

THE JOURNEY FROM KENYA AND ACROSS UGANDA IN 1966

Part 2 of 2: Uganda

The new day was sunny and warm so we decided to visit the Murchison Falls site. First I went to the garage to repair the flat tire. I was annoyed because I had forgotten to take a new inner tube with me. Obviously I had misplaced a reserve belt for the ventilator that could be disastrous for us if the engine cooling system failed. The mechanic was good at his job so he mounted the repaired tire and I put the reserve safely back to its place.



This is the view upriver at the Murchison Falls with the island at center left of Ljiljana.

After a late breakfast we drove some 25km back the way we had come in the day before. We crossed the Victoria Nile on the same ferry. The road was dry with a few potholes still filled with water that I could easily avoid. In the great flood of 1961 a bridge was destroyed, making the access to the waterfalls more complex. The trail was tricky, with many sharp curves and ups and downs along a narrow valley between steep hills. Suddenly a gap between hills opened in front of us. We saw the river's blue waters some 300m away and could hear a thunderous noise. We had arrived at Murchison waterfall of the Victoria Nile at last.



The falls are at left just behind of Ljiljana's standpoint as viewing downriver. Vesna caressed a Copper monkey for that the ranger said that it welcomes every visitor.

We got out of the car on a small plateau where a ranger came out of a small hut. On a bank next to it, a copper-coloured monkey observed us curiously. This was a wild Palate monkey that did not run away but waited for some tidbits from visitors. Vesna

tried giving it some bread which it did not like, but it happily accepted a sweet. The ranger showed us the way down to the waterfalls lookout. The noise got louder as we approached the viewpoint, above which a cloud of water spray moved with the wind. The place was a photographers' paradise, particularly as the scene changed constantly by dancing rainbows in the moving spray lit by late morning sun.

The Nile bore a lot of water due to recent rains, thus its flow was split into two streams. The closest torrent crashed down a 15m-wide chasm with a horrendous sound. The right stream flowed through a much wider gap behind a rocky island in the river. One could not see over the island due to the thick undergrowth and a few large trees there. The river was about 150m wide before it crashed down the two waterfalls into a much wider flow over 500m wide. From our viewpoint we could view the Albert Lake and the outflow of the Albert Nile far away. The whole scene was absolutely fantastic. The rainbows danced here and there due to the always stirring mist of spray under an appalling noise. It was an awesome experience.

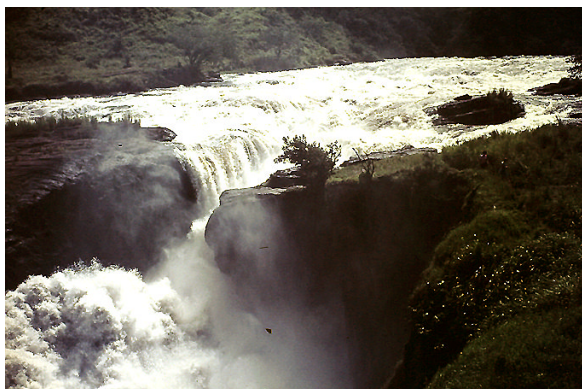


Beyond Ljiljana and Vesna at center is the island that divides the river flow at Murchison Falls.

Ljiljana and Vesna were wearing red blouses that were just perfect for taking colour pictures. With two cameras in hand, I looked for a better position, climbing a nearby rock just above the chasm. Then it happened ... I slipped off! In that moment of extreme shock I tossed my "Zorkii" (Russian reproduced "Leica") camera towards Ljiljana's feet and dropped on my left knee and shin instantaneously. Subconsciously I held fast in my right hand my new and much more expensive "Canon EOS" camera. In the next moment I felt horrible pains surging through my left leg and fist. Somehow I got up and managed to walk over to the still-shocked ladies. For we instant we kept motionless, stunned by what could have happened to me. After a short while we slowly walked over to the car, where the ranger did not show any interest in our coming. I had skinned the inside of my left fist, which bled a bit. My bruised shinbone looked awful as the "colour" changed from red to blue. To our dismay, we had left the first-aid kit at the cottage, so Ljiljana warily washed the injuries with clear water. The fist pain was bad, but my left leg ached much more.

What if I could not drive the car onwards? This was the first thought that hit me. Then a car arrived just at the right moment. A British couple got out of the vehicle, followed by their two kids. Immediately the gentleman kindly offered his help and gave us some kind of antiseptic ointment. I applied a thick layer of the balm first to my fist and then over the hemorrhage on my shinbone. This salve worked real wonders! Within minutes the pains subsided gradually and the cooling effect made me feel better as the first

shock wore off. Within a few days the lesions healed properly without any infection. The painful shinbone was almost forgotten until I hit a ladder rung some weeks later during a site inspection.



The river right arm counter-flow at left and the view downriver from Ljiljana's at same spot at right.

After a while I felt fine and we returned to the lookout point. All of us were happy to be back to the lookout. The magical powers of the thunderous river held us firmly in its grip. We would remember these miraculous moments forever! Time was running out so we took several pictures more and I cautiously touched the rock where I had slipped. Only then did I visualize the dangerous situation I had been in.

We left the Murchison lookout after saying goodbye and thanks to the gentleman and his family. The sun stood high, stopping the rainbow show, so it was time to go back to the lodge to for lunch. My leg hurt me a bit yet I managed to get us safely back to the lodge for lunch.



This was our last view downriver from the top of the Murchison Falls

After lunch we opted for a boat trip instead of a rest. Not driving would be good for my hurting fist and leg, so we boarded a boat for a ride upstream to view the Murchison Falls from below. The trip started at 2:00 o'clock and the six grownups and three older children plus one annoying youngster (not Vesna!) boarded a flat boat designed for 15

persons. There was enough room for that girl to move around to have a better vision but it was irritating for us.

The two strong outboard motors took the boat across the river and continued upstream, following the left bank as close to it as possible. There were several herds of elephants and buffalos grazing almost side by side with a few groups of warthogs running to and fro in between. A buffalo herd taking a mud bath did not like the boat's approach and indignantly got out of the mud.

It was a bird watchers' paradise and Vesna recited birds' names like an expert: Pied and Malachite kingfishers, cormorants, darters, marabous, Goliath heron, egret ... she went on and on. Then we saw hammer kops, saddle-bill storks, a fish eagle cruising above, then stilts, many gulls, etc. One would have needed a minimum 300mm telescopic lens to photograph those birds. For the hippos one did not need such a lens as these were the main attraction, relaxing in the shallow water along the left bank. As the boat got closer to the hippos, they started trotting off through the mud banks, or chose to dive into deeper water in front or beside the boat. This pastime continued for a while until everybody got enough of taking pictures, as well as of the water splashing and spray caused by hippos diving very close to the boat.



Even at day buffalos would visit Paraa Lodge grounds for grazing high grass there. At right is the boat waiting for the visitors to visit Murchison Falls from downriver side.

The steersman turned the boat to cross the river and approached some sandbanks on the right river bank. At this place there reclined some dozens of crocodiles. Some of them were huge and really mighty looking beasts. A few had open jaws that were full of dangerous-looking teeth. We learned that an open jaw meant an invitation to "somebody" to clean this monstrous cavity. The cleaning of crocodile jaws is necessary, mainly to remove the leeches sticking to the mouth's inner flesh. A huge crocodile rushed towards the boat and dived just in front of it. I got nervous seeing this beast coming straight at us so I did not have time to adjust the lens to such a short distance. I was scared, believe me! Thus there is no picture of this incident.

and Malachite kingfishers, cormorants, darters, marabous, goliath heron, egret ... she went on and on. Then appeared hammer kops, saddle-bill storks, a fish eagle cruised above, then stilts, many gulls etc. One would need a minimum 300mm telescopic lens to photograph the birds though. Yet for the hippos one did need such a lens as these were the main attraction relaxing in the shallow water along the left bank. As the boat got rather closer to the hippos they startled trotted of through the mud banks or choose to dive into deeper water in front or by side of the boat. This pastime continued for a while until everybody got enough of taking pictures as well as of the water splashing and spray caused by hippos diving very close to the boat.

Then the helmsman moved the boat upstream and the two outboard motors revved up to their maximum power. The boat speed decreased rapidly as we approached the waterfalls, of which the left one was the much wider than the right one. It was difficult to distinguish which of the noises was louder - that of the howling motors or that of the roaring waterfalls. Then the boat moved into calmer waters, shoving its nose into a sandbank where dozens of crocodiles of different sizes were resting or waiting for food. This sandbank lay in the shadow of the wide rock that divided the Victoria Nile River flow into two arms at high-water level, as it was then. The crocodiles just had to wait for some animal or fish trapped in the waterfall that none could survive. Nothing could withstand such a force of water at that speed and pressure, followed by a drop into a whirlpool. The the crocodiles just had to wait for killed or dazed animals or fishes that floated on the river surface along their sandbank.



The view of Murchison Falls from the boat as it drew nearer at full power of its two motors.

After some quarter of hour it was time to turn back down river, so the boatman pushed off from the sandbank with a long pole. The crocodiles did not move at all, continuing their leisurely wait for the food coming to them on the “river platter”. The boat moved fast downstream yet we had the chance to take pictures of the mighty waterfall that made a lot of spray and clouds of water vapour. The view of the waterfall from below was fascinating, to be remembered forever. However, I would say that our impressions from the morning visit were by far more imposing and certainly worth the experience, even the hurting part of it.

Everybody on this trip was tired after so much natural beauty and all of us were quiet; even that small girl fell asleep in her mother's arms. The weather worsened as ominous clouds rolled in from the northeast, so it was just the right time to get back to the lodge. The return ride down river took almost 45 minutes of the whole trip, which lasted three full hours. A strong downpour started soon after we arrived, giving us just enough time to get to the restaurant to enjoy the 5'clock tea of cakes and sandwiches. What to do with the rest of the afternoon up to dinner time? Vesna filed her animal count records and read rangers' reports; Ljiljana did some washing and the ailing driver made notes in his day log. It became cooler and there was sporadic rain throughout the whole night, which passed without any animals visiting our chalet.

The morning promised a beautiful sunny day so we decided to tour the Buligi Circuit. An earthen track north out of the lodge to a branch west of the junction of Victoria Nile and

Albert Nile. We drove on a flat plateau between high grasses. We stopped at higher places, getting out of the car to see if there were any animals around. We passed a few elephant herds, then smaller herds of Jackson's hartebeest, oribi, and duiker antelopes, some close to the road. Suddenly we came across a larger herd of antelopes with strange horns. Vesna exclaimed: "It's the rare Uganda kob!" She had read in the rangers' reports that this kind of antelope was rare and that one should report seeing them to the chief ranger. If the herd had been closer I would have "shot" the whole film on them for sure.



Crocodiles waiting on a sandbank where as a few are in water. One is in water closer at center.

Soon we arrived at a branching road and chose the left path of the three available. There were two full loops in the Buligi Circuit and we believed that the left one would take us closer to Albert Nile. On both sides of the trail there was about 1.5m high grass so we could not see from the car what was behind that dense "curtain". Suddenly in front of us at some 20m distance appeared the rear of a mighty buffalo bull. Stop and wait! The bull moved a few steps forward and we followed after it very slowly. Then stop again! This kind of "game" continued for a short while. Ljiljana's warning came to me "Do not follow a lonely bull buffalo. Never!" I took the binoculars to see what is wrong with the animal. My God, both buttocks were covered with heavy scars so bloody red flesh was wide open, with flies crawling on it. For sure this suffering animal would be dangerous if we came too close. As there was no chance to pass the wounded buffalo, it was best to retreat. Driving the car in reverse gear I returned slowly to the junction. After a quick film change in the Zorkii camera we continued along the middle trail, driving between walls of high grass again.

We could not see anything through the high grass. An antelope jumped out of the grass in front of us and quickly disappeared on the opposite side. Only for a brief moment a few duikers or oribis came out from grass and spotted us and were gone in a flash. So it went for some 6km when a wide meadow opened to our view. We could see the Albert Nile not far away. On that broad pasture grazed some hundred Kob antelopes. A stunning male Kob stood less than 10m from us, posing for a picture. We drove in a zigzag across the field, not disturbing the many antelopes there at all. There were hundreds of Kob antelopes scattered around. Normally a male would have a herd of some 20 animals. The other male Kobs stayed separate. There were smaller herds of other antelopes like oribi, hartebeest, duiker, and some waterbucks (slightly different from the Kenyan ones). Despite the abundant grass we had not seen any other kinds of grazing animals.



We have seen quite a lot of Uganda kob antelopes touring the Buligi Circuit.

We reached the bank of Albert Nile flowing north, crossing into the Sudan at Nimule. From there it is known as the White Nile, meandering through the great swamps up to Juba. It was time to return, following the third track to avoid meeting the wounded buffalo once more. We were somehow disappointed by the lack of animal variety here. We got this impression throughout the whole safari in Uganda, despite plentiful grasslands and water everywhere. Another problem was the high grass that nobody bothered to cut down - at least the narrow strip along the road. The upkeep of the trails had been neglected as well.



Also we have seen from left: Jackson's hartebeest, oribi and duiker antelopes.

After a long return trip we got to the lodge in time for a good meal, but the waiters were disturbed by the arrival of a large bus load of tourists, mostly Germans. For such a small restaurant that large number of guests was far too much. The normally easy-going service was disturbed by the rush of guests.

A good rest and an afternoon nap lifted our spirits again. We went to a small museum still in the development stage, but it was not worth it. Then we tried the outlook hill that was more of a knoll with hardly any view over the large surrounding plain. On the way back to the lodge we came to a village where we stopped, stunned by what we saw. Next to the last hut at some 25m distance, three huge elephants and a toto (calf) browsed at the rubbish heap and bins. People sat calmly in front of their huts; children ran and played on the small village square. Nobody bothered about the presence of those huge wild animals. We got out of the car and Ljiljana and Vesna went to talk to the people. I was taking pictures, trying to find an angle to get the setting sun in the background. What scenery - just splendid for marvellous pictures!



The common giraffes form an unexpected pose. There are several impala antelopes at right.

Yet something was wrong with the number of taken pictures! Normally a film gets about 36 pictures but I read 40 ... 41 etc. Oh, the film had not been advanced by the camera mechanism. I have made the grave mistake of not checking the film advancement in the early morning rush. Thus there would not be any picture of the well known "Dustbin Nelly" and her companions rummaging around the village rubbish bins. With trembling fingers I opened my Russian "Zorkii" camera and saw the unfolded film the way I had put it in earlier. I was so disappointed that I did not want to use that camera anymore ... for today at least. My spirit reached a new low that evening, particularly as it started to rain again. This was not a good sign for the morning departure from Paraa Lodge. I was deeply disillusioned.

The morning of August 25th promised a sunny day but I expected problems driving on wet trail of "black cotton soil" (dark fat loam). We ordered "dry lunch" boxes and left the Paraa lodge for good after breakfast at 9:30. We left to the Buligi Circuit and drove along the path where we had met the wounded buffalo yesterday. My whole attention was on the still wet road surface, trying to avoid potholes filled with water. At last we got out of the high grass passageway to an open place with spectacular views of the outlet of Victoria Nile into Lake Albert. It was almost next to the outflow of the Albert Nile from the same lake. Around us were the same species of animals we had seen yesterday, like the kob, duiker, kongoni (aka as hartebeest), and many kinds of swamp birds. We looked for a dry place where we could have our lunch. Later we returned to the path and drove on towards north Murchison Park gate after Wangkwar, reaching it at about 13h.



A typical road section after a strong rain with potholes filled with water axle deep. One had just to get through!

The road got dryer but the many ruts made the driving extremely difficult. I had to protect the car so I kept to 20km/h all the way out of the park, continuing towards Anaka and Gulu. Before Gulu we turned south for some 30km. Short of Pamwa we entered the gate of Murchison N. P., where a strong rain hit us again. I drove carefully and slowly on that slippery road for some 15km until we came to a wide meadow, in the middle of which stood a modern set of buildings. This was our next stop at the Chobe Lodge, which had opened for tourists recently. We got a room at the first floor, from which we had a marvellous view of the cataracts in the Victoria Nile some 100m away. Our moods improved instantly as the lodge promised better comfort and good service.

However, the weather did not play its part at all. For the two days of our stay in Chobe it rained sporadically, making trips by car impossible. This was good in a way because I did not like the way the car responded to shocks to the front axle that I felt hard on the steering wheel. Also I had the feeling that the car drifted on curves. It was good to have a respite so we enjoyed a few sunny spots for short walks to the river, keeping a safe distance from the numerous hippos basking on the muddy bank. We wrote a dozen postcards and Vesna and I completed our logs. The lodge had a wide verandah on the first floor where we could rest in long chairs with a superb view of the cataracts in the Victoria Nile River nearby. At night we watched the animals coming to the watering pond lit by floodlights. Yet there were very few species coming at night: hippos, mongooses, some hares - that was it!



This picture shows the confluence of Victoria Nile (from the right) with Albert Nile flowing out at center at the north end of Lake Albert (at left picture side down).

I had a long talk with the lodge manager and an entomologist from the UK regarding the scarcity of species in Uganda. The entomologist was studying insects in various parts of Uganda. Both agreed with my observations that the variety of species was much smaller than in Kenya or Tanganyika. The main reason was that Uganda had a colder and wetter climate, being in the transition region from east Africa to central Africa. Foot-rot infection had devastated various kinds of antelopes. The high grasses growing in the wetlands made it possible that only certain antelopes could live there. Of course, it was humans who had killed many of the original species. We had not seen the great herds of zebras, gnus, and gazelles during our safari in Uganda, although we had seen a lot of buffalos and elephants. The Ugandan manager talked about herds of several hundreds of the later species, but who could not be specific. According to the entomologist, the dangerous "elephant fly" had not been found in these regions yet.

It seemed there was little or no co-operation between the Uganda Hotels Ltd. and the park management. Road maintenance was pitiful, or in some places, nonexistent. The construction of new pathways was an imperative, as well as cutting the high grass

along the existing ones to open some vistas to the visitors. The publicity for visiting the parks concentrated on the package tours, mainly from West Germany and USA. Everybody talked about lack of funds, but it would be necessary to improve the species' habitat as well as to import some species, like the predators, etc. The manager complained about the weather too, as it was the time of a new rainy season. I learned quite a lot, particularly that the Uganda country was quite different from Kenya and/or Tanganyika.

The two days of leisure had been good for us as well as for our VW car. The Chobe Lodge was a three-storey building, with the restaurant and social rooms on the ground level. The large verandah on the first floor was probably its greatest attraction. Our room was on the first floor too, and we had a perfect view of the Victoria Nile river some 100m away. Next to the cataracts were several small islets that were populated by dozens of hippos. There were many small waterfalls that were not as attractive as Murchison Falls. I could not spot any herd or group of large animals through my binoculars on the left river flat bank. I was told that at this area was the hunting grounds, so one could hardly see anything.



Brief reconnaissance stop before we reached the Mweya peninsula and the Kazinga Channel.

We left Chobe on Sunday, August 28th, at 8:30 because the driving section was about 515km. Quite a distance for the driver of an unreliable vehicle. The lodge was enfolded in a morning haze and six giraffes were on guard when we left the park, crossing the bridge downriver of Karuma Falls on Victoria Nile. These falls were not as attractive as the Murchison falls despite plenty of water flowing in the river.

Before we reached Masindi I noticed that the engine was not working the way it should so I looked at the reserve fuel tank. It should still have contained some fuel, but it did not help at all. Thus I had to stop at the crest of that undulating road to check whether the tank had a leak. Fortunately this was not the case, so next I checked my mileage calculation. By Jove, I had made a mistake in the calculation and it was exactly 165km too much, needing about 15lt of fuel. No wonder the engine could work without fuel! We pulled out the reserve canister with 10lt of fuel and poured it into the tank. We arrived to Masindi safely and filled up the tank and the canister to the brim. Ljiljana almost fainted, seeing the attendant smoking a cigarette at the same time as handling the fuel hose.

The countryside changed entirely after Hoima compared to the morning ride through Bunyoro province. There were many ups and downs as we moved between hills, left

and right curves, a forest interchanged with open areas with a few huts or hamlets. People we met were dressed well and Ljiljana noted that we did not see a single woman with bare breasts in Uganda. It was Sunday and the people most probably were going to attend service in a few churches we passed along the murrum road.

We entered Mubende province after crossing the river Nkusi and the driving became more demanding due to the many bends. Ljiljana did not like those, feeling a bit sick. Also I needed some respite and it was midday, so we stopped for lunch in the shade of a grove. We enjoyed the prepared food and the tea calmed our nerves and stomachs too. After half an hour we had to press on as there were about 200km to our final destination in Tororo province.

At Mukunyu we came upon the tarmac road from Kampala leading to Fort Portal. The modern town had one main street along which we noticed several government buildings, a large modern hospital, and nice residential dwellings. Fort Portal had some industry too, mainly in timber manufacturing and the tea trade. One road lead westwards to Kichwamba and the foot of Ruwenzori Mountain. This region was notorious for earthquakes as well as for some volcanic activity like geysers, hot springs, etc.

We turned southwards to the slopes of Kambwa Mountain (+3.240m) descending on the tarmac road. At first we drove through forested areas but suddenly we came to a dry steppe, flat and almost barren except for some bushes. After Kisomoro we saw several small crater lakes scattered alongside the road to Kasese, where we arrived at 16:30. Kasese was linked by railway and high-voltage power lines leading towards the Kilembe Mines, known for its large copper reserve. I remembered that we had held talks about building the cement works at Kasese, but nothing had been worked out yet.

Immediately out of Kasese started the Elisabeth National Park, where only a few small hamlets or petite villages had been allowed. As we approached the equator, the wetlands started alongside Lake George, seeming to me more like a swamp. Of course Vesna pointed to some groups of waterbuck, kob, a few buffalos and kongoni, as well as many varieties of birds. On the right the mountains Ruato (+3.550m) and Ruwenzori (+5.115m) were wrapped in clouds. The obligatory picture at the Equator with a damaged sign was without Vesna, who was in a bad mood.

It was almost 17h so I pushed onward, particularly as I had turned off on an awful path full of potholes and ruts. The sudden change of speed from 60km/h on tarmac to almost a creeping ride made me rather irritable, when Ljiljana asked me to stop. It was a buffalo carcass, actually only a skeleton - really nothing worth seeing. I cooled down enough to continue at snail-speed the 12km up to the park gate of Kabatoro Township. From there it was only 6km to the lodge and the path was in much better condition. Yet I could not withhold my anger and told the ranger in my "possibly mildest voice" that they should do some road maintenance "mara moja" (instantly). He admitted that many had complained already but the grader was due tomorrow. I swore that I would never again drive on such a ruined path!

The track improved as we entered the park area, although every time the front axle was jolted it jarred my hands on the steering wheel. All of a sudden Ljiljana noticed a mighty Defassa waterbuck behind a bush, so I slowed, moving back and forth to get a better view for a picture. We did not notice we had cut it off from its herd, consisting of females and calves. Then Vesna yelled, "Daddy, get out fast! The buck attacks us!" In the rear-view mirror I saw the buck with its long horns lowered run at the car. The car

jumped forward and the buck gave up the pursuit to rejoin its herd. It would have been embarrassing to tell about a waterbuck picking up a VW with its horns!

Soon after that incident the blue waters of Lake Edward appeared on our right. The Kazinga Channel joined it to the smaller Lake George, which was about 60cm higher than Lake Edward. The vegetation reminded us of the Mediterranean, except for a hippo that was grazing next to the road. I got out of the car to take a picture against the sunset, looking for a good position, but the hippo did not wait and rushed away into the nearby water. At the end of Kazinga Channel was Mweya, a triangular peninsula that we had to climb to reach the Mweya Lodge.

At first we were disappointed with the ongoing construction works around the lodge but the receptionist appeased us by showing us to our room. From there we had an astounding view of the Kazinga Channel and Edward Lake's broad waters beyond. That lifted our spirits and we fully enjoyed tea time. After that we went to stretch our legs and walked along the peninsula outskirts.



The Mweya Lodge as seen from the Kazinga Channel that joins Lake George with Lake Edward.

The lodge had a few old houses but there were three new ones built close to and above the channel itself. There was the Park Management H.Q. building with workshops and staff houses, as well as several private dwellings for the sponsors of the Nuffield Research Station. Walking nearby, we noticed a large heap of bones from various species - complete skeletons or only skulls. On some bones worms were still at "work" and it smelled unpleasantly of dry fish or formaldehyde.

We had had enough excitement and trouble for the day so we returned to the room to get ready for dinner. I checked the shock absorbers fitting before dark. On the right side the two screws had fallen out; on the left side the screws still held except for a crack that appeared along one of screw head. This was not serious damage but it was no wonder that I had felt even the smallest bumps on the road through the steering wheel.

The next morning the sun rose over the Kazinga Channel in an absolutely clear blue sky. After breakfast we decided to roam the eastern side of the park, and after descending the Mweya hillside, we got to the ferry that would take us across the channel. I have never seen anything like that ferry. Two pontoons carried a platform that had been salvaged from the military. Attached to one end was a small platform on which sat a tractor with an engine, gear switchbox, and differential box. The two rear big wheels were missing and instead, two paddle-wheels were mounted to the rear axle. The tractor engine was good enough to drive this water vehicle forward or back, or to pull itself free if stranded. It took about 20 minutes to get across the 500m wide channel.

A few pelicans stoically watched us land and did not move as we drove onto a sandy track with too many ruts. Climbing a small knoll, we saw a brown puddle in which dozens of hippos were buried in mud so that their backs almost filled the surface. Just for a brief moment an open upper jaw broke out of the muddy surface. I turned onto a track leading towards Casing village, but after passing I had to slow down to almost a crawl from knot to knot avoiding gap after gap etc. Fishermen greeted us and apologized, blaming the start of the rainy season for the bad state of the track.

We continued after Ljiljana and Vesna had admired the goats, in particular the many varying markings. There were several twins, and I liked a pair of twins of which one had black spots on white hair and the other had just the opposite: white spots on black hair. Rather funny!

The path improved a bit along the lakeshore. We passed a few buffalo (smaller in size than the Kenyan ones) and elephants, and then we came upon the main road to Katunguru - inshallah that we would travel in two days.



**The ferryboat driving wheels turn at full power to cross the Kazinga Channel.
The Mweya Lodge could be seen on left picture on top of the hill.**

We returned some distance with the idea of visiting Lakes Nyamusingire and Kasandura under the slopes of a mountain chain (over 1.550m), following the road to Mbararu. In the forests lived chimpanzees and with luck we might see them. At a junction near Mukolobezi I turned right onto a path that seemed dry yet hardly used, judging from the growth on it. I decided to go on although the car passed safely through a puddle. This proved to be a grave mistake! Along the way we saw quite a lot of elephants, buffalos, kobs, and waterbucks on both sides. The forest not too far in front of us drew me like a magnet so I drove on, despite Vesna's protests. It was my big mistake not to have checked that track on a map as it was a Rutanda river bed that was mostly dry but turned into a flood when strong rains hit the area.

I saw the "lake" - actually a marsh - when the car drove into the next puddle and the rear wheels sank into the deep mud. The front wheels were on a dry surface but the rear ones dropped into a hole that instantly filled up with water. It was nearly 11 o'clock and the accident happened some 8km from the road plus some 24km more to the lodge.

We got out of the car into stifling heat, and several large elephants and buffalo watched us. I had to drain water out of that hole or we were stuck. Fortunately, I had a short shovel packed so I got it and started digging a drainage channel. Ljiljana and Vesna went to collect some dry branches, and Ljiljana's panga (machete) proved useful too.



**We were definitely stuck in the deep muck somewhere of nowhere.
These were our worse moments of despair on the safari up to now.**

Frantically I dug the first channel, but that one did not work as it was not at a lower level. Then I made a small dam around the higher side and dug another channel and a deep pit farther off that filled with water. I was getting tired digging and my hands hurt but I had to go on. Gradually the draining effect made me optimistic as we stuck the collected branches under the tires. I thought it was worth trying and Ljiljana started the engine. I pushed and lifted the car as much I could, but to no avail. The car moved, but sank into another hole – fortunately shallower. Push and try to lift the car, but it did not move again. I was splattered with mud from head to foot. I had to get the bloody car out the muck somehow! I started digging another drain that had worked fine before and I decided to take out the jack.

First I set the jack on a board on the left side of the car. My good girls got branches from the other hole and put them under the tire again. Then I had to dig out the board as it sank under the car's weight before I carried out the same procedure on the opposite side. Finally both rear wheels sat firmly on the branches. We decided that this was to be the final trial, and if we should not succeed, then we must get some help. Ljiljana offered to walk back to the ferry, despite the wild animals around and with no other human soul miles nearby. Both my hands were covered with blisters, five of which were open wounds. To save drinking water I washed my hands and washed the used gear in muddy water instead. Midday had passed already and some ominous clouds had started gathering in the sky.

It was an extreme situation and everybody prayed to our guardian angels to help us get out from there. We must get out of there at any price. For the third and final time, Ljiljana started the engine while Vesna and I pushed the car with all our strength. And then the car started moving slowly but steadily out of the mud. It had worked at last! Ljiljana stopped the car at a safe dry place we packed all our gear into the car.

It was nearly 14h o'clock when I started the engine and Ljiljana walked off, showing the way. I drove backwards a short distance to where it was safe to turn the car. With my hands bandaged with handkerchiefs, we slowly returned to the main road. Something went wrong with the front axle, and the horn blew every time we hit a bump. There were elephants and buffalo every where, and I wondered what they thought about strangers muddling around on their grounds. I had to turn off the horn as I had been told by the manager of VW back in Kampala. Was this an awful omen?



Vesna observes my disembarking after crossing the Kazinga Channel at left. At right we boarded the ferryboat after our successful “emerge” from the mud trap.

Certainly our return to the ferryboat was not reputable at all, including the fact that we would miss lunch. There we met an English woman scientist working at the Makerere University in Kampala. She told me that the area where we had been stuck in mud should be visited by four-wheel drive vehicles only. The rangers agreed, nodding their heads. They had been looking at me as if I were a ghost. From head to foot I was covered with mud. Only the white of teeth and eyes proved that I was human and not a monster that had had a mud bath.

Back at the lodge, Ljiljana went to ask the manager if we could get some food, explaining the reason for our delay. Compassionately the manager told a waiter to get a meal for us. He told me that I had not written in the book the place of our intended safari. Well, it was too late now! But I told him that in Kenya and Tanganyika, roads that needed 4-wheel drives must have a warning notice. That was the end of this most unfortunate trip that had ended happily, despite some serious setbacks.

Hurriedly I washed my face and hands and went to devour the meal and to drink a lot of mineral water. After lunch Ljiljana worked rather hard for some two hours to wash the car outside and inside. In the meantime Vesna took a bath and disappeared in her bed sleeping two long hours. The servant took our shoes to wash them. We got them back when Ljiljana finished that hard job. I needed a real scrubbing too but the black cotton soil remained under my nails for some two weeks. Later I went to the tea room and waited for Ljiljana after she had a shower too. My hands hurt a lot from the blisters I got digging the car out, but Vaseline ointment helped a lot.



The unexpected “visitor” was a tame warthog boar “Piggy” that liked Ljiljana’s tidbits.

We were relaxing on the verandah when a warthog paraded along in front of the guests. Ljiljana found some crackers which she offered to the boar, while stroking his back. It had been brought up by a woman with the research station and released into

the wild. But every evening the boar came back to the lodge, though it had a pack nearby. It was called "Piggy".

After dinner we talked with two couples who were visiting the Mweya Lodge, just as we were. The English couple were Uganda government officials working in education. With some interest they followed my story about teaching in the Sudan. The other couple was Belgian and the gentleman had been an army officer in the Congo but now had to move to Burundi. He did not know what his future would be as he had to wait for the outcome of the election in Burundi. After a while we said goodnight, and returning to our room where we instantly fell deeply asleep. We were just thankful we were sleeping in a bed and not stuck in the mud, waiting for help.

Next morning we decided to make a boat trip in the morning and I would go to the mechanical shop for the car's "surgery" in the afternoon. At 9 o'clock we embarked in a boat with another couple and two boys about Vesna's age. The boat took us to a cruise in the Kazinga Channel, which was rather shallow with almost no current. No wonder, as the water level difference between the two lakes was only about 60cm for that 43km long channel.

First the boat shoved upstream towards Lake George, following the left bank, and after some 8km ride, returned along the right bank. The fauna was similar to that encountered on the Nile with one exception - there were no crocodiles. Instead, we saw several mighty monitor lizards almost 2m long, whose mostly green scales blended into the nearby flora.



At left fishermen gather on the shore of Kazinga Channel and are tending their nets at right.

The hippos were the best attraction of this 500m-wide channel and hundreds of them wallowed in mud with just their backs showing. The hippos were timid and did not like our boat coming close to them. Some of them moved into the water, almost grazing the boat and spraying those sitting too close. I had to watch my cameras often and the show was getting boring. There was a rather young calf still with pink-coloured skin trudging behind its huge mother through the mud bank. It was about the size of a large domestic pig. There was one rather unpleasant encounter with a mighty hippo on our return. This beast suddenly came out in front of the bow of the boat. The hippo started relieving the content of its bowels, using its tail as a propeller to distribute the horribly stinking material just in front of us. The kids sitting at the bow shrieked and rushed back while the rest of us held our noses. There was a general uproar in the boat.

On the way back the boat toured around Mweya peninsula and sailed into Lake Edward, a large part of which is in the Congo Republic. On the way back we passed near the village of Kasinga, where fishermen were tenting their nets and sorting out the night's catch. We did not see any other animals along the Kazinga Channel close to the

village. The villagers were known as notorious poachers south of the channel region as it was not in the park's restricted area. However, we saw many birds as the region was a bird-watchers' paradise. I have to mention some of the birds Vesna noted in her record-book: pied-kingfisher, cormorant, darter, pelican, Goliath heron, marabou, egret, hammer kop, saddle-bill stork, hadida, secret ibis, and Egyptian goose, fish eagle, thicknee, jacana, stilt tern and gull. There were more on another page: white-baked vulture, kite, martial eagle, crested crane, augur buzzard, Guinea-fowl, pied and yellow wagtail, swallow; spur fowl, Bishop bird, coucal, bee-eater, eagle owl, oxpecker, weaver, nightjar, turaco, sunbird, fire finch, hornbill, mouse bird, bulbul, scrub-robin.

Rounding the peninsula, the boat approached a place called Katwe. It was close to the ruin of Fort George as well as Lake Katwe, from which salt was extracted. After about a three-hour trip we landed safely, and went straight to the restaurant to have lunch. After that I went to the workshop for the necessary "surgery" on the steering wheel. The German engineer of the VW service station in Kampala told me how to remove the direction ring from the steering wheel axle. The front axle had set down and by removing one of the rings I believed that the horn would not sound. Yet when I switched on the horn it made such a noise that I had to switch it off at once. Obviously there was a short circuit on the horn ring, probably from the friction of the removed ring. Thus I would have to continue driving my car without the horn and the direction marker. What would happen next, I wondered, gravely concerned about the forthcoming long trip back to Kampala. We decided to make a short trip to check the driving of our damaged car.



Two of several roadside stops at western Uganda hill country that we made at regular intervals.

We drove north into the crater region where the state of the road was just short of impossible. Also rain was imminent so we crept from rock to rock or over a gully at a snail speed. The countryside view was amazing, and everything was green, despite soil of volcanic origin. Our path went mostly along the craters' rims, where we saw some herds of kob, kongoni and buffalo. The first drops of rain fell so I opted to return, as I was not able to drive with my bandaged hands the way I had done the day before. The volcanic dust could be even worse than the wet black cotton soil. I have to mention some of the fantastic names of the volcanos: Nyaruzigati, Rwengaga, Kanyamiomba, Kyamatumu, Rwemisundu, etc. The crater lakes' names sound the same: Mahiga, Kitagata, Murumuli, Nyamunuka, Busing, etc. The rain stopped as we reached the park entrance and a beautiful sunset was the last gift of the day for us.

The last view towards the crater region was really dramatic and inviting at the same time. Green slopes and black crater chasms lit by the setting sun gave an impression of tranquility and splendour nearby. As the last we tried the Royal circuit, where we found many buffalo, bushbucks, and topi antelopes, with several calves born not long ago. Not far away we came across a group of hyenas, which we approached to within a short distance, taking dozens of pictures. Later we found that all these pictures had

been spoiled by "waves". The film emulsion had melted in the camera, which obviously had been left in a hot place, probably the day before in the mud trap.

Soon after breakfast we left Mweya to cross Kazinga channel on that strange ferryboat. We took the main road from Katunguru to Ishasha (at the border between Uganda and Congo). From the steppe with plenty of buffalo and baboons, we came to a forested region after crossing the Yammer River. In Maramagambo Forest lived chimpanzees and at a crossing of Rweponu River I believed I saw some of them. Yet the monkeys turned to be the Colobus monkeys, quite different from the ones we knew from the coast in Mombasa. These beautiful monkeys were very shy so there was no chance to take pictures of them, despite seeing plenty of them on both sides. The countryside changed to the steppe after crossing the bridge over the Rweponu River and the road, which had been graded and gravelled, was better.

Driving cautiously at 40km/h, we reached the Ishasha entrance of the Queen Elisabeth National Park, which stretched along the east bank of Lake Edward, around midday. Unfortunately the ranger, George, had left on his bike to have lunch at the camp. There was no hurry so we crawled along a path between several herds of hundreds topi (with black markings) and kob antelopes, as well as buffalo. We passed near a mud pond whose surface consisted of dark brown rounded of "waves". Then suddenly a huge mouth opened and we heard the well-known sound "Ho-ho-hooh-hoooo..." Can you imagine hundreds of hippo bodies buried in mud, one against the other? Incredible - there was no free pond surface to be seen. These scenes occurred a few times more but we had to get to the camp to find George.



Another two roadside stops somewhere as we drove through western Uganda. Zvonko has still his left hand fully bandaged at right picture.

We got to the camp and a mighty man appeared to be the Ranger George. I worried about my car, whether the front axle could take another load of say 100kg. Fortunately, a VW-Carman arrived, driven by a single person with no safari equipment, but he knew George well. We followed the Carman with George looking for lions dwelling in trees. The cruising continued for some time on unmarked paths until we came to place where three lionesses lay in the shade of a mighty tree. Some 6m above lay a lioness on a branch, with her legs hanging down. We took pictures, but they suffered the same fate as the earlier ones.

We drove on, passing hundreds of topi antelopes, many about to give birth and some still with wet calves. We continued to look for a lion in a tree but without success. Ljiljana served us dry snacks and drinks while I drove behind the Carman at a safe distance. Our convoy stirred up a huge herd of buffalo, starting a mighty stampede which stopped as suddenly as it had started. The herd did not move from the place there were grazing.

After two hours it was time to say goodbye to the last of the Ugandan National Parks that we had visited on the long safari in 1966. We left the Ishasha region still with its abundance of animals. Was it just a matter of time that this growth would last?



We reached the shore of Lake Edward after a long drive through two Provinces.

We were back on track looking for the main road to Kabale. At the right moment Ljiljana spotted an overturned board with a sign "KABALE". I turned onto a road with plenty of vertical and horizontal curves leading through the Kigezi district. The people greeted us with friendly waves. They look more sturdy and well dressed, living in this mountainous region. As we climbed slowly, the rare settlements vanished completely as we left the steppe. The narrow road climbed first through thick shrub, to leaf forest, to pine forest.



These were our last pictures of Lake Edward and the countryside beyond it.

We met children coming out of school as we drove through small places like Kilifi, Bulimia, and Karma. The houses had gardens and there were a few plantations of tea. We almost missed the right turn at Kanungu and had to return to the correct direction of Kabale. Now the road turned into a real mountainous narrow track of 3m width with tight curves. I had put on the lights as there was no horn to warn any oncoming vehicles. I had to drive mostly in first gear along this stretch of path through the rain forest like a tunnel. The steep road stopped abruptly after what seemed to me like an eternity. It had been a very long climb for the vehicle as well as for the driver.

The Mafuga forest we went through was the watershed in Uganda South. We emerged out of it and stopped at a lookout on the pass overlooking the valley. On the slopes were planted huge plots of pine forest interspersed by strips of eucalyptus trees for the prevention of spreading fire. We reached this pass just at the right time as a long convoy of heavy trucks loaded with tree trunks was climbing towards us. After these monstrous vehicles left we continued our descent, thanking our guardian angels that we had not met them on that narrow road.

The descending road was in better shape because of its use by the forestry trucks. Ljiljana asked me to stop to ask why a well-dressed man waved to us in such a friendly way. It turned out that he just wanted to greet us while he waited in a long queue at the forestry wage department. We continued descending to the picturesque valley and came to a junction at last. The right road lead towards Kiroro and Rutshuru in the Congo and the left one went straight to Kabale.



We drove along a stretch of tarmac road through forested region of western Uganda.

I was disturbed because the car drifted strangely in the curves. My anxiety increased with every curve we reached on this never-ending trip. As we were leaving the last forest, a small group of Grivet monkeys ran across the road. The Grivet is an Old World monkey with long white tufts of hair along the sides of its face with black facial skin, hands, and feet, and a white line above the eyes. Vesna told us that, reading from her omni-knowledgeable book, and that the Grivets are rarely be seen.

The valley was originally a large swamp that had drained, becoming perfect agricultural land. The main road to Kabale was in a bad state, so I drove at 30km/h as we approached this city. Kabale was the capital of a former Uganda kingdom and was now the D.C. seat. We got a nice room in the White Horse Inn, and after settling in, we decided to stroll through the downtown. The main street meandered in the valley with shops and offices, whereas the residential areas spread over several surrounding hills. There was a golf course that reminded us of the one at Molo, with many ups and downs that would be quite strenuous for any player. A perfect dinner satisfied our great hunger so we went to bed to have a well-deserved long sleep. As the night was very cold we had to put on everything available and huddled together to keep warm. Tiredness took over at last.

The brilliant morning sun woke us, and after breakfast we descended to the town. We were too early for any shopping and after I got gas, we decided to scrap the visit to Kisoro. Allegedly one could see from there five active volcanoes, but I did not want to take any risks because of the car's deficiencies. Instead we went to Lake Bunyonyi, only 10km away yet with an extremely sharp climb to a pass at +2.745m. Then there was a short descent to the lake at +2.165m, so I had use first gear again. Several row boats were available on the lake but the whole situation seemed too mystifying. The lake was of glacier origin with several small islands of conical shape, obviously the remnants of volcanic activity. No way to get Ljiljana or Vesna onto such a lake!

The return was a grand effort for the driver and the engine, climbing in first gear uphill, and in 2nd cum both brakes active again. The rest of the day we spent at leisure in the hotel or wandering on the golf course. Ljiljana and Vesna went window-shopping, looking for some native artifacts. We enjoyed the last evening thoroughly because in the morning we would start our return journey, which would include an essential stop at the VW service station in Kampala. The state of our car had me concerned, and I wondered if we would reach Kampala and Mombasa safely.



The Lake Bunyonyi was the last place we visited prior to the return drive to Kampala.

On September 2nd we started the return home. We made an early start to make sure that we reached Kampala around 14h to be on time at the service station. The first 90km of the road had been badly maintained and driving without a horn and a direction indicator was not a pleasure. I drove at 35km/h despite the road layout being a perfect design by Germans and Italians, leading through an interesting countryside. Soon after Bukinda and Lwentobo, we came to a wide tarmac road constructed by an Italian company. From Ntungamo I sped up to 60km/h, leaving behind the last mountain vista. The rain stopped as we descended the escarpment on a murrum road into a valley where a large herd of Ankole or Watusi cattle grazed. The Ankole has very large, distinctive horns, which can grow up to 1.8m long. We had no time to take pictures close up as I was in too much of a hurry.

Around 11h. we came to Mbarara in Ankole Province, a larger city with the D. C. residence, army camps, and the police central station cum prison, a bulky hospital, and a large secondary school building. The town was orderly and had several parks with green spots all around. Ljiljana went to the market and got a strange-looking vase cut from an "Omutsiko" tree root for Sh16. It was a bit expensive for a hollowed out root yet a bargain for its form.

Pressed for time, I drove fast, passing by Lyantonde to Masaka at 140km. At Masaka I had to stop for petrol, and my spirits improved a bit noticing the vicinity of Lake Victoria. Masaka was a larger township having a military camp, a large police station, and many Indian shop keepers along the main road. I did not want to spend any time sightseeing and drove on to Kampala as fast as possible. The road was wide tarmac leading alongside the wetlands, with reed and bamboo on one side and coffee plantations on the hillside on the other side.

Ljiljana served us a cold meal with drinks, using whatever she found in the iron rations we carried through the whole safari. Then my good girls started playing some memory games that I could not attend to at all. My whole attention was on driving and getting over the 135km to Kampala as fast as possible. I had no problems driving on straight stretches but the slightest curve affected the steering. I felt a kind of wobbling as the car gave away as I did not get the normal resistance from the tires on the steering wheel. One of the shock absorbers did not function either. The strong smell of coffee bushes in bloom made me long for a coffee break. I made a brief stop at Nabusanke, not for coffee but for another picture at the equator crossing with a proper board. This had become a standard procedure at any equator crossing.

The car got more unstable as we drove, but at 14:15 we reached Kampala suburb roundabout. I slowed down to 50km/h and entered the VW service station at 14:40. I had made that nerve racking 435km in six hours and 10 minutes exactly. The German engineer came out of his office, and the car was lifted onto a ramp for inspection after 15 minutes that seemed to me like infinity. Both of us moved to look at the front axle fixing plate to the chassis. The two rectangular plates were held tight together by four bolts fixing the front axle to the chassis. The inspection revealed that somebody had tried inexpertly to weld the two plates together. The engineer told me that whoever had done it was an absolute idiot as the welding of this high steel quality plates could be done only by an expert. On one side, two bolts had lost their nuts and a mechanic just pulled them out. My heart sank as the third bolt fell out too. Then the mechanic tried to tighten the last of four bolts but could not do it as the shaft cut just came out. I felt sick! I needed air! I went out instantly almost fainting.

The German engineer led me outside, saying: "Mein Got! Sie haben es noch gerade geschafft!" (My God! You have JUST made it!) I got a headache and sat for a while outside, sipping something (I do not remember what!) until my mind cleared enough. It realized that we had been driving for many miles on the grace of the Almighty ... not on the four holding bolts.

The mechanics fixed the two plates in their proper position and the four new bolts were properly tightened. The two new arm-holds for the front axle ordered from Europe were fixed afterwards. These arm-holds were new parts introduced on recent model of VW cars, not on the 1961 model like my car. The front axle was much better fastened to the chassis and the four bolts were less strained. The car came off the ramp at 4:00 and I thanked the German and tipped the mechanics. It was time to proceed safely to Mombasa at last.

We made a short visit to our friends in Kampala, and after tea we left for Jinja, our next stop. It was almost 7:00 when we arrived there and went to the modern hotel "Crested Crane". I had a hot bath and a few "shenzies" (shandy: half beer, half lemonade), which relieved my dehydration and allowed me to relax after our near disasters on the road.

On Saturday we got up later than usual and left after 9:00. First we drove to the Owen Falls Dam to view the might hydroelectric-power station at the Nile outlet from the Victoria Lake. We toured Jinja Main Street and looked for some native art products. The city was well kept and clean and had a nice residential area which reminded us of the colonial times. Jinja was an important industrial town with large steel works and railway workshops as well as tea and sugar-cane manufacture plants. It was a sunny day so we drove on happily and fast to Tororo and crossed the border to Kenya around 11:30.

The custom officer told me to watch the road which was in a very bad state in Western Bungoma or Nyanza as it rained after 16:00 almost every day. I drove as fast as

possible but Ljiljana insisted on stopping to take pictures of some boys standing at the road side. They wore white paint all over their bodies, exposing their genitals to view. The boys had passed the circumcising ceremony and tried to collect money from passers-by. I stopped and Ljiljana got her pictures but after that we did not talk to each other for some time.

The state of the road worsened significantly so I slowed down, trying to avoid ruts and washouts, etc. Now and then I heard a strange squeaking, chafing or rubbing noise of steel on steel. What the hell was it now! I had to stop and inspect the front axle again as the noise came from there whenever the car hit bumps. By Jove, the new bolts were put in the wrong way to the plate so their ends rubbed against the rod connecting the two wheels. Well, there was nothing I could do now but get to Eldoret as fast as possible to find a workshop open on Saturday. Then it started raining and I drove on, cursing the idiotic fate of my car.

I will never forget the despair I felt when I heard that screeching noise, and the hope of finding a garage on a Saturday afternoon. Expecting a catastrophe at any time, I finally reached Eldoret at 14:20. Luckily we found a skillful mechanic at the AGIP petrol station who hoisted the car to reach the four bolts. It took him some time to turn them the right way and to fasten them tight. The steering rod had been slightly abraded but there was no danger in continuing the drive to Mombasa, he said.

I started the drive singing aloud with happiness, hurrying eastwards to our next and hopefully last stop before getting home. Ljiljana got out bread and other goodies and started feeding me with bits of sandwiches. I drove about 100km/h as long the road allowed it. We came to the equator, climbed the Mau Mountain (+2.535m), and enjoyed the alley of mimosa trees in full bloom.



At one of the last roadside stop Ljiljana and Vesna had to check offered items prior to bargain for.

Ljiljana reminded me that we had promised to buy the Molo cheese (that pleases!), so I turned at the right junction to the farm. The owner was pleased with our interest in his cheese products and lead Ljiljana around his farm, explaining everything in detail. Vesna disappeared with the owner's daughter of about the same age and they went looking for the horses. I was left alone, getting more nervous with every passing minute. We had still some 215km to Nairobi that I intended to reach before darkness. Finally we left the farm at 16:30 with quite a quantity of well-packed cheeses, and reached the main road soon after.

We passed through Nakuru without stopping and a downpour got us at Elmenteita Lake short of Gilgil. I had to slow down and drove extremely cautiously until the downpour stopped. The sun came out low in the west below dark clouds. We started climbing the escarpment after we rushed through Naivasha. It was getting dark and I happily queued behind a Jeep that had better lights, showing me where the road went. I was tired and the night driving turned into a nightmare. I followed that Jeep for many miles at almost 80km/h until we reached the suburbs of Nairobi. I turned off at a junction, not knowing where we were, but Ljiljana soon realized that we were in the Ngongong area. Under her vigilant instruction we got to the Fairview Hotel at 7:10 after all. I cannot remember driving that last hour in total darkness. I drove our car for a total of 10 hours on that day - it was my longest drive on that safari.

My nerves calmed down after a long hot bath and a perfect dinner. I slept that night like a log and nothing could wake me for sure.

I agreed that Ljiljana could go shopping on Sunday, being happy with the state of my car. We would meet at 10:00, but there was a misunderstanding regarding the place, so I found them at last around 11:00. Ljiljana and Vesna were nervously waiting for me at the place I had left them before. As a dispute would erupt for sure, I decided just to drive out of Nairobi instantly. There was no time for arguing as we were on our way home.

Soon after the Athi River we came upon the dusty murrum section of old road leading through Sultan Hamud and Emali. The new road was under construction and nobody cared for the old one, so clouds of red dust engulfed anyone behind another vehicle. It was best to stop or slow down for a while, getting a clear view until the next "cloud". The most difficult were the curves at Kiboko and Kibwezi as bypassing the Chyului Hills. Around 3:30 we reached the tarmac at last and drove as fast as possible through Mtito Andei. I had to drive at a lower speed the 3km-long murrum section before we got to Voi on tarmac again.



We were rather happy to be back to the Bamburi Beach at last!

The sun blazed on my side and it became generally hotter with every mile as we got close to Mombasa. At last, on passing Mariakani, we saw in the east the wide ocean lit

by the late afternoon sun. Around 17h I drove slowly through Mombasa center and got to the factory gate at 17:25 to pick up the post. We reached our home at Bamburi Beach and saw the blue sea at 17:50. Eureka! Everybody expected us there, including Knocker, our dog. We had made it home, safe and sound!

* * * End of Part 2 of 2: Uganda * * *