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BROOKLANDS BARAZA

A newsletter to keep Old Yorkists and Laibon in touch and their friendships alive

Issue Number 4 - January 2022

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A message from John O'Grady our Chairman and Founder:

All at [Optimum Kenya Trust and Msaada](#) send you Greetings for the Festive Season and we wish you a Happy and Successful New Year. We take this opportunity to thank you, most gratefully and sincerely, for

all your donations to provide bursaries for pupils we support at the School through this and all previous years. Your generosity literally makes a life-changing difference to them all. Thanks also to those who have contributed to the Brooklands Baraza Newsletter. We hope it has filled a void and has been successful in keeping Old Yorkists and Laibon in touch and their friendships alive.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(these are just a few of many received and much appreciated)

Terrific publication...keep up the great work

John Harman (Kirk)

Brilliant. Well done.

Ken Doig

For the record, the Newsletter is simply excellent – very well done.

Gayling May

Another excellent edition and my congratulations as I know how much work goes into something like that – well done again!!

Peter Neep

Just finished reading edition No3; took a while as it is so full of information and entertainment. Especially enjoyed the clip of the EA Safari, which brought back fond memories!

Thank you for all you do in editing and keeping us together.

Geoff "Bobby" Lock

Sadly, since receiving this letter, I have been informed by Mike Johnson that Geoff died on 8th December at his home in Bristol. An obituary will be published in the next edition of this Newsletter.

G'Day Alan (pronounced 'gid-die' here in Aus),

Well done on your BB project. Lots of good memories. I much enjoyed Johnny Platter's exploit and I remember Cuccurullo well. He was the most popular boy in Junior House because he arrived at school with seemingly unlimited pocket money. I think we were supposed to be limited to 60Ksh a term, whereas Cuccu would spend that in a week so he had lots of friends who would accompany him to the Tuck Shop!

Brendan Brooksbank

Roger Maudsley writes:

Johnny Platter, in his fascinating description of his "bunk" from school states: "Cuccurullo was an amiable Italian boy, reckless sometimes but always good, warm company. I think – old men forget – his first name was Luigi and I've no idea where or how he ended up."

Surprisingly I can help out once again.

I don't know how we made contact (probably via the Old Yorkist site) but Silvio - yes it's Silvio not Luigi! - turned up in Rio a few years ago. Based in Houston he was employed by an oil-industry outfit, in marketing I believe. He was probably given the job as he spoke Spanish after a period in Venezuela. He also had a Brazilian girlfriend. He didn't make much headway with the local Petrobras monopoly though and gave up. We had dinner with him on the few occasions he came down and I later communicated once or twice a year via Skype.

As I understand it, he moved to Palma de Majorca where one of his, I think, two sons was based as a pilot.

He was a great talker and our conversations lasted for ages. Unfortunately, I never got the full lowdown on his post-Duko life in Africa. In full "African Queen" style he traded for a while between ports on, I think, Lake Tanganyika. He then got involved with mercenaries but I never got the details. His health wasn't good and I wonder how he's doing these days.

Ed asks: if anyone knows where Silvio is and how he is doing, please write in and let us know?

Ed Writes:

I shared a dormitory in Junior House with Cuccurullo. He was a great character, very entertaining and always hungry. I well remember one dinner-time when, to his delight, spaghetti was served. You may remember, there were at least 4 of us (maybe 5) on either side of the table with a prefect at the end so there was enough for at least 9, maybe 11 of us. That's a lot of spaghetti.

Cuccu smacked his lips in true Italian style and said he could eat the lot. That was a claim we couldn't resist and we challenged him to prove it.

He immediately started stuffing spaghetti down his throat in huge spoonfuls. As time went on and the original pile declined, the pace slowed and we all thought he would fail. But Cuccu was no loser. Following a massive burp, he got his second wind (with more to come later) and he scoffed the lot!

The rest of us went hungry that night but it was great entertainment!!

Thanks for all your letters. Please keep them coming.

Bunking out of School

In a previous edition of this newsletter, John Platter told us about Bunking out of school with Alan Doig. That has prompted one or two other amusing stories on a similar theme. How about you? Do you have any similar confessions you want to share?

A confession from Brandon Brooksbank:

The only bunk I ever did out of school was when Robin McGuinness, Steve Hobson and I jumped on the train one Sunday morning and got off at the next station up the line. Unfortunately, the Station Master objected to us climbing up and swimming in the elevated water tanks and he rang the school. Apparently, the School Bell was rung and there was a snap roll call in all houses at lunch time to find the miscreants.

After dinner that evening, we were summoned to Ken Higson's study to explain our absence and we lied through our teeth that we hadn't heard the bell (which was true) because we were at the far end of the bundu looking after an injured hyrax (which wasn't true). Higson was a decent guy and he let us off with a caution, but lying to him weighed on my mind after that. Just before he died, I atoned somewhat by

writing to him to confess and to thank him for getting me through A Level maths and subsequently into a career in Civil Engineering.

Another from the editor:

I bunked out of school on more than one occasion but one that sticks in mind was with a lovesick pal desperate to see his girlfriend. Rob Bradshaw was anxious to see JS, his valentine, who was due to appear, with her school at the Nairobi Showground. He persuaded me and AN Other to go with him down the railway line which was the most direct route. As luck would have it, just as we were going through the narrow cutting under the Ngong road a train came hurtling down the track. There was nowhere for us to go so we had to lay face down beside the vibrating railway line as the monstrous train approached at high speed. The engine driver hooted his horn continuously as he thundered towards us and, as he went by, out of anger and spite, he sprayed us with boiling hot steam! It was a scary and painful experience! We went on from there to the Showground and waited for hours for the Kenya High School girls to come by. Eventually they did, in close order, quick march. Rob got a momentary sideways glance and the briefest of smiles, which he returned with a shy wave and that was what all the sacrifice we had made was for!

Roger Maudsley was an offender too!

I also did a "bunk" once. This was with Chris Greaves and we hitched, believe it or not, to the Prince of Wales where the daughters of two teachers (met by the swimming pool during the holidays) were girlfriends! Mine, Stephanie, was the daughter of the French teacher. The bastard must have later rung the Duko as I was subsequently summoned before Kirk housemaster Panha who announced he was going to have to cane me. If I remember correctly his exact words were "Maudsley, I'm going to have to beat you. Would you like it now or later"!

The early days of The Duke of York School

A contribution from **Eddie Green** – Delamere 1946-1954

Government House - January 1949 to April 1949.

What an amazing place to start off a great new school. This is where it began, while we were waiting for our new school buildings, on the Ngong Road, to reach the point of construction where they could accommodate pupils.



The dormitories at GH were situated upstairs, in what were essentially staterooms. The classrooms were located in three or four large reception rooms on the ground floor, and were accessed by pillared galleries which surrounded a central courtyard. In those classrooms we seventy or so boys were taught by the four original teachers, namely George James, Frank Harris, Harry Hesketh, and Charles Kitchener. They set the tone and the standards for all that followed.

Many names and many incidents come to mind - random flashes of memory. The names of "Forty Niners" arise out of the past: Byron ('Kalulu') Kalogeris; Jake Behr; Jock Smit; Don Rooken-Smith; Peter Langton; Tom Stevenson; 'Nod' Hollyer; Rusty Miller - and on and on....

And images: such as when, at break times between periods, Andrew Hitch and I would play soccer with a tennis ball or ping pong ball in the galleries, seeing how many times we could keep the ball in the air without it hitting the floor. And a vivid picture of Tony Phillips, a soccer prodigy, dumbfounding opponents

and seemingly scoring at will.

Catapults were a big thing in those early days at the Duko. Everyone had one. Government House was bordered by the Nairobi Arboretum, which merged into the grounds of GH, providing a great natural habitat for teeming bird life. Some of the guys spent what little spare time there was hunting and shooting birds. I have a vivid memory of Derek Rossenrode coming out from the bushes at the rear of GH, with a big bulge at the front of his shirt. He proudly opened his shirt, to reveal the fruit of his hunt. It was one of Governor Sir Phillip Mitchell's prized and protected Lorie birds! Anxious days followed, while we awaited the repercussions from this risky action. Fortunately, there were none, to Derek's huge relief.

The playing fields on which we played sports at GH were set out on the huge lawn and grass parade ground at the front of the Governor's mansion.

A prime sporting event in Nairobi at that time was a huge 5-a-Side schools' soccer tournament, promoted and run by the Caledonian Soccer Club. The Duko entered a team, comprised of Tony Phillips, Andrew Hitch, Louie Heine, Deon Hugo, Faanie Viljoen, John Bramwell, and myself. We astonished the local soccer world (and ourselves) by winning the whole thing, and bringing home a handsome trophy.

The New Duke of York. - April 1949 to 1952.

At the end of the first term we were able to move into our new school, on the edge of the Kikuyu reserve, out towards Ngong.

What an experience awaited us.

There were very few buildings ready for occupation. The buildings, made out of pise-de-terre, consisted of two main boarding blocks where the dormitories were situated, served by a central dining room. Another block served for classrooms. One dorm block accommodated Delamere and Kirk houses; the other block held Lugard and Mitchell houses. These buildings were situated at the west end of Brooklands, the large circular, central driveway that would eventually surround the main buildings and classrooms, once they had been constructed. Heavy machinery operated all day long on the central site, stirring up huge clouds of red dust, which blew constantly into the classrooms and dorms, leaving a red patina everywhere. In the classrooms, dust coated the pages of our exercise books, and our hands left red smears as we wrote. We had to keep blowing the dust off the page in order to write the next few lines.

There was a huge amount of work to be done in establishing our new school. We students were a ready and easily-exploitable source of labour. Every Wednesday afternoon, throughout the first three years at our new school, we were formed into work parties, and were made to work on the school grounds. We planted the jacaranda trees that bordered the driveway leading up to the main school. Each guy was responsible for the planting and nurturing of two jacarandas, including the dreaded task of "chota maji" in buckets filled from the tap beside the classroom block, or near to George James's house and the stable where he kept his horses. And as we worked, George supervised our efforts from atop his horse! We planted the main rugger/soccer pitch immediately to the north of Delamere House. We planted the hedge along the western boundary of the school, separating the playing fields from the Reserve. And we carried out numerous other landscaping projects.

On weekends, when we weren't playing sports matches against teams from the Prince of Wales and St. Mary's schools, we had time to ourselves. This was when we made full use of the 'bundus' to the east of the school buildings. There was a forested area where we built tree houses in the big Croton and Mugumu trees. These tree houses served as 'forts', and were the sites of many battles and sieges between the owners. The faithful catapults were used, buck apples were fired as 'catty' ammunition, and missiles flew - even stones. Goodness knows why no one was seriously injured. I was part of a gang in one tree

house/fort, built by myself, Michael Gibbons, James and Sandy Watson, Ken Payet, whose names I recall. We nailed the tree house together, driving nails into the host tree, and nailed rungs to the trunk of the tree, by which we mounted into our domain. Vivid memories come back...Derek Rossenrode, who used big stones in his 'catty', and Georgie Wilson (later Wilson-Green) who used small stones - both of whom recorded many kills in the bundu: birds, the odd squirrel, a hyrax.

As School Cert approached, and as we became interested in the opposite sex, we thought nothing of breaking bounds, and heading out across country to visit our girlfriends at 'The Boma'. We would set out in a North-easterly direction, and run all the way to the Boma, crossing Convent Drive, Lavington Estate, and the vleis at the south west corner of the Kenya High School campus. All for a few hurried minutes spent flirting with the girlfriend of the moment! I believe the successes I recorded in the annual Cross Country races at the Duko may be chalked up in part to those cross-country excursions to the Boma on weekends. Amazingly, we were never caught (and inevitably punished !) for doing so.

However, a few of us did get caught leaving the dorm one night, to go up to the railway embankment and wave to the Boma girls on the train going up country at the end of term. The night watchman reported us to George James, who came along and hauled us into his office, where he administered 'the cuts' - six of the best that he could deliver! We were in our pyjamas, and it hurt like hell.

Those were exhilarating, carefree days at the young Duko.

Somehow we managed to pass our exams; and to proceed on to Higher School Cert; and to eventually become responsible citizens of the world.

I was incredibly fortunate to be able to enjoy such a rich educational experience - in a wonderful country, at a great school, and with so many unforgettable school friends.

As many of you may know, Eddie subsequently returned to the Duke of York School as a teacher and housemaster from 1959 - 64

Founder members of Duke of York Staff at Government House, Nairobi - 1949



Biddy Clayden, 'Bulldog' Harris, 'Pansy James', 'Harry' Hesketh, Lesley James, 'Charlie' Kitchener

TEACHERS AND OTHER INFLUENCES

A contribution by **By John Platter** – Kirk/Grogan 1956-62

The founding headmaster, R.H. James, had assembled a team unrivalled in Kenya. The majority of the 30-strong staff, including himself, came with Oxbridge degrees. (Why did we call him Pansy? Or was it Pansy? He wore his belt well above his tummy).

A spirit of intellectual curiosity and healthy, competitive sportsmanship – where sportsmanship of course was as important as winning - pervaded our many and diverse activities. Eccentricity and originality were valued, cliché discounted, even effrontery tolerated within bounds - nothing laboured, just the unstated, understood ethos. Pansy was justifiably proud of his young school, founded in 1949. Its first intake was housed at Government (now State) House!

Our Kirk housemaster at the time, Jock Pearson, a French and German teacher, remains an enduring idol, an avuncular, generous man of graceful manners, unhurried competence and wide interests. Exceptionally cool. He edited *The Yorkist*. We doted on his beautiful little only-daughter and Austrian wife - a Lily Marlene figure; I imagined her soothing audiences in a low register, in a dimly-lit, smoky Viennese nightclub, balancing on a bar stool.

A couple of other 'characters' include the chaplain, the Rev E.B. Rees - even he was an Oxonian. He exemplified oddity. His most fervent advice to which his stout frame bore unambiguous witness, didn't come from the gospels. 'Listen to me - for a change,' I remember him shouting hoarsely. He thought himself an orator and had a way of looking way over his flock toward the heavens. 'Your most important quality in a wife is that she be a good cook.' However, the lusty choir, the hymns – even his sermons – roused us in the intended way, with pride for 'the empire'.

The most 'famous' and titled master was 'The Hon. Charles Kitchener', direct descendant of the victor of the 1898 Battle of Omdurman, and other campaigns – World War I, India, South Africa. The victory reclaimed the Sudan from Mahdist Islamic rule. Lord Kitchener smashed the Mahdi's tomb and threw his remains into the Nile; more details are too macabre to mention. However, the Mahdi four years earlier had

driven the British out of Khartoum and delivered the severed blond head of its last defender, Maj. Gen. Captain Charles Gordon, to Queen Victoria's retreating forces.

Later, as a foreign correspondent for United Press International (the American news agency UPI) I interviewed the Mahdi's great grandson at Omdurman in 1966. Saddiq al-Mahdi was then Prime Minister of the Sudan and, what else, an Oxford graduate too. A tall, slow-moving white-turbaned figure, he had two luckless cracks in 1966-67 and 1986-97 at 'democratising' his country - now two countries, neither democratic but in transition. He raised a wordless eyebrow and managed a taut smile when I mentioned I'd been taught at school by a Kitchener.

Our own gangly, 6ft 4, self-effacing but always attentive Kitchener's generosity extended to his personal library. The keen gardener had the worrywart creased look of his ancestor - a visage described as akin to the 'Polish railway system'.

James (Jim) de Vere Allen was a donnish, wayward history master, fresh from university. He played Al Jolson too loudly, not so surreptitiously dispensing Vodka shots. His highly-strung Doberman, Buster, was a needy, leaping hound prone to knock over the glasses. Allen grew orchids dangling from the lush indigenous trees around his house.

He took a few of us to climb the Ruwenzoris - the rarer option to the Outward Bound Kilimanjaro climb - and frostbite was the least of it; we nearly killed ourselves. When Jock Pearson heard of it, he said: 'History masters are expendable. Platter, write about it for the Yorkist' and I did. We had in situ tutorials as we traversed the four ancient Ugandan Kingdoms and were suitably awed by the reverence for the red Ankole cattle fearsomely armed with their spear-sharp horns, meters high and spanned equally wide.

Allen's Marxist theory lectures included the mildly subversive advice to mine our privileged lives for juicy ironies. Any essay - 'stick to verbs and short sentences' - however rigorously constructed was the poorer without wit; and unadorned facts could do irony too.

His focus on people, the players more than dry theory, has been defining in my 60-odd years since as a correspondent (69 countries, mostly in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, many coups, too many assassinations). And later as a wine critic and grower - in the Cape, South Africa. It's the hands of men and women - not only God and the whims of climate - that shape great wines.

Allen parsed the daily newspapers with us as they reported the constitutional crises in the rush to East African independence. Julius Nyerere usually came out in front for spare Orwellian clarity, Tom Mboya for deadly repartee. That they - and their countries - would part ways as political polar opposites after independence was no surprise to Jim Allen students. It was an article of faith to jolt young minds.

I don't mean to evade the grand questions of white privilege and colonialism. We lived in times not of our making. Of course we were extraordinarily advantaged not just by the amenities and spacious sports fields, not just by the civil tone and humour of the men and women who taught us but also by the lively fellowship among boys that they engendered.

However, one celebrated Lenana alumnus, way after our time, Binyavanga Wainaina, in a 2005 Granta essay - How to write about Africa - has left us a withering tirade on the colonial legacy. As an Old Boy, and a reporter on the continent, I felt myself swelling with pride at the sneering wit - honed at Lenana doubtless - even as I flinched.

Wainaina's 'how to' advice:

'Describe in detail naked breasts (young, old conservative, recently raped, big, small) or mutilated genitals,

or enhanced genitals. Or any kind of genitals. And dead bodies, rotting naked bodies. Any work you submit, in which people look filthy and miserable will be referred to as the 'real Africa'. The biggest taboo in writing about Africa is to describe or show dead or suffering white people... and always end with Nelson Mandela saying something about rainbows and renaissances. Because you care.'

TIME magazine voted Wainaina, born in Nakuru of mixed Gikuyu and Tutsi parentage, among its Top 100 most influential people in 2014, soon after he declared himself an LGBTQ activist.

We met to 'ongea sawa' - as he put it - during his brief foray into Cape Town's ethnic restaurant scene in the 1980's. He was – isn't it often the case? – a gentler in person than on paper. He died in 2019, aged 48, a few days before the Kenya High Court's decision not to liberalise the country's anti-gay laws.

SPORTS INTEGRATION IN KENYA IN 1960

Brendan Brooksbank writes

In the late 1950s Kenya was starting to move rapidly away from being a colony of Britain towards Independence and the Colonial Government decided that it would be a good idea to start integrating young people of different ethnic backgrounds. Up to that point in time nearly all schools in Kenya had been segregated by race and secondary schools by gender as well.

As a young student at the all-white, all-male Duke of York School my first experience of this new policy was in 1960 when our school first XI soccer team was scheduled to play the all-black Alliance High School at soccer. As we piled into the back of the 3-ton lorry that masqueraded as our school bus for the drive to Alliance I am sure that we must have felt a bit of unease as to our reception at the other end. After all, the Mau Mau emergency had come close to our school and was still very much in all our memories. The gun towers and sandbags had only recently been removed from our school grounds.

However, our fears were unfounded, and we received an enthusiastic and noisy welcome from several hundred well-dressed and polite Alliance students. We found that they were not quite so polite on the field and were determined to show us that they were not to be taken lightly. Some of their tactics took us a bit by surprise, but the game was played hard and in good spirit amid a cacophony of sound from what sounded like thousands of their supporters pressing in on all sides of the pitch. I can still hear their cries of 'HARRRASSSS HEEM' whenever one of our players had the ball. After the game, we were invited to their canteen to mingle and chat over tea and biscuits. A few months later they came to the Duke of York for a return match, but I'm afraid our supporters were no match for the Alliance boys for noise level or enthusiasm. I cannot for the life of me remember which team won the games, but I think that the results were close. I know that I enjoyed them both and meeting our fellow Kenyan students and I am sure that these early Government initiatives using sport to break down racial barriers paid off later on.

My second experience with this new Government initiative was not so personally enjoyable. In fact, it was downright embarrassing. The Government had also initiated what it called 'Triangular Sports Days' using athletics as a medium to integrate the three largest racial groups in Kenya i.e., African, Indian and European. My first, and only, experience of one of these days occurred in 1962 at Machakos, where the Government had just built a brand-new sports stadium, complete with large grandstand and cinder running track. Somehow, I found myself representing the Europeans in the 440-yard sprint. The other sacrificial lamb from the Duke of York was John (Jog) O'Grady. Jog could actually run and was school 440-yard champion, but I was a rugby front row forward and they are not known for their ability to run, let alone to sprint. So, I have no idea how I got there – perhaps I was stupid enough to volunteer (everyone else would probably have suspected the humiliation to come). When we arrived in Machakos all I remember was a sea of black faces filling the new grandstand to overflowing. This was a new experience

for them, and, like Romans at the Coliseum, they had come to witness the slaughter. There was much merriment, and a lot of smiling faces up there. I drew Lane 1, right in front of the Grandstand. I noticed that the African and Indian runners were all built like gazelles, but I comforted myself with the knowledge that a white man, Roger Bannister, had broken the 4-minute mile and that, unlike my competition, I was wearing proper running spikes. Well, the starting gun went off and my competition disappeared around the first bend, and I didn't see them again until after the race. But I did get a standing ovation from the crowd in the grandstand as I came in last, about 20m behind Jog who was second last.

I comfort myself with the idea that even Usain Bolt has never had a unanimous standing ovation at the end of a race. So, Jog and I did our bit to prove once and for all to the people of Machakos that white athletic superiority is and always will be a myth. Incidentally, I recently managed to catch up with Jog at the last Duke of York School reunion in 2019 to discover that he has managed to erase this whole episode from his memory. I wish I could do the same!

ANCIENT AMERICAN MAN: NOW YOU SEE HIM NOW YOU DON'T

A letter from **Roger Maudsley - Kirk** 1956/62

The Destination

It was the San rock art, displayed on kopjes on the farm Doug Duncan once managed in then Rhodesia's Umvukwes, that first awakened my interest in the subject. I can still recall the depiction what seemed to be an entire tribal group, lined up, side by side, from the tallest to its shortest member.

Primitive rock art doesn't interest everyone. Its vividness suggested the San art dated to the Christian era but other images are thousands of years old. Think of it this way: the painting can afford a direct link to the mind of someone living millennia ago: the artist could have completed his work an hour earlier. Of course, the link may be mute, but nothing can bring you into closer contact with the mind of prehistoric man!

Most people have heard of Rio's beaches, its carnival, Sugar Loaf Mountain and the Christ Redeemer statue. More informed visitors will know of Paratí, the colonial jewel of the Costa Verde, and the baroque churches of Minas Gerais. Outside the southeast of Brazil only the Iguaçu Falls and the Amazon make the list of popular "highlights".

There is spectacular place, however, that many Brazilians know little about: the Serra da Capivara or, more precisely, its National Park.



Covering some 350 sq km the park contains the largest collection of rock art in the Americas, and possibly in the world. In a striking setting of rocky outcrops and canyons in Brazil's semi-arid some 30,000 images are spread across more than 1300 sites. The oldest art is believed to be 12,000 years old.

Besides geometric designs the paintings, mostly displayed on exposed surfaces below overhangs, depict humans, animals and supernatural beings involved in hunting, sexual activity, rituals, fighting and dancing. The art is a unique display of what ancient man got up to, thousands of years ago, in a land where giant sloths, mega armadillos and sabre-toothed tigers were soon to disappear – and long before decimation by European arms and disease.



The park infrastructure is first-world. In "the country of the future", where dusty stuff in museums and indigenous Indian scrawling take a distant second place to crass consumerism, park founder French-Brazilian Néide Guidon has done a magnificent job. Her team has installed viewing infrastructure, trained guides and set up an impressive museum.

But, situated 2,000 km north of Rio, in the hot caatinga ("white bush") of the Northeast's Piauí State, it's not easy to get to.

The Journey

Travelling at a leisurely pace by car it took us a week. But this included side trips in Bahia State: to the Abrolhos Arquipelago for whale-viewing and snorkelling; a stop at Itabuna to see, and taste, chocolate being produced from the region's cacao; and a visit to Brazil's historic capital, the port city of Salvador.

This latter, one of the oldest cities founded by Europeans in the Americas, was a major destination for African slaves and an exporter of the highly sought after sugar they produced. As a result, centuries later,

it is famous for its spicy palm-oil laced West African food and syncretic religious beliefs – where Catholic saints serve as avatars for African deities! With more than half its citizens having African ancestry the city is Brazil's black heart.

Then, beside the São Francisco River, important route of early penetration into the Brazilian interior, there was the “bodódromo”. Think “aerodrome” or “hippodrome”, the bodódromo, or “goatdrome” was the town of Petrolina's homage to a north-eastern food speciality: a large space occupied by half-a-dozen open-air restaurants offering select cuts of the “bode” or goat. Unmissable!

With traffic and human presence dwindling, the latter part of the journey took us through the “Polygon of Marijuana” an (illegal) production area of the weed. A note on our map helpfully warned us not to traverse the zone at night!

The Background

It's certain that Tierra del Fuego represents the most distant point reached by man after leaving Africa. He may, however, have also taken a short cut. Hotly contested evidence suggests direct African transatlantic arrival in South America. If monkeys made it who's to say humans couldn't! And didn't Brazil's Amyr Klink row across?!

The hypothesis is an outlier among the many theories concerning the settlement of the Americas. It is generally agreed that pre-Columbian inhabitants came via Asia. But was it via the Beringia land bridge or was it along the western coast? And when was it? Or did they come in waves?

Once upon a time the “Clovis First” theory, named after stone tools first discovered near the eponymous town in New Mexico, dominated the subject. It postulated the arrival of man in North America some 13,000 years ago via Beringia. More recent archaeological finds in North and South America have all but buried the hypothesis.

In North America a number of pre-Clovis sites have been discovered with East-Coast digs even suggesting - because of near identical stone-tool sets - settlement by western Europe's Solutrean peoples. Recently there have even been wild claims of hominid activity 130,000 years ago! That is before the exodus of homo sapiens from Africa!

Here it's worth remembering that Louis Leakey once kicked over some stone tools in the United States and declared they were 100,000 years old!

Foremost among South America sites, at least as far as North American scientists are concerned, is Chile's Monte Verde where there is evidence of human presence as long as 18,500 years ago.

Which brings us back to the Serra da Capivara. Perhaps because of excavation by sneaky French Brazilians rather than straight-shooting North Americans, evidence of human presence here is hotly disputed.

Although the earliest human fossil has been dated at 11,000 years there is a degree of acceptance of the presence of man in the park at least 18,000 years ago. Much more controversial is the claim by Nélida Guidon and co-researchers that there's evidence - turning on whether carbon and stones are the result of natural phenomenon or human intervention - of dates that go back 50,000 years!

In a recent presentation an American archaeologist started by asking rhetorically when, and how, did man first come to the Americas, before answering: “we just don't know”.

Whatever tool-using hominid first entered the Americas it is notable that the Serra de Capivara is home to a rare precursor of homo habilis – a capuchin monkey that smashes rocks into handy pieces suitable for

digging and cracking open nuts! And apparently has been doing this for the last 3,000 years! Archaeologists, eat your hearts out!

FURTHER PROGRESS AT MUCHENJE

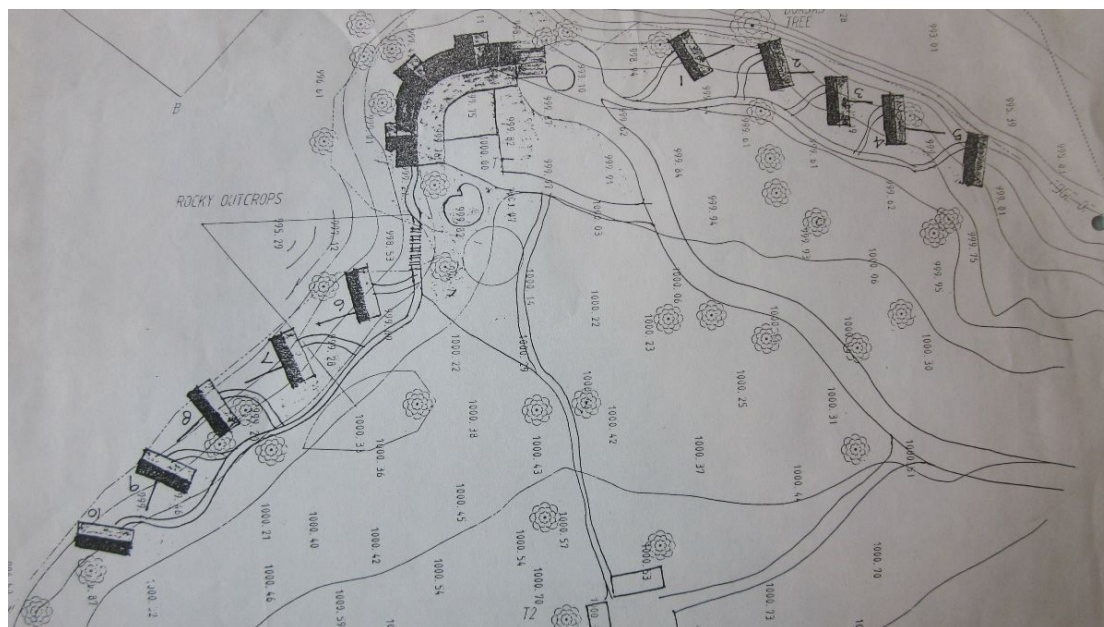
By Shaune Metcalfe

Early planning and lodge drawings

We had permission to build 16 rooms, a main block, a staff village and management housing. We wanted each room to have a view over the escarpment to the River Chobe and flood plain; we also wanted room privacy and so we decided to have 10 rooms built well spaced out. Subsequently an 11th room was constructed, slightly larger than the other rooms, so that we could accommodate families.

Our architect flew up to the Chobe many times and fully surveyed the escarpment. We wanted to ensure that we could place all rooms on the edge of this main escarpment and, just as important, make sure that no trees were cut down or destroyed. Indeed, no trees were removed and during the building works they were all firmly ringed and secured with heavy wire.

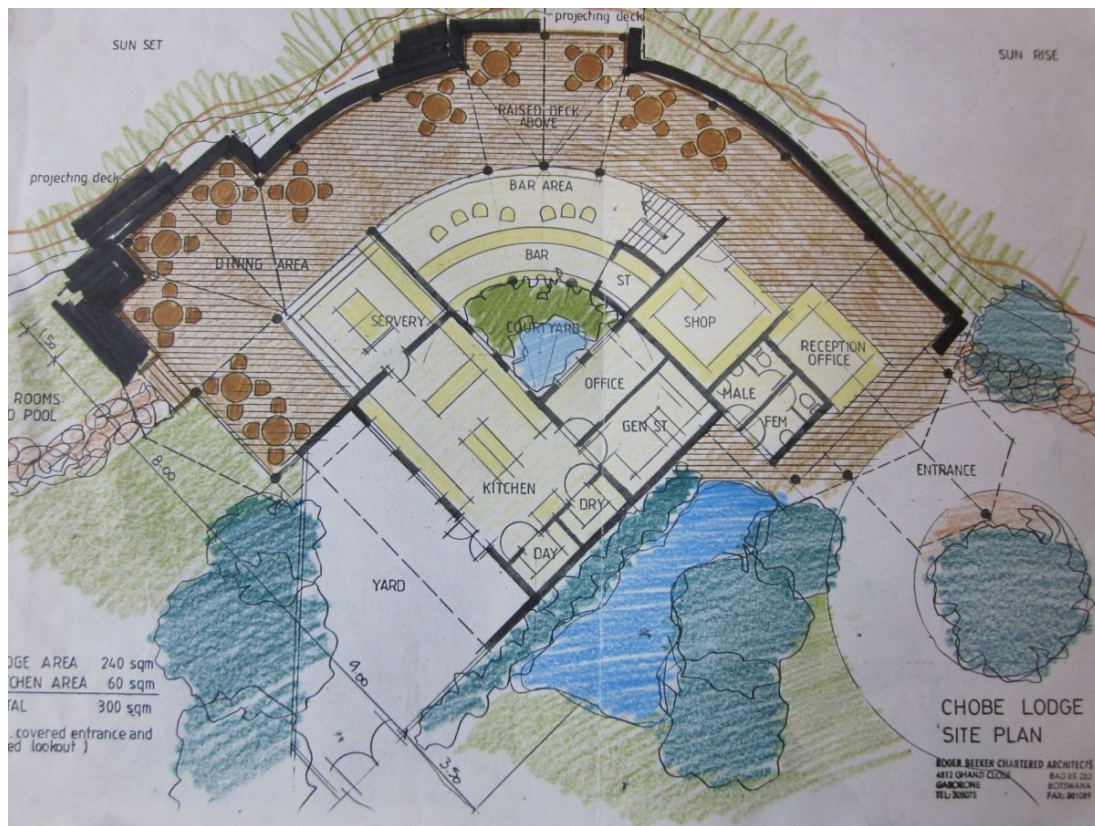
Our agreed layout drawing in 1994 still stands to this day.



Once the plans were done and agreed by us all we started to apply for all the necessary Government approvals. Planning permission in Botswana is extremely strict; this bureaucracy is right and correct although things do take time. One of the main concerns was waste water. Muchenje is on a fault line and it was important that no water was allowed to drain into the fault line. The Water Board was insistent but extremely helpful in establishing where the faults were.

Full planning approvals took around six months, really quick by many western standards. Once the approvals were given a turn key builder was selected from a Tender that we published. After around twelve months we were ready to go. The builders came on site in early 1995

The central block of the lodge is shown below.



The longest bar in Botswana.

Shaun's first trip to Botswana was in 1981. He was helping to plan Radio Botswana's radio shortwave transmitting station at Sebele, just outside Gaborone. We stayed at the Holiday Inn, not far from the old airport. Still known as the Holiday Inn by the oldies, it is now the Avani Gaborone Resort and Casino, having been the Gaborone Sun as well. The then Holiday Inn had a fairly short bar outside by the pool.

Our Wild Africa Safaris offices were at the Sheraton Hotel, now the Grand Palm. When we opened the facility there in the old Avis office we all stayed at the Sheraton. The Sheraton had a small bar just off reception and an outside pool bar.

These were the two main hotels in Gaborone. The first international hotel in Gaborone was, and still is, the Cresta President in the centre of the main mall in the city. We used to lunch there frequently, but never stayed as it had little parking and was quite noisy. Waiters brought you drinks and the bar area was limited.

When we designed the lounge area for the lodge we wanted to make sure that there was lots of space for everyone. We just did not want a cramped area. This, of course (see the original lodge centre block layout above), made sure that the bar itself extended the full length of the inner arc of the lounge. During construction we were still travelling via Gaborone and staying in both hotels, the Sheraton and the Holiday Inn. Their bars were measured; our Muchenje bar was over a metre longer.

We thus assumed that ours was the longest bar in Botswana.

We're sure that this is not the case now, even in Kasane. Cresta Mowana and Chobe Safari Lodge have substantial bars that, no doubt, are longer bars than the Muchenje one. This, of course, is unimportant, and we still tell guests that at one time we had the longest bar in the whole of Botswana.



The bar during construction, 1995



2021, once the longest bar in Botswana

We have all spent many, many relaxing hours in the lounge and bar at Muchenje. It's not a pub, it's a meeting place. Bar snacks are served before dinner. We have draught beer (this is new), a gin selection with different local cocktails and we try to serve whatever cocktail is required. And we do get weird requests sometimes, and in those cases the guest will probably be asked by our intrepid barman to come behind the bar and provide advice.

We like our bar; it is a magnet for all.

OLD YORKIST GOLF WEEKEND - OCTOBER 2021

By editor, Alan May

Following an enjoyable golf competition the day after the Old Yorkist reunion in July 2019 it was agreed that something similar should be held at a later date. A venue in the middle of the UK with easy access from all directions, was found and an overnight stay was arranged for May 2020. Unfortunately, Coronavirus then stepped in.

For that reason, the event had to be postponed until October 2020, when it was hoped the Virus would no longer be a problem. Unfortunately, it was still prolific. Arrangements had to be postponed again. It was fast becoming an organiser's nightmare!

Finally, it was pushed forward a further 12 months, in the hope that, surely, the Virus would be under control by then. It was and the event finally went ahead, despite a last-minute fuel crisis which briefly threatened a possible cancellation.

Unfortunately, David de Bromhead was unable to attend, but on 3/4th of October 2021, the following twelve stalwarts met at the Abbey Hotel and Golf Resort in Redditch:

Alan May, Carey Keates, Grant Daniels, John Crosher, Ken Doig, Mike Wilson, Neil Morison, Nigel Gaymer, Robin Crosher, Rod Bridle, Ted Olive and Tony Saunders.

The sun shone briefly. There were no casualties worse than a sore head or two. It was an enjoyable occasion. The golf was less important than getting together and swapping nostalgic stories. You may recognise some of the faces below:



Everyone went home happy with a bottle of Tusker and a few "Old Yorkist Weekend" golf balls.

A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE JONATHAN LEAKEY

Written by his two daughters, arrived just too late to include in the previous edition of the Newsletter.

Jonathan Harry Erskine Leakey

4th November 1940 – 12th July 2021

Jonathan was a man of few words but his interests, knowledge and experiences were vast and varied. "Ask Dad" was the routine response to questions in the household. He was always trying new things, be it snake venom extraction for antivenom production, melon farming, fish farming, medicinal plant extraction, cat food production, tourism, storage, auctioneering. The list goes on.

As a young man, he discovered what has become known as "Jonny's Child" and is still the earliest known remains of our human ancestors, *Homo habilis*. The eldest son of palaeontologists Louis and Mary Leakey (and brother to Richard and Philip; and half-brother to Priscilla and Colin), he moved away from the family business of 'bones' soon after this discovery, to focus on turning his passion for reptiles into a profession. Through determination, a hefty dose of stubbornness, and his scientific approach to new



ventures, he succeeded in many of his initiatives - although he was never one to speak of his own achievements. His melons were quickly - and to this day are still - regarded as the best in Kenya. Having started off his snake career keeping snakes in his desk at school, to later establish the Nairobi Snake Park at the National Museum and become its first curator, he gained a reputation for being one of East Africa's greatest herpetologists. The Kenyan carpet viper (*Echis pyramidum leakeyi*) was named in honour of his contributions to herpetology. It was whilst extracting venom from one of these notoriously difficult vipers that he was bitten and lost the feeling in the end of his right

index finger. By happy coincidence, the slightly disfigured finger formed the perfectly shaped tamp for his pipe - much to the horror of unsuspecting onlookers - and to Jonathan's great amusement.

Stephen Spawls (author of Field Guide to East African Snakes most recently, amongst a number of other reptile and snake guidebooks), credits Jonathan, who he considers one of the "Kenya Legends" of herpetology, for encouraging him into the field. When Spawls sent Jonathan, as the Nairobi Museum Curator, a note saying he had some "ordinary chameleons", Jonathan replied saying that "no chameleons were ordinary and that he would love to receive the specimens". Jonathan loved, and had an affinity for, all animals. As a teenager, he entered an international frog jumping competition with his sharp-nosed frog, Vespa, and - much to everyone's surprise being the newcomer, he won - bringing home an enormous trophy and purchasing his first car with the prize money. His cat food, despite the unlikely name of Pampered Pussy (Cat), became a firm favourite amongst Nairobi cat owners and his storage company - equally inappropriately named, Leakeys Storage - continues his legacy today. His improbable choice of names belied his meticulous approach to life - he had a brilliant mathematical mind and was very detailed, precise and careful in his planning. One of his most strictly enforced rules was that supper time was at 8 o'clock sharp and woe betide any of his children being late to supper and risking overcooking the meat!

He liked routine. The image of him in his standard short-sleeved pastel shirt, his parker pen, comb, couple of banknotes and still-burning pipe sticking out of his top pocket (with the obligatory burn hole in the bottom of the pocket), beige shorts with his Swiss Army knife, coins and hanky in his pocket - and tobacco tin in the back pocket, his Chaplis sandals and glasses, typically bandaged together in the middle, carving an over-sized, under-cooked piece of meat at the head of the dining room table will be remembered fondly by all those who visited him at Baringo, where he loved to host guests.

Quiet, dependable, loyal and constant - Jonathan could always be relied upon for help, advice and to offer a pragmatic solution to problems. He always knew what each of his family members were up to, wherever they were in the world - tirelessly interested and encouraging in their news and plans. He found enjoyment in simplicity - in the call of a bullfrog before rain, the excitement of his Dalmatians chasing balls down the corridor, and in watching his fish and snails chase each other in his aquarium - and he laughed easily, crying with laughter as he listened to the stories and mishaps, often of his children. He was in his element when surrounded by his family and bestowed upon each an enduring love and affection.

After establishing his home in Baringo, he quickly became a respected member of the community who was greatly appreciated for all the support he lent others. Sadly, he was forced to leave his home of almost 60 years in Baringo due to the rising water levels, moving to Langata in 2020. He had a number of health issues over recent years. After bouncing back against the odds many times, Jonathan passed away at home in Langata on 12th July 2021. He is survived by his partner, Dena; children: Julia, Nigel, Tanya and

Mouse; and grandchildren: Acacia, Harry, Elliot, Ellis and Nile. Jonathan; Jonny; Dad; Pops; Grampa; Mzee will be desperately missed and lovingly remembered as the head of both the family and the table.

The family have identified the Taylor Ashe Antivenom Fund, a cause very close to his heart. For those wishing to make a donation in his memory.

Mpesa donation details:

Paybill Number: 4068531 (East African Venom Supplies)

Account name: TAAF J Leakey (Your Name) e.g. TAAF J Leakey (Kyle Ray).

Bank account donation details:

Account name: East African Venom Supplies.

Account number: 0581002001.

Branch: Bank Diamond Trust Bank, Watamu.

Swift code: DTKEKENA.

Reference: DONATION TAAF J Leakey (Your Name)

If you transfer by bank transfer, please make sure to state on the transfer that it is a donation. Thank you!

"Look at the stars – how they shine and glow. Yet some of those stars died a long time ago. Still they shine in the evening skies... love, like starlight, never dies"

More about Jonathan Leakey

Dear Alan

Many thanks for the latest Newsletter. Very entertaining as always and stirred up many memories.

I was sorry to learn of the death of Jonathan Leakey. I did not know him at school – he left in 1958, the year at the end of which I started – but in late 1966 my good mate John Curtis, also DOY and Pembroke House with me before that, were doing a bit of a safari in North-west Kenya killing time before I started work for the CDC in Tanganyika in January 1967. We camped one night on the shores of Lake Baringo (the mozzies were unbelievable: not only arrived in hordes as soon as the sun went down but were quite capable of biting you through netting or even the fabric of the camp bed wherever your body brushed against the material!) The next day we went up and had a look at Jonathan's snake farm where he kept hundreds of snakes in low stone enclosures covered with wire netting. The snakes were, as mentioned in your article, milked of their venom for use in the manufacture of anti-venene and, because the snakes would apparently get discouraged and die after a while, he had teams out all over East Africa collecting fresh snakes for him. We had a nice lunch with Jonathan and his wife and I remember their pet lynx wandering rather disconcertingly around the house.

On our way home we called in at the farm of a friend of John's family near Nakuru and mentioned we had just visited the Leakey snake farm. She told us that a few months previously, two of his guys had turned up and asked if they could gather snakes on her property. She told them they were welcome to look, but she did not hold out much hope of success. She had lived on the farm for over 30 years and had never yet seen a snake. A couple of days later her servant told her that Bwana Leakey's snake boys were just leaving and wanted to speak to her. When she went round the back, they thanked her very much and suggested she might like to see what they had gathered. They had two sacks containing, apparently, about 30 green and black mambas!

MEMORIES IN PASSING

Mike Vaughan – Speke 1962-68



Mike was born on 3rd March 1950 in Denbigh, Wales. His family went to Kenya in 1946/47 where Mike first went to the Hill School, Eldoret before going on to the Duke of York. He was a popular guy who excelled at sport being very good at rugby, cricket, hockey and swimming.

After leaving school, in 1969, Mike emigrated with his sister and brother-in-law to South Africa and settled in Durban, where, when working in the newspaper industry, in sales and advertising, he met and married Lesley. They subsequently had three children, Bronwyn, Debra and Warren.

In 1998 the family relocated to Kingston-upon-Thames in the UK where Mike worked mostly in food manufacturing and distribution. He still played a bit of pub league cricket and kept in touch with old school pals including Nick Roselli-Cecconi, Geoff Pelling, Danny Walmsley, Ken Doig, Hamish Kinghorn, Bob Rickards, Johnny Stols and others.

On retirement, they moved to the Isle of Wight where, on 6th September 2021, Mike sadly died of Coronavirus complications. He will be sorely missed and we send our sincere condolences to Lesley and their children, Bronwyn, Debra, in Texas, Warren and their six grand-children.

Many thanks to Lesley, Ken Doig and Nick Roselli-Cecconi for providing these details of Mike's life.

Andrew Barnett – James 1961-66



Andrew was born on 17th June 1947 in Leicester. In 1948 his family moved to Nigeria then, in 1952, to Kenya, buying a small tea farm in Kiambu, where Andrew grew up. From boarding at Nairobi Primary School, he went to the Duke of York as a founder member of James House. He was above average academically and was very good at sport. Whilst still at school, he became a member of the East African Men's Squash team and had the distinction of playing in Nairobi with Jonah Barrington who won the British Open six times between 1967/73. He also climbed Mt Kilimanjaro with Outwood Bound and helped bring home the body of a member of their party who died on the mountain.

Andrew took his A levels in the UK before going on to London University to study Geology. After graduating in 1970 he went to Guyana as a geologist where he met and married Camille before moving to Brazil and then to the copper belt in Zambia. Whilst on a visit to Kenya he was involved in a car accident which resulted in the death of Camille.

He later returned to the UK to do a Masters degree at Newcastle; met and married Rosalie, an Australian, before relocating first to Nigeria and then to Sydney in 1979/80 where he established a consultancy business specialising in risk assessment and safety management to infrastructure projects. Andrew and

Rosalie had two sons, Edward and Charles, before separating. He subsequently met Cynthia and they married in 1992.

Andrew's interests were varied, including history, languages, literature and nature. He had a small Eucalyptus plantation in NSW where he established a Koala Bear sanctuary and kept bees, dogs and various parrots, which would often sit on his shoulder.

In recent years Andrew suffered from lymphoblastic leukaemia, which initially responded to treatment but reappeared aggressively and he died on 8th November 2021. We send sincere condolences to Cynthia, his sons and the rest of their family.

Many thanks to Mike Robson for providing this moving obituary of Andrew and for this photo of him with, Cynthia and his sons Edward and Charles.

Mike Behr – passed away December 2021



This photo, taken in Scotsburg, Natal in 2005, shows, Nigel Braye and Mike Behr standing with Derek Rossenrode, Tom Stephenson, Bernard Blowers and Jimmy Cruickshank all seated. The recent death of Mike Behr, from pancreatic cancer, leaves Jimmy as the only survivor of that happy group of 49ers.

An obituary is yet to be received but, in the meantime, we send our sincere condolences to Mike's wife Paddy.

Laibon Anthony Kimeria – Lugard 1976-79



Anthony was born in Nyeri on 20th January 1963, the first of 5 children. He went to St George Primary School, then to Lenana and finally to Strathmore College for his A levels before further studies in Canada.

He married Christine on 7th December 1996 and they had two daughters, Kimberley Wanjiru and Nderitu. The family name for him was Kim. He was a gifted artist and loved music. He worked initially as a graphic designer and videographer With Manlaka Hill Chapel. He was also a keen photographer. He later became a commercial farmer, rearing pigs, rabbits and agricultural produce.

Sadly, Anthony died on 2nd November 2021 after a short illness. We send sincere condolences to his wife Christine, daughters Kimberley Wanjiru and Nderitu and to the rest of his family.

Our condolences also go to the family and friends of the following:

Geoff (Bobby) Lock – Lugard 1955-60

An obituary will follow in due course.

Laibon Kevin Kihara – Mumia 1990 – 93

An energetic, sociable, humorous member of the cheering squad, who also represented Lenana at squash.

Laibon Paul Mutungi – Kinyanjui House 1973-78

Head of House and Lenana athletics vice-captain.

Late news:

Richard Leakey – Elliot 1956-59

As we go to press, we hear the sad news that Richard Leakey has died. He was an eminent Kenyan, a great conservationist and an internationally renowned paleoanthropologist. He was also Patron of Optimum Kenya Trust and a generous supporter of Msaada Trust. He will be missed by us all. An appropriate obituary will feature in the next edition of this Newsletter.

ACTIVITIES OF THE MSAADA TRUST AND DEVELOPMENTS AT THE SCHOOL

A report from Ronnie Andrews in Nairobi

Despite the cloud of Covid, there is much good news to report and it is heartening that the School and particularly its pupils are taking important strides forward. The bursary recipients remain committed to their work and the current cohort we interviewed earlier this year, who are pictured amongst those sitting with us in the shade behind the chapel, are definitely headed for good results.



The fact is that Lenana remains one of the top choices for boys coming through from primary school, despite the overcrowded classrooms, the congested and under-equipped boarding houses and all those

things associated with a country that has so many people to educate and so little funding to support educational needs.

At the outset, as trustees, we agreed that we should set ourselves achievable targets, concentrating only on the boys. As such the Msaada bursary scheme has worked extremely well. From an initial target to provide bursaries for 15 boys, ie 5 from each of forms 2,3 and 4, the number has since increased and we now support a total of 38 boys, including those funded by other donors whom we manage, and the number grows every year.

The intention to support scholars from Form 2 is because at the end of the first year, it was felt, we could be more certain as to how they had adjusted to life, often far from home. This has worked well. The students chosen are enthusiastic and proud of their association with Msaada, with the Laibon and they feel privileged. When you hear tales from their homes, their family hardships and living conditions, they are indeed privileged and in most cases they in turn make us proud in being associated with them.

Many of our past bursary scholars are now in tertiary education, some in the top universities in Kenya and others abroad. One young lad, Abraham Mabior, on the strength of his exam results and our endorsement, has recently gained entrance to Canada and a place at a Canadian University under a program of assistance to refugees. He grew up as a refugee in Kakuma Camp and this opportunity is literally a dream come true.

Other students we have regular contact with are now studying Law, Electronic Engineering, Chemical (Process) Engineering and Computer Science. Their prospects look better for the fact that they got through school without the threat of being sent home term after term and missing important lessons while they try to squeeze a few more shillings out of their communities to pay for their school fees.

The boys we support mature into leaders because they have seen leadership in action and have experienced demonstrations of community care in the support they have received from Old Boys of all generations of our School.

Update on Projects

1. Golf Academy

The bad news first! The golf course was planned and laid out and buildings designed for the first golf academy in Kenya and we were pleased to provide pictorial evidence of progress. That is where it stopped. Unfortunately, it is now a grazing patch again for the "School Cattle herding team".

We are assured that the project is still on the go and the wise and capable people in the Ministry of Sport assure us that this will move forward but there has been precious little progress this year. It makes you wonder how the school bursar managed it in the past with nothing but a beaten-up old tractor and 200 hardworking rabbles on working parties!

2. School Library

Not to put too fine a point on it, the library, as we knew it, is history! It is a disgrace. But help is at hand in the form of KEY Libraries, a fund established by Kenyans (mostly resident overseas) to develop libraries and their usage through co-operation with generous donors.

The team assisting on the ground includes appointees of KEY plus three Old Boys and the Chief Principal all of whom are pictured below. Msaada is working with KEY and the school although progress has been slow due largely to the challenges of Covid.



Pictured above are: Dave Njuguna (Head of School 1970), Gladys Kerich (KEY, ? Laibon and Dean of Architecture, Kenyatta National University), William Kemei (Principal) and Liz, (assistant to CEO of KEY, Rita Field-Marsham)

3. Perimeter Fence

Readers will note that I am saving the best until last! The building of a perimeter fence is thought to be an essential step towards ensuring that there is no illegal encroachment onto the school land nor any further destruction of the natural environment, especially that of the forest which stands next to the school entrance and the hockey pitches.

In recent years there have been some attempts to hive off land from that originally set aside for the school. The whole community of Old Boys, and any right-thinking members of society, abhor the regular reports of illegal acquisition of title deeds and fraudulent land transactions. The school and its grounds have an important role to play in educational development at all levels in the Kenya of the future. The wall will hopefully fend off those who have their eyes on the land for personal gain.

Progress on the fence has been rapid and the chain link fencing with concrete posts is now three quarters complete. In recent years there has also been encroachment onto the Kenya Railways' land. This is now being dealt with by the school in concert with KR who are assisting in fencing the portion of the school which sits on the southern side of the railway.

4. New Dormitory

Most readers will be aware that there was a fire which destroyed Tom Mboya House, formerly Upper Junior House. It was one of those old buildings which have well and truly done their time! Progress on the replacement building, similar to Mandela House, which is next to the Donga behind Kirk, is now at roof level. It will house 300 of the current 1500 boarders at the school.

One can only speculate as to when the other "mud and wattle" houses will be replaced.

5. New Classrooms and facilities

The school has completed six new classrooms and is preparing for the intake of 2023 (which will double the size of the school!) and the start of the new curriculum. Quite mind boggling!

There is now full 50Mbps internet connectivity at the school provided by Liquid Telecom in preparation for the development of the installation of desktop infrastructure from the new IT Hub of Konza City.

Full CCTV equipment and infrastructure is being installed to cover all boarding houses and will also provide monitoring of the perimeter fence and some blind spots in the school. This would have seriously inhibited activities in days gone by but, with the bundu all but gone and far more scholars to look after, it is at least a step towards ensuring that the incident of arson that destroyed Tom Mboya house will not be repeated.

Summary

The original objective of Msaada, to distribute funds raised, mostly from you, through the efforts of Optimum Kenya Trust, continues to be for the BOYS and their education. It is often said that there is something intangible and special about being a Laibon or an Old Yorkist. There is a sense of community and commitment towards the School, which is still viewed as one of the finest in Kenya. The boys who receive our support inherit the same philosophy and regularly commit themselves to good work in building the Laibon fraternity by retaining elements of education which were so much a part of the school we all knew: sports, extra-curricular activities, arts and community.

At OKT and Msaada, we continue to help in our own small way but the funds we collect and disburse are generating interest and support from others. The effort is growing, widening, becoming more potent. The responsibility shown by the support from old boys is being noticed by larger and more significant funds and in due course we shall have a very powerful tool to grow even more leaders and help to develop a truly outstanding educational institution.

As you have read, the challenges faced at the School are many, varied and great. We therefore congratulate the Chief Principal, William Kemei, on his efforts and activities. During his time in office, he has implemented many improvements and, through excellent relations with the Ministry of Education, has overseen a great deal of necessary development and change.

If you would like to contribute to funds which Optimum Kenya Trust provide for bursaries, through MSAADA Trust, or as an individual sponsor, please donate directly to the following:

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Account name: | Optimum Kenya Trust |
| Bank sort code: | 40-44-37 |
| Account number: | 92114542 |
| IBAN number: | GB17HBUK40443792114542 |
| BIC number/SWIFT: | HBUKGB4160J |

Or visit our website <https://www.optimumkenyatrust.org/take-action>

MY JOURNEY WITH MSAADA KENYA TRUST

By Steven Havo Achieng - Lenana School, Class of 2018

Getting the opportunity to study in a great institution like Lenana School is a rare opportunity for many children in Kenya. In fact, it is a dream come true for anyone who is called to partake in the academic nourishment in such an honorable school. This was the case with me. Having performed exemplarily in primary school, I had that golden opportunity. At first, the chance came with so much uncertainties and fear of whether or not I would successfully complete my four-year stay at the school.

I came from a humble background and this, coupled with the fact that I was not the only child being provided for by my parents presented a challenge in the payment of my school fees. Sometimes I applied for bursaries from my constituency but as may be clear to many, such programs are laced with a lot of bureaucracy hence getting a dime relies on probabilities rather than possibilities.

So one particular morning in 2016, I am in class, around second term in form 2, and my Class teacher, Mrs. Jamal, who doubled as my teacher of English, came into class and asks whether there is anyone who would like to get some financial assistance. She then gives the conditions that such a person must be from within Nairobi. My heart skips a mighty beat at the opportunity, but I am from Kisumu, so I rule out the opportunity. However, seeing that no one else is interested, I quietly follow my class teacher after

class to ask if I can apply, although am not from within the capital city. She tells me, in the most motherly way, while smiling, that she is not sure, but that I should trust my guts and apply. I get encouraged and apply. To cut a long story short, more than three weeks later, I am called for what looked more of "You are in" rather than an interview. I get all emotional and such an cannot believe it at first. I call my brother and he is like, "Boy, you better not be joking." I walk in the old library and I meet Mr. Ronnie Andrews for the first time. I have never been more inspired than by the kindness and consistency that Ronnie showed towards us. That, is how I got to join the Msaada Community.

My Academic Journey with Msaada Trust Group

On many occasions, I was tasked with the work of organizing my fellow students during meetings with Ronnie. Balancing my academic performance with sports as well as leadership was not a walk in the park. At form four, I held one of the highest leadership positions in the school (Council Captain, Boarding Department) and the position was really demanding. I have always been a good performer academic wise, maintaining an average of A- way back from form 1. However, I must admit that within the last quarter of my stay at Lenana School, things got a little bit tough and I slacked a little due to my many responsibilities. I had classes, a whole boarding department to look after as well as sports activities to partake in. At some point, I felt like giving up my leadership position because it was affecting my education.

However, I pushed on and in the final exam, I scored a clean A-. I believe that with Msaada's help, I had not had to waste time being sent home for school fees. Hence I had no excuse for failing my exams. In addition, Mr. Ronnie Andrews played a very important role in our lives due to his constant encouragement. I am sure at some point he felt we were not giving our best, and this he told me during a meeting with Old Boys from the former Duke of Yoke School. However, he persistently followed up on us and made sure we did our best. I thank him for that.

My current Undertakings

Having passed well in my KCSE, I received an invitation to join the University of Nairobi to pursue a Bachelors in Law (LLB). Currently, I am a student at the University of Nairobi and continuing with my studies. Though the novel Corona virus brought everything at a standstill, we are going on with our online studies and hope that things will turn out well soon.

Lessons learnt throughout my journey with Msaada Trust Group

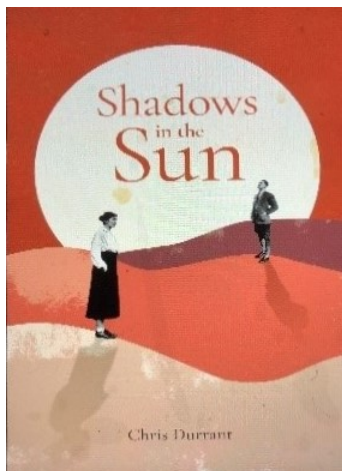
The biggest and perhaps the single most important lesson I learnt as a member of Msaada Group is the fact that opportunities come once, and when they do so, only the people who trust their guts get them. All the same, securing a scholarship is not the end of the road. One still has to fight tooth and nail to sustain it. It thus follows that this rare opportunity made me view life through a lens of 'survival of the fittest'.

All said, I want to recognize my fellow beneficiaries who helped me walk the journey and together we would sometimes meet and deliberate on what we would tell Mr. Ronnie Andrews especially when things did not look well academically. I recognize Alex Magoba, Lennox Kahati and Shemaka plus all other beneficiaries who were not in my group.

BOOK REVIEWS

Shadows in the sun – by Chris Durrant

You might be interested to know that I have just published my second novel, "Shadows in the Sun", which is a sequel to the first, "Under the Same Moon", and follows some of the characters from that book when they go out after the Great War to try and make a new life in colonial Kenya.



I would obviously be delighted if you acquire and enjoy 'Shadows' and encourage your near and dear to do likewise. Both books are gentle little tales which will not take you long to read and I'd like to think you will find entertaining and interesting, set, as they are, in a fascinating era.

All the best, Chris

Ed adds: I have read and enjoyed all the books that Chris has written, including both the above and an earlier one called "Bwana Kidogo". They are simple stories, well written and easy to read. "Shadows in the Sun" will resonate with anyone brought up in Kenya. Apart from the

narrative, I also enjoyed the following poem, by Russell Wells, that accompanied it:

Bright is the earth where the dark shadows lie

Cast by the beams of a glittering sky.

Praise for the shadows when earth days are done

For the darker the shadows the brighter the sun.

BILLABONG'S LATEST REPORT FROM THE OUTBACK

We have just left an amazing area in a remote cattle station. A geologist's paradise with 330 million, year-old rock formations. Beautiful scenery. However, there is always a penalty to be paid for visiting such pristine places. In this case horrible corrugations which actually got our teeth rattling. The caravan suffered a bit, with the microwave shaken off its base and other damage which will come to light later. On these road trips I have to take half my workshop with us - the ute has built-in drawers full of tools and spares.

The Memsahib may have once been a city girl but unfortunately, she has inherited an almost obsessive desire to find not just a suitable picnic place but THE PERFECT picnic place. I believe family picnics in the Ngong Hills were responsible. In her case, this translates into finding the PERFECT campsite with panoramic views, as far away as possible from any other human being.

My heart sinks as we approach a new destination, hoping against hope that it will be acceptable. This time, 4 wheel drive, diff lock AND low ratio had to be engaged to manoeuvre the 2.2 tonne caravan up slopes more fitting for tanks! Maybe I should view this as revenge for "dragging her off to the bundu!" as someone once said.

Fortunately, she is a very keen bird watcher - she has a little book to record her sightings (so far 52 this trip) and realises our safaris have made it possible for her to follow her hobby. The attached photo shows her, with binoculars in an idyllic spot!



Never mind the crocs – where's that kookaburra?

IRREPRESSIBLE HUMOUR

I am sure you will agree that, if questioned when in the wrong, it is always best to be honest and truthful. The two go together. But is a truthful answer always being honest?

Here's a story which questions that principle:

One night, years ago, when we lived in a decrepit old house in the Westlands suburb of Nairobi, we had an unexpected visit from a Land-Rover full of policemen. The senior officer apologised to my Dad but explained that they had received a tip-off that illegal "pombe" was being brewed in our servants quarters and they needed to raid the premises. Dad expressed surprise but gave permission for it to proceed. It was all very exciting!

With that, the police charged round the back of the house, blowing whistles and shouting for those involved to give themselves up and face the full force of the law!

That prompted a mass scattering in all directions with police attempting to tackle the guilty culprits. None were captured. Undaunted, the police continued to conduct a thorough search of the premises, scattering clothing, possessions and furniture in all directions. They found nothing. Caught no-one. Not a single arrest was made. No illegal pombe was found. Only a faint whiff of ganja remained in the air.

The excitement was over. Adrenaline ceased pumping and the police began to retire, empty handed. As the disappointed, senior officer was about to leave he whacked his baton on the side of a 40 gallon water tank and shouted in Swahili "is anyone in there"?

"Hapana" came the reply.

Was he being honest? Was he being truthful? Or was he being truthful without being honest?
What do you think?

DISCONNECTED JOTTINGS



Rob Bradshaw – Lugard 1956/62

Rob, with his daughter and son-in-law, have recently raised nearly £1,500 for Prostate Cancer by riding their bicycles 65.73 miles, enduring elevation of 5,843, over Exmoor in 6 hours 11 minutes.

I know that route and its undulations, some of them quite severe. It is no easy ride. Very well done Mate!

The Orchestra:

I am advised that there remains an ongoing need for musical instruments for the school orchestra. If you can help, please send an email to brooklandsbaraza@gmail.com

Rally Pace notes:

Ken Doig used to do a lot of navigating for Davinder Singh and others in the EA Safari. He sent me this video clip which demonstrates how the navigator communicates with the driver, telling him what comes next.

To view, put your cursor on the link, right click and select “open hyperlink” and open up the sound.

<https://fb.watch/7HtOZcO6f-/>

An answer for Roger Maudsley



It was Andrew Kerfoot and myself Robin (Tiggy) Archer who went with you and Jimmy Allen on that trip. We started by going on a bit of a climb of Mt Elgon, camped the night by the Suam River on the Uganda border then headed down to Karamoja to climb Mt Kadam (Dabasien) which was where we struck up an acquaintance with that less than reliable guide. After that we stumbled across the Afrikaner and his gold panning outfit on the Turkwell river.... so many memories. All the best. Rob Archer

Old Africa magazine:

it is good to see that this excellent publication is also read Down Under by Chris Durrant and Brendan Brooksbank who both have letters published in Issue 98.

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

I was hoping to close the year on a positive note but unfortunately, here in the UK, we have been slammed by another variant of the virus that has controlled our lives for the past 18 months. A sombre mood prevails in anticipation of further restraints being imposed after Christmas.

However, the good news is that this Newsletter appears to have been a success. It has been a year since it started and your response has been great. We are most grateful for all your contributions which have been interesting, varied and amusing. Sadly, we have also published an increasing number of obituaries, with more than usual in this edition.

We already have quite a few articles lined up for next year which continue to come from a limited group of contributors from within a similar age band. I look forward to hearing from a younger range of Old Yorkists and Laibon, who I hope will submit stories of their activities at school, or experiences thereafter, which I am sure would be of equal interest and amusement to us all. Don't rely on others, please give it some thought and contribute if you can. The Brooklands Baraza relies on your submissions for its continuing success.

Best wishes to you all for 2022. Let us make it even better than the year before.

To contribute to this Newsletter, please send your submission and photographs to the following email address: brooklandsbaraza@gmail.com

You can contribute images and connect with other Old Yorkists and Laibon on the [Brooklands Baraza Revisited Facebook Group](#).
