

## My first solo trip to Tanzania in 1996.

I had wanted to return to Tanzania since climbing Kilimanjaro in 1994 and this adventure came about when I was forced to withdraw from a Charity walk along the Rift Valley for personal reasons.

So I put this trip together with the help of Hoopoe Safaris of Arusha and worked out an itinerary to first climb Mount Meru, Africa's fourth highest mountain and then head for Ngorongoro for some further recreation including this walk across the highlands from Ngorongoro Crater via Olmoti and Empakai to the shores of Lake Natron where a vehicle would come to Simon's Camp to return me to my base at Kirurumu Tented Camp at Mto wa Mbu.

From there I spent a further two weeks or so walking around the area with a local Masai man Milau who took me along with him almost everywhere.

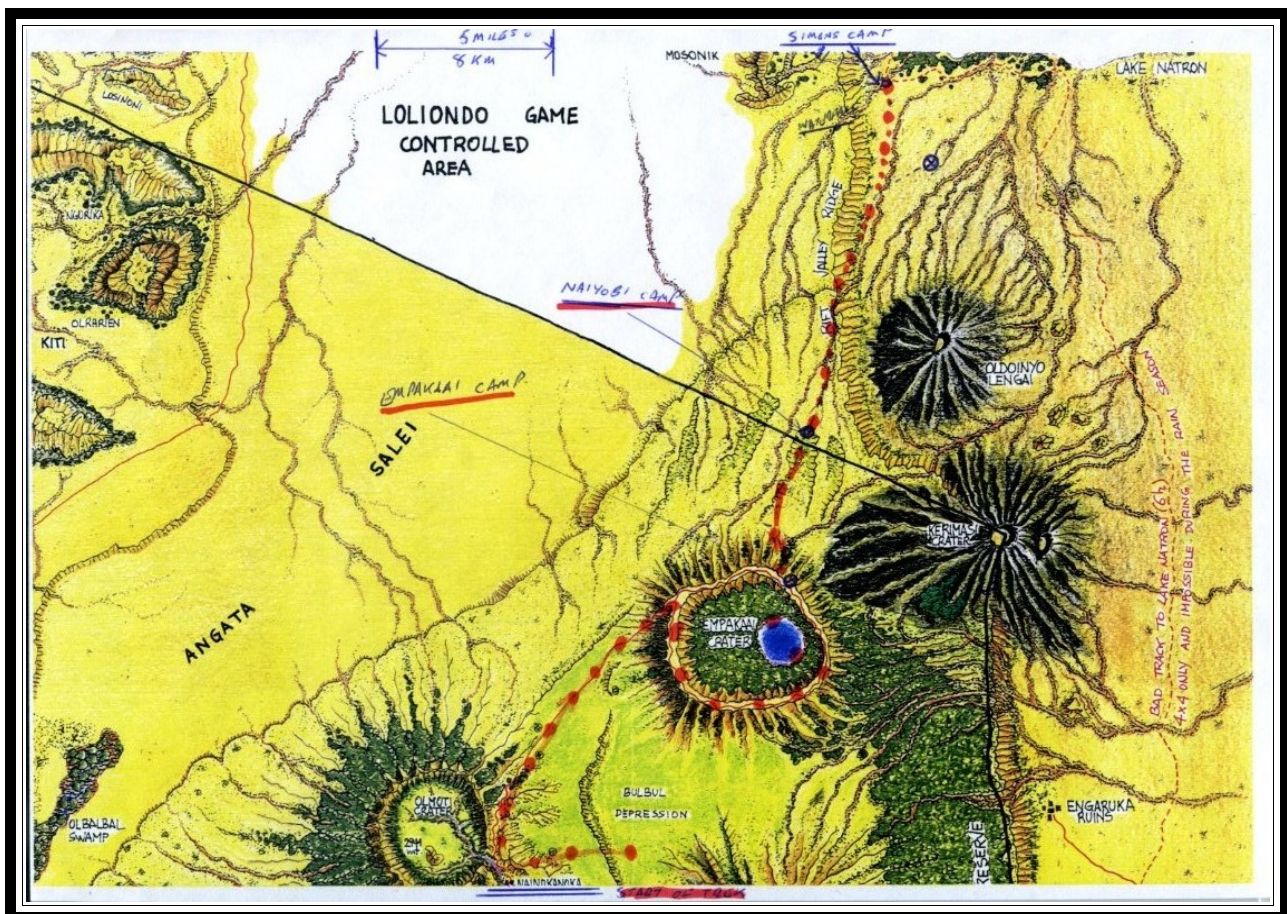
The map below shows our trek route from Olmoti at the foot to Empakai and on up to Simon's Camp at Lake Natron passing the slopes of the active volcano on our right called Ol Donyo Lengai (Ma for 'The mountain of God')

Our trekking team consisted of myself, a cook, Joseph, a guide called Wilfred and a Masai Lemete with his two donkeys to carry our camping gear and Gabriel a Tanzanian Ranger who carried the gun..

We camped 'wild' with no facilities but what we could carry with us.

As my original report was written in BC (Before Computer) I have had to utilise scanned copies for this 'website edition.'

As I cannot insert photographs I shall attempt to add some with captions at the end of the script.





## TRAVELLING AND TOURING IN TANZANIA.

18th July - 10th August 1996.

Getting there. Left home at 7.30 for the short drive to Douglas Sea Terminal for the 8.30 boat to Heysham, Lancashire where I switched to Rail for the 2½ hour trip to Manchester Airport. After check-in etc., and a last good meal for some days caught the 19.00 flight to Amsterdam where I switched to KLM DC10 to Nairobi arriving 09.00 local time. Met by car, Courtesy of Hoopoe, and after lunch at Norfolk Hotel, caught the 2pm shuttle bus to Arusha, arriving just after 6pm. Border crossing at Namanga a bit of a scrum on Kenyan side but Tanzanians as friendly as always. Got a visa for 3 months and oh for the opportunity to use it.

First Night in ILBORU SAFARI LODGE. Quite clean and comfortable in Rondaval style. Very friendly staff and pleasant food. A bit far out of Arusha to walk but otherwise everything O.K. Good food, well presented although condiments etc., may confuse first time visitors especially at breakfast. Met after breakfast by Terri (Hoopoe) and driven to town to meet others and discuss tour. Went off with Yusef for lunch at 'Green Court' and enjoyed Beef, Ugali and Spinach-like leaves. After lunch had the usual tour of Arusha including market and Culture centre. Too early to decide on Souvenirs yet but changed T/Chqs to Tanz Sch. Driver got booked for my seat belt but it was probably a private scam. Back to ILBORU S.L. for dinner and an early night after packing the climbing kit for Mt. Meru on the morrow.

MOUNT MERU. driver arrived after breakfast and we shopped for provisions for the climb. Discovered no bottled water so bought some to delay use of puritabs. Drove to Momella Gate past assorted wildlife and completed formalities and met porter and OSSY the guide/guard. You need an armed guide for this climb due to Buffalo disputing right of way. We crossed rivers and fields with Giraffe, Zebra, Buffalo etc., and then started to climb steadily towards the cloudbase with the going getting steeper and steeper. Began to think I was not as fit as I had thought until the guide said that Meru is stiffer than Kilimanjaro! So that's o.k. then! Took lunch at the stoney place watched by a pair of Giraffe and can hear Elephant not far off but no sighting. This IS a better climb than K'jaro for the wildlife etc., as well as scenically. After another hour or so of climbing, with many stops 'to admire the view' we arrived at Miriakambe hut at 8250 ft. Had tea and popcorn but little appetite. Poor JUVENAL (Cook) is upset but I assure him it is not the food he is making, which looks good. During tea we see Buffalo feeding quite close above campsite and it is getting quite misty as we are almost into the cloudbase by now. Disturbed by shouting and a porter is brought in having come off worse with a Buffalo whilst getting firewood. At first I thought he was just getting his breath back but when I check, I find his right leg is shattered with a compound fracture just below the knee where the Buffs horn had come out having entered through the calf muscle. My first aid kit is not up to this but I try and get him inside and warm and give him Kaolin & Morphine mix to hopefully delay shock. A runner is sent off down the mountain to summon help as there is no Radio at the hut. It will therefore be a few hours before help comes.



About an hour later a party of walkers arrive amongst which are two medical students. They also render what help they can and clean up the entry/exit wounds and attempt to stem the flow of blood. We also devise a leg support to take weight off the fracture and otherwise make him comfortable whilst denying him any sleep which would be almost fatal, due to shock. A Land Rover arrives about four hours later and we despatch him to Arusha Hospital. (We later hear that he has survived and has had a metal pin placed in his leg. Good things were said about the first aiders by the hospital). Appetite revived due to excitement and steak and chips consumed.

After camp fire chats we retire with strict instructions not to leave the hut without checking first with a torch that it was safe to do so. Perish the thought!

MONDAY.22nd. Still cloudy mist but after breakfast of scrambled eggs, we set off through the forest and it is now both muddy and steep. After about 90mins of this we reach the crater rim and have a rest/snack then onwards and upwards. We leave the forest, and the clouds, and are in sunshine. We can see little Meru and Kilimanjaro and the going is dryer but still steeply upwards. We reach the saddle hut(11,700') at about 1.30pm and have lunch which pleases JUVENAL. After lunch and a nap, went for a shortwalk but kept well clear of the Buffalo. Good sunset colours and an electric storm in the clouds below us made the evening quite spectacular. Dinner was spaghetti Bolognese. OSSY breaks the news that we start in the dark tomorrow. WHY do they do this? Is it a throwback to when Tanzania was in German East Africa? There is no need at all when the purpose of going up mountains is to enjoy the scenery, which lack of daylight makes rather difficult! Told him not to bother setting the alarm as I will go when I am ready!

TUESDAY 23rd. Thick mist just before dawn so we set off 'just before first light' and have dispensed with torches after 1/2 hour or so. In the clear by the time we reach 'Rhino point' with spectacular views into the mist filled crater. We go on across a tight ridge like striding edge and up towards the summit in the distance. We see Camilla's party ahead and then lose them in the circling mists. As we are on the rim with the summit still a good hour or so away, but only 100mtrs higher, we feel honour is satisfied particularly as the mist is now obscuring the path and true summit. Ozzy agrees with me and so turn back as he had been unhappy for some time with the worsening conditions and it is a sheer 3000ft drop into the crater. We take a photo of the sun coming up over Kilimanjaro for the book, and down we go. A welcome breakfast of Scrambled Eggs and bacon, chips, and SLICED CARROT? Plenty of hot tea as it is still below 0°C. After a rest we leave at 10.30 for MIRIAKAMBA. Dryish walking at first, then into the forest and black (mud) ski runs. Even the porters fall down once or twice. See many Colobus Monkeys and smell Buffalo very close but it is probably too boggy for them to charge. I know we could not run if they did! Back at the hut at 2.30pm. so it is just as slow coming downhill in these conditions. Cleaned boots and attacked by ANTS. As OZZY IS THE ONLY ONE LICENCED TO KILL he offers to shoot them off me. When Camilla joins us, both her and her guide tell us LION tracks were seen over the top of ours so it must have passed between us! National Park say no LIONS in Park, They are wrong! Oh well! Supper of chicken and chips etc., and campfire chatting. Woken in the night by Hyenas in the dustbins.



WEDNESDAY 24th. Heavy rain in night(in the DRY Season!) and no letup by 9am. The way is less steep and more open so not as slippery as yesterday. MANY Elephants around, all sizes, After 3 hours of wet walking including fording rivers in spate, we cross the final plains and reach the gate. Say our farewell and thanks to OZZY and young porter, whose name I never got to remember, I am then taken on tour of ARUSHA N.P.(wet clothes and all). Sun comes out about 2pm. Plenty of game, including Giraffe around as well as birds. Worth the trip and very pretty park. Back to ILBORU for the night and a welcome shower and dry clothes. Not all the suntan washed off. Maid at Ilboru had made up my bed with TWO pillows as she has remembered me from last trip. Well done! Dinner of Pork Chop etc., joined by Terry, Polly Marni and Willa who are on Safari from Connecticut. Terry has done some walking and wants to hear of my trip.

THURSDAY.25th. Up early and into Arusha. Message passed home via Harriet in Watford. Many thanks! Shopped for provisions and left for KIRURUMU. Stopped by same police in same place as Friday. This IS a scam. Hailed Sergeant and told him we had met last week. Africans can blush! All smiles and wished 'Safari Njema'. Driver WINSTON is puzzled till I explain that I only pay ONCE. Tarmac runs out after 50 miles at Makuyuni and then it is rough tracks for about 18miles to Mto wa Mbu (Mosquito River) at the foot of the Rift Escarpment. More shopping and then up the 2000ft cliff road to Kirurumu Tented Lodge. Good lunch after which we are given a tour by GLEN BROCK(Mgr) and then go on trip to Manyara National Park. Main camera broken so resort to little Halina with reasonable results. Back after dark for excellent dinner during which I share a bottle of Ethiopian Red with Serena and Pierre, the other guests, mainly in the interests of research. To bed before 'lights out' at 10pm.

FRIDAY.26th. Best bed for ages, up at 730 for breakfast where I am introduced to 'Cinnamon butter'. Send Camera back to Arusha with Glen, to see if it can be fixed, and went to Manyara Park again, the permit is for 24hours, not per day, Serena & Pierre off to Serengeti but will pass back en route to Zanzibar. During drive we got to see LEOPARD in tree quite close but too dark for the fixed aperture of the Halina. What marvellous Yellow Eyes staring back at me, I don't need a camera to still see them!. Back at KTL for late lunch as Winston not well and coughing blood. Send him to Medicine Man in village. I meet Millau, a Masai Askari who escorts me on a walk down the cliff to look at birds etc., Snakes too! Many Butterflies. A good walk into Mto wa Mbu where we meet L.Rover and sick driver. Back to KTL for dinner of Chicken etc., Early to bed as little company about.

SATURDAY.27th. Packed for next trek and will leave luggage at KTL for return. Glen has got Camera fixed, Well done Terri at Hoopoe! The drive to NAINOKANOKA was via Ngorongoro Crater but misty and in low clouds for most of way. See many plains game on the way as well as Masai herdsmen. Arrive 11.30am. Change into walking kit and climb to OLMOTI crater rim. Steepish but not difficult. Great views and watched 4 Lammergeier who seem to nest in the gorge below Rim. Had packed lunch and met local people. Back to Camp but not much to do till dinner other than to watch Buzzards roosting in trees above camp. Good Tilapia for Dinner and nights are cold now due to altitude (10,000 ft). Few camp fire stories and turn in to tent early. Tent comfortable but probably don't need the bed, a mattress would suffice.



SUNDAY 28th. Misty at first but cleared by 7.30. Breakfasted and walked into village in search of Medicine for Winston who is still wheezing. Good walk but no medicine. Packed up and drove towards Empakai. Met several Maasai on the way at an elaborate system of wells. Saw plenty of plains game on the ascent to EMPAKAI crater rim. Got out and walked for about 3 hours whilst L.Rover went ahead to set up camp. We had been scheduled to walk the whole way but the Guard did not seem to want to do this. However, the walk we did was quite interesting and we should get plenty of walking from now on as I am sending the Land Rover back tomorrow.

Arrived at Campsite on crater rim with good views all round.

Many passing herdsmen stopped to talk including interesting family with baby to whom we gave water. They did not drink it, but washed the baby's head with it! Had good dinner of Soup. Beef in Tomato with Rice. Camp fire and bed early again.

MONDAY 29th. Up early, well sunrise, and after good breakfast, set off down into Empakai Crater. Very steep and misty but down at the lake side it was clearing as the sun got over the rim. Many many flamingoes and ducks. The lake is about 6km wide and we set off round. At one point the guide, Gabriel? suggested turning back but without success. Shortly after this a Hyena rushed out into the lake, grabbed a flamingo from the flock, and went back into the bush. Stopped for lunch just before the start of the return climb which was just as well. We needed the calories! It was hard work but we got up o.k. and it is really very beautiful amongst the "Hagenia Abyssinica" trees in flower. We have been joined by donkeys (3) and LEMETE the driver.

Winston and guard go off in L.Rover (was this the reason he wanted to shorten the walk?) and we now have YUSEF, the cook, WILFRED SAIDIMU, porter/guide, left from the original. Passed a pleasant afternoon in the sunshine with constant visitors. Dinner was Oxtail Soup which was appropriate as we were interrupted in mid-spoon by the arrival of Buffalo. This was pursued to leave by Lemete and I wish it had been light enough for use of Camera. And I never spilled a drop of soup whilst I watched and I will probably never get as close to a Buffalo on foot again. Finished dinner and brought the donkeys into the boma with us for safety, Ours or theirs? Into tents at 9 and woke to find lamp out and Hyenas in camp. Guard fast asleep with his donkeys. Ah well, back to bed.

TUESDAY 30th. Loaded donkeys after breakfast and struck camp. The walk to NAIYOBI is very pleasant in the morning sun along a good trail with lots to see. Mostly downhill from 11,000ft all the way to Lake Natron now. Wonderful scenery and well recommended, very like British uplands but with game and Maasai herdsmen. Met and exchanged greetings with many residents. Arrived NAIYOBI in about 4 hours for late lunch. School turns out to see us arrive. Maasai are fascinated by my collapsible walking sticks (and my hairy forearms). Much amusement, and we have audience of children and adults as we pitch tents and eat lunch. There are many people gathering for a ceremony and much singing and dancing. This seems to be a pre-circumcision initiation rite a bit like Confirmation Classes in Church I suppose. I am invited to watch, provided I take no photographs. I show all the kids what a zoom lens does, and the ladies keep taking my hat off and stroking my hair. Thank God it's only my hat! Went into the compound and said hello to all the elders with much handshaking. Declined to partake of the drink and had an excellent introduction to Maasai culture. Visited local schoolroom and understood the Chemistry lesson on the board. Composition of matter.



After all the handshaking, had a good wash before dinner of Asparagus soup, and Spaghetti Bolognese. Very good. The singing and dancing went on well after dark. The pan cleaning is done with hot ashes and grass, and the chicken frying is a new method which I will try when I get home. Could KILL for a Cold Beer! Full moon rose over KERIMASI and into tent before lights out. WEDNESDAY 31st. Today is to be a long slog in the heat, so we try to get away early but catching the donkeys takes time as they have differing views. The way is good and passes many interesting sights and people as we gradually lose height over undulating hills. Good views of Ol Donyo Lengai as we get closer to the rift valley and the mist/dust clouds clear. We have lunch in a pleasant grove of Acacia Tortellis and Fever Trees and then pick our way down the ridge of Volcanic rocks and soil. This is very dusty and the donkeys play up a bit. YUSEF is way ahead with one but the other two are not happy at all. It is very steep and they are heavy laden. Perhaps too heavy laden? Eventually we make the valley floor where it is HOT and after another mile or so we meet the L.Rover. Winston seems better and had brought cold 'Fanta'. We say goodbye to LEMETE and donkeys who are to return to Naiyobi. A very goodlooking Maasai girl sells me two authentic seed necklaces. We drive to our campsite on the banks of a small stream. This is Simon's Camp and is quite pleasant but dusty.. Good dinner of steak and Pepper sauce, to which Winston adds Chilli sauce thinking it was ketchup. Receive a letter from Serena & Pierre who passed through Kirurumu last night. Bush telegraph in action.

THURSDAY 1st August. Before leaving camp for KTL, we go for a walk to a local waterfall at the head of the river where we are camped. We are joined by two Maasai ladies who appear to be our guides. The way involves much crossing of the river to avoid cliffs and they show us where the water is not as deep as elsewhere. Despite this, it is deep enough and the current is strong so keeping upright is more important than keeping dry. Alternatively clinging from rocks and wading waist high in rushing water we arrive at the Waterfall which is quite pretty. The ladies promptly set up shop and try to sell us trinkets etc., but to no avail. I tip (dash) them for the walk but don't need any beads. Back by the same route and tents down and loaded. After a short drive to Lake Natron, more flamingoes, we sight two Oryx and watch them a while before setting off on the long dusty rough road back to Kirurumu. Including lunch stop this takes about five hours during which we sight many animals including 12 Giraffe in one group. We passed Engaruka ruins without stopping for some reason so will have to explore these another time. Back to KTL for a welcome shower and cold beer. Sent some clothes for Laundry and watch game from my tent whilst awaiting dinner. KTL not full and dined with Glen whilst trying to plan final week which I have decided to spend at KTL until going on a passing trip if Hoopoe can arrange it as they were asked to do. Dinner at KTL excellent as always, it really is a superb spot and worth a longer stay than overnight. FRIDAY 2nd. Sent fax home, via Hoopoe in Arusha, and paid off YUSEF, WILFRED AND WINSTON who are going home now, leaving me to make my own way back to Arusha. Had a walk around local area including cashing T/Chqs at Manyara Hotel which was much less hassle than at a Bank in Arusha. After lunch went down the gorge with Milange another Maasai who seemed astonished that I could keep up with him despite my 'years'. Am now 'Mzee' (elder) and not 'mzungu' (foreigner) in conversations between them which they think I cannot follow.



The rest of the afternoon was spent wildlife and guestwatching and then cool pre dinner drinks in the bar with party of eight from Oregon 'doing the circuit' in 3 days. All guests love KTL and wish they could stay longer but their tight itinerary never permits this. Maybe this is something 'Management' could address for the future?

SATURDAY 3rd. Still no news of revised itinerary so if no news by monday will go off on my own again. Spent the first part of the morning watching birds including miniature woodpeckers. Then walked down to Mto wa Mbu with Milau through the gorge with its baboons, monkeys and snakes. Joined by Glenn Brock who had taken the easier but longer route by Land Rover. Toured the shops and then went to Zebra Gardens for a beer (or two). The afternoon wore on well and I accepted a lift back to camp as it was getting dark and the gorge is not very wise walked in dark. Good meal, and a few more beers while plans are hatched for a walk to Milau's home village tomorrow.

SUNDAY 4th. Off to Milau's village which is about 3 hours away. Make Mto wa Mbu inside 40minutes which is faster than by road. Milau still doesn't fully understand why I walk when there is serviceable transport available, but it really is the best way to experience Tanzania. Stuck in a vehicle, you just get the heat, dusts and a bumpy ride as I could see from the 'happy' faces of those we passed. Some of their expressions clearly said 'who is that man walking with those Maasai, and why can't I?' We met several of Milau's extended family en route and many greetings were exchanged. Also saw a 10ft Cobra on a termite hill! Got to the village just before noon and was made most welcome by his friendly family with the small children offering their heads for touching in the traditional Maasai greeting of respect. Invited into house/hut which was pitch black, there being no windows, and smokey from the fire, but very cosy if a little snug. Bought some necklaces for home and was allowed freedom to use my camera so got some pictures but would like longer here to get a fuller record of village life and costumes etc. My walking stick, telephoto lens and nailfile, all came in for close scrutiny. The walking stick, which is telescopic, was operated in all combinations from chasing children to use as a crutch for the elders.

All too soon we had to leave as we were to be picked up by Glen and driven back to the Zebra Gardens for lunch which was BBQ goat as well as our packed supply, washed down with the 'Safari' beer. There was a 'homebrew' as well but...Brucellose is also endemic in the milk supply, including Maasai cheese. After lunch got my haircut in 'Georges'. Very short but cooler. A couple more beers with some Maasai friends of Milau, who won't leave my stick alone, and then back up to KTL for a shower to remove dust and hair trimmings. Lodge full tonight and this was the only time the Restaurant showed signs of 'stress'. Split a pitcher of 'TNT' with Glen and then got out the Tullamore Dew as a thank you gesture. Even Milau enjoyed this and Maasai don't drink in public (some say). A late night.

MONDAY 5th. Whilst preparing for a walk to 'misfortune village' with Milau, there is a message from Hoopoe to say car coming out for me. No further details due 'static' but not to leave camp for too long. We must wait and see when the radio improves.



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There is also an overbooking problem so I agree to vacate my tent for the night to help out with the crowding. My transport duly arrives offering trips to Manyara (again), Ngorongoro and Tarangire. Two nights at KTL and then back to Arusha for Wed & Thurs nights. Means a full day in Arusha which I don't particularly want but will see what happens. Two fellow travellers are medical students, Will and Adam, and appear good company. After lunch down the track to Manyara to feed the Midges. Plenty to see but no lions. Been in Africa nearly 3 weeks and seen only one so far! Good dinner and post prandial drink and to my spartan tent. No Hot or Cold, in fact no water! No Electric either so very romantic by parafin lamp. Slept well but heard gunshots in the night just after dog and Hyena noises.

TUESDAY 6TH. Hot water personally delivered by Peter Lindstrom Hoopoe Director, who is staying at KTL. Can't see Rocco Forte providing such service! After breakfast off to Ngorongoro for the day. Big queue at gate which takes forever and the crater rim is in thick cloud so no views. Down into crater which is the 8th wonder of the world. Not much to see apart from plains game and two lion well hidden in the long grass. Lunchtime picnic enlivened by idiot tourist who tries to walk to an Elephant feeding in the reedbed and had to be dragged back by the watchful ranger as well as others who had promptly followed to get their own 'close up'. After lunch the drive got very hard work and we felt driver CRISPIN was just filling in time. But later on it became apparent he was really trying but nothing much was about. He scoured the crater floor and every little side track was investigated. Adams trip was made when we got stuck in a muddy river and only got out with difficulty with mud everywhere. We then towed out the other car that we had gone in to rescue in the first place. We then spotted what looked like two RHINO well out in the grass but heading for Lerai forest area. We drove slowly round to 'intercept' but lost them in 'dead' ground. Others drove off eventually but Crispin was sure they would come into view eventually and hoped we had sufficient time to wait before the Park closed at 7 and NO-ONE was allowed to stay in the Crater after this. Came in for some chiding over my eyesight whilst the others watched an old bull Elephant wander off into the yellow grass which was quite a sight in itself. Patience paid off and just as the others were convinced I had dreamt the Rhino up, they appeared from amongst some Buffalo heading our way, slowly grazing as they came. Light was fading and it became a race between closing time, sunset, and the Rhino's coming into camera range. Just made it in time for a longish view but they were worth seeing, without or with a photograph. Off out of the park just after the deadline so I feigned carsickness to the guards to excuse our tardiness which was accepted. Long drive back to KTL makes Ngorongoro a bit far for a daytrip but the car sickness cleared 200 yards from the park gate. Good dinner as usual and drinks round the campfire before bed.

WEDNESDAY 7th. Said farewell to all at KTL who had looked after this old man so well during my visit(s) and I will return, as there is much to do in the area other than game drives. Good time was made to Tarangire Park and Crispin was asked to find me ELAND! He doubted this but would try. Found plenty of Tsetse fly, and they found us! Evidently the Eland like this part of the park as the flies keep the tourists out.



Saw some fringe eared Oryx under a tree and many other animals but no ELAND. Eventually we could stand the flies no longer and turned to flee. Shortly after, a small party of ELAND, sprinted across the track in front of us. Magnificent sight and worth the bites we had endured. Crispin thinks Tsetse are attracted to Mosquito repellent and he could be right. We got VERY close to a party of Elephant trying to cross the track and I was well within my 'flight distance' of one cow with calf who was not best pleased to see us. If the photo's are blurred it will be legshake not camera shake. They passed on peacefully enough but last week a Car was wrecked in this park as I knew. The Elephant here are less tolerant of human presence as the park is relatively new in terms of Elephant memory span and they CAN remember less pleasant encounters with mankind. After a friendly lunch with many birds for company we went towards another large herd of Elephants heading down to the river. These seemed more tolerant or maybe it was me being less nervous! Lots of Elephant on the move all heading Northwest towards Lake Manyara. Are they migrating for water in the dry season? Sighted two lions, male and female the latter up a tree! More animals on the way to the gate including some Elephant right at the entrance. Tried for an interesting photo but some idiot drove and stopped right in line. Oh well! Arrived Arusha 6.15 having had my first view of Mt. Meru clear of cloud. Did I really climb up there? Booked in at Ilboru again and made welcome as usual. Good dinner.

THURSDAY 8th. Have arranged to meet Will and Adam at Hoopoe about 10.30 and when Peter Lindstrom appears at Ilboru I accept a lift. Such Service! Public holiday in Arusha so many shops are shut and Hoopoe on short staff. Will come again tomorrow, to settle up. Adam arrives first as Will is having problems with their hotel bill/booking. They tried 15 places last night before getting a bed. We go shopping for cloth and souvenirs. Will has had some trousers made up from Maasai cloth. Very trendy. Met 2 others and went for lunch of chicken and chips in Arusha's answer to McDonalds. More shopping for Makonde carvings etc., and finished off my Tanz shillings. Home tomorrow. Afternoon beers and more shopping then back to Ilboru to pack for the last time. Looking forward to seeing Snaefell on the horizon and E on the quayside in Douglas.

FRIDAY 9th. Said farewell to Ilboru and down to Hoopoe to settle up. Then fill in time til bus to Nairobi at 1.30, visit one or two sights and then on to bus. Quite full and Hoopoe had not booked until I called today! Paid driver and off to Namanga border. Formalities over and into Kenya. Arrive airport 6.30 after comfort stop, and await check in. Resist 'assistance' with luggage and am left alone. Eventually check in early and after paying departure tax etc., go through to departure lounge which I find doubles as arrivals as well. Well, why not if it saves space and confuses people? Last minute duty free shopping to replenish whiskey stocks at \$10 a bottle. Then onto KLM for Amsterdam and manage some sleep before being woken over Zagreb for breakfast. A bit like hospital I suppose. Wake em up to see if they are alive? If so feed em and send em back to sleep.



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SATURDAY 10th. Arrived over Holland in Electric storm and a bumpy descent into Amsterdam. Breakfast of Scrambled Egg and Mushrooms. Not as good as Yusef's. Will use KLM again as service and style well above average. Connecting flight superb and a little early so once through immigration and the 'Green' Channel catch the early train to Preston. Well done AIR UK, will definitely come this way again. Phone home from Preston to advise arrival at Douglas on schedule. Next train packed to Heysham and the boat quite full. Memo! Avoid summer saturday travel in future. Catch up on sleep and brace myself for E's re-action to my appearance. Only joking. Arrive DOUGLAS Harbour 24 hours after NAIROBI which is not bad considering the 'rest' intervals. Much better than via London.

Collected luggage on arrival and greeted by Elizabeth with a hug and she does not put me back on the boat as I had feared! Home safe and sound and time to start planning the next one.

Watch this space!

NOTES. The above is transcribed from notes made at the time but can only give 'edited highlights' of the whole trip which was an epic experience and one that should not be missed. Don't ask for a blow by blow account as you risk being bored rotten for days.

Travel in Africa is NOT dangerous, its different and sometimes difficult but rarely Dangerous. Large Cities everywhere have problems and elementary precautions taken for welfare.

Travel in rural areas is rarely a problem and I certainly never felt at risk from either human or animal encounters.

Take elementary steps with hygiene, particularly water for drinking or toothcleansing, and you will be fine.

Respect the culture and smile at everyone you meet and you will enjoy the experience. Tanzanians are particularly friendly and greet strangers readily. Pick up some words in Swahili if you can as it is only polite. Avoid the temptation to judge matters with European standards, it will rarely work and you will get very frustrated when it does not.

ASK before you take pictures, you would expect the same courtesy in your own hometown! Maasai in particular are sensitive on this, not because they think the camera will steal their 'spirit'; but because they tend to appreciate the income it can bring from tips. But DON'T overtly tip! Moderation in all things.

When in close proximity to animals, keep silent, the human voice will strike terror in most animals and provoke a charge whereas most will tolerate a silent upright human shape.

The Day in Africa is roughly 12 hours dark and 12 hours light and there is little dawn or dusk.



Now the promised photographs.  
Mount Meru climb first.



Sunrise over Kilimanjaro from Meru ridge with Little Meru in foreground.



Saddle Hut. Juvenal in the red trousers with Ozzie behind.

Now the Lake Natron Trek.



Our camp (Boma) on Empakai  
crater rim. The donkeys are  
housed in here at night for safety.  
We used it as our canteen.  
L-R. Josefu, Cook.  
Winston. Driver.  
Wilfred, Guide and helper.  
Gabriel. Ranger.





Our camp, my tent on Empakai Crater rim. Lemete and his Donkeys.



On the trail of the Lonesome Pine. Empakai in the background.



Making good progress along the ridge.





Lake Natron, our destination in sight in the haze. Ol Donyo Lengai on the right.



I take a break with Lengai in the background.



Milau's family..Milau is third from left. His favourite wife is centre.