despite early approval of my passage from Mombasa to Nairobi, I managed to spend a whole week at the coast and took part in the Variety Show which turned out to be a great success, judging by the number of people who had packed the Goan Institute hall that evening. I could hardly believe that such a successful performance could have been staged at so short notice; where there's a will, there is surely a way!

The next day I reported to the Government Coast Agency where I was handed a railway warrant which I later exchanged at the station for a second class ticket to Nairobi. My baggage was weighed and taken away by the railway porter to be stored in the main brake van. I was given a receipt to enable me to reclaim the packages at the other end. My compartment had been reserved, and after quickly checking the Reservations board, I walked up to my coach and off-loaded some of my hand luggage on to the lower bunk. This would be sufficient indication to the three other passengers who would be sharing my compartment, that I had already reserved my seat! The coach itself was

immaculately clean, and this impressed me greatly especially since the coaches I had been used to travelling on in India were just the opposite. Even the coach attendants here were smartly turned out and looked very impressive in their well-laundered and starched snow-white uniforms.

For a very modest charge (which I was told I would be entitled to claim), I obtained my bedding, and later found that the attendant had made my bed up very neatly for the night. I had never before experienced such luxury.

The railway station was bustling with activity. There were so many faces to be seen – some happy, others sad (a fairly common scene at any railway station). Porters were busy running up and down the platform with loads of luggage strategically balanced. I often wondered how they remembered to collect the portage from the various passengers. The great steam engine was hissing and puffing away, and soon I heard the whistle blow; the green flag held out by the railway guard signalled the ‘all clear’ for our departure. At this stage, and as the train pulled out of the station, three ear piercing whistles sounded, and with a sea of hands and handkerchiefs fluttering from passengers on the platform, the mighty engine hissed her way out of Mombasa station. The sound of the steam engine pulling the long line of coaches, and belching out clouds of smoke as it raced along, gave me a wonderful feeling. As the train snaked her way, leaving the sea and the palm-fringed coast behind, we passed lush green mangrove plantations. There were brief stops at Mazeras and Mariakani — station names with so much of a coastal fla-

vous.

Here, small but very lively crowds of the local Swahili folk would assemble, and there always seemed a festive air about. While some were welcoming home loved ones and friends, others had come to see them off.

All along our route, we often passed villagers standing outside their *shambas* in their colourful dresses and waving happily to the passengers in the train. Such scenes must have been a daily occurrence especially since the mail train plied between Mombasa and Nairobi every day.

The first visitor to our compartment was the TTE (Travelling Ticket Examiner) – a European; he was later followed by a Goan steward, immaculately dressed in a white suit, and holding a pack of dining-room tickets in one hand. I booked for the first sitting and was given a card, the reverse of which showed the seating plan. One of the catering staff, dressed in a snow-white *kanzu* and red *fez*, sounded the xylophone to announce the start of each sitting. A few minutes after this signal, I walked up to the restaurant car along with some of the other passengers; here, we were greeted by the steward and shown to our respective places. Everything appeared so spick and span – from the crisp white damask table-cloth and napkin, to the polished heavy silver cutlery and china – all carrying the railway crest. Adding colour to each table was a tulip vase containing freshly cut carnations which filled the air with their fragrance. How I admired the skill of the waiters in serving piping hot food from a fast-moving and sometimes ‘jerky’ train. They certainly had a

knack in the manner they dished out the food. The meal itself was delicious – a soup as a starter, followed by roast beef and all the trimmings and finally a dessert. The freshly percolated Kenya coffee which followed was a real treat, and its rich aroma was so appealing that I couldn't resist the temptation of having a second cup! I was not able to remain long in the dining car since passengers for the second sitting were now beginning to arrive. I returned to my compartment, and spent some time reading. Our train had now arrived at Voi station – the main junction for Tanganyika-bound traffic. We had to spend some time here while coaches were being shunted on to the right track; it was quite dark by now and there was not much to be seen outside. Because the train was likely to remain here for some time, many of the passengers decided to alight and stretch their legs. I did the same, and when we were all set to leave, I decided to retire to bed. I slept comfortably that night and was awakened very early the following morning by the coach attendant who had arrived with cups of early morning tea. Personally, I was used to having coffee in the mornings, but didn't feel it right to ask for something 'special' just for myself.

The view of the surrounding countryside was wonderful. There were the Athi plains just before we came in to Nairobi. All along the route, we saw an assortment of game, notably giraffe and zebra.

At Nairobi station to meet me was an old family friend, Louis

Borges, whose guest I was to be for many days to come.

Louis, who worked for Barclay Bank (D.C.& O.), was a close friend of my parents, and had even stayed with them during his early days in Kenya. He gave me a very warm welcome, and on the very evening of my arrival, took me to visit some of the close friends and neighbours we had left behind some eleven years ago. Mr L. da Cruz (he was a widower whose wife had died shortly after my own mother) and his family were good friends of ours. The feeling inside me was now certainly one of great joy – it brought back many a memory of the happy days of my childhood – a childhood that was spent in our own home in Nairobi with my Mum, Dad and two brothers. I should mention here that my father had built a palatial house next door to the da Cruz bungalow. My dear mother, who was greatly instrumental in encouraging Dad to build the house, did not have the good fortune of living long in it. She died at childbirth in 1935, leaving my father a widower at the age of 35. I was six years old when Mum died, my elder brother Joseph, eight, while my younger brother Wilfred, was only three. A shattering blow this was for all of us – to be deprived of mother at such a tender age.

For reasons best known to my late father, he had sold the house, with nearly an acre of land around it, for a very modest sum. To this day, none of us has recovered any money from this sale, and because of the unpleasant nature of the whole episode, I would prefer not to discuss this particular issue which must now remain a closed book. Suffice it to say that there were no docu-

ments or official papers for us to prove that Dad had not been fully paid for the house – all such documents being lost when the whole family died at sea.

At the Secretariat the following day, I was taken to meet Capt. Wood by one of the senior Goan clerks. I was very well received by him. On this first occasion, I had worn the brand new suit which I'd had specially tailored in Belgaum. The welcome and reception I received from the many friends and acquaintances, is a fitting tribute to the high esteem in which my late parents were held. All this gave me a tremendous feeling of pride, and there were moments when I longed to embrace Dad and Mum and say a big 'Thank you' for all they had done for us. They were parents I was truly proud of, and my determination was to preserve their good name at all costs. In the beginning, I was attached to the DC's (District Commissioner's) office at Nairobi, where I was given a variety of jobs, which included, among other things, the compiling of the new Voters Rolls for the district.

One of the senior Goan clerks – I think he was the Cashier at the time, a Mr. Figueira, introduced me to the DC, an elderly gentleman by the name of J. Douglas-McKean. He struck me as a very kindly sort of person. I was told that he had not long to go before he retired. Even at the DC's office, there were frequent words of praise for my late father – not only from the Goan colleagues, but also the two African office boys who remembered him dearly. With obvious respect, they nodded their heads and said, "Oh, oh, *mtoto ya Bwana Maciel eh?*" ("So this

is Mr Maciel's son?") I was very touched by their expressions; I may have been new to the office, but certainly didn't feel lost. The people around me made me feel so much at ease and at home. This meant a lot to me especially when you consider that I was a mere junior clerk then.

In Nairobi, I teamed up with three other friends who were allocated a wood and iron Government quarter in the Ngara residential area. Together we shared all the household expenses. Mr T. X. D'Cruz was the veteran among us, followed closely by the late Francis Ramos and Silvester Fernandes who I knew well from my school days in Belgaum. He was very much my senior though. All my three companions worked for the Kenya Secretariat. We had engaged a Kikuyu cook who produced average 'bachelor-type' midday meals for us, and in the evening, under the watchful eye of Mr D'Cruz (who was himself a good cook), Mwangi would turn out something more interesting and palatable!

I cannot describe my 'excitement on receiving my first ever salary. Never had I seen so much money in my hands before! After quickly paying off my messing charges (Mr D'Cruz acted as a sort. of 'general factotum'), I bought a brand new bicycle, using part of my salary, and the cash I had left over from India. The bicycle itself was a great boon since I used it daily to and from work. It provided me with some exercise and kept me fit.



With a bicycle, bought with my first salary.

There was no expense for clothing as such since I had arrived

with a fairly new wardrobe – all the suits having been hand-tailored in Belgaum and Bombay. Tailoring was fairly cheap in India, and this is one of the reasons I had equipped myself with sufficient clothing to last me for a few years.

After office hours, Francis Ramos and I would go along to the Goan Institute, which was then situated in Duke Street. It was here that I had my first real taste of beer. I must confess to not liking the ‘bitter stuff’ at first, and wondered how so many of the club members were able to drink several bottles of it! All I was used to in India was soft drinks, so this drinking of beer was clearly a new experience for me. As time went by I got used to this popular liquid, but even so, the most I drank then was a glassful – never a whole bottle!

2. Move to the Coast

I had spent barely a couple of months in Nairobi when I asked my immediate superiors whether it would be possible to move me to the DC's office at Mombasa. Unofficially at least, I was told not to expect much, since people who were transferred to the Coast Province, were sent there more on health grounds (here, I am referring to the Goan staff in particular). Luck seemed to have been on my side, and within a few days, my transfer to the Coast Province was approved. I was simply delighted at the thought of returning to the warm and sunny climate of Mombasa, and of being with my cousins once more. Mombasa had a varied and interesting history; it was known as 'Mombasa Mvita' – the isle of war, and there is no denying the fact that this sunny town on Kenya's coastline witnessed, over the years, some bloody struggles involving Arabs, Africans and the Portuguese – all of whom were anxious to gain a foothold on the island.

The DC at Mombasa was a very stern man I was warned. He was strict and expected a high degree of efficiency from his staff. So much for this rather awesome introduction to a man I had yet to meet! The only other thing I knew about him was that he was a New Zealander.

My cousins were delighted to have me back, and though they had a young family of four children then, they readily agreed to my staying with them.

On my first working day at Mombasa, I took the bus from Ganjoni (where we lived), to the town centre. On arrival at the DC's office, I reported to the District Clerk, Mr Cordeiro (a very tall and worried-looking man) who introduced me to the District Cashier, another tall, grey-haired elderly gentleman by the name of Albert D'Cunha. He was pleased to meet me, as was also my next contact – a Mr S. F. Bragança, a retired civil servant who, I was told, had been recalled to help with the additional work that had arisen in the office.

As both these men knew my late father, I felt quite at home with them. The soft-spoken and well-mannered Mr Bragança had a very neat handwriting; he would have made a good artist. His was the type of handwriting that we were taught at school, and which I had great difficulty in transcribing. Sadly, my handwriting never improved over the years! Having met most of the Goan staff, I was then taken to meet the District Officer (DO) – the Hon. Roger Clinton-Mills, himself fairly new to Kenya; finally, I met the DC himself. There was no doubt in my mind, no sooner I had met him, that Mr Skipper was a tough man;

earlier descriptions I'd been given of the man matched his serious countenance; he looked stern – rarely a smile on his face. In their white drill safari-type jackets and shorts, with well polished 'Kenya lion' brass buttons on their pockets, both the DC and DO looked very smart indeed. Since the DC and PC's offices were housed on the same floor, I also met some of the Provincial Commissioner's staff – first the chief clerk, Mr Pascoal D'Mello; an intelligent-looking individual, one of whose many duties included the posting of Asian staff within the Province. It was therefore very much in my interest to create a good impression, and this I was determined to do. I then met the relief clerk for the Province – a sprightly young man, two years my senior – his name, Ignatius Carvalho. This man was to become my loyal and trusted friend in later years.

My duties also brought me in contact with some of the other officials in the district office – the Liwali for the Coast, Sheikh Mbarak Ali Hinaway (later Sir Mbarak Ali Hinaway), and also the Asst. Liwali at the time, Sheikh Rashid bin Azzan. I had more dealings with the latter with whom I also got on very well. He was a very kind and soft-spoken Arab who looked very impressive in his long flowing white robe. Mohamed Said was the Kadhi, and mention must also be made of our ever-obliging office boy, Fadhili, a native of the Coast Province, who looked old enough to be my father. He often surprised me with the speed with which he would attend to our many errands on his bicycle – official and private errands at that! I was never introduced to the Provincial Commissioner (PC) Mr E. R. St.

Davies or the Deputy PC, Mr P. F. Foster, although I did know them by sight.

Being new to the office, I was given an assortment of jobs – maintaining the inward and outward register of all correspondence, filing and correctly disposing of all incoming mail, etc. I welcomed the opportunity of doing the different jobs because of the training it provided me in the many aspects of the work in a busy district office like Mombasa. The District Clerk, Mr Cordeiro, was not a very healthy man and suffered frequently from attacks of asthma. This often meant that I, a comparative junior, had to step into the breach and take on a good deal of added responsibility. My efforts certainly didn't go unnoticed. I found that Mr Skipper would channel quite a portion of the daily correspondence and other jobs in my direction. This in itself gave me an added degree of responsibility which I knew would stand me in good stead in the years ahead.

With the added experience I had gained, it was felt by officials at the PC's office, that I would now be suited for a posting to another district where I could work almost on my own. In many ways, I was delighted at the thought of being independent and having to fend for myself so to speak. This was the only way to get along in life I thought. As if to give me a foretaste of things to come, I was sent on relief duty to the Kilifi District situated half-way between Mombasa and Malindi. I was to assist the District Clerk who, I was told, was a very hot tempered individual. Fortunately for me, I never noticed any such traits in him, and must record that both he and his wife made my brief

stay in Kilifi a very memorable and enjoyable one. Mr and Mrs R. R. D'Souza were a middle-aged couple who had no children; they were very pleased to have me stay with them. During my short stay in this district, I handled a lot of Court and Prisons work – a new experience as far as I was concerned. In addition, I was able to assist Mr D'Souza generally in the office. The DC at the time was Mr J. D. Stringer, brother-in-law of Mr Skipper. Kilifi reminded me very much of my native Goa. It was here that I was able to taste some of the best cashews and cashew nuts too. Through the kindness of the D'Souzias, I was even able to visit the nearby town of Malindi, passing the Gedi ruins en route. These ruins are the first of the coast's long-lost ancient cities which were later uncovered and preserved. We made a brief stop here to survey the ruins, and later drove to Malindi where we spent the night. It was here I am told that the Portuguese navigator, Vasco da Gama, first stopped in the fifteenth century. Malindi is an idyllic little town full of unspoilt white sandy beaches. The music of the coconut palms swaying romantically in the gentle tropical breeze, the non-stop chatter of the Swahili folk at the local fish market, and the lavish hospitality of our Goan host, Mr Collaço (who owned an hotel at Malindi) are memories that haunt me still.

Malindi has a large Arab and Swahili population, and is a well-known tourist attraction. As one approaches the Arab quarter of this small 'Arabian Nights-type' town, one can smell the salt fish-laden air, in distinct contrast to the fresh sea air in the more salubrious parts of the town. I returned to Mombasa having

enjoyed my brief tour of duty at Kilifi immensely.

The experience I had now gained in the many aspects of administration work had now made me 'eligible' for a transfer elsewhere. I had, in a way, come well through my probationary period, and the powers that be felt that I was fit to move out on my own. That they felt so confident, gave me added pluck and encouragement too. For me, it was a case of 'so far, so good'! Not surprisingly in late 1948, I was posted to Voi in the Teita District. I had heard a lot about Voi – notorious in days gone by for its malaria, a town where the grave of one of the victims of the '*Man-eaters of Tsavo*' – Capt. O'Hara, still stands (and which I was able to visit). Voi also served as a junction for rail traffic bound for Tanganyika.

I was delighted over this new posting, and left Mombasa by train on a Saturday, arriving at Voi a few hours later. I had passed through this station previously on my first trip to Nairobi. There to greet me were three Goans from the DC's office – the Cashier, Mr Silwyn Pinto, the District Clerk, Mr L. G. Noronha and the Rationing Clerk, a Mr P. J. DeMellow (who spelt his name differently from the rest of the D'Mellos – and who I was to replace). Accompanying them, was a rather serious-looking Goan, Germano Gomes by name, who was temporarily stationed at Voi while staff quarters and a district office were being completed at the nearby sub-station at Mackinnon Road where he was actually posted. Gomes, as I've said, looked very stern and gave me the impression of being a strict disciplinarian. I was not sure what to expect in the way of a reception, espe-

cially since the man I would be replacing, had had his services terminated. I never really found out why he was removed from office, nor did it worry me at the time since my prime task was to do the job I had been sent out to do.

I must admit, however, to being somewhat embarrassed by the remarks of one of the Goans who had come to collect me from the station. Having driven down from the *boma* (administrative headquarters), in the government three-tonner, he just couldn't understand how my luggage was so little – consisting of a large cabin trunk, a camp bed, mattress and holdall; that was all, nothing more! I wondered if he had realized that I was new to the service, and the things I had brought out with me were in fact the very items I had arrived with from India! This was, after all, my first job since leaving school, and the few possessions I had were my 'all and everything'.

As I was to learn later, administrative staff who transfer between districts invariably carried 'tons' of luggage, and it was certainly a big joke among my colleagues – to see the three-tonner being driven back to the *boma* almost as empty as when it had first arrived at the station. The driver of the truck, a fierce looking Mteita tribesman, with piercing eyes and distinct tribal markings all over his face, must have been equally amazed, but didn't utter a word. He merely grinned at me. Shingira was a very good driver, who I got to know and like. It was he who, in the months ahead, gave me my first driving lessons at the wheel of his three-tonner.

The hospitality I received from my friends was very warm, and

after a brief stop at the house of Silwyn Pinto – where we were entertained to coffee by his wife, and where we also met Mrs Noronha – I was taken by Germano Gomes, later that night, to the Government bungalow which we would be sharing; a daunting prospect to be sharing this house with a man I held in awe. I needn't have feared though, since he turned out to be a very charming and hospitable individual. Despite the difference in ages, we got on very well. From my experience of Gomes in the office, I soon discovered that he was a glutton for work and a stickler for perfection. He was certainly not the person to suffer fools gladly.

The surroundings at Voi were truly rural and I loved them. They made a pleasant change from Mombasa. From the rear of our bungalow, we looked out into the sparsely forested Teita Hills. The soil was ochre-like, and the ground itself seemed very parched.

On the Monday morning, I met the DC – Mr K. M. Cowley, a Manxman from Douglas, Isle of Man. A very friendly and likeable person he really was, and I was convinced from the outset that I would have no difficulty in getting on with him. I was shown around my new office – a temporary mud and wattle structure with a thatched roof, housing among other things, a collection of ants, lizards and other creepy-crawlies! I also had an office boy attached to my office – a Mteita tribesman called Mwambacha. An elderly and well-mannered individual, he was always willing to help in any way possible. The office boy at the main district office was also a Mteita by the name of Matasa, so

was the tax clerk Douglas Mlamba.

I was responsible to the DC for the issue of ration cards throughout the township, allocation of cereals, rice and sugar and, believe it or not, organizing the whisky quota among the Government and railway officials in the district. Scotch was strictly rationed in those days. I liked the job as it brought me in contact with the bulk of the townsfolk, chiefly the *bibis* (womenfolk), many of whom, babes strapped around their backs, queued patiently for their ration cards. These women wore very colourful dresses – some wore *kangas* (material for which was rationed and only obtainable against a permit signed by me on the DC's behalf). Mwambacha kept them all amused by indulging in their never-ending chatter. I dealt with the long queues as speedily as I could, but the worried look on Mwambacha's face often made me feel that I wasn't quick enough. I needn't have worried since I found out later that Mwambacha was very pleased with the way things were going – his worried look was part of his make-up since he always wore a solemn face! I was very impressed at the way in which he controlled the sometimes restless crowds, making sure there was no queue jumping.

In addition to running the rationing office, I also looked after the District office stores. The stores ledgers and the stores generally were in one big muddle – no one had attempted to organize them, so I decided to make these my next priority. Mr Cowley was pleased with the initiative I'd shown, and gave me a free hand in the organization. After some weeks of hard work, I saw the DC and suggested that the best way to get the stores

in ship-shape order would be to convene a Board of Survey – write off any minor losses and such items which had become unserviceable through fair wear and tear, and start afresh. He readily agreed, and soon after the Board of Survey had met and made its recommendations, I was able to start a brand new stores ledger with all stocks physically checked and recorded. Obviously impressed by what I had achieved in the short space of time, Mr Cowley was quick to commend me for my efforts. I felt greatly encouraged. Having thus spent a fair portion of my time organizing my work schedule, I found that I was free for varying periods during the day. I could, had I wanted to, have wasted this time in not doing anything constructive; the rationing office was a building completely separated from the main district office, so there was no direct supervision of my work as such. With all this time at my disposal, I volunteered to help both the District Cashier and District Clerk, since in addition to assisting them, I would be profiting by learning the various aspects of their respective jobs – an experience which would no doubt be to my advantage in the future. I do not think that either of them felt any sense of insecurity over my offer of help, especially since, judging from the rules for promotion obtaining at the time, it would be several years before I could be appointed to their grades. I must admit that the thought of displacing them never crossed my mind, and feel sure that the staff concerned were grateful for the assistance provided. On the home front, the senior clerk with whom I shared accommodation, Germano Gomes, was soon to move to Mackinnon

Road. The DO, a Mr D. J. Penwill, had already moved there himself, and felt that he should have his clerk with him as quickly as possible. Gomes left within a very short time, and as a numerical replacement, and in order to step up the strength of the clerical staff at Voi, the PC's office posted Ignatius Carvalho (who I had previously met at Mombasa), as Asst. to the District Cashier. I was excited with the news of his posting as, being virtually of the same age, we would get on well together. Besides, our ideas about work and recreation were very similar. We even succeeded in dividing the domestic chores between us when Ignatius arrived. I managed the household budget, while he coped with, and very admirably too, the cooking and general housekeeping side of things. To assist us in the home, we employed a *mtoto* (Swahili term for juvenile) whose task it was to do the odd jobs around the house, i.e. the sweeping and tidying up of the house, shopping, and assisting generally with the cooking/washing up, etc. This young lad proved more of a liability at times. He would delight in helping himself to a bowl or two of rich soup, while we were treated to a highly watered-down version of the original recipe! We sometimes got quite exasperated and lost our cool, but soon came to accept the situation. After all, these were bachelor days, and there was precious little we could do to remedy the domestic situation. There was a great deal of outdoor activity to occupy our spare time; we often played tennis with the railway and post office staff; on occasions, the DC and some of the army personnel would join us. Another sport we indulged in was wild game

hunting. The newly-arrived Cashier, a Mr Andrade, a frontier veteran, possessed a firearm and also a bird/game licence, and we would frequently go on a dik-dik or buck shoot. Andrade was a crack shot who would have made an excellent marksman. We were never short of game meat while he was there. Our other recreation included a walk to the railway station each night in time to meet the Mombasa-Nairobi train. Here we often met the Postmaster and his family who lived not far from the station. Ed Ohis was a very jovial Mauritian who lived with his wife and grown up daughter in a house adjoining Voi post office. As Ignatius Carvalho knew many of the catering staff on the trains (his father having been employed in this department previously), we were very fortunate on occasions, to be treated to cups of that delightful railway percolated coffee. After the train had left Voi, we would return to the Ohis household to be entertained by soothing music from his guitar while I did the singing!

At the office, several staff changes had taken place. The DC, Mr Cowley, had left on overseas leave, and was replaced by Mr A. J. Stevens (sadly, this young and promising officer was killed several years later when he went to investigate a border skirmish involving members of the East Suk tribe at a place called Nginyang in the Rift Valley Province). He was a much younger man than Mr Cowley. The District Clerk, Mr L. G. Noronha was transferred to Kwale, and his place taken by a native of the Seychelles – a Mr Popponeau.

This latest arrival was fairly senior in the service, and had earned

himself a reputation for introducing efficient filing systems wherever he went. He was a very methodical and conscientious worker. Relations with all the staff were very cordial, and although age-wise, Mr Andrade was the oldest, he certainly seemed the most active and energetic of the lot.

Voi had no police station during my time, but a small force of six Kenya Police was stationed there under the command of a Sgt.-Major – Mohamed Lali, a Bajun from the Lamu district. Tall, tough and always smartly turned out, Sgt.-Major Mohamed Lali came directly under the DC as far as the day to day work and discipline was concerned; otherwise, his superior was the Superintendent of Police for the Coast Province who was stationed at Mombasa.

An incident involving three off-duty Kenya policemen, and over which I had some dealings, needs to be mentioned. One evening when the DC, Mr Stevens, was away on safari, Sgt.-Major Lali came dashing to my house after office hours, with a familiar looking Government form in his hand. I immediately recognized this as being the one we always sent down to the local Medical Officer whenever there was a case involving assault causing actual bodily harm. It so happened that the three policemen (all of the Nandi tribe) had got themselves so drunk that evening, that they attacked and savagely beat up a European farmer who had stopped briefly in the township on his way from Mombasa to his farm at Thompson's Falls in the Rift Valley Province. Dr. Jodh Singh, the local MO who examined Mr Swanepoel indicated the extent of the injuries on the form

which was then returned to me by the Sgt.-Major. This would be required as evidence at a later date. As Mr Swanepoel had nowhere to sleep that night, Ignatius and I offered him the hospitality of our government bungalow – a gesture he much appreciated. After spending the night with us, obviously in great pain, he left the following morning. The next day, I reported the incident to the DC and the policemen concerned were charged and placed on remand. Their case was later tried by Mr Stevens in his capacity as First Class Magistrate, and the three were sentenced to nine months imprisonment with hard labour, with a recommendation that they each receive six strokes of the cane. I was a principal witness in this case. Without in anyway wanting to condone the action of these men, I felt very sorry for them. Here were three young men with a bright and promising future ahead of them – who had ruined their whole career because of drink.

During our stay at Voi, Ignatius and I were very fortunate to make a trip to the Teita Hills, helping in the population census that was being conducted about that time. While in this area, we stayed at the Government Rest House at a place called Ngereni, high up in the hills at Wundanyi. On this safari, we stopped briefly at the main hospital at Wesu; the whole hospital area seemed always enveloped in a thick cloud of mist which kept lifting very slowly. Apart from the roads leading up to the Teita Hills, which were very steep and windy, the area itself was healthy, and there was talk even then of moving the administrative headquarters from Voi to Wundanyi (this transfer was

achieved several years later).

Due to Voi's proximity to Tanganyika, Ignatius and I were also able to visit the town of Moshi – thanks to a kindly Arab trader (Shariff Ali) who ran a regular bus service between Voi and Moshi; I recall having a haircut there since we did not have a resident barber at Voi! Yet another sub-station where I was fortunate in being able to do a spell of relief duty was Taveta on the Kenya-Tanganyika borders. This district was well known for its sisal plantations and one of the early European pioneers, the late Col. Ewart S. Grogan lived here. Although my stay at Taveta was very brief, the young Goan cashier (Peter de Souza) and his wife were perfect hosts to me. The DO at the time was a Mr A. D. Galton-Fenzi, a tall and well-built young man who always seemed so full of energy. He and Peter de Souza were greatly instrumental in having a tennis court built at Taveta with the help of prison labour. The District Cashier prior to Peter's arrival was a middle-aged Goan called Ivo Coelho, who was a good friend of ours.

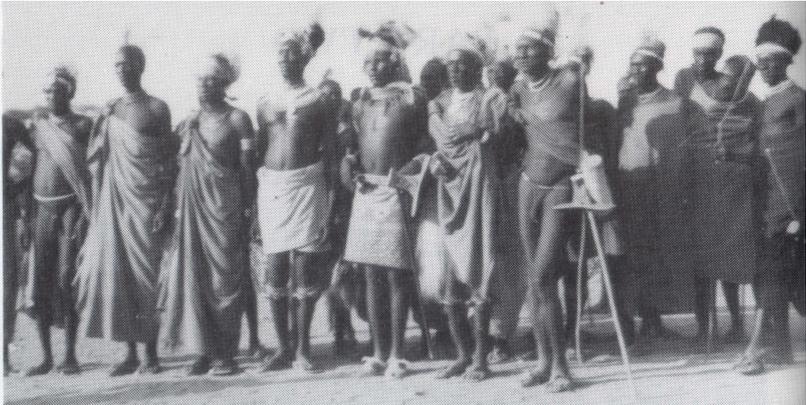
As bachelors, Ignatius and I found that our house was regularly being used as a sort of 'entertainments centre'. While we were happy to entertain our guests, the frequency of such 'get-togethers' was beginning to make inroads into our meagre finances. Under the existing rules governing advancement within the service, there was no prospect of our receiving any substantial financial reward (other than the annual increments) for some considerable time. Seniority was the main criterion for promotion in those days.

Although in our own minds we knew we were doing a good job, and certain that our immediate superior was aware of this, we did realize that, as newcomers in the service we could hardly expect to receive any preferential treatment. The only solution was for us to move to a district where there was not too much of a social life, and where we could live relatively debt-free.

**PART TWO — A Taste of the
N.F.D.**

3. Turkana District

We had heard of inducements made to those who served in the N.F.D. One received a hardship allowance of Shs.4/- per day in the case of the Asian staff, while the European staff received Shs.6/-. I could never really understand the inequality of this allowance especially since we endured the same hardships and inconveniences as our European colleagues. In some cases, I feel the Asian staff were at a greater disadvantage.



Turkana tribesmen at Lodwar.



My government quarter at Lodwar.

A further attraction of a frontier posting was the certainty of being granted an interest-free advance of three months' salary, repayable over a period of 12 months. The purpose of the loan was to enable staff to buy a good supply of tinned food and other necessities in advance of their posting; this was because many of the commodities that were freely available elsewhere in Kenya, were either in very short supply or just not obtainable in some of the frontier stations. The granting of the loan itself was a mere formality, but application had to be made none the less.

Ignatius and I lost no time in applying for a posting to the frontier, much to the surprise of local colleagues and, I daresay, staff at the Secretariat; very few, if any of the Asian staff ever applied

for a posting to the N.F.D. Surprisingly, and much to our delight, within the space of a few weeks of our applying, our posting orders had arrived. I was transferred to Lodwar in the Turkana district (on the Kenya-Uganda-Sudan borders), while Ignatius was to go to Wajir in the heart of the Somali country, not far from the Italian Somaliland border. Our salary advances were approved and a major portion of this was utilized to purchase various provisions and other requirements for our new stations. Owing to the remoteness of frontier stations from the nearest down country base, staff were expected to carry adequate stocks of food, drink and other domestic requirements. In the words of the then Provincial Commissioner, anyone borrowing from a fellow officer – be it a can of corned beef or a bottle of kerosene oil – was “making an infernal nuisance of himself”. A harsh directive surely, and one that couldn’t be taken lightly!

The days prior to our departure from Voi were pretty hectic; we had made many friends during our stay in the district, and were naturally sorry to leave them behind. Not only did we have friends at Voi, but also in the surrounding areas of Mwatate and Bura (where the Catholic Mission was situated). Our last days were taken up attending several farewell parties which friends from all walks of life had organized for us. It was very comforting to feel the warmth of friendship so manifest in the hospitality we received everywhere. Even the Teita Vegetable Company (an African co-operative venture), from whom most of our vegetable supplies came, had sent us a basketful of freshly picked vegetables of various kinds.

I was quite fond of the Mteita tribe and my cook-cum-houseboy, himself a Mteita, asked if I could take him along to Lodwar. Since neither of us knew what was in store for us at the other end, I readily agreed to his joining me, but warned him about the climate and lack of amenities, etc. Lodwar was the direct opposite of the Teita Hills area from where Daniel came, but the thought of going to this inferno didn't seem to worry him unduly at the time.

There was not much to do in the way of packing since neither of us had much luggage. I left ahead of Ignatius, especially since we were going in different directions – he to Wajir via Nanyuki and Isiolo, while I had to go via Nairobi, Nakuru and Kitale to get to Lodwar. The journey from Voi to Kitale (the nearest down country base for the Turkana district) was quite tiring. I had left Voi at night and arrived in Nairobi the following morning.

As one leaves Nairobi and enters the Rift Valley Province, stopping briefly at some very interesting and well-maintained stations en route, one couldn't help noticing the change in the vegetation. Some of the richest farming areas were to be found in this region – the 'White Highlands'. Many of the station names were familiar to me – Naivasha, Gilgil, Nakuru and Eldoret. Kitale was a truly farming town which bustled with a lot of activity every week when farmers from the nearby areas of the Cherangani Hills, Endebess and even Hoey's Bridge, would come in to deliver their cereals to the big co-operative store – the Kenya Farmers' Association (or K.F.A. as it was popularly known). Dairy farmers would bring in their milk and cream sup-

plies to the Kenya Co-operative creameries from where was produced some of the best known Kenya butter, cream and cheese. After seeing the large farms that many of the European settlers owned, the prize dairy herds they kept and the sheer richness of the land, I realized why they wanted to keep the Highlands all for themselves. Who wouldn't, given the excellent climatic conditions?

The fact that I had old family friends at Kitale made matters much easier for me accommodation-wise, and I was happy to be in a family environment once more, and taste the delights of good home cooking from the hands of a grand old lady (Mrs C. H. Collaço) who, many years later was to become my mother-in-law! I stayed here for two days – thanks to the hospitality provided by the Collaço family, and left for Lodwar on a three-ton army type truck belonging to the local Government transport contractor (A. M. Kaka), on the afternoon of May 29, 1949. Mr Kaka, a staunch Muslim, had been the Government contractor for the Turkana district for many years; through very adverse conditions, and at great personal risk, he had carried on the transport business, starting with a modest Ford V-8 truck, and later ending with a fleet of modern vehicles. These lorries were rightly his pride and joy, but the envy of some of his competitors who now wanted to enter the transportation scene themselves.

Kaka's success was due to sheer hard work, and he had earned himself a reputation for reliability and dependability – attributes so essential if any business is to succeed. His trucks plied al-

most daily between Kitale and the various parts of the Turkana district, notably Lodwar and Lokitaung, with the occasional trips to the lake and even further north to Namaraputh. He was regularly awarded the Government contract for carrying mail, personnel and other supplies. He had served the Administration well and efficiently and was well liked and highly respected in the district generally. There was never any reason to look for an alternative contractor judging from the excellent service he had provided all along. The monopoly over transport that Kaka enjoyed certainly caused a good deal of resentment in later years among some of the newer traders who were now beginning to gain a foothold in the district. Despite his wealth – and there is no denying the fact that Kaka was quite a rich man – he was a very modest and unassuming individual, whose pleasant manner and willingness to help impressed me greatly. The driver of the truck that took me to Lodwar was a young Sebei tribesman from the Nyanza Province whose name was Wanyama. He made sure I was made comfortable from the time I boarded his truck, as his front seat and almost VIP passenger. He was more than courteous to me, and often stopped to enquire whether I wanted any refreshments. I learnt later of course, that owing to the strains and hazards of the long and cumbersome journey, drivers usually 'fortified' themselves with pints of beer during the trip. There was no shortage of the precious liquid on this journey either, since the truck we were travelling on was loaded with several crates of beer and sacks of *posho* (maize meal) – most of it destined for the government

staff at Lodwar, with the odd crate of beer consigned to one of the Asian traders in the township. Wanyama was a very fast driver who I felt sure would have been had up for speeding anywhere else. Despite his consumption of alcohol, his hand was pretty steady at the wheel, and never for a moment did I feel nervous over his driving. I had full confidence in him. After all, he knew the road well enough and was quick to slow down at the approach of a pot-hole or other similar obstacle on this long and dreary trail.

The drive from Kitale to Kapenguria – some 20 miles away – was pleasant, and the lush green farms of the White settlers were a soothing spectacle to behold until we started making our way into the West Suk district proper. The little township of Kapenguria lies on the slopes of the Cherangani Hills, and carved a place for itself in the history of Kenya, since it was here in 1952 that the principal trial of *Mzee* Jomo Kenyatta and his associates was held – in a tiny schoolroom which was hurriedly converted into a Court House (my recollections during a brief tour of duty at Kapenguria at the time of this famous trial, will be found in a later Chapter).

As we headed for the West Suk (now West Pokot) district, both the vegetation and terrain became more fierce and rugged. The grim reality of what I could expect in the way of an ‘uncivilized’ life soon dawned upon me as we passed some of the villages. Most of these consisted of a little more than a few twigs of the thorny acacia tree neatly wound together to form an igloo-like enclosure. Outside the *manyatta* (homestead or village), a herd

of goats was often to be seen grazing on the very scarce greenery that was available; the menfolk members of the Suk (or Pokot) tribe, usually sat on their *ekichalong* (small wooden stool standing barely 12 inches from the ground) – and talked about a variety of subjects, ranging from the grazing available to the prospect of finding a new wife! The roughly carved *ekichalong* is used as a head rest. To an outsider, it certainly looks primitive, but for the Suk and Turkana tribesmen, it provided a practical and useful means of relaxing, and there was no sign of boredom on the faces of the men who used these handy stools – lazing on them for hours on end.

The Suk look very much like the Turkana tribesmen, with whom they are always at daggers drawn. They are pastoralists, but also till the land and employ irrigation methods not common among their neighbours.

We had now driven a fair distance and I was told that we would shortly be arriving at a trading post called Amudat on the Kenya-Uganda border. This post is actually situated in Uganda, and it was here that I had my first encounter with the Karamojong tribe. They are certainly no friends of the Suk or Turkana, but at this outpost, it was amazing to see how freely they mixed – no outward signs of any hostility. How I wished they could always live side by side in harmony.

On arrival at Amudat, Wanyama knocked at the door of a *duka* owned by an Indian trader named Patel (I cannot recall his initials, but the name Patel is very common among the Gujerati community). Although we had arrived at an unearthly hour,

Mr Patel and his wife quickly woke up and opened their little *duka* for us. A hurricane lamp was lit, but the whole place still appeared very dark to me. At a given signal, Wanyama got Mr Patel to offer me a bottle of beer. Personally, I would have preferred a cup of tea since I had already consumed a fair amount of beer so far. Not wishing to be awkward and cause the trader further inconvenience, I accepted and slowly consumed the beer. Wanyama had downed his bottle in no time and seemed ready for a second round. It was as though he was preparing himself for the long journey ahead.

We stopped here for a few hours and Wanyama suggested I got some sleep. I remained seated in the driver's cab while he got out his blanket and slept on the floor outside Mr Patel's *duka*. I felt sufficiently rested when we awoke the following morning to continue our journey. I could already feel the dry heat of the desert that lay not far ahead, and which was soon to become 'home' for the next few months or maybe years!



The truck in which the author travelled to Lodwar.

Arid and semi-desert conditions prevailed throughout, and we drove several miles without seeing any signs of human habitation. How on earth people could survive in such scorching heat was the thought that constantly flashed through my mind. Dark lava rocks, and miles and miles of absolute nothingness lay ahead of us now. The road too was becoming rougher and very bumpy, and the Loiya escarpment proved nerve wrecking. A road sign conspicuously displayed at the entrance to the escarpment reads, '**Private burial ground for reckless drivers**'. The sight of this inscription sent a chilling shiver through my spine, but Wanyama seemed to take it all in his stride. He knew the area well, and far from impairing his efficiency, I felt the beer he had consumed at Amudat had made him even more confident. On average, he made three trips to Lodwar per week, and being one of Kaka's most trusted drivers, I had no reason to doubt his ability to complete the rest of the journey. He was very jovial and didn't stop talking to me as we drove. At one point he jokingly said that had I chosen to travel on the truck of the other driver, a much older man by the name of Onyango, it would have taken me almost two days to reach Lodwar! After we had driven for quite some distance, we noticed the lone figure of a Turkana tribesman in the distance; he was walking aimlessly along a path which only he knew. As we got closer to him, I noticed that he was carrying a spear in one hand, while in the other was that multi-purpose stool/headrest – his *ekichalong*. If he was lucky enough, Wanyama may give him a lift in to Lodwar *boma*. After all, as I later found out, this

tribesman was none other than Ewoi, the brother of Ethinyon, one of the DC's tribal policemen, who was well known to both our driver and turn-boy. A lift he certainly did get, but I also heard that Wanyama expected to be suitably compensated at the other end. This was, mind you, highly illegal; even the giving of lifts to sundry tribesmen on what was, strictly speaking, Government chartered transport was not, allowed. I never ever found out how much Ewoi paid Wanyama for the 'fare', but expect he received cash or a goat skin (the latter being worth its weight in gold, as it would eventually find its way to one of the down country tanneries).

We could now see Lodwar *boma* faintly in the distance, and before long we had arrived at our destination. Lodwar is the administrative headquarters for the Turkana district which also takes in the sub-station of Lokitaung further north. Although *Mzee* Jomo Kenyatta was moved to Lokitaung after the Mau Mau trial, it was at Lodwar that he was held after his release from gaol. This is the very same place which he once described as 'a hell on earth, where you sweat from morning to evening – if you are not sweating, you are covered in dust'!) Hot and dusty the journey surely was and I felt very exhausted from it, and in many ways, relieved that it was all over.

Before proceeding to the administrative headquarters, we stopped briefly at a *duka* run by a nephew of A. M. Kaka. Mr Shah Mohamed came out and greeted me with a warm *Salaam alekum* handshake. Whether it was because he lived in the wilds or not, Shah Mohamed looked very scruffy. He had not shaved for

days and looked rather sickly with all that untidy growth about his face. On our way to the *boma*, we had to negotiate a steep bend, and as we climbed further, I heard a smart, "Halt, who goes there?" challenge coming from a well-turned-out half clad Turkana tribal policeman who was perched high atop a stone-walled fortress. He looked smart in his *kikoi* (a mini-skirt type of garment), with a .303 rifle slung around his shoulder. The challenge, I gathered, was a normal one used for all incoming, and occasionally, outgoing, traffic. It certainly added an air of high adventure to the whole scene.

As our truck parked in front of the DC's office, a young Turkana TP drew up and gave me a smart salute and a warm "*Jambo Bwana karani*" greeting, followed by a fairly common Turkana expression, "*Ejok*" (meaning OK, or are you all right?) The Turkana have an accent all of their own when speaking Ki-Swahili. Three of the Goan clerical staff also came out to greet me. I had come as a numerical replacement for a Mr Andrade (not the same one from my Voi days) who was due to go on overseas leave pending retirement very shortly.

The two other Goans were John Vaz who took over the Cashier's duties, and the District-cum-Postal Clerk, a Mr De Souza, who I would eventually be replacing. Although they were pleased to see me, their steel-like faces seemed to mirror the reality they had come in accept in this dreary inferno. I was then taken to meet the DO (District Officer) – a young Englishman named Oliver Knowles, who obviously hadn't been long at Lodwar himself. He welcomed me in the absence of the DC who happened

to be away on safari in the Northern Turkana region at the time, and later suggested that my host (John Vaz) took me home for some breakfast. Because of the intense heat, coupled with the invasion of flies and not infrequent sandstorms, very few of the staff ate a full breakfast I was told. A glass or two of chilled juice accompanied by some toast and a cup of coffee was all they had.

Personally, I was far too tired and feeling the heat intensely, and so settled for a light breakfast after first having a quick shower. The cold fruit juice was a real treat and here I feel the Goan staff can thank successive Provincial Commissioners – notably Sir Gerald Reece and latterly Sir Richard Turnbull, through whose efforts all Asian staff in the N.F.D. were provided with kerosene-powered refrigerators free of charge. It must surely have taken some convincing on their part to persuade the authorities in Nairobi to waive the rules in this case.

Having felt refreshed, I walked to the office almost blinded by the penetrating sunlight. The building itself was of open plan structure and the whole area had an air of authority about it; outside every office (including my own), tough looking TPs, very sparsely clad in *kikois*, stood guard. This was more in an effort to prevent the entry of unauthorized 'visitors'. The tribal policemen would normally vet any tribesmen who wanted to see either the DC, DO, Cashier, or myself. Some *shauris* (complaints) were referred to me, others to the DC or DO as appropriate. I always made use of our young interpreter-cum-office boy, Dies Tappo. Strangely enough, he was a Merille; tribes-

man from Ethiopia who spoke fluent Turkana and a smattering of English too. Most of our conversations were conducted in Ki-Swahili though. Dies could hardly have been more than eighteen years old; he was very tall for his age, with a slim and erect figure and clear cut features.

As District Clerk, I was more of a Personal Secretary to the DC, and handled all his correspondence, including all confidential and secret papers. There were no secretaries as such in the frontier; women were not, as a rule, allowed into the N.F.D., and even if they were, I doubt whether any would volunteer for service in Lodwar – no matter how great the inducements! In addition to my normal duties, I also acted as Postal Agent; this job involved the stocking and selling of stamps, postal orders, etc, registered letters/parcel service and even Post Office Savings Bank transactions. I also looked after the accounts of the ‘Lodwar Athanaeum Club’. This unofficial post was more of an unpaid ‘barman’, since it was my job to see that adequate stocks of beer (a ‘precious’ liquid in the N.F.D) and fruit cordials were held at all times. We normally consumed some twenty crates of lager each month – sometimes more, depending largely on how often we entertained – not just colleagues from the office, but even visitors from neighbouring Lokitaung who ‘passed through Lodwar. The fact that the Government bore the full transport costs of all goods ordered by the staff meant that we were able to obtain our beer and other supplies at ex-factory Nairobi prices. This was a very valuable concession, and it is perhaps because of the cheapness of the beer that

we consumed so much! One other reason was also because of the water at Lodwar, which had a very high fluorine content. This made it most unpalatable.

There was a lot of work to keep me fully occupied in the office. The DC and DO turned out a fair amount of correspondence; then there were the Safari and Monthly Intelligence reports, letters to Head Office departments and the PC's office and other similar correspondence to be typed – all of which was done by me. In addition, there were the daily routine shauris of the tribesmen and office staff to deal with. There is one other aspect of my work at Lodwar I should like to mention, and that is my role as weatherman.

I received a small honorarium from the meteorological department for sending reports, twice daily, of cloud formations, wind speed and direction, temperature, etc, and on the rare occasion, a record of the rainfall. The reports were telegraphed to the Met. office in Nairobi. I was quite thrilled when I received a letter from the Director of Meteorological Services in Nairobi, thanking me for the weather reports I had submitted at the time when some members of the British Royal family were en route to Uganda. The reports were apparently of great help to the Civil Aviation authorities on this particular occasion. Although my daily work schedule was a fairly crowded one, there were times when I was able to assist the Cashier, John Vaz with the typing of endless salary and other vouchers, returns, safari allowance claims, etc. I knew he was very grateful for this help. Although, as I have said earlier, many regarded a posting to Lod-

war as being banished to some God-forsaken island, I must say that I enjoyed my tour of duty there immensely. From the very first moment I saw them, I took a liking to the simple and care-free Turkana tribesmen. They were simplicity personified and this appealed to me very much. The men wore no clothing at all and roamed about *sicut Deus creavit*. The women were likewise scantily-clad, their bare, shiny and well-formed breasts openly displayed, while a roughly made goat skin skirt concealed their nakedness. Despite the harsh environment they lived in, they always appeared very cheerful and happy to me. The Turkana are amongst the most primitive tribesmen in East Africa, and it is precisely their very simple and fuss-free life-style that left a lasting mark on me. They are law-abiding people, and there are instances when tribesmen have walked several miles from their *manyattas* to the Administrative headquarters at Lodwar merely to pay their kodi (poll tax – in those days, some Shs.3/- per adult male). There was never any deliberate tax evasion as such. Those who could not afford to pay, and could prove through their tribal Chiefs that they were *masikini* (destitute), were exempted from payment altogether.

The Turkana appear, and in fact are, an aggressive lot. Unlike other pastoral tribes in Kenya though, they are among the best craftsmen. Most of the ornaments they wear are handmade, and although the craft is now a dying one, the Turkana once made their own pottery. These days, they work with leather, turning out women's skirts, the odd pouches, etc; they also work with wood, producing their small wooden stools and other

useful gadgets – not for resale (in those days) but more for their own use. With the opening up of the area to tourists, the picture today is quite different.

Like all frontier tribesmen, the Turkana love their land, rugged and harsh though it may appear to the outsider, even more dearly do they love their animals, which they keep as a necessity of life. Goats and donkeys are normally kept, and also camels since they can survive on virtually little or no vegetation and still yield more milk than goats, who provide not only milk, but also meat and skins. Donkeys, even with the Turkana, fulfil their usual role – that of beasts of burden.

It is very interesting to note that herding livestock starts at a very young age among the Turkana, and it is not uncommon to see a young boy of seven or eight herding goats or even camels. With the shortage of grazing however the Turkana frequently move their *manyattas*, sadly with disturbing consequences. Tribal feuds which so often started, were more the result of the Turkana straying into the grazing grounds of the neighbouring Donyiro from the Sudan border or even the Merille from Ethiopia. During such skirmishes, justice was meted out tribal-style. In such cases, it was not uncommon for rival tribesmen to be killed in cold blood. For the Turkana, as indeed for most frontier tribesmen, their livestock meant everything, and they were often prepared to risk their lives and all they possessed to safeguard their animals.

Because of the high incidence of stock thefts, and the resultant murders, the DC at Lodwar had more than his fair share of

conducting preliminary inquiries into murder cases. I had the good fortune of typing out the Court proceedings; it certainly was a thrilling experience and one which I enjoyed more than reading a book. One never knew what was coming next in the gruesome chapters leading up to the murder. Unlike routine and rather mundane typing, I was always pleased when there was a murder enquiry to be typed. I somehow felt I was there in person, experiencing every moment of the exciting, frightening and often blood-chilling drama. The inquiry sometimes ran into 50 to 60 pages.

The District Commissioner during my tour at Lodwar was a middle-aged Englishman by the name of Leslie Whitehouse, who came from Horsham in Sussex. His rugged and badly tanned face, with its village schoolmaster-type expression, was a clear indication of the hard taskmaster he really was. While most of the European officers couldn't wait for their overseas leave or posting from Lodwar, Mr Whitehouse never wanted to move out of the district. Many a young District Officer held him in awe, so did I when I was first posted there; in all fairness, I must say that despite his fiery temper – and I was to witness many such 'explosions' while I was there – he was a perfect gentleman, always kind-hearted and human. The heat of Lodwar was such that it made one very irritable, and Mr Whitehouse, despite his long stay in the district, was no exception. I can well recall one occasion when he was visibly excited over an incident reported to him by the Kenya Police Sgt. in charge. Although I cannot remember the precise nature of the incident,

it must have been serious enough for him to fly into a rage, and in a gesture obviously intended to show his authority – order the entire Kenya Police contingent at Lodwar to turn out on parade in their ceremonial dress. Meanwhile, he rushed home to change into his own official uniform. Moments later he returned, still fuming, and took the salute while an impressively turned out force of Kenya Police askaris presented arms! He wanted to reassert his authority and make sure that everyone in the district understood that he was in charge. There was also a pleasant side to his nature and I remember how, on one occasion, a truck had pulled up from neighbouring Lokitaung carrying, among other things, two Goan police clerks who worked at that sub-station. As was normal, they called in to greet us and take a short break before continuing their journeys to Kitale. Bottles of beer and hastily made snacks were laid before them, and while we were thus busy entertaining them, one of our guests suggested that I accompany them to Kitale. The idea seemed irresistible, especially since my girl-friend lived there, and this would, be an ideal opportunity to get down to see her; but then, there was quite a lot of work to be done at the office; there were the unfinished legal proceedings which had to be typed and sent off to the Supreme Court in Nairobi; there was also the Annual Report for the district – a very comprehensive record of all that had taken place in the district during the year under review. This report, together with appendices, normally ran into some 40-50 typed pages. A host of other outstanding jobs quickly flashed through my mind like flickering lights on

a Christmas tree. On the other hand, the opportunity to get down to Kitale and see my girl-friend seemed too good to miss, so I plucked enough courage and quickly scribbled a note to the DC. It ran thus: Dear Mr Whitehouse, I said, a Police truck has just arrived from Lokitaung (as though he hadn't heard it roar through the *boma*), carrying two of my friends from the Police department – Messrs. Rodrigues and Neves Vaz, on their way to Kitale; would you mind if I went with them, and returned by the next available transport, possibly a couple of days later? My cook Daniel quickly took the note to the DC. His reply, written at the bottom of my note, was swift and brief: Yes, certainly, it said, off you go. This is precisely what I did. My delight knew no bounds, and when I showed the note to my friends, I must say that they were both taken aback to see the manner in which it was couched.

"Do you always say, 'Dear Mr Whitehouse' when you write to the DC?" asked one of them. "Don't you call him 'Sir'?"

"No," I replied, intending no disrespect of course. Privately, in letters, I have always addressed my DCs and other officers as 'Dear Mr ...', also in conversation and whenever we met socially. I felt that there was a place and time for the use of the word 'Sir', always intending no discourtesy or disrespect, and I am pleased to be able to record that I encountered no problems in this respect.

We drove through the afternoon and when I arrived at Kitale late that evening, my face was still sore from sunburn. This was because Neves Vaz and I had to travel at the back of the open

police truck since there was no room for us all in the driver's cab. My girl-friend and her parents were delighted to see me and the former's excitement showed clearly in her face, since my arrival was so unexpected. As was her nature, my mother-in-law-to-be quickly produced a cup of percolated coffee. It was just the tonic I needed after the long and uncomfortable journey. Mrs Collaço was a great hostess, always at her best when entertaining people. She knew of my great passion for good food, and saw to it that my taste buds were well satisfied while I was at Kitale. She was an expert at cooking, and what impressed me most was the sheer speed with which she went about her business. One moment she was in the kitchen, the next she would join us in a lively and happy conversation. Such was the nature of this larger-than-life woman. I spent two unforgettable days in the cool of this beautiful farming town, met many old friends during that all-too-brief stay, and returned to Lodwar 'fully charged' and ready to face the mountain of paperwork that awaited me.

Because I was permitted to leave at such short notice, I decided to 'repay' Mr. Whitehouse's kindness by putting in extra hours and doing everything possible to bring the work up to date. There was no question of being paid any overtime for this. I do not think that the word 'overtime' had even entered the workers' dictionary in those days. In any case the general rule in the N.F.D. was to work regardless of office hours when there was work to be done. When there was no work (and this was very, very rare), we relaxed! This, with the full backing of the PC and

DC who were well aware of the extra hours we regularly put in. In fact, it was not uncommon for us to be called outside office hours to pay off tribal policemen, road gangs or other staff who had just returned to the *boma* after a spell of duty at some of the frontier outposts; similarly, if a contingent of men had to be despatched urgently on safari, we would be called to pay them and arrange for their rations, etc. All this we accepted uncomplainingly, and it certainly didn't go unnoticed.



The author with a Turkana belle at Lake Rudolf (Turkana).

Another pleasing aspect of my stay at Lodwar was its proximity to Lake Rudolf and Fergusson's Gulf. To compensate for the hard and unvaried life we, the clerical staff had to endure, the Provincial Commissioner had instructed the DC Turkana, through an Official Order – to ensure that we were given free trips to the lake at least once a month, and also occasional trips

to Kitale. We needed these outings especially since, unlike our European colleagues, we never went out on safari. Uncomfortable though they were, travel-wise, the trips to the lake helped us enormously; they were a great morale booster, and always seemed to give us a 'lift' – a sort of new lease of life really whenever we got back to the *boma*. For this concession, we were deeply grateful to the authorities. There were other concessions afforded to us too – thanks to the untiring efforts of successive Provincial Commissioners; in addition to the free refrigerators we were provided with, and, which I have already mentioned, we were also given the bare minimum of furniture consisting of a bed and coir mattress, occasional table, dining-table and chairs and a couple of un-cushioned lounge chairs; these were all supplied rent free. This was a special privilege afforded to the Asian staff in the N.F.D. since furniture was only supplied to European staff and that too on payment of the appropriate furniture rental. I feel sure that the various Provincial Commissioners must have made out a strong enough case to convince officials at the Treasury and Secretariat that the rules should be 'bent'. As a general rule, Head office personnel were sticklers for abiding by the Code of Regulations.

At Lake Rudolf, a retired Royal Naval Commander (Dennis McKay) and his wife Susan, ran a thriving fishing business. He had served as a DC at Lodwar previously and knew the area well. There was not the slightest doubt that the couple loved the lake and the area around it. One other reason why they had settled there was because of Commander McKay's health; he suffered

from asthma, and this seemed the ideal area to be in – a totally clean air zone. They were a wonderful pair who seemed to enjoy every moment of their life on this rather secluded island cut off as it were from the rest of civilization; they didn't seem to mind this in the least. The McKays employed a small number of Turkana fishermen and exported lorry loads of dried fish (mostly tilapia) to Kitale.

In addition to tilapia, there were also Nile perch to be found in Lake Rudolf. It is believed that some fifteen thousand years ago, the whole region formed part of the Nile system and the Nile perch now found in the lake are the survivors.

Tilapia abound in Lake Rudolf and sometimes weighed between ten and fifteen pounds. Cooked in the Eastern style with a sprinkling of herbs and spice, they made a very delicious meal indeed.

Through their previous service in Lodwar, the McKays had got to know and like the Goans, and were fully aware of the hardships we had to endure. On their frequent trips to Kitale, they always made sure that the Goan staff at Lodwar were kept well supplied with fresh lake fish – usually tilapia. I shall remain ever grateful for their thoughtfulness in bringing us regular and large parcels of this delicacy. I often had the fish cut up into neat steaks, fried and then stored in the fridge for a day or two in readiness for being sent down to Kitale. My girl-friend and her parents loved fish, and her mother being the great cook she was, made sure that this consignment from the lake was soon converted into that spicy and mouth-watering pickled fish that

we Goans relish so much. I was later to hear from Mrs. Collaço that baked in straw, tilapia made a very satisfying meal indeed. We would certainly try out this recipe the next time we were at the lake, I thought.

Women were, as a rule, not allowed into the Turkana district – the only exception being wives of officials at the sub-station at Lokitaung. This restriction was probably because of the rough and troublesome journey with its attendant hazards, the intensive heat, and perhaps because of the very primitive and sometimes ‘savage’ nature of the tribesmen. Because of this ban, I could not bring myself to ask the DC for permission to allow my girlfriend and her family to come over to Lodwar for a few days. For weeks I brooded over the idea. I had described the place to them, and warned them of the hardships of the journey; despite all this, they still seemed very keen on seeing the place. The big hurdle to overcome now was obtaining official permission. I should explain here that the N.F.D. was declared a Closed District under the Outlying District Ordinance, and permission to enter was only given on written application to the PC or DC of the district concerned. Such applications had also to be made well in advance of the proposed visit; nor was permission granted lightly. Besides, the permit itself had to be signed by the DC personally, or in his absence, the DO (this only if the DC had previously approved of the visit). I therefore decided to wait for an opportune moment when the DC, Mr Whitehouse, was in a good mood. Such occasions were not very common during office hours, and I always put his ‘moodiness’ down to the intol-

erable heat and general conditions prevailing in Lodwar. Mind you, we, the clerical staff also had the same fierce heat and conditions to endure! One evening, when my colleague and I were invited over to the DC's house for drinks, I mustered sufficient courage to pop the question.

"My girl-friend and her parents are very anxious to come over and see the place, and, I wondered, Mr Whitehouse, if you would..." A nervous cough kept interrupting some of my speech as I continued. "I wondered, if you would agree to their coming and staying with me for a few days."

"Of course," he replied, "you must bring them over – prepare a Pass for my signature tomorrow." I could hardly believe my ears. Had he really uttered those all-comforting words? Would it all be reversed when we got back to the office the next day? I kept asking myself. There was no question of the DC or myself being intoxicated the previous evening, we were both very normal at the time, but I could still not believe that he had agreed to the visit. When I returned to the office the following morning, I quickly prepared the Pass and tucked it among several other official papers that were being taken to the DC for signature. I was not summoned to his office (as sometimes happened when he wanted to discuss any letters sent for his signature with me): this in itself sounded promising. When at last, a few moments later, the TP orderly returned with the DC's out-tray overflowing with official papers, I noticed that the Pass had been signed, L. E. Whitehouse, District Commissioner, Turkana. For a moment I was dumbfounded – I could hardly believe what I was

seeing before my very eyes. I was thrilled to bits and lost no time in sending the permit off to my girl-friend. It was too precious a piece of paper to sit over. What if the DC changed his mind? Well, eventually, the Pass did get to its destination much to the delight of my girl-friend and her family.

Transport was arranged through the Government contractor and in a matter of a few days, the whole family had landed at Lodwar – my girl-friend, her parents, three sisters and a brother. Not being accustomed to such long and gruelling journeys, they were obviously showing signs of fatigue – a natural reaction in the circumstances. The furthest part of this route they had previously ventured out to was Kapenguria. It didn't take them long to recover from the effect of the journey. The DC himself couldn't have behaved in a kinder fashion – and even gave me time off to take the family home. I very much appreciated this gesture on his part, and after getting them settled in, left them in the capable hands of our new cook, Sheunda. This elderly man was a Luo from Mumias in the Nyanza Province. He had previously worked for the Cashier, John Vaz and other Goans too in Nakuru and Tambach (In the Rift Valley Province). My Mteita cook Daniel, who had accompanied me from Voi, had found that he could not stand the Lodwar climate and conditions any longer. He had also got himself involved with the local women, and to save further trouble, I felt that it would be best if I discharged him and sent him back to his home in the Teita Hills; this I did, and we parted as friends. Sheunda was a much older man with a shiny ebony-like complexion. He

had a habit of whistling while he worked, and one of his favourite tunes was La Paloma. Perhaps this tune had some sort of therapeutic effect on him?

My visitors made the best of their stay, and for John Vaz and myself, the delicious cooking of my girl-friend's mother made a pleasant change from the regular dishes which Sheunda used to turn out. On one evening during their stay at Lodwar, my guests were invited over to drinks by the DC. I had not expected such an invitation, neither had they. During the course of the conversation that evening, Mr Whitehouse must have read my thoughts as, to everyone's surprise, he suggested that we make the trip to Lake Rudolf and Fergusson's Gulf. The Asst. Superintendent of Police from neighbouring Lokitaung also happened to be at the party, and he readily undertook to provide the transport from his own fleet of vehicles. This was great! To add to my sheer delight, the DC agreed that I could have two days off, so too John Vaz. This was not to be deducted from our normal local leave entitlement, but more of a goodwill gesture on his part. He was well aware of the long hours we worked, and we were grateful that he had shown his appreciation in this way. That night, we left the DC's house having thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, and full of appreciation for his kindness.

As promised, the ASP Lokitaung (a Mr Dennis Wright) sent the police truck to Lodwar within a day of his getting back, and before long we were all bound for the lake. I had made this journey before and so knew the roads well. For my visitors, the 45-mile stretch, bumpy in several places, was not very comfort-

able. I felt sorry for them, but knew they would be compensated at the other end. We arrived at the lake shore at dusk, and were quickly surrounded by a crowd of Turkana men, women and children. The Government employed a headman – a Luo by the name of Pankrassio, to supervise the pauper's camp at Ferguson's Gulf. He had lived on the lakeside for many years, and had become more of a Turkana himself; he was quick to arrive on the scene and greeted us all in his customary pleasant manner. We were then ferried across in a little boat to Ferguson's Gulf where we pitched camp for the night. All through the night I hardly slept; I could hear the splashing of the crocodiles, and in the distance, the faint chatter of the Turkana paupers who inhabited the opposite bank of the gulf. Despite a rather disturbed sleep, I was not really restless. Having given up counting sheep, I looked up into the dark sky lit up by millions of twinkling stars; the occasional splashing of the odd crocodile disturbed the relative quiet at the night. Where else on earth could I experience an atmosphere such as this? I wondered. It was an experience that brought man close to earth and gave him a feeling of his own insignificance.

The Turkana paupers were a noisy lot, but this didn't worry me unduly. The poor souls, known locally as *masikini* (Swahili for beggars), existed solely on Government aid, and the ration of *posho* (maize meal) they received free of charge under the Famine Relief scheme. In turn, they turned out some dom palm ropes for the administration; these ropes were a vital part of the equipment during camel and donkey safaris.

Despite the intensity of the heat, my visitors seemed to enjoy every minute of their stay at the lake, and even managed to fit in a lot of fishing. Those who were not doing the actual fishing watched Turkana fishermen cast their half-torn nets and bring in quite a sizeable catch of very large lake fish – mostly tilapia. Between us, we had now caught a very large quantity of fish, and decided that we had best dry most of it on the hot sands of the lake. Having no doubt heard of the abundance of fish in this area, my friends had asked me to take along a quantity of rock salt. This came in very handy. There was no shortage of willing Turkana hands to help gut and clean the fish which was then spread on jute sacks (gunny bags), and left to dry in the baking sun. In this way, we succeeded in drying nearly two sackfuls of tilapia. We also caught and ate fish as never before – there was baked fish, fried fish and even slightly spiced fish. It was also here that we were able to try out the baked fish recipe – only that we had to substitute dom palm leaves for straw; the resultant meal was delicious all the same! Tilapia are a very meaty and tasty variety of fish which, as you will have read, can weigh upwards of 10 lbs. The fish, which is so plentiful in Lake Rudolf, plays a very important part in the diet of the local Turkana. In other parts of the district, the tribesmen live off meat and berries and, if lucky, milk and blood from the animals they keep.

Our stay at the lake had been simply wonderful, and we finally got back to Lodwar after three well-spent days. After a further two days' stay with us, my visitors left for Kitale, no doubt full

of memories of their trip into adventure-land – a trip which very few women could boast of in those days.

For my girl-friend, this must have been a very exciting and stimulating experience, and one that would remain with her for a long time; it certainly played a big part in later years, especially when it came to deciding which station we would like to live in after we were married. Without any doubt, it would have to be the N.F.D.!!

Although there was every indication that they had all enjoyed their trip to Turkana, I do not somehow, think that the parents felt quite the same. After all, which caring parent would like to see their young and beautiful daughter live in what they still regarded as a primitive corner of Kenya –especially when there were far better and healthier stations like Nakuru, Kisumu or even Kitale that one could choose to serve in? As far as I was concerned, I had made up my mind that the ‘uncivilized’ life was the one for me; I wouldn’t swap it for all the tea in China. Despite the heat and barrenness of Lodwar, I had decided that nothing was going to deter me from remaining here – to be honest, I had no intention of moving. I discovered later, however, that it was customary in those days not to post staff in such areas for a period exceeding eighteen months. This was more because of the adverse climatic conditions. Several years ago, a young DO had died of black-water fever; another DO, Christopher Parry had died of polio. Whenever we went for our evening walks in the direction of Lodwar airfield, we always made it a point of visiting the graves of these officers. I can still

recall some of the letters we received from Mr Parry's mother in England, enquiring about the upkeep and condition of her son's grave. Given the nature of the countryside, I must say that the graves were very well looked after. As for long-serving officers in the district, Mr Whitehouse seemed to be the only exception. Whereas most officers couldn't wait to get out once their eighteen months (sometimes less) tour was up, Mr Whitehouse had asked not to be moved from the district, and had even volunteered to return there after his vacation leave. He loved the area and was certainly the Supremo here. He was equally well known throughout the whole of the district both among the Government staff and the tribesmen too. The name 'W'house' was on the lips of many a Turkana – even the herds-boys and the younger generation of the township were familiar with his name. He had, in the time he had been at Lodwar succeeded in establishing a firm hold over the district and its peoples.

Another reason which prompted me to stay on at Lodwar was its proximity to Kitale, and the fact that I could get down to see my girlfriend whenever possible; the tiresome and uncomfortable journey of some 200 miles didn't seem to matter, nor did the threat of contracting malaria. As for the disease, we took every precaution by taking daily doses of Paludrine tablets; our cook was well trained in this respect, and always made sure that the tablets were produced at the breakfast table each morning. An incident which I will not forget, and in which I played an insignificant part, cannot escape mention. During the latter part of my stay at Lodwar, the DC from neighbouring Moroto in

Uganda had arrived as guest of Mr Whitehouse. He had been granted permission to bring his family along as they were hoping to spend few days at the lake. I cannot recall whether it was on the day of their arrival at Fergusson's Gulf or a few days later, when something horrible happened. I had finished my supper that evening and was getting ready to walk up the steps of my bungalow leading up to the mosquito-proof cabin above. I had scarcely got into the cabin when I noticed the bright lights of a truck coming from the direction of the lake and making its way towards my house. I stood by the door and waited for it to pull up. As it drew nearer, I immediately noticed it was our own administration lorry. The DC's driver, a Luo from Nyanza, by the name of Zadok, got out and handed me a letter. When I asked what it was all about, he replied, "*Mamba na kwisha kula mkono ya Bwana DC ya Moroto*" (a crocodile has bitten the hand of the DC Moroto). I knew then what was coming in the letter from Mr. Whitehouse. It said that Mr Watney had been badly mauled by a crocodile, and asked me to organize, as a matter of urgency, an aircraft and doctor to take him to hospital. Such first aid as was possible had already been administered by the DC at the lake shore.

Arrangements were also being made for Mr Watney and his family to be brought back to Lodwar as soon as driver Zadok had returned. I lost no time in scribbling a hurried note to Mr Whitehouse telling him that I would make all the arrangements he wanted. As soon as the Posts & Telegraphs wireless station opened the following morning, I despatched a signal to the air

charter firm in Nairobi, and also asked the Medical Officer at Kitale if he would arrange for a doctor to join the aircraft at Kitale. Later that morning I received a reply giving the aircraft's ETA at Lodwar, and confirming that a doctor would be collected *en route*. This gave me sufficient time to organize transport to take down a supply of aviation spirit which would be required for refuelling the aircraft. Later that afternoon, the aircraft and doctor arrived, and Mr Watney who had arrived earlier with the DC and was resting at the latter's house, was driven to the airstrip after the doctor had first examined him. He must have been in considerable pain but never so much as showed it; I was glad and so was Mr Whitehouse that the whole operation had gone off smoothly. I even prayed that all be well with Mr Watney; he was in good hands now and it was up to the doctors to do their best to save his arm. Later that evening, I got further details of this terrible accident from the DC. The crocodile, it appears, had been shot by Mr. Watney, and presuming it dead, he had brought it ashore and was showing his family the spot where the bullet had penetrated this creature. In what must surely have been a final gasp for life, the deadly beast got hold of his arm, mauling it very badly in the process. It must have been a terrifying moment for all who were there, especially Mrs Watney. Fortunately, whatever first aid Mr Whitehouse and his party were able to administer must have been of considerable help. They had saved the life of the DC Moroto. I was, in my own way, very pleased to have played a small part in this rescue operation, and very much appreciated the note of thanks sent

later to the DC by Mrs Watney. I felt sorry for the way in which their holiday had been ruined, but pleased to hear later that Mr Watney had made a good recovery. I am sure he will not easily forget this unfortunate experience.

John Vaz, who had been Cashier at Lodwar for some time now, was preparing for his overseas leave. His replacement, Austin D'Souza had already arrived from Kakamega. Austin was a married man who, because of the prevailing regulations, was not allowed to bring his wife to Lodwar. He seemed very lost during his first few days, and I could sense that he was missing his wife a lot; he looked worried quite often and found it difficult to adjust to this strange environment. This initial phase soon passed however, and like the rest of us, Austin soon came to terms with the situation. I was sorry to see John Vaz go – we had got on so well together, and I was certainly going to miss him. About this time, an additional clerk, Christie Almeida, had also arrived at Lodwar to assist with the increased volume of work in the district. Christie had brought along his young and playful Alsatian pet called 'Junno' who seemed to settle in well despite the heat. Junno was a very healthy looking dog, and there was no shortage of meat for him while he was at Lodwar. The local butcher always sent some extra meat and a bone each time our cook collected our meat supplies. The locals dreaded the dog, and the kids couldn't always understand his playful moods. In many respects, the presence of this pet was a blessing in disguise for the rest of us since, like it or not, Junno would 'force' us to take him out for long walks each evening. He was not content with our

strolling to the nearby *dukas* and drinking beer with the local traders, while he was deprived of his evening constitutional!

During my tour at Lodwar, I was sent out to Lokitaung on two occasions. This sub-station lies in a range of low hills, hence its climate was far cooler than that of Lodwar. The area around it is nothing more than a desert of sand and lava, very much like parts of Lodwar, save that the township water supply was very much better. I gather that Lokitaung itself owes its existence to a spring of water oozing from a hole in the rock at the head of a dried-up river bed. As in most desert regions, water has always been the cause of raids between the tribes, and despite a Police and Administration presence in the area, raids between the Merille tribesmen from Ethiopia and the Turkana were not uncommon.

The District Officer when I first went to Lokitaung was Patrick Crichton, who was previously stationed at Lodwar. I knew him well, and he appreciated the help I was able to give while his own District Clerk, Honorato Fernandes was on local leave. On a second occasion, I was again asked to go there to help reorganize the office systems. The DO then was again an ex-Lodwar officer, K. B. Keith (Kenneth to his friends). Mr Keith and I were good friends at Lodwar and he often acted as my 'unofficial' postman carrying letters to my girl-friend at Kitale whenever he went down to see his wife, Isobel and their baby son Hamish, who were then staying at one of the mission stations around Kapenguria. At Lokitaung, I also had the pleasure of meeting the Medical Officer i/c, Dr R. D. Singh ('Ripi' to his friends), a

young Sikh doctor who was very popular with everyone on the station. He once invited me to accompany him on his hospital rounds to see some of the cases he was treating.

Conjunctivitis and trachoma were fairly common ailments among the Turkana. By far, the disease that was most prevalent here was VD. Minor operations were performed at the Lokitaung hospital, more serious cases being sent by road to Kitale.

Another 'Singh' I also met at Lokitaung, was Makhan Singh, the trade union leader who had been restricted to this area following anti-government trade union activities. My host at Lokitaung was a very likeable and soft-spoken police clerk, Neves Vaz, while Mr and Mrs Rodrigues entertained us to meals each day. There was a great concentration of police officers at Lokitaung – in fact this was the headquarters, and in addition to the ASP, there were two Asst. Inspectors – during my time, Bob Matthews and Nigel Marsh, the latter being later replaced by Tom Lawson. I still remember the pet ostrich that Bob Matthews had. He had picked this bird when it was a mere chick during one of his safaris to Namaraputh in the extreme north of the district. Work-wise, there was not much to keep me fully occupied at Lokitaung.

My one regret on leaving this sub-station was not being able to visit the police post at Namaraputh on the Ethiopian border. This post was sited for the surveillance of the top end of the lake, and was suitable for use as a secure base from which patrols could operate along the Sudan frontier.



Elsie atop lava rocks at Lodwar:

4. Lodwar-Marsabit

On my return to Lodwar from Lokitaung, I somehow got the impression that Mr Whitehouse had no intention of letting me leave the district. If he could have had his way, I am sure he would have liked me to stay on there as long as I wanted to. Things didn't work out quite that way though, and I soon found that my days at Lodwar were coming to an end. I had served more than the normal eighteen months – in fact I'd been in Turkana for nearly two years now.

A Goan District Clerk at Marsabit (also one of the districts of the Northern Frontier Province) — but climatically, the direct opposite of Lodwar — had requested a move from Marsabit. The Provincial Commissioner at the time, Mr R. G. Turnbull (now Sir Richard Turnbull), had suggested that we two should exchange places. The DC at Marsabit wanted me urgently and was anxious that the move should be completed before the arrival of the long rains.



Marsbit D.C. 'Windy' Wild and Rendille interpreter Sangarta.

Mr. Whitehouse was equally determined that I should stay on for as long as he could 'hold on' to me. I did not mind this in the least, but very much hoped that the move would not take place before my girl-friend and her family, who were then on holiday at the coast, had returned to Kitale. Unfortunately for me though, this was not to be and in late 1950, the posting orders had been issued. Although the actual date of the move was left to be negotiated between the two District Commissioners, the PC had made it plain that he wanted the transfers completed well before the rainy season. Because of the infrequency of mails between Lodwar and Marsabit and vice versa, a great deal of correspondence pertaining to my move had to be conducted by telegram, a not uncommon method of communication in the N.F.D.

There were many friends I had made in the Turkana district particularly at Lodwar – not just among the Administration staff but also some of the personnel from the other Government offices medical staff, P & T operators and the Italian brick foreman, Giovanni Fadi, who had arrived at Lodwar a few months before I was due to leave. In addition to the two Asian traders, there was another veteran Somali trader, Farah Issa, a retired policeman who had served the Government well during his days. He was blind in one eye but managed to run his little *duka* fairly well. He had ploughed all his service gratuity into this *duka*, and although I often wondered how he made a living – especially since his turnover was nowhere near that of the two Asians, he seemed quite happy with the small quantities of

tobacco, tea, salt and sugar he sold to the local Turkana.

He also kept a supply of *shukas* (a calico wrap round) since this item of clothing was very much in demand. A grand old man Farah Issa really was; whenever there was a ceremonial parade or similar occasion, he would always turn out with all his service medals, and wore these with pride.

An anthropologist (P. H. Gulliver) and his wife had also arrived from England to carry out a study of the Turkana tribe a few months before I left Lodwar. I was often amazed at the fluency with which Gulliver spoke to the Turkana in their local dialect – not an easy language by any means.

When news of my transfer was officially out, several farewell parties were organized for me. The DC and DO both had me over for drinks, so also did the two Asian traders, even though one was a Muslim. Religious differences (one of the traders was a Hindu) were conveniently forgotten when it came to eating meat or drinking intoxicating liquor. Perhaps when one lives in areas like Lodwar, under what can best be described as difficult conditions, even the Almighty shows greater mercy!

I was truly sad when the day of my departure from Lodwar finally came. On my outward journey, there was time to wave the occasional *kwaheri* to some of the familiar faces I had come to know and love during my stay in this isolated corner of Kenya. I was now looking forward to the challenge awaiting me at Marsabit.

On arrival at Kitale, I was sorry not to be able to call on my girl-friend and her parents who, as mentioned earlier, were hol-

idaying at Malindi. I spent a few hours at the offices of Mr A. M. Kaka who I had got to know quite well. We talked about the good times at Lodwar and he said he was very sorry to see me leave the district. Since the Kitale-Nairobi train was not due to leave until later that evening, I decided to make my way to the town centre and bid farewell to the many friends I'd made at Kitale; I knew quite a few people here, not just members of my own community who I used meet either at Church or at the Goan Institute, but even some of the Asian and Somali traders. My Indian tailor, Mr Solanki, could hardly conceal his disappointment when I told him I was leaving the area. He was an expert bespoke tailor, whose work was of a very high standard. I assured him that the order for my wedding suit would be his! There were other traders I also called on — Maganlal Anderji who supplied all our fresh vegetables and a Mr Patel, a very lively and diminutive employee who was employed by Kitale Bakery. This establishment, which was very popular among the local farmers, was run by a husband and wife team – Willie Woods and his wife. (My girl-friend supervised most of the provision deliveries that came to me each week from Kitale Bakery.)

Later that evening, I was driven to the railway station by Mr Kaka and boarded the train for Nairobi. As my compartment had previously been reserved, there was no real problem of getting to station early. The journey to Eldoret was quite pleasant, and here we had to wait for a few hours until the mail train from Uganda had arrived. I remained awake until our coaches

had been connected to this train and remember leaving Eldoret about midnight. That night, I slept very well, waking up only occasionally when we stopped at some of the stations *en route*. Later the following morning, we were at Nairobi, and here I spent two days with friends before continuing the journey to Marsabit via Nyeri, Nanyuki and Isiolo.

Since most of my warm clothing had been left behind at Kitale (I had no real need for this in the heat of Lodwar), and with my girl-friend and her family away at the coast, I had arrived in Nairobi with the bare minimum of summer attire. This after all, was my only wardrobe at Lodwar. While the light-weight clothes would be adequate for the journey up to Isiolo, I would certainly be needing something more protective and warm for the onward trip to Marsabit, and also for my first few weeks there – until such time as the bulk of my packages were sent on from Kitale. A friend of mine at Nairobi very kindly lent me his tweed jacket, which not only fitted me perfectly, but also came in very handy.

From Nairobi, I took a train to Nanyuki, a small town some 7,000 feet above sea level, standing near the base of Mount Kenya. Nanyuki, like Kitale, was a farming town where some of the well known Kenya pioneers had settled – among them, the late Major Robert Foran, who was the original Commandant of Kenya's Police Force. It was also here at Nanyuki that the luxurious Mount Kenya Safari Lodge, owned at one time by the actor, the late William Holden, now stands. The journey from Nairobi to Nanyuki was quite pleasant, and we passed through quite

a few stations en route, among them being Thika and Nyeri. From Nyeri onwards, the climate changed steadily and I was now beginning to feel the cold – perhaps because of the proximity of this area to Mount Kenya. At Nanyuki station, I was met by the District Cashier, a smart and well groomed Goan, Mr J. N. D’Costa. He looked impeccable and made me feel completely at home from the very moment I met him. He later took me home and here I must admit to being very touched by his hospitality. D’Costa entertained me lavishly and I listened with interest to the stories he had to tell of his experiences in some of the more remote districts he had served in. He was a much-travelled man, and knew my in-laws-to-be well. Although his wife and family were away in India at the time, I was impressed at the way in which he kept his home exceptionally neat and tidy. I felt very proud myself and thought that here was a rare breed of those early Goans who were a real credit to our community and who had, in their own way, done much for the country. The next morning, D’Costa took me to his office where I was introduced to some of the other staff. Later the same day, I was collected by a Land Rover from the PC’s office and driven to Isiolo, headquarters of the N.F.D.

The contrast from Nanyuki to Isiolo was quite striking and reminded me so much of being in Lodwar again. In many respects, Isiolo was very much like Lodwar – hot and dusty but with a more civilized outlook than Turkana. As we entered the township, I noticed a rather untidy row of tin-roofed shops sprawled on either side. It looked as though there were more

shops than the population needed, but I am sure most of them made quite a decent living. I also observed a great movement of traffic in the town – a euphorbia hedge seemed to provide a sort of one-way traffic system. For me, it all seemed too organized when compared to Lodwar.

I was driven straight to the PC's office where I met an old friend from Kitale days – Martin Rocha ('Dick' to his friends). Since the Provincial clerk, Francis da Lima, was away in Kisumu on leave, I stayed with Dick. I had heard a great deal about Francis da Lima – a shy and unassuming person who was more than a PA to successive Provincial Commissioners. Although his official designation was 'PC's clerk', I was well aware that his skill at stenography and general office efficiency, could well have earned him a far higher salary in a commercial organization in Kenya than the normal civil service emoluments he was receiving at the time.

Being the Provincial headquarters for the Northern Frontier Province, there was a larger concentration of staff at Isiolo, both European and Goan and during my two-day stay there, Dick Rocha made sure that I met all the Goans in the town. Most of the clerical staff in the various Government departments were Goan, including the Postmaster Isiolo at the time. There was also a charming Seychellois family I met that evening – Albert and Rose Lawrence (Albert worked for the Transport division of the Kenya Police). The whole crowd at Isiolo were a very hospitable lot who, despite their petty differences got on well together, especially when there was a visitor about! There is

no denying the fact that differences such as where one worked, i.e. Administration or Police departments, did exist. Rightly or wrongly, those of us who worked for the Administration were regarded as a sort of élite, a special class of people who commanded much respect and authority in the district where they served. Understandably, this was a constant bone of contention among the other staff, and I know that such feelings were not confined to the Goan community alone, but existed among European staff as well.

During the course of the social get-together, these differences were forgotten, even though momentarily, and everyone seemed cheerful and in good spirits. The drinks (Scotch or South African Mellow Wood brandy for those who liked spirits, and beer for the likes of me) were flowing freely, as they always did in the N.F.D.! There was no fear of our running short of booze or food on this occasion. Everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves, and some of us broke into party songs. If you didn't already know it Goans are at their best when singing together some of their favourite folk songs – the mandos and other similar nostalgic and sentimental tunes. Music is very much part of a Goan's life. I had a wonderful evening and wished it had never ended – alas, all good things must come to an end!

After this short stay at Isiolo, I was taken to Marsabit in a truck belonging to a Goan trader – J. B. Fernandes & Son. Fernandes had died some years previously, but the business was still being carried out in his name by his surviving partner, another Goan,

by the name of Simoes.² This gentleman was to be my escort on the long journey to Marsabit. Although he looked old for his age, he was very tough, and I immediately sensed from his rugged complexion that he was no stranger to the N.F.D. His bloodshot eyes confirmed my earlier suspicions that here was a man who loved his liquor. He was one of those Goans who had come out to the frontier in the pioneering and more adventurous days when life itself must have been truly hard. There was no proper transport then; people often travelled on donkeys, camels, or even on foot, and Simoes had experienced all these different modes of travel. He had lived for many years in the Marsabit district, and had even married into the Boran tribe. Although he was about fifty years old when I met him, his Gabra wife who had borne him a son (whom they called Henry), couldn't have been more than eighteen or nineteen years old. She was a very young and attractive woman with clear cut features. Simoes, who was well known within the district was affectionately referred to as 'Simmis' by the locals.

Throughout the journey, he was very helpful to me, treating me more like his own son. I was beginning to feel quite embarrassed over all the fuss that was being made of me. He would stop at regular intervals to offer me (and himself partake of), a bottle of beer. From the pocket of his half-torn jacket, he would produce, what to me looked like a crumpled sandwich. There

² He died in a Nyeri hospital during my tour at Marsabit.

was no doubt that he meant well when he kept reassuring me in my native tongue, Konkani, that a drink of beer was a very good tonic for a long and rough journey.

In fact he felt it was vital to keep one's spirits up. Well, who was I to disagree?

We had left Isiolo fairly late that afternoon. As a rule, most frontier travel is undertaken during the late evenings or at nights because of the intolerable daytime heat. Our first stop was briefly at Archer's Post (where the Buffalo Springs Game Reserve now stands). This post which lies on the Nanyuki-Addis Ababa road, was set up in 1909 by Geoffrey Archer on the northern bank of the Uaso river, whilst on his way to establish a station at Marsabit. I understand it was also intended to serve as a supply and transport depot for Marsabit and Moyale, and a Police Post too. The whole place was quite deserted now, but relics of its past glory were still to be seen. Just off Archer's Post, our Somali driver, Kassim, stopped briefly to talk to a group of individuals who were walking along our route, and who he must have recognized. When he returned to the cab, he took out some shoots of *miraa* from his pocket, and mixing them with sugar, began to chew them. There is no suggestion that the friends had given him this illegal plant. It was more than likely that he had obtained it either from Nanyuki or perhaps Isiolo. Possession of *miraa* was an offence under the Dangerous Drugs Laws of Kenya but Kassim must have known that I was certainly not going to report him. He even tried to offer me some of the 'drug', but I politely declined. *Miraa*, which is often purported

to be an aphrodisiac, also has, so at least I was told by Kassim, a calming effect on those who use it, and was intended to keep drivers awake and alert during such tedious journeys. I found it difficult to believe this, especially since on several occasions during the trip, Kassim appeared visibly 'dopey' to me.

After a brief stop not far from Archer's Post, we continued our journey. I must say I was enjoying every moment of the trip; the landscape kept changing all the time. From the built-up and sun-baked township of Isiolo, we were entering a semi-desert region. The vegetation consisted of thorn bush and scrub. Now and then, we ran into a whole brood of guinea fowl. They looked so majestic and elegant in their polka-dotted plumage. At times, they appeared tame and seemed quite oblivious of our truck which was heading in their direction. The area also had its complement of other game. There was the almost bashful *gerenuk* – balancing on its hind legs to reach the few available twigs – gazelle and the nervous-looking *dik-dik*. The whole scene was so wonderful, and as if to add a touch of colour to the whole spectacle, a lone tribesman would appear, almost from nowhere, spear in hand – trekking along this harsh and desolate terrain. He had no fear of man or beast so long as he had his spear about him. The African sky was at its best, beautifully lit up by a million starry lights. It is only in places like these that one gets, or rather makes, the time to stop and admire the marvels of God's creation.

We were now heading in the direction of Wamba, a small trading post in the Samburu country, which lies on the western edge

of the deserts of Northern Kenya. We decided to stop here for a brew up and rest. I could see that this was a regular stopping over point, and there was ample evidence to show that passing travellers had pitched camp here; half cleared fire places, the odd empty tin of corned beef or peas – all these were a clear indication that the site was a popular camping spot among travellers who used this route.

As we prepared to settle down, a group of Samburu warriors walked up and greeted us with cries of “*Soba, soba*” (this was the local greeting similar to the Ki-Swahili “Jambo”). The Samburu are a very colourful tribe, akin in many respects to their cousins, the Masai. The warriors, standing heron-like, spear in hand, are just the sort of material an artist would be looking for. (Alas, I am no artist – else I would have drawn some very interesting people in very interesting poses too!)

Not far from here was the Matthews range, so named after Sir Lloyd Matthews, Commander-in-Chief of the Sultan of Zanzibar’s army, I was told.

Refreshed by the cup of *chai* we now continued our journey to Marsabit passing at first, Lololokwe, a towering rock which rises from the very foot of the road and juts over the road junction itself. The air all along was still warm and sticky, and there was little or no change in the vegetation. Quite often, as our truck raced through the dry and desolate wilderness, small gangs of tribesmen would appear and wave to us. I was told that these men sometimes walked several miles in a day, often without any food or drink; they seemed none the worse for it. Most of

the tribes along this route were Rendille who, like their neighbours, the Samburu, are a nomadic and pastoral tribe. The road between Wamba and Marsabit consists of many dried river beds called *luggas*. The tribes who inhabit this region can sometimes be seen digging up these dry beds in a desperate search for water during the dry season. Incredible though this may sound, these very *luggas* can prove quite dangerous during the rainy season; they can often become fierce torrents, several feet in depth, capable of washing away lorries and even bridges. The floods can rise in minutes and disappear almost as quickly! On the road between the Lololokwe rock and Marsabit lies Laisamis, a small post where I was told we would be stopping and calling on the local Chief. It did not take us long to reach Laisamis, and here again, as was the case at Wamba, we were surrounded by the local tribesmen. The Rendille are very akin to other nomadic tribes of the frontier; they are pastoralists, and it is sad to see some of their old culture disappearing these days – all in the name of progress. While the Samburu greeting *soba* is also understood among the Rendille, I could hear a new greeting which ran more like... “*aye dho, napa heite?*” Translated literally, this probably means ‘hello, how are you?’ Greetings were exchanged all round amidst scenes of great jubilation. There was one man who really stood out among these very primitive tribesmen – he was an imposing figure of a man, very tall and ‘beefy’, who resembled the one-eyed Cyclops. He wore an ochre-coloured blanket which was thrown rather untidily around his whole body. “*Jambo Bwana,*” he said in a thun-

dering and authoritative. voice. “*Jambo, Chief,*” I replied. I had been previously told that this was Chief Ejerre of the Rendille tribe. I shook his hand – a truly massive hand, and felt so much like a Lilliputian in front of this mighty ‘Gulliver’. “*Karibu Bwana,*” he continued, “*manyatta yangu ni karibu sana, angalia huko,*” (welcome Bwana, my *manyatta* is very close by, look there), inviting me over to his homestead. I was warned about the milk I would be offered from a gourd (possibly camel or goat milk) – and told that drunk by anyone not used to it, the milk could well act as a laxative! Not only this; it was quite possible that the gourd may contain a few flies (the tribesmen don’t seem to worry unduly about them). As it so happened, I was offered the milk and, not wishing to appear unmannerly, I took a small sip and then politely refused any more. I was nevertheless touched by the Chief’s hospitality. Obviously sensing that I had not enjoyed the fly-infested drink, my Goan escort Simoes, quickly got our driver to organize another brew up. This was a welcome relief, and the peculiar taste which the smoke-smelling and fly-infested milk had left in my mouth disappeared – but not before giving me an awfully ‘sickish’ feeling. Chief Ejerre also joined us for a cup of tea; we later shook hands, and while I was busy talking and thanking him for his hospitality, several tribesmen kept milling around me, and with broad smiles on their faces, shook hands with me in turn. It was certainly a memorable and moving occasion for me. Amidst shouts of “*asante sana Bwana*” (Thank you Sir), and “*Kwaheri*” (Good-bye), we left Laisamis and all these good folk behind.

Between Laisamis and Marsabit lay the Milgis lugga where during the rainy season, many a traveller was delayed on his safari because of the sudden floods which made the whole road impassable. I was told that we were very fortunate to be crossing this particular section when it was relatively dry. The road, was now getting more and more bumpy, and my heart went out to the turn-boy, Ali, and others who were perched atop several sacks of maize meal and other stores which were stacked at the back of the lorry. It was a rough enough ride sitting in the driver's cab. Large rocks, strewn-unevenly over our path, made our truck bounce up and down as we drove along. Our driver Kassim knew this area well, and carefully manoeuvred the lorry so as to avoid some of the rocks and loose stones hitting the petrol tank. To any driver unaccustomed to these roads, I felt sure a lot of damage could be caused to the petrol tank; as for someone using a smaller vehicle, the sump would be the first to go!

We had hardly covered a few miles when we noticed a truck approaching us from the Marsabit direction. Whispers of “*gari ya DC*” (the DC's lorry) could be heard. The driver of our truck and some of the occupants who knew the DC's truck and driver (Abdalla) well, had guessed rightly. The vehicle was in fact that of the DC Marsabit. In a gesture obviously intended to convey respect for authority, Kassim stopped as we approached the DC's vehicle, and we all got out. This also proved a wonderful opportunity for me to stretch my legs. I felt too cramped sitting in the one position for so long. From the other truck emerged a

stocky figure of a man who walked up to me, hand outstretched and said, "So you must be Mr Maciel from Lodwar."

"Yes," I replied politely.

"My name is Bebb, and I am the DC Marsabit," he continued. All very official! After we had spoken for a few moments, he apologized for not being in the *boma* to welcome me but added that he had made temporary arrangements for my accommodation. I thanked him and we then left – we heading for Marsabit, while the DC and his party were on their way to Laisamis where, I was told, a stock sale had been arranged in conjunction with the Kenya Meat Commission representative and the Veterinary Officer for the Province. As was the practice in other N.F.D. stations as well, such stock sales coincided with a tax collection drive.

It was interesting to note the variation in temperatures as we continued our journey. Whereas only a few hours ago we were still feeling a near-desert type of heat, we now felt a distinct and sudden drop in temperature as we headed towards Marsabit. We were entering what is now the Marsabit National Reserve. This is an area which abounds in game of varied species – lion, buffalo, leopard and another great creature which seems created solely for this environment – the mighty elephant. This was the area where the legendary elephant Ahmed roamed and where he and his herd reigned supreme. (Although I did not see Ahmed on this particular occasion, I was fortunate to see this stately looking elephant at close quarters, on several other occasions during my stay at Marsabit.)

As we continued on our trail, I was filled with excitement as our driver announced that we would soon be seeing some *ndofu* (elephants). For a moment I wondered how he knew the ‘homes’ of these mighty creatures so well. Kassim was right however, and spoke with some knowledge when he mentioned the elephants to me.

The excitement within me grew, and when I heard cries of “*angalia ndofu kule*” (look, elephant there!) I could hardly believe my eyes. There, a few hundred yards in front of us, a herd of elephants was crossing the road and seemed in no hurry at all. Why should they be – this was, after all, their domain which we, humans, were invading and their majestic strides seemed to convey to man that in this area THEY were the masters!

Scarcely could I have wished for a better sight – elephants at such close quarters and in their natural surroundings; but, they were not to be provoked. How I wished I had a camera with me at the time. We allowed them to cross the road (as though we had any choice!); trumpeting almost angrily at seeing us, they disappeared into the dense forest that surrounds Marsabit Mountain. Their trumpeting kept echoing all the way as they slowly disappeared into the thick bush. Parts of the road along which we were now travelling were strewn with large mounds of elephant droppings, which was further proof that this was an area much used by them.

We were now within a few miles of Marsabit and I was beginning to feel the cold even more; this was only natural since I had been used to the hot and dry climate of Lodwar. As we

drove along, we passed a few villagers standing by the roadside, their bodies shielded from the cold Marsabit air with a long piece of fabric resembling a shawl. Most of them waved welcomingly to us. The vegetation here was greener – lush green in fact, which gave one the impression that some kind of miraculous transformation must have taken place. As we moved on, the mist, which now seemed to envelop the whole area, began getting denser and denser; visibility was reduced to almost nil in some places, and I wondered how our driver would negotiate his way along this route even though I was aware that the vehicle's front lights were switched on. In the distance, hidden partly by increasing clouds of mist which cover one section of Marsabit Mountain, we could see the forests. The temperature was dropping steadily and I was beginning to get colder – so much so that I reached out for my pullover and tweed jacket (this is the one I had borrowed in Nairobi). Simoes and Kassim meanwhile kept assuring me that despite the cold and misty atmosphere, I would get to like Marsabit. They tried to 'console' me by saying that the weather in this district was 'always like this', especially in the mornings.

Before we had even arrived in the *boma*, they lost no time in wishing me well, and hoped I would be kept in Marsabit for many years – “*Inshallah*” (God willing) they kept saying, and “*Inshallah*” I replied enthusiastically.

The last snaking section into Marsabit *boma* was the slowest part of the trip. With thick mist wrapped tightly round the entire area like a blanket of smoke, our truck struggled almost

helplessly over this final stretch, at times looking as though she wouldn't quite make the steep bend. We were travelling in first gear and I could sense the strain on the truck from the sheer sound of the engine. We negotiated this part of the road fairly successfully, and as though wishing to give the impression that it had come to life again, the truck continued proudly along the last few hundred yards, parking outside the DC's office.

Here to meet me were the staff of the Provincial Administration – the Cashier, Tom Lobo, District Clerk, Joe Aguiar (who I was to replace) and David Dabasso, a local Gabbra from the Marsabit area who was the Asst. District clerk. David was a young man, handsome, very smartly dressed and well spoken. We walked into the office – a rather unimpressive and modest building which none the less blended with the surrounding area.



*Dabasso –
handsome, smart.*

Like Lodwar, the DC's office at Marsabit was also the local Post Office, and as the sacks of mail were offloaded from the truck and brought in to the office, I noticed the anxious and excited looks on the faces of some of the officials who had all now crowded into the tiny office. Mail sorting time was always an anxious period for everyone – it was a time when we received

news from Kenya (those of us who lived in the N.F.D. always referred to places beyond Isiolo as ‘Kenya’ as though we lived in a different country!) While all the excitement was going on at the office, an elderly looking member of the staff, smart in his khaki uniform, which bore the letters "D. C. MBT" (in red) across his breast pocket, hobbled up to me, and stretching out his hand greeted me with a very warm “Jambo Bwana” handshake. He was smiling broadly while at the same time chewing some tobacco. I gathered this was Shalle Hirbo, the office boy. He had lost a leg in a train accident in Nairobi some years ago, and though crippled and now fitted with an artificial leg, walked without the aid of crutches or a walking stick. He was a Burji by tribe and came from the Moyale area. A very efficient and dependable worker, I was told Shalle had given many years of faithful service to the Administration at Marsabit. He remembered many of the old DCs, notably Major H. B. Sharpe, Sir Vincent Glenday and Sir Walter Coutts (who later became Governor of Uganda). I was greatly impressed by this simple man from the very first moment I met him. Here was a man who made little of his disability and instead radiated a great amount of joy and happiness among others both inside and outside the office.

After spending some time in the office – during which I met several more local staff and townsfolk – I was taken to the house of my hosts, Mr and Mrs Tom Lobo. This in itself was a break-away from tradition which always required the outgoing officer to entertain his successor. It so happened that Joe Aguiar was

staying with a police clerk and his wife (a Mr and Mrs Raymond D'Souza) and rather than enter into the politics of it all, I gladly accepted the invitation to stay with the Lobo family. However, the subtle differences that existed between the Administration and police staff were now beginning to come to the surface. The Lobos had three young children – all girls; in many respects, I felt more at home with this family. Here, I also met a young and handsome police clerk by the name of John D'Souza. Although John had his own Burji cook, he had, in view of his imminent departure on vacation leave to Goa, decided to spend the last few days with the Lobos – an arrangement that was mutually convenient.

When I enquired about my own housing, I was told that I was not, under any circumstances, to accept the temporary accommodation that had very hurriedly been prepared for me. The tiny and dark mud and wattle hut had been previously used by one of the local Boran labourers who also kept his sheep in the same room! While efforts had undoubtedly been made to give the hut a good spring cleaning, in anticipation of my arrival, I found the place quite uninhabitable; animal droppings could still be seen on the floor and the stench from the urine soaked mud floor was quite overpowering. The Lobos very kindly agreed that I could have my meals with them; as for my sleeping accommodation, two police clerks (Messrs Falcão and Moraes), both bachelors, agreed that I could temporarily lodge with them. This seemed a very practical arrangement, and when I met the DC the following day, I informed him of my

plans. He raised no objection.

In readiness for his home leave, John D'Souza had packed most of his luggage and stored it in the police store. Being the handsome bachelor he was, I knew he would have no difficulty in finding a suitable bride once he had landed in Goa. I was fairly certain that he intended to get married while on holiday; this was, after all, a pattern followed by most Goans whenever they went on home leave as bachelors. (Normally, once news of the impending arrival of the 'eligible' bachelor reached his village in Goa, several 'likely' brides would be vetted by his mother and close relatives.) The final choice would be made when the young bachelor arrived home!

Within a few weeks of my arrival, I found I had settled in quite well at Marsabit – the damp and misty weather made no difference. I hoped I would be kept here for a long time, and realized then why this district had been one of the popular choices of most officers when it came to transferring within the N.F.D. The Lobo family looked after me very well. It was customary in those days for the bachelors to meet on Saturday afternoons at the Lobo household. Here, while we were all entertained with glasses of fine Kenya ale by Tom, Mrs Lobo would treat us to some of her tasty potato chops – a savoury potato and mince rissole which went down very well with drinks! After this initial entertainment, we would all retire to our individual quarters, where our *mpishis* (cooks) were eagerly waiting to serve lunch (or as they say in Ki-Swahili – “*ku pakua chakula*”). This entertainment pattern was repeated each Saturday in rotation,

each of us being given the opportunity of playing host. In this way, no one felt they were being taken advantage of, and the whole arrangement worked very well and seemed very popular. The European officials followed a routine very similar to ours. As I have already said in these pages, Marsabit was a place I was fascinated with from the very first moment I set foot there, and because of the very special place it occupies in my heart, I am devoting the next chapter to the period I spent there.

5. The Marsabit I Love

Whereas a posting to Lodwar in the Turkana district could be interpreted as being 'sent to Devil's Island', the reverse could be said of Marsabit. For a start, the contrast in climate alone was so noticeable, so much so that a posting to Marsabit could well be regarded as a bonus; in Lodwar, the heat was, at most times quite unbearable; the sun seemed to be at its fiercest in the Turkana district no matter what hour of the day. In Marsabit, on the other hand, and in the *boma* in particular, it was a relief to see the sun. Thick early morning mists usually envelop the whole of the township and mountain area and visibility is reduced to nil. These dense mists are the result of the desert air cooling and condensing into thick clouds as the air reaches the cooler regions. Rarely do these clouds of mist release their grip from the whole area before the early afternoon sometimes even later.

I had more than served my term in Lodwar, and being so much in love with the N.F.D., did not want to leave this wonderful

Province even though life here was hard and lonely. Many of my friends, especially those living in major towns like Nairobi, Nakuru and even Kitale, must have thought that it was odd for me to be sacrificing or rather ‘wasting’ the best years of my life, i.e. my youth, to go and live in the wilds of Kenya. According to them, there was hardly any social life in the N.F.D., the area was inhabited by primitive tribesmen and the climate too, far from congenial. Quite a few thought that I had gone to the N.F.D. to amass a fortune. Whatever their thoughts and misgivings, I must say that my stay in Marsabit was far from dull or boring; in fact it was quite the contrary, and some of the best days of my life were spent there, days I shall never forget, and days I often look back on with a great feeling of nostalgia. For the benefit of my readers, I am reproducing (in the Appendices), some topical verses I wrote when I was in Marsabit for the traditional N.F.D. ‘Somali Somali’ song. The mainspring of the chorus is not of course mine, but comes from the original composition of the song in Wajir, a few years before the war.

It occurs to me that this might be a suitable place in which to set down the history of ‘Somali Somali’, for if there is such a thing as an N.F.D. song, this, as it was first written, is it. Sir Richard Turnbull tells me that in its origins, ‘Somali Somali’ was essentially a 3rd KAR song. He goes on to say that the lyrics were written by various officers of the Regiment stationed in Wajir in 1935 on the eve of the Italo-Abyssinian war. Although there is no single person that one could claim was the author of the song, it is generally agreed that Captain (later Brigadier) Mac-

Dermott was what one might call its architect and prime mover; his, anyway, was the inspiration and the wit that got the whole thing going. The tune was dredged up from the prodigious musical memory of the Wajir Medical Officer of the day.

The song opened thus:

*They say that the Itos are ready for war
They want Abyssinia: God knows what for!
If they must have some place, why not N.F.D.?
They can have every acre; it's OK by me.*

This was followed by:

*Somali Somali we're here for your sake
But what the hell difference does the N.F.D. make
Mussolini can have it, with a great rousing cheer,
Moyale, Mandera, Eil Wak and Wajir:*

This second quatrain became the chorus.

There were a score or so of verses, each one painting a brief word picture of a character, a place, a situation or an event.

Since 1935, any number of additional verses have been produced, some by soldiers, some by District Commissioners, some by police officers; and it has become a kind of local tradition that the name of any character of note should be commemorated in at least one verse of 'Somali, Somali'. Each of the eight

or nine verses that I have taken the liberty of adding to the song is based on some contemporary attitude of mind or state of affairs, or on the activities or idiosyncrasies of one or another of my colleagues in the N.F.D. or Turkana. And I respectfully make my bow to those distant figures who, fifty years ago, at Wajir, produced the basic chorus, and laid down the pattern of the song. What a lot of pleasure it has given to a succession of Government officers serving in the N.F.D.

Coming to Marsabit from the inferno of Lodwar was tremendous relief, and I rejoiced at this happy turn of the postings wheel.

Marsabit district is about the second largest in Kenya, extending as it does, over a vast area of some 28,000 square miles. Apart from the Marsabit and Kulal mountains, which by far constitute the only ameliorating factors, the remainder of the district is made up of waste and scrubland, with a small lacustrine section. A very noticeable feature is the switch from the cool mountain air of Marsabit to the hot desert conditions of Korole, Chalbi and Kaisut deserts, especially when travelling within a short radius outside the main township. Mount Kulal, a forest-clad mountain of some 7,500 feet, whose beauty has to be seen to be believed, runs parallel to Lake Rudolf (now renamed Lake Turkana). The area around it is inhabited by both the Rendille and Samburu tribesmen. In the Marsabit mountain area, however, uncompromising desert nomads meet on common ground. The Gabbra, Rendille and the Boran are all pastoralists, each with their own rich culture.



With a .303 in action at Lake Paradise, Marsabit.

I was posted to Marsabit as District Clerk and David Dabasso³ was to be my assistant. David, a Gabbra, and perhaps the first literate member of his tribe, was a very efficient clerk whose life at Marsabit was unfortunately plagued by a series of domestic problems. There were any number of his relatives, including his two wives, living with him, and this in itself put a great strain on the man and his limited financial resources. The domestic pressures were so great that they were beginning to affect the general performance of his work.

In the early stages, I decided to spend as much time as I could getting to know the office staff, and later, with their co-operation, introduced some changes in the office with greater efficiency in mind. I must say that David Dabasso was very co-operative during this period, but neither of us liked the arrangement obtaining at the time, where a number of duties which I rightly considered to be that of a District Clerk, were being handled by a European Works Supervisor who, to my mind, had really nothing to do with the day to day running of the district office anyway. The individual in question, who the locals referred to as "Maja Pota" (Major Porter) posed more like a D.O.. Having been given far more freedom in the conduct and running of the District office at Lodwar, I could not bring myself to accept the present situation. Rather than put up with the unhappy state of affairs, I decided to make my feelings known to the D.C.

³ He was promoted as DC Isiolo, but sadly this promising young officer was assassinated shortly after Kenya's independence.

(Mr. Bebb). From the initial discussion we had, he realized at once how strongly I felt and, while not wishing to ‘upset’ the status quo before he left on vacation leave in a few months’ time, agreed to try and remedy the situation gradually by getting me more involved in the day to day office work. Although not altogether happy with the limited responsibilities I now had, I decided not to pursue the matter any further – for the time being anyway. In many ways, I was relieved that I had brought the whole question out in the open.

Mr Bebb was a man not given to going out much on safari. He was married but the couple had no family at the time. They did, however, keep two playful and healthy-looking Dalmatians, who frightened the living daylights out of the tribesmen whenever they accompanied the DC to the office. The locals, as a general rule, do not like dogs; this applied more to those of the Muslim faith, and such individuals always made sure that the dogs never got anywhere near them. There were constant cries of “*kuth, kuth*” (meaning “go away” in Boran).

With the responsibilities I had undertaken at Lodwar and the rather limited work schedule at Marsabit under the present set up, I found myself with a lot of time on my hands; this I instantly placed at the disposal of the Cashier, Tom Lobo. Such a co-operative atmosphere between Cashier and District Clerk had not previously existed, and he was naturally grateful for my assistance.

When the new DC arrived, the situation in the office changed dramatically. Fortunately for me, I had met Mr Wild previously

during my stay at Voi – he had replaced Mr D. J. Penwill as DO at Mackinnon Road. We got on very well together and it was indeed a pleasure to be serving under someone I knew, and one who appreciated my work. I was also pleased to learn that he shared my feelings about the rather unfair distribution of the work at the office – a situation he was hell bent on changing as soon as possible. The Cashier, Tom Lobo, had now very few months before he left Marsabit on transfer; his was a growing family and he was naturally concerned about the education of his children.

My assistance to the District Cashier had hitherto been confined to typing out the various vouchers (i.e. in respect of staff salaries travelling allowances, trader's bills, monthly returns, etc). Seeing that I coped quite well with these additional jobs, I was now asked to help with the issue of the various licences, i.e. firearms, bird/game licences. I did not in the least mind this since it all meant added experience.

An incident that I shall never forget took place during one of the occasions when a police officer came to have his revolver licensed. It was on a morning when the DC was away on safari that Inspector Ron Crossland of the Kenya Police walked into the DC's office and jokingly threw his revolver across the cashier's table, at the same time asking Tom Lobo to have the firearms licence renewed; seeing I was nearest the table, Tom asked me to do so. However, before actually getting down to renewing the firearms certificate, I grabbed hold of the revolver and pointed it straight at John Dixon, the police mech-

anic who was standing by the open window outside, less than two feet away from me. At this stage, I jokingly said, "Hands up, John"! Before I had time to pull the trigger, Tom Lobo took firearm off me and, pointing it to the ground, pulled the trigger. There was one loud bang which immediately shattered the relatively calm atmosphere of the office and caused total confusion among those inside and outside. The Kenya Police Quarter Guard (mounted outside the Police Armoury) fearing that some *shifita* (Ethiopian bandits) had raided the *boma*, quickly sounded the alarm. The bugle call brought more police and several of the townsfolk on the scene. I was most embarrassed, and none of us was amused over this rather childish incident which could well have assumed serious proportions. I recognize that it was I who caused this unfortunate incident, and really cannot think what possessed me that I should behave with such crass idiocy. The only relatively satisfactory thing that came out of the whole dismal episode was that I learnt a lesson that I have never forgotten. We made no mention of the incident to the DC when he returned from safari, although I am sure he must have come to hear of it through some of his 'secret agents'.

Within a short time of his arrival at Marsabit, Mr Wild got down to the task of reorganizing the office. Many of the changes he proposed were to affect me directly, and I was extremely pleased with the added responsibility I was now being given. It certainly showed a feeling of trust on the part of the DC, and this in itself gave me tremendous encouragement.

As there was no European District Officer at Marsabit during

this period, quite a few of the day to day tasks that would otherwise have been undertaken by the DO fell to my lot. These included responsibility for the Tribal Police Armoury (which housed a fair amount of arms and ammunition), and also the TP uniforms and general equipment store. I was set more in the role of a Quartermaster. The other important duty allotted to me whenever the DC was on safari, was to carry out the weekly inspection of the prisons and attend to any grievances from the prisoners and detainees. I was also, as District Clerk, responsible for ordering all the prisoners' rations and stores, and maintaining a daily register of the prison population. I found these new tasks very satisfying indeed.

On one occasion during the DC's absence, I was called upon to supervise the administering of several strokes of the cane to a prisoner who had been so sentenced following a criminal conviction for theft. This recommendation was over and above the hard labour sentence he had already received. On all such occasions, the local hospital assistant took the place of the Medical Officer who was always required to supervise such canings. After half the number of strokes had been administered by the Corporal of the gaol – such strokes always being given on the bare buttocks over which was spread a wet muslin towel, the hospital assistant would examine the prisoner to see whether he was physically fit to go through the recommended number of strokes. If he was, the punishment would continue, and at the end of it all, the prisoner was expected to stand up and salute the presiding officer (in this particular case, me!) I did

not much relish this particular duty and must admit to having some difficulty in curbing my emotions when it was all over. The prisoner in question had been given the full treatment.

Other occasions when I inspected the prisons were less unpleasant. Here, the Corporal i/c would have the warders perform an arms drill, after which I usually inspected them and discussed any particular problems they had. During such inspections, I made it a point of meeting and talking to those prisoners who had a particular grievance or problem to air.

At the office, Tom Lobo's replacement as Cashier was Victor Fernandes, himself no stranger to the N.F.D. He had previously served as a temporary relief clerk in the Province. and knew some parts of the district well. Having worked in Marsabit before, he knew some of the local staff and traders too and so had no difficulty settling down fairly quickly. I liked Victor and took to him immediately — he was in his late thirties, tall, of good physique and above all very jovial. He always seemed so full of life, and was a great do-it-yourself enthusiast who, in the short time following his arrival had made some noticeable changes to the Government quarter he occupied. I am no handyman myself, but remember spending many an evening with Victor helping him polish some of the coffee tables he had made; we sometimes worked late into the evenings and after hours of patient polishing, it was very satisfying to see the mirror-like finish the polish had imparted on the table tops. We used to prepare the polish with shellac crystals which we dissolved in methylated spirits.

On the whole, the DC Mr Wild was a very friendly sort of person who was well liked by everyone; there was, however, also a serious angle to his personality, and this latter attitude had earned him the nickname of Bwana Nencho (Mr Lion!) among the locals. Despite his sometimes serious appearance, he was always in good humour at the office, and had that great attribute of putting people at ease. We got on extremely well and became the best of friends latterly. (I was deeply grieved to hear of his untimely death in South Africa in July 1983.) Unlike his predecessor, the new DC loved the great outdoors. He hated being stuck in the office as much as he detested paperwork. He was more at home – at least so I felt – with a rifle in his hand helping the tribal and Kenya policemen fight the *shifta* at some of the border posts. He would try to be away on safari as often as possible.

While in the *boma*, his time was taken up hearing court cases, inspecting housing and road work in the area, and also carrying out some of his other official duties like the weekly checking of the cash book and other financial documents. There were also the *shauris* of the locals to attend to, and the weekly inspections of the prisons, staff quarters and township to be fitted in to the whole work schedule.

Because of his preference for the outdoor life, both Victor and I were – on an alternate basis – encouraged to accompany the DC on some of his safaris to the remoter areas of this vast and interesting district. Places like Kargi, Maikona, Korole and North Horr still ring clearly in my mind. I must admit to being fascin-

ated by these safaris despite the initial discomfort of some of them.

Quite often, a stock sale would be combined with a tax collection drive, and here it is necessary to explain very briefly, the tax collection system obtaining in the districts at the time. Legally, every adult male was liable to pay Native Poll Tax as it was then known. The rates varied from district to district, and the local Chiefs and headmen played a prominent part in seeing that any tax due was in fact paid by their subjects. The Swahili word for tax was '*kodi*'. Poor though they were, the tribesmen never evaded tax. They may have omitted to pay it for a particular year either because they had moved their *manyattas* to other areas or been away serving with the armed forces in various parts of Kenya. As long as the local Chief was able to confirm such situations there was no real problem. Arrears of tax would be paid ungrudgingly, and if hard cash was not available, the dues would often be paid in kind, i.e. by producing a sheep or goat.

The animals thus handed in were bought by the local butcher who often accompanied the administration party on such sales; the proceeds from the sale of such animals was used to pay the tax and/or arrears of the particular individual for a given year. On a tax collection safari, we normally took one or other of the tax clerks who would come, fully armed with the various sets of tax receipt books, tax registers and most important of all, their steel cash boxes – each bearing a 'TS' (Treasury Serial) number. During my tour at Marsabit, we had two tax clerks – one a

Samburu named Lekilepa and the other a Burji called Shadrack. Lekilepa was the younger of the two and spoke fluent English. It is sad to have to record that while I was still at Marsabit, these two clerks were charged and found guilty of misappropriating Government funds and later sentenced to terms of hard labour. They were replaced by a Boran named Ali Guyo and a Burji who had only recently left school then, Elisha Godana. The latter was well educated, and many years later, following Kenya's independence, rose to become the Member of Parliament for the area, and even a Junior Minister in the government of *Mzee* Jomo Kenyatta. I knew Elisha's father, Daniel Godana well, and am sure he was pleased that his young son had secured a job in the DC's office.

In addition to the tax collection safaris undertaken by the DC, Mr Wild also carried out a weekly inspection of the township. This was more of a 'showing the flag' exercise, but it did a world of good and was in itself a great morale booster. In this way, it was also possible for the DC to keep in touch with his people and know what was going on in the district generally.

The Rendille interpreter, Sangarta, and I would always accompany the DC on such inspections which would commence at the tribal police lines. Dubas was the local name given to these smartly turned out tribal police. I am told that a tradition founded by Sir Gerald Reece was that these Dubas had to be chosen from families of proven courage. Most of the men thus recruited were from the Boran and Rendille tribes, although we did have the odd Turkana. During these inspections, the Ser-

geant or Corporal i/c of the Dubas would always be present, and of them I can still remember Sergeant Adano Dabasso, Corporals Golicha and Dub Gadafu. The Sergeant and Corporals were tough-looking characters who commanded a lot of respect among their men and who certainly had a great sway over them. The Dubas, especially when on ceremonial parades, looked so impeccable in their snow-white *bafta* uniform, red turbans and bandoliers.



The author with Dubas (Frontier Tribal Police) at Marsabit.

To me, the visits to the staff quarters were rewarding in themselves as I got to know the families of these men and see the living conditions at first hand. Invariably, in anticipation of the DC's visit, the small house, (consisting usually of single-room bachelor-type or double-roomed married accommodation) would

be thoroughly cleaned out, and all the tableware consisting of very colourful and almost gaudy enamel dishes proudly displayed on a table outside. This looked more like a kit inspection – only that crockery and cutlery were substituted for arms and ammunition! As we looked round the house, there would be smiles from the shy wife (or was she a girl-friend perhaps!) and later a short list of requirements for improving it would be given. It was my job to note these and the list I maintained usually ran like this... ‘Sgt. Adano’s house needs repairs to fireplace and redecoration of kitchen’... ‘broken window in Cpl. Golicha’s quarters to be replaced and a new hasp and staple fitted to front door... ‘Kanchora’s and Leripen’s houses need whitewashing on the outside’, etc.

From the Dubas quarters, we would move on quickly to conduct a similar inspection of the station hands’, artisans’, masons’ and carpenters’ houses including other manual labourers’ quarters. The list of repairs and improvements kept growing, and in my own mind I wondered how much of this we would actually be able to undertake especially in view of the limited maintenance funds at our disposal. Somehow however, there was always an answer to the financial problem; whereas our expenditure in certain areas, notably maintenance and upkeep of buildings was high, we were often able to show savings in other areas. The PC’s approval had to be sought for such ‘switching over’ of funds, and this was almost always granted, unless there was a more pressing need in another district.

Our next call would be to the prisons where things were more

formal. As soon as they heard the DC and his party arrive, the prison Corporal (a well-built Kikuyu by the name of Wainaina s/o Keriba) would unlock the prison gates, salute the DC and then have the warders perform the usual arms drill. Then followed the inspection and when this was over, the prisoners were paraded; those having a particular grievance to ventilate were given the opportunity to do so. Most complained about the diet or the fact that they were too ill to do any more hard labour. Some complained of the cold at nights (prisoners were given coir mats to sleep on and were each provided with a blanket). Genuine complaints were promptly redressed, but one had also to remember that the individuals concerned were in prison for committing an offence, however small this may have been, and it was certainly not the policy of the administration or the prisons department for that matter, to 'feather bed' or make them feel too comfortable while in prison.

At every new 'port of call' during these inspections, the list I maintained kept growing longer and longer, and I so wished I knew shorthand. Having covered the Government staff quarters and the prisons, the DC would then proceed to inspect the township, calling at some of the *dukas* en route. There were three general provision-type stores, run mainly by Asians; one of these was run by a Goan, Simoes, about whom you will have heard in the earlier chapter. Simoes was the sole surviving partner of the previous Goan owner of the business, J. B. Fernandes (who had died some years previously). The business was however still being carried out under the style J.B. Fernandes &

Sons'. Both Fernandes and Simoes had lived for many years in the Marsabit district and had married women from the local tribes – the former had married a Boran woman who had borne him two children, a son named Domnic and a very attractive daughter, Caroline. Simoes, who married very late in life, had a son (Henry) through his very young Gabbra wife. For his age, Simoes was quite active, but not a good business man at all; very few Goans are! He was awarded the Government contract for supplying rations to the police and Administration staff, a contract worth several thousand pounds. Unfortunately, he was never able to cope with this commitment since he hardly had the ready cash available to pay for bulk orders placed with the wholesalers. He was full of confidence though – never gave up and always kept assuring the DC that, given a second chance, he would 'deliver the goods'; sadly, his failing health didn't help matters much and the situation soon began deteriorate.

Simoes fell ill not long after he secured the Government contract for a second year running and had to be moved to a Nyeri hospital where he died. The business was eventually closed down and the contract later transferred to another Asian. Noor-mohamed Mangia & Sons were Ismailis, and their local manager Juma, and latterly Abdul, ran the business very efficiently and at great profit. They were far better organized than Simoes, who was very much of a happy-go-lucky character (a trait not uncommon in the Goans!)

There were other Asian traders like Shah Padamshi Meghji (whom the locals referred to as 'Godamso') and Bachu and his father

Kanji Jagan who were well-known tailors in the district. All three were Hindu, but Bachu was more of a modern Hindu who did not observe the strict restrictions of eating meat or drinking alcohol that his religion required. Padamshi had married a local Boran woman and had quite a large family. The remainder of the Asian trading community consisted of a Sikh carpenter Jagat Singh and his son, a Pakistani by the name of *Mzee* Adan. This elderly trader seemed almost cut off from the rest of the community; although his shop was open throughout the day, there was little evidence of any notable business activity. All the same, his shop was well stocked with the much-sought-after items like kerosene oil, match boxes, tobacco, etc. I cannot forget that much-liked and dependable transporter, G. H. Khan, a native of Kashmir, who was courtesy itself. Through his gentle manner, Khan, who was quite an old man, had endeared himself to most of the European community. He had a Ford V-8 truck which he nursed with great care. It is no wonder that this vehicle gave him many years of good service and certainly brought in a steady and healthy income. He never employed any drivers, but as age began to tell on him, Khan brought out his nephew from Kashmir. Mohamed Farid turned out to be a true 'chip off the old block'.

There were smaller *dukas* run by the locals like the Somali Chief, Yusuf Sugulle (a very pleasant man indeed). Guyo Tassi, a step-brother of David Dabasso owned a small store as also did Daniel Godana, father of Elisha Godana. These *dukas* sold modest quantities of *posho* (maize meal), cooking oil, tea, sugar and

also calico sheets (*shukas*) and blankets which were much in demand. The *dukas* were often used as a rendezvous for local gossip.

As in the case of the earlier inspections, the *dukas* would be appropriately 'dressed up' for the occasion, and despite the cost to them, the traders spent a lot of money painting the frontages of their their shops in colours of varied hue, the outside walls often being given a liberal coat of whitewash. The whole idea was to impress the DC whose inspection tours were often used by the traders to ventilate some of their grievances, e.g. shortages of a particular commodity notably sugar over which some traders made a small fortune whenever the price went up! The need for increasing their quota of certain essential commodities was another point many of the smaller traders kept bringing up. The DC always assured traders that their complaints would be looked into – an answer that usually satisfied them. On returning to the office after these inspections, I would prepare a schedule of the various jobs that needed attention, and the DC would then decide on the priority that was to be accorded to each of these. The whole exercise proved very popular and kept everyone happy. There was a general feeling among the people that the Government was taking an interest in them.

Work in a district office, and particularly in a remote area like Marsabit, was varied and interesting. The day usually started with the handling of routine *shauris* (problems/complaints) from the tribesmen/townsfolk. The district office was also a kind of meeting place for many people – Chiefs, headmen, road

foremen, tribal police and others. The usual gossip was also conducted during such encounters; other topics discussed by the tribesmen included such common problems like the state of grazing in their particular areas, shortage of water, invasion by *shifita* – notably the Gelubba from Ethiopia. The Rendille Chief, Largo Ogum would make sure that he met as many of his people as possible whenever he came in to the *boma*; the Rendille living locally were pleased to have the opportunity of receiving first hand news from their *manyattas*. The Gabbra went through a similar routine whenever their Chief, Tulu Godana (a grand old man) was in the town. The local Boran Chief for the Marsabit mountain area was a biblical-looking character, an old man in fact, called Galgallo Duba. He and his assistant, Jilo Tukena were daily visitors to the district office.

Many of the local tribesmen would call in at the DC's office for a variety of reasons; some to complain about their cattle who were dying from an outbreak of anthrax, others to report an epidemic that was playing havoc with their people. In such cases immediate relief measures would be provided by the Administration. Then there were those who had come to listen to a court case involving some of their relatives/friends; of particular interest were cases involving grazing offences, entry into the district without a valid permit, etc. In the case of grazing offences, a heavy fine would be imposed on the whole tribe/clan and this seemed to act as a deterrent.

In between dealing with *shauris* from the tribesmen and town-folk, I also attended to the requests of our own staff, i.e. tribal

police, prison warders, etc. There were the occasions when a contingent of Dubas had to be quickly despatched to a frontier outpost where a raid by neighbouring tribesmen had been reported. Rations, wages, arms and ammunition all had to be organized in a matter of a few hours, and this task fell to my lot. My job as a District Clerk, with the variety of work it offered, was very satisfying indeed. There was never a dull moment and certainly no room for boredom. Besides, if one was interested in the local tribes, as I was, there was always the opportunity to get to know the various customs and general way of life at first hand. I remember one such occasion when I invited the Rendille headman (Adiforu) to my house with the express purpose of finding out more about his tribe. Through questioning him I learnt quite a lot about them, more so about some of their customs and beliefs; for example, the Rendille still practise infanticide, as they believe it ill fated to allow second-born or subsequent male children, delivered on a moonless Wednesday to live; then again, the manner, in which a woman styles her hair denotes whether her first-born was a male, etc.

I took a great liking to the Rendille, and like the Turkana, it was their simple life-style that impressed me. Primitive they may have appeared, but they certainly had their own culture and disciplines in life. Like their neighbours, the Samburu, they too were pastoralists.

As the DC's office was the centre of the district administration, one always came in contact with a variety of people. There were the *askaris* of the KAR (King's African Rifles) for example,

who always had to report to the Administrative headquarters whenever they arrived on leave from Nairobi or some of the other units. Officially, their leave would commence from the day they arrived in the district; however, in the case of some of the tribesmen, especially those whose *manyatta* was several hundred miles from the *boma*, I was allowed, on the DC's behalf to sanction an extension of leave; this would entail our notifying the Command Pay Office in Nairobi, organizing transport and quite often, an advance of salary for the individual concerned.

Once among his own people, the *askari* would quickly go 'native' and it would be extremely difficult to recognize one having previously seen him in his smart army outfit! I encountered this problem on one occasion when an askari, clad in his tribal *shuka*, spear in hand and hair all done up in tribal finery, would appear outside my office seeking an extension of leave. The transformation in dress styles was incredible. Thanks to the prompt intervention of our interpreter, Sangarta, all was well when the true identity of the individual was finally established! Here, I am reminded of the case of a young Rendille private who had come home on compassionate leave. When he arrived at Marsabit, he was fortunate to secure official transport to a point not very far from the family *manyatta*. On reaching his destination, however, he discovered that his people had moved away several miles further into the interior; the reason? Lack of adequate grazing for their sheep and goats. This now meant a further journey on foot for Private Lenyasei – a journey to his

Chief to report that he would not be arriving at the new family homestead for at least another two days. From the Chief came a report back to us; we in turn signalled his headquarters in Nairobi so as to keep them posted, while at the same time seeking their approval to an extension of leave. In this particular case, what should have been, in effect, a leave period of two weeks, ended up as an absence of six weeks. This was not uncommon, and on his return to the *boma*, Private Lenyasei was quick to give me a detailed account of the problems he had encountered on the journey, the condition of his family's livestock, etc. He wanted to make quite sure that I had all the relevant facts regarding his unavoidable delay, just in case there were any repercussions when he returned to Nairobi. To save him being penalized or unduly disciplined when he reported for duty, I would give him a brief report to take to his Commanding Officer.

Some of the other problems I got involved in at work were purely domestic; not all shauris were referred to the DC; I dealt with quite a few of these. In my experience, I found that a certain amount of straight talking and counselling (where required) did the trick. Where I was unable to deal with a particular *shauri*, I would hand the person over to Sangarta, our interpreter. This grand old man, himself a Rendille and a former tribal policeman, was very helpful. He knew the people well, and was able to deal with many of the problems. One great advantage with him was the fact that although of a different tribe, he spoke Boran quite fluently. There were other occasions

when I found myself in the role of a marriage guidance counselor, when some of the locals, notably the Boran, brought their domestic disputes to the office! Before granting individuals an ‘audience’ with the DC, Sangarta would invariably conduct his own private ‘investigation’ into a case. The DC was popularly known as ‘*Bwana Shauri*’ (i.e. the person to whom one took one’s problems – no matter how serious or insignificant these were). The very fact that the people could air their grievances was sufficient to make them feel good. It had a sort of therapeutic effect. Pleased or not after the DC’s verdict, they always felt that justice had been done!

Next on the agenda at the office were the court cases the DC required to hear; the DC Marsabit (as were all other similar personnel in the Province) was gazetted a First Class Magistrate, and held court frequently to try a variety of cases – ranging from petty theft and assault to more serious offences under the grazing laws, serious cases of assault, etc. Preliminary inquiries into murder cases would also be conducted by him in the first instance, and the entire proceedings would then be submitted to the Supreme Court in Nairobi via the PC, Isiolo. Soon after the court sittings were over, the prisoners would be brought into my office since, another side of my job included responsibility for maintaining the register of incoming and outgoing prisoners by categories, i.e. remand, convicted prisoners or detainees; a tribal breakdown was also shown – ‘African’, ‘Somali’, ‘Arab’, etc. This distinction was important and enabled me to order the right type of rations. The Somalis and Arabs, for

example, were classed as 'Asians' for the purpose of a prison diet. Whereas an African prisoner received the normal diet of maize (*posho*), meat and salt, a Somali prisoner was entitled to a special diet which included such items as rice, *ghee* (clarified butter) and meat.

As I have mentioned earlier, there was distinct variety in the work at the office. One moment I would be dealing with a tribal complaint – in between trying to reply to official correspondence, while at another, I had to abandon what I was doing, make a quick dash for the armoury and issue our tribal policemen with extra ammunition, clothing and rations. Such emergencies arose whenever we received news of a tribal raid which often resulted in the loss of many lives; at times like these, reinforcements had to be quickly despatched to the affected areas, and depending on the size of the skirmish, the Kenya Police, who had men at two strategically-placed outposts at Sabarei and Banya, would also assist. The orders for the deployment of a particular force had, however, to come from the DC. I was somehow left with the feeling that the Kenya Police senior personnel never quite liked this arrangement, but then, one had to remember that the DC was the Sovereign, the Governor and the PC's representative – so like it or not, his orders had to be carried out.

Because of the absence of any social life in areas such as Marsabit, I found myself working well beyond normal office hours as also did my colleague, the Cashier. These were the days when the word 'overtime' was unheard of (if we were paid overtime in

the frontier – and we often worked well outside office hours — many of us would have ended up being quite rich!)



The author with camels at the NFD in Kenya.

After tea in the evenings, the Cashier and I would join our police colleagues and go for long walks. Being Government officials, we were greeted everywhere we went – “*Jambo Bwana karani*”, or just “*Jambo Bwana*” were greetings that filled the air as we strolled along. Our route would take us through the township, then on to the open grounds around Marsabit airstrip. Quite often during such trips, we would encounter long camel trains plodding majestically along this route, with sticks and skins propped high up in untidy packs on the camels’ backs. These were used for erecting the tent-like *manyattas* which could be

assembled and taken down in a few minutes (see illustration). On such occasions, time was of no consequence, and we often stopped to talk to the tribesmen, Government employees or even some of the locals en route. I can well recall spending some time with an elderly Arab (Haroub Bakheit) who had lived in Marsabit for many years. He was a much travelled man who had obviously met many a Goan in his days. Not only was he able to use a few Konkani words, but my biggest surprise was to hear him sing one of our traditional folk songs in flawless Konkani. Haroub was one of the township notables, who was also respected as an Elder.

At other times during the week, the Asian traders would take it in turns to entertain us to drinks (usually beer). We also met fairly regularly at one or another's house, such occasions often taking the form of an impromptu party; these get-togethers, informal as they always were, became a regular feature of our lives in the N.F.D. The DC and Superintendent of Police (a Mr Griffith) invited us around for drinks at least once a month. Such invitations were always reciprocated by us.

For a short period, I used to have my meals with the two bachelor police clerks (Savio Falcão and 'Capy' Moraes). I knew the latter well during my school days in India. When I was eventually allotted a large mud and wattle house (at one time used by one of the European officers), I decided to send for the cook John Vaz and I'd had at Lodwar. My girl-friend at Kitale quickly arranged things and soon my old faithful, Sheunda, was back with me at Marsabit. Since he was a good cook, I decided to

go 'independent' so to speak and have my meals at home. My two colleagues did not mind this in the least. The house I had moved into had a thatched roof and a fairly large lounge which had been partitioned at one end to form a bedroom; the other end combined a lounge-cum-dining-room-cum-pantry. The kitchen and WC were outside, not a convenient arrangement as I was to find out later. Another drawback in this house was the absence of a ceiling with the result that all manner of insects, spiders, lizards an assortment of creepy-crawlies moved around quite freely! To guard against their landing on my bare body at nights, I slept under a mosquito net. While living on one's own had its compensations, life did get a trifle dreary at times. I was therefore more than delighted when my old friend 'Capy' Moraes approached me a few months after I had moved on my own and asked whether he could move in with me; I readily agreed and the move from his former lodgings was conducted amicably I am pleased to say. I was delighted to have someone stay with me, someone with whom I got along well and was able to communicate. My cook Sheunda did not seem at all displeased with the additional cooking, etc., expected of him, but to compensate him for this, I gave him a wage increase. It was important to keep him happy. Saturday afternoons, as I have already said, were spent at one or another's house – the host entertaining us to drinks and a few snacks. After spending an hour or so together, we would each disperse to our respective homes. Lunch over, and I would have a short siesta and then return to the office sometime to catch up on any backlog of work, but

more often to type out long letters to my girl-friend in Kitale. Because of the infrequency of mail services in the frontier, I found myself writing to Elsie almost daily – the letters usually taking the form of a diary of events. After all, I wanted her to share in my life and know how I passed my days, just as much as I longed for her to tell me all that went on at her end; this she did with religious regularity. My only regret was that whereas I had the luxury of the office typewriter, she had to write all her letters in long hand. There are times I wish I had preserved her letters; there were several hundred of these – warm, loving and affectionate letters which I would dearly love to have published. Alas, I do not have them – they are locked away safely in my heart. After completing my official work/letter writing, I returned home for tea. If Sheunda needed to be away, he would neatly arrange my tea on the trolley and never forgot to include my favourite tea-time snack – buttered toast and jam! When I look back on this life-style, I feel I lived like a mini ‘lord’, and ate and drank a trifle too much perhaps.

Sheunda was a very loyal cook, who would always turn up and serve dinner no matter what hour of the night we turned up. Reflecting on this now, I feel a sort of guilt over my lack of consideration at the time. We understood each other though, and on occasions when I knew I would be late getting back home, I would always ask him to pack up early and not wait till I returned. He always seemed to display the kind of fatherly concern towards me which I greatly appreciated.

Of all the commodities in Marsabit, meat was about the cheapest.

Normally, sheep and goats were slaughtered daily and I could ask for whatever 'cut' I liked, although I must admit, the local butchers had no real idea about the different cuts of meat. When one lives in a harsh environment, one is not fussy about such things as 'cuts of meat'. Whereas I preferred beef or mutton, the locals liked camel meat. I tried it once, but didn't like it. Quality-wise, the meat at Marsabit was much better than that at Lodwar. The poor animals in Turkana had virtually nothing to graze on. We, the Government staff were always supplied with the best meat available and were often sent far more than we could consume. The local butchers during my time at Marsabit were, Abdulrehman Ibrahim (whose brother Dalab, had once plotted to murder me), Guled Abdi and Yusuf Ali. Abdulrehman was an ex-Government tax clerk who-spoke excellent English. He was very much of an extrovert. Guled Abdi on the other hand was a mild and kind-hearted individual who always included in my daily order, liver, tongue and even ox-tail; offal was never charged for, but I could not bring myself to eat such meats daily. I would use tinned foods and game meat quite often. The butchers were not in the habit of rendering any accounts for the meat supplied; instead, at the end of the month, they would each produce all the daily 'chits' I had signed; my job was to tot these up and pay them on this basis. There was never any argument over the amount we paid, although I feel sure they knew, quite by instinct I expect, just how much we owed them each month. Yusuf Ali, who like Abdulrehman was a Somali, looked a much older man. Unlike the youthful and

out-going Abdulrehman, Yusuf was more reserved. He was also the poorer of the two. Of the local butchers, the one who was awarded the contract for the supply of meat to Government employees, was always the most popular. Although tenders for these contracts were invited annually, I seem to recall that Abdulrehman (who was no doubt a shrewd business man-, held the contract more often than the other two. It was all a question of finance, and since Abdulrehman had more ready cash available to cope with a fairly large Government contract than did his two colleagues, he was assured of winning it regularly. At Marsabit, fresh vegetables were a luxury; as also such items like butter, milk and cheese; the three Asian traders carried ample stocks of tinned food, so one never ran short. Most of the fresh food was ordered either from Nanyuki or Isiolo and came by road – except during the rainy season when emergency rations and mail were flown out every fortnight by charter flight. This service was referred to as the ‘milk round’.

Well before the start of the rainy season, the PC would send out a directive to all his DCs asking them to ensure that all officers in their districts stocked up with adequate supplies of food, drink, kerosene oil (there was no electricity at Marsabit), etc. The paraffin was required for our lamps and refrigerators. The Provincial Commissioner’s warning to those who ignored his instruction was plain and blunt. I do not think we ever ran out of food at Marsabit, but there were times when we did run out of beer. On one such occasion, when I was returning from local leave, and was unable to travel from Isiolo to Marsabit

because of the floods, I was flown out in a light aircraft; with the exception of the pilot, my only other ‘companions’ on this trip were four crates of beer and two mail bags!

I have previously said that the life of the clerical staff in the frontier lacked the variety of a safari, and I know the PC and DC were well aware of this. For this reason, we would, from time to time, be given a Government vehicle to take us out on a picnic — quite often a journey of 100 or more miles. We looked forward to these occasions, as not only did they break the monotony of office work, but we were also able to see more of the district in this way; of great interest to me was the opportunity to meet and talk to the local tribesmen in their own surroundings. The hospitality of these primitive and so-called ‘uncivilized’ people has to be experienced to be believed. We never ran short of meat on such safaris. Whenever word reached the Chief or headman that we would be coming out to their area, they would always make sure that we were able to buy, at a very reasonable price, a fatted sheep or goat. There were the occasions when we went out on purely hunting safaris – armed with shot-guns and/or .22 rifles. We often brought home buck or *dik-dik*, and sometimes guinea fowl.

During trips to the more distant outposts like North Horr and Loiyangalani, we ended up with a large collection of sand grouse. During my stay in the frontier, I developed a liking for game meat, but somehow could never bring myself to eat or even taste buffalo or elephant meat. I could have, had I wanted to, tasted the latter since, whenever the animal was destroying

local *shambas*, a ‘culling’ operation would be organized which meant the killing of several elephants. The tribesmen, especially the Turkana, were quick to carve up the carcass and denude it in no time. One such elephant was shot not far from my house by Terence Adamson, brother-in-law of the late Joy Adamson (of *Born Free* fame). I was very fortunate in being able to obtain the feet of this animal. It took me some six months to cure these and this included a two-month period when I left them out to dry in the burning sands of the Chalbi desert.

Eating out in the wilds can be a great experience, and although I carried a supply of tinned food on safari, I rarely used this since I much preferred the meat of a freshly killed bird or even barbecued strips of game meat (my apologies to animal lovers!) At the office, David Dabasso, whose family lived in Marsabit had more domestic problems than he could cope with, and in an effort to ease the pressure, had asked to be moved away from the district to a region where he could feel relatively ‘safe’ financially; he didn’t like the idea of being constantly pestered for handouts from an ever-growing string of relatives. He had also got himself heavily in debt, not just with the local traders, but even with one of his own tribesman. This particular individual, Jirma Liche, never failed to call at my office each week to see if I could help in any way over collecting his debts. When the PC’s office eventually agreed to transfer David to Wajir, I was successful in getting him to agree to paying off his debt to Jirma Liche by regular monthly instalments sent to me. He also asked whether I would send him news of his family from time

to time, and this I was very happy to do. David's replacement was a Kikuyu from Nyeri. George Kihia Mahinda was an efficient clerk, an excellent typist and good company generally. He spoke very good English taking care to pronounce every word forcefully and distinctly; he was also good at drafting routine letters and dealing with minor, day to day problems at the office. He and his wife Joyce got on very well with the locals and within a short time of their arrival had learnt to speak Boran quite fluently. George was a deeply religious individual who took things a little too seriously at times. When on occasions we had a light-hearted discussion on a particular religious subject, George would tend to form the mistaken impression that I was an unbeliever! In moments like this, he would often say to me, " ... but, Mr Maciel, I shall pray that you be converted." He couldn't see that as a Christian one could have a laugh and a joke as well without in any way hurting anyone's feelings.

Victor Fernandes and I got on very well together both in and outside the office, and I spent many an evening with him listening his collection of old-time favourites. He was exceptionally good with his hands and there was ample evidence of his creative work to be seen around the house. During his last leave in Goa, he had got engaged to a girl from Jhansi (U.P. Province of India), and I realized then that his bachelor days were numbered; This explains why most of the records he played were of a romantic and sentimental nature – and who can blame him for such a choice! In anticipation of his fiancée's arrival, Victor had very tastefully decorated the whole house in colour schemes

he had himself chosen – schemes that were not available from the standard Government range of colours, and which were kindly made available through the good offices of the DC. Not very long after his arrival, Victor left on the first quota of his local leave. He was heading for Mombasa to meet his fiancée, Lucy, who was due to arrive there very shortly. On- returning from their honeymoon, I was happy to welcome and play host to them that evening. Lucy was absolutely ‘green’ to Africa, and to be thrust into the wilds of Marsabit so soon after she had arrived, must have been quite an upheaval; on the other hand, this could be just the sort of atmosphere a newly-wedded couple would want to be in, I thought – quiet, peaceful, so natural and romantic in its own way. I spent many an evening with them and always enjoyed their hospitality.

The married families in the *boma* were now increasing – the two police clerks and myself being the only bachelors — a rare breed? The DC was married with five daughters, the Superintendent of Police was also married but the couple had no children. A young married couple had also recently arrived from England. Paul Baxter was the newly-appointed anthropologist, who with his equally young and attractive wife, Patricia (Pat) and son Timmy, had come out straight from Oxford. For this young family, the entry into wildest Africa must have been a great and challenging experience. I got to like the Baxters and we got on very well together. Paul looked much too young to be involved in such an important study of the Galla tribes. Pat was a paragon of beauty, always so full of life and bouncing with

energy.

In addition to the Goan bachelors (for a short while, we had a third police clerk by the name of Telles, who didn't last long at Marsabit), there were two European Inspectors of Police – Ron Crossland and Jim Cable. There was also Major Porter, the Works Supervisor who was married with one small son, and a Locust Officer, who I understand was married but didn't have his wife with him. His name was Sehof, a South African who, in addition to doing a good job in controlling the locust pest, also spent some of his spare time collecting snakes! A most unusual hobby you may well think, but I understand that the serum from these reptiles was extracted and sent to laboratories in South Africa where it was used in cancer research.

Fresh produce was not easily obtainable in Marsabit and had to be imported from Kenya. As far as fresh milk was concerned however, we operated what I can only describe as a truly unique system. Through the good offices of the local Boran Chief, Galgallo Duba, the Administration and police staff each hired out a cow from the local tribesmen. A Government syce was provided to herd and do the actual milking; all we had to do was provide a container and pay a rental of Shs.5/- each per month. If the cow went 'dry' especially in the dry season (referred to as jilal in Boran) or at any other time for that matter, the animal was promptly replaced. The arrangement worked very well, and the tribesmen seemed quite pleased with the small rental they received each month. Besides, they also enjoyed the unique concession of having the whole of the milk

herd grazed in the *boma*. The syce was equally happy since he too received a modest tip from each of the staff. All in all, this was a wonderful system which ensured that we always had a supply of fresh milk.

For some unknown reason, it was not the practice for the Asian clerical staff to go out on safari. I found this difficult to understand especially since they, of all people – who were virtually tied down their desks from morning to evening, needed such outings most. Such was the system obtaining in all districts at the time and no DC had questioned it – neither did the clerical staff. However, the whole system was changed by Mr Wild, without any questions being asked from the PC's office at Isiolo! His proposal was that the Cashier and District clerk would, on an alternate basis accompany him on safari. I was more than delighted with this arrangement and can still recall the many pleasant times spent on such safaris. Mr Wild would sometimes take his whole family out on such trips. This was a good break for them too, and his daughters, young though they were at the time, seemed none the worse after the safari. The travelling allowances we were allowed to claim in those days was a negligible Shs.3/- per night, though I must admit that it often cost us more more on safari. The tinned food and beer alone added up to more than 3/-; the expense didn't worry me unduly however, since the very thought of getting away from the office was comforting in itself. The one thing I was never able to understand about Mr Wild was the amount of 'stuff' he took on safari, including all manner of clothing, a suit, etc. (perhaps he even

had a dinner jacket tucked away among his wardrobe ... just in case!) I always thought that one dressed informally when travelling on safari; not so with Mr Wild however. He would go all prepared for the unexpected VIP who might suddenly turn up!

There was a set routine we followed whenever we accompanied the DC on safari. After our main official duty was over, and well before sunset, we would retire to our respective tents. A quick wash and change of clothes in the evening, and I would appear in shirt and trousers (not shorts) outside the DC's tent. Here, drinks were laid on and we would sit back and talk until late into the night. For my sake, snacks that the DC's cook had prepared would be served midway through our drinking session. Mr Wild never believed in eating anything during such times – it interfered with his drinking he would tell me! We talked about various things – any subject other than work, and being an ex-RAF officer (he was a pilot who had been awarded the DFC for his war service), he often talked about the stars, their formations, how to identify a particular star, etc. No doubt some of what he said was too technical for me; in any case, my knowledge of the heavenly constellations is very limited indeed. After a fairly relaxed and enjoyable evening, I would bid the DC 'good night' and walk back to my own tent. My cook who had waited patiently for me to return would quickly serve my dinner, and even at that late hour, I would sit down and do justice to the safari-type meal he had prepared. It was well past midnight before I retired to bed. Because of the heat in

areas like North Horr, I never slept inside the tent, and would always get my cook to lay my camp bed well outside the tent. The tribal police and our domestic staff slept on ground sheets within earshot, and I could often hear their conversations well into the night.

Getting away on safari, however infrequently, was a very good and refreshing experience indeed; the rough travel, excessive heat and even the flies, didn't seem to worry me. I enjoyed every safari immensely. There was the experience of being face to face with Mother Nature, whether driving through the burning sands of the endless Chalbi desert or the cooler reaches of the Loiyangalani oasis by the lake shore. Each area had its own particular charm, and one aspect that appealed most to me was this freedom of being able to sleep out in the open and admire the sheer beauty and splendour of God's creation. The brightly lit sky at night, the millions of stars which adorned the heavens and which we took so much for granted, began to mean more to me now.

While on safari, I also found that I ate more than I normally would; perhaps it was the open spaces with their abundance of clean air that produced such a healthy appetite in me. There was never any shortage of meat either as most of the tribesmen were only too willing to sell us a fatted sheep or even a goat (depending on our preference), at a reasonable price.

Living in the frontier, under what can at best be described as rugged conditions, was not everyone's 'cup of tea'; the same applied to being out on safari. Personally, I enjoyed the great

outdoors, an experience which always gave me a new lease of life whenever I got back to the *boma*. Safari life is however, not without its dangers. Depending on the particular area one camped out at, the presence of wild animals and predators had always to be considered; but all this was, after all, part of the experience and something which added that little bit of interest and excitement to the whole exercise. In areas like North Horr for instance, the constant chatter and laughing of the hideous looking hyena kept me awake for hours. During one such safari to the area, I remember the DC carrying out what can be described as a 'cropping' operation. The local tribesmen, through their Chief, Tulu Godana, had complained about the destruction of their sheep and goats by hyena, and had asked for assistance from the Administration. The method we used was to poison a goat by injecting it with a heavy dose of strychnine. Once killed in this manner, several pieces of the poisoned bait were placed along the path used by the hyena while some of it was even laid outside the tribesmen's *manyattas*. When we awoke the following morning we counted ten dead hyenas. The Chief and the locals were extremely pleased that the Administration had come to their aid in this way; henceforth, their livestock would be safe from the threat of the ugly-looking and destructive beast!

In some of the warmer areas, notably North Horr and Kargi, I found that I rose fairly early in the morning; this gave me the opportunity of taking in as much of the beauty of a desert sunrise — in itself a wonderful spectacle. Because of the intense

daytime heat, we would often start work soon after an early breakfast, which consisted of a cup of tea or coffee and freshly made toast prepared by setting up an improvised wire grill.

The occasions when I went on official safaris were chiefly to assist with tax collection and pay tribal police or road gangs, who were working away from the *boma*. The stock sales at which tax was collected was widely advertised — no publicity machine though, messages usually being sent out through the various Chiefs and headmen. The tribesmen would bring in their livestock and the whole atmosphere would take the form of a cattle auction. One of the reasons for the DC's presence at such sales was also to ensure that the tribesmen received a fair price for their animals.

During these tax collection safaris, I soon found that unlike some of the larger and wealthier nations, where tax evasion is not uncommon, there was a noticeable degree of honesty among these simple pastoral people. If the individual could afford to pay tax, there was no option since non-payment was an offence punishable by a term of imprisonment or a heavy fine and no one really wanted that!

The number of people who did not pay tax was negligible, and the only reason I can ascribe for this is their long absence from the *manyattas* either while in employment in other parts of Kenya (strangely enough, those of us who lived in the N.F.D., although within Kenya, always referred to Nairobi and other towns as though they were another country!) or their move to a different area. Moving in search of grazing involved the up-

rooting of the entire *manyatta* – lock, stock and barrel; after all, for these desert nomads, livestock was their sole wealth.

At most, I would spend one or two nights out on safari at any one time. The DC spent much longer periods since, in addition to organizing tax collections, he would visit the more remote outposts of the frontier to meet and talk to tribal policemen and *askaris* from the Kenya Police stationed there. This was more of a morale boosting exercise. Other occasions that took the DC on safari were those when a border raid involving local tribesmen had been reported. Casualties would often be high, as once was the case when an entire Rendille *manyatta* was raided by Gelubba tribesmen and men, women and children indiscriminately butchered to death. The DC's visit was not merely to see things for himself, but also to reassure the Chief and the rest of the population that the Government was taking action to combat such incursions and massacres.

It was not always known where the enemy might strike next, but where any such threat had been reported by the Chief, extra precautions would be taken by reinforcing the border patrols. Safaris were also made to drought-stricken areas to inspect and access the seriousness of the situation at first hand, and introduce appropriate famine relief measures. Transport to the *boma* would have to be arranged for the very weak and those who were ill, while at the same time arrangements were made for the urgent despatch of relief food and medical supplies to the affected areas. To convince the locals that everything was being done to alleviate their plight, the DC would hold open air

barazas (meetings) at which such measures and other forms of Government assistance would be announced.

On returning from a safari, we were also able to bring back news to relatives and immediate family of safari personnel in the *boma*. Tribal policemen would sometimes be away from their families for as long as three months at a stretch, and the regular safaris that the DC made thus provided a link between the men and their families.



Victor Fernandes and me in the Chalbi Desert, Marsabit.

In addition to going out on official safaris, we, the clerical staff were also encouraged to spend a day or more either at North Horr or even at Loiyangalani. I vividly recall one such trip. In the company of three of the police clerks, I left Marsabit early one morning and headed for North Horr, crossing the blazing sands of the Chalbi desert en route; despite the intense heat, we stopped for a brief moment in the desert to take some pho-

tographs. None of us had any cameras to be proud of – just the ordinary Kodak box camera with black and white film. The driver and his turn-boy must have thought us ‘mad’ to stop in the middle of the desert.

There was no denying the fact that it was intolerably hot on the Chalbi – no sign of any life, merely one endless expanse of sand, hot burning sand with an equally hot sun burning brightly overhead. Even the *upepo* (breeze) was hot and uncomfortable; admittedly, while the heat was initially welcome, considering that we had driven from Marsabit which was cold and misty – the temperatures we were now enduring were far too excessive for comfort.

We kept consoling ourselves with the thought that we would soon be arriving at North Horr. After driving some 90 miles through this desert, we finally made it to the oasis, and what a relief it was to us all. We were visibly tired from the long and dusty journey and were now anxious to unload the truck and just sit back and relax. Thanks to the foresight of the Administration, there was a modest guest-house at North Horr which the DC had permitted us to use. Its dom palm-thatched roof made it cool, and we were fortunate to be able to have a cold shower here – something we very badly needed..

In no time at all, the area surrounding the guest-house which, only moments earlier was almost deserted, was now teeming with activity. There to greet us was the local Chief, Tulu Godana. He must have been in his late sixties then but looked a very fit and healthy individual. Only his white beard gave him away.

With him were his usual followers – the Gabbra headman and several tribal elders who were obviously well known to him. Chief Tulu was the Senior Chief of the Gabbra tribe. In a spontaneous gesture of welcome, and at the Chief's beckoning, a fatted sheep was produced as a *zawadi* (gift) for us all. We were very grateful and thanked the Chief for his generosity. When we asked whether he would like a drink, he unhesitatingly answered, "*Farso*" (liquor), "*a-ye, a-ye*" (yes, yes!) We offered him a bottle of beer which he downed without too much difficulty. Another bottle was opened and passed round and the elders in his group each took a sip in turn. A loud and uncontrollable belch from Chief Tulu seemed to indicate that he had now had enough. The conversation among us grew in intensity with the Chief and some of his companions asking after some of their friends at Marsabit.

The usual gossip continued and after spending a few moments with us, Chief Tulu and his-party left and headed in the direction of the *duka*. There was only one *duka* at North Horr at the time and this sold the usual items like *posho*, tobacco, tea, sugar and *shukas*.

North Horr is a very sandy area, the only vegetation thriving there being the few dom palms and acacia bushes. At the time we visited the area, there was a water shortage – something not uncommon in these regions. This was evident from the swarms – literally hundreds — of sand grouse which had converged at the tiny spot where water was still standing. The half dried out lake was a few hundred yards from the guest-house, and we de-

cided to go out and shoot a few grouse for dinner. Judging from the hundreds of birds that were hovering above making for this spot (if only to dip their tiny beaks into the cool of the muddy water), no real skill was needed in shooting. A mere bang from our shot-gun brought down several of these grouse. There were so many of them around the water that they became almost oblivious of us (the enemy around them). When I look back on that particular 'expedition', I cannot but feel that the shoot was too cruel for words. Unfortunately, I didn't quite appreciate it then – else I would certainly not have indulged in such a sport. Alongside the grouse, many hundreds of camels were also competing for the water from what now appeared to be a fast drying out lake. As for us, we were very fortunate in having a good supply of water since we had brought three barramils from Marsabit. There were also two jerricans of this precious liquid which the driver and his party had brought. Not until one has been to barren areas like this can one begin to appreciate the sheer luxury of a fresh water supply. We had taken the availability of water so much for granted, and here were man and beast struggling through lack of it. For these hard hit people and their livestock, it is a case of survival. In extreme cases where the drought was severe, several people would die and many of their livestock perish; it is not an uncommon sight to see animal carcasses scattered over the affected areas in times like this. We spent some time at the water point watching the sand grouse and camels drink happily together. By now, we had bagged some thirty grouse and decided to make for our camp where we had

them cooked. While on safari, I have found that the best way to eat grouse was to have the birds grilled over an open fire; this is precisely what we did on this occasion, and with a sprinkling of salt and pepper they tasted delicious. There were so many of these tiny birds to be cooked that we soon found our hard-working cook couldn't keep up with the demand! Drinks go down well with grilled grouse, so the demand for more grilled birds increased with every bottle of beer we consumed. By now we had all had our fill and there were enough birds left over to go round our cook and some of his helpers. While we invited them all to feast on these grouse, I got the impression that they were not very keen over them. Lay a sheep or goat before them; ah, ah! well, that would be a different matter. How much meat was there to be found in a tiny little bird? they kept saying among themselves. They obviously had their eyes on the sheep that Chief Tulu had presented us with. We had reserved this for the following day.

We spent two days at North Horr and then moved on to Loiyangalani. The road between North Horr and Loiyangalani was very rough indeed, strewn in places with boulders which made the truck jerk from side to side as it attempted to manoeuvre its way through this difficult stretch. The heat too was becoming more and more unbearable, and though there was a breeze, all it produced were gusts of hot air.

Loiyangalani, a one-time military post, is set in the midst of a beautiful palm grove. It was a great relief when we arrived at this oasis, a welcome change from North Horr. In front of us

lay the lake and not far across, the 'island of no return' more popularly known as Von Hohnel or South Island. Unlike the barrenness of North Horr, we had the open lake to gaze into; it was also much cooler and we were able to enjoy some of the fish that the lake abounds in – notably tilapia and Nile perch. This region is inhabited by one of the poorer tribes in East Africa – the El Molo, who are reputed to number only a hundred souls. They are a very poor and destitute people, but a tribe who, despite all their poverty and hard life-style, still managed to survive. They had come to terms with their inhospitable environment. Several visitors to this area have been amazed at the generosity of this tribe. They could teach many of us a lesson or two, not just in good neighbourliness, but also something in the way of learning to accept one's condition in life uncomplainingly. I certainly learnt much by merely-watching their sheer determination to make the best of a bad bargain. Their diet consisted mostly of fish – which was plentiful in the lake, plus the odd crocodile or hippo if they were fortunate in hunting one down. Swimming is a risky business in this area, and none of us indulged in this sport, even though the heat was scorching and the waters of the lake very inviting. The nearest we got was to wade in the shallow areas while skinny El Molo *mtotos* (small boys) kept the crocodiles at bay by throwing knife-sharp stones into the water.

As was usual on such safaris, we had taken some chewing tobacco and a small quantity of posho (maize meal) with us; the *zawadi* (gift), especially the tobacco, is greatly appreciated by

the local tribesmen, not only in this region, but in most other parts of the N.F.D. also, although not perhaps in the Somali areas. I must admit I was sorry to leave this tribe behind when the time came for us to depart, and so wished we had spent the night at Loiyangalani – but we didn't and instead drove back to North Horr. The following morning we returned to Marsabit, tired no doubt and very sunburnt and dusty.



A camel caravan.

The whole outing had been well worthwhile; not only had it provided a welcome change climatically, but also a much-needed change of environment. I treasure to this day, memories of the area and the wonderful simple folk who inhabit it.

This, incidentally, was my last trip to the North Horr and Loiyangalani areas as a bachelor. I had to remind myself that I would soon be a married man, and unless my wife-to-be was

willing to undertake such uncomfortable trips, I might never again see these areas or indeed the inhabitants.

6. Hospital Fire at Marsabit

There are a few incidents which occurred during my bachelor days in Marsabit which I would like to share with the reader. These are not narrated in any particular order but merely as I can recall them now. I would like to begin with the fire at Marsabit hospital.

One evening when Victor Fernandes and I were relaxing at his house, listening to some of his record collection, his Meru cook Simeon came up to us and enquired in a rather nervous and terrified manner – whether we hadn't heard the bugle sound the alarm. The answer was quite simple – we hadn't. A fire had apparently broken out and the whole of the hospital store was ablaze. Victor and I lost no time in rushing to the scene. Most of the Government employees were there – police, hospital staff and even the traders; there was one man I couldn't see however, and this was the African Hospital Assistant i/c. It was certainly a case of 'all hands to the pumps'; people were working desperately to extinguish the flames. We had no fire-

fighting equipment. All I could see were buckets of water and some earth (I don't think we had any sand) being thrown at the flames. There was confusion with people running in all directions. In a flash, I heard an explosion come from the direction of the hospital store. The next thing I knew was that the Hospital Assistant, a stocky man from the Coast Province, was lying by the grass verge outside the store, groaning. I rushed to see how he was only to discover that he was very badly burnt, some of his skin peeling openly. With the help of two of the hospital staff who were around, we managed to move the assistant well away from the fire. I stayed with him for some time, offering what comfort I could.

Although the store was on fire, the main hospital area had escaped the blaze. The DC and Supt. of Police had also now arrived on the scene, and the Hospital Assistant was moved to a bed inside the hospital. The fire which was confined to the store had at last been brought under control. From supplies available at the hospital, the senior dresser tended to the Hospital Assistant's burns. It was decided that owing to the lack of adequate facilities at Marsabit, the hospital Assistant would have to be flown out to Nairobi or Nyeri, and the DC assumed responsibility for making the necessary arrangements. After satisfying ourselves that all was reasonably well with the assistant, and that the fire was completely extinguished, we all returned home. I could not help feeling that it was a miracle that he had survived the blaze, and we were all pleased that the fire had not spread further. A report of the Incident was sent to the PC, the

DMS (Director of Medical Services) and the PMO (Provincial Medical Officer). It was quite late the following morning when the plane arrived to evacuate last night's casualty to Nyeri hospital. The hospital Asst. remained there for some four weeks, and on discharge was given compassionate leave to spend a few days with his family in his home district. Meanwhile, on the recommendation of the DC, a strong case was put forward to the DMS for some form of compensation for this dedicated official, who had in fact risked his life in the execution of his duties. While I cannot recollect the actual amount he was paid, I know that in addition to the compensation of Shs.400/- he also received a letter of commendation from the Director of Medical Services.

7. A Snake in the Office!

There were certain days when I used to remain in the office well after office hours; one such occasion was when I was relieving the Cashier who was away on local leave at the time. I can well remember the evening — everyone had left to go home except that faithful old office boy, Shalle Hirbo. He insisted on staying with me while I completed some last-minute cash checking. I had just finished paying off a whole group of tribal policemen who had returned from safari; ‘illegal’ though it was, I had also given small advances of salary to several policemen who were going out to replace these men, and was keen on balancing the cash book in readiness for the DC’s inspection the following day. I had got through most of my work and asked Shalle to start locking up the office. While he was thus engaged, I shut the safe and the filing cabinet which held part of the unpaid wages and also unused tax/licence receipts, and was on my way out. I had hardly got to the door when I noticed a snake, a puff adder in fact, wriggling his way into the office. I rushed back

inside and took a defensive position on top of one of the filing cabinets which was located not far from the entrance. Shalle, to whom I had previously bid good-night, hearing the commotion, and wondering why I had returned, hobbled back into the main office.

(At the time of my returning, he was locking up the DC's side of the office.) Seeing me on top of the filing cabinet he asked what was happening. With my finger pointing nervously at the snake. I shouted "*nyoka*" (snake!) Shalle asked me to stay where I was, while he went to the DC's office and brought back a spear. This weapon was in fact an exhibit in a murder case. While Shalle was in the adjacent office, Inspector Jim Cable happened to be passing by on his way home from work, and noticing the window of the DC's office open, peered in and wondered what was going on. When I explained the situation, he asked me to 'stay put' while he returned with his revolver. Meanwhile, Shalle came back with the spear, and stretching across from a safe distance, passed it to me. While all this was going on, I was conscious of the danger that Shalle, a cripple, was exposing himself to. Without wasting any more time, I managed to land the spear on the snake's head and kept him tightly pinned down in this fashion. By increasing the pressure on the spear, and turning and twisting it while it was still lodged in the snake's head, I was able to restrict its movements. Jim Cable arrived shortly afterwards, but there was no need to use the revolver. A few hard strokes with Shalle's walking stick and the snake was dead; we later disposed of him. I was thankful that Shalle

had stayed behind. Had he not been there that evening, things might have turned out quite differently. I was also grateful to Inspector Cable for his offer of help.

The next morning, the news of my heroic deed had spread among the staff and the locals. Everyone kept asking me about the incident and were pleased that I had come to no harm. Personally, it is an incident not easily forgotten!

8. A Plot to Murder Me

The townsfolk at Marsabit were, on the whole, very friendly people, but there are black sheep in every community; one event that stands out vividly in my mind is the attempt of our local butcher's brother to 'get rid of me'. The reason? Well, during the DC's absence on safari one evening, and at a time when there was no European District Officer stationed at Marsabit, I handled, as you will have already read, many of the jobs which would otherwise have come under his portfolio.

It so happened that when Victor Fernandes and I were returning home from our usual evening walk, we were approached by his Meru cook/houseboy who told us that a local Somali by the name of 'Dalab' (a notorious criminal), had broken into Victor's house and attempted to steal a bottle of gin (having drunk some of it himself). Dalab was a Muslim and as such not allowed to consume alcohol. The taking of liquor is strictly prohibited among this sect. Dalab had, however, travelled out of the district, lived in Nairobi and other Kenya stations for a

long time, and had naturally been ‘contaminated’. His family were well aware of this and had in fact disowned him. He had brought much shame on them previously. Victor’s cook seemed quite frightened when relating the sequence of events to us.

In the absence of the DC, I felt it was my duty to see that the culprit was caught and apprehended. I was told that Dalab had escaped in the direction of the Kenya Police staff quarters: We quickly ran in that direction; and on arrival found that there were quite a few policemen gathered in the compound. Some were engaged in a loud conversation which sounded more like an argument. I asked to see the Sgt. Major i/c., a stocky and likeable Nubian (from the Sudan). In no time at all, Sgt.-Major Ibrahim had appeared, and in his customary well-disciplined manner, saluted me smartly with the words, “*Ndio Effendi*” (Yes, Sir). I explained the crime that had just been reported to me, and asked that the culprit be arrested and locked up for the night in the main prison and not in a police cell. He seemed to sense that there was some reluctance on the part of the Somali policemen (who belonged to the same tribe as Dalab) to carry out my order, and immediately ordered a Nandi constable to arrest Dalab; the whole operation was completed very quickly. There were a few murmurs from the crowd which by now had grown enormously — but that was about all. Meanwhile I made my way to the prison gates to warn the Corporal i/c to expect trouble. The Corporal was a stout headed Kikuyu named Wainaina s/o Keriba, who knew Dalab well from previous encounters. A long procession of men (mostly Somali) followed

the arrested man as he was being led under escort from the Kenya police lines to the prison. At this stage, I was already in the prison compound talking to the Corporal and the two Meru warders. When Dalab was led through the prison gates, he was furious at seeing me there. I could also sense that he had consumed a fair amount of alcohol. He tried to tear himself from the policemen who were restraining him; eventually, he managed to throw himself to the ground, and while I attempted to control him while he was being handcuffed, he kept kicking his feet in the air in a rather violent fashion and managed to land one on my thigh, very narrowly missing my testicles! I immediately asked the prison Corporal to isolate Dalab from the rest of the prisoners, since I was not prepared for any disturbances in the prison itself, and also arranged for the prisoner to be given a meal for the night. Later that evening, I received a deputation at my house from the local Somali Chief, Yusuf Sugulle. I knew Yusuf well and he always respected me. I certainly didn't want to fall out with him. The deputation had called to ask whether they could be allowed to take some of their own food for Dalab as they did not want him to be given the local African prison diet. Not wanting to hurt their feelings and since I did not want any further trouble, I readily agreed to their request.

Having acted in a manner I considered right at the time, I was rather surprised to receive a note from the European Works Supervisor that same evening. In it, he tried to explain that he had had a lot of experience with the Somalis in the past, and wondered whether the action I had taken in locking up one of

their number during the DC's absence, was the right course. I sent a polite note back telling him that I accepted full responsibility for my action, and would be making a detailed report to the DC. I am pleased to record here that when I did report the incident to the DC Mr Wild strongly endorsed my stand and even thanked me for the manner in which I had acted. I was immensely satisfied that the decision I had taken was the right one, even though I realized that some individuals must have been upset in the process. The accused (Dalab) was duly charged at a later_ date and released on bail while a record of his previous convictions was obtained from Nairobi. It was during this term on bail that he attempted to strike me while I, in the company of my colleagues, was walking through the main township one evening. Fortunately, the local Somali Chief, Yusuf Sugulle and some of the Elders succeeded in restraining him. I received information later, through some of my Somali friends, that Dalab's motive was to capture and murder me. Several meetings were held with his henchmen, and a 'secret' plot was hatched. The intention was to ambush me during one of my daily walks through the township, and then get rid of me: Subsequent information I received suggested that there was disagreement among his aides. The majority were not in favour of carrying out this plot and did not want to be a party to it. There was even some talk of one of his men leaking the details of the plot to me. I was naturally upset with what had happened and all that I had heard too, especially since my relations with Somalis in the town had always been very cordial.

The following day, I immediately reported the incident to the DC, and when Dalab was eventually sentenced to nine months imprisonment with hard labour, "he was transferred to Nairobi prison. I was greatly relieved, but later heard that he had written to his friends and family telling them that as soon as he was released, he would make sure that I was 'done'. (I am pleased to say that such an opportunity never arose, since I had already left Marsabit for Kisii much before Dalab's release from prison). I also got to hear that he had served more than the nine months in Nairobi.

This was because he had assaulted a fellow prisoner while in gaol and lost all his remission in the process. I was not sorry! This was the only unfortunate incident during my entire stay at Marsabit, but not one that has clouded the many happy memories of the place I still have. I should also mention that Dalab's aged and greying father, a grand old man, called at my house one evening with a gift of a dozen eggs.

Why these, I thought especially since I was responsible for having his son imprisoned? The old man's thoughts were quite different however. He had come to thank me for having his troublesome son locked away, and also to apologize over the plot to kill me – adding that he was no party to it. Knowing the man as I did, there was no reason to doubt what he was saying. After this unfortunate incident, life carried on as normal and I tried to put the whole episode behind. In any case, I was too young at the time to worry unduly over it. There was a feeling of great embarrassment and shame whenever I met some of my

Somali friends, notably Chief Yusuf Sugulle and even some of the stock traders. I assured them that I held nothing against them and would continue the co-operation they had enjoyed in the past.

9. End of a Bachelor Era

As each day passed, I soon became aware that my own days of bachelorhood were not to last very much longer. My fiancée and I had planned a wedding in August (1952) – there was much to be done in the way of organizing the whole affair. We were hampered in the planning of this event by the fact that there were no telephones at Marsabit. Most of our arrangements had to be conducted through letters, and with the mails being infrequent, things did get hectic at times. The local post office must have made a small fortune from the many telegrams we often had to send!

I spent Christmas of 1951 with my fiancée in Kitale, and on Boxing Day that year we got engaged. A very simple occasion at home where only the immediate family and the Parish Priest, Fr. John Hawes were present. The announcement must have taken everyone by surprise as nothing had been planned in advance. We were certainly thinking about plans for the wedding, but the engagement itself was a spur of the moment decision.

The following week, our engagement notice appeared in the local Press and many messages of congratulations started pouring in from relatives and friends alike. We had also informed my brothers abroad of the forthcoming event. Within a few months of my returning to Marsabit, the Notice of Marriage was out in Kitale (my fiancée's home town), and the DC's office there had sent a copy to the DC Marsabit, so that it could be similarly displayed locally. Our friends were quick to offer congratulations. I felt really great – it was a proud moment in my life, even though some remarked that we were too young to be thinking of marriage. Young we may have been, but we certainly knew we were in love and were equally aware of the great responsibilities that lay ahead of us. The only preparation I had so far made, was to save up a whole case of Scotch whisky from the monthly ration of one bottle that my friends and I received. I was grateful to all those who had sacrificed their own quotas so that I could build up this stock. Scotch was hard to come by in those days, and since my fiancée's parents would be doing all the catering for the wedding at home, I felt that this small contribution would not come amiss.

A few months before I was married, a District Officer had finally been posted to Marsabit. His very presence would give the DC (Mr Wild) more time to get out on safari and visit some of the more remote areas of this vast district. Robin Otter, the newly appointed DO was a young man of very refined manner; who spoke English with a very distinct and pleasant accent.

In the initial stages, he spent a lot of time with either Victor

Fernandes or myself getting a first-hand grounding in some of the day to day work in a district office. With a full time District Officer now stationed at Marsabit, the DC was able to delegate certain duties to him. After the initial exercise in office routine, the DO accompanied the DC on safari, touring parts of the district, meeting the various Chiefs and headmen — a familiarization tour really. Some of the work I had previously been doing was now passed on to Robin Otter. I was fully aware that such a change would come about one day. The volume of clerical work had also increased by now, and although I was able to hand over many of my former tasks to the DO, I was still left with a fair amount of work on my plate.

A consoling factor was that the arrival of the DO did not in any way alter the arrangement whereby either Victor or I would accompany the DC on some safaris, and I was grateful to Mr Wild for allowing this concession to remain.

The days of my bachelorhood were now quickly drawing to a close and every letter from my fiancée seemed to confirm this. Serving in the N.F.D. had its advantages and disadvantages, but I prefer to dwell on the advantages! A useful 'perk' was the local leave we were entitled to every six months (14 days at a stretch); we also earned more overseas leave in the frontier than our colleagues elsewhere. Then, there was the hardship or frontier allowance and, in the case of married officers — whose families were prevented from joining them — a separation allowance was also paid. The additional local leave I had, meant that I was able to spend some days with my fiancée and her par-

ents finalizing arrangements for our wedding day which was now, not many months away. When I finally arrived at Kitale, I found that my fiancée had made most of the arrangements — the guest list had been drawn up, a Goan tailor (Manuel Fernandes) had been chosen to make the bridal outfit, etc. I was even able to get myself measured out for my wedding suit and fulfil a promise I had made to my tailor, Solanki, when I left Lodwar. Fortunately, I was able to have a trial fitting before returning to Marsabit. There was a certain thrill when going through the list of the various jobs that had to be done in preparation for the wedding. My fiancée's parents were a great help, and I was well aware that the bulk of the catering arrangements would fall on the shoulders of my future mother-in-law. She didn't seem to mind this in the least and coped with the whole situation very calmly.

Fully satisfied that the arrangements for our wedding were proceeding very smoothly, I returned to Marsabit after my short leave in the certain knowledge that there was now not long to wait before the Big Day or Siku Kuu (as they say in Ki-Swahili). On many an evening there would be 'extra' celebrations at Marsabit. Some of my friends who knew I would be losing my bachelor 'freedom' felt that the last few days of this carefree era should be suitably remembered. I must admit that the six months between returning from my casual leave and leaving to get married flew by. I was back at Kitale once more a few days before the wedding, and together my fiancée and I were able to attend to the last minute details.

My future in-laws had recently moved into their brand new home – an architect-designed bungalow with four spacious bedrooms, a modern lounge-cum-dining-room, with an equally modern bathroom, toilet and kitchen. The whole house had been tastefully decorated and adequately furnished; as this was to be the first family wedding to be held in the new home, no expense had been spared to make the place look like a mini ‘palace’. The builders had also worked round the clock to ensure that the house was completed in good time for the family to move in well before the Big Day. My fiancée was very popular in the Kitale area and in the district generally, and the wedding presents that were beginning to arrive from all manner of people, brought home to me the great regard and affection these people had for her. There were gifts from the simple folk and the well-to-do alike, among the latter was one from the then Secretary to the Duke of Manchester (Mr N.O.C. Marsh – an imposing figure of a man). Many local farmers who knew her well when she worked at the KFA (Kenya Farmers Association) had also sent in their gifts and good wishes, and we were greatly touched by the generosity of so many. Even those who could not make it to the wedding, and those who weren’t even invited (we had to restrict numbers because of the available space), had sent tokens of affection. Most of the arrangements for the wedding were well advanced by now – the bride’s trousseau was complete, so were my own suits, the bridesmaids’ outfits, etc. The parish priest of the small Catholic Church had asked us over a few days before the big occasion – for a gen-

eral face-to-face talk on the all-important religious significance of our marriage, and the great responsibilities we were soon to undertake. Being a close friend of the family, talking plainly to us both came so naturally to Fr. John Hawes. My younger brother Wilfred, who I would dearly have liked to have been my best man, was away in England pursuing his studies, so I had to choose my next favourite relative instead. Here, I must admit, I broke away from tradition and asked my married cousin, Jock Sequeira (an Education Officer in Mombasa) — to do the honours. Normally the person chosen is, I believe, a bachelor. Jock arrived a day before and was the only member of my immediate family at the wedding; sadly, due to family commitments, Beryl was unable to accompany him. Most of my other relatives were too far away to make the trip — a paternal uncle (Luis) in Mombasa, others in Zanzibar, Moçambique, Uganda, and my two brothers in Bombay and England respectively. Still, I knew they would all be with us in spirit.

While my future in-laws were doubtless happy that their daughter was soon to be married, there was a hint in their sad expressions that they were obviously going to miss her dearly when she left home. What was worse — we had planned to leave for a honeymoon in the wilds on the very evening of our wedding day.

This must, in a way, have disappointed my fiancée's folks and my cousin too, since they had hoped we would spend a few days at Kitale. I closely watched the last-minute arrangements now being made; a lot of hard work had gone into all the pre-

parations, and I couldn't understand how my future mother-in-law had coped with so much on her own. In addition to the normal wedding fare, a whole pig had been slaughtered for the occasion, and many tempting and tasty traditional Goan dishes prepared. The pig was presented by another missionary friend of my fiancée — a Dutchman of the Mill Hill order, by the name of Fr. Molenaar. There was much life and activity in the house that evening, and everyone seemed in such a happy mood. There was excitement and laughter – some sang while others danced and for a moment it looked as though the celebrations had already started! All in all it was a wonderful atmosphere and we all knew that there was now not much longer to wait for the happy occasion.

10. A New Life Begins

The day finally dawned – August 16, 1952. I was up fairly early that morning, so was Jock, and together we began checking on some of the last-minute details. Had I stuck strictly to tradition, I should actually have spent the eve of our wedding night under a different roof, and not in the same house where my future wife was staying. It didn't really matter, however, since my best man and I were given a separate room well away from the main area where my future in-laws and fiancée were. I am not a superstitious person, so this aspect didn't really worry me. My fiancée's family had made quite sure that I didn't get a glimpse of the bride on the morning of our wedding day – at least not while I was still at home getting all ready to go to the church. Jock and I arrived in good time at the Church of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, to be greeted warmly by Fr. Hawes. As far as he was concerned, everything was just perfect for the day – the weather was fine, the church had been beautifully decorated and he himself looked so pleased and happy. Most

bridegrooms are nervous on occasions such as this – I was no exception. The church began to fill up gradually and soon, to the strains of ‘Here comes the bride’ my future wife walked down the aisle on the arm of her father. She looked radiant and I was the proudest man in the world from that moment. My wish had been granted, and I had, by my side, the woman who was soon to become my ‘Queen’. The nuptial service proceeded without a hitch – even the cute little flower girls didn’t err. So far so good! At the end of the Mass, we were conducted to the sacristy where we signed the Register in the presence of Fr. Hawes and the two witnesses – Jock, my cousin, and Elvira, my wife’s eldest sister.



Elsie and the author’s wedding on August 16, 1952.

The knot had now been firmly tied, and we had just proclaimed before God and man that we were taking each other for good – ‘for better for worse, in sickness and in health, till death us do part...’ The moment that followed was the proudest for me – walking up the aisle as we left the sacristy, hand in hand as man and wife for the first time. A thrilling and memorable moment this by all accounts. Nervousness soon gave way to a feeling of elation and pride. We stood on the steps outside the church and received the congratulations and good wishes of our family and friends. Then followed the photographs, taken by Mr Embleton, a professional and well-known photographer in the district. After this session, we both stepped into a suitably decorated limousine and were driven around on a short tour of the town, returning home for the wedding breakfast a few moments later. This was purely a family occasion since the main reception was scheduled for the afternoon. My mother-in-law, as I have said earlier, had done all the catering herself and I would like to record my tribute to her skill. Professional caterers couldn’t have done better and we were truly proud of the varied spread she had laid on for the guests who numbered about one hundred and fifty. It was an excellent reception which many remember to this day. It was truly wonderful to see so many of our family and friends there and receive their good wishes. Fr. Hawes raised the toast, extolling the virtues and good qualities of my wife and wishing us God’s blessings. I replied suitably, and felt surprised that I was able to go through this ‘ordeal’ without any outward signs of nervousness. We

mingled happily with the guests for a few hours; they were all in excellent form enjoying themselves and doing full justice (as indeed we wanted them to) to the food and refreshments laid on for them. Although we were even able to join in the dancing for a while, we were very sorry to have to leave them later that evening when we boarded our train bound for Nairobi. All the family were equally sorry to see us leave, but we had insisted that they carry on with the celebrations well after we had gone. There was certainly no shortage of food or drink that evening, and as for good spirit and cheer, this was not lacking either.

The send-off at Kitale station was very moving; no one could hold back tears as we two finally said goodbye to family and close friends. We had a very comfortable journey down to Nairobi, where we were made welcome by my wife's uncles (Francis and Maurice Ramos). After spending a night with them, we caught the Nanyuki-bound train the following morning. The journey throughout was very pleasant and on our route, we passed several well-maintained stations, little townships and some neatly laid out small holdings belonging to the Kikuyu farmers who lived in this area. The soil looked rich and fertile and no wonder some of the best coffee was produced around this region of the Central Province. We were now approaching Nyeri station and I was busy describing the whole area to my wife. As we pulled in, I was pleasantly surprised to see two of my friends from Isiolo at the station. They had driven all the way to collect us and I could hardly conceal my gratitude for this unexpected act of kindness. John Fernandes

had taken us by surprise, so had his companion Victor D'Lima. Our suitcases were quickly loaded on to the van; we left almost immediately for Nanyuki and Isiolo. Because of the desire to get to Isiolo as soon as possible, we made no stop at Nanyuki. The cool air of Nyeri and Nanyuki and the greenery of the surrounding countryside seemed no more as we raced towards Isiolo.

The contrast from Nanyuki at 7,000 feet above sea level to Isiolo at a mere 3,000 was quite noticeable. For me, it was a welcome return to a region I loved so much; for my wife, this was her very first entry into this sector of the 'forbidden' Province as the N.F.D. was so often referred to. The heat was intense and the vegetation more scrubland and thorn bush. There was not the slightest doubt that we were in the wilds — the real safari country to be exact.

Judging from her expression, my wife looked obviously happy to be here and the discomfort of the heat didn't seem to matter. On arrival at Isiolo, we were driven straight to the home of the pioneer Goan family – Mr and Mrs M. X. (known affectionately as 'Moti') Fernandes. Their son John had earlier told us that his parents had made all the arrangements for our stay with them while at Isiolo. This was indeed a very kind gesture on their part, and I was fully aware of the trouble and inconvenience they must have had to put themselves to, to make us so comfortable. We were very appreciative of their generosity. The Fernandes ran a very efficient General Provision store at Isiolo and kept frontier officials well supplied with the little comforts

of life. They were quite old at the time of our stay, but both looked a picture of health and happiness. Assisting them at the store were their two sons John and Bernard. A third son, Thomas, who worked for the Provincial Administration- at Isiolo (co-ordinating transport for the area), also helped out at the shop after office hours. All in all, it was a truly efficiently-run family business which was well patronized by most of the Europeans and Goans in the Province. Shoppers at this store have included many famous people, among them, the film star Stewart Grainger.



The Fernandes Family at Isiolo.

To our surprise and sheer delight, we found that the Fernandes had organized a right royal feast on the evening of our arrival, so as to give us the opportunity of meeting the rest of the Goan community in Isiolo. No expense or effort had been spared,

and my wife and I were overwhelmed by the sheer warmth and affection we received from the many Goans who were at the party that evening. It was as though we were continuing our wedding celebrations — only this time in more romantic surroundings.

Our hosts more than did us proud that night; they went to enormous trouble to make this an occasion to remember. Despite the temporary type of housing they occupied, they had prepared a lovely room for our stay and the care and love with which this must have been arranged, convinced me that this simple room far surpassed the conventional honeymoon suite of a more luxurious hotel in the city.

After a two day stay at Isiolo, we left for our new home at Marsabit, a journey of some 150 miles. My wife, who had previously worked for a Government transport contractor at Kitale, was well aware of the mode of travel employed in the N.F.D.; so when an Indian trader's truck (a 5-tonner) arrived to collect us, loaded to capacity with sacks of *posho* and other supplies for his *duka* at Marsabit, she was not in the least bit surprised. She had seen me travel in similar vehicles during my bachelor days at Lodwar, and had experienced such a trip herself when she had visited Turkana. The driver of our truck was a local Galla tribesman by the name of Abdi Goji. He was a young man, full of energy, always cheerful and ever ready to help. He greeted us in his best Ki-Swahili, and after bidding our hosts and other friends at Isiolo farewell, we set off on the long journey home, fully mindful of the fact that all the Goans at Isiolo, and partic-

ularly the Fernandes family had done us really proud.

Frontier travel is, as a rule, undertaken in the evenings because of the intense heat of the day; we accordingly left Isiolo just before sunset, with a warm breeze brushing us as we sat alongside the driver in his cab. The remainder of the party, which included the turn-boy, two Rendille *askaris* returning home on leave, and a few locals from Marsabit, were piled on top of sacks of *posho* and other merchandise destined for the Marsabit *duka* of Messrs. Noormohamed Mangia and Sons. The turn-boy was a young Boran, not more than 18 or 19. His duties included, among other things, getting off the lorry smartly whenever it stopped — no matter what hour of the day or night, to see what assistance the driver needed. There could have been a puncture which needed repairing, the engine could have over-heated or the driver may have decided to just camp at a particular spot. Well, on all such occasions, it was always the faithful turn-boy who was summoned first. I vaguely recollect that this particular turn-boy was called Halake, a common enough Boran name. Despite the odd hours of the night, the bumpy ride and lack of sleep, Halake always appeared very cheerful and obliging when he got down to working.

As we were leaving Isiolo, we had to cross the police barrier. Isiolo, as I have said earlier, is the gateway to the ‘forbidden’ Province, and all travellers (with the exception of Government officials stationed in the Province), had to be in possession of a valid permit issued by the DC. This was a sort of passport to enter the area and it was at this check point that such docu-

ments were inspected; the driver, turn-boy and others were no exception, even though they used the route regularly.

A few miles out of Isiolo, we stopped briefly just outside Archer's Post; it was in 1909 that this post was established and all that now remained to remind us of its past were a few foundation stones. During my days in the frontier, I had often marvelled at the sense of space and sheer freedom when travelling in this region. Whereas in towns one has to contend with heavy traffic, one can often drive for several miles in the frontier without meeting anyone. It is precisely this sense of freedom that often made me pause and make time for some spiritual reflection.

My wife had always been a bad traveller, and I knew her mother was very anxious about the long road journey we had to make, and how she would fare. Her constant worry was whether her daughter would be able to stand the trip without getting car sick. She needn't have worried especially since there was not the slightest hint of travel sickness in Elsie; if anything, she was enjoying every moment of the drive; the interesting commentary provided by our driver Abdi, no doubt kept her amused, and perhaps contributed in some way to her making the entire journey without any problem.

The plain we were now travelling across was barren – the only vegetation being a few thorn trees and some *dom* palms. Nature has its own way of breaking the monotony in such areas, and to add a touch of colour to an otherwise dreary trail, there were groups of guinea fowl, racing ahead of us, proudly displaying their polka-dotted plumage, while on the other side of the road,

various species of buck and gerenuk gazed at us as the truck sped by. The night was gradually closing in, and the sight of an African sky by night was the best I've had the pleasure of beholding; night-time too is by far, an ideal time to be travelling in the frontier – it brings back memories of the fires we lit around our camp, the camp-style meals we ate and the sheer thrill of sleeping out in the open. Before long, Abdi decided that it was time we had a brew up, and so pulled in at Wamba, a small market centre for Samburu tribesmen on the southern end of the Matthews range. This is truly Samburu country, and a regular stopping over point for most travellers. Remains of a recently-vacated camp were clearly to be seen. True to form, I heard the turn-boy being summoned. A sackful of utensils was off-loaded from the truck, a fire lit, and in no time the *sufuria* (cooking pot) was boiling. The sound of the crackling fire was so pleasing to hear; besides, we were now in the thick of the African bush, so close to Mother Nature, and in the company of a people who knew and understood the bush around them so well. Only they could interpret the environment they lived in. The cup of tea was very refreshing and seemed to taste that much better when drunk in fairly large quantities from enamel cups. Attracted by the glowing fire, a group of Samburu warriors (*moran*) had quickly assembled at the camp site. Fierce-looking in appearance, they meant no harm; they were only curious to meet us, shake hands and just stand around. One of these Samburu was lucky to get a cup of tea from Halake. This was all that was left from the earlier brew up. As we were pre-

paring to move away, the Samburu tribesmen slowly dispersed, heading for their *manyattas* which were not far from the camp. Abdi decided that if we were not too tired, we continue driving for a few more miles and camp at Laisamis for the night. This suited us very well even though we were far from tired. In fact, the vastness of the countryside, the sudden appearance of the Samburu tribesmen, and the general atmosphere along the camp site, all added to the pleasures of this safari. This was no ordinary safari either. It was a trip with a difference. After all, how many newly-weds would choose to spend their honeymoon travelling uncomfortably in a truck, through miles and miles of virtually uninhabited bush and wasteland? For us, this was a memorable occasion, a trip which all the money in the world could never buy, and we were determined to make the most of it; this we certainly did! Our driver kept us amused with tales of the many trips he had made across this part of the N.F.D., an area he knew so well. We heard about some of the hazards he had encountered – at times, in the shape of wild animals, on other occasions the flash floods which would make the roads impassable for hours. As we continued our journey, we could see some signs of life in the distance. The flickering of lights from some of the nearby *manyattas*, the smell of fresh dung were all indications that a Rendille *boma* was not far off. Like most pastoral tribes, the Rendille livestock *boma* (a small enclosure made from thorny twigs), is an extension of the family *manyatta*. Here, man and beast live almost as equals, the animals often receiving more attention. The air as

we travelled was getting much cooler, and within a few moments, we were at Laisamis. The noise of the moving truck had brought quite a few people out on the road, even though it was dark by now. Among those in the group was Chief Ejerre of the Rendille tribe, who I had met previously on my first trip to Marsabit. He walked up and greeted us – not just a *jambo Bwana* and Memsahib; he wanted to, and did shake hands with us. There were also several *jambo Bwanas* echoing from other tribesmen in the crowd. Some of them must obviously have remembered me from earlier occasions and knew I was the DC's clerk at Marsabit.

The whole atmosphere around us was great and the welcome we received simply wonderful. On being told that we were just married, Chief Ejerre lost no time in ordering a fatted sheep to be brought to us as a *zawadi* (gift) from him. The affection of these simple people touched us deeply. My wife, as I could sense, was visibly moved by their kindness. Here were a very ordinary and seemingly primitive people, but they had already won our hearts by their warmth and kindness. While we were busy talking to the Chief, Abdi and the rest of the crew from our truck were busy exchanging their own greetings. Any excuse is good enough for a cup of tea, and before long, a camp fire had been started, and we didn't have to wait long before being treated to another cup of that soothing beverage – *chai*! Shouts of "*chai, chai*" could be heard all around us. I cannot speak for other travellers, but for me, sipping tea in the remote wilds of Africa, with primitive tribesmen for company, and a brightly-lit

African sky above, is an experience I shall not easily forget. It finds a permanent home in the archives of my memory. Such scenes and the music and sounds that formed a regular feature of most safaris, continue to haunt me to this day. The cup of *chai* we had just consumed certainly relaxed us, but I was now beginning to feel sleepy. Abdi himself was fully mindful of this, but not wanting to camp too close to Laisamis he decided to drive on for a few more miles and then pitch camp for the night. We were now about ten miles out of Laisamis when we came across and settled for an ideal spot for a night's rest. A site was quickly cleared for us in the bush, and our bedding spread over a canvas groundsheet on the bare ground a few hundred yards off the main road. Abdi and his party camped on the opposite side of the road and kept us awake during most of the night by their constant jabbering. Despite their chatter and that of the hyena from the surrounding area, we felt rested enough after the short periods of sleep we were able to snatch that night. At the crack of dawn, we were all up and ready to resume our trail. In most frontier regions, it is always a pleasure to drive during the night or early morning; in some respects, this may seem inconvenient for the driver and his passengers, but it certainly prolonged the life of the vehicle. Since a vehicle was virtually a trader's prize possession, his 'all' really, it was very much in his interests to do everything possible to ensure that repairs and damage to his vehicle were kept to a minimum. In cases of emergency, however, it did become necessary for a vehicle to make the journey during the daytime.

As we drove along, I was fascinated by the sight of dawn breaking in the distance – it is quite one of the most satisfying sights to behold. One needs to be an artist to capture the full impact of such a spectacle; sadly, I am not, but the very thought of such experiences often creates pleasant images in my own mind, images that act as a healing balm whenever my mind seems troubled with worldly cares.

The scrub and wasteland outside Laisamis soon gave way to a new form of vegetation; the air too was now becoming much cooler as we continued our journey; there were patches of lush greenery – the mist in the Marsabit mountain area was dense and with each mile that we covered. I found the air getting colder. I could hardly believe that the change in temperatures could be so pronounced and sudden too. The atmosphere was none the less fresh and bracing. The 150-odd mile drive from the heat of Isiolo to the relative cool of the surrounding countryside had now ended, and we were cutting our way through the thick clouds of mist which are so characteristic of the Marsaliit area. For a radius of approximately seven miles, the whole area is draped in a thick and cold blanket of mist, while just outside this zone, you could be in the open and hot barren wastelands.

Our heavily laden truck pulled into Marsabit *boma*, struggling over the last mile or so. As it came to a halt, my wife and I got off while Abdi raced towards the DC's office to report his arrival; such reporting requirements applied throughout the frontier and it was here at the DC's office that the relevant permit

(or Pass as it was popularly known) was endorsed. To meet us as we alighted was Victor Fernandes. He knew of our arrival and he and his wife Lucy had gone to a great deal of trouble to entertain us that day; they were the perfect host and hostess. Despite the warm and genuine hospitality lavished on us by the Fernandeses, we had decided that we should start on our own almost immediately. This surely must be the dream of every newly-wedded couple. So as not to appear discourteous, however, we agreed to have all our meals with them on the day of our arrival. I know they would have liked us to be their guests even longer, but we were equally impatient to make a start in our new home. Besides, my elderly cook Sheunda, also wanted to display his culinary skills to my brand-new wife. A very humble man who always sought Elsie's 'seal of approval' for the dishes he turned out, Sheunda did us proud and managed to turn out some very good meals. The assistance she received in the kitchen thus enabled Elsie to devote more time to- organizing our new home in the manner she wished. After all, this was our first family home, and she was my 'Queen'. Here, I would like to pay tribute to my young wife's great gift of not merely transforming my former bachelor residence into a well-arranged home, but also in being the perfect hostess whenever we entertained friends, which was quite often. The artistic manner in which she presented and served food, her impressive floral arrangements, the manner in which she arranged the various rooms – were all talents I was truly proud of. The transformation in the home was keenly noticed not only by my

cook, but also my other colleagues and their wives. I was convinced from that moment onwards that it really takes a dutiful and loving wife, as was my own, to change the place so dramatically in so short a time, while at the same time retaining within its walls, the warm and loving atmosphere of a home.

For Elsie, Marsabit must have seemed very lonely at first – a far cry from Kitale where she had previously lived and worked. She had now sacrificed all this for the quiet and lonely existence of a frontier district. There is no doubt, however, that she soon got to love the place and in the short time she had been there, won the respect and affection not only of the Europeans, but also of my fellow Goans and in fact the indigenous folk as well. Being a keen gardener, she lost no time in getting down to the task of planning the whole lay-out of the garden. Before long, we had a collection of neatly shaped flower beds, all of which would soon be displaying some of the colourful fruits of my wife's patient labours. The local Agricultural Instructor i/c was a young and well-mannered Sudanese called Abdul Kadir.

Noticing her interest in gardening, he quickly offered his assistance and soon we had cuttings of various description arrive at our home. The Neopara (headman) of the station labour force at the time, was a shrewd looking Boran by the name of Jaldessa Diko. This character could never say "no" to anyone who approached him for assistance, and had thus earned for himself, the nickname *Bwana Sasahivi* (Mr 'Soonest' or 'Just Now'). With Jaldessa, nothing was impossible, especially if the request for assistance came from one of us, i.e. the staff of

the Provincial Administration. “Sasa hivi” would always be his prompt response to any request we made, so much so that I couldn’t help feeling that in trying to please us, he often upset some of my colleagues in the process! However, with the help from the station labour, and on occasions the prisoners, we were able to convert this whole plot of virgin land into an attractive and neatly laid out garden. Ours was a brand new house surrounded by rich and fertile soil, and we had no doubt at all that in a few months, the whole area would be ablaze with flowers of varied hue. The elephants, who used to be our nightly visitors, caused a lot of damage to some of our plants, but this was something we couldn’t do much about. The locals were in a far worse situation since it was not their flower beds that the elephants plundered, but the maize and other edible crops in their *shambas*.

Although there was no social life as such in Marsabit, coffee mornings were often organized by the wives on the station, and this provided a sort of outlet for them. For Elsie, there was never a dull moment since there was a lot to be done in the way of sewing and making up new curtains and furnishings from the materials we had bought in Kitale. A Sikh carpenter from Nanyuki had made me a complete suite of brand new furniture, all in the best of Kenya *mvuli* (teak) so there was much to keep Elsie busy in the home. Added to all this was her interest in cooking and the high quality pastries she produced. Bread was always home made since fresh bread was unobtainable in Marsabit. We also entertained a lot – this seemed to be almost a way of life

in the N.F.D. and Marsabit was no exception.

The entertainment 'cycle' usually started with the DC inviting all the Goan staff to drinks. On some occasions, the Police Superintendent and Inspectors and any other European officers in the district were also invited. These social encounters, which were more on an exchange basis, were very useful and certainly helped to keep our spirits up.

The DC had a spacious house which his wife (Kay Wild) had had very tastefully converted. Why a large house in a district like Marsabit you may well ask. I gather the intention had for a short time been that Marsabit should be the Provincial headquarters of the N.F.D., and a residence suitable for the Provincial Commissioner was in fact built, but the transfer of the headquarters was never made.

Marsabit abounded in game of varying species – the most common being the elephant and buffalo. There were occasions when we would witness a rare treat on being driven home by the DC after the usual social evenings – a herd of elephants would sometimes be trudging lazily along the road; at other times, we would see a huge buffalo, standing in the thick undergrowth, watching us drive past.

Quite often, it was not uncommon for us to see a whole herd of elephants just outside our front door, playing havoc with the garden and sometimes our *shambas*. Buffalo could be even more dangerous. On one occasion during my early days, and at a time when there was no indoor sanitation at Marsabit, I recall having a narrow escape from a wild buffalo when returning in-

doors from an outside WC. The sight of this creature, staring at me as the beam from my torch flashed its eyes, scared the living daylight out of me. Without hesitating for a moment longer, I made a desperate dash for home and quickly bolted the door behind me. This was perhaps a rare encounter; some of the tribesmen were 'treated' to such experiences quite often. I recall how an elderly and senior Game Scout was savagely gored by a buffalo in the thick of Marsabit forest. His ribs were broken and he also had a deep gash in his thigh. There he lay helpless for two whole days until a colleague who happened to be patrolling the area for poachers found him and alerted the DC and hospital authorities at Marsabit. How this old Scout, Ibrahim, survived such an attack, I cannot say. Perhaps it was a case of their faith making them whole? The locals would always pass off any such mishap with the words, "*shauri ya Mungu*" (God's will); after all, they had grown up in this environment, harsh and dangerous though it sometimes was, and the feeling of adventure was not quite the same for them as for us. Besides, many of them had to live with this threat daily. About this time, the political situation in Kenya was fast deteriorating. A new Governor- had arrived in the person of Sir Evelyn Baring (later Lord Howick). Within a month of his arrival in September, 1952, a State of Emergency had been declared in Kenya. The armed services were alerted as trouble was expected since some of the key figures in the Kenya African Union (KAU) were soon to be arrested. High on the list of wanted persons was the name of Jomo Kenyatta and, on Oc-

tober 20, 1952, he was arrested and flown to Lokitaung in the Turkana district. This was as remote a place as could be found in Kenya. Brutal murders of several Europeans followed in the wake of the declaration of the State of Emergency. We in the N.F.D. were virtually unaffected by the goings-on in Nairobi and around the Central and Rift Valley Provinces. This state of affairs did not last for long however.

One evening, when my wife and I were sitting by the fireside enjoying a quiet drink, there was a knock at the door. Outside stood Mr Wild (the DC). He apologized to my young wife for having to take me away for a few hours. As we drove along in his car he told me what it was all about. He had received a coded message from Nairobi to the effect that a party of detainees who had been arrested under the newly promulgated Emergency Regulations, were due to arrive at Marsabit in a few hours. We were required to get a temporary camp put up for them almost immediately. This seemed an impossible task, but our main concern was to ensure that they could be provided with some form of temporary shelter for that night. Our first stop was at the prisons where we collected a number of blankets and sleeping mats. These were taken to a hurriedly prepared temporary shelter which the DC was able to find them for the night. Among those who arrived was Achieng Oneko, a close associate of Jomo Kenyatta. There were several other prominent Kikuyu members of the KAU too. An armed guard was placed over the area where the political detainees were held and the DC and I returned home. More appropriate accommodation

would be found for them in the morning. With the transfer of the detainees to various districts of the N.F.D., hitherto little known places like Lokitaung and Marsabit soon began to gain prominence.

In the days that followed, additional temporary accommodation was constructed for the new arrivals and a barbed wire fence built around the perimeter. In Marsabit, and most frontier stations with the possible exception of Isiolo, there were no newspapers and our only contact with the outside world was through radio.

The presence of the detainees certainly meant more work for the Administration. The DC and I would visit them at regular intervals and attend to some of their legitimate requests, etc. I was even given the job of censoring all their incoming and outgoing mail.

One other individual – also classified as a detainee, but who had been restricted to Marsabit because of his trade union activities – was Mwangi Macharia, a Kikuyu from the Forthall area. Mwangi was a model detainee who was not only well liked by the locals, but who, because of his exemplary behaviour, was employed by the PWD as a plumber/handyman. He and a European Inspector of Works from the PWD (a Mr Randall), together with a force of some 25 Meru and local labourers, was instrumental in laying the first domestic piped water supply in Marsabit township. This was achieved at great personal risk to all those involved since the areas across which the pipeline had to be laid was occupied by elephants and buffalo.

Unfortunately, despite all the hard work she had put into our new home and the garden, my wife had to leave Marsabit just three months after we were married. Unlike most women who are more fortunate during these times, she suffered badly from morning sickness and no amount of treatment could bring relief. As there was no qualified doctor on the station, it was decided that she should return to her parents' home at Kitale. Parting, after so short a time together was sad, but there was no alternative in the circumstances.

Try hard though she did, there was no improvement in her condition. Before she left for Nairobi by air, I shall never forget how the Cpl. i/c prisons – a tall and manly figure named William Ongera (a Mkisii by tribe) – pressed a Sh.10/- note in Elsie's hands with this message in Ki-Swahili: "May God keep you and your child safely." The words were a great comfort, but the very thought of this gift, from a man who wasn't earning much himself, touched us both deeply. For me, it was a moment of pride to see that in the short time she had been at Marsabit, Elsie had got on so well with the African employees – so much so that one of their number had come to show his appreciation in such a tangible way. Our cook, Sheunda, was also very sad, but the shy-smile he gave, reassured my wife that she had nothing to worry about me. *Bwana* would be well looked after by him while she was away.

Transport arrangements for Elsie's departure worked out in a way I can only describe as providential. It so happened that a Kenya Police askari (constable) had been seriously wounded

during a border raid with Gelubba tribesmen near the northern outpost of Banya. He was in need of urgent medical treatment and since an aircraft had been chartered to fly him out to Nairobi, it was decided that Elsie should be flown out at the same time. I saw her off at the airstrip. The light aircraft had arrived from Banya carrying the wounded askari and was on its way to Nairobi via Isiolo. I had signalled friends in Nairobi to meet her on arrival, and her elder sister had also arrived from Kitale to accompany her home. I was greatly relieved when I received telegram a couple of days later confirming that she was safe and well at her parents' home at Kitale. My parents-in-law were no doubt happy to have their daughter back with them so soon after the wedding, but little did they realize the loneliness I had to endure. Being a bachelor and living on one's own is one thing – being newly married and separated so quickly from one's wife is quite another!

The hours between my getting home from work and retiring for the night seemed long and at times so empty. Nevertheless, all this gave me a lot of time to revert to my former 'pastime' – writing letters home. I wrote to Elsie almost daily, the letters taking the form of a day to day diary. Because of the infrequency of mail services in the frontier and the uncertainty of vehicles going in to Isiolo, I felt it was best to keep my letters ready so that, in the event of a vehicle arriving from, say, Moyale at short notice, we could always arrange for an additional mail bag to be sent to Isiolo. There was no limit to the number of mail bags that could be sent — we availed ourselves of every opportunity

that arose to send mail down to Isiolo. This meant that Elsie often received several of my letters in one batch and the same was true as far as I was concerned. We both enjoyed this warm exchange of correspondence which meant so much and helped to keep us even closer together. My cook, Sheunda, and all my colleagues were very kind to me during this period of 'enforced second bachelorhood'. The wives of my Goan colleagues made sure that I never had my weekend meals on my own. There was always an open invitation to dine or lunch at one or another's home. I did not want Sheunda to get the impression that I had deserted him for good or that his meals were in any way less tasty; so, as often as I could, I would invite some of my friends to join me for a meal. In this way, everyone was kept happy. In fairness to the DC, I must admit that during this period, I was given the opportunity of accompanying him on safari more often, and for this consideration we were deeply grateful. Mr Wild never missed the opportunity of 'pulling my leg' – visions of fatherhood kept flashing through my mind; how would we cope with an addition to the family so soon and on my comparatively low salary I kept asking myself.

A few weeks after my wife had left Marsabit, I was allowed to take some leave and be reunited with her, even though temporarily. As though things had been specially laid on for me, I was offered a lift on – a truck leaving for Isiolo one morning, and on arriving there, a kindly trader, hearing of my plight, agreed to take me down to Nanyuki – thanks to the influence of my Goan friends at Isiolo, all this was made possible. We left Isiolo in

an almost brand new Mercedes Benz diesel truck belonging to Fakirmohamed Lalkhan and Sons, and were at Nanyuki within a very short time. Here, I was lavishly entertained to a vegetarian lunch by one of the traders with whom we had official dealings — Messrs. Settlers Stores. I was later driven to the house of another Goan friend, Joe Mathias. This man had a heart of gold. We didn't even work for the same Government departments (he was with the Labour department), but Joe was always so obliging and good natured. I had met him on a previous occasion and had been much impressed by his hospitality and kindness then. His genial nature had won him the respect and esteem of many of the locals in Nanyuki. My purpose in calling on him was to see if he would be able to arrange a lift for me to Kitale — a distance of some 300 miles. It was short notice admittedly, but I was hoping for a miracle!

Patiently Joe took me from trader to trader, but few were prepared to drive that far, and those who were willing to demanded exorbitant fares. Joe was very helpful to the last, and we eventually came across an Asian trader who agreed to drive me to Kitale for the sum of Shs.300/ – (a heavy price to pay in those days, especially since my monthly salary was not far from this figure!) I mused over the price for a moment, but then decided that this was no time for bargaining. Love knows no expense, and even though Joe and I tried to explain the special circumstances that had prompted me to seek help at such short notice, the trader seemed quite unmoved. I eventually accepted the fare, even though, in my heart of hearts, I was saddened by

the fact that a fellow human being, with far greater financial resources than myself, could not play the Good Samaritan and assist me in this instance. However, this was not to be, and I am sure Joe felt as I did – that the amount charged was excessive and out of proportion to the special circumstances of my case which was more of a ‘mission of mercy’. I refused to be discouraged by this incident, and consoled myself by the thought that in a few hours, I would be united with my wife. Neither she nor her parents had any warning of my coming, and I wondered for a moment whether this ‘surprise’ might not prove too much for Elsie in her present delicate state. I needn’t have feared as I was to discover later. After driving all through the night (I slept for a good part of the journey), we arrived at Kitale at around 2 a.m. the following morning – a very unearthly hour to disturb anyone; I knew however, there would be no objection from the inmates of the house! As the driver brought the car to a halt, I quickly alighted, grabbed what little luggage I had with me, paid the Shs.300/- in crisp bank notes and made for the front door of my in-laws’ house. The trader was more than pleased with the cash I had just parted with, and smilingly waved me goodbye. I knocked at the front door rather gently hoping not to disturb the entire household. I would never have guessed that it would be my darling wife who opened the door — sleepy-eyed, yet overjoyed to see me so unexpectedly. We embraced each other tenderly. By now, other members of the family were awakened even though we tried to talk in whispers. More hugs and kisses all round; there were looks of astonishment at my

sudden appearance, but there was joy too. We talked for a few moments, and then back to bed we all went. I had to remember that while I was on holiday, my sisters and brother-in-law had to be at work in a few hours' time. I must confess that Elsie and I had very little sleep that night (it was early morning really!) We were up again in a few hours just as the rest of the working members were getting ready to set off to work.

We had not expected to start a family so soon I must admit, and were in fact booked to sail to Goa on overseas leave in a few months time. The doctor who was looking after Elsie during her pregnancy – a middle-aged Englishman named Marcus Broadbent – felt that in her present condition, it would be inadvisable for her to undertake the long sea voyage to Goa. She suffered badly from morning sickness, and he had recommended that we postpone our holiday until after the arrival of the baby. I was given a certificate to this effect which I would require to support my request for the cancellation of my vacation leave and our sea passages.

PART THREE — Rift Valley and Overseas Vacation

11. Kitale Posting

While on leave at Kitale, I had heard that the District Clerk there, Baptist D'Sa, was himself due to go on vacation leave about the same time as myself. I could only put this down as a welcome 'coincidence' and decided to seize the opportunity and ask if I could be temporarily posted there — at least until after our first-born had arrived. It was important that I was close at hand and by my wife's side during these days, especially since she was quite helpless, having now lost a considerable amount of weight too. My mother-in-law, who herself had six children (without any of the troubles Elsie was now going through), felt that this should be our first and last baby! Seeing Elsie's almost frail condition, I nodded in agreement. I lost no time in applying to the Secretariat in Nairobi for a temporary posting to Kitale, enclosing the medical certificate which Dr Broadbent had earlier given me as evidence. My request was strongly supported by both the DC Marsabit and the PC at Isiolo. Besides, I had also met John Carson, (the DC Kitale) previously at our

wedding and had got to know him well. I had no doubt that we would get on well together. As good luck would have it, the Secretariat were quick to approve my request, and in a few months, I found myself back at Kitale, only this time on a semi-permanent basis! I was sad to leave Marsabit, and vowed then, that if I was ever given a second chance of returning to the N.F.D., it would be this district that I would choose.

My replacement at Marsabit was Joe da Cunha, a cousin of Victor Fernandes, who had only recently arrived in the country from India. For Joe, it must have been a great comfort having his relations there, else he would have felt quite lost in these new and dreary surroundings. The PC's office had arranged for him to arrive at Marsabit several weeks prior to my departure, to enable him to acquire as much knowledge of the work while I was still around. Joe was a keen worker who had no difficulty in grasping the various jobs, and I felt sure in my own mind that he would fit in well at the office and on the station generally. Coping with the many send-offs I was given before I left Marsabit was not easy, but the final departure from a district I had come to love so dearly, was truly sad – the only consolation was that I was soon to be back with my family.

Since my in-laws owned a spacious house at Kitale, they had made a fairly large room available for Elsie and myself, a gesture which I appreciated, especially since they themselves were a large family.

Elsie, as I have said earlier, had a very difficult pregnancy, and even though she tried to put on a brave face on many occasions,

she just couldn't suppress the morning sickness that plagued her almost throughout her pre-natal period. Oh, how I envied those wives who boasted of going out for a swim or even dancing during their pregnancies! There were times when I felt quite helpless. Try as she would, even retaining a few sips of water proved difficult. On the rare 'bright' day she had, we would go out for long walks together and talk about the days ahead. I was so thrilled with the beautiful clothes she had sewn for our baby; these she had neatly packed away in a suitcase all in readiness for the big event. At every opportunity when she felt better, she would add a few more items to the baby's wardrobe. I was so proud of her and all she was doing for this family we were soon to start. All the money in the world couldn't have bought those hand-made garments; the depth of a mother's love was beginning to show itself now and I was deeply touched by the interest she took, despite her many 'off' days, in seeing to this side of things.

At work, there were no problems at all since John Carson was such a gentleman who took to me within a few days of my arrival. As far as I can remember, he was also the first DC who, in those days, called me by my Christian name — not the done thing then. I very much appreciated this informality. Sadly though, he suffered from bouts of drowsiness and often during the course of our conversation he would lapse into a brief slumber. I understand that he had been a notable heavyweight boxer in his days and his present condition resulted from some injury he received in the boxing ring.

I was stationed at Kitale at the height of the Mau Mau emergency. Under the new Emergency Regulations, all movements of the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru tribes were strictly controlled. No member of this tribal group could move from one area to another, even within the same district, without a valid permit signed by the DC. I usually made out these permits (referred to as Passes) which were later signed by the DC. In his absence (and the DC was often away attending meetings of various security committees) I signed permits which had previously been authorized by him. Mr Carson himself had not long to stay before going on vacation leave overseas. He was replaced by a young District Officer from Eldama Ravine (in the Rift Valley Province) – Christopher Denton, who was promoted as DC Kitale. He must have been the youngest DC to have held this post in a predominantly farming area like Kitale. Before they left on leave, the Carsons had us over to tea, and during the course of that evening. John Carson told us of his enjoyable tour of duty in the Samburu district and also latterly in Tam-bach.

In a very short time, the new DC Mr Denton, had made his mark, and was very well received by the white settler population of the Trans Nzoia District. It was very important for the DC (especially in farming towns like Kitale) to hit it off well with the local settlers – else they would make his life a real hell! I have no doubt that if it ever came to the push — such was the influence of the European settlers in these areas in those days — that they could quite easily have had a DC transferred from

the district if they didn't like the way in which he governed the area. Whatever he did, had to find favour with them!

From the very outset, Mr Denton and I got on very well together. Seeing that I could take on a far greater share of responsibility than he had previously been accustomed to delegate to his clerks, I found myself doing quite a few jobs which, in a larger station, would be handled by a DO. He soon found that I could cope with the day to day administrative routine with ease; members of the public, including local farmers, did not have to trouble him personally on every single occasion. I could attend to most of their requests and deal adequately with minor problems that arose. In the days of the Emergency, a Temporary DO was also attached to the DC's office at Kitale; this was a post created more to deal with the security aspect. The DO (Emergency) as he was known, did not handle the day to day administration at the district office though.

It didn't take Mr Denton long to discover my flair for writing, and I was now left to deal with a sizeable proportion of the daily correspondence. I was very pleased with this arrangement since, in addition to doing something I enjoyed, it also gave the DC more time to deal with the additional work load created by the State of Emergency. He had any number of meetings to attend with the Kenya Police, Security Team and also with officials of the Kitale Municipality and District Council. There were also the visits to be paid to farmers who lived in the more remote areas of the district; such occasions were used to hold *barazas* with the farm labourers (especially those

of the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru tribes) at which he would try to put over the Government's plan for combating the wave of terrorism that was sweeping through the country. I enjoyed the challenge and variety of the job; dealing with the farmers – some well-mannered and decent, others, mostly of South African extraction, openly displaying their inborn discriminatory attitudes. Such individuals (and they were a tiny minority), would rather wait to see the DC personally over what, to my mind, was often a trivial matter, instead of coming to me! This didn't worry me in the least since I had many good friends even among the farming community and got on well with the vast majority of them.

In addition to the normal office work and additional work created by the Emergency, there was also the trial taking place in neighbouring Kapenguria of *Mzee* Jomo Kenyatta and his associates. Several distinguished Counsel from overseas had arrived to defend them, among these being the late D. N. Pritt, QC from Britain, Chief W. O. Davies from Nigeria, Diwan Chaman Lal from India and Messrs. A. R. Kapila and Fritz D'Souza from Nairobi. I met most of these gentlemen at my in-laws whose hospitality they often enjoyed. This was because the Kitale Hotel, the only decent hotel in the town operated a colour bar in those days and non-Europeans were not allowed to use its facilities. Because of the embarrassment caused to these learned members of the Bench, and following adverse publicity in the local Press, the hotel did make some concessions eventually. It was late though as the damage had already been done. So as

not to be unduly humiliated in this manner, we would sometimes go to a sister establishment of the Kitale Hotel – a real dump of a place called the North End Arms. We met several of the Defence Counsel over drinks at this rather inferior place and I thus got to know several of them fairly well. The two who impressed me most were the British QC, D. N. Pritt, and Chief Davies of Nigeria.

While at Kitale, I was seconded for a short period to Kapenguria at the time of the Kenyatta trial. Ironically, the gentleman who gave me a lift there was none other than one of the Defence Counsel – Chief Davies of Nigeria. I remained here for two weeks during which time I was able to carry out some reorganization of the district office systems at the DC's request. My efforts were much appreciated and the DC Kapenguria at the time (Mr H. C. F. Wilks) sent in a special recommendation to the DC Kitale when a case for my accelerated promotion was put up some months later.

The prison where *Mzee* Jomo Kenyatta and his associates (Paul Ngei, Achieng Oneko, Bildad Kaggia, Fred Kubai and Kungu Karumba) were held was right behind the Government quarters which I occupied. I got a daily glimpse of them as they were driven from the prison to the converted court-house each morning.

Because members of the Defence Counsel travelled daily between Kapenguria and Kitale, I often got a lift in to Kitale. This was most welcome especially over weekends. The days were now fast approaching when our baby would be born. Unfortunately,

the European hospital was not open to us in those days, and we had to make arrangements for the confinement at the Native Civil Hospital. We had seen the midwife who would be assisting at the delivery, and she reassured us that all was well. Mrs Steers (an Anglo-Indian, who was well liked and who did well from the baby boom of the Asian population of Kitale!) reminded me very much of a Matron. The day finally dawned – it was very early on the morning of July 17, 1953 that the first labour pains were felt by my wife. My mother-in-law, being the experienced mother she was, soon recognized these as genuine, and quickly prepared some percolated coffee which the four of us (my in-laws, my wife and I) stood in the kitchen and drank. The other members of the family were still asleep and it was not felt necessary to disturb them lest this was a false alarm! With the increase in the frequency of the labour pains, my mother-in-law was soon convinced that it would be some hours before the baby actually arrived. We tried to relax but this was not always possible with all the excitement. A family friend, Jim Cox, had offered to drive us to the hospital and had asked that we contact him whenever the moment arrived. Since my sister-in-law worked for the same organization (KFA) as Jim Cox, she was able to get a message across to him and in no time he was at the house ready to drive us all to hospital.

It is worth mentioning that in those days, there were no proper maternity facilities for Asians in most of the smaller districts. If one had the money and could afford a private hospital room in places like Nairobi or Mombasa, there was no problem; un-

fortunately, we weren't so fortunate. Elsie was brought to the hospital and given a very small room, which to me, resembled a store room (I found out later that this room was in fact an old store which had recently been converted into a maternity wing for the Asians!) The DC's office was within walking distance of the hospital and after satisfying myself that all was well, I reported for duty a little later than usual. At work I was far from settled and was quite nervous. The DC, Mr Denton, could understand my feelings and made it clear that I could go down to the hospital whenever I wished. When I called on the first occasion, there was no change in Elsie's condition and I was told that the birth of our baby was now imminent. More nerves! I returned to the office, and during my lunch hour strolled back to see if there had been any developments. On entering the little room, I could sense from the beaming smile on my mother-in-law's face, that the miracle of life had taken place. I rushed to kiss and congratulate my wife and immediately spotted a small wooden carry-cot by her side. In it lay that lovely bundle of flesh and blood that was all our own. I was too excited for words. The nurses had washed and bathed the little infant, and got him into his new set of clothes – garments that were made with such loving care by Elsie. He looked a perfect angel, sleeping peacefully away in his little cot. I was the proudest man on earth and felt so thrilled but far too excited for words to say much more to Elsie; neither did I want to tire her. Before I left to return to the office, I pressed her hand tenderly into mine to assure her of my love and joy over our new-born

babe. Mr Denton and all the office staff were delighted with the news and congratulated me in succession. Even the veteran office boy, Naidwa, (who had known Elsie as a little girl from the days when my father-in-law worked at the DC's office), couldn't conceal his joy. I made quite a few telephone calls to my sisters and brothers-in-law to give them the good news. Cables were sent to my brother in India and my brother in England was similarly advised. That evening we had a little celebration at home. For my in-laws, it must have been the proudest moment of their lives — the birth of their first grandson. I was prepared to excuse my father-in-law even if he had one drink too many that night. After all, like me, he was quite entitled to enjoy himself on this very special occasion! I was told by the Medical Officer i/c (Dr Harland) that as my wife had had a difficult delivery, she would be kept in hospital for a few more days, and would also be needing some minor surgery which my old friend of Lokitaung days (Ripi Singh) would be attending to. I felt that keeping her there was the best course since it would also provide an enforced rest. I visited her daily and was always so pleased to see our new baby looking so well and healthy.

After a week's stay at the hospital, Elsie returned home with the little bundle, much to the delight of all. From the very start, the baby was very well behaved and gave us no trouble at all. He seemed generally contented. The choice of names was the next thing to sort out. We had decided that if the child were a girl, we would call her Patricia. No such provision had been made for a boy – why I just don't know! Even the second-hand

carry-cot which we had bought from a farmer's wife (a family friend), was all pink.

The only decision we had made was that the baby would bear one of my late father's names, 'Mathias' if he were a boy, and my mother's 'Josephine' if she were a girl. Another name for a boy would be Elsie's grandfather's, 'Alexander'. We did not want a litany of names (as is common among the Goans who would normally not be content with just paternal names, but wanted names of patron saints, godfather/godmother, etc. — some names were difficult to pronounce!) Not satisfied with the two names we had chosen, we looked around for yet another, and finally decided on the name Clyde. Why we chose a river in Scotland I just can't explain, but this was a name we came across in a magazine and immediately fell for it. The decision was finally made that the child be named Clyde Mathias Alexander. Quite a mouthful after all! As is customary among Roman Catholics, our baby was baptized within a few days of birth. Fr. John Hawes performed the ceremony and a modest celebration of close family members and a few friends followed that evening. The godparents were my younger brother, Wilfred, who was in England and Elsie's elder sister, Elvira. The christening party went off very well that evening, and we were truly grateful for the many gifts that had been lavished on our baby.

The fact that our child was healthy and trouble-free gave Elsie a chance to get back to her old self more quickly and forget the difficult period she had experienced all through pregnancy.

There was a lot to keep her busy and she coped admirably with all the additional work – feed preparations, and nappy washing, etc.

Because of my increased financial commitments following the new addition, I had asked that I be posted back to the N.F.D. on my return from overseas leave. For his part, Mr Denton was very keen that I should return to Kitale and had even submitted an out-of-turn report in which he had recommended me for accelerated promotion. Before I left on vacation leave, the PC Rift Valley Province, Mr Robin Wainwright was touring the Trans Nzoia district, and the DC had made sure that I met him. During our meeting, Mr Wainwright thanked me for my good work and added that he would strongly support the DC's recommendation for my promotion and hoped very much that I would come back to Kitale. An additional factor that had influenced Mr Denton in making the recommendation was the fact that I had shown a keen interest in Ki-Swahili and had in fact appeared for both the Oral and Written parts of the Standard Swahili examination. (Asian staff were not required to take this examination, but European officers were, and received a bonus if they secured a distinction; their annual increment was also dependent on their passing this vital examination.) I faced a panel of three examining officers at the oral examination which was held at Eldoret (Mr Jack Wolff the DC Eldoret, a European Labour Officer and an African official of the Education department). Quite an experience! I took the examination more out of interest in the language and my desire to be able to speak

confinement, and we were now booked to sail home in November 1953. For a moment we wondered how we would cope on the voyage with a little babe barely three months old. If anything, these fears proved to be groundless.

12. Overseas Leave in India

Our last few days at Kitale were taken up getting everything organized for our long leave – buying all the essential items we would be requiring for the voyage and for our stay in India generally, particular attention being paid to such items as baby foods, feeding bottles, sterilizing liquid, nappies, etc. It was very fortunate that our passage home included food and a full complement of tinned baby food. All these arrangements were made by the Govt. Coast Agents with the B.I. Shipping Company. My in-laws were particularly sorry to see us go more so because they would miss their grandson.

At Mombasa, we spent a day with my cousins, Jock and Beryl, and left for Bombay the following day. The voyage was trouble-free save for the odd bouts of sea sickness Elsie suffered from. Our baby, now looking very healthy and bouncy, seemed to thrive on the fresh sea air – he was also the centre of attraction among the passengers and crew alike. We were never without a baby sitter. Our only problem was how to keep the number

of volunteers down while at the same time not upsetting anyone! We stopped briefly at Mahe in the Seychelles and through the kindness of one of the passengers (who agreed to look after Clyde), Elsie and I were able to go ashore and spend a few hours on this heavenly island. We were ferried from the ship to the shore in small fishing craft and toured as much of Mahe as we were able to in the short time at our disposal. The Seychelles has a sort of romanticism about it and its people are very hospitable and courteous. We lunched at one of the smaller restaurants and returned to the ship laden with curios from the island. We so wished we could have spent some more time exploring this beautiful isle.

A further week at sea and we had docked at Bombay on the ninth day, where we were met by my cousins and taken by taxi to the home of my father's sister (Esmeralda) and her husband (Ignatius Sequeira) at Dadar. They were all delighted to see us and my two cousins, Tony and Nabor made a real fuss of Clyde. I got the impression, rightly or wrongly, that some of our people in Bombay felt we were too young to have started a family so soon. Perhaps they were right, but we were not in the least bit disappointed.

We spent the first few days in Bombay and later left for Elsie's grandmother's home in Belgaum. It was in this former military cantonment, a few hundred miles out of Bombay, that I had received most of my early education at the Jesuit-run St. Paul's High School. At the time of our arrival in India, my elder brother Joseph, was away in South India pursuing his clerical

studies at the Jesuit Seminary at Shembaganur – a lovely hill-side town in the Madurai district. The weather in India was very warm and uncomfortable, and despite the use of a net, we were unable to keep the mosquitoes away at nights – more particularly in Belgaum! After a few days' stay here, we decided to take the long train journey to Kodaikanal. Travelling on the East African Railways & Harbours system was a real luxury when compared with the modest facilities the Indian railways had to offer. The train journey from Belgaum, with two stops en route, was very long and tiresome. At one of the stations, we were 'invaded' by a whole pack of monkeys. I discovered later that this particular station was noted for these creatures. Passengers are warned to keep their shutters up while the train stopped here – a warning both we and our fellow passengers completely forgot about. There were monkeys all over the compartment and a daring specimen from among these 'uninvited visitors' helped himself to a bunch of bananas which one of the passengers was carrying, while the poor owner looked helplessly and timidly on. He was much too afraid to make the next move, lest he excited the creature further. The monkey kept gazing at our baby, sending a fright through both of us. As soon as the train pulled out of the station, the monkeys left the coaches one by one, leaving us free again to talk about their daring raid on our compartment. The remainder of our journey through to Kodaikanal was very pleasant and on arrival at the station, we were met by my brother and another young Jesuit from the novitiate. They were delighted to see us and hoped we would have a pleasant stay

with them. We boarded the local village bus, and after a hair-raising drive through some very winding roads, finally arrived at the Sacred Heart College at Shembaganur. Fellow Jesuits from the community (one of them my former class mate from Belgaum days) had gathered to welcome us and we were later shown around to our spacious and well furnished guest-house. A room had been specially prepared for us, and before long, we were treated to a sumptuous breakfast. In many respects the community was self-sufficient; the bread was all baked on the premises by the lay brothers who also grew their own vegetables and, if I am not mistaken, kept poultry and pigs too. We enjoyed the college meals very much, and being situated at such a high altitude, always seemed to work up a very healthy appetite! Women were, as a rule, not allowed into the kitchen or other areas where the fathers and novices lived. Fortunately for me however, I was shown round the kitchen by the brothers, and on one occasion saw them hard at work mixing huge mounds of flour for bread. It was just as well that all this was done mechanically since kneading by hand would have taken several hours.

The climate of Shembaganur was cold and the air very healthy and bracing. No wonder, the Jesuits had chosen this secluded spot for their novitiate, I thought. The setting was ideal, and there were ample opportunities for contemplation and meditation in the vast grounds of this imposing training college. The entire Jesuit community had done us proud, and I was very grateful to my brother and the Revd. Fr. Minister, Fr. Morganti,

for the trouble they had all taken to accommodate and feed us so lavishly. Even the car that belonged to the community was placed at our disposal and made available on one occasion to take my brother and some of his companions on a picnic to the nearby Kodi Lake. We enjoyed the outing immensely and even managed to do some boating during the short time we spent there. Clyde presented no problems at all since there were so many willing hands from among the young Jesuits to look after him. Elsie was even spared the job of washing and drying the nappies – one of the elderly domestic staff undertook this job quite cheerfully for us. I was deeply grateful to the Revd Fr. Rector for granting my brother and his companions permission to spend some of their leisure moments with us. Jesuit discipline is, as a rule, very strict, and this is why I was all the more thankful for the concessions made in this instance. After spending some ten days in this beautiful countryside, we returned to Belgaum.

From here, after a brief stay, we arrived home in Goa. My grandmother, who was now in her late seventies was overjoyed to see us, more so her great-grandson; so also was our adopted African maid, Marie (from Moçambique). The neighbours from my village (Salvador-do-Mundo – ‘Saloi’ for short), came one by one to greet us and play with Clyde. For the younger people of the neighbourhood, he was a great attraction, and there were any number of eager volunteers, always ready to pick him up whenever he cried. He was truly spoilt! They would sometimes walk him among the coconut and mango plantations that we

owned and Clyde certainly thrived on all the fuss and attention he was receiving.

Because of my service in the N.F.D., I had now earned the equivalent of nearly six months' paid leave. This was a lot, especially since there was not much to do in a quiet village such as mine. The well known *susegad* (quiet, calm) atmosphere of Goa prevailed; all we did was eat, drink and relax for hours on end. Regrettably, the latter part of our holiday was marred by my having to go into hospital for an emergency appendicitis operation. The young Sindhi surgeon who operated on me at the Asilo hospital in Mapuça, told Elsie later that I was very lucky to have survived; a delay of a few days could well have cost me my life, especially since the appendix was in a very bad condition. I was so relieved that it was all over, so too was Elsie and the rest of my relatives, particularly my aged grandmother. I received excellent treatment at the hands of the surgeon, Dr Khemani and the entire nursing staff. Several visitors called to see me in hospital, among these being that eminent Jesuit historian, Revd Claude Saldanha, who was also a distant relative of the family. The cost of my hospitalization was quite considerable, and I would like to record the deep debt of gratitude I owe here to my late grandmother and to a cousin in Bombay (Tony Sequeira) who, without any approach on my part, came to my rescue with financial assistance which no doubt enabled me to meet the bill. I cannot consider the charges excessive when weighed against the excellent treatment I received, but it so happened that the total cost of the operation and hospitaliz-

ation was roughly three times my monthly salary at the time! I was most embarrassed to find that instead of helping out my grandmother financially while on holiday, it was she who had to come to my aid. (I am pleased to say however, that on my return to Kenya, I submitted a claim to the Government for an *ex gratia* payment. Fortunately, the bill was met in its entirety.) Because a period of convalescence had been recommended, I was advised to delay my departure to Kenya. This meant applying for an extension of leave on medical grounds. I immediately cabled the Secretariat in Nairobi requesting the extension, and also asked whether we could be provided with saloon class passages since I would be quite unable to travel by deck in my present condition. I should explain that because of the considerable savings involved, many of the Asian staff (although entitled to first or second class passages – depending on their grading) — chose to travel by deck and utilize the savings towards their holiday expenses. Mr Ayub Ali, who was a Senior Establishment Officer at the Secretariat, and a good friend of my late father, immediately approved the extension, and asked the Government agents in Bombay to book us by saloon class on a sailing leaving Marmagoa (Goa's natural harbour) in about six weeks' time. This news came as a great relief to us. My period of convalescence was spent partly at our paternal home (with my grandmother in Saloi), with a few days being spent with an aunt in Moira (Aunt Lepoldina – my father's youngest sister) and with a relative in Aldona (Mrs Anna Clara Mendonca e Trindade, who we referred to affectionately as Aldona-

mãe). Much to my aunt's embarrassment however, I could not rest well at their Moira house because of the presence of the odd field mouse which appeared nightly in the adjoining room where the paddy harvest was temporarily stored. I am not a lover of mice or rats and have never felt comfortable with them around! Because of this, we had to cut short the visit to Moira and return to my granny's house at Saloi. Here a lot of care was lavished on me, with special foods and chicken broth being prepared – all in an effort to get me back to normal. I was conscious all along of the great strain being placed on Elsie's shoulders at this difficult time since she also had Clyde to look after. Because of my inability to travel long distance following the operation, we were unable to get out and about and so spent most of the time indoors. After breakfast each morning, we would read the daily paper from first to last page, covering every column including the sometimes hilarious-sounding matrimonial and personal columns! The arrival of the postman just before lunch was always a moment we awaited anxiously. This is when letters arrived from overseas and some from Bombay too and there was always disappointment if there was no mail. One letter that did bring us both a good deal of satisfaction was from Mr Denton, the DC and Kitale. He had written to congratulate me on my passing the oral and written parts of the Standard Swahili Examination. I was excited over the news and knew that most of my Administration colleagues would come to hear of this through the publication of the results in the *Kenya Official Gazette*.

While we were enjoying the last few weeks of our holiday, frantic preparations were being made at home to ensure that we had a good supply of Goan delicacies to take back to Kenya. It is necessary to explain here that whenever Goans returned after their vacations leaves, it was customary for the household to arrange for the preparation of several rich and spicy Goa sausages, pickled fish and even some of the traditional Goan sweetmeats made from mango and guava. A flagon of the local spirit (cashew *feni* made from the cashew apple or coconut *feni*), and a cask (*garrafão*) of strong vinegar made from toddy would also be bought well in advance of our departure. Vinegar made from toddy is more like cider vinegar, slightly stronger but with a flavour all of its own. At home, this vinegar is widely used in salads and for making some of the traditional Goan dishes like *sorpotel* and *vindalo*.

After several months of holidaying in Goa, my granny and our relatives and neighbours were understandably sad at the thought of seeing us go. They were going to miss us a lot, especially our baby Clyde, who they had by now got so used to; he had certainly filled their otherwise empty leisure hours. I was particularly sorry to leave my granny behind at this stage because of the terrible blow she had received while we were on holiday. A few weeks before we were due to return to Kenya, news had come in of the death in Moçambique of my Uncle Bernard, her eldest son. He had died of a heart attack at his office in Lourenço Marques (then Portuguese East Africa). I realized how the blow had been temporarily cushioned because of our

presence, since she always had Clyde to keep her amused and occupied and thus forget her deep sorrow and pain albeit momentarily. With our leaving, she would be well and truly lost. Life can be very cruel at times.

A few days before we left, boatmen from the neighbouring fishing village of Ecoxim had collected all our heavy baggage and transported it in their boats to the port of Marmagoa whence we would be embarking, timing their arrival there in such a way as to coincide with ours. These men had in previous years rendered a similar service to my father, and I was truly amazed to see how these outwardly weak-looking individuals, were able to bear such heavy loads on their bare heads.

With a warm embrace from my granny and other close relatives who had come to see us off, and handshakes with several neighbours, we finally left for Marmagoa by taxi. It broke my heart to leave Goa and I am sure Elsie felt likewise.

The scene on arrival at Marmagoa, although in some respects chaotic, still had a festive air about it. There were crowds gathered at the quayside and it was quite clear that for every outgoing passenger, half a dozen relatives had come to see him or her off! This was not an uncommon feature especially among Goans.

Customs formalities were minimal – the Portuguese are pretty easy-going in this respect and, in any case, outgoing passengers were never subjected to any strict customs examinations. The boatmen who had transported our luggage all the way from home and even loaded it on the ship, were the last to bid us

goodbye after collecting their charges. I can still recall their parting message to us, “*Bore bashen vossat, ani veguin ghara yeat*” (Go safely and come home soon!)

13. Re-posting to Kitale

The return voyage to Kenya was very pleasant, and we had an enjoyable time throughout. On arrival at Mombasa, we were met by a representative of the Government Coast Agent and informed that I had been reposted to Kitale. Although Elsie and I were both disappointed that we would not be returning to the N.F.D. (as we had previously hoped), we were nevertheless pleased to have the opportunity of seeing my in-laws once more after all these months.

At Mombasa, we again stayed with my cousins for a couple of days and here met (as we always did when we were in Mombasa), that unforgettable and colourful member of my family – my Dad's younger brother, Uncle Luis. He was a real character – a bachelor who had served with the army in Addis Ababa, and a man who, despite not having a permanent job, never seemed to worry. He was well known among the various communities in Mombasa and especially at the docks at Kilindini harbour even though he had no official connections here. All he did was to

help out with the clearing and forwarding of passengers' baggage, acting as an agent for one of the local firms. Through his previous service with the Kenya & Uganda Railways & Harbours, he had got to know many Goans.

At this late stage in his life (he must have been in his fifties), he had decided to get married, and at the civil ceremony which was held at Margão (Goa) while we were on holiday, I stood as his proxy! (As the final chapters of my manuscript were being typed, news reached me of the death in Goa on February 7, 1985, of our dear and much-talked-about Uncle Luis. Despite his sometimes 'eccentric' behaviour, many will, like me, miss him.)

At Kitale to meet us when we returned were all my in-laws. They were undoubtedly delighted to have us back, especially to see Clyde so fit and grown up. He was now nearly a year old and had become the centre of attraction at home and everywhere we went – be it shopping, to church, or the Goan Institute. Everyone adored him, more so because he was such a friendly and happy baby.

When I reported for duty, Mr Denton expressed his pleasure in having me back; my other office colleagues were equally happy that I was back at Kitale. Although we had stayed with my in-laws prior to our going on vacation leave, I had decided that we now had to move into independent accommodation; this would give us a chance to start on our own all over again. With great difficulty, I managed to secure a Government quarter and we moved in a few weeks after returning from Goa. Regrettably,

the house had been left in a disgraceful condition by the previous occupant. I invited Mr Denton to inspect the house for himself so that he could assess the priority for having it decorated. Following his recommendation after the visit, the PWD immediately set about redecorating and modifying the quarter as I had earlier requested. I do not think that the local Inspector of Works, a South African, was terribly pleased at having to get this job done as a matter of some urgency. (It is as well to explain that unlike European housing, which was well looked after and maintained, the maintenance of Asian housing left a lot to be desired.) Once the redecoration was completed, Elsie soon transformed the place into a warm and cosy home. The hitherto neglected garden also received attention, and in a matter of a few months, the whole area had received a face lift and become the envy of the neighbourhood!

The worsening of the security situation had created much extra work at the office, but all this made for variety which was important. The post of DC carried with it several other responsibilities, such as, Registrar of births, deaths and marriages, Chairman of various committees, including the all-important District Intelligence Team. While Margaret Finch, the DC's part-time Secretary dealt with the confidential and secret correspondence in the main, I handled the bulk of the day to day correspondence and would also assist with some of the classified correspondence when asked to do so.

Despite being close to Elsie's parents and our other friends, the urge to move back to the N.F.D. was still within me; Elsie was

equally keen that we should return to Marsabit if this were possible. Kitale was a town where there was more than enough of a social life for us. There was a small but well patronized and run Goan Institute of which I was, for a time Vice-President. The clubhouse provided an ideal meeting place for young and old alike, and the one thing that sticks in my mind about these clubs is the feeling of togetherness which existed in those days. Families would come to the club together – husband, wife and children; everyone looked forward to the many social and sporting events that were organized through the year. The weekly tombola was very popular among some of the older folks, while for the younger section of the community the various sporting activities organized throughout the year proved very popular. Fixtures were organized with other clubs both locally and from outside the district too. Despite all these attractions, I was still keen on moving back to the frontier as soon as the opportunity arose.

**PART FOUR — In the N.F.D.
Again**

14. Return to Marsabit

With a young family to support, the financial pressures on me began to grow. The only solution was to renew my application for a transfer to the N.F.D. Sadly, despite the strong recommendation for accelerated promotion put forward by Mr Denton and supported by the Rift Valley Provincial Commissioner, the Secretariat were unable to approve the request as there were fears that this might create a precedent. I was naturally disappointed but satisfied that the DC had done everything possible. Rules are rules I realized, and it is very difficult to get civil servants to 'bend' these. I discussed the question of my transfer with Mr Denton and felt sure he appreciated my particular problem. I submitted my application through the usual channels, and the fact that the DC saw fit to send a routine request of this nature under confidential cover, convinced me that he was still trying to get the powers that be to change their decision over the case for my accelerated promotion. However, the original decision was not altered and my posting to the frontier was approved

some months later. By sheer coincidence, Mr Denton also received his posting orders about the same time. He was promoted as Private Secretary to the Governor of Kenya (Sir Evelyn Baring) and would soon be moving to Nairobi. My destination was to be Marsabit. While obviously delighted at the thought of returning to a district I clearly loved, there was a tinge of sadness in that Elsie would not be accompanying me this time. We were told that she was again pregnant and in view of the difficulties encountered previously during her pre-natal period, it was not considered advisable for her to return with me. The general feeling was that she should stay behind at Kitale. Although pleased with the news of another addition to our family I was naturally disappointed that I would not have the company of Elsie and Clyde at Marsabit. She too didn't seem pleased at the thought of staying behind, but we both agreed that in the circumstances, it was best for her to move in with her parents, at least until our second child had arrived.

Quite by coincidence, Mr Denton and I were booked to travel to Nairobi on the same train. Being the popular man he was, several organizations feted him before his departure and Elsie and I were pleased to attend a reception given in honour of the outgoing DC by the Kitale Indian Association. A similar party was organized for both Mr Denton and myself by the Goan Institute. It certainly was a proud moment for me. Many saw me off at the station, and before we were due to arrive at Nairobi, Mr Denton made a special point of coming to my compartment to wish me goodbye and thank me for my services at Kitale. I was

so pleased for him and grateful for all the efforts he had made to try and secure my promotion. I spent a day with friends in Nairobi and left the next morning for Nanyuki and Isiolo – a route I was now familiar with.

At Isiolo, I stayed with an old friend of mine, Francis da Lima since the PC's office had decided that I should spend a few days here helping out at the Provincial headquarters. This presented no immediate problems and I was pleased to be able to have some work experience in a Provincial Commissioner's office. Mr Turnbull (now Sir Richard Turnbull) had now moved to the Ministry of Defence in Nairobi and his place at Isiolo taken by Mr Myles North, a well-known ornithologist. Being stationed at Isiolo certainly had its advantages for me – mail services were normal, transport fairly regular and most food-stuffs freely available.

I had now spent about a month at Isiolo when I was told to hold myself in readiness for a posting to Marsabit. During one of his safaris to the area, the acting PC, Mr North was informed of the acute staff shortage at Marsabit. Victor Fernandes had left to go on vacation leave, so also had the DC Mr Wild. The latter would, however, be returning in time for the proposed visit to Marsabit of the Governor of Kenya. Victor's replacement was an elderly man named Kaplia who had had no experience whatsoever in the provincial administration. For his age, Kapila was a wonderful companion both in and out of the office. Most of his previous service had been in the Veterinary department at Mariakani in the Coast Province. Although I had heard that he

was a willing worker and ready to learn and adapt himself to changed situations, I couldn't help feeling that it was a mistake to have posted him to the N.F.D. For one thing, he was quite old (over 50 then), had no experience of the work or life in the N.F.D. His inexperience was causing problems at Marsabit, and with a DO (John Lister) who had enough on his plate while the DC was away on leave – it was felt that my move should take place as soon as possible. I had not met John Lister before, but he had no doubt heard of me through the Wild family. As Mr North had planned a further safari to Marsabit very shortly – to check on the arrangements for the Governor's visit – he suggested that I could come along with him. In addition to his Land Rover in which he and his bird-loving friend (General Sir Gerald Lathbury, GOC, East Africa) would be travelling, he was also taking a Government lorry on which I could travel. I learnt that his VIP guest was as keen as Mr North as far as ornithology went.

Little did I appreciate then what I had let myself in for. During the journey to Marsabit, we stopped on numerous occasions *en route* to record some of the bird sounds. Here in the N.F.D. there was tremendous scope for anyone with 'bird watching' interests, and for both the PC and the GOC, this must have been a very interesting trip indeed. There were times when, as we drove a few miles, Mr Myles North, hearing some bird sounds, and recognizing these as rare, would stop the Land Rover and call for total silence among the party. Out would come the driver and tribal police escort. In a few minutes, they would

be busy uncoiling great lengths of wiring and off-loading some of the recording paraphernalia, taking great care not to disturb the bird in the process. Then came the patient waiting to listen to some if not all of the bird-song. This was a task which only someone with a degree of patience – an attribute Mr North was not lacking in – could accomplish. It struck me then that he was a man so interested in this particular field – for him, as for General Sir Gerald Lathbury, this must have been more than just a hobby – it certainly provided a great deal of relaxation. There were times when, after getting out all the recording equipment and waiting anxiously for several moments, the particular bird would just fly away! If he was able to track the movements of this particular bird, the truck would move on to the new area and the whole process of relaying and setting the recording equipment would start again. All these stops to record bird sounds resulted in our arriving at Marsabit much later than we normally would. I was not sure whether the PC had succeeded in making any recordings on this trip but I expect that the very sighting of a particular bird was enough satisfaction.

Whereas during my initial posting there was just the DC and latterly a DO at Marsabit, there now was an additional European officer. Brian Hodgson, a very young man with a boyish appearance, was the District Assistant. This was a newly created cadre in the Provincial Administration. Coming as District Cashier on this second posting, I was allocated the house recently vacated by the Fernandeses. It was a well-appointed bungalow which Victor had had tastefully modified. He and Lucy had also main-

tained an excellent garden which they had both worked hard to create. Our trusted and faithful cook Sheunda, had more than served his time in the N.F.D. and decided that he would not be able to accompany me on this posting. I sympathized with his feelings; he was now quite old and not in the best of health. I knew at once how much I would miss him. Domestic staff were, as a rule, not too difficult to find, but the problem was to find the right type of person.

Once word got around that I needed a cook/houseboy, there were any number of applicants. The local Borana always felt 'safe' working for a Government official, especially if the particular individual happened to be a member of the Provincial Administration. Of the many applicants I saw, I finally settled for Godana, a tall and rather extrovert-type of person who had previously worked for one of the European police inspectors. He was fluent in Ki-Swahili and seemed a very jovial and lively individual. I do not think he had any experience of cooking Goan-type meals, but I had no doubt that with his enthusiastic approach and willing nature, he would have no difficulty in picking up some of the basics. Godana was very clean in appearance and without any prompting from me he would keep the house very neat and tidy always.

He had a very obliging nature too, but like most of the local domestic staff, he had a regular 'invasion' of visitors, all purporting to be the *ndugus* (brothers or relatives). The Boran, and for that matter most Africans, are fond of very sweet tea, and as the stream of his visitors kept increasing, I found that

my stocks of tea and sugar were being steadily 'demolished' – I did not mind this in the least since Godana could never be faulted on his housework or cooking. I had also to remember that while I was occupied at work, it must have been pretty boring for him to sit all alone (after finishing his daily chores) and wait for me to arrive!

Throughout this period at Marsabit, all the other Goan families (who were employed by the Kenya Police) looked after me very well; here I must mention the Furtado family, the two Almeida families and the late Francis Fernandes and his wife Leonora. Mrs Fernandes always had a dish prepared specially in my honour whenever I was invited to lunch or dinner. All the fuss that was being made of me was quite embarrassing at times, but I was grateful for the care and friendship. Good old Kapila, who was on his own, lived mostly on a diet of fresh fruit and vegetables. He had a Meru cook (left behind by the previous District clerk – a Muslim by the name of Khan) – who was, for a greater part, under-employed (through no fault of his own), Kapila, as I've previously said, was very much my senior age-wise, but still respected me as though I was one of his elders. This caused me no end of embarrassment in the early days, but I soon learnt to accept the situation, knowing how genuine and well-meaning a person he really was.

Being on my own again, the old familiar pattern of exchanging correspondence soon became the only link that bound Elsie and myself during these days of 'enforced' separation. I began to miss her and Clyde very much, and rather than spend time on

my own at home, I often called at the homes of some of my other colleagues on the station.

In readiness for the Governor's visit, the outside of the district office had been given a liberal coat of whitewash – other offices and the shops in the township had received a similar face-lift. Mr Wild returned to Marsabit a few weeks before Sir Evelyn and Lady Mary Baring were due to arrive and seemed generally satisfied with all the arrangements that John Lister (the DO) had made in his absence. He and his wife were delighted to have me back and hoped it would not be long before the rest of the family would join me. Even though Marsabit was being honoured by a visit from the Governor and his wife, we couldn't get the elements to change their normal pattern. The cold and misty weather greeted the VIPs as they landed, and after being met by the DC, the party were driven into the *boma*. Here, on the green outside the DC's office, the Governor inspected a guard of honour mounted by the Kenya Police and a contingent of Dubas, and later took the salute at a ceremonial parade that followed. The distinguished visitors were then introduced to the staff and other notables in the township – Chiefs, prominent traders, etc. I had the pleasure of meeting both Sir Evelyn and Lady Mary Baring, and can recall quite vividly the scenes outside the district office on that cold morning. In introducing me to Sir Evelyn, John Lister told His Excellency that he didn't feel I would be staying long at Marsabit since it was individuals like me that the Secretariat in Nairobi were looking for.

If only he knew how much I wanted to be left behind at Marsabit

or at any rate in the N.F.D. Nairobi did not appeal to me in the least – even if moving there meant a promotion. I preferred the simple and unspoilt life of the district, the colourful people and above all, the wide open spaces; this, to me was real freedom! The Dubas in their snow-white *bafta* uniforms with bright red turbans, the Kenya police *askaris* in their well starched uniforms and the European Police officers and the DC in ceremonial dress all looked very impressive indeed. The parade itself was a great occasion conducted with due pomp and ceremony. Although I had accumulated quite a few days local leave, I had no intention of utilizing all of it to go down to Kitale, since the bulk had to be saved up for later – nearer the time of Elsie's confinement. We were told that the baby could be expected any time during the second week in October 1955; since there were still some six months to go, I decided to take a week's casual leave and get down to Kitale to be reunited with the family once more. On this occasion, I was pleasantly surprised to find Elsie looking much better than she was when I first left her; Clyde was also growing up nicely and looked a perfect picture of health. At Kitale, I was quick to notice some of the changes. A new maternity unit for the Asian population had been opened as an extension of the Native hospital – with Sister Steers in charge. For us, it was a comfort to know that our second child would be born in more pleasant surroundings. I just didn't feel like leaving my young family to return to Marsabit, but consoled myself with the thought that once the baby was born, we would all be together again. This was the only consoling

thought.

The week at Kitale just flew by, and before I had time to think about it, I was back at Marsabit – all too soon it seemed!

As our new addition was not expected until the second week in October, I decided to postpone my second local leave entitlement until nearer the day; besides, with all the additional leave we were able to earn in the frontier, I had now accumulated quite a few days and by October would have some three weeks in hand. The period between my returning from my first leave, and waiting to go down on my second, seemed the longest I have known — perhaps I was getting too impatient. The only comforting aspect was the regular mail I received from Elsie. Meanwhile at Marsabit, all my friends were being most kind and helpful, and my Boran cook, Godana, did his best to keep me well fed. Arero, our gardener, who obviously had green fingers, toiled hard to give the whole place a very colourful and tidy look. He was an exceptionally good gardener who had profited much from the training received under the Fernandeses.

As often as I could, I would get out for weekends – either to nearby Lake Paradise or Gof Choba. Lake Paradise was a densely forested area where many of the trees were laced with a moss which we called 'elephant grass' – I believe this moss is also called 'old man's beard'. Here we would picnic and sometimes drive further afield in search of game for the pot. This was truly a naturalist's paradise. Whereas the climate in the Lake Paradise area was cold and damp, Gof Choba was just the

opposite. This was an empty crater on the Marsabit-Moyale road which had the usual complement of guinea fowl and dik-dik. Whenever we went on such outings we would spend the whole day outdoors, returning to the *boma* well before dusk. We would then disperse to our respective homes and meet again later in the evening over drinks. On such evenings, I always ensured that I returned home well before it got dark, and certainly before the elephant herds arrived on their nightly patrols! The area around Marsabit mountain had a sizeable elephant population, and the herds would often stray into the *boma* at nights causing havoc to the *shambas* of the locals. They likewise strolled through our gardens, breaking down the branches of the pepper trees which they somehow took a liking to.

With all the outings and the varied entertainment we created for ourselves, the days now seemed to be moving faster – for me at any rate. I found myself back at Kitale during the first week of October, and was again pleased to see Elsie looking fit and well. All the indications were that she hadn't long to wait now before our second child arrived. Clyde, now two years old, was beginning to look very handsome – a real attraction he was. With all the fuss and pampering he received at the hands of my in-laws, it took him a few days to get to know me again! He seemed very shy initially but soon got over this phase. He was at that interesting age when he didn't require much attention, although there was no shortage of volunteers from among my in-laws' family – if such help was required.

Our second child, another boy, was born on October 10, 1955.

Since I would be returning to Marsabit within a few days, it was decided that he be christened much earlier than usual. The names we chose were Conrad Francis. He weighed seven pounds at birth and looked very healthy and quite normal. There was great rejoicing when Elsie left hospital to return home with him. Clyde was now beginning to sense the attention that was focused on Conrad, but in his own way, seemed quite proud of his new baby brother. I had decided to leave after satisfying myself that all was well with Elsie and the family, and we had agreed that she and the boys should join me at Marsabit once Conrad was about three months old.

From my side, nothing had been planned for Christmas, although I had hoped to be able to get down to Kitale again in the New Year and collect the family. The DC, no doubt realizing I would be lost at Marsabit on my own during the festive season, agreed that I could spend Christmas with the family and return with them later. As good luck would have it, I managed to get a lift in to Isiolo, and from there a trader's truck took me all the way to Nairobi. Here I took the Grey Line coach to Kitale and was simply thrilled to be back with the family in such a short time.

I was pleased to have been given this opportunity of spending Christmas at Kitale more so because I would have the opportunity of attending midnight Mass (something I just couldn't have done at Marsabit) and also taking part in the festivities.

The whole season passed off very well and there were gifts galore for our two sons – with so many aunts and uncles, this

was only to be expected. As usual my mother-in-law had laid on a tremendous spread for the whole family and I often wondered how she coped with such ease with all the preparations. She seemed born to entertain and make people happy. Had we agreed, I am quite sure she would have wanted us to leave the two children behind with her while we went to Marsabit.

15. Good and Sad Times at Marsabit

Conrad, now nearly three months old, looked rather frail; he certainly wasn't putting on any weight as Clyde previously had; what was worse – he was highly susceptible to colds and coughs. Dr Broadbent, our family doctor gave us some medication which he said would ease the problem. The treatment did work, and when Conrad was rid of his cold, we all left for Nanyuki via Nairobi. From here we got a lift in to Isiolo where we spent the day with another old friend, John Pereira – himself a frontier veteran. Elsie seemed very happy to be back at Marsabit and many of the locals who remembered her well during her brief stay previously, were equally delighted to welcome her back. Although there were no children of his age to play with him, Clyde seemed quite at home in the company of our gardener Arero and our Boran cook, Godana. As he was able to amuse himself without too much attention from Elsie, she was able to

devote more time to Conrad who now needed full time attention.

The general security situation in the country had not improved, and in some of the areas of the Central Province – notably the Aberdare and Mount Kenya forests, army patrols were constantly on the look-out for terrorists, following the second forest offensive that was launched earlier that year. At Marsabit itself, there were now not just the detainees who had arrived following the declaration of the State of Emergency, but also two elderly and well-known Kikuyu members from the Central Province – Jesse Kariuki and ex-Senior Chief Mbiu Koinange. Meanwhile, Elijah Masinde, the leader of the proscribed Diniya Msambwa sect, who had been restricted to Marsabit for some years, was transferred elsewhere within the Province (I think it was Mandera), well before the original batch of political detainees had arrived. Both the new arrivals had a 24-hour guard following them wherever they went. Mwangi Macharia, the banned trade unionist, was a very industrious individual. He was allotted a small *shamba* which he cultivated, and from which he was able to enjoy fresh vegetables and potatoes in abundance; some of his surplus produce was sold to locals at the station. He could put his hand to almost any job – be it plumbing, masonry, woodwork, etc. Because of his exemplary behaviour, Mwangi was later allowed total freedom and, on the DC's recommendation was taken on as a handyman-plumber by the Ministry of Works. He proved of great help and played a significant role, as I have recorded earlier, in the laying of the

first pipeline in Marsabit.

Ex-Senior Chief Koinange was a very old man. For his long – service with the Administration, he received a pension which he would collect from me at the end of each month. On such occasions I would also help this likeable old man to write letters to his family back home in the Kikuyu reserve. He would always offer to compensate me for the little help I was able to give him, but I could never bring myself to accept any reward since I felt it was my duty to help where I could.

Within a few months of Elsie's return to Marsabit, Conrad's health began to suffer. The local hospital assistant tried his best to help with several injections of penicillin. Crystalline penicillin is very painful, and I can well imagine the agony Conrad (who was mere skin and bone) went through. The treatment had no effect at all, and after further consultations with the hospital assistant, the DC agreed that the child and Elsie be flown out to Nairobi. In our hearts, we felt quite sorry for the trouble we were causing the Administration, but in the circumstances, there was little we could do as the problem was beyond our control. An aircraft of the Kenya Police Airwing was called in and the pilot, Capt 'Punch' Bearcroft (who had only one arm) alerted the authorities at Wilson aerodrome and asked if an ambulance could be made available to evacuate Conrad to hospital. Sadly, on their arrival at Nairobi, there was no sign of the ambulance and although Capt. Bearcroft stayed with Elsie for some time in the hope that one would turn up, he had to leave eventually so as to get back to his base at Nyeri before nightfall.

The European receptionist at the aerodrome, seeing Elsie in a state of panic, and realizing that Conrad was now gravely ill, immediately called for a taxi. The drive from the airport in to Nairobi must, without doubt, have been one of the most frightening experiences for Elsie. The driver of the cab had obviously consumed a fair amount of alcohol and it is something short of a miracle that she and Conrad arrived unharmed and safe at the house of a friend. Completely worn out and exhausted by now – having had to carry Conrad in her arms all along – Elsie had the added humiliation and embarrassment of apologizing to our friends for having arrived without any prior warning; somehow, the message I had sent earlier via the Posts & Telegraphs system at Marsabit had got delayed. Mrs Nobert Menezes and her family were very understanding though, and when Conrad's condition deteriorated during the night, they quickly summoned a doctor friend of theirs. Dr Masie Fernandes administered what emergency treatment she was able to, but told Mrs Menezes in confidence that she didn't expect Conrad to survive the night. The next morning when they met at church, Dr Masie enquired whether Conrad was still alive. Hearing that his condition had not improved, and realizing that he needed urgent hospitalization, the doctor had him admitted to the privately-run Radiant Health Clinic? I was informed of these developments and granted a few days' compassionate leave to visit our gravely ill son. We were very fortunate in having good and dependable friends in the persons of Mr and Mrs Price, and I was able to leave Clyde in their safe hands while I made for the clinic. On arrival

there, I was immediately taken to see Conrad. He looked very ill from the non-stop cough he had developed, but despite his frail condition and the pain he must have been in, he still managed to put on a smile when he saw me. Elsie pressed my hand in hers as we both stood there watching him helplessly. The strain of the past few days was written all over her face, and I wished I could do more to help her. She had been through some hell during the past few weeks. A child specialist was called in to see Conrad and I was asked to remain in Nairobi until the results of the various tests and X-rays were known. Meanwhile, my in-laws had collected Clyde and taken him to Kitale. As a relative of Elsie's lived fairly close to the Radiant Health Clinic, I moved in with him while Elsie was allowed to remain with Conrad. We took it in turns to spend time with him, and kept an almost round-the-clock watch; in this way we tried to share our problem. At weekends, Elsie's cousin, the late Raymond Collaço, would relieve us. It is precisely during one of these periods that the worst happened. Raymond, seeing that both of us were worried and strained over Conrad's condition, suggested that we should go over to his house and have some lunch, while he stayed behind with Conrad.

The nurses were never far away in case help was needed. We had not quite finished our meal when Raymond rushed back home to tell us that Dr Patience Davies, the specialist, had visited Conrad only a few moments previously, and asked to see us rather urgently. Fearing the worst, we left behind our unfinished meals and raced towards the hospital, panting from the

sheer exhaustion as we ran; it took us some time to get our breath back once we had arrived there. We were introduced to Dr Davies by one of the nurses, and without wasting any time, she told us quite coldly (all well-intentioned no doubt) that the tests had shown that Conrad had an enlarged heart – a congenital condition for which there was no real cure. As she had finished talking, the words sent a chilling shiver down my spine. I realized then how Elsie's heart must have been deeply pained too. We stared at each other nervously, trying hard to contain our emotions.

“Oh Lord,” I said within myself, “why us? Why our dear Conrad?” The poor child had suffered so much already and I was more or less ‘arguing’ with God as to why He wanted him to suffer even more. This was certainly a testing time for our faith.

In addition to the defective heart condition, Dr Patience Davies also told us that Conrad's liver and stomach were both on the wrong side – the liver on the left and stomach on the right; an abnormality no doubt, but nothing to worry about so long as we remembered this and made the hospital staff aware of it if ever Conrad needed abdominal surgery. We stood in silence – limp, cold and totally helpless. We gazed at the angelic look on Conrad's face and wondered if he knew that we too were sharing his pain with him. For a brief moment, we lost all interest in life. When the specialist left us, we both broke down. The tears could be held back no longer. We had been through such great strain and anxiety during the past few days – Elsie more than I, and we wondered if we had the strength to go on in this

fashion much longer. Because the cough he developed often left him tired and breathless, Conrad had to be 'doped' on occasions with small dose of 'Chloral' syrup to induce sleep and give him the rest he so badly needed. The cough was incessant and quite irritating, and all our efforts to try and alleviate his condition proved in vain. The nurses, seeing we were so worried and desperate suggested that we go home ,while they looked after Conrad; reluctantly we left, praying hard for a' miracle. Despite the anxious times we were going through, we were determined not to give up the fight to save Conrad.

Being a private hospital, the charges at the Radiant Health Clinic were very high, and the worry of being able to afford the cost of hospitalization weighed heavily on me. I made up my mind, however, that I would submit a strong case for compensation, since it was the failure of the ambulance to turn up at the aerodrome that had forced Elise to make alternative arrangements. Had the ambulance arrived, she and Conrad would have been taken straight to the Government hospital. The present case was a genuine emergency. (I am pleased to be able to record that my case was strongly supported not only by the Provincial and District Commissioners, but by the pilot who had flown Elsie out to Nairobi, Capt. Bearcroft himself; I was duly reimbursed with the full cost of Conrad's treatment and stay at the Nairobi clinic.)

When he had recovered sufficiently to be discharged from hospital, we agreed that Elsie should return to Kitale with Conrad and remain with her parents until such time as he was better

and well enough to join me at Marsabit. A few days later I saw them off while I returned to Marsabit. From letters I received after her return to Kitale, it appeared that the family doctor there felt that Conrad's condition would not alter wherever we took him. In fact he suggested that Elsie should join me at Marsabit as soon as Conrad was better so that the whole family could be together again. I had felt that a period with her family at Kitale would give her time to unwind and also provide a much-needed rest after all she had been through. When I got back to Marsabit, I discussed Conrad's condition with the DC and our other friends too. Everyone tried to offer words of comfort, but in the state that I was, these words seemed so hollow and meaningless, however well-intentioned they were. My mind was on the family, particularly Conrad, and I wondered how Elsie was coping with this problem all on her own. Subsequent news from Kitale suggested that Elsie was optimistic about Conrad's health and felt that his general condition was improving, even though very slowly. The pneumonia he had earlier developed in Nairobi had cleared, but he was still very weak and frail. When he had recovered sufficiently enough to make the journey, we decided that Elsie and the boys should join me.

Several weeks later, they travelled by RVP taxi (one of the fastest taxi services at the time) from Kitale to Nairobi where, after a brief stop, they took a similar service to Nanyuki. I myself had a large amount of cash to collect from the Standard Bank of South Africa at Nanyuki for our office requirements at Marsabit.

I had therefore arranged that my trip should coincide with the family's arrival there. On all occasions when I went down to collect cash, I was always accompanied by two armed Tribal Police (Dubas) escort! They sat in the rear of the Land Rover, rifles in hand, keeping an eye on the cash box containing the money I had earlier collected from the bank while I waited outside the taxi rank looking eagerly for the Peugeot taxi to pull up from Nairobi. When it did arrive a few minutes later, Elsie seemed so happy to see me. Clyde was too tired from the long journey and half asleep. I was told that both he and Conrad had been car sick during the long trip, and that two British soldiers who were returning to their base camp at Nanyuki on the same taxi, had been most helpful and tolerant throughout the journey. After loading the suitcases and other small packages on to the Land Rover, we left for Isiolo. Here, we again spent the night with our old friend John Pereira, who seemed visibly moved on hearing of Conrad's plight and the troubles we had been through. He did everything possible to make us comfortable, and we were able to relax sufficiently here before continuing the journey to Marsabit the following day. The cash box I had collected earlier from the Nanyuki bank was meanwhile stored away in the DC Isiolo's vaults. The next morning we left for Marsabit, arriving there late that afternoon. Conrad had withstood the journey pretty well even though he must have been quite tired.

At Marsabit, we soon settled back into our old familiar routine. There was so much on our minds that we hardly found time to talk about our earlier days here. Conrad was our main concern

now. We took on a young Boran lad by the name of Dima Boru to help Elise with the general housework and also assist over Conrad whenever required. We had tried for an *ayah*, but there was none available at the time.

Dima did his best to amuse Conrad – carrying and pacing up and down with him, singing songs in his native Boran. Such songs were often about their livestock, the people and the natural surroundings. They certainly couldn't be described as a lullaby but as long as they kept Conrad quiet, this was all that mattered. Perhaps because of his condition he needed to be carried all the time; he could never bear to be laid in his cot while he was awake. Even when he dropped off to sleep, there was a particular position in which he had to be placed in his cot, else he would go into a frightening fit of incessant coughing. Having watched Elsie closely, Dima had now developed the technique of putting Conrad to sleep. Physically, his condition hadn't changed much – he was still very weak and far too light weight-wise. Having Dima to look after Conrad meant that Elsie would lose herself in the garden and thus try to get things off mind. We had a good gardener in the person of Arero; not only was he a willing worker, but he was good company for Clyde. With most of our attention now centred around Conrad, Clyde must have felt a trifle neglected. Things were not so bad when I returned from work as I was able to relieve Elsie of Conrad while at the same time trying to keep Clyde amused.



With Elsie, Clyde and baby Conrad at Marsabit, 1955.

The nights were periods we dreaded most at Marsabit, especially when it came to Conrad. There was no way of getting instant help in an emergency. No telephones – any messages that needed to be sent to the hospital assistant or even neighbours, had to be through one of the domestic staff. A few months after returning to Marsabit, Conrad started to put on a few ounces of flesh but very, very slowly. For Elsie and myself it was certainly painful to see him develop so slowly. We were determined to do all we possibly could to make his life comfortable. Although we were now restricted in our movements as a result of his health, we took advantage of every opportunity that came our way to get out and about whenever he felt well. I even used to take the family out on pay safaris, and one such trip was to Badassa, a few miles out of Marsabit where I was sent to pay out one of

our road gangs.

As a rule, the Boran never worked long as domestic servants – the urge to go back to Dirre (Ethiopia) was always there; it was not long before Dima Boru approached us saying he wanted to return home, but would wait until we had found someone to look after Conrad. Word soon gets around and I have no doubt that the locals were quite experienced in the art of advertising. Within weeks of Dima telling us of his intention to go home, we had found and taken on a young Burji girl called Maria. She was tall and slim with an ebony-like complexion but very attractive features. Conrad took to her instantly. Godana, our cook/houseboy, had gone on leave and not returned due to some domestic *shauris* (problems). We were now left without a cook or houseboy, and Elsie's hands were more than full with the never-ending jobs she had to cope with. Fortunately, Arero, our faithful gardener always came to the rescue and helped out whenever required; besides, there was always a host of willing volunteers from among some of the station labour force – all eager to help with odd jobs or act as errand boys. Because of the great strain on us as a result of the continuous attention we had to give Conrad, both Elsie and I could sense how frayed our nerves were. There were the occasional outbursts, and at times periods of sheer despair and frustration, since neither of us could bear to see the poor child suffer so much. We felt that all our efforts were not producing any results – try hard though we did, we noticed very little improvement in his general condition. One thing we constantly had to guard Conrad against

was colds, and we wondered how in a damp and cold climate like Marsabit, this would be possible. He just didn't seem to have the resistance or the stamina to fight such an ailment – nor was there any medication we could give him to prevent him catching a cold. Thanks however to the regular supply of firewood we received free of charge – we were able to keep the whole house reasonably warm since we had a log fire burning each night. As the day brightened and the thick mists around Marsabit mountain lifted, our ayah Maria would walk Conrad out in the garden. He badly needed the fresh air and it did him good. On some of his 'brighter' days – and sadly such days were rare – Conrad would try his best to join in and play with Clyde. He could never engage in anything strenuous and could hardly walk as his legs were very feeble and thin; whenever he was able to sit down and play, however simply and innocently, it was always a relief to the ayah and to us also, since he otherwise had to be carried throughout the day – and this could be quite tiring. What we dreaded most was the fit of coughing that often plagued him and which we were unable to control. It would leave him tired and restless; besides, the poor child had got to know the taste of Chlorol and hated the stuff; unfortunately, we sometimes had to force a dose down merely to calm him and give him a much-needed rest.

Both Elsie and I were madly in love with Marsabit despite the problems we were going through. We adored the countryside, the open deserts, the interesting people — in short, we loved everything this district had to offer and kept praying desper-

ately for some change in Conrad's condition. We had accepted the situation as put to us by the specialist in Nairobi, and realized that however much we did, his condition would never improve — nor could we expect him to have a long life span. He would not be able to play like a normal child, we were told — and we had to ensure that he did not engage in too active sports as he grew up; he would 'puff' and tire easily with the slightest exertion. These were very hard and cruel facts for a young couple like ourselves to swallow. When I look back at this particular period in our lives, I cannot help feeling that but for our faith, even our marriage might have suffered.

As the days passed by Conrad seemed better; sadly this period was short-lived, but while it lasted, we made the best of it taking him wherever we went — even to such far off places like North Horr (a risk we surely must have taken, when I now consider the long drive through the Chalbi desert!) Weeks went by and Conrad developed a cold again, and within a few days his condition had worsened to such an extent that the dreaded pneumonia had set in once more. The frequent and painful doses of crystalline penicillin which the local hospital assistant so patiently administered seemed to have no effect at all. In desperation, we sought the help of Miss Gibbins, a European nursing sister who was attached to the BCMS mission at Marsabit. Canon Eric Webster (who was the rural Dean stationed at Marsabit at the time), was most helpful in making her services available to us; she arrived on a bicycle in true African missionary style, and at once set about to do everything

she possibly could to help. Seeing that the hospital assistant had done everything that was humanly possible in the circumstances, and seeing Conrad's condition worsening by the hour, she decided it was best to inform the DC of the seriousness of the situation so that arrangements could be made to evacuate him to Nairobi. She even offered to stay the night with us and keep watch over Conrad, adding that she would be quite happy to use the camp bed we had. We felt that this was a very considerate gesture on her part and were most grateful. As soon as word reached the DC, he immediately signalled the PC at Isiolo requesting the urgent despatch of an aircraft, complete with doctor and oxygen tent, to fly Conrad and Elsie out to Nairobi. I also sent a telegram to my friends there and to my in-laws in Kitale informing them of these developments. The next morning confirmation was received from the PC and the Kenya Police Airwing that a plane would be arriving at Marsabit late that evening. If visibility there was bad, the pilot had arranged to land at the temporary airstrip a few miles outside Marsabit at a place called Hogitchu. Mr Wild was an ex-RAF officer and seeing the general weather conditions knew immediately that there was not the slightest hope of the of the plane landing at Marsabit airstrip. He suggested that we should stand by to take off from Hogitchu and meanwhile despatched a truck to the area to pick up the doctor and pilot, since it was felt best that the doctor should examine Conrad thoroughly before they flew out.

Despite being torn with worry, and visibly weighed down with

the strain of the past few days, Elsie quickly packed together a suitcase of clothes for herself and Conrad, the bulk being taken up by nappies and warm clothing he would need. As always in times of trouble, there were any number of friends who rallied round and gave us the courage we so desperately needed. In her heart of hearts, I felt sure that Elsie had realized that there would be no return to Marsabit this time – things hadn't worked out quite the way we had hoped for, but the welfare of our ailing baby had to be of paramount importance. Both of us agreed that I would now almost certainly have to ask for a transfer out of the N.F.D. and preferably to a district which had a resident doctor and well equipped hospital.

We were now virtually all set to leave for the airstrip when the DC's driver, Abdalla, pulled up in his truck bringing the Indian doctor and the KPR Airwing pilot. Normally, whenever a plane arrived at Marsabit or Hogitchu, it was always a welcome occasion to which most of us looked forward since it always brought sacks of mail, fresh provisions, etc. On this particular occasion, I felt no such excitement; in fact the feeling inside me was quite the reverse. After the doctor had examined Conrad, we all left for Hogitchu. I had been told that the Indian doctor was not a good traveller, and that he had been air sick during the short flight from Nyeri. For a moment, I wondered how he would cope on the flight especially if Conrad needed to be given oxygen. I guess the same thoughts raced through Elsie's mind, but then such things are best left to Providence, and we resigned ourselves to accept the present situation as the African would

– “*shauri ya Mungu*” (God’s will). We said a sad goodbye and waited until the plane took off and was airborne before returning.

It was very fortunate that Clyde was with me when I got home, else I would have felt completely lost. His very presence was a source of great strength and comfort to me, although I was fully conscious how much he was missing Conrad and Elsie too – after all, who can ever make up for a mother’s love? The following day I received a telegram from a friend in Nairobi informing me that Elsie and Conrad had arrived and were safe at the King George VI Hospital. A police ambulance had met them at the airstrip and driven them straight to the hospital. Henry Price was a loyal and trusted friend who we had met during our first overseas leave in India. He happened to be on leave at the same time as we were. He and his entire family did much for us during those very difficult years and even afterwards. Words cannot adequately express the gratitude we owe them. Henry was an Anglo-Indian who was well known and respected in Nairobi social circles. Despite not owning a car in those days, he visited Elsie and Conrad daily in hospital. He would wait patiently with them, sacrificing his leisure hours and even trying to amuse Conrad as best as he could. He and his Goan friend, the late Damien Nunes, also helped Elsie with most of the shopping she needed while at the hospital. I was grateful for the great personal sacrifice they were both making for our sakes.

Elsie, despite the many problems she was going through, never

kept me waiting for news. She wrote a detailed letter telling me all about Conrad, the kindness and care of the hospital staff and even the genuine concern and understanding of the senior specialist who was treating Conrad. There was not much the hospital could do for him, but they all – nurses and doctors alike – did their best to make his stay as painless and comfortable as they possibly could. Because of his rare health condition, teams of doctors and students would come to see him; for them, this was an interesting case to study even though it brought little relief or comfort to us. The senior specialist, Dr Harris had expressed a desire to see and talk to us jointly and Elsie had asked if it would be possible for me to get down to Nairobi as soon as convenient.

It so happened that while Conrad was being treated, Elsie herself was taken seriously ill in Nairobi. As she would be requiring surgery, it was considered best that she too be admitted as an in-patient; previously, because of Conrad's condition, she was given special permission to stay with him in hospital and even share the same room. When news of Elsie's condition reached me, I was truly shattered, and could well imagine her thoughts at this hour of need. Here again, I must record my gratitude to my good friend Henry Price who never let us down. He was at the hospital every evening, visiting both Conrad and Elsie — not an easy undertaking for a young man who led an active and busy social life. Following her operation Elsie was kept in hospital for nearly four weeks, and during this period, a 24-hour round-the-clock watch was kept over Conrad by the

nursing staff. His condition had begun to deteriorate quite suddenly and rather rapidly too. He was gravely ill and the hospital staff were anxious that I should get down to Nairobi as soon as possible. Henry telegraphed the latest news to me at Marsabit, and once again I was granted compassionate leave to visit them. As good luck would have it, I managed to get a lift to Isiolo and from there another truck conveyed me straight to Nairobi. Things couldn't have worked out any better in the circumstances.

While in Nairobi, arrangements were made for Elsie and me to see Dr Harris, himself a very busy man who was much in demand. When we arrived at his office, there was no beating about the bush. He told us quite bluntly and coldly that Conrad's condition would never improve – it was something we had to live with since there was no known cure for it. He went so far as to tell us that Conrad would not live beyond the age of fourteen at most. For a young couple like ourselves, it was as though a hundred arrows were piercing our hearts all at once. We were full of emotion and very shattered but somehow had to contain our feelings. We had hoped all along that Dr Harris was going to give us some hope – even if it meant sending Conrad to England or anywhere in the world where a 'miracle cure' could be found. Quite rightly, he was giving us the bare facts – no hidden hopes. Painful and hard though these facts were, we had to accept them. He even went on to suggest that we should seriously consider having another child, and assured us that there was nothing to show that any future child would be similarly af-

fectured; the chances were a million to one. We were too broken at the time even to consider the thought of another child since our minds and hearts were centered on Conrad alone. Dr Harris then told us that as soon as Conrad had recovered sufficiently, he would be discharged from hospital, and asked us to consider, very seriously, the possibility of moving out of the N.F.D. and obtaining a posting to a district with adequate medical facilities. He would, if required, provide a recommendation to support any application for my transfer. That day, we left his office very upset and dejected.

I remained at Nairobi until Elsie and Conrad were discharged from hospital, and later we all (including Clyde) stayed at the Price household for a few days. Even though not fully recovered and sufficiently rested, Elsie returned to her parents' home at Kitale taking Clyde with her too, while I went back to Marsabit. Here, the DC and his wife and all our friends were disappointed that we would have to leave the district and the N.F.D. It hurt us dearly too since I never wanted to leave this Province. However great the attractions of a city life, my heart was right in this part of Africa and it was a great comfort that Elsie, despite all the problems we had been through also shared this feeling. However, we had to accept the fact that we simply couldn't afford to risk Conrad's life by remaining in an area which was miles away from a hospital proper. I had not given serious thought to the choice of a district, but felt that the Coast Province or a town like Kisumu in the Nyanza Province would be ideal especially because of their warm climates. There was no certainty,

however, that I would be posted to a station of my preference, but in view of the special circumstances surrounding my case, I was convinced that the DC would strongly support my application. Although I was born in Nairobi, I never wanted to be posted there; somehow or other city life never appealed to me – the districts had more to offer!

**PART FIVE — South Nyanza
District**

16. Move to Kisii

Quite to my surprise, at about the time I was contemplating a transfer, news reached the DC that I, along with several other clerical officers, had been promoted to a more senior grade. This new grading would necessitate my moving from Marsabit to a station commensurate with the new post. Were it not for Conrad's condition, I would have been quite prepared to sacrifice my promotion if only I could be assured that I would be left in 'peace' to continue working in the N.F.D. Besides, there was every likelihood that the post at Marsabit too might soon be up-graded. The promotion itself meant very little to me at the time. In monetary terms, the increase was negligible, especially since many of the salary scales overlapped. Besides, when one considered that I would be losing my separation and hardship (frontier) allowances, the pecuniary gain was of little consequence. There was no way out of the posting now, and not long after my promotion was announced, my posting orders were out! I was posted to Kisii, in the South Nyanza district. I

had never before served in the Nyanza Province, and my only information about Kisii was that it was a very damp station, with a fairly high rainfall record. For a moment I wondered why the powers that be, conscious of Conrad's state of health and general condition, had posted me to this place after all. When I questioned this posting 'unofficially', I was told that Kisii was quite a good station which had a modern hospital with three doctors attached to it.

Because of the fairly large house we occupied at Marsabit, I found I had accumulated far too much luggage and other possessions. My suite of furniture had been specially made by a Sikh firm in Nanyuki from the best available *mvuli* timber and I was determined to take this along. I had also accumulated various curios and trophies – three colobus monkey skins I had bought from Ethiopia, plus the two elephant feet which I would never leave behind at any cost. These feet were of sentimental value, having been cured by me over many months of drying in the hot sands of the Chalbi desert. Terence Adamson, brother of George Adamson, and brother-in-law of the late Joy Adamson of *Born Free* fame, had actually shot the elephant a few hundred yards from our garden. I was quite prepared to dispose of some of our kitchen utensils and, even items of bed linen, but certainly not any of the game trophies which I had preserved and looked after all these years. These would be a constant reminder of our days in the N.F.D.

After the years spent at Marsabit, it was not easy to leave behind the friends we had made during our stay there; in addi-

tion to our Goan colleagues, there was Willie Perera, a native of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), who was attached to the National Parks departments. Willie had supervised the building of the log cabin on Marsabit mountain – an area which abounds in wildlife of various description, elephants of great size, buffalo, greater kudu and oryx. During her brief stay in Marsabit, Elsie was fortunate to spend a whole day with me and the children in this log cabin well before it was officially opened for visitors and tourists.

At Kisii, the district clerk had applied for a few days' local leave prior to moving to Marsabit, and the intention was that I should move there well in advance of his departure. Terry Lobo and I communicated over our respective moves as though we had been the best of friends (I had never met him before, nor have I met him to this day!) Because of the urgency of the move, I had to leave Marsabit without having a formal handing-over period with my successor as was normally the practice. Instead I handed over to the DO (Richard Hickman – who had not been long at Marsabit himself); to assist Terry Lobo, I had also prepared a detailed handing over report (this was not required in the case of hand-overs between members of the clerical staff, but I felt that it was only fair that I should leave such a report for my successor, considering the urgency surrounding my transfer). Through the good offices of the DC, I was able to leave my luggage behind at Marsabit. This had all been securely packed for me by the station labour, assisted by the local carpenter, Marete, and also some of the prisoners. Several wooden

crates had been made for the furniture and other bulky items. I could see that I would eventually be requiring a five-tonner to move my personal effects to Kisii and the local transporter, Noormohamed Mangia, had agreed to provide his truck when the time came – even though, my entitlement at the time was a three-tonner only!

I was truly sad to say goodbye to my many friends and to a district and people I had become so much a part of. At Isiolo, I was able to stop briefly to say goodbye and ‘thank you’ to as many of my friends there as possible. From Isiolo, I got a lift straight into Nairobi, and after a night stop in the city, took the taxi to Kitale. Here I spent a few more days before finally proceeding to Kisii. It was nice to be united with the whole family once more, and even to find Conrad looking much better even though he was still weak and feeble.

From Kitale, I took the local African bus service in to Kisumu where I arrived just before lunch and stayed with the District Clerk (Joe D’Souza and his wife Farah). Joe, who I had not met previously, knew my in-laws well during his days at Lodwar, and even though we had never met before, we were not total strangers, as I subsequently found out that he also knew my uncle at Zanzibar. On the evening of my arrival, Joe took me to meet some of the other Goans. I recall meeting the PC’s clerk, a very kind-hearted man by the name of Sally Mendes; there was D. A. da Cunha, that veteran of Kisumu and father-in-law of my good friend, Francis da Lima. There were several other Goan families I met later that evening at the Goan Institute in Kisumu.

The following morning, I left for Kisii, again by the local African bus service. Although my old friend and colleague from Voi days, Germano Gomes (now married with two young children), was at Kisii at the time, arrangements had been made for me to be accommodated by a Mr C. Remedios (known to his friends as 'Caitu'). He was a married man who, because of the children's education, had to leave his wife in Nairobi. Remedios worked as a Cashier for the South Nyanza LNC (Local Native Council) — later renamed African District Council. He was a quiet and reserved individual whose conversation was minimal. All the same, he was a good host and certainly looked after me well. The arrangement was that I should stay_a few days with him – at least until such time as a suitable Government quarter could be allocated to me. I felt it would be pointless bringing the whole family over until I had first secured accommodation. Kisii was the headquarters of the South Nyanza district — a very large district, judging from the number of staff attached to the DC's office. There was the DC, a senior DO (referred to as DO 1), then the DO/E (Eastern), DO/W (Western) and DO (Nyamira–Kisii Highlands). In addition there were three District Assistants – one DA (Boma), 1 DA (Office Supt.) and the DRO (District Revenue officer). The DC when I arrived at Kisii was a man with the personality of a headmaster – by the name of Jack Wolff (it was he who was one of my examiners at the oral part of the standard Swahili examination, when he was DC at Eldoret). The man I was immediately responsible to was a young Englishman by the name of Paul Massey. He was

fairly new to Kenya and struck me as being very immature. His position was that of Office Superintendent.

I have previously referred to the urgency attached to my posting, which meant that there was no time for a proper hand over to be conducted at either end. I found the district clerk's office at Kisii in utter chaos when I arrived. I had never before been accustomed to working in such conditions, and decided that my first priority would be to get some measure of order. What used to upset me most was the constant thoroughfare of all and sundry in the clerks' office. It took me a while to establish who my own staff and the distract office staff were, and who were members of the general public!

To achieve what I had in mind, I asked the DC if it would be possible to have a large counter built so that members of the public could be excluded from the main office, and be attended to over the counter. This would eventually result in greater efficiency, and would certainly cut out the free access to the district clerk's office of unauthorized personnel. Once the counter was built, the staff would be able to concentrate on their respective jobs unhindered as opposed to the old situation where a strange mixture of people, with an equally assorted number of shauris, would stroll freely through the office, while in another corner, the local Kisii gruel-vendor was doing a brisk trade doling out bowlfuls of hot gruel to some of the staff. While I had no objections whatsoever to their having a bowl of that delicious *wimbi* porridge during the day, the constant toing and froing certainly disrupted the smooth running of the office. My staff

at the time consisted of an assistant District clerk and two typists. The Kisii clerk, Patrick, who did all the clerical work for the African courts, also shared our offices; he always had a constant stream of people, some wanting to pay court fines, others waiting for him to type out the necessary warrants which would admit them to prison. In the latter case, such individuals were always brought under police escort.

One morning, I called all my staff together and explained what I had in mind. Paul Massey, whose job it really was to organize this side of things, didn't seem very interested and rather left it all to me. The arrangement was that my assistant, Onyango, would have an office next door to mine with a connecting door to provide easy access between our two offices. It would be his job to attend to members of the public over the new counter, and then direct them to me or the appropriate district officer or assistant. The typists were to be housed in a separate office next door to my assistant's. I had also explained to the two office boys (Nyamwencha and Dominic) what I now expected of them. It was as much their responsibility to see that members of the public did not enter the main clerks' offices unless there was a very real reason for them to be there. I gave each of the staff some share in the responsibility, and this in itself made them welcome the changes I was introducing. I too felt more comfortable to see the office gradually take shape and look more like an office than the shambles it previously was! Although I had left a very detailed handing-over report with the District Officer at Marsabit, I was surprised to learn, from a tele-

gram received from the Ministry of African Affairs in Nairobi (no doubt at the request of the PC Isiolo and DC Marsabit) – that I be sent back to Marsabit to conduct a full scale hand over. Mr Wolff, the DC at Kisii strongly resisted the request, and even went so far as to inform the Establishment Officer at the Ministry how pleased he was with me. To quote his own words, “In the short time he has been here, Mr Maciel has already knocked my chaotic office into shape.” These remarks, coming from a man who I had hardly got to know well enough, were very encouraging indeed and I was pleased to know that my efforts had been appreciated. My ego was boosted even further when the DC called me into his office one evening to personally congratulate me and thank me for what I had achieved in such a short space of time. The encouragement I received made me all the more determined to maintain high standards at work. I now had an office to myself – with a connecting door which gave me access to both my assistant and also the typing pool. Gordon Orinda, who was my assistant before Onyango took over, had left earlier to enter politics. He was contesting the parliamentary seat for South Nyanza alongside Lawrence Oguda (who eventually won the elections).

Onyango was a very capable clerk, and together we kept the district office running very smoothly.

The Government quarter I had been allocated was in need of urgent redecoration, and I had hoped, especially in view of Conrad’s condition, that this could be done before the family arrived. I had asked the DO 1 (Mr Holford-Walker) and the Dis-

trict Assistant Paul Massey to visit the house so that they could see its condition for themselves. I submitted the normal request for redecoration to the PWD, even though I was aware that I was asking for this job to be done well before the accepted four-year period. My request had the DC's support, and even though the local Inspector of Works was not altogether keen on undertaking the job, he did (after inspecting the quarter himself) agree and I must say that the whole house looked much cleaner and brighter when the redecoration was completed. Coming from Marsabit where we had a modern and well-maintained house, the housing at Kisii was something of a let down – especially since I had come to this station on promotion, and would have thought that the house would be in keeping with my grading, and of a slightly better standard.

Housing at Kisii, as in many other parts of Kenya, was still allocated on a racial basis –the Europeans occupying the best houses, the Asians, the second best, and the Africans the third best! The only exception as far as I can recall, was a quarter in the European residential area, which had been allotted to the Indian Medical Officer (Dr Sood). He was married to an Englishwoman. The two African Assistant District Officers also had 'superior' type quarters, but again, in the African residential area. Regrettably, I have to record that when it came to housing, and especially the redecoration of houses, there was always a problem if an Asian or African house needed attention. Besides, the Asian and African staff never had any choice when it came to colour schemes, with the result that the general decor and

choice of colour schemes, some of these houses left much to be desired.

Although I had felt that the family should now join me, I had still not decided on transport arrangements. The African bus service to Kisumu would be far too cumbersome, especially for Conrad, and I finally resigned myself to hiring a private taxi, regardless of the cost. I had already asked Elsie to stand by to move to Kisii at any time and as Conrad himself was improving slightly, I felt that the journey from Kitale to Kisii should be made in some comfort. I was granted a few days' leave to get down to Kitale, and on arrival there made arrangements for a taxi to take us all back; admittedly the cost was prohibitive, but there was no alternative in the circumstances. As good luck would have it, an old friend of my in-laws, and a man who had served for many years as Revenue Officer at Kitale, had called to wish Elsie goodbye. Major 'Sammy' Weller, though old, was a very active man and ran a mixed farm at Cherangani where he had a considerable acreage under cultivation – mostly coffee and maize. "Mr Weller" (as we always referred to him) had known Elsie since she was a young girl and had a great regard for her. When he heard of our plight over transport and the high fare I had agreed to pay for the taxi, he immediately came to our rescue and offered to drive us down to Kisii in his own car. I just couldn't believe this, but was grateful for his offer which I readily accepted. Since, the journey to Kisii, via Kakamega and and Kisumu'would be too much for a man of his age, I had suggested that he should spend the night with us at

Kisii and perhaps leave the following morning. He was quite welcome to stay on for a few more days if he so wished. He was very glad of the invitation, and we eventually arranged to leave on the Monday morning. As for luggage, we had only two suitcases to take along and now that I had a Government house, made arrangements for my baggage to be transported by Messrs Noormohamed Mangia of Marsabit since most of my heavy baggage was still in the DC's store there. My mother-in-law decided to accompany us on the journey to Kisii, and in a way I was pleased about this, especially since she would be a great source of comfort to Elsie who had already suffered a great deal as a result of Conrad's continued ill health.

We left Kitale early on that Monday morning, travelling at a steady speed through Kakamega and stopping briefly en route at Kisumu. The 75-mile drive from Kisumu to Kisii took just under two hours. It was certainly a long trip and we were all quite tired when we arrived at Kisii later that afternoon. Despite the limited accommodation we had, we managed to make Mr Weller as comfortable as possible. He was a very easy guest who could adapt to any situation. He settled down comfortably that night and after spending a day with us, he and my mother-in-law left for Kitale. I couldn't thank him enough for his kindness.

Although Kisii had a cool and damp climate, the area around the township, and especially the Kisii highlands, must surely have been one of the richest agricultural areas I've known as far as African farming was concerned (I use the term 'African farm-

ing' since only Europeans were allowed to farm in the 'White Highlands' in those days). A large area of the Kisii highlands was planted out to coffee, and later through help from the agricultural department, the local farmers were even encouraged to grow tea, which they did very successfully. In the warmer regions of the district, not far from Lake Victoria, some of the best fruit was grown notably pawpaw and custard apples. The Kisii also grew a fair amount of bananas, and during the period I was stationed there, it was possible to buy a whole cluster of sun-ripe bananas for about Shs.1/- from the local African market or the many fruit vendors who often hawked their produce around the houses of the Government staff. A few miles outside Kisii, on the road to Kisumu, at a place called Oyugis, some of the best ground-nuts were grown.

On the domestic front, we had taken on a Kisii lad to look after Conrad. His job was really to carry Conrad about and keep the poor child amused. Elsie tackled all the other house hold chores and also did the gardening and in no time at all, we were able to boast of a very attractive and colourful garden, a lush green lawn, and even a home which, thanks to Elsie's good sense of taste – had been beautifully decorated and adequately furnished. Although the house had been decorated a short time ago, the colour schemes were far from pleasing, and we decided that the only way out of this was to buy the paint privately ourselves. This is precisely what we did, and it was nice to be able to paint the walls and doors in a colour that matched some of the furnishings around. Elsie even managed to get one of

the local Kisii craftsmen to make us a three-piece lounge suite from the cane that this region is noted for. The rustic-carved, garden-type of chairs were very common in Kisii and could be bought for around Shs.5/- . Elsie wanted the sofa to be equally simple, and though the craftsman had never made anything like this previously, he was quite willing to 'have a go'. We were delighted to see the finished product after a few weeks; Elsie spray painted the entire furniture in a light shade of pink so as to blend with the general decor of our lounge. Little by little, we bought the other items we needed, including a paraffin-run refrigerator.

Because of the added strain on Elsie as a result of Conrad's condition, we now took on a Mkisii houseboy by the name of Simeon. Between him and the *mtoto* (John Kebasso), they managed to cope with the various jobs around the house. With his condition showing little improvement, it was necessary for Elsie to spend a lot of time with Conrad, often carrying him for hours on end. When I returned from work each evening, I would relieve her to some extent by taking Conrad over, and trying my best to help with what sometimes became a desperate situation. Clyde, somehow sensing the demands on our time, managed to amuse himself in the garden by getting one of the domestic staff to play with him. John Kebasso was quite young himself, and so enjoyed spending his free time with Clyde. On occasions when Conrad had a 'brighter' day, Clyde would always expect him to play with him, little realizing then that the poor child was so restricted in the amount of exertion or exercise he could take.

Whenever possible, and the Kisii weather permitting, we would get out and go for walks. On all such outings, we had to carry Conrad along since a pram or push chair were of no avail. His heart condition meant that he always wanted to be held in the upright position whenever he was awake.

In the short time we had been in the district, we had made many friends. The Europeans had their own club and kept very much to themselves. They also used the Kisii Hotel, a typical English inn type of establishment. The Asians had recently formed a club which they called the South Nyanza Sports Club. Its constitution was multi-racial and its members consisted mainly of local Asians from the business community, some from the civil service and other commercial organizations in the town. Justin D'Souza who worked for the transporters, Gethin & Dawson, was a popular member of the club and he and his wife (Grace) frequented it fairly regularly. Dr N.D. Chaudhri, the private and ever-popular medical practitioner, was another regular at the club, as was my old friend Germano Gomes. The only non-Asian members of the club were Senior Chief Musa Nyandusi of Nyaribari location – who was its Vice-President, and Chief Zacharia Aseda of the Kisii highlands. The President was Dr Chaudhri. There was not much of indoor activity at the clubhouse – not for me at any rate, since most "of those who frequented the place normally played various card games (unfortunately, I have never been a lover of card games ever since my childhood days!) Outdoor activities included hockey and cricket and fixtures were organized with the Government

African school and also the Goan Institute at Kisumu.

In addition to the Goan and other Asians employed in the civil service, there were three other Goan families at Kisii. Prominent among these was Mrs Mascarenhas, an elderly and well-spoken lady who, like Major Gethin, was one of the early pioneers in this part of Nyanza. She must have been in her sixties when we were there. The others consisted of Mr and Mrs Justin D'Souza who I have referred to earlier. Justin, although once an employee of the Administration, was now employed by Messrs. Gethin & Dawson. Mr John D'Souza worked for the African Highlands Tea Company, and like Justin D'Souza, he and his family were provided with decent housing free of charge. The furniture they were provided with was far superior to that supplied by the Kenya PWD. Another asset was that they were provided with indoor sanitation which the Government Asian quarters lacked. Indoor sanitation made all the difference, and I could hardly believe that coming from the wilds of Marsabit, where the sanitation was understandably primitive initially (we later had indoor sanitation), the Asian clerical staff at Kisii were still using the old bucket-type of system. For this job, the Administration employed a handful of sweepers recruited mainly from the Embu and Mwea-Tebere areas of the Central Province. I considered the whole system to be unhygienic.

The John D'Souzas, who had two daughters, were good friends of ours. Being mobile, they were able to show us some of the beautiful countryside around this vast district. Kisii had more than its fair share of rainfall and this no doubt accounted for

the greenery around the whole township and adjoining areas. There was never any shortage of fresh produce, and the weekly market was well stocked with fruit and vegetables of varying kinds – all at very reasonable prices. Eggs were plentiful, so too poultry, and many of the locals would bring their produce for sale at the houses of the Asian staff. I recall buying some of the best *pawpaws* and pineapples here and very cheaply too. Conrad's condition was unpredictable. There were days when he appeared quite normal and fit, but this condition would deteriorate very suddenly and without the slightest warning. It is because of this peculiar situation that we were unable to plan anything, particularly outings, in advance. This was, in some respects, very unfortunate, and added to the pressures already on us. On occasions when the D'Souza family would drive us to the nearby highlands location of Manga, the whole trip would prove such a relaxing experience. The air in and around the highlands was so bracing, and the lush and neatly laid out *shambas* of the local Kisii farmers presented a very soothing spectacle.

In addition to the Provincial Administration, there was a fairly well staffed agricultural department at Kisii, a veterinary department, public works department and even a Resident Magistrate's Court, not forgetting the Kenya Police Divisional Headquarters. There were also the co-operative and marketing departments (this last establishment coming under the control of the Maize Marketing Board). The co-operative department, whose Accountant was a Goan named Alick P. H. D'Souza, played a

great part in encouraging local farmers to start and manage their own co-operatives. There was also the Local Native Council (LNC for short, and later renamed ADC – African District Council). The District Commissioner was President of the LNC and the Secretary during my tour at Kisii was a very tall and well-built Luo by the name of Paul Mboya.

For his services with the council, he was later awarded the MBE. The Treasurer was an Englishman – Joe England, and the Cashier, Mr Remedios, the gentleman I stayed with when I first arrived at Kisii. On the education front, the township was well served for schools – there was a well-run Government African school and a Government-aided Asian school. In the district a whole, there was a very high number of schools run, in the main, by the various missionaries.

Work-wise, I found myself involved in a variety of jobs which were, strictly speaking, those of the Office Superintendent. Paul Massey was not very happy at his job, and this resulted in fairly frequent absences from work owing to illness, brought about, no doubt through lack of job satisfaction. On such occasions I was always asked to step into the breach and run the office administration side of things, in addition to my own duties as district clerk. Paul had very much wanted an outdoor job – he liked to go on safari, get involved in some of the decision making, etc. He had seen many a young District Officer command considerable authority, and I feel that his exclusion from this élite cadre must have been partly to blame for his attitude at work. His colleague, Ray Hawes, the Revenue Officer, did a

considerable amount of travelling as part of his job since South Nyanza was a very vast district, and one of the main jobs of the DRO was to organize tax collection throughout the district.

The District headquarters at Kisii housed not just the district office, but also the Resident Magistrate's Court and offices. Mr R.M. Bainbridge, an elderly New Zealander was Resident Magistrate at the time. When he retired, he was replaced by Mr J. McEvoy. The revenue office was situated in a separate block, and Ray Hawes's staff included Germano Gomes (the Cashier), Robert Ouko (revenue clerk) the two tax clerks. Robert was a brilliant young Luo, very studious and hard working. Within a short time he had won a scholarship to study in Ethiopia. He did so well in later years, and became a very important and trusted figure in *Mzee* Jomo Kenyatta's government, rising to become Kenya's Foreign Minister.

There was much opportunity for sport at Kisii, and as a member of the South Nyanza Sports Club, I sometimes represented them at friendly cricket and hockey matches against staff and students of the Government African school, and even accompanied the cricket team whenever we played against the Goan Institute at Kisumu. On some of our free weekends, we would accompany the D'Souza family to nearby Kendu Bay on Lake Victoria or some of the neighbouring regions like Riana and Asumbi. At Asumbi. there was a very flourishing Catholic mission run by the Mill Hill fathers. The district as a whole was well served for schools and hospitals – all run by missionaries of different denominations. At Kendu Bay, the Seventh Day Ad-

ventists ran a very popular and well-patronized hospital, staffed at senior level by Americans. This hospital was a great boon to the many people who lived around the area, and also to other residents of Kisii who preferred the services of a private hospital to those available at the Native Civil Hospital at Kisii. On our trips to Kendu Bay, we would use the Government guest-house as our base; most of the day would be spent fishing at the nearby pier and returning to Kisii late in the evening with quite a sizeable catch of fresh lake fish.

During our stay at Kisii, we were also fortunate in visiting the Macalder Mines which employed a very large number of Africans. On one such trip to this area, we called at the residence of an elderly Goan couple – Mr and Mrs Mascarenhas (no relation of that pioneering woman, Mrs Mascarenhas of Kisii). This couple ran a small *duka* at a place called Sakwa in the heart of the African reserve. They had been in the area for quite a few years, and I admired their courage in sticking it out alone in this area. They were well liked by the locals since theirs was the only non-African *duka* in Sakwa at the time (as far as I can recollect anyway). We were very touched by the hospitality they extended us especially since our visit had been unannounced.

There were several Catholic missions in the district, and the one nearest us was at Nyabururu. Here, a Dutch priest, Jac. Van der Weyden was in charge, assisted by two other priests, all from the Mill Hill order. The church itself was very large and was always full of people on Sundays and other holy days. The local Mkisii would travel long distances to get to church, many

of them in their Sunday best

Owing to the distance of Nyabururu from Kisii *boma*, a long-standing arrangement was in operation whereby one of the priests came out to say Mass at Kisii once a month. At this Mass, which was held in a small chapel not far from the Asian residential area, the majority of the congregation consisted of Goans, with a sprinkling of Europeans and Africans. I was never really able to find out why – but for some unknown reason, the task of entertaining the visiting priest always fell to the Goans! A rota system was devised and in this way the priest got to meet all the Goans on the station. Why only the Goans I shall never know – perhaps the missionaries knew where to come when they needed help!

My Chapter on Kisii would be incomplete were I not to mention two pioneers who I have briefly referred to earlier. One of these was Major Richard Gathin who, in the early days, travelled throughout the district on foot. Through sheer determination, hard work and an enterprising spirit, he set up a very successful and thriving transport business in Kisii. The firm of Gethin & Dawson was well known in the district, and when Major Gethin retired many years later, the business was taken over by his son. The other pioneer was a woman, and a Goan at that! Mrs Mascarenhas was a grand old lady who had dared to go out and live in some of the rural areas around Kisii and run her business. She had a shop at Riana and in addition owned property in Kisii township itself. Old age had forced her to give up activities and she later took up residence in Kisii town. She

was a pleasant, well-educated and determined woman. Both she and Major Gethin were highly respected members of their respective communities and in the district generally.

There was a great deal to see in and around Kisii, but not being mobile it was difficult to cover the many interesting areas of this vast district. Elsie and I had often talked about buying a car more so because of Conrad. With a car, we felt that we could at least take Conrad out for a drive and thereby provide a change of scene and air both for him and also a much needed break for us both and Clyde too. Because of financial limitations, we could never think of buying a new car; besides, with no knowledge whatsoever of motor mechanics, I would sooner have had a brand new car than an old 'banger'. Through Ray Hawes (the Revenue Officer), I had heard that the Resident Magistrate, Mr Bainbridge, who was shortly to retire intended to sell his car prior to proceeding on leave. His was virtually a brand new car, in immaculate condition, and used mostly on the home to office run and rarely on long distance trips. This would be the ideal buy, but could we- really afford this 'newish' car? In the interests of Conrad, we had. decided to sacrifice all. The problem was how to approach the Bainbridges about the possibility of our buying their car; even though I knew the couple (and Mrs Bainbridge worked as the DC's secretary), I could not bring myself to ask if we could buy their car. When he heard of my interest. Ray Hawes immediately agreed to act as a go-between. He soon found out that not only were they happy to sell the car to me, but had even offered to let me

come down to see and test drive it, and if the price and terms were favourable, to buy it! The testing of the car was hardly necessary since it was in immaculate condition throughout.

Later that afternoon, Mr Bainbridge and I met and agreed on the price; the only snag was that I did not have the ready cash available, but had the necessary funds to meet the cost in my Post Office Savings account. These funds were accumulated partly from the share I had inherited from my late father's estate, and partly from the little we were able to save. Buying the car would mean sacrificing our entire savings, but as I have already said, we were prepared to do this in the interests of giving Conrad that little bit extra in the shape of comfort.

Ray Hawes did well from the sale deal since the Bainbridges compensated him with two bottles of Scotch for introducing us. He deserved this and we were very pleased for him. After I handed Mr Bainbridge our Post Office Savings book and a withdrawal warrant which he would cash in Nairobi, he parted with the car, and from the Kisii Hotel where they were staying, I drove home. Despite all our problems with Conrad, we were all so delighted that we had now become the proud owners of a little Morris Minor saloon – colour leaf green, reg. no. KFJ 910. Even Conrad smiled shyly as we all got into our latest acquisition and drove off to the D'Souza family to tell them about it. Everyone seemed pleased that we had bought a car and a fairly new one at that. I had learnt to drive on one of the Government trucks at Voi, but never really applied for a licence or took a test. No one ever questioned the DC's staff; it was

always assumed that if we drove, we obviously had a licence! I decided to regularize the whole situation by applying for and taking my test. The Police Inspector who examined applicants was a very strict type of person and I was told that one of the Catholic missionaries had failed three times at the hands of this examiner. It must have been my lucky day, since I passed the test at the first attempt. Many of my friends were surprised over this especially since Inspector Cassells had a reputation of failing first-time applicants. With the added confidence I had now gained on passing my test, I decided that we should take a trip to my in-laws at Kitale to show off our good as new car. When we got there, they were all so pleased for us. We spent the weekend with them, returning to Kisii late on Sunday afternoon.

17. Conrad's Last Days and the Aftermath

In the months that followed our return from Kitale, Conrad's condition showed no improvement; the climates of Kisii was, for the greater part of the year, damp and wet – not the sort of conditions that were suitable for a child who was so susceptible to attacks of pneumonia. We were at the mercy of the Government medical staff – a team of three doctors in fact. Two of these were Europeans one having arrived only recently as a replacement for the Indian doctor, Dr Sood who had left the district on transfer. The third was an African, a Mkamba by tribe by the name of Dr Mwinzi. Although Kisii had such a sizeable complement of medical staff, and a fairly well equipped hospital, we were, at times, disappointed that nothing could be done to alleviate Conrad's condition. At the office, Paul Massey, writing on the DC's behalf, had strongly recommended that consideration be given to flying Elsie and Conrad out to Britain for

specialized treatment. Unfortunately, heart surgery was not far advanced in those days, and we were told that nothing could be done to correct Conrad's defective heart condition, even if we were able to afford the treatment abroad. This was a sad blow for us, especially since we had high hopes that it would be possible for him to be treated in the United Kingdom.

At home, despite the disappointment, we coped as best as we possibly could, but the final blow was struck in December 1957 when Conrad became seriously ill soon after Christmas. The treatment he was receiving at home was of no avail and it was decided that he should be admitted to hospital; we agreed that this was the best possible course in the circumstances, although we were aware that the facilities at Kisii hospital, especially for in-patients, were not the same as one might expect- in towns like Kisumu or Nakuru. Elsie was allowed to stay with him all day and night, and I relieved her as often I could as soon as I returned from work. It was so sad to see him suffer the way he did and we both felt so helpless.

At the office, my heart was not in my work – the strain of Conrad's deteriorating condition was weighing heavily on me. The DC, Mr Wolff, had been transferred to Nakuru as Acting Provincial Commissioner for the Rift Valley Province, and his replacement was the man I had first met at Mombasa – Mr G.A. Skipper. In my desperation. I saw him on several occasions about getting the doctors to do 'something more' to help poor Conrad. Friends, who could not understand how we were able to contain the anxiety and strain of the past few months ral-

lied round with offers of help. My two brothers also comforted us with their letters and prayers, as did my in-laws. Everyone seemed so kind and understanding.

A few weeks before Conrad became seriously ill, two of my young cousins from Mombasa (Darrell and Denzyl Sequeira), had arrived to spend part of their vacation with us. While we were able to take them around some of the district initially, this was not possible after Conrad's admission to hospital, and I was grateful for their understanding of the difficult situation we were in.

All through these months, I was conscious of the heavy strain on Elsie who was not in the best of health herself at the time. On her shoulders fell the brunt of the task of being mother and even full-time nurse to Conrad. I can honestly say that during those difficult days, she and I hardly slept a wink.

New Year's Day passed off uneventfully for us. There was too much on our minds, and we prayed that things would improve for us all in the year just started – 1958. On the 2nd January, seeing that she had now been at the hospital for so many days at a stretch, I asked Elsie to go home for the night while I stayed behind with Conrad. She would not hear of it, but we finally arrived at a compromise whereby I would relieve her early the following morning. Conrad was far from well when I left to return home that evening, and seeing him suffer so much, I arrived home completely shattered. Clyde was asleep when I got home, so too my two cousins. I could hardly wait for the morning to dawn and was up fairly early. I had barely driven a few

hundred yards towards the hospital when I noticed that one of the wheels was flat. What a desperate hour to have a puncture I thought! Not being able to change the wheel with any speed, I walked the short distance and reached the hospital rather later than I expected. Elsie, who had anticipated my arrival much earlier was very upset initially, but soon settled down after I had explained the problem I had encountered with the car. Later she told me how gravely ill Conrad had been the previous night. There was no doctor available and the African female dresser who was around at the time seemed quite helpless. Before I had actually arrived at the hospital, I understand Dr Mwinzi, who had just arrived for duty that morning, happened to be passing through and seemed very surprised that no doctor had seen Conrad. Later, a European nursing sister arrived and administered, what Elsie feels was a sedative (syrup) to try and put Conrad to sleep. Soon after, Elsie left for home on foot, visibly shattered and in tears. Meanwhile, I sat alongside Conrad's cot and watched him struggle helplessly for life. Despite the aid of an oxygen tent, his breathing was becoming 'heavy', and life was slowly ebbing away. I clasped his tiny hand in mine, and with tears rolling down my cheeks, pleaded with St Jude (Patron Saint of desperate causes), to come to our aid.

In a way I was pleased Elsie was not there to witness Conrad's last few moments, even though I knew she would certainly have been a great comfort to me had she been around – but hadn't she endured much pain and anxiety already? Many a young mother of her age would never have known such an experience,

I kept telling myself. Moments later, Conrad breathed his last, and although in that fleeting moment my whole world seemed shattered, I was, in a way, relieved to see him at peace at last. My disappointment and anger was directed more at the hospital authorities. I am not for one moment suggesting that Conrad's life could have been prolonged, rather that his last moments could have been made more peaceful and painless. After all, even in death there is dignity!

Elsie must have had some premonition since she could hardly settle at home and rushed back to the hospital. She broke down when I gave her the news – more so because she wasn't by his side during his last moments.

We both wept bitterly. A struggle which together we were engaged in just over two years ago had finally ended. News of Conrad's death soon spread and many of our friends rushed home with offers of help. They even took over full control for all the funeral arrangements. As there was no proper church in the immediate vicinity where the body could be kept, it lay exposed at our home. Many of our friends kept an all-night vigil, allowing us to snatch a few moments of sleep. My in-laws arrived later that night.

The funeral the next evening was very well attended and Conrad was buried at the nearby Catholic Mission at Nyabururu in a plot normally reserved for missionaries.

Conrad's absence had left a complete void in our lives. Clyde too was now beginning to miss him. We now had to make sure that he was given our undivided attention – something he

had missed (not intentionally) because of the constant care and attention that Conrad's condition demanded.

Simeon, our houseboy, had meanwhile asked for leave to go to his home in the Reserve, and we were very fortunate in securing the services of an elderly Mkisii cook whose name was Magama Nyangechi. This man was a very good-natured person who was well experienced in the art of Goan cuisine, having worked for several Goans in the past. He was polite and always smart in appearance. We wished so much we had found him during our earlier and difficult days. Because of the strong feelings about the lack of attention while Conrad was an in-patient, I had drafted a formal complaint which the DC later referred to the medical authorities. I met the Medical Officer i/c and put my case in a face to face talk with him. While he made every effort to defend his staff, I made it clear that nothing would deter me from making, what I considered to be a perfectly justifiable and legitimate complaint. As a parent, I felt I had a duty to speak out on Conrad's behalf. He went on to assure me that my family and I had nothing to fear in the future. This remark was prompted by the fact that he was aware of my request for a transfer from the district on the grounds that I had lost all faith in the hospital after our bitter experience. Although deeply hurt, and still far from convinced that justice had been done, the MO and I later agreed to bury the hatchet.

For the time being at least, we decided to stay on at Kisii, but I had made up my mind that if a suitable opportunity arose in the future, I would immediately apply for a transfer.

Our troubles were far from over after Conrad died. Within a few months of his death, Clyde developed some severe pains in the region of his thigh. At first thinking that he was 'fussing' over the loss of Conrad, I often, in my impatience (and much to my regret now), smacked him. As the pains persisted, we decided to consult a private doctor. Dr Chaudhri was very popular among the locals and many of the Africans would travel for miles to be treated by him. During this period, Elsie herself was pregnant and far from fit; besides, the strain of the past two years had certainly taken its toll. An X-ray of the femur, and other laboratory tests revealed that Clyde was suffering from osteomyelitis, and it was recommended that he be referred to the Provincial Surgeon at Kisumu. Armed with the X-rays and other medical notes from Dr Chaudhri, we saw Mr Hurley. An initial course of penicillin injections proved ineffective, and he was later admitted to hospital at Kisumu where a biopsy was done. Fragments of the affected bone were sent to Nairobi for further tests. Dr Chaudhri's X-ray had revealed a pea-size growth on the right femur. Clyde was kept in hospital for a week, and during this period I did a round trip of some 150 miles daily between Kisii and Kisumu. All along, I was conscious of Elsie's own delicate state of health and didn't want to add to her anxiety. Our friends at Kisumu – specially the da Limas (Francis and Ancy) and also Joe and Farah D'Souza were most helpful during Clyde's period in hospital.

Although the tests at Nairobi had revealed that the growth was not cancerous, Mr Hurley still felt that a further operation would

be necessary to remove it altogether. The operation itself was a success, and we remain grateful to Mr Hurley for what he did. He seemed very pleased himself with the outcome, adding that we too were very lucky because Clyde's condition was not as serious as was originally feared. Because of the fragile nature of the operated femur, Clyde had a plaster cast from his chest right down to his foot, so as to restrict his movements. While he was recovering in hospital, Elsie and I stayed for a while with the Da Limas; we much appreciated their hospitality and kind gesture as it would otherwise have meant a long journey between Kisumu and Kisii each day (as I had previously done) – clearly something I didn't want, especially for Elsie. Two days before Clyde was due to be discharged from hospital. I took Elsie back to Kisii.

When I returned to collect him, it was raining very heavily and the road between Kisumu and Kisii, especially the stretch beyond Ahero, was very wet and slippery. The heavy buses which use this route daily on their way to Tarime (in Tanganyika), made a real mess of the roads. A young Goan assistant of mine at the DC's office, Robert D'Souza, who had not been long in Kisii himself, offered to accompany me on this trip, and I was glad to have him with me. We laid Clyde on the rear seat of our Morris Minor, and Robert, who sat with me in front, was able to keep an eye and protect him whenever we hit a rough patch on the roads — which often happened! On some stretches, the car kept skidding badly and I was finding it extremely difficult to control the steering. The *murrām* roads were so 'caked' that the

wheels kept spinning every time I attempted to drive on – we were swaying from one side of the road to the other, and it was fortunate that there was little oncoming traffic. What traffic there was at the time, was from the rear, and this consisted mostly of the heavy lorries and buses bound for Tanganyika.

At one point during the journey, I skidded so badly that the car came to rest on the right bank of the road at a dangerously sloping angle. I had to seek the assistance of one of the bus drivers to get me out of this situation! Travelling in first gear, I was also low on petrol and hoped very much that we would make it to Oyugis safely. I knew there was a petrol pump at this point. The rain was now falling in heavy sheets, and the whole ground was saturated. We had been on the road for nearly three and a half hours – a journey which, under normal circumstances, is easily done in less than two hours. My anxiety was for Elsie who I knew would be worrying about us. Some stretches of the road were so bad that we kept bumping up and down in spring-like fashion. I was chiefly concerned for Clyde and the effect all this jolting would have on his operated leg. Robert was always quick to turn towards him and adjust the cushions which we had placed across the seat to support his legs. I got the impression that Clyde was enjoying all this swaying and jolting in the car, and didn't seem to be in any pain. His previous drives had been all so routine and lacking in the adventure of a real rough safari such as we were now experiencing! After continuing to drive in what can only be described as torrential rains, we limped into the small township

of Oyugis. I was relieved that we had made it to this point, and glad to be able to fill up with petrol. I knew Oyugis well, as this was an area where some of the best ground-nuts came from. Besides, I also knew an Ismaili trader here (Mr Lalani), and had decided to seek his assistance in case of any further trouble. With the heavy rain still continuing, and the condition of the roads getting progressively worse. I drove on very slowly, arriving at Kisii late that night.

I knew Elsie would be at the D'Souza household, so we called on them first. After some very light refreshments, we all drove home. Robert had been staying with us ever since his arrival at Kisii and we were most grateful for the help he was able to give us with Clyde. As we were very tired by now, we all retired for the night after first making sure that our young patient was comfortably settled in bed. Because of the plaster cast around part of his body, we had to be extremely careful when moving Clyde about, especially when getting him out of bed, taking him to the loo, etc. While I did most of the 'moving around' when I was at home, we had also trained both Magama and John Kebasso to cope with this. On the surgeon's recommendation, it was unlikely that the plaster cast would be taken off for at least another twelve weeks.

Some two and a half months after the operation, I took Clyde back to Kisutrm, and having examined him, Mr Hurley expressed his pleasure over the success of the operation; we still needed to be careful with him and watch his movements, he warned – at least until such time as he had fully recovered and regained

the use of his leg. We had nothing to worry about if we noticed a slight limp in his walk initially, as this would correct itself gradually we were told. Trying to control the energy of a young and playful child is not a very easy task as most parents must have discovered! While we took great care to ensure that Clyde did not over-exert himself, we had to leave the rest in the hands of Providence – otherwise, we could have worried ourselves to death! A few weeks after our last visit to the hospital, we were told that the plaster cast could come off and that Clyde should try walking very slowly to begin with. This he certainly did, and having had the support of the cast for so long, he found it rather difficult to walk normally during the first few days. Slowly, we began to notice an improvement in his condition, and it was not long before he was back to his former active self.

Thanks to the availability of modern drugs which were prescribed by Dr Chaudhri, Elsie's morning sickness was kept in check. She also looked better this time, and all the indications were that she would have a normal delivery. Since we did not want our child to be born at the Native Civil Hospital (because of the unpleasantness caused over Conrad), some of the nuns from the Catholic Mission at Nyabururu suggested that we might try the Mission Hospital at Sotik, a small town not far from the tea growing area of Kericho; as the Reverend Mother was herself due to go there for a check-up very shortly, she suggested that we should go along with her. This sounded a wonderful idea, and a good friend of mine, a well-to-do and popular

Ismaili trader, Mr Esmail Kassam, agreed to take us down in his Mercedes Benz. This man was a very lively and energetic individual, ever ready to help, and always so full of life. I felt very grateful for the lift he provided, so did Mother Melanie. At Sotik Mission, Elsie was seen by the Italian doctor in charge, and we were later told by the sister i/c that we would be notified nearer the time, whether my wife would be able to have her baby at the Mission Hospital. We were well aware that some Catholic and non-Catholic Europeans had been afforded such a facility in the past, and foresaw no difficulty as far as Elsie was concerned. Months passed by and there was no news from the mission; the time for her confinement was fast approaching, and although Mother Melanie reassured us that we would hear from the hospital, I felt that we just couldn't take the risk of waiting for a reply indefinitely. We had heard of the American-run SDA (Seventh Day Adventists) mission at Kendu Bay which accepted members of all denominations, and so decided to make the trip there and see the authorities in charge. I should like to record that not only were we well received by the doctor and his staff, but Elsie was taken round the hospital and a firm booking made for her confinement. This was a big relief to us all, even though it would mean a drive of some 40 miles when the day actually dawned.

18. A New Arrival and Goodbye to Provincial Aministration

We did not have long to wait for the arrival of our new baby. The initial 40-mile trip to Kendu Bay and back on February 2 (1959), turned out to be a false alarm, but this disappointment soon gave way to joy when two days later, Elsie gave birth to a bonny boy. She was treated very well during her week's stay at the hospital, and later returned home with the welcome addition to our family. We were all delighted with the new baby, and for Clyde, it must certainly have filled the vacuum left by Conrad's death. The baby was christened John Andrew Hermenegildo (the last almost unpronounceable name being chosen after my father-in-law). We called him Andrew though. He was no problem at all, and continued to bring much joy into

our home and hearts. As the months passed by, he began to look a real picture of health, and for his age, seemed a very big baby. He was always so contented and proved a great attraction among all our friends, and especially my in-laws. I am sure they would have loved us to leave Clyde and Andrew with them at Kitale so that, like most grandparents, they could spoil them.

While things were certainly looking brighter on the home front, several changes had now taken place at the office. Basil de Souza, who had replaced Ray Hawes as DRO, was due to go on vacation leave. Joe Aguiar, who I had first met at Marsabit, and who was now married, had meanwhile arrived at Kisii a few weeks before Andrew was born. Robert Ouko, the Revenue clerk had also left on a scholarship to Ethiopia, and a young Goan bachelor, a Mr Zuzarte, had been posted as a numerical replacement. There were several new faces in the office generally; Paul Massey, the Office Superintendent, didn't seem very happy at his job, and rather than lose him to the service, it was decided to move him to the Homa Bay/Lambwe Valley area where he seemed to settle in quite well. He would be assisting the DO/Western with some of his work in that part of the district. I should explain here that the administration of the whole district had been divided among the various District Officers – the DO 1 (firstly Mr Holford-Walker and latterly Mr Pat de Warrenne Waller) was more of a Deputy DC, followed by the DO/Kisii Highlands (Roy Spendlove), DO/Eastern (George Grimmett) and the DO/Western (John Lowdell). There were also two other District Officers – one stationed at Nyamira in

the Kisii Highlands (Mike Phillips) and the other at Migori, not far from the Tanganyika border (Tom Powell). Also stationed at Kisii during my term there were David Evans – whose architectural skills showed in some of the buildings in and around the district, and Peter Wheeler, who made a name for himself some years later when, as Administrator of the island of Tristan da Cunha, he organized the evacuation of the islanders during a serious volcanic eruption which hit this small and isolated island. The DC (Mr Skipper) had moved to Kisumu as Acting Provincial Commissioner, Nyanza Province and his place eventually taken by Pat de Warrenne Waller. It was Mr Waller's wish that I should be 'officially' appointed as Office Superintendent in place of Paul Massey, and he had already informed the PC and other Government officers at Kisii of this appointment. I now moved from my old office into the office formerly used by Paul Massey. For over a month, I ran both the district office in addition to carrying out my former duties as district clerk. I later succeeded in getting the DC to agree that the Revenue clerk (Claro Menezes) be moved to act as district clerk, and even recommended that he be given an acting allowance, since he was on a grading below my own. This was agreed, but because of the overlapping of the salary scales of Paul Massey and myself, I never received any increase in salary for the additional responsibility I had now assumed. I was far from happy over this, so was the DC, especially since it seemed quite inequitable that the additional responsibility was not being compensated with some form of monetary reward. These, however, were

some of the anomalies which existed in the civil service at the time and there was nothing we could do to change things. In my new post, I sat on the housing committee and the Liquor Licensing Court – this latter job involving close liaison between the police and health authorities. I also acted as Secretary of the Township Plots allocation committee, and dealt with, among other things, the registration of births, deaths and marriages in the district.

When the job of District Assistant was advertised by the Civil Service Commission, I promptly applied for it, since the DC felt this was a mere formality as I was already acting in the post; regrettably, I was not successful despite, what was to me, a very worthwhile interview in Nairobi. A further interview for a similar job followed a few weeks later, and again I did not succeed. At this stage, I wrote in to the Civil Service Commission stating that I felt it was a waste of public funds in calling me for an interview in so short a time, and pointing out that I had felt truly disappointed especially since my immediate superiors, i.e. the Provincial and District Commissioners had both strongly recommended me for the post.

I was bitter about the whole affair, and though I had now served for some years in the Provincial Administration and I liked this particular branch of the civil service, I made up my mind that should any promotional post be advertised in the future, I would apply for it regardless of the department in which the vacancy arose.

Some months after I had been unsuccessful for the DA's post

(a job I was already doing), two adverts appeared in the Official Gazette – one for an Executive Officer with the Ministry of Agriculture, and three similar posts with the Ministry of Works. My colleague, Joe Aguiar, decided to apply for one of the three posts within the Ministry of Works, and I ended up applying for the only post in the Ministry of Agriculture.

I do not know why, but somehow I never fancied working for the MOW. Quite rightly, Joe Aguiar kept telling me that I should have applied for a post in that department since there was a better chance of success – there being three vacancies. I appreciated his point, but very much like Pontius Pilate, I said, “What I have done, I have done!” and left it at that. I fully realized that the odds were heavily against me. Both the posts advertised were on the executive grade scale, which in real terms would not only mean a very substantial rise in salary, but also a change in all privileges, i.e. first class travel privileges instead of second, increased travelling/subsistence allowances, etc. In short, whoever succeeded in getting these posts would be very fortunate indeed. For days after I had sent in my application, colleagues at work would talk about my case especially in so far as the previous interviews were concerned. They felt sure that the DC would do his best to keep me in the Administration.

PART SIX – With the Agriculture Ministry

19. Promotion and Move to Machakos

To my surprise, I was called for the interview and faced not just the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission, but five other officers drawn from various departments. The interview itself was quite painless and in my own mind I felt that I had performed well. This was not a new feeling however, since I had returned with similar hopes from previous interviews. There was not much I could do now but to await the verdict of the Commission. Since I had some local leave due to me, we decided to take a few days and spend this period with my in-laws. It was while we were on holiday at Kitale that I was recalled and told that I had in fact been selected for the Ministry of Agriculture post. I was over the moon, especially since this posting would be a turning point in my career. Amidst all the excitement, there was disappointment in that I would be leaving a department I had grown up in, and where I had hoped to stay on until I re-

tired. I somehow liked the Provincial Administration, the variety of work and also the opportunity one had of meeting some of the cream of the civil service among the European officers. However, sentiment had to give way to my future career and prospects and I soon reconciled myself to the fact that although I was moving to a new department, my links with the many friends I had made in the Provincial Administration would always be retained. Besides, if things changed, and a suitable opportunity arose in the future, who knows, I might even apply for a posting back to the Administration! Much to my in-laws' disappointment, we had to cut short our holiday and return to Kisii to pack up and arrange to leave for Machakos, where I was told I would be relieving the European Office Superintendent who was due to retire very soon. Our friends, though pleased over my success were very disappointed that we would be leaving Kisii. We had established a very lively and friendly community there. Both individually and collectively, they entertained us prior to our leaving, and at a farewell party to mark my promotion, friends in the Provincial Administration even presented me with a gift as a token of their esteem – a gesture I deeply appreciated.

After I had handed over temporarily (my substantive replacement had not arrived when I left Kisii), we left for Machakos via Nairobi, stopping in the city for a few hours. At Machakos, I had an old friend from Lodwar days – John Vaz, and we were his guests for the first few days of our arrival there while the question of providing us with more permanent accommodation

was being sorted out. John was a married man now and he and his wife Olinda looked after us well.

At the office the following day, I met the man I was to replace – Archie Allan; he had served for many years in the Agricultural department and had decided to retire to England. I also met the Provincial Agricultural Officer, Reg Spooner, who was due to leave on a posting outside Kenya himself; later the same morning, I met the new PAO who would be my immediate boss. He introduced himself as Dick Henderson and asked what my Christian name was. It was this first and informal meeting that set the tone for our happy working relationship in the months that followed. Dick Henderson was new to the area, having come from Nyeri. In a way, it was good that we were both new, but I was new not only to the job but the department as well. As Provincial Office Superintendent, I was more of a PA to the Provincial Agricultural Officer and handled all the administrative and financial aspects of the various District Agricultural offices within the Southern Province. Archie Allan gave me a good introduction to the work and even provided me with valuable information on the various officers – those who were easy to get on with and others who could be awkward. It is my good fortune to record that I never met any of the latter – they all turned out to be a splendid group of men who I had not the slightest difficulty in working with.

Despite the change in the type of work I was previously doing, I soon settled down in my new post, and within a few months had already won the respect of the various District and Asst. Ag-

ricultural officers in the field – and more particularly of the PAO himself. I was given a free hand in the running of the office, and this helped me no end, since Dick Henderson never questioned any decisions I made; in fact he always backed me to the hilt, and it was this attitude of his that provided a great deal of encouragement and also gave me much confidence. His concern and regard for me is borne out by the strong case he put forward to the Director of Agriculture – that I be housed in a Government quarter compatible with my status. In this connection, I should mention that after staying with John Vaz for the first few days, I was asked to move into an Asian quarter, which two Goan bachelor friends of mine (Caje Lobo and Tony D’Souza) were rather abruptly asked to vacate. I was far from pleased with this arrangement, since in the first place the house was not in keeping with my new grading, and secondly, it lacked such simple amenities as indoor sanitation and similar facilities. The DC at the time (who was also Chairman of the Housing committee) was a Mr T.A. (Tom) Watts. I was told by colleagues in the DC’s office that it would not be possible for me to be given a superior-type quarter, nor was there any prospect of an immediate change in the amenities as far as Asian housing was concerned. I refused to be discouraged by all this and was determined to put up a strong case – firstly for a complete modernization of the quarter allotted to me, and secondly that as soon as a ‘European-type’ quarter (for which my new grading entitled me) became available, I should be given first priority. My request was strongly supported by Dick Henderson, and be-

fore long the DC had got his District Assistant and a team from the Ministry of Works to carry out a detailed survey of Asian housing in the township. We were later told that indoor sanitation would be installed and some modifications carried out to the quarter. Not being entirely satisfied with this temporary arrangement, Dick Henderson sent me off to the Ministry in Nairobi with a letter for the Deputy Director of Agriculture – putting up a strong case for my housing, and asking that he (the Director) make suitable representations to the DC at Machakos. I must say that my case for improved housing conditions was strongly backed by the Asst. Director of Agriculture, Tom Wills, and before long we were allocated a spacious European-type house at Kithayoni, some two and a half miles from the township. The house was occupied by Peter Cochrane, an Asst. Agricultural Officer, who was leaving on overseas leave. There was one other quarter at Kithayoni, and this was occupied by Dr M. Waiyaki, one of the local Medical Officers who later left the service to enter politics and eventually rose to become a key Minister in *Mzee* Jomo Kenyatta's cabinet.

My new job entailed attendance at meetings in Nairobi fairly frequently, and because of other local travelling to the nearby stations of Katumani and Ngelani, I was allowed to use one of the official Land Rovers. Bill Reid (I called him the singing Scotsman) was the Provincial Transport Officer with whom I got on very well so there was never any problem in getting a Land Rover whenever I needed one. He was full of energy and had a funny habit of singing and tap-dancing whenever I went

across to see him (hence the nickname!)

Kithayoni was a little village on the road to the Mua Hills (and the Kenya Orchards factory) where many of the Wakamba wood-carvers lived. Some of these men would call at our house bringing all their attractive wares for sale. We were thus able to buy some very good carvings and on occasions get them to produce special carvings from designs supplied by us. I marvelled at the way they produced some of these works of art, using very basic tools like a pen-knife, kitchen knife, etc.

There were several Asian-owned shops at Machakos – the most popular being the two stores run by Jan Mohamed (M.D. Puri & Sons), and the other run by the Maini brothers. Jan Mohamed was an Ismaili (a friend and follower of the Aga Khan) who was well liked and respected not only by members of his own community, but others as well. After Kenya's independence, he rose to become an Asst. Minister for Tourism. The Mainis were equally popular in the town. There was also a bakery owned and run by a Goan family – the D'Souzas; one of the sons worked for the District Agricultural office and helped with the family business in the evenings. I was told that the family had lived in Machakos for some years.

Being stationed at the Provincial Agricultural headquarters, I regularly came in contact with officers from various other departments, and on one occasion I was pleasantly surprised to see an old friend of mine, Mr K.M. Cowley (my DC at Voi), who was now the Provincial Commissioner for the Southern Province. There was a hint of surprise in his face when he

greeted me – I expect he wondered for a moment whether I was in the wrong office! When I told him of my recent promotion in the Agricultural Department, he jokingly referred to me as ‘traitor’, little realizing that I would never have left the Provincial Administration had a similar opening been found for me in that department. On one of his other visits to Machakos, I had the pleasure of meeting him and another of my former DCs (Mr Christopher Denton) – at a party given in honour of the visiting Provincial Commissioner by the DC Machakos. In some ways I felt that although I had moved from the Administration to a new department, I had not really, severed my links with the many friends I had made while in that department.

Machakos was a very rich district in the agricultural sense, and it was always a pleasure to shop at the many local markets and pick up some of the finest fresh produce. Because of my working at the Provincial headquarters, and the fact that the Marketing and Produce officer operated from the District Agricultural office next door, I was very fortunate in being able to buy many items of choice fresh produce including eggs, strawberries, etc. at very reasonable prices.

Being so close to Nairobi, we drove to the city quite often, and this gave us the opportunity of not only doing the odd shopping there, but also meeting and renewing old acquaintances. Similarly, our friends in the city were able to escape and spend a day or weekends with us in the quiet of Kithayoni.

Andrew was now at a very interesting age, and he and Clyde got on well together; besides, our house was quite spacious with

equally open grounds so there was never a problem or shortage of playing space outdoors. Although starved of company of his age, Clyde managed to amuse himself somehow. For Elsie, the whole area must have seemed so quiet and isolated, but having lived in Marsabit previously, and with more than a handful to cope with over Clyde and Andrew, she was never really lonely. Besides, our cook Magama was a great help. He had been with us since Kisii days and had got to know us well. He was very much of a fatherly figure – kind, caring was always obliging. Ever since my posting to Machakos, I had known that I would not be stationed long in the district, especially since the time was soon approaching when we were due for another round of overseas leave. I had been in my new job for a very short period and very much hoped that I would be posted back to Machakos when I returned from leave, since I loved the district and the people very much. I had visited Ministry officials in Nairobi prior to departing on the holiday, and all the indications were that I would be returning here very shortly. Even so, we had to pack all our belongings since the Government quarter would now revert to the housing pool and be re-allocated. I was very fortunate in being, able to store all our baggage in the transport store – thanks to Bill Reid.

20. Overseas Leave to India

First class passages both by rail and sea were booked for us, and early in December 1959, we found ourselves in Bombay. The voyage from Mombasa to Bombay had been trouble-free and most enjoyable, and Clyde and Andrew were so well behaved throughout the trip that they won the admiration of many of the passengers and crew, including the Captain of the passenger steamer, the *SS Kampala*. My younger brother, Wilfred, had very kindly hired out a spacious bungalow for us by the seaside in the fishing village of Versova. The house itself was very large, but as it had been unoccupied for some time, it was in need of a thorough spring cleaning; thanks to the efforts of a cousin of mine (Tony Sequeira) who secured the services of a chimney sweep-cum-handyman, the bungalow was thoroughly cleaned out and made more habitable, but not without the untiring efforts of Elsie herself. I thought of what this village must have been in its heyday, especially when the British were still here. The area had an ideal setting – spacious and well-appointed

houses, many with neatly kept gardens, and almost all the bungalows commanding an excellent view of the sea. Some of the well-known Indian film stars lived in this area – a perfect retreat for those who worked in the city.



Our family group after Joseph's first Mass at Poona, now Pune.

One of the reasons for arranging my leave at this time was also because of my elder brother's ordination to the priesthood at Poona in 1960. This was an occasion I wouldn't miss at any cost since it also provided an ideal opportunity for a grand family re-union. We made Versova our base, and while living here had its advantages, the great disadvantage was its remoteness from the city centre, and the time it took to get from one end of Bombay to another. We spent a few weeks here, and my younger brother who worked as an Accounts Executive in an advertising firm in the city, made Versova his temporary base

too. The rent of the seaside bungalow was quite high and since Wilfred was bearing the brunt of this expense, I did not feel it was fair to take advantage of his generosity – in any case, my own income could not stand this little luxury for very much longer. Accordingly we moved down to Belgaum where Elsie's grandmother lived, and here spent some days before moving on to Poona in readiness for the big occasion. For the first few days following our arrival in Poona, we stayed at a nearby Goan-run guest-house. From here, together with my younger brother and several other relatives and close friends, we attended the ordination ceremony at De Nobili College; there were several of his Jesuit friends who were also ordained on that day. The whole ceremony was very impressive and was conducted by the Bishop of Poona. The next day, my brother celebrated his first Mass at the Convent of Jesus and Mary (the very convent which my mother once attended); Wilfred and I were privileged to serve at this Mass, but the greatest honour was reserved for Clyde — for it was on this day (March 25, 1960) that he made his first Holy Communion at the hands of his uncle. Certainly a day to remember! After the Mass, a modest reception was held for assembled friends and relatives – an occasion much enjoyed by all those present.

While at Poona, we also had the pleasure of meeting an old friend – Beatrice Soares (the widow of the late Edward Soares, the unforgettable Principal of St. Thomas' High School, Aldona, Goa, where I spent three years). She and her two daughters Meera and Theresa went out of their way to help and entertain

us, and while the girls would willingly baby-sit for us, Cyril, her eldest son, took us round Poona on our numerous shopping errands. Through him, we were also able to visit the Military Academy at Khadakvasla – the Indian equivalent of Sandhurst, where we met some of the officers and cadets. At Poona, we also met, for the first time, that famous Goan artist – Angelo da Fonseca who was married to a cousin of mine (Ivy Menezes). Angelo was a very quiet and unassuming individual (as all great men are) but very warm at heart. He had travelled extensively throughout Europe exhibiting some of his paintings, many of which still stand in some of the Jesuit Houses in and around India. Angelo and Ivy lived in a little cottage (Arcene Lodge Cottage) with their only daughter Yessonda (a beautiful and bright young girl). Through the kindness of a grand-aunt of mine (Aunt Mary) we were allowed the use of one of her houses at Kirkee, a town not far from Poona. In this town lived a much-loved cousin of my mother (Aunt Horty — God bless her soul), who often went out of her way to make sure that we were comfortable; she even found a place for Clyde at the little nursery school she ran from home. She was a very generous person who often forgot her own problems and difficulties while making others happy. Because of these good natured people, our stay at Kirkee turned out to be a pleasant one and it was very fortunate that while still here, we were able to visit Mrs Fernandes of ‘Ferns Pickles’ fame. We had now spent nearly a month at Kirkee and as the days for our return to Africa were fast approaching, we decided to move back to Bombay, where we stayed at my

uncle's rented flat at Gregory House, Dadar. After a few days stay here, we left for Mombasa on the B.I. Passenger liner, *SS Amra*. We were very sorry not to have been able to make the trip to Goa on this occasion due to circumstances beyond our control. Following the Indo-Portuguese dispute over the future of Goa, the border had been closed, and the new route involved a long and troublesome journey. We were showered with gifts before we left Bombay, and I felt truly sad to be leaving them (my brothers and relatives) behind after a long and very enjoyable holiday. I was also very conscious of the great amount of trouble and expense incurred by my younger brother Wilfred in arranging the holiday accommodation for us.

The return voyage was extremely pleasant, and with Clyde and Andrew giving us little or no trouble, and with several of the passengers eager to fuss over them, we had plenty of time to ourselves. I have always found that the sea voyage was the best part of the holiday – the leisurely and care-free days, the fresh sea air all around, the appetizing menus and the lively entertainment – what more could one wish for!

Our plans were to spend a day or two at Mombasa and then move on to Machakos since it was almost certain that we would be returning here.

21. Posting to Njoro

On our arrival at Mombasa, I was rather surprised to learn that we would not be returning to Machakos after all; instead, I had been posted to the Plant Breeding Station at Njoro. There was not the slightest hint when I left Machakos that I would not be returning there for a further tour of duty. Having previously served in the Provincial Administration and being accustomed to transfer between districts at fairly frequent intervals, I was not unduly worried over the move to Njoro. Besides, it would be yet another station to add to the long list of places I'd worked in since joining the civil service. We would also be meeting new people and making new friends. I had hazy recollections of Njoro which went back to my childhood days, as it was here that my father spent his first local leave after my mother died in 1935; with him, my two brothers and I had spent a few days with an old friend of Dad's — Hector Moraes, who was then Chief Clerk at the Agricultural station at Njoro.

We stuck to our original plan and spent two days with my cousins at Mombasa and then left for Nairobi and finally Machakos. It was very fortunate that our cook Magama had arrived there earlier from Kisii and was able to assist Elsie with the move. After a very brief stay at Machakos, we drove to Njoro via Nairobi and Nakuru. Most of our luggage had been sent through one of the Agricultural department trucks, and since the one truck was not sufficient, Bill Reid had kindly provided a Land Rover as well. We arrived at Njoro later that evening where we were met by Victor da Costa. We had never met before but I must say he made us very welcome. He had not been long at Njoro himself, and was employed as a Lab. Technologist at the station. On the evening of our arrival, the Farm Manager of the station – a tall and tough looking Welshman by the name of George Roberts – also called to let us know that we had been allotted a brand new house; as we were quite tired after the long journey from Machakos, I decided to leave the inspection of the house until the following day. That night, Victor had also asked the Goan carpenter on the station to join us at dinner. I remembered Pedro D’Souza well from my childhood days and was pleased to see that he was still attached to this important station; my only disappointment was when I heard how he had been unable to advance further in the service because of being semi-literate and lacking in paper qualifications. This was a real pity especially since his work was of a very high standard – and many of the farm buildings, etc. were ample testimony to his skill and hard work. I_vowed then that I would do all in my

power to see that his post was upgraded.

Our first impressions of Njoro were that this was a truly healthy station where we hoped we would be kept for many years. The whole area was so unlike the normal district headquarters; this place was more of a huge farm with acres and acres of lush green fields all around. Most of the staff quarters were fairly new, and the one we were to move into had only just been completed. This was the first station in my entire civil service career where I was allocated a brand new house.

On the Monday morning I reported for duty and met the Senior Plant Breeder, an elderly Englishman by the name of Hugh Thorpe. He was a bachelor and had been at Njoro for many years now. The Plant Breeder, who was more of a deputy to the Senior Plant Breeder was away on vacation leave in England at the time – his name, Giles Dixon. There was yet another Plant Breeder I met – a young Welshman called Ken Lynch. The Asst. Plant Breeder, and the only Goan who had been on the Plant Breeding Station for many years, Felix Pinto, was also away doing a post-graduate course at Cambridge. I had heard a lot about him – a very hard working and efficient Plant Breeder who was well liked and respected by the predominantly European farming community, and also held in high esteem by all his other friends. I was so looking forward to meeting him when he returned to Njoro. There were others at the station who I also met – Dr John Guthrie, who was Plant Pathologist, N.K. Patel, the Lab. Technologist and the second Asst. Plant Breeder who had recently joined the station – V. P. Patel. In

addition, there was an elderly Swede, Nils Lundin who was employed as Seeds Officer, and then of course, the man I had come to replace, Jim Crawford. He was a charming man but sadly, a victim of multiple sclerosis. His wife Betty, who worked as a Secretary at the nearby Egerton Agricultural College, was also a polio victim. Despite their disability, however, this couple were very cheerful indeed, and Jim reminded me so much of some of the old British army officers who served in India during the days of the Raj. He was confined to a wheelchair and had very little use of his hands or legs. In fact, one of the office boys was permanently by his side, helping to move him around and also lifting him up from time to time – thereby enabling him to stretch and relax his muscles, which tended to become numb from being confined in the one position for long periods at a stretch. At first, I used to find this sight very distressing and disturbing especially since, for quite some time after my arrival, Jim and I shared the same office. With the greatest of respect for him, and certainly not wishing to jeopardize his career in any way, I felt that such an arrangement could not continue indefinitely especially since I had been officially posted as Office Superintendent at the station, and wanted to assume full responsibility immediately. Besides, it was sometimes uncomfortable and embarrassing working in the shadow of someone who had been in the post for many years, and who obviously felt that things should be done in the way he had been used to. I could see that Jim was beginning to sense my feelings too, and in fairness to him, I must record that he never stood

in my way. He was anxious, now that I had taken over, that I should assume full responsibility. I had no difficulty in settling down in this job. The station had an excellent library which had been ably set up and catalogued by Jessie Dixon, wife of Giles – with some assistance from the Chief Librarian at the Ministry in Nairobi.

Within a month of my arrival at Njoro, an important meeting to discuss the finances of the various Provinces and research stations had been arranged in Nairobi. Hugh Thorpe was very keen that I should accompany him and I was equally delighted to do so. For reasons of economy, we drove in his car. The meeting the following morning turned out to be quite an important one, and one of the sessions was addressed by the then Minister of Agriculture, the late Bruce Mackenzie. I felt honoured at being the only non-European official taking part in this meeting of senior officials. Having given a good account of myself at the earlier session which was addressed by the Deputy Director of Agriculture, I felt sure that Hugh Thorpe too was pleased that he had brought me along. Having thus economized as much as possible by doubling up over transport, I was rather annoyed when a claim for taxi fares (for my travel to and from the Ministry while in Nairobi) was queried by the Chief Accountant's office. I was infuriated at the lack of discretion shown by some of the officials, and made my feelings known through a letter which Hugh Thorpe forwarded to the Ministry. Unfortunately, the letter had quite the opposite effect. The pundits at Head Office didn't so much as comment on my entitlement or other-

wise to the taxi fares claim, but took umbrage to the tone of the letter! Fortunately, the matter was quickly nipped in the bud and the whole episode happily settled when I was able to have a face to face talk with one of the Ministry officials when he came to Njoro. This isolated incident, coming so soon after I had taken over at Njoro, in no way dampened the good relations that the Plant Breeding staff and I personally had with officials at head office.

Hugh Thorpe who had been in charge of the station for many years now was going to leave Kenya, having secured an appointment with the FAO of the United Nations. He was destined for Tehran as Wheat Expert and seemed very pleased with this latest development. His place was taken by Giles Dixon who slotted very well into this new post. Felix Pinto had meanwhile returned from Cambridge, but despite doing very well and being highly reported upon by his tutors at the Plant Breeding Institute, Cambridge, no move was made locally to have him up-graded to a more senior position. I often discussed this aspect with Felix and felt there would be no harm in writing to the Minister on this point. It is very heartening to be able to record that the new Minister, Sir Michael Blundell, lost no time in investigating the case, and before long, Felix was appointed Plant Breeder at a salary and on conditions commensurate with his qualifications and wide experience. I was very pleased for him and felt that justice had at last been done. Socially, he was a great mixer and the life and soul of the party. He was also a keen sportsman and represented the Goan Institute Nakuru at

many a friendly hockey match. We got on very well together and he became a good friend of the family.

Because of my frequent postings to outlying districts in the past, Clyde's education had already begun to suffer. He had started schooling at Kisii for a short while when my transfer to Machakos came through. Continuing his education during the short time we spent at Machakos and latterly during our vacation leave in India was not easy, so we attempted to coach him from home as best as we could. At Nakuru, there was a well-run Goan school where we had Clyde admitted. Fortunately for us, Egerton College ran a daily bus service for children of their European staff, and very kindly agreed that Clyde could use this facility. The arrangement was satisfactory for a short while, but we soon had to move Clyde to Nakuru as a day-boarder – staying with a Goan family during the week and returning to Njoro at weekends. I had very much hoped it would be possible to leave him in some central establishment where it would not be necessary to move him around so often – just in case I was transferred yet again! With this in mind, I had applied well in advance to the only Catholic school which admitted non-European boarders. The school, which was run by nuns, was at Mangu in the Thika district. Despite writing for a place almost a year in advance, we were unable to secure admission. I was very disappointed and appealed to the then Archbishop of Nairobi (the Rt. Revd J.J. McCarthy) for help, since I felt that some concessions should be afforded for the children of Government employees and others stationed in

remote areas. Although he never acknowledged my letter, he did in fact send a copy to the Mother Superior of the White Sisters Boarding School at Thika. On December 28, 1960, I received a letter from the Revd Mother Principal, explaining that Clyde could not be admitted due to 'lack of accommodation (this after my writing as early as January 1958). She further went on to say that there was no 'colour bar' at their school, and that the earliest date she could take him would be 1962. Since this was an abnormally long wait, I asked her to delete Clyde's name from the 1962 list. You can imagine my surprise when I received a further letter from the Revd Mother on January 4, 1961, telling me that they could now take him if we were 'still disposed to send him'. I confirmed our acceptance by telegram. In my earlier letter, I also explained that I was not in any way insinuating that her school practised a colour bar – rather than there were many Catholic schools in Kenya which admitted Europeans regardless of their religion. I considered this an undesirable state of affairs when Catholic parents like myself were finding it difficult to have their child admitted to the only boarding school then open to non-Europeans.

On January 4, 1961, we drove Clyde from Njoro to Thika, and returned home broken-hearted. He too must have felt quite lost in this rather huge and impersonal establishment. We used to keep in regular touch with the school and write to Clyde frequently. That April, we were very pleased to welcome him home for his holidays. From the reports we received through him, we soon realized he was far from happy at this school.

Besides, with a younger brother at home with us, it was but natural that he should miss home. However, we felt that this was a price we all had to pay by way of sacrifice. We received regular reports from the Sisters and got the impression that all was well. There was one occasion when we arrived at Thika unannounced, and were horrified to see the state Clyde was in. His clothes were filthy and he looked as though he hadn't had a bath for several days. We were also able to see the sanitary arrangements, specially for the boys, and I must admit I found these totally primitive. We returned home that evening very disappointed and convinced in our own minds that the younger boys were left very much to themselves – with little or no supervision. On another occasion when we arrived to attend one of the parents' days in October 1961, we found Clyde was missing. After much enquiring, we eventually found that he was ill and in the sick bay. We called to see him here and spent all our time with him — once again returning home very upset indeed. Later that year, we received a circular from the school authorities informing us that they would be discontinuing the present concession of having boys at the school as from the end of 1962. This would mean that we would have to find an alternative school for Clyde. The news, coming as it did so soon after the recent 'upsets' was more of a blessing in disguise. It was our intention to remove Clyde from this school anyway lest he suffered any further. Our good friend, Mrs Price, had kindly agreed to keep Clyde with her at Nairobi, and Fr. Hannon, the Principal of St. Teresa's Boys' School had also reserved a place

for him from the new term. Our hearts were more at rest now, especially since we knew that Clyde would at least be living with a family where he would receive the care and warmth, unlike the problems he must have encountered at Thika.

Njoro, and especially the Plant Breeding Station which comprised some 500 acres of land, was an area where kids could really enjoy themselves. We had a spacious house with vast grounds and even a trout stream where we spent many an hour by the river allowing the 'crafty' trout to test our patience! There were the occasions when we caught quite a few trout, and I recall one in particular when Elsie landed a whopper – about 18 inches in length and weighing nearly 6 lbs – some catch! We also kept our own poultry and maintained a reasonably-sized *shamba*. The 45 well-bred birds I had were raised from day-old chicks I bought from Kigwaru Poultry Farm just outside Nairobi. The breed I found most promising as layers were the 'light Sussex' and they kept us well supplied with eggs all the year round. We were even able to sell some of the surplus eggs to staff on the station. Several others breeds of day-old chicks were also bought – some as layers, while others were roosters for the pot! There was never any problem of fattening these birds on the plentiful supply of chick wheat I was able to buy very cheaply from the station. For a while, Felix and I experimented with a kerosene-run incubator and were successful in rearing some healthy-looking chicks, ducklings and even turkey chicks!

All this outdoor activity provided great excitement for Clyde

and Andrew who would spend the whole day out in the sun and take great delight in feeding the chickens and the bunnies which we also kept. Having enjoyed his holidays immensely, Clyde was understandably sad at having to leave home again and start at a new school in Nairobi.

We drove him there ourselves, spent the night with the Prices and returned later the following evening. It was always a sad moment – this parting from each other. Although we were satisfied that he was in good hands, we were conscious that Clyde was missing home, his younger brother and the sheer freedom Njoro had to offer. He was now nearly nine years old, and although Andrew was a mere three years, the difference in their ages didn't seem to matter. They got on so well together and missed each other very much when they parted.

Towards the middle of 1962, it was confirmed that Elsie was pregnant, and we very much hoped that the new baby would be a girl. Unlike her previous pregnancies, she kept much better health during this period.

Having a spacious house and being so close to Nakuru, we had more than our fair share of visitors – some would drive in just for the day out in the country, others would spend weekends. All in all, we did a lot of entertaining, and there were the occasions when we even had the odd 'invasion' from Nairobi. At Nakuru, we were fortunate in having some very good friends in the person of Fancush and Elizen da Gama-Rose. Fancush (Francis) was a flourishing lawyer in Nakuru – a man with a wealth of determination and great intelligence, he had given up nearly

seventeen years of service in the civilian ranks of the Kenya Police to study law in England. After qualifying, he had returned to practise in Kenya. He was a very popular lawyer who had worked hard to bring his practice to the very efficient set up it was. His wife, Elizen, a charming lady and perfect hostess, ran a secretarial school, and amazingly still found time to entertain visitors to several lavish parties, many of which we were privileged to attend. There were other friends at Nakuru who need to be mentioned also – Francis and Cybele Noronha – both educationists in their own right, who were a great asset to their noble profession. Then there was Cosie and Irene D’Souza. He worked for the Provincial Agricultural Office while his wife and her family were old friends of mine from schooldays in Goa. There were several others – too numerous to mention here, who have on many occasions, extended hospitality to us; and how can I forget my sister and brother-in-law, Eslinda and Tony Saldanha who then lived at Nakuru and whose guests we were on many occasions.

During our stay at Njoro, a cousin of mine (Naty D’Sa) who taught at the Goan school Nakuru, and Elsie’s younger brother (Achilles Collaço) – who worked for the DC’s office in Nakuru, stayed with us. For a period, my younger brother, Wilfred, who had moved to Kenya from Bombay also was with us. He had originally come out as a freelance reporter to cover the historic Maralal Press conference in April 1961 when *Mzee* Jomo Kenyatta faced the world Press for the first time after his release from detention.

About the time when our new baby was expected, Elsie's mother was taken seriously ill and admitted to a Nairobi hospital for surgery. She was found to have that dreaded disease – cancer. We were all told that she did not have long to live. Hard and painful facts to swallow, especially since we remembered her as an energetic and robust woman who was always on her feet happily entertaining family and friends alike. Through the courtesy of a friend in Nakuru – Tinny Toscano – who loaned us his brand new car, we were able to drive down to Nairobi to see my mother-in-law. We could hardly believe how rapidly her condition had deteriorated. Being the determined and cheerful person she always was, she was confident her health would improve and promised to visit us when she was discharged from hospital.

On January 31, 1963, our baby arrived – a beautiful girl she was, and we were all so excited over her. The doctor who attended Elsie at the hospital was a young and attractive Indian lady who was very popular in the Nakuru area. Dr Ruwalla herself was doubly pleased as ours was apparently the first baby she had delivered! The maternity wing at the hospital, which was reserved for Asians, was far superior to the tiny and rather cramped storeroom in which Clyde was born at Kitale. Andrew was far too excited for words when I showed him his little sister, and kept asking why we hadn't returned home with her and his Mummy! Clyde was informed of the happy event by telegram, and the news soon spread to relatives and friends. As my mother-in-law was soon to leave hospital, my younger

sister-in-law, Eslinda, decided to stop over briefly at Nakuru on her way to Kitale. This would give them some time with Elsie and our new daughter, while at the same time providing a welcome break before continuing the long and tiresome journey to Kitale that lay ahead.

It was a moving occasion when she arrived. She looked very weak and helpless, and though the operation had brought slight relief, she was certainly far from fit; despite all this, she didn't conceal her feelings of joy and even managed to cradle the little 'bundle' in her arms. For her, it was a thrilling moment, and we had hoped that the very thought of the baby would help keep her spirits up. After a further two days' stay at the hospital, Elsie was allowed to come home. I had engaged an ayah to assist her with the household chores, especially since she would need to take things easy for a while. Magama, our faithful cook, who had been with us at Kisii and Machakos, was again around and proved of great help. By now, he had become one of the family. Our daughter was christened Josephine (after my mother) Anne-Marie, and baptized at the Catholic church at Nakuru by the parish priest, Fr. Prunty. Many of our friends attended the ceremony at Nakuru, and later a reception at Njoro. Clyde was there too and he and Andrew looked really pleased and excited on this occasion. The new baby certainly filled our lives, and Andrew was so taken up by his little sister, that he got a trifle over-possessive at times. Amidst all the joy over the new arrival, there was sadness in that my mother-in-law's condition had begun to deteriorate. As often as we could, we would visit her at

Kitale, but it became really distressing to see the almost emaciated state she was reduced to. I was fully mindful of the heavy strain on the whole family, but felt totally helpless as there was precious little help we could give from Njoro. Although the doctors in Nairobi had given her only a few weeks to live, she suffered and lasted for many months after her operation.

The end finally came on July 30, 1963, and the news of her death was telephoned to us by our good friend Bismark Noronha (who was temporarily staying with us while Felix Pinto was away) and who happened to be at Kitale at the time. We left for Kitale almost immediately, and it was a sad moment when we got there. The house seemed so empty without that familiar voice and smile that always greeted us. Tearfully, we paid our respects to a wonderful woman whose body lay exposed in the lounge (as was the Goan custom back home). There were many who joined in the tributes both at the house and the graveyard. Truly, we were all the poorer without her. We spent a few days with my father-in-law (himself a broken-hearted man now) and the rest of the family before returning to Njoro. I realized how shattered Elsie too must have been especially since she adored her 'Mama'. It would not be easy either for her brothers and sisters and particularly her father to get over the sad loss, but I knew time would be the final healer. For us, Kitale would never be the same place again, and while we all deeply mourned the passing away of one that was dear to us, we were relieved that all the suffering and pain of the past few months had now finally ended.

22. East African Holiday... and Zanzibar Revolution

The time for Kenya's independence was now fast approaching, and there were many changes taking place around the country. It was the declared policy of the newly-elected leaders that priority would be given to resettling the thousands of landless Africans. Understandably, many Europeans, uncertain and worried about the future in an independent Kenya, began to leave the country. This feeling of insecurity was not confined to the European farming community alone – even the Asian business community and civil servants began to feel uneasy about their future.

It was now not long before I would be due for my next 'quota' of overseas leave. Having previously been to India on two occasions, we decided to spend our forthcoming vacation in East Africa. After all, although I was born and bred in this country, there was so much of it I had not seen. The added attraction of

spending one's leave locally was the substantial allowance paid to the official and family as a kind of inducement. This was in addition to all other travel privileges. On my grading and salary, the allowance was quite generous. I immediately notified my Ministry officials in Nairobi of my intention to spend my leave within East Africa.

The period prior to our going on leave was spent getting out and about as much as possible, especially at weekends or over bank holidays. One such weekend was spent in a very quiet district called Eldma Ravine. My brother-in-law was attached to the District Office at the time, and in the short time we spent there, were able to see much of this place. On several other occasions we used to travel to Lake Baringo, a few miles out of Nakuru. The roads along this route were very rough and reminded me very much of those in the N.F.D. At the lake, which covers about one hundred and fifty square miles, we would camp along the shore and do most of our fishing from this base. I was often tempted to accompany the Njemps tribesmen to the deeper areas of the lake, and on one occasion set out in one of their papyrus-type canoes. I did not catch any fish but saw any number of crocodiles. On a subsequent occasion however, when I was out fishing from a disused pier, I accidentally slipped and fell into the lake. To my horror, I saw two large crocodiles heading towards me.

My attempts to shield myself from these deadly creatures by mounting a granite-type slab proved in vain. As I mounted, I kept sliding back into the lake, and it was only after my friends

heard my cries for help that I was rescued in time. The local fishermen use this area for gutting all the fish they catch – with the result that the ramp leading down to the lake is always slimy and very slippery. After realizing how lucky I was to be saved, I vowed never again to fish from the rocks or the ramp, but instead get one of the more experienced Njemps fishermen to take me out in their canoes.

Plans for our East African holiday were now well in hand. My uncle (mother's brother) and aunt, who for many years lived in Zanzibar, were always asking me to spend my holidays with them. Since I had never been to this lovely island (noted for its cloves), I decided to take advantage of their invitation and spend at least part of our leave with them. The earlier part would be spent with our old friend Bismark Noronha at Dar es Salaam, since he had now been transferred there from Kenya and had in fact invited us over.

We decided to make the trip to Dar es Salaam by the most economical route, i.e. by bus rather than aeroplane. One of the attractions of road travel was that we would be able to see much more of the countryside. The Overseas Touring Co (OTC) ran a regular service between Kenya and Tanganyika, and although the journey was fairly long and tiresome, there were several stops en route. Passages were accordingly booked for the journey up to Dar es Salaam, and air bookings from there on to Zanzibar.

We left Nairobi on the eve of Kenya's independence – December 11, 1963. The capital was in festive mood with the streets

and all major buildings decorated with the new Kenya flag and buntings of varied hue. Dignitaries from all over the world had arrived for the independence celebrations which were being held at Nairobi's Uhuru (Freedom) stadium. The journey right up to the Kenyan border seemed long and tiring, but we were compensated by the sights of the colourful Masai tribesmen and their *manyattas* (homesteads) en route; at Namanga, we were able to alight and stretch our now cramped bodies. It was also here that the Tanganyika police conducted an immigration check. Due to some last minute hitch at Nairobi, Elsie's passport, which the immigration authorities had sent back by post, had not arrived at Njoro by the time we left. We decided to risk it and travel without one rather than delay our departure. I had my own passport, and had also obtained individual passports for Clyde and Andrew. When we produced the three passports at the check-point, the police official never so much as troubled to check the identity of each of us. This was just as well as Elsie would otherwise have been detained at the border or sent back to Nairobi with Josey. This would have been the ruin of our holiday.

We had arranged that the driver of the OTC coach should stop at the stroke of midnight when we would all drink a toast to Kenya's independence. This we certainly did, not in champagne though, but Kenyan beer! The driver and his relief and all the passengers happily joined in the celebrations, and as one of our number had a portable radio, we were able to follow the ceremony taking place at the stadium. It was a thrilling moment

— at the same time, a thousand thoughts kept racing through my mind like shooting stars in the sky. What would happen in Kenya after independence? The pessimists had forecast gloom – some even went so far as to predict a blood bath. At this precise moment though, all we could do was to wish the new nation and its peoples well. This was the land where we had all grown up and worked in, and the toast we drank was to Kenya, its people and its future. The Prime Minister-elect, *Mzee* Jomo Kenyatta, had coined a catch word – Harambee (meaning ‘let’s pull together’ in KiSwahili), which was to be the recipe for progress and prosperity.

After this brief stop, we continued our journey, the relief driver now taking over. It was dark and most of the passengers had fallen asleep within a few hours of the bus leaving. We arrived at Dar es Salaam early the next morning and were met by our old friend Bismark (Bis to his friends). He was employed as an engineer with Tanganyika Shell and had a palatial house in one of the most sought-after and salubrious areas of Dar (short for Dar es Salaam), Oyster Bay. We were so close to the sea, and the warm sea breeze made a welcome change from the cool air of Njoro. We felt like VIPs in this place. Sea food and fresh tropical fruit was plentiful, and we certainly did justice to both. Being so close to the sea, local fishermen often brought their catch up to the house and we were thus able to buy fresh fish at very reasonable prices. Crab, prawns, lobsters and all manner of sea food was always on the table, tastefully cooked by Bis’s cook John.

Our original plan was to spend a week to ten days at Dar and then move on to Zanzibar; with Christmas just round the corner, Bis would not hear of this. He was keen that we should spend at least Christmas Day with him and leave the next day. We gladly agreed since we had also, during our brief stay here, met many of his friends who were equally keen that we should extend our stay. Having an imposing house and ample grounds, the obvious choice for the Christmas party was Bis's mansion. After midnight Mass, we all returned home where a slap-up party was organized, complete with Father Christmas, presents – the lot! Together, we had an exceptionally good time, and it was amazing to see how our children had kept up so well. Josey was the only one who slept peacefully in her Moses basket throughout the night while all the singing and dancing was in progress. Later that evening we all met at the Goan Institute. Like most Goan clubs in other parts of East Africa, this was a well-run and much-patronized institution, a great credit to the Goan community in Dar. There was no chance for much rest that night; the next evening, Bis and a party of friends, including a cousin of mine (Nico Pinto) accompanied us to Dar airport where, in the departure lounge, a further celebration commenced! Bis had arranged that we should leave for Zanzibar by the last holiday flight. Because of the heavy air traffic during the holiday season, several extra flights had been put on and planes were landing and taking off with great frequency. Two of Bis's friends worked for the East African Airways and had considerable influence with the airport staff. Through their

good offices, we were allowed to occupy the departure lounge where, within a few minutes, amidst the sing-song and laughter of our friends, the whole area took on a festive air. Even passengers arriving from Zanzibar and those waiting to take off for the island were amused by this impromptu entertainment we were providing! The singing continued right up to the time we were ready to board the Foker Friendship aircraft which was to take us to Zanzibar. We left with memories of a well-spent holiday – thanks to the hospitality provided by Bis and his friends.

The flight to Zanzibar was very short and it was a real thrill to see the live flares that lit the airport runway. The whole island had a kind of romanticism about it right from the time of our touching down at the small airport, up to the drive through the coconut palm-lined avenue that led to the town centre. This was a town with an Arabian Nights setting, where the exotic scent of the clove-laden air was everywhere. Custom formalities were minimal and the taxi from the airport to my uncle's rented home took only a few minutes to convey us. Uncle Joe and Aunt Benny (short for Bernadette) were overjoyed to see us after all these years. Theirs was a very modest house with living accommodation upstairs and a basement which was a constant reminder of the old days of the slave trade. It was quite possible that slaves must have been housed here by their wealthy Arab masters – the small openings along the outer walls. of the basement were a clear indication that this was the spot where the slaves must have been kept – packed no doubt like sardines. As the house was a mere stone's throw away from the sea, we

made it a point of getting down to the sea front daily, sometimes even twice or three times a day! The evenings were the most pleasant, and we would usually walk past the Sultan's palace and then return to the open area around the pier to find the whole place teeming with people. There were the fruit sellers, the coffee vendors who walked through rows of islanders carrying their highly polished brass coffee pot in one hand, while producing a musical sort of clinking of the small cups with the other. Parked at another corner was the cart from which sugar cane juice was extracted, and served to thirsty customers with a generous helping of ice and a hint of green ginger. There was corn being roasted on open braziers, and in another cart, again over open braziers, an Arab would be roasting slices of cassava, which would then be served piping hot with a sprinkling of salt and chilli powder. It was this tempting fare from the Arab's barrow that we just couldn't resist. My uncle, who had never before risked any food sold from open carts, hesitatingly joined us in sampling some of the delicacies! The aroma of a variety of roasted snacks, the smell of strong Arab coffee (*kahawa*), the cool of the sea breeze and the sounds that came from the noisy crowds who flocked to the sea front daily, lent the whole scene a fun fair type of atmosphere. At dusk, we would make our way homewards, but not without first calling at one of the Asian traders en route to collect giant-size bottles of Dutch lager. The beer was very cheap indeed when compared with prices in Kenya or even Dar. Being a duty-free port, the prices of several other goods were remarkably cheap, and

I could see now why Zanzibar was truly a tourist's paradise. I had made up my mind then that it would be to this 'Garden of Eden' that I would like to retire when the time came, and made no secret of this desire in conversation with my uncle and aunt. This was an island which was in every respect a paradise on earth, with a lovely climate, a simple and leisurely life-style, a land abounding in tropical fruits and fish, where the sweet scent of cloves pervaded the air wherever one went, and above all, a land where all the different races seemed to mix so freely and happily together.

A few days after our arrival, we all went on a picnic to the nearby Mangapwani creek in a car which my uncle had hired. This was an area noted for its caves, and here again as we drove through some of the African villages, we could smell the scent from the nearby clove plantations; the sight of the many coconut palms swaying in the tropical breeze reminded me so much of my native Goa. We had a wonderful time here and had the beach almost to ourselves.

Clyde and Naty were due to return to Nairobi in time for the commencement of the new school term, and they flew out of Zanzibar a couple of days after we had seen the New Year in. The days following their departure took on a set pattern. In the mornings I would accompany my uncle to the local fish and vegetable market, taking Andrew with us. He loved these shopping errands and the locals seemed very attracted towards him since he was so friendly. There were times when we would leave him in the care of one of the island's tourist attractions –

a dwarf by the name of Athmani. Andrew loved sitting with this man on one of the shop pavements along the narrow and winding Zanzibar streets. The heat never troubled me, although I knew Elsie couldn't tolerate it as well as I could – young Josey seemed to thrive on it though. She was now nearly a year old, trouble-free and quite an attraction; she was also great company for Andrew who would otherwise have been lost especially now that Clyde was not there to play with him.

On Sundays we would take it in turn to go to Mass. The Sunday in question was the feast of the Holy Family, and my uncle and I went to an early service at the imposing Roman Catholic cathedral, while Elsie and my aunt stayed behind to look after the children. At the end of Mass the priest made a brief announcement asking people to remain indoors as the Government was expecting some trouble. There had been riots previously which, for an island as peaceful as Zanzibar, were quite 'foreign', and we all went home with the feeling that the warning probably envisaged similar disturbances. As Elsie and my aunt were returning after Mass, they hurried to give us the news that the troubles which had broken out earlier in the day were real and quite serious; some shots had been heard in the town but these were at first dismissed as being of no consequence. In fact, we were all under the impression that some of the local Arab and Indian children were playing with fireworks! Seconds later a bullet narrowly missed Elsie and my aunt as they had reached the front door of the house. They rushed inside quickly, bolting the doors behind them. We could now hear the sound of heavy

vehicles in the town; sporadic firing was also going on, increasing in intensity all the time. It was at this stage that we tuned in to the local radio station.

There were intermittent announcements being broadcast in a rather 'unprepared' fashion by an individual who spoke Ki-Swahili with a Kenyan accent. It was certainly not the Ki-Swahili *ki-safi* (well spoken Swahili) I had been so accustomed to hearing from the local Arabs and Africans from the coast. A kind of fear spread through our entire household as the announcements continued. My uncle and aunt had lived in Zanzibar for several years and were accustomed to the easy pace and quiet life of this lovely island. Our concern was not just for our children but more for them too. We were now certain that the troubles were more than just riots and conscious all along that the radio broadcasts had to be taken seriously.

It was later established that some 500 revolutionaries, incited by a Uganda-born Kenyan, who described himself as 'Field Marshal' John Okello, had overthrown the Government in what can best be described as a lightning revolution. The relative tranquillity of this once peaceful haven was shattered; fortunately, the Sultan and his entourage, as also Prime Minister Shamte had managed to escape. Only the previous evening, when strolling through the town, we had seen him through the open window of his official residence. It seemed incredible that things should have changed so dramatically and so suddenly too. There was no confirmation whether the Prime Minister had been taken prisoner by the rebels although there were un-

confirmed rumours that he had been killed. It was difficult to know what to believe as the reports over the radio were so haphazard.

There had been a strong anti-Arab feeling on the island for a long time, and during the revolution several of them were massacred indiscriminately. Those who managed to escape were later rounded up, bundled like sardines and shipped to Arabia in dhows. Zanzibar was now completely cut off from the outside world. The air and sea ports were sealed and all key installations taken over by the rebels. The inexperience of these men showed clearly in some of the confusing and sometimes conflicting announcements that were being constantly broadcast over the radio. As news of the revolution spread gradually to the town and neighbouring areas, it transpired that there had been an armed struggle at the police station which resulted in the rebels gaining control over the armoury. Firearms and ammunition were now being issued freely to trigger-happy individuals who had no military, or police training whatsoever. The result was obvious – several people had been murdered in cold blood and hundreds more, mostly Arabs, were butchered to death and their homes looted and burnt to the ground. Arson, rape and wanton destruction of property became the order of the day. There was a distinct flavour of revenge by the African masses against the Arab population. In the anxious hours that followed, drunken and inexperienced soldiers went on the rampage through the town, looting shops and terrorizing the population. My uncle's rented house backed on to the American Em-

bassy and a few hundred yards away stood the Cable & Wireless station. Here the staff had been locked up and not allowed to leave the building. The firing continued unabated and bullets from various corners kept whizzing past our house; on one occasion a bullet narrowly missed entering our window. The heat of Zanzibar at this time of the year was intense, but because of the danger of flying bullets, we had to keep all doors and windows firmly closed. This seemed the ultimate test of endurance and amidst all the chaos that was going on outside, I could hardly believe how our two young children had remained so quiet. For us all, it seemed such an abrupt end to an otherwise enjoyable holiday; gone were those daily outings and walks to the seaside. We didn't even venture to go out shopping since all the shops had been shut down on orders from the coup leader. It was very fortunate that we had enough food and drink to last about two days. Unlike Kenya where, because of our frontier experience, we were used to bulk buying and stocking up with provisions, etc, this was not the case in Zanzibar, nor was it necessary; most of the residents did their shopping daily and it was not uncommon to see many shop two or three times a day! Our only contact with the outside world was the BBC World Service, and of course the spasmodic and vague announcements made over the local radio station. Outside, there was little or no movement of civilians, and the whole place had taken on the appearance of a ghost town. It had all happened so suddenly that people were too frightened and stunned to even talk about the revolution. On the third day after the coup, just about the time

when I was beginning to get anxious over Josey's powdered milk supply (which was fast running out), we heard the 'Field Marshal' broadcast an order to all traders in the town – his instructions were that they should open their shops for two hours to allow people to do their essential shopping. I decided to take the risk and get down to the shops. My uncle decided to come along too. In his broadcast, the 'Field Marshal' had asked all those going out to wear distinctive arm bands and carry white flags, which we're no doubt meant to denote a surrender to the new regime. When I reached the main street, I passed several trigger-happy soldiers walking along and chatting rather loudly among themselves. They seemed so excited with the guns that had been planted in their hands. They appeared more like kids with new toys and at one point I was challenged and a gun held to my chest. The soldier who tackled me was obviously not pleased with the colour of my arm band and ordered me to go home and change it. I cannot now recall the exact colour of the arm bands which Elsie and my aunt had quickly made up for us, but this was no time for arguing with these young, immature and barely-trained soldiers. We apologized, returned home and after quickly having the arm bands changed, went back to the shops, passing the very same road block and soldiers who had earlier challenged me. Obviously recognizing us, they let us pass. I had to make sure that we finished our shopping in the short time that we were allotted. Since there were several people at the particular *duka* we called on, it was quite a long wait before I was able to buy the baby foods and other

requisites. The shoppers were all very silent – no one dared talk about the events of the past few days; everyone seemed too frightened and conscious of the fact that they were being watched wherever they went. On returning from the *dukas*, I met some Europeans who gave me a few more details of the coup itself – the mass killings and the reign of terror that prevailed in many parts of the island. Several people, notably Arabs, were being herded like cattle and locked up in makeshift gaols. I also heard that a young man (a Goan) had been shot dead as he tried to escape. Bodies of the victims lay where they were killed, their relatives too scared to remove them because of the risks involved. There was panic and sheer chaos during the early stages of the coup.

Law and order had completely broken down. A dawn to dusk curfew was imposed in the beginning, but variations to the curfew order were broadcast from time to time to allow people time for essential shopping, etc. Government employees and those employed in commercial houses, banks, etc. were assured it would be safe for them to return to their places of employment. When restrictions were finally lifted, life in Zanzibar slowly began to return to normal. There is no doubt that the entire population had been shaken by the events of the past few days.

When out shopping one day, I met two Europeans who happened to be walking towards me from the direction of the Zanzibar hotel. I stopped and spoke to them and found out that they too were tourists like us – their holiday had also been abruptly

shattered. We talked briefly about the sad events and they very kindly asked me to come to the English Club later that afternoon as the British High Commissioner had organized a meeting for all British citizens on the island; this was primarily to discuss the latest situation in the light of the bloody coup and also give details of emergency evacuation arrangements that were being planned. I was very grateful for this information and later that afternoon got my uncle to accompany me to the English Club where several Europeans had gathered to listen to Mr Crossthwaite, the High Commissioner. The meeting itself was very informal and I could see from the worried looks on the faces of some of the residents how shattered they really were. Many had made this island their home and there were some who had lived here for several years. For them it was an end of a dream. Detailed plans for the evacuation of families were discussed and those wanting to leave the island were told that they would be escorted by British troops from their homes to the pier on the actual day. There was no compulsion to leave, although judging from the tone of the meeting, I was left in no doubt that the High Commissioner would certainly have liked women and children to get out immediately. I discussed our own position with officials of the High Commission, and was told that we were welcome to go along with the advance party that was being evacuated to Mombasa. On returning home, I put this suggestion to my uncle and aunt – that they too should accompany us to Mombasa, since I would not feel happy to move out on our own and leave them behind. Because of the suddenness

of the whole situation, there was a good deal of confusion and anxiety in our minds. At first, they agreed to come, but later changed their minds, and suggested that because of our young children, we should move out first. "God will look after us," they kept saying. As far as I was concerned, there was no question of our leaving without them, and since I still had quite a few weeks of my leave in hand, and with the general security situation showing some signs of improvement, we decided to stay behind as well and face the consequences together! All along, we were conscious of the fact that Clyde and my cousin Naty were safe in Nairobi, oblivious of what we were going through. In many ways, we were grateful that they were able to get out before the troubles had erupted. Meanwhile, as the first batch of refugees and evacuees reached Dar es Salaam and Mombasa, news of the coup spread to the outside world. The Sultan and his family, who had managed to escape, had been offered asylum by the Kenyan authorities. So as not to cause any distress and anxiety to Clyde or Naty, and many of our relatives and, friends in Kenya, we despatched a cable to Nairobi telling them we were all safe and well. Slowly, very slowly, life began to return to a degree of normality. The full horrors of what had happened during those fateful days began to unfold, with some close friends of my uncle and aunt telling us how lucky they were to be alive. One spoke of his wife who had been murdered while he was held captive in their own home — another had lost a son, and there were similar tales from those who had lost their loved ones. They wept and mourned

in silence. There was no one they could complain to, and in any case, very little would have been done in the confused and chaotic state the whole island was in at the time.

Despite the tense situation prevailing, we spent a whole month in Zanzibar after the revolution, and flew back to Dar where our friends were eagerly awaiting all the news at first hand. We were very sad to be leaving what was once (at least when we first set foot on it) a very peaceful and idyllic island. Now, we would be taking back only memories of days well spent, and of an experience we would never forget. At Dar es Salaam airport, we were welcomed back by Bis and driven to his home. The same evening we met most of our friends and my cousin, Nico Pinto at the Goan Institute. We were constantly being asked about our experiences during the revolution, and there were moments I wished we had recorded these events – if only to save us repeating the whole story over and over again! It so happened that Nico had planned to leave for Mombasa overland, and since he had enough room in his car for us all suggested that we accompany him in a couple of days.

This was a wonderful opportunity for us and we jumped at the idea. The drive from Dar to Mombasa was a long and tiresome one, but on arrival there, we were warmly received by my cousins Jock and Beryl. They too were pleased to know all was well with us. We later heard that some of our friends, presuming us to be dead during the revolution, had even offered up Masses for us. This was all understandable in view of the complete lack of any communication with the outside world at the time.

It was very comforting to receive the good wishes and encouraging remarks of our many friends wherever we went.

I still had quite a fair portion of my leave in hand and we decided to spend a few more days in Mombasa, some in Nairobi and return to Njoro earlier than due. In the special circumstances, the Ministry of Agriculture raised no objection to this arrangement. At Nairobi, we were happy to be reunited with Clyde once more, and here again many of our friends were eager to hear all our experiences. It all sounded so much like 'facing the Press'.

On returning to Njoro, I was very pleased to discover that the Ministry of Agriculture, through the Kenyan Foreign Ministry, had in fact sent cables to the Zanzibar Government enquiring about us and had received confirmation about our safety. I was truly grateful for all the efforts made on our behalf; as my old friend and one-time colleague, Robert Ouko, was now a senior official at the Kenya Foreign Ministry, I immediately sent him a note of thanks. It was difficult to believe how, after all that had taken place in Zanzibar, we had still returned unscathed and alive!

The trouble that started in Zanzibar sent shock waves to neighbouring Tanganyika where two battalions of former KAR *askaris* mutinied against their officers. Fortunately, President Nyerere appealed to the soldiers and the mutiny was quelled a few days later – not without some loss of life in its initial stages however. Similar trouble spread to Kenya and even Uganda; late in January 1964, there had been an attempted mutiny by the 11th

battalion of the Kenya Rifles stationed at Lanet, not far from Nakuru. This was quickly suppressed – thanks to the efforts of the 3rd Royal Horse Artillery which was stationed nearby. But for the prompt assistance provided by the British Government at the time, the Governments of Presidents Kenyatta and Milton Obote might well have been toppled. The Kenyan authorities were quick to bring the mutineers to book. Quite apart from recent troubles within the army, Kenya was also plagued by internal problems.



Elsie with our cook Magama and ayah Mary at Njoro, 1965.

In the N.F.D., neighbouring Somalia began stepping up its raids across the border and in February 1964, the State of Emergency in that Province was extended. I was saddened that

this area, in which I had served for many years, and which I had come to love dearly, was threatened by war. Fortunately, several years later, following intervention by the OAU, Kenya and Somalia signed a memorandum agreeing to cease hostilities and pledging to work much closer together in the interests of peace.

23. Njoro – the Final Chapter

At the Plant Breeding Station, many changes were also taking place. Giles Dixon, the Senior Plant Breeder had decided to retire early under the favourable compensation scheme negotiated for expatriate officers, and return to Britain. Pending the appointment of a substantive replacement, Michael Harrison, Senior Maize Research Officer from Kitale, and latterly Brian Dowker, a Plant Breeder from the Katumani Experimental station near Machakos acted in the post for varying periods. John Guthrie the Plant Pathologist eventually took over and was now designated Officer-in Charge of the station. The first African Plant Breeder, Festus Ogada had arrived to join the staff after graduating in the States. The senior staff was gradually being Africanized with the arrival of Messrs. Muruli, Ebagole and Waiyaki who supplemented the Plant Pathology and Plant Breeding teams.

In the country generally, the new African government was committed to a policy of Africanization not just in the civil service but various sectors of the economy. On the agricultural front, some two and a half million acres of land in the former White Highlands was still unallocated by the end of 1964. The settlement schemes drawn up earlier in respect of the first million acres had not proved successful. Its consequences affected the overall agricultural production which began to decline. Although the initial aim of *Mzee* Kenyatta's government was to satisfy land hunger and resettle many of the landless Africans – a pledge that had been given after Uhuru, it did not take the Minister responsible long to find out that further fragmentation of the land into small units was not an economic solution. What was needed was large scale units which could at the same time be run on efficient lines. All this required money, and because of the lack of capital, many of the ambitious schemes had temporarily to be shelved. The million acres settlement scheme had alone cost some £23 million by 1965 but had resettled some 25,000 families. The Government's policy was to go in for larger and more economic units, and the Agricultural Development Corporation, which was set up in 1965, was charged specifically with the organization of farming units during the transitional stage. Funds began to arrive from various sources including the Agricultural Finance Corporation, Land Bank of Kenya, International Development Agency (an agency of the World Bank). The aim was to increase productivity on small farms and a scheme designed by an Asst. Director of

Agriculture, and appropriately named after him – the ‘Swynerton Plan’, (which concentrated on the proper development of agriculture in the African areas) proved very popular. With the credit facilities made available through the Land Settlement Bank, a new breed of African farmers was lining up to buy land in the former White Highlands.

With the advent of Uhuru, many European farmers and some expatriate civil servants had decided to leave the country, despite assurances given and tributes paid to them by the new Prime Minister – *Mzee Kenyatta* himself.

I must admit that I personally had not given serious thought to the question of leaving Kenya, and was quite prepared to stay on as long as possible. There was not the slightest hint that my job as Executive Officer on the station was to be Africanized immediately. At one stage, the newly appointed Chief Research Officer at the Ministry, Dr Njoroge, even asked me to spend some time at the Mtwapa Agricultural Station on the Coast, and help reorganize their stores ledgers and procedures, which had come in for some criticism from the Ministry’s auditors. It was gratifying to note that my efforts in this direction were much appreciated both at the Ministry and the local Agricultural Officer at Mtwapa.

Although many of my friends had decided to retire prematurely, I must say that the terms offered to Asian civil servants were far from favourable and there was a general feeling among the Asian officers at the time that we had been badly let down by the British Government – some of my European friends shared

this view. We came to be known as the ‘Forgotten Men’, and a Goan Education Officer from Nairobi – who was also President of the Asian Civil Service Association – Robert Fernandes, emerged as our leader. He and his colleagues in the association fought relentlessly, with some success, to obtain a better deal for the vast majority of Asians.

In June 1965, our second daughter, Pollyanna Clare was born – another beautiful girl, and a fitting completion to our family now. Elsie was, on this occasion, able to have her baby in pleasant surroundings – at the Nakuru War Memorial Hospital which hitherto admitted Europeans only. Although everything went off well at the actual confinement, Elsie’s health began to deteriorate steadily. For this reason, we had arranged that the new baby be christened at home. We had many friends among the local missionaries, and one of the priests from Nakuru very kindly agreed to come and conduct the ceremony. Clyde and Andrew (who was also now away at school in Nairobi), and several of our relatives and friends attended the homely celebration that followed.

To provide some assistance for Elsie, we took on a full time ayah and were fortunate in securing the services of a young and attractive girl by the name of Mary. She had never worked before and had in fact come out from her reserve in the Nyanza Province. Her brother, who worked as a domestic servant on the station was very keen that she should work for us and get some training and experience.

Mary was a very neat and tidy person, always smartly turned

out and with a pleasant nature. She seemed very happy with us and got on well with our cook Magama who was more like a father to her. He too was of tremendous help to us especially during the period immediately following Elsie's discharge from hospital. He looked after her as he would his own daughter and we had absolute confidence and trust in him.

Following the departure of Giles Dixon and latterly Ken Lynch, many other changes took place at the station. Jim Crawford, who had been kept on much after I had taken over, found that the new African government were now accelerating the process of Africanization. His continued employment was not therefore possible, and his contract was accordingly terminated after due notice had been given. He and his family eventually left for the United Kingdom. The station also saw some other changes with the arrival of Dr Rudy Petersen and Dr Hannah from Canada as part of the Rockefeller Aid Scheme. Another Plant Breeder, Dr Henry Enns, also from Canada, was brought in to supplement the Plant Breeding team. Dave Ensor, who was the Seeds Officer was replaced by Shashi Shah, a product of Egerton College. Shashi was a young man, full of drive and an abnormal amount of enthusiasm. He got on well with the local farmers. Others to join the station from Egerton College included Jimmy Pradhan, Mohamed Butt and Bernard Muruli.

Not long after returning from overseas leave, Felix Pinto had got married; his wife, Doreen, a doctor, was previously attached to the Aga Khan hospital at Mombasa. It was very nice having another married couple on the station. The only bachelor among

the Goans was now Malachias Da Costa, a Lecturer at Egerton College who, because of the housing shortage there, was temporarily housed at the Plant Breeding Station. Another family who were also housed on the station were Marty and Hannah Reid who had recently arrived from the States. Marty lectured at Egerton College and both he and his wife became very good friends of ours, and proved of tremendous help on many occasions.



Senior staff of the Plant Breeding Station at Njoro in the 1960s.

Africanization in the civil service had now started in real earnest; many of our friends had already left the country to return to Goa, while others had emigrated to the UK and Canada. Towards the latter half of 1965, I heard that there was a move

afoot to Africanize some of the Executive Officer posts within the Ministry of Agriculture. I was one of the early casualties! My initial reaction was one of disappointment especially since I had wanted to stay on and work in Kenya. I had not prepared myself for any move out of the country of my birth, nor for that matter made any plans as to what we would do if my post was one day Africanized. Here, I must pay tribute to my dear wife, Elsie who was quick to act. With the understandable aspirations of the Kenyan people and the Government's declared policy of Africanization, the job prospects for someone in my position were not, at the time, bright, and with a very young family, we felt that it would be in their long-term interests if moved to Britain. I was told that there would be no difficulty in my obtaining a job there. I was given ample notice of the Government's intention to Africanize my post; in fact with the leave that was due to me and my notice period, I would be paid up right until the end of November, 1966. It is really amazing how quickly one can act in an emergency! Immediate plans were made and passages booked to the UK. Next was the job of disposing of all our surplus possessions and packing those essentials we would be taking with us. As most people in similar circumstances will have experienced, this is a time when you virtually have to 'give away' a lot of what has been accumulated. But for a few trunks containing our clothing, linen, etc., the only other bulky packages were the crates I had had made for the two elephant feet I was determined to take along. The cost of freight didn't arise since the Government would be

bearing the entire cost from Kenya to the UK port.

A few weeks before our actual departure, a Plant Breeder had arrived from England. Coming out to Kenya on his first ever posting abroad, Dick Little was naturally pleased to have been sent to a station like Njoro. He never stopped talking about the ‘glorious weather’ and couldn’t understand why we were leaving all this to go to England!

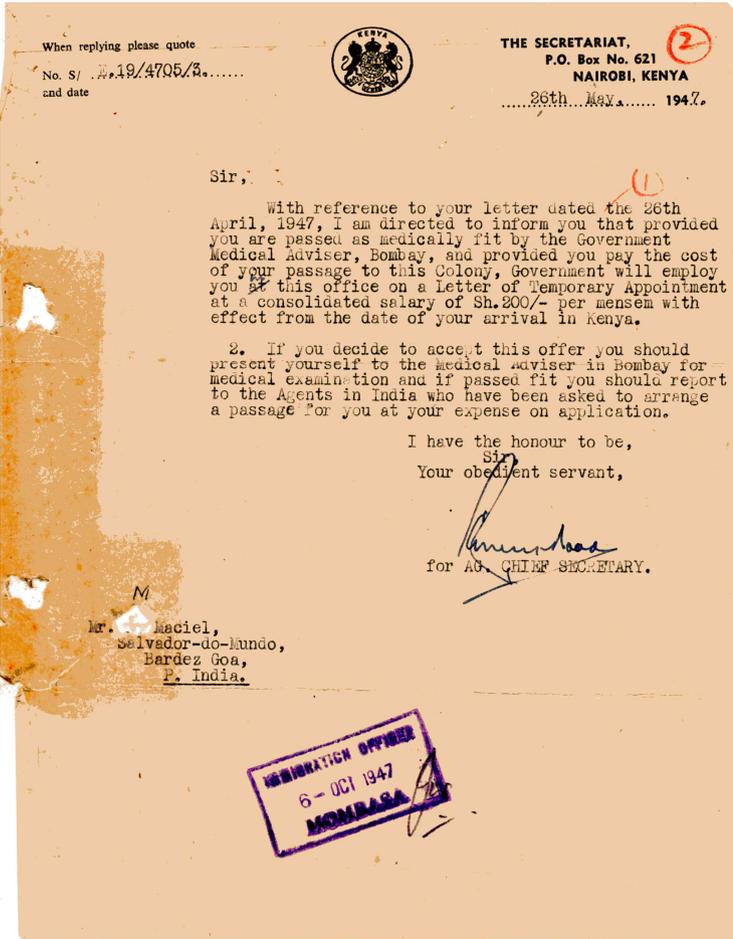
Our last few months were pretty crowded socially since farewell parties had been organized by our many friends. We had arranged a farewell barbecue (which we appropriately called a Funga Safari evening) which was well attended. The days flew by all too quickly, but as yet the full impact of what was happening had not hit me. We were too much a part and parcel of Kenya to be torn away from her so suddenly. It was sad to be leaving behind a country and people we loved so dearly. With the exception of our eldest son Clyde, the rest of the family were far too young to appreciate what was going on. Perhaps this was just as well. Although he and Andrew might well be able to retain some memories of Kenya, Josey was too young to remember much, and as for Pollyanna, she was a mere babe who would be growing up in a wholly English environment.

Uprooting oneself from a country in which one had grown, and moving to pastures new was certainly a big wrench. Uhuru had no doubt brought about many changes – sadly, it had also displaced many families. There was no bitterness in our hearts – only sadness at having to leave this lovely land, many family members and the hundreds of friends of every race we had

made during our stay in Kenya. Many were there to see us off at Nairobi's Embakasi airport on the evening of June 10, 1966. Even our faithful cook Magama, had travelled down to Nairobi to bid us farewell. For him, it would be the end of a long and happy association with us – but we had promised to keep in touch.

As we boarded the steps of the East African Airways jet that was to fly us out to London via Entebbe and Rome, my parting words to this wonderful country and its people were – “Kwaheri ya Kuonana” (till we meet again)!

Below is the Letter of Appointment from the Kenya Secretariat as a temporary clerk at a salary of £120 per annum:



Song of the Wild NFD

(Written in May 1951)

(Tune: "I'm a broken down cowboy")

Chorus:

Somali, Somali, we're here for your sake
But what the hell difference does the N.F.D. make
We're all hale and hearty and sure full of cheer
When wearied or downcast, we just sip a beer!
We've left old Nairobi and come all way here
Though the City folk at us so often do jeer;
"You N.F.D. guys have a 'gold mine' up there,"
For such idle gossip we sure couldn't care.
Our friends in the City and round everywhere
A welcome to you all comes from us up here,
Moyale, Mandera makes no difference to us
Our N.F.D. camels sure beat 'Kenya bus'.

Ignatius Carvalho is now homeward bound
While Marsabit's Maciel sings in tones so profound;
Young Capy Moraes is so thrilled at Wajir
Now Isiolo's Thomas (Fernandes) goes there as Cashier.
Marsabit's cold now, says old Victor Ferns (Fernandes)
While our friends in Turkana complain of the burns;
Isiolo's comrades have naught to complain
They're always so happy, but still ask for rain!
Faria at Garissa has a surplus of rice,
We'll sure buy it off him for that generous price;
Mandera's John Falcão seems quite happy there
Old Martin now joins him – they'll make a good pair!
Our friends in Turkana we greet you aloud
'Tis pleasant to class you in our frontier crowd,
You're surely content with Lake Rudolf's fresh fish
While we are so tired of our Njoro pea dish.
Isiolo's da Lima is quite hale and blithe
While poor Luis Fernandes still fights for his rights;
Furtados left Mandera and Almeidas also here
Now Marsabit's Falcão is all full of cheer.
On a well earned vacation, old Santimano goes —
While Isiolo's Pacheco can't save any dough
Moraes is now tired – he wants City life,
Look out oh my comrades, he'll soon have a wife!
We've left distant homeland and come all way here
Oh leaving behind us our near and our dear

But Somali Somali, we're still full of glee
Amidst frontier tribesmen, it's such comp-a-ny.

FINAL CHORUS:

Now Somali Somali we're leaving you not
To live in the frontier 'tis surely our lot
We'll always keep singing wherever we go
The song of the wild N.F.D. ever more!

For origin of the 'Somali Somali' song, please see page 85.

Glossary

Ki-Swahili

ASANTE SANA thank you very much

ASKARI policeman, soldier

BOMA administrative headquarters – also used for livestock enclosure

duka shop

FUNGA close, pack

JAMBO general salutation, e.g. hello, good-morning, etc.

KANGA brightly coloured muslin wrap

KANZU a cassock-type full length robe worn by domestic servants in Colonial days

KARANI clerk

KODI poll tax

KWAHERI goodbye

MANYATTA homestead, hut, village (Masai)

MASIKINI beggar, pauper

MEMSAHIB Madam, Mrs

MORAN warrior

MTOTO juvenile, small boy

MVULI teak

NEOPARA headman

POSHO maize meal

SAFARI journey, trip

SASA HIVI just now, quickly, soon

SHAMBA field, farm

SHAURI complaint, problem

SUFURIA cooking pot ‘

SHUKA calico sheet wrapped around body

UHURU freedom

UPEPO breeze

ZAWADI gift

Turkana

EKICHALONG

(TURKANA/SUK headrest/stool)

Boran

FARSO liquor

Konkani⁴

SORPOTEL spicy pork dish made with diced pork, liver, etc.

SUSEGAD quiet, restful

VINDALO spicy pork dish

⁴ (lingua franca of the Goans)

In Memoriam

(Composed: November 1944)

*My mother was snatched at too early an age
My father soon followed that same old stage,
And left us three brothers quite helpless, alone
To bear the yoke that they had borne.*

*My mother's death took place at home –
Where all of us did weep and mourn
But my father's was a death at sea,
It tore our hearts and orphaned three!*

*My Dad with step-mum and children three
Was sailing to Africa full of glee;
He smilingly said, "I'll come back soon,"
But we knew not death would call so soon.*

*So sudden God's summons, so quick the deep sea
Did swallow them all, O Destiny,*

*No time to say farewell, no time to say 'wait',
Death's cold gatekeeper had opened the gate!*

*And now that he's gone, we can murmur not
But trust in God for that's our lot,
And trusting in Him who reigns on high
We'll patiently wait till the end draws nigh.*

*Then Daddy and Mummy soon shall we meet
When death has silenced our last heart-beat,
Together then we'll live forever and ever
In He'ven so beautiful, we shall part — no NEVER!*

What the Others Say

Mervyn Maciel's *Bwana Karani* is an eye-opener. His is the only work of its kind to be published by any member of any Asian community in Kenya. —Cynthia Salvadori, author and historian. *Bwana Karani* is a *Roots* of sorts, and what a journey it is!. His love and warmth of the people — African people — cannot be mistaken. —*Nairobi Weekly News*.

More detailed reviews can be found in Mervyn Maciel's second book, *From Mtoto to Mzee*, pages 156-161.

About the Author

Born in Kenya in the late twenties, MERVYN MACIEL has spent many years in East Africa. His love of the African bush and a particular fascination for the tribes – especially those from the Northern Frontier Province (N.F.D. as the Kenyan region was then known), together with his desire to live out in the wilderness close to Nature, prompted him to move to some of the most outlying and isolated areas of Kenya at a very young age. He has served in many areas affected by the Mau Mau uprising and witnessed Kenya's final march to UHURU (Freedom) and Nationhood. He and his family were also in the clove-famed island of Zanzibar at the height of the revolution which overthrew the Sultan.

Mervyn Maciel has had a very interesting and successful career in the Kenya civil service spanning some twenty years, and *Bwana Karani* is the realization of a lifelong dream.

His move to the United Kingdom followed the Africanization of his post at the internationally-renowned Plant Breeding Station

at Njoro in Kenya's former 'White Highlands'.

He and his family now live in Sutton, Surrey, from where he still finds time to pursue some of his other interests which include free-lance writing, gardening and home wine making.

Bwana Karani is a personal narrative of the author's life and times in East Africa covering some twenty years. It recalls the years spent in the Provincial Administration in some of the most outlying areas of Kenya – a service which, in the words of Sir Richard Turnbull (a former Governor of Tanganyika, who has contributed the Foreword), was 'indeed a splendid service, and one to which one is proud to have belonged'. It catalogues also the period of the Mau Mau uprising through which the Maciel family lived, and speaks with affection of the many characters and old friends the author worked with.

Filled with nostalgic memories of Kenya during the colonial days, this book is bound to appeal to a wide readership and, as Sir Richard Turnbull again recalls, interest 'those such as myself, eager to refresh recollections of earlier days, and to read of old friends... many, alas, no longer with us but still remembered with affection.... '

Mervyn Maciel is a nonagerian Goan based in Britain. This is the story of his experiences in Africa; this, where he worked in Kenya's Provincial Administration. It is an attempt to share his experiences with the reader, from the times where he "enjoyed the delights and varied attractions of a district life."

Bwana Karani, the book's title, in Ki-Swahili, the lingua franca of East Africa, comes from the words 'clerk' (karani), the author's very first job. Literally, it would mean 'Mister Clerk'; the courtesy title was an accepted one and extended to personnel in the civil service and other commercial quarters too.

This story takes us from Maciel's student days to his entry into the Kenya Civil Service, his work in the coast, Turkana District, Lodwar-Marsabit, marriage and family, a posting at Kitale, overseas leave in India, ks Machakos, Njoro, the Zanzibar Revolution and more.

