

03. LEARNING TO LOVE LIFE IN KENYA

We have been infected by “the bacillus africanus” since our first safari in Kenya when visiting Amboseli National Park beginning of January 1964. Once we have settled in our new habitat it became obvious that we have to start roaming up and down of Kenya’s Coast first. The car we got on our disposal was a VW Beetle 1961 Model that was the same type we have had in Khartoum nicknamed “the rat” there. However our “new” car was a second-hand vehicle that had over 60.000km on its tachometer already. We would get free fuel at the factory garage petrol station where one had maintained the car when needed too. Although an old car it served us well throughout the whole stay in Bamburi including on many safaris we have made during that time. By end of February 1967 we left Kenya for good and handed over the car showing some 90.000km on its tachometer. Thus we have driven that vehicle we had nicknamed “Dudu” (“Beetle” is an insect – thus “dudu” in Swahili) for about 30.000km in 31 months – quite many safaris of good service.

The first safari we started in our car “Dudu” about a week or so after we have settled on Bamburi beach. Werner Smolniker suggested travelling to the South Coast where we would decide what to see there first. He joined us on this trip as a guide (his family was not back from Europe yet) so we drove southwards through the Mombasa town. First we crossed the Nyali Bridge (on pontoons), turned into Salim Road (Tom Mboya and Abdel Nasser Roads later) to the town centre and continued by Prince Charles Street (Digo Road and Nyerere Avenue) to the Likoni Ferry landing site at south of Mombasa Island. There we crossed the Channel of Kilindini Harbour and landed at the main land at Likoni village. There was the tarmac surface on most of the roads within the Mombasa Town and its near suburbs.

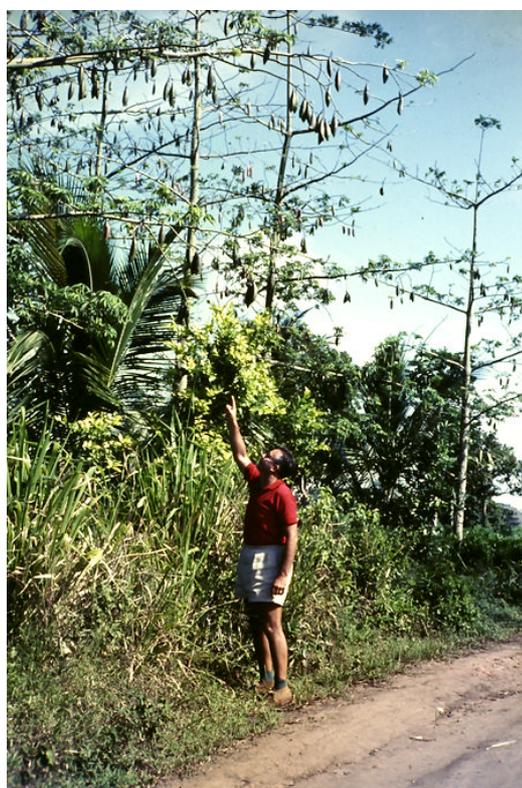


**Werner Smolniker showed us a termite hill partially damaged.
Ljiljana worryingly looks for termites on her shoes.**

However when we passed Likoni on way southwards towards Kwale and Ukunda one drove on murrum surfaced roads. Most of the long distance roads have that murrum finish made of stabilized soil with cement or lime and compacted on a graded red soil base. The red soil as a clayey sand is quite common in East Africa and the stabilization works fine during the dry seasons. It is essential to keep the road drainage in good shape as the rain would soften the soil by improper maintenance and cause washouts

and potholes in the road surface. Murram roads are a bit less dusty than the just graded earthen or dirt roads.

After passing the junction for Kwale we continued to Ukunda village and turned of left onto a “through bush” road leading through the dense but narrow forest branch where we have seen numerous Vervet or Sykes monkeys. Soon we came to the Two Fishes Hotel on the Diani Beach that consisted of a few huts with “makuti” roofs (slates of palm leaves) each had one simple room and shower only. However its restaurant was well known as well as the white coral sand beach stretching several kilometres both ways. First we waded for a while in the shallow waters as the sea was at low tide and decided to take Knocker with us on the next visit here. Then we returned to the restaurant for lunch enjoying the good sea food except for Ljiljana who did not like the “smell” of it. As a child she was forced to take the still unrefined train-oil so its smell remained revolting to her. After a lunch respite we got to return the same way and saw a few Colobus monkeys for the first time here.



**At left the King palm trees to be found at the Kwale district on South Coast of Mombasa.
At right picture Zvonko points to fruits on the Kapok trees.**

As days passed we got more involved by the daily chores that included writing letters to our relatives in Yugoslavia: Ljiljana’s family staying in Zagreb and Zvonko’s living in Osijek. We bought a new PFAFF sewing machine for Ljiljana who got busy on it instantly. We subscribed the new magazine ANIMALS that printed excellent animal pictures and also renewed the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC that we liked to read from its front to end. In a letter my parents informed that they sold their house in Osijek and would be moving to their new flat in due course. That meant that my father had closed his lawyer’s practise for good after over 40 years of service some of through rather turbulent times too. We thought that it would be a good distraction for both of my parents if we invite them to visit us here as our stay seemed could be lasting for a

longer time than originally thought of. At that time we were not sure if we would return to Europe after all and we kept the Australian option still open.

With the improving weather we would go ahead to explore the lagoon of Bamburi Beach and went swimming more often when the tide would allow it. Spring tides stood at +3,4m ASL (above sea mean level) and the lowest level at -0,4m making a difference of some 3,8m within 6 hours. These spring tides were accompanied with strong waves

We were a little bit too late hence we decided to get to Kilaguni Lodge possibly by the shortest way. At first one follows Tsavo River and then we turned into Kalanga Valley on a winding earthen road bypassing Ngulia Hills Circuit to make a short stop below Roaring Rocks. Yet one could not perceive any roaring so we continued straight on (winding!) to Kilaguni Lodge not seeing too many animals along though. Our ground floor room was simple but contained all guest's necessary facilities and had a balcony with a low wall dividing it from Mungai plains. Sunset had set in and we had enough time to take a shower washing of the red dust before going out for dinner. It was sensational to dine on an open terrace fenced of with a low wall from the wide flat area with a floodlit water hole about 100m far-off. It was to be one of the many such dinner nights we would enjoy during forthcoming safaris in future. The guests talk quietly between servings one collects from a buffet except for the drinks that one have to order from a few waiters. As the time passes and the darkness becomes more impenetrable slowly different small and larger animals appear to drink at the intensively floodlit waterhole. It is just an unforgettable sight!



This was the “road” in Rhino Valley below the Ngulia Hills Range.

After a while we had to withdraw to our room being tired from many impressions and long travel. Sometime at wee hours and despite being deep asleep I heard some strange noise of running waters through the open balcony door. Getting up I noticed something big standing close to the separating wall – it was an elephant urinating that sounded like a “waterfall” some 5m from my standpoint. Well, I thought, better get back to your bed fast and dream nicely! We got up at 6 a.m. and drove of soon after following the road along Five Sisters to the junction with a signpost pointing towards Poacher's Lookout. We reached the peak of a small hill just on time to see Kilimanjaro peaks Mawensi (5.357m) and Kibo (5.967m) in their full splendour in light of a rising sun. This mighty mountain rising out from Kuku Plains called up childhood's memories of a

“small” mountain as shown in student’s book on geography. One would never forget this sight! An extraordinary and impressive one for ever!

making the swimming nasty and dangerous too. At half time of the tidal cycle one got the neap tides standing at about +1,2m to +0m ASL that were best for swimming. We got the “Tidal tables” so we could plane in advance our weekends to for goggling and/or swimming as well.

Bamburi Beach lagoon was about 500m wide and had a deeper channel inside of the reef that width varied but not too much. Yet it contained numerous and varying kinds of coral heads swarmed with a lot of different marine lives. Thus goggling became our favourite sport in that Knocker was interested too. The dog came with us on our wadding tours in the lagoon shallow waters or even at its dry parts on the reef. For the dog was not a problem to swim through the channel and to plod on the coral reef never hurting his paws or feet. However we wore sport’s shoes with rubber sole and had shirts and hats to protect ourselves from the fierce tropical sun always. Inevitably we got sunburned often despite that protection and application of recommended sun taint crèmes.



An aerial view of the coral coast at left. A storm builds up viewed from our house at right.

In a certain way we had changed our attitudes to which we were used living in Khartoum town only. Here we were free to move around and enjoy country’s natural beauties and the splendour of its wideness. The going on safaris became a fascination that kept us looking for new adventures and experiences. Yes, one could say that we were infested by the “African Bacillus” as one’s insight became more sensible for any fresh and unfamiliar stimulus or impression. Of course we have made mistakes undertaking certain safaris mainly due to the hugeness of the Kenya’s country sites at begin.

For instance on a Sunday early morning we would start the safari to Tsavo East National Park entrance at Buchuma Gate some 100km from Mombasa on the main road to Nairobi. All it took a good 3 hours drive to pass through the City, ascend on a murram road to village Mazeras (nearby was Rabai quarry), pass through Mariakani (with the Dairy of Mombasa) to get through the gate at about 10 a.m. Inside the park we choose the earthen trail to Voi (Park H.Q.) via Aruba Lodge and bypassed Aruba Dam driving at the permitted speed of 50km/h. At first we were disappointed with a relatively small number of animals we saw en route to Voi of another 80km drive. During the lunch at Voi Park Inn Vesna produced her record of animals we have seen and it proved not to be as bad as thought at first. So we learned that the animals could be

best viewed before 10 a.m. as they keep to shadows and away of waterholes during the midday's "white hours".

However there were some other kinds of entertainment some of similar to those going to in Khartoum. There were two closed yet air-conditioned cinemas where the program changed every week. Our preference was the open-air drive-in cinema at Chamgamwe where the performance started at 8 p.m. every night except on Sundays. Most of the programs shown were premiers for Mombasa and going to that drive-in cinema was the meeting point for the children too. It was pleasant to sit in one's own car with open windows for a good breeze and viewing the movie on the very wide screen through the front car window. The car was parked close to a column fitted with two extractable loudspeakers one of which you pulled into you car to get the tune. One would eat and drink things brought in a cool box or ordered some meals and drinks from the bar. Kids usually congregated at an extra gallery near the bar and spent their "time" there the way they liked. The grown ups enjoyed few hours of peace until the movie ended and the time came to return home. The full moon nights were the most excellent for driving home as one could switch of the car lights on the straight road after passing Kissauni village on the way to home at Bamburi. An absolutely marvellous driving without headlights on in a moon lit night!



The elephants came regularly to the artificial lake at Aruba Lodge in Tsavo East National Park.

At the Coast we got a short rainy season in November. Upcountry the weather was fine and dry that was a good to make a safari in Tsavo West N. P. We booked a room for 3 in Kilaguni Lodge and started a Saturday early morning to Tsavo East entering through Buchuma Gate. First we stopped at Aruba Lodge where we had a snack proceeding then to Voi Ranger Post to visit the orphaned animals there. For the first time we met Rufus, the young black rhino known from a book, hundreds of photos and movies. A few rangers looked after Rufus and a few young elephants at an open place near the Ranger post. Visitors could caress and feed some titbits like bananas or biscuits to the orphaned totos (= young animals). After the lunch at Park Inn we drove on the earthen road along Mudanda Rocks. This basalt rock is rather large and 2km long but not too high so we climbed at the marked place for the perfect outlook over Tsavo East plane. A few elephant herds wandering going to or from waterholes scattered in the plane. Bypassing Manyani Gate we continued westwards and got out of Tsavo East at Tsavo Gate entering Tsavo West just across the main road from Mombasa to Nairobi.

Suddenly a ranger appeared from no where and told us to watch near by for a rhino and some other grazing antelopes and zebras too. After a small talk with him we departed with thanks for the info. True soon we saw the rhino far of the road but have seen many other grazing animals on the way to nearby Mzima Springs. The springs' pool had astonished as the oasis in an arid countryside. I was driving with Ljiljana in front seat and Vesna at rear and all windows were open. I approached slowly the wooded area looking after a parking lot when events developed in frenzy. A monkey jumped on the car bonnet and something hit on roof. A baboon face watched at me through front windowpane; next second Ljiljana shrieked as a monkey's hand reached through the window for a small sack with snack on dashboard; a next instant it had disappeared being followed by another baboon. I stopped instantly to check if my camera is still there - with the first shock over we parked the car and closed all windows for sure. Not far away was a footpath leading into the forest that surrounded the Mzima Spring.



A brief stop at Tsavo Inn at Mtito Andei next to Tsavo Gate entering Tsavo West National Park.

Now we learned to beware of the monkeys and walked slowly cautiously where to step and what we carried with us like cameras, bags etc. Tall palm trees and rather thick undergrowth surrounded a large pool of transparent bluish water in that a large number of hippos relax yawning occasionally showing several long protruding teeth in their wide gapping mouth. Close to the pool approach there is an underwater glass chamber with room for 2-3 persons accessible by a ladder. Next to it stood board with the warning to beware of crocodiles. We went down into that chamber and for the first time we have seen hippos more walking than swimming in that shallow yet very wide pond. Hippos have short legs and their height at the shoulder stands say at 1,2 – 1,4m only.

One could observe plenty of fishes (tilapias) in the clear waters of the spring pool of Tsavo River. Hippos do not eat fishes! According to an African saga hippos begged Mungo (= God) to permit them to stay in water during the day and come out to graze at night only. Hippos could stand the heat of sun on their skin anymore as it went of red. Mungo approved hippos this desire provided that they would not eat any fish. Hippos happily plunged into the water and came out to graze at night only. Yet when a hippo sticks its head out of water it has to open wide his jaws to a long yawn thus to prove to Mungo that it has no fish in his mouth.



The pool of Mzima springs that absolutely clean waters sprout out in a cave underneath.

The spring is actually in a cave in the volcanic rock (basalt) from which one catches the fresh water into pipe of Ø2 feet that carries it in a pipeline for about 150km far to Mombasa. One told any newcomer that is safe to drink “Hippo water” straight from a faucet. An outflow from the pool is at its south-east corner where Tsavo River flows onwards below Ngulia Range for quite a long way through Tsavo West until in confluence into Galana River in Tsavo East near Tsavo Gate. We could not stay long at Mzima as we should be back to Kilaguni before 9 a.m. to get the breakfast. After a hearty meal it was time to pack our few bit and pieces but Vesna wanted to swim in the swimming pool before leaving. However she was out of pool as fast as she jumped in – the water temperature was rather low caused by evaporation and air dryness here at up country.



A detail of the rather long Chiemu lava field shown here.

Ljiljana got some sandwiches from the kitchen and bottled water so we started the homeward trip at 11 a.m. On the way we stopped passing by Five Sister rock that was actually long lava “tongue” from a relatively “recent” eruption several hundreds years ago. We ascended a peak at the end of this barren ridge where I told my ladies that this lava field could not be too old as the vegetation did not get hold on it yet. Vesna got scared assuming that an imminent volcanic activity is due and run back to the car urging us to follow her. The view was not striking at all so we left this place which was a

War Site in 1914-1918 war. We continued bypassing Chiemu Hills and turned into Rhino Valley following more a track along Tsavo River. At midday times most the large animals hid in shades of scattered acacia trees so we had seen mostly antelopes, zebras and giraffes grazing on greens near the river.

At last we got to a better road that followed Tsavo River at a closer distance when Vesna shouted "RHINO!" True there was a grown mighty black rhino coming out from the river side and stopped at a distance of say 30m only. I stopped instantly, got the camera, took pictures ... should I move to a better position ... no, wait please ... do not move! We stood there for a minute or so observing the rhino doing the same when the animal turned of to disappear in the bushes. This fantastic encounter had to be the end of our first 2-day safari and it was time to return home. We got out of Tsavo West N. P. an hour or so after noon and decided to drive straight on home. We got tired of many impressions and new experiences gained on our first safari that we accomplished with best newcomer's success.

After a short break at Tsavo Gate to consume food and drink we had with us (another important experience: carry always some food and drink with you!) I drove straight on the partly tarmac main road to Mombasa some 200km far. We bypassed Manyani Gate followed the ones at Voi and Buchama without stopping. Vesna summarized her lists on which she had noted the kinds of animals we met in the park as well as the number of that she did with great accurateness throughout the whole safari. She told us the number of the animals and it astounded us how much we have seen. One could drive faster say at 80km/h on tarmac but had to slow down on stretches with murram to 40-50km/h only. At last we passed through Mombasa town and reached Bamburi at sunset where Knocker greeted us excitingly sniffing unknown smells on "Dudu" the car.



Vesna and Ljiljana did not like the walk over the lava field of Chiemu Hill.

My work pressed on me hard particularly as the speed of construction work at Wazo Hill improved. However the nearly weekly flights now to Dar-es-Salaam by regular airliner were rather time consuming and sometimes it was necessary that I stay overnight to finish accumulated jobs. Thus the Management decided to book services of a private air company. At first one choose an aircraft CESSNA with one engine only that could carry the pilot and 3 passengers (without any cargo though). A flight from Mombasa airport to the earthen strip at Wazo Hill site of the new cement works would last about 90 minutes that saved us quite a lot of time on these visits. After Dr. Mandl's arrival in

November one started talking about an airstrip near the Bamburi Works that would make the whole affair even more convenient. Therefore early 1965 the Company decided to lease a CESSNA 2-engine aircraft including its pilot for a longer period. A flat area in the bush a mile or so north of the factory had to be cleared first. Jock Reed, the Quarry Manager, sent his largest Caterpillar bulldozer to level grounds mainly of coral first.

A massive road roller had lay down broken in a ditch near the Garden Department. It had been used by George Dobrolubov (Mandl's son-in-law) during the construction on the main access road to the factory several years ago. Mechanical Workshops made an excellent job out of that old road roller (made in Austria around the turn of century). This monster returned to "life" with a fully refurbished Diesel engine and produced a super job on the new runway by rolling in wetted crushed coral rag mixed with some cement. The runway had a slight slant across for better run of surface water to a drain where lengthwise it was almost perfectly level. The Cessna's first landing was greeted with cheers and the aircraft drove into its new shed built aside of the runway. From now on we had it rather easy to get to the aircraft as the runway was some five hundred meters from Dr. Mandl's house and just across to the main road north from Mombasa to Malindi.



We often stopped at Mudanda Rocks on the way to Manyani Gate to enter Tsavo West. At right there is a water pool below the rock almost dried out at present.

Often Bwana Mzee (as one used to call the Managing Director Dr. Felix Mandl) asked me to have table tennis game at his house. It was astonishing how good he played with fast reaction and perfect shots. He liked to gain but I was not always as a good a match for him as I really liked to be. It has happened sometimes that I won a few games like a "blind hen" I was excusing myself. Mzee liked to play tennis and invited me for a game of single or double at the Mombasa Club on Azania Drive next to which the Golf course stretched along the Ocean coast. The tennis courts were overcrowded and one had to book well in advance to get a court. Also the facilities were a bit outdated that amenities Mzee did not like so much. On some other occasions Mzee suggested to play chess with me that gave me a perfect opportunity to show my familiarity with this game. During my schooling years I was member of Osijek Chess Club in Osijek and have been used to play "blind chess" during the railway line inspections that had to be carried by student during the war times.

Our social life was getting busier as the Christmas holidays approached. One of the more important events was the International Football Game held at Sport Club of Mombasa late in November 1964. The German team consisted mainly of sailors and a few from the Company where as in the other (international) team players were Swiss, Danes, British and me still and unavoidably a Yugoslav. Our golly was determined so I had to play the right back-man. The play was fairly tempered and temperamental as there were quite a lot of (unintentional) fouls but otherwise it was a great fun and pleasure for all. Our team won 2:1 and everybody left the field after looking for good and long drinks. The winning team has been invited to Robert "Bob" Brenneisen's house on Bamburi Beach where an opulent barbecue and drinks were waiting for the winning players. This most important event ended with a joyous meeting.

On the first weekend in December we got up rather early at 4:30 a.m. and drove straight through the City and got on the Likoni ferry in 20 minutes only. As there was hardly any traffic going southwards so we could continue rather fast up to the junction to Kwale village. From here we rushed onwards ascending Shimba Hills on an earthen road with many narrow curves. We managed to reach Giriya Lookout (approx. at +450m) in time to see the sun rising far out of the Ocean horizon behind a hazy curtain of the early morning. The panoramic sight is an absolute must to view round some 240° and as far one's eye could see stretches of South Coast plain below. The natural display was certainly worth getting up so early but we wondered whether we would do it again at time. It was a mere luck to make some 65km drive within such a short time.



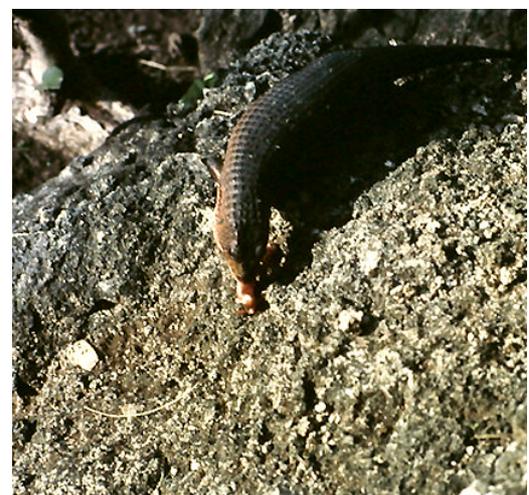
A herd of Sable antelopes stampedes across the meadow in Shimba Hills.

After a basket breakfast we returned to cruise in the interior of Shimba Hills for sometime. Soon in viewing distance we found a herd of Sable antelopes after which this Reserve was named. Quite back in this Reserve there is thick forest where – if one is lucky enough – it is possible to see there a few forest elephants foraging in rather on dense ground vegetation. After a while we decided to abandon further touring around the Reserve as it was close to midday and we moved downwards to the Coast. This time we visited another restaurant on Tiwi Beach that Smolniker recommended to us. The access to Tiwi Beach was similar to the one we had made to Diani Beach some 10km south of and not so long ago. Tiwi Restaurant was a rather simple establishment but the food served there was perfect – truly we were also rather hungry. The beach here was similar to the one at Diani and we spent some time by sea wadding shallow waters and had some sun basking before we returned home to get some rest before the next working week again.



A rare close view of a herd of Sable antelopes with a dark buck in front.

Since the short rainy period finished in November we could spent more time on the beach that Knocker liked most. One day Ljiljana told me an almost incredible story that she saw a large monitor lizard (aka “varan”) that came out of the bush chasing after a long legged rat. Varan disappeared in a hole in the coral rock below the balcony. At first I could not believe it and prepared for Ljiljana the readied camera to take pictures on the next opportunity. Despite disbelieve of mine the proof could be “smelled” few days after of the remnants of rat cadaver. Ljiljana was adamant to make photos of this carnivorous visitor so she patiently waited for the varan to appear again for the leftovers soon. True to the lizard nature Ljiljana would make “shots of her life” of a 1,2m long alive varan.



The brown lizard named “Milena” (locally “brukenga”) living in the coral rock next to our house.

About the same time she saw a brown lizard (locally called “brukenga”) coming out of a hole next the house north side wall close to the virgin bush. From now on Ljiljana placed bits of meat offal next to this hole. Normally she had would give the sinewy parts to Mwachiro or Ngoa who liked these as “to stuck between their teeth” – as they said. Of course the bits and pieces had disappeared soonest! Another lizard almost 60cm long and of more vivid colours, obviously a male, was seen munching on these bits too. Ljiljana decided to give them names so the female lizard was “Milena” (“Dear”) and the male one became “Miško” (for our nephew in Zagreb). This feeding continued and after

some while Ljiljana fed Milena from her hand almost at regular intervals. Milena would come out of her hole if called ... sometimes though. One day a land turtle turned up during Ljiljana's garden inspections and she offered a piece of mango that had it nipped instantly. To this menagerie fed by our "home coach" one should add a number of birds of which the weavers were the most numerous and loud ones.

Luckily for us we did not have any termite hives on our plot but this dudu could be a real pest say in store room or similar. The storekeeper complained that stored crates or boxes made of soft wood (shipped from Europe) disintegrated to dust after a while. By inspection it has been established that there must be several termite hives under the storeroom floor. One called in RENTOKILL Company from Mombasa to get rid of this nuisance. It was a job for the Building Dept. as holes had to be drilled 60cm apart into which specialist pumped some poisonous gas mix. Holes had to be sealed of and everybody could pray only hope that termites would not return. It was for me an important experience for the future coming to check any site for termites before embarking on any construction work. To eradicate termites is almost a Sisyphus task.

The visit of HMS "Eagle" aircraft carrier to Kilindini Harbour was the event everybody talked about early in December 1964. We joined a party hiring a boat to take from the visitors' quay to this majestic ship but a downpour almost ruined this visit. We were astounded that soils and road surfaces were bone-dry when returning to Bamburi region. This experience one would make at Coast often that a rain would hit a rather restricted area and one could observe a straight line between wet and dry areas. One never stops learning!



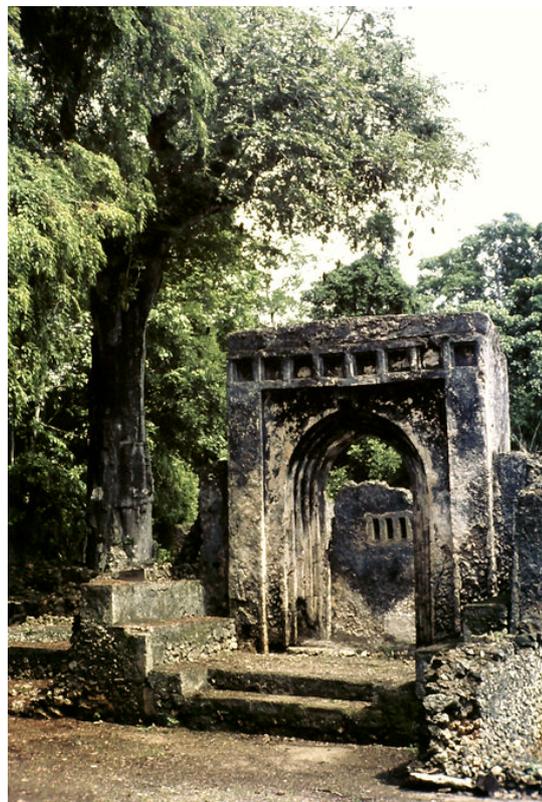
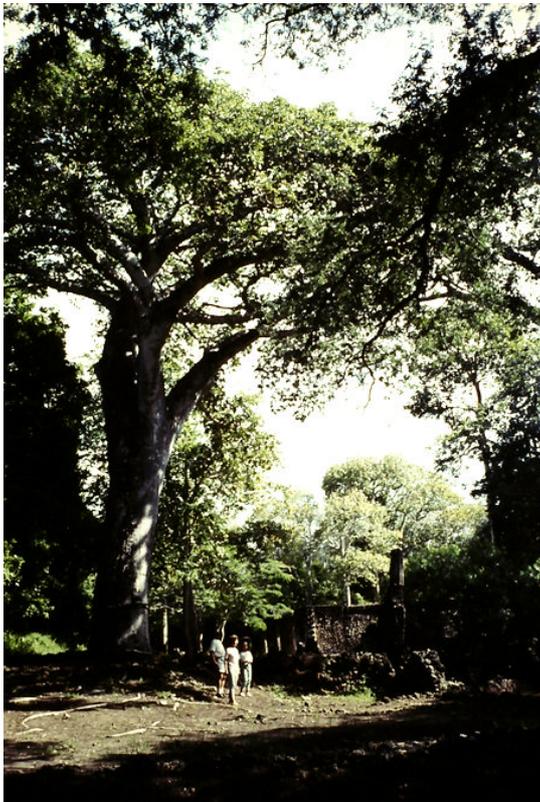
**A young varan taking a sun bath on a tree in Ljiljana's garden.
At right a grown up varan housing in the coral outcrop in front of our house.**

On a dull Sunday we decided to start a safari to the North and drove on a murrum road ruined by rain to varying extend. It was a rather strenuous ride crossing the Mtwapa Creek on a bridge of British army type to continue in a kind of road-slalom to reach the ferry at Kilifi. After some waiting time (crew had tea-time!?) we carried on to reach Malindi at lunch time. At Sinbad Hotel cum Restaurant we got our first typical curry lunch that we liked much and we had many of after some Ljiljana had prepared too. Curry was used to conserve meat or fish as best in this climate – so the Indian c ook told us as Sinbad.



The varan (gen. Varanopidae) living in coral rock below the veranda of our house.

We could not spend too long time in Malindi as the bad road ride home in darkness would not be advisable at all. Yet we decided to go on through thick bush and to view the Blue Lagoon in its virgin appearance – nobody wide and far to be seen. We sat on a high coral rock at which foot one could see a white sandy lagoon by calm blue seas. On the way we could not resist and turned of the road left at the shield saying “GEDI” only. This place was completely overgrown and we had to tour the ruins taking care not to stop on a snake.



The Gedi ruins we visited first time in 1964. The ruins almost fully grown over and rarely visited.

Gedi is an archaeological site where the clearing and excavation work has not started yet. According to the available information this site is an abandoned Swahili or Arabic settlement from 14th century. Little was known about this interesting site with many

ruins at the time of our visit. I guess that the loss of potable water caused the population to seek another place for living. We arrived home in good time and considered that another visit to Malindi and its surrounding would be worth of.

Our social acquaintance improved particularly after my “glamorous” actions in the football game with for the Swiss international team helping them to thrash the German one. After that victorious game followed by a jolly barbecue party we would be more often called to parties by the staff members and other new acquaintances of ours. As one would say we were socially accepted as any of Cement Company’s senior staff member. René Haller has asked me to be his first witness at the wedding to Christa who was GM’s secretary. The wedding went by usual standards at Mombasa Mayor’s Office but the best of was the lunch at the well known restaurant of Nyali Beach Hotel. Soon after this wedding Hallers’ invited the senior staff members to a Carnival costumed party to be held in their garden next to the beach. The party was a great success that Ljiljana almost spoiled the stunned party when a sheikh entered unexpectedly in that she recognized Dr. Mandl his perfect costume but too early.



We found a stone bench near a Kilaguni Water Hole providing a splendid view on Chamwe Hill and Kuku plains that spread below Kilimanjaro northern slopes.

Vice versa we had to invite these people to our house and once again Ljiljana’s practise gained in Khartoum resulted with ideal successes. However she had here better conditions including better quality and variety of food. Yet she had the advantages of help from our servants and working in a more pleasant climate here. Mandls were leaving for Europe by mid of February so we invited them for a “Farwell dinner” that turned out to be another hit of Ljiljana’s cuisine. On such an occasion Bwana Mzee was more easily talkative and he told me about the approved financing of £S1Mio for the large extension in the Bamburi Works. After Mzee had explained some more details of the project he told me his idea that I could complete most of the design work with existing staff I have here.

Instantly I had doubts and asked him whether this is not to be a joke? Smilingly he recounted the following joke about a Director who asked his executive officer: “Do you

have an ulcer?” The Exec replied promptly: “No” after the Director said: “Fine! As you do not have an ulcer you can continue with your job, isn’t so?” We laughed both about this joke printed in a professional paper – me a bit sullenly – when Dr. Mandl continued: “Of course you do not have any ulcer as you look to be really of a good health, isn’t so?” Teasingly he asked Ljiljana to look that I do not make any training in table tennis during his absence. I should stay with my work and spend time on some other distractions.



The mosque at Malindi with the phallic symbol on tombs in front of it.

When Mandl left we had more time for us making long walks on fine white sand in lagoon at late afternoons after I came home from works. Of course the dog enjoyed these strolls and rushed into seas after Vesna threw a wood. Vesna trained Knocker various commands but he did it for her only. The dog was an excellent swimmer but did like at all Ljiljana’s washing out salt from his fur. Nevertheless the dog was still and obediently waited for Ljiljana pulling out ticks that he collected abundantly after “free love” safaris to a bush-lady. When Ljiljana watered the garden Knocker would run instantly her posing to be sprayed with water from the hose. Don’t you see that I feel hot too!



Ljiljana poses on a coral outcrop at Blue Lagoon (becoming National Reserve later) near Malindi.

January and February were the best months for strolling through the lagoon and to enjoy sporadic “hot” bathing at deeper spot still containing water at low tide. The water

would warm say to 35°C or more and the dog joined us in a pool. We always wore head covers and some old shirt to protect us from strong sun rays so the dog tried finding some shade of our body silhouette behind or between us. Vesna would get something to make a hat for Knocker who sat with in a “hot” pool until we decided to move again.

The best part of such activities was to walk out from the shallow to the channel where one could swim and the water was cooler. This deeper channel of the riff was the place where one could goggle seeing there several kinds of coral heads teeming with fishes as long as one would get overtired or the high tide would set in. Afterwards we returned home very tired but before that everybody took a shower near the slipway on access road. Of course Knocker had to be hold back as this kind of “washing” he did not like at all.

It is time to go back of some other subjects of our life at the North Coast of Mombasa about that we have not yet wrote about yet. Read more about our daily chores and excursions in the next chapter.



A bush rose is in full bloom at Mandl's garden.

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