Kenya
Past and Present

Issue 37

Kenya Past and Present

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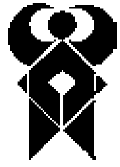
FRONT COVER
The entrance to the refurbished and newly-reopened Nairobi Museum.
Photo by Bernice Macharia.



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KENYA MUSEUM SOCIETY

The Kenya Museum Society is a non-profit-making organisation dedicated to assisting the National Museums of Kenya. You are invited to join the Society and receive a subscription to *Kenya Past and Present*. Privileges to members include free entrance to all museums, regional museums, prehistoric sites and monuments under the jurisdiction of the National Museums of Kenya.

In addition, local members receive a monthly newsletter about Society activities: lectures, slide-shows, films, birdwalks, nature hikes, weekend field trips and visits to places of interest. The Society runs the bookshops at the Nairobi Museum, the Nairobi Gallery in central Nairobi, and the Karen Blixen Museum. One major event organised by KMS for its members and the public is the annual Know Kenya Course, an informal learning programme popular with expatriates, longtime residents and those involved in the travel and tourism industry.

NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF KENYA

Fort Jesus Museum	Box 82412, Mombasa 80100
Institute of Primate Research	Box 24481, Nairobi 00502
Kabarnet Museum	Box 419, Kabarnet 30400
Kapenguria Museum	Box 283, Kapenguria 30600
Karen Blixen Museum	Box 40658, Nairobi 00100
Kisumu Museum	Box 1779, Kisumu 40100
Kitale Museum	Box 1219, Kitale 30200
Lamu Museum & Lamu Fort	Box 48, Lamu 80500
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Sites and monuments:

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Rusinga Island	Box 41, Mbita 40305
Gede	Box 5067, Malindi 80200
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Fort Tenan	Box 159, Koru 40104
Kenyatta House	Box 41, Maralal 20600
Songhor	Box 143, Songhor 40110
Olorgesailie	Magadi 00205
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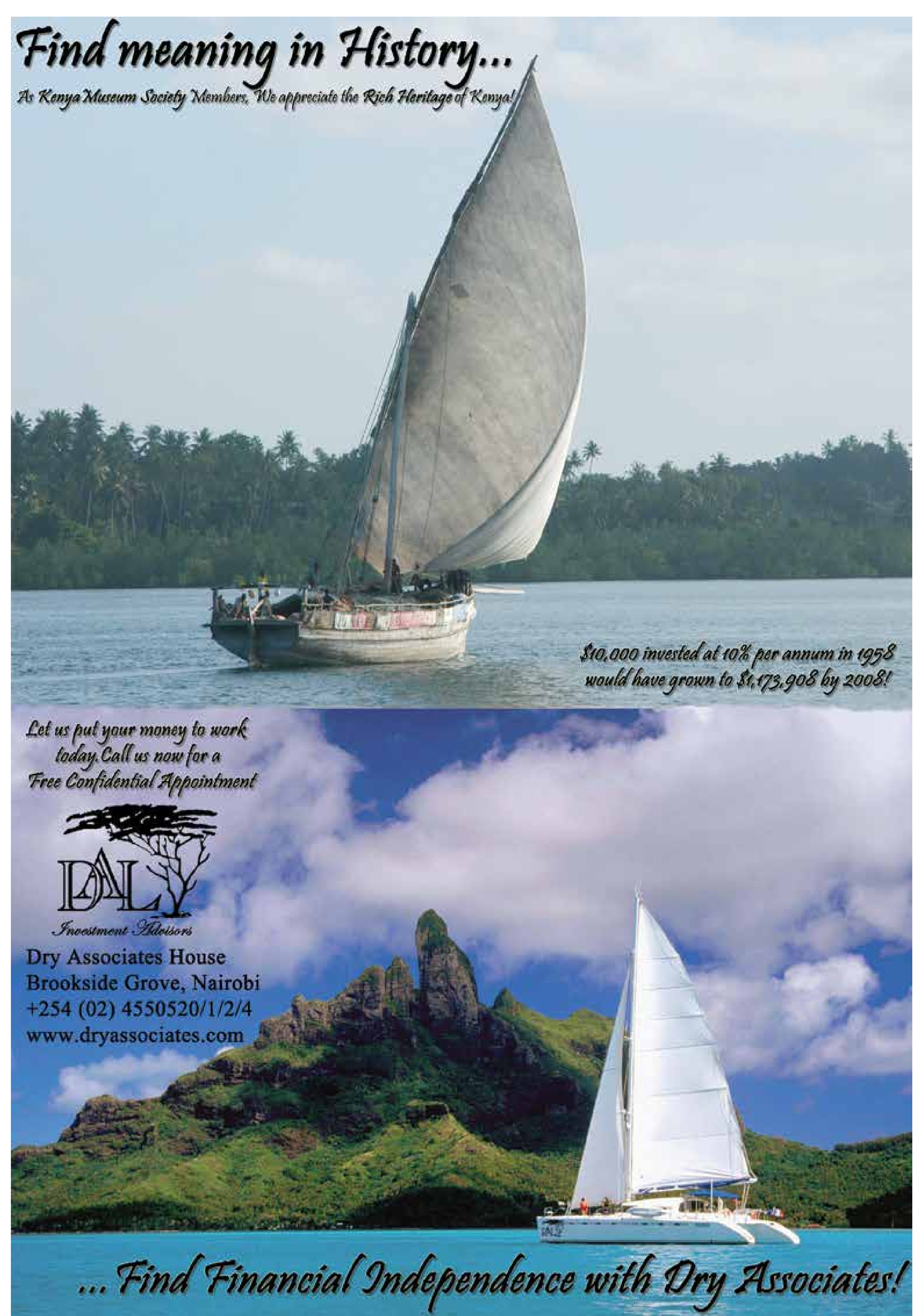
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KMS report 2007–2008

KMS Chairperson
Joanna McWilliam

The past year has presented many opportunities as well as challenges for the Kenya Museum Society.

After a lengthy period of renovation, the Museum reopened its doors to the general public in March of this year. This was followed by the official opening of the new Nairobi Museum by His Excellency President Mwai Kibaki on 14 July 2008. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. Every day visitors flock through the doors to experience this new space and to explore the different galleries.

KMS Nairobi bookshop

As part of the new Nairobi Museum, the Kenya Museum Society established a new KMS bookshop at the entrance to the Museum. The Society spent ten months planning, designing and constructing the interior space, which we feel adds to the beauty of the Museum. Many thanks to KMS member Georgina Ludwick, a professional interior designer who contributed her considerable talents and expertise without charge. This construction represents a major investment for the Society, one that we know will provide a significant return over the years.

The shop is spacious and inviting with lovely wooden shelves, barkcloth display areas, jewellery cabinets, and a children's seating and activity area. Its location is easily accessible to visitors. Our merchandise includes a wide selection of books chosen with different interests and age groups in mind. In addition jewellery, paintings, soapstone, clothing items, ethnic art, children's books and games, tshirts, handbags, and many other items are offered for sale. We feel certain that this bookshop will increase our revenues and enable us to provide more funding support to the National Museums of Kenya.

Income from the Karen Blixen Bookshop declined substantially in the

Photo above: The new expanded KMS bookshop occupies a prime position at the entrance to the Nairobi Museum.

Following the reopening of the Nairobi Museum, KMS has been allocated a new and expanded office, with more space for meetings and member activities.

first half of 2008 as a result of the drop in tourism in Kenya. However, as things return to normal, we expect the situation to improve.

New expanded KMS office

Following the reopening of the Nairobi Museum, KMS has at last been able to move into its long-awaited new office space. Members will find the office via the new Museum side entrance on Kipande Road, located opposite the new Heritage Centre that houses the NMK administration.

Know Kenya Course 2007-08

Because of the closure of the Nairobi Museum, the previous Know Kenya Course coordinators had earlier decided to postpone the 2007 course to March 2008.

However, due to the post-election disturbances, the Society deemed it advisable to further postpone KKC to later in the year. The course has been rescheduled and will be held 27 October – 1 November. We are grateful to Safaricom for their many years of sponsorship.

Among the eminent speakers who have agreed to share their time and knowledge with us are Sunny Bindra, Gado, Bryan Harris, Tove Hussein, Dr Meave Leakey, Dr Cynthia Moss, Hon. Njoke Ndung'u, John Sibi Okumu, Nigel Pavitt, Paul Tergat and other sports stars, Munir Virani, Muthoni Wanyeke and Rupert Watson. We look forward to increased participation as a result of the Museum reopening.

Grants awards

In 2007, the KMS Council agreed to focus our grant monies on the renovation of the Louis Leakey Auditorium. The auditorium was constructed in 1977 to provide a public space for the many educational events at the National Museums of Kenya. During the last three decades, the Auditorium has served as the NMK venue for meetings, lectures and international conferences. However, it is clear that the auditorium no longer serves as the prestigious Nairobi venue it should be. The European Union, having funded the renovation of the main Nairobi Museum, did not provide funds for the rehabilitation of the auditorium. Kenya Museum Society decided to make the Louis Leakey Auditorium the major fundraising goal for 2007-2008 and all the proceeds from the KMS bookshops and other KMS-sponsored activities will be spent to accomplish this task. In August 2007, KMS produced a full assessment of the necessary upgrades to the auditorium, including interior and exterior redesigns

Photos on these two pages are from some of the many adventurous safaris through scenically-diverse parts of Kenya enjoyed by KMS members over the past year. Above left to right: Samburu and Masai Mara. Oposite page: Lake Magadi

and technical refurbishment. The report determined that KSh 13 million would be needed to complete the renovation so the auditorium can begin to generate revenue and monetize Kenya's historical and cultural heritage. As a result the Louis Leakey Auditorium Capital Campaign was inaugurated and we have been aggressively seeking partners including corporations, media houses, business leaders and international organisations to participate in this endeavour.

Weekend outings

Under the direction of Narinder Heyer, our members have enjoyed extraordinary weekend safaris over the last year. The safaris are increasingly popular as they offer reasonably-priced trips to fascinating places in the company of other travel enthusiasts.

The Samburu Game Lodge on the bank of the Uaso Nyiro River was a comfortable base from which to explore the beauty of the scenery and diversity of wildlife of the Samburu National Reserve.

Riverside Camp on the Talek River in the Masai Mara, owned and run exclusively by the Maasai people, was the site of a fun-filled and informative weekend.

The KMS visit to the Cherangani West Pokot area provided a fabulous trip through rolling dales, steep escarpments and the beautiful Kerio Valley, as well as a visit to the scenic and controversial Turkwell Gorge Dam.

30 members stayed at the beautiful Shaba Sarova Lodge and enjoyed a three-night safari to Samburu/Shaba and Buffalo Springs. The group was enthusiastic, and great fun was had by all.

A Kilimanjaro safari included a drive through the Chyulu Hills, Loitokitok and

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Amboseli with stunning views of Mount Kilimanjaro.

A five-night safari was organised and members travelled through Garissa, Bura on the Tana, Hola and Garsen to reach the Tana River Delta. An eight-hour journey up the Tana River by boat was the highlight of the trip with huge hippo pods and a myriad of bird species to delight the visitors.

A visit to the newly-established luxury tented camp, Man Eaters Lodge, situated on the Tsavo River a short distance from the Tsavo East railway station, provided a trip through the past for historical enthusiasts who revelled in the story of the hair-raising adventures involved in the building of the railway bridge.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many KMS volunteers who provide service and skills to assist the Society in our different activities.

The Society would like to thank the administration of the National Museums of Kenya, in particular the Director-General of NMK, Dr Idle Farah, Connie Maina, Director of Development and Corporate Affairs, who serves as the NMK representative on the KMS Council, and Simon Gatheru, the Principal Curator of the Nairobi Museum, for their support and encouragement towards our fundraising activities.

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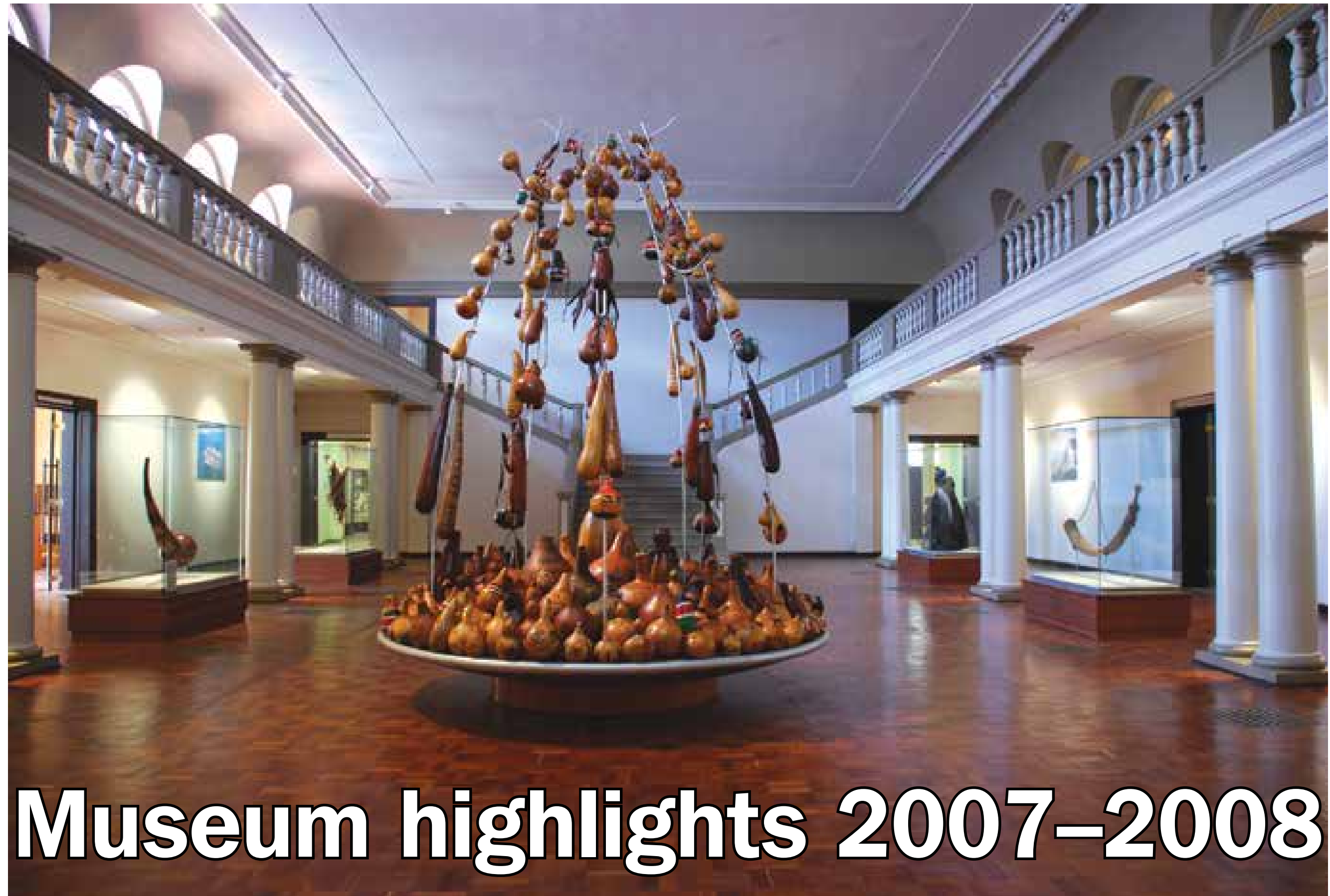


Museum highlights 2007–2008

Linda Mboya
National Museums of Kenya

This year marks an extraordinary milestone for the National Museums of Kenya (NMK) as the institution begins a historic transformation with the re-opening of the Nairobi Museum. As KMS members may recall, the Nairobi Museum shut its doors on 15 October 2005, launching a major expansion project supported by the European Union.

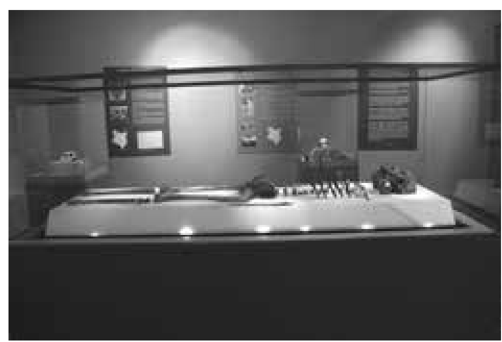
The end result was the "soft" opening on 31 March 2008 of a state-of-the-art facility with new exhibitions and larger exhibition galleries as well as a new visitor centre. Designed by Triad Architects, Nairobi, with a modern facade that cleverly echoes the columns and proportions of the original Corydon Building, the Museum also features an array of new visitor amenities, including restaurants and shops, that brings the Museum in line with similar institutions around the world.

On 14 July 2008 the President of Kenya, HE Mwai Kibaki, officially opened and toured the new-look Museum. He was accompanied by the Prime Minister Hon. Raila Odinga, the Vice-President Hon. Kalonzo Musyoka, the Minister of State for National Heritage and Culture Hon. William Ole Ntimama, the Head

Above: The refurbished entrance hall to the new-look Nairobi Museum.

Right: President Kibaki officially declares the Nairobi Museum open.

Extreme right: The new corporate identity for the National Museums of Kenya.



Top left: Dr Fredrick Manthi, Senior Research Scientist in the Palaeontology Section, Earth Sciences Department, conducts President Kibaki and other dignitaries around the new Human Origins Gallery.

Middle: Taking pride of place in the redesigned Human Origins Gallery is the original skeleton of the famous "Turkana Boy"

Bottom: An intricately-carved *siwa* ivory horn from Lamu.

of the EU, members of the Diplomatic Corps, and other dignitaries and guests.

The renovated Museum offers greatly enhanced flexibility for viewing, studying, and interacting with the collections while providing dynamic museum experiences for our visitors and establishing an innovative new model for object-based learning.

New corporate logo

Shortly before the official opening of the new-look Nairobi Museum, the Minister of State for National Heritage and Culture Hon. William ole Ntimama officially unveiled the new logo and slogan "Where heritage lives on" for the National Museums of Kenya.

The new corporate identity reflects the repositioning of the National Museums of Kenya as the country's dynamic heritage management institution. In an effort to portray a vibrant and enjoyable place for experiencing cultural heritage, the National Museums of Kenya undertook a re-branding exercise led by MCL Saatchi and Saatchi Consultants, to re-position itself and put more meaning into its identity.

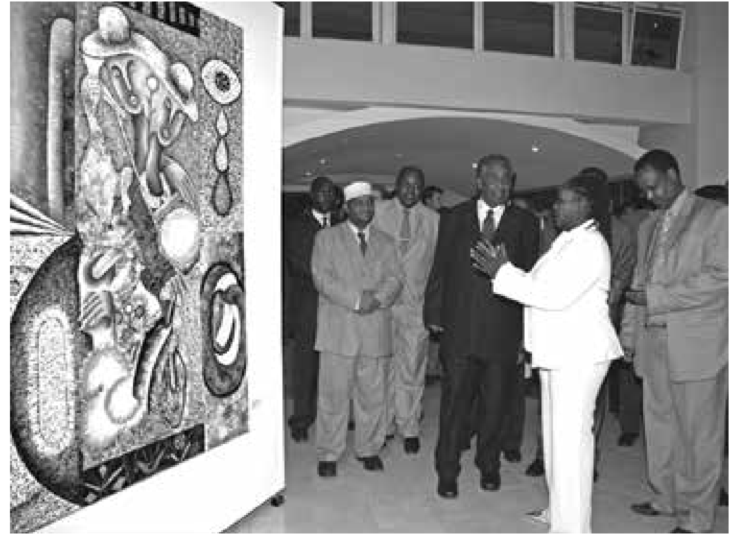
The new logo is a colourful and energetic representation of what NMK stands for. Its curves, circles, and warm colours express the continuous cycle of life in the rich natural and cultural heritage that can be experienced when one visits the Museum.

The new corporate identity is part of changes that have been taking place at the National Museums of Kenya since 2005.

The changes have included the enactment of the heritage bill 2006, organisational restructuring, infrastructure development and the development of public programmes.

Unbounded Extravaganza exhibition

To coincide with the Museum's relaunch, an art exhibition "Unbounded Extravaganza"



The "Unbounded Extravaganza" exhibition marked the opening of the Nairobi Museum's new Creativity Gallery.

The sacred kaya forests of the coastal Mijikenda people is now a World Heritage Site.

opened at the new Creativity Gallery, featuring artwork by Kenyan artists.

The National Museums of Kenya, through the former Gallery of Contemporary East African Art established in 1986, has enjoyed a friendly relationship with artists around the country. With a new expanded space, it is expected that the gallery will be a hive of activity, hosting solo shows and group exhibitions.

Nairobi Snake Park renovation

The Nairobi Snake Park at the National Museums of Kenya is temporarily closed. The park was closed on 16 June 2008 to pave the way for expansion and renovation. The project, which is funded by the Kenyan Government, will take six months and is expected to transform the facility into a modern reptile park. During the closure, a section of the park has been set aside for maintenance of the animals under the care of the reptile and fish experts.

More monuments added to NMK sites

Three more buildings have been declared National Monuments. One of the buildings is in Kikuyu, another in Karen and the third in Lamu. Other buildings that have been listed as monuments are the manse, PCEA Church of the Torch, and Watson Scott Memorial Church, all situated in Thogoto sub-location, Kinoo location, Kikuyu Division of Kiambu District. The cottage 150 Nandi Road, situated in Miotoni, Karen within Nairobi city was also gazetted as a monument. The area covering the Ras Kitau and mangroves skyline of Manda Island, situated within Lamu District, closes the list of the newly declared national monuments as published in the Kenya Gazette, notice No. 3499 of 11 April 2008.

The Mijikenda sacred kayas inscribed on the World Heritage List

UNESCO's World Heritage Committee, meeting for its 32nd session in Canada's eastern city of Quebec, has added 12 new world heritage sites covering a swathe of civilizations, from 10,000-year-old agriculture in Papua New Guinea to 20th-century social housing in Berlin.

Most important for the Kenyan heritage scene, the Committee approved and added to the UNESCO World Heritage List Kenya's Mijikenda kaya forests. The kaya forests of the Mijikendas consist of 11 separate forest sites spread over some 200 km along the coast containing the remains of numerous fortified villages, known as kayas, of the

The official opening of the new Loiyangalani Desert Museum on the shores of Lake Turkana.

Mijikenda people. The kayas, built during the 16th century and abandoned by the 1940s, are now regarded as the abodes of ancestors and revered as sacred sites; as such, they are maintained by councils of elders. The site is inscribed for bearing unique testimony to a cultural tradition, and for its direct link to a living tradition.

This is a great achievement for the National Museums of Kenya as the inscription expands traditional notions of what is categorised "of universal value" and affirms the interrelationship on the continent between religion, culture and the nurturing of the natural environment.

UNESCO's World Heritage List currently includes 851 properties of "outstanding universal value", comprising 661 cultural, 166 natural and 25 mixed properties in 141 countries.

NMK thanks the African representatives on the World Heritage Committee for their commitment, discipline and rigour in ensuring that the rich and diverse heritage of the continent is truly spoken for.

The inscription of these sites by the World Heritage Committee should pose a challenge to us in our pursuit of excellence in the management of our heritage resources on the continent. Let us begin by committing ourselves to a greater emphasis on researching, writing and generating new knowledge about ourselves.

Loiyangalani Desert Museum opened

The Loiyangalani Desert Museum was officially opened on 14 June 2008. The ceremony was presided over by Hon. William Ole Ntimama, Minister of State for Heritage and Culture. Ten Ambassadors including the project donors, represented by the Italian Ambassador, made the long journey to attend the opening of the Museum.

Located on the Eastern shore of Lake Turkana, Loiyangalani is a small but a popular market centre. The Museum is located halfway between Loiyangalani and El Molo and therefore accessible to communities living in both areas. It was established with the aim of making tourists aware of the rich heritage of the east Lake Turkana area and also to make the inhabitants of the area culturally conscious of their own heritage.

For the people living around Lake Turkana, the Loiyangalani Desert Museum is an opportunity to learn more about their own culture and environment.

NMK had first proposed to establish a desert museum to conserve and celebrate the cultures and lifestyles of communities living in the arid and semi-arid areas 15 years ago. A programme on conservation and community development in the Lake Turkana area, funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, offered an opportunity to realise this proposal by establishing the Loiyangalani Desert Museum.

This unique Desert Museum is beautifully situated on top of a hill overlooking the expansive Lake Turkana. The Museum focuses on the lives of eight communities living in the area and on the natural environment in this harsh part of the country.

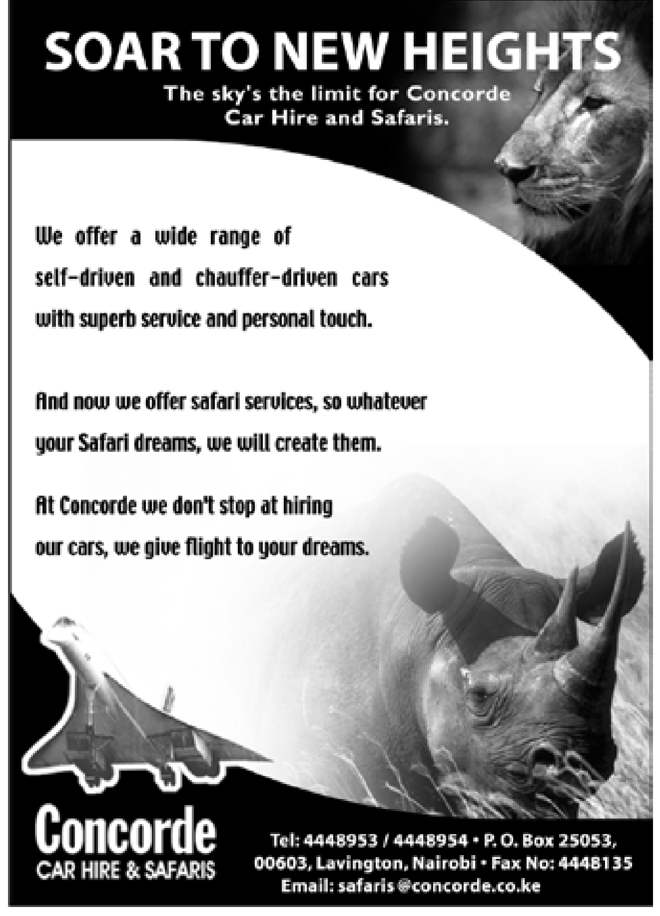
Through the Italian Embassy, construction work at the Loiyangalani Desert Museum began in February 2005 and was funded to a tune of KSh 11 million. The project included a gallery, an office, a store and a community hall. Work at the Desert Museum was completed one year later when it was handed over by the Italian Embassy to the National Museums of Kenya.

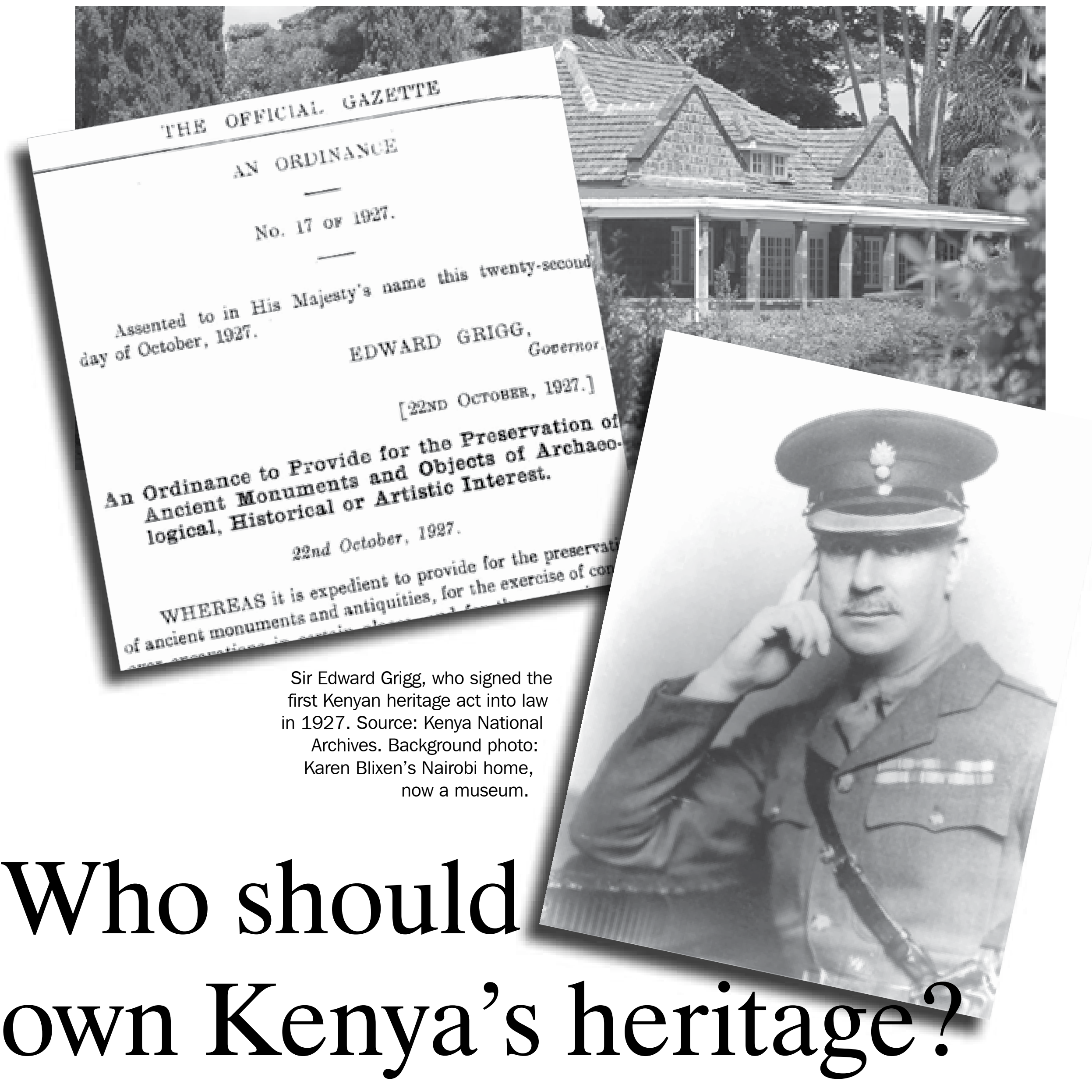
Exhibition development and audiovisual equipment for the Museum were realised through the joint efforts of NMK, Trust for African Rock Art and the German

Embassy. The US Embassy through its Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation also granted NMK US$ 26,471 to preserve heritage in the region, including interpretation of the Marti rock art site found in Loiyangalani. The Desert Museum is also working closely with the American and German Embassies to research rock art sites in the area.

Loiyangalani is the main centre for tourists on the eastern shore of Lake Turkana. The small town has an airstrip, post office, fishing station, two campsites and a luxury lodge, surrounded by the traditional homes of the Turkana people. Loiyangalani was founded in the 1960s at a freshwater spring and is the home of the El Molo people.

The NMK regional museum development programme seeks to establish museums in different regions of Kenya — museums that are meant to mirror the geographical areas where they are located, through their collections and exhibitions of the area's culture, history and archaeology.





THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE

AN ORDINANCE

No. 17 of 1927.

Assented to in His Majesty's name this twenty-second day of October, 1927.

EDWARD GRIGG, Governor

[22nd October, 1927.]

An Ordinance to Provide for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments and Objects of Archaeo-logical, Historical or Artistic Interest.

22nd October, 1927.

WHEREAS it is expedient to provide for the preservati of ancient monuments and antiquities, for the exercise of co

Sir Edward Grigg, who signed the first Kenyan heritage act into law in 1927. Source: Kenya National Archives. Background photo: Karen Blixen's Nairobi home, now a museum.

Who should own Kenya's heritage?

The history of heritage protection in Kenya argues that it is time to break away from the colonial model and use economic incentives in place of punishment to encourage conservation.

Thomas Hart

One fine sunny Nairobi day in October 1927, Governor Sir Edward Grigg put pen to paper in his mock-Tudor official mansion,[1] setting in motion heritage protection in Kenya Colony with his signature on "An Ordinance to Provide for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments and Objects of Archaeological, Historical, or Artistic Interest."[2]

As we celebrate the reopening of the newly-renovated and expanded Nairobi National Museum, let us consider this long-held but less visible role of the Museums — the protection of Kenya's historic and culturally significant places

The Vasco da Gama pillar, Malindi.

and buildings. These responsibilities range from palaeontological sites and the Mijikenda sacred kaya forests to Vasco da Gama's pillar, Swahili towns, and the home of *Out of Africa* author Karen Blixen. The Kenyan museum system, its staff, and its efforts to conserve heritage are among the best organised and most conscientious in sub-Saharan Africa.

Yet the system, like many Kenyan laws and institutions, still bears the centralised, punitive, and undemocratic stamp of its colonial origins. While tremendously successful in many ways, the 'monuments' regime has been subject to corrupt abuse as well as suspicious objections by the public and owners.

Travellers abroad will have noticed how popular 'old town' districts have become, from Singapore to Dubrovnik to rural Virginia. Such historic areas are not just preserved, but revived as economic engines to redevelop decaying downtown business areas into hotspots full of restaurants, entertainment, and desirable flats and offices. Such development is not achieved by the curatorial control and penalties that characterise Kenya's colonial-inspired system. Rather, an array of financial incentives — usually tax advantages that do not require direct funding — have convinced owners and developers that refurbishment of historic properties can be more profitable than new suburban construction. Such incentives are worth considering in Kenya. But first, let us review the successes and challenges of the past 80 years.

Why was heritage legislation passed in Kenya in 1927? A memorandum to the bill explained that the government "followed the scheme of the Indian Act" which was "the late Marquis Curzon's especial care."[3] Curzon, former Viceroy of India, was a statesman of empire who died in 1925; it is likely that Kenyan colonial administrators, many from India, meant to honour him. Governor Grigg himself had been born in Madras and must have known Curzon well during his own colonial career.

While Great Britain began protecting its own heritage with modest and locally-oriented Ancient Monuments acts in 1882 and 1913,[4] the Indian crown jewel of empire produced a very different version of such legislation in 1904: a system managed by the central vice-regal power without reference to localities or the public, controlled by 'experts' for scholarly purposes, and enforced by fines and prison sentences. For heritage, as for other matters, the legal framework of Indian colonialism afforded a convenient template for the new African offshoot, and this authoritarian model would permanently mark Kenyan preservation policy.

The 1927 ancient monuments act was the first of five successive pieces of Kenyan preservation legislation. The acts of 1934, 1962, 1983 and 2005 each repealed and replaced its predecessor, but retained substantial language in a system with as much continuity as change.

The 1927 Act:
Preservation as police power

The draconian and highly centralised tenets of the Indian law would certainly never have been accepted by the British — or any — parliament or public.[5] It proved suitable, however, to the fundamentally undemocratic nature of colonial rule, unfettered by public opinion, politics, or property owners. In comparing the text of the "Indian Ancient Monuments Preservation Act" of 1904,[6] we see that it was adopted practically verbatim in Kenya, and many sections of text from turn-of-the-century India remain ossified in the current legislation. It established a model of central government control over historic sites that continues in spirit (and often to the letter) today.

The most fundamental of the major powers of this act, and still in force, is the power to declare protection of historic sites by publication in the government *Gazette*.[7]

The government is also empowered to direct control of protected sites and objects through compulsory acquisition by right of eminent domain, agreements with owners, or assumption of guardianship of any unowned site or object.

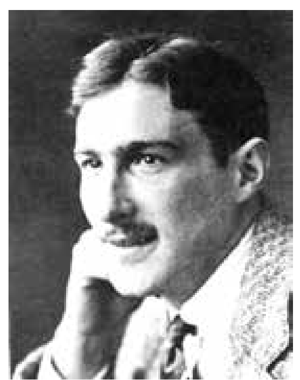
The power to fine and/or imprison gave (and gives) the law teeth: "Anyone who destroys, removes, injures, alters, defaces or imperils a protected monument or antiquity" was (and is still) guilty of a crime. The maximum fine of 100 pounds in 1927 compared to an average British salary of about five pounds a week, and for Africans a few shillings a day. The maximum prison sentence was six months. Heritage conservation was placed squarely within the police power of government.

In 1934, the legislation was expanded to 25 sections; 17 of these were practically identical to the 1927 law.[8] The changes were necessitated by the work of the great pioneer of human palaeontology, Louis Leakey. By 1932, Leakey's Kenyan sites had established East Africa as the cradle of humankind, shattering the previous academic consensus that hominid origins lay in Asia.[9] The new sections largely addressed the needs of palaeontology: research and export permits; ownership and treatment of objects; and the control of excavations at protected sites. All of the "powers" were retained, and if anything made more specific. In 1962, when the winds of change brought an end to colonial rule, the 1934 legislation was hastily converted to the forms of the new nation, almost verbatim.[10]

1983: Disappearing heritage and an overhauled law

In the two decades after independence, coastal tourism brought thousands of European sun-seekers to Indian Ocean beaches, where they eagerly bought (and were eagerly sold) the many relics and artefacts of the Swahili culture, created centuries ago from the cultural intermarriage of indigenous coastal Africans and Arab traders.

The most notable Swahili sites in Kenya are the narrow 'old town' mazes of Mombasa and Lamu, but numerous ruins of Swahili settlements dating back to the 9th century dot the coast, notably at Gedi, Takwa, Shanga, Manda and Pate. By 1980 the elaborately carved doors and windows of the old coral-rag houses, beds and other furniture, jewellery, and porcelain were disappearing at an alarming rate. In response, a new "Antiquities and Monuments Act" took effect in 1983, the work of curator-turned politician Omar Bwana and the dynamic Museums director, Richard Leakey, son of Louis. Once again, 24 old sections were substantially recycled.



Louis Leakey in the 1930s. His pioneering palaeontological discoveries necessitated the changes in the 1934 heritage act. Source: By the Evidence.

One of the most significant changes in 1983 was automatic blanket protection of sites and objects dating from before 1895, so that only places of unclear or more modern date require specific protection.[11] As we shall see, this rule has focused active gazetting on more modern (post-1895) historic properties, often privately owned and still in use, creating new challenges to the system.

The new law of 2005

The most recent and current legislation, "The National Museums and Heritage Act (2006)" was drafted as part and parcel of the just-concluded European Union programme addressing staff rationalisation and physical infrastructure for the National Museums of Kenya. For the first time, as the name implies, protection of heritage and the basic text governing the Museums have been combined. Most of the new act concerns the Museums.

The sections that deal with heritage are substantially similar to previous texts. The fundamental approach empowering the national government to protect or to gazette sites and objects for protection, to administer agreements with owners, to compel lease or purchase, to issue all permits and licences, and to fine and imprison violators remains. There is also

a frank effort by the professionals "to limit the powers of the politicians"[12] and avoid some of the abuses of gazettement. Perhaps the most important change is 'spot gazetting' — emergency protection for "any heritage…in imminent danger of serious damage or destruction".[13] The penalties for violation of the law have also been increased to a million shillings (about 25 times the Kenyan per capita annual income) and 12 rather than six months in prison.

What has been gazetted?

The first list of officially gazetted antiquities and monuments was published on 19 March 1929.[14] Of the 18 listings, 15 were Portuguese or Swahili (often referred to as 'Arab') ruins on the Indian Ocean coast, two were tribal sacred sites, and one was prehistoric. All of the 1929 listings remain gazetted today.

By 1935 the list had grown to 23, with Louis Leakey's activities reflected in the addition of the Kanam-Kanjera fossil beds near Lake Victoria. In the 1950s the coastal antiquities warden for the Kenyan National Park Service, James Kirkman, began serious research on the lost cities of the Swahili civilization, contributing 40 gazettings of monuments on the coast from 1954 to 1959. [15]

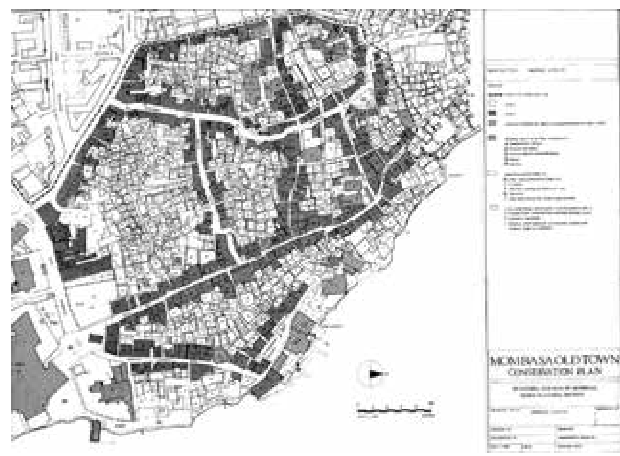
The arrival of Martin Pickford at the National Museums of Kenya in 1978, where he established and first headed the Department of Sites and Monuments, marked a watershed. By Pickford's own account, Museums Director Richard Leakey was instrumental in directing attention to many coastal ruins and prehistoric sites during this period.[16] A comprehensive list dating from about 1983, apparently the work of Pickford, lists 79 "Inland and Coastal Monuments" by that date.[17]

In addition to the ever-growing lists of coastal ruins and prehistoric remains, something new appears on that list: two historic buildings of relatively recent date, still standing and in use. The Italian Church at Kijabe, an architectural gem built by talented Italian prisoners in World War II, was gazetted in 1981, and the house of Jomo Kenyatta, father of independent Kenya, in 1977.

With the departure of Pickford and the adoption of the blanket protection rules in 1983, gazetting fell into a lull for nearly a decade. The appointment of Dr George Abungu as Head of Coastal Archaeology in 1990, later Director of Regional Museums from 1996–99 and overall Director-General of the National Museums of Kenya from 1999–2002, marked renewed gazetting activity and emphasised further areas of interest: cultural landscapes, landmarks of the independence struggle, and buildings of the colonial era. The current list stands at 223.

Thus a dramatic increase, as well as a change of direction, in protected properties has occurred since 1990. This group includes a large number of indigenous Kenyan cultural sites, notably the Mukuruwe-wa-Nyagathanga, the Bedida and Mrima Sacred Groves, and 34 sacred kaya forest sites of the coastal Mijikenda people. Landmarks of the independence struggle have only been protected recently as well, including Dedan Kimathi's trench and three other Mau Mau sites.

Photo right: The 1982 razing of Nairobi House, which aroused public attention to the loss of historic buildings. Source: The Nation (Nairobi), 1982.



Mombasa Old Town, the second community gazetted as a historic district (1992) and to have a preservation ordinance (1996). Source: King and Procesi, 1990.

Most notably similar to international experience, conventional urban buildings over 50 years old are now included in significant numbers. The gazetting of the old district officer's building in Malindi in 1991 broke the ice for what now comprises a group of over 70 colonial-era structures, including government offices, churches, schools, clubs, and commercial buildings.

What caused the new directions in Kenyan preservation? First, the 'blanket' protections for pre-1895 sites eliminated the need to individually protect the prehistoric sites and Swahili ruins that had hitherto formed the quasi-entirety of the gazetted list. The growing number of educated indigenous Kenyans in museum service by the 1990s no doubt contributed to interest in tribal sacred sites as well as Mau Mau landmarks.

As for the buildings of the colonial period, the opening of the University of Nairobi's architecture school in 1975 led to study and appreciation of urban buildings (evidenced in MA theses) by budding Kenyan architects — several of whom joined the Museums' staff.[18] Further, the work of international researchers on historic Lamu Town made local staff aware of the importance of protecting inhabited buildings and urban areas. Many of the later and current leaders of preservation in Kenya began as understudies to the expatriates directing the Lamu research.[19]

Dr Mzalendo Kibunjia, the present Director of Museums, Sites and Monuments, also notes that before the building boom of the 70s and 80s, older buildings were simply not in danger. Such cases as the 1982 razing of Nairobi House, the former headquarters of the Imperial British East Africa Company, caused considerable controversy,[20] particularly since this handsome and historic building has never been replaced with any permanent structure.

Two historic districts

Historic districts, the basic tool for physical and economic revitalisation of heritage areas, are rare in Kenya. There are two examples of historic districts with local bylaws: the old town areas of Lamu and Mombasa. Lamu came to international research attention in the 1970s and 80s, and was recognised as a UNESCO international heritage site in 2001. The entire old town was gazetted for protection in 1986, with local bylaws adopted in 1991.[21] The relatively brief bylaws — three pages in the *Gazette* — adopted the foreign experts' definitions and map of an inner 'conservation area' and an outer 'protection area'. A Local Planning Commission consists of three local and eight central government officials — proportions seemingly at odds with the concept of "local".

The commission is charged with reviewing all applications to alter buildings or change of use or user; to make recommendations on building permits; to coordinate plans for public areas; and to provide technical advice on approved construction. The demolition of coral buildings or any feature in the conservation areas is prohibited. Any alteration is subject to prior approval by the Commission, as are any signs or advertisements.

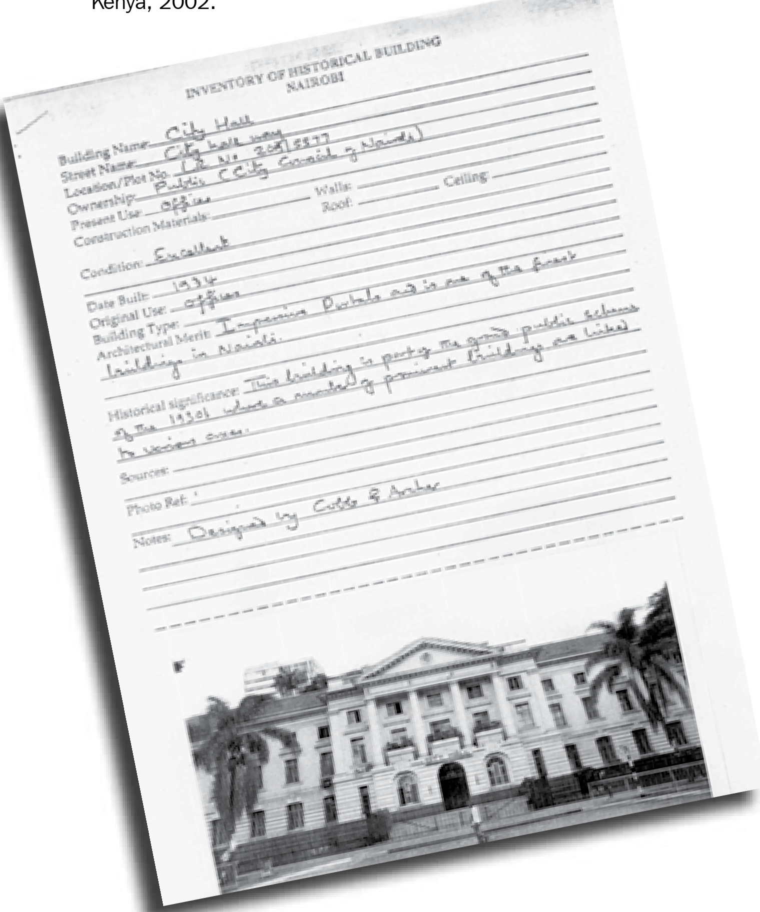
In many ways the Lamu Planning Commission has been a success. A European Union grant to restore 10 houses launched it to much local appreciation. Citizens are accustomed to having building and other projects reviewed.[22] On the other hand, certain violations by influential local businesses — unsuitable signs by the Glory

Hotel and Air Kenya, and encroachment on the waterfront by two others — have been allowed to stand. Locally authorised fines and imprisonment have never been imposed.

Preservation bylaws based on the Lamu model were decreed (rather than adopted by the city government) for Mombasa in 1996.[23] Oddly enough the conservation commission was not appointed at all and did not meet for the first decade of the Mombasa bylaws.[24] Rather, the Mombasa Old Town Conservation Office (MOTCO), an office of the National Museums with a staff of three, took charge.

Among MOTCO's successes, the property tax rate on homes in the conservation area was halved; a casino in the old port of Mombasa was thwarted; public seafront corruptly reallocated to an Italian hotel developer was preserved; large diesel oil tanks at the old port were disapproved.[25] MOTCO can also point to restored balcony houses, improvements fronting Fort Jesus, and newly paved roads and alleys. The Mombasa Conservation Commission was finally appointed under the 2002 Kibaki government, bringing citizen voices to the conservation of Mombasa.

Lamu and Mombasa lack some typical international historic district practices, including no historic building plaque programme, no detailed building and rehabilitation guidelines, no 'main street' integrated development programmes, no power to propose local landmarks or new districts, and no public meetings for architectural review. While technically useful by all accounts, the presence of nationally-appointed expert 'outsiders' on the local commissions is also unusual, and may contribute to resistance to such historic districts.


INVENTORY OF HISTORICAL BUILDING
NAIROBI

Building Name: City Hall
Street Name: City hall way
Location/Plot No. [illegible]
Ownership: Public (City Council of Nairobi)
Present Use: offices
Walls: Ceiling:
Roof:
Construction Materials:
Condition: Excellent
Date Built: 1934
Original Use: offices
Building Type:
Architectural Merit: Imposing Portals and is one of the finest building in Nairobi.
Historical significance: This building is part of the grand public scheme of the 1930s when a number of prominent buildings are linked to various areas.
Sources:
Photo Ref.:
Notes: Designed by Cobb & Archer

A typical inventory form completed by the Research Section of the Sites and Monuments Department. The Nairobi City Hall is not yet gazetted. Source: National Museums of Kenya, 2002.

Gazetting procedures

How does a place become a protected monument? Briefly, the National Museums of Kenya makes a recommendation to the Minister of Heritage and Culture. The minister then signs the notice and sends it to the Attorney General for publication in the *Kenya Gazette*. This is a winding trail through much bureaucratic turf, and not without pitfalls.

The gazetting process begins as researchers of the Sites and Monuments department compile regional catalogues of sites worthy of protection. The resulting eight loose-leaf 'inventories', one for each province in Kenya, are catalogues of two-page forms for each building. The criteria of the inventory forms appear to have their roots in those used by the American-educated Italian scholar Francesco Siravo in his survey of old town Mombasa in the late 1980s.[26] Thus the Kenyan use of architectural merit, historical period, association to significant events, the fifty-year rule, and condition are all also criteria for the US National Register of Historic Places.

Delays and problems

In many cases the Museums have written repeatedly to the ministry about delays or non-execution of gazettements. The

Museums' former legal officer noted the frequent changes in personnel at the ministry and the Attorney General's office, and conflicting jurisdictions, as with the Ministry of Environment in the case of the Lamu water catchments.[27]

Former cartographer Zachary Otieno and former Museums director George Abungu bring out a more sinister view of such delays and obstacles: influential individuals can work the bureaucratic maze to block gazettement. Keeping property free of any legal encumbrance makes it easier for owners to develop — or for corrupt officials to profit from transfer and resale of land. As the Kenyan public has become aware, such "land-grabbing" has affected agricultural research farms, forests, alleys, even cemeteries and public toilets.

Posted and published notice is required to ensure that owners have an opportunity to object to the gazettement, which they may do within one month, but otherwise there is a general lack of public input or consultation in the gazetting process. Individual citizens or even local governments may not submit gazettement proposals directly to the Ministry. The Sites and Monuments Department must first be convinced. The result is greater curatorial and professional control over the process, but less public input.

Degazettement and land grabbing

On several occasions, protected status has been removed from a site by a new *Gazette* notice without the Museums' approval, revoking the previous declaration as a monument. Several instances of degazettement in the 1990s had an unsavoury flavour of greed and political interference.

The Mama Ngina Drive area of Mombasa, a public waterfront park containing archaeological remnants of the city's foundation, was degazetted in 1993.[28] Cronies of a powerful coastal politician dreamed up a plan to degazette the oceanfront property, get it allocated to themselves by the lands office, and resell it at enormous profit to commercial developers. The land grabbers encountered unexpected opposition from local groups, including the Friends of Fort Jesus and the Muslim Human Rights League (MUHURI), and were forced to abandon their plans.

The Railway Staff Quarters gazetted in 1997 are a group of stone bungalows built in the 1920s for junior European railway staff in Nairobi. "One of Moi's sons" had the commercially desirable eastern end of the property, on a busy intersection, allocated to him by Kenya Railways in order to resell it to an Asian entrepreneur. Degazettement of the prime plot ensued, and the houses on the eastern side have been razed.[29]

Other cases of politically-connected degazettement of declared monuments that could be discussed in similar detail include Nairobi City Park, Lord Egerton's castle and Westminster House, a 1928 neoclassical office building in the central business district. Yet the Kenyan preservation system is not altogether a paper tiger, and several instances of success can be identified.

The National Museums in Mombasa awoke one morning in 1997 to find their own parking lot adjacent to the Old Law Courts being excavated for a new bank. Despite being publicly owned and within the boundaries of the gazetted Old Town Mombasa area, title to the plot had been given to individuals by the City Council and Commissioner of Lands, then sold to Habib Bank of Zurich. The Museums managed to stop construction with a restraining order; the case is still in court.[30]

Land grabbers were again restrained by legal action in Mombasa in 1999 at 17th century Portuguese Fort St Joseph, among the first sites gazetted in 1929. Developers 'grabbed' the land through the usual corrupt title reallocation and started work on a hotel, posting Maasai guards. The spear-wielding guards were so zealous that they refused entry even to the judge hearing the Museum's application for a restraining order. The injunction was granted, and again the case remains in court.[31] Another relatively successful case (in the sense that it is still in court) stopped the destruction of the

historic tomb of Bwana Zahidi Ngumi in the gazetted Old Town Lamu district in 1999.[32] In a rare case of a completed prosecution in the early 1990s, a New York antiques dealer was caught with "a lorry load" of Lamu antiquities. He was taken to court, found guilty, and fined.[33]

With a single lawyer in the Legal Department of the National Museums of Kenya, initiating legal action is constrained not only by the desire to avoid antagonising the public, but also man-hours to handle the litigation. There is a decided mismatch between a protection system based on direct legal sanctions and the personnel available to enforce it.

Further, hard experience has shown the Museums the public relations complexities of working under a preservation law with police powers. Omar Bwana, while Lamu Museum director around 1980, antagonised the local public against heritage protection when he had a local woman from Pate arrested for the time-immemorial practice of picking cut stone from the ruins to repair her house. She was released when the equally confused police charged her only with "picking up stones".[34]

The government's right to acquire historic places from private owners by compulsory purchase has been carried out only twice. The first instance was for the Lamu Museum in 1975. The property was owned by the Busaidi family, formerly the *liwalis* (traditional rulers) of Lamu, whose fine house had been expropriated by the British District Commissioner at the turn of the century. The family wanted it back after independence, but were forced to sell to the Museums.[35] The second use of compulsory purchase was the acquisition of what is now the Old German Post Office Museum in Lamu in 1988.[36]

The Old Mutual. The insurance company fears that gazettement will block redevelopment and lower its value. Photo by Akbar Hussein.

The mere threat of compulsory purchase has been effective as well. In the case of Leven House in Mombasa, the owner wanted an exorbitant price. The Museums retaliated with the threat of compulsory purchase, even posting notice of a hearing in the *Gazette*, and the owner negotiated down.[37]

Objections to gazettement

As Kenya has turned to recognition of living buildings, objection by owners has emerged as a serious problem. The many objections in recent years reveal not only misunderstanding of the law, but also the paradox of central government protection in a climate universally suspicious of corrupt government motives.

Owners have most frequently objected because they believed that gazettement meant their property would be taken by the state, or that no further alterations to their properties could be undertaken, or that it would interfere with their accustomed use of the property. The Presbyterian Church, for example, wrote to ask "what it means…in terms of ownership" for two gazetted churches.[38] The lawyer for the owners of Imperial Chambers cites several examples of old buildings "demolished and allocated to politically correct individuals. Our clients are apprehensive whether this is prelude to a similar exercise."[39] The University of Nairobi was reassured over ownership of their Chiromo House by the Museums' legal officer, and the Director of Sites and Monuments personally handled a worried call from the head of Nairobi School, who assumed the Museum was taking over.[40] Needless to say, all were assured that gazettement of a property in no way changes its legal ownership.

Alterations, historic interest and use

Five objections cited constraints on altering or enlarging their properties as the basis of their complaint. Old Mutual's written complaint noted "major refurbishment of this property" and objected to gazettement "because it is so unclear what you can do and can't do under the historic building scenario".[41]

Standard Chartered Bank's objection includes "the restriction on making alterations under section 23 of the Act," as did the owners of Imperial Chambers, who had drawn up a surprisingly sympathetic expansion to six stories, maintaining the historic stone façade.[42] Similar concerns were voiced by the Bull Café, "being reconstructed into a modern building".[43] St. Peter's Anglican Church in Nyeri was concerned about the "need to renovate and reconstruct".[44]

Although Section 23 of the Act indeed penalises anyone who "destroys, removes, injures, alters or defaces" a monument,[45] the actual policy is much more flexible. The Sites and Monuments department, while retaining the right to be consulted on alterations, is "mainly interested in the exterior façade"[46] of historic buildings and will accept sympathetic changes, as in the cases of Grindlays Bank and the Royal Casino in Mombasa.

More lawyerly objections disputed a property's "historic interest" qualification mandated by the Act. Standard Chartered Bank made this argument,[47] and in the case of Bohra Mosque, the congregation pointed out that the Mosque itself was pulled down and rebuilt in 1980, and only the ornate old gateway is original.[48] (They have since agreed to gazette the gate.) Imperial Chambers, the Blixen House in Naivasha, and Grindlays Bank made similar arguments.

Owners of three properties — the Nairobi School, Bohra Mosque, and the Surat District Association — made objection to gazettement interfering with use, assuming the public would henceforth have access. In fact they had nothing to fear, since under the heritage law public access does not apply to privately owned property: "The public shall have right of access" only to "a monument which is for the time being owned by the National Museums Board or by another authority."[49]

The Standard Chartered Bank. The bank objects to restrictions on alterations and disputes its historic character. Photo by Akbar Hussein.

In addition to this protection, the Bohra and Surat buildings — the legacy of groups of railway labourers imported from British India — are protected under the Act's special status for religious structures, in language dating from the 1904 Indian law. "When any monument …is used periodically for religious observances, the authority shall make due provision for the protection of the monument from pollution or desecration… by prohibiting entry therein, except in accordance with by-laws made with the concurrence of the persons in religious charge of the monument."[50] The contentious tangle of Indian religions under the Raj created a text now relevant to two such groups a century later on another continent. As with most of the objections, these three cases remain in limbo — gazetted, but neither confirmed or withdrawn.

Official reaction to objections

Officials are always willing to discuss problems with objecting owners. In the cases of Nairobi School and Chiromo House, formal objection was forestalled once the policy was understood.

The Museums also took the step of publishing a "Monuments Declaration" in the newspapers "in view of the anxiety caused to some of the owners". In one-line bullets the

The Surat District Association. Members are concerned that gazettement will mean public access to their religious ceremonies. Photo by Akbar Hussein.

notice clarified policy on ownership, public access, alterations, and other issues, as well as promising such rather vague benefits as "recognition of the uniqueness of the property" and "potential assistance" from donors.[51] More significantly, the ministry now insists that the Sites and Monuments department not only consults with owners, but presents evidence of their agreement when sending a draft gazette notice to the ministry.[52]

The confusion over the owners' ability to alter their properties also points to the utility of detailed guidelines for alterations to historic buildings — provisions best created and administered by the community itself. In hundreds of American communities, boards of qualified local citizens work with owners of protected buildings or in historic districts to help renovate properties in appropriate materials and style. The central government and its institutions are thus relieved of the burdens of architectural review, enforcement, and appearing to be a distant, dictatorial authority. But Kenya lacks any national or local guidelines. Even the Lamu and Mombasa ordinances are vague. In the US, the national "Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treating Historic Properties" has provided a model for localities to adapt. The Museums should take the lead in creating such guidelines.

In the United States, owners do not routinely object to national registration; on the contrary, they seek it. This is because such recognition carries with it a variety of national, state, and local financial incentives. In the words of one introductory text:

The American system of preservation… accepts at the outset that the core of the problem of preserving old buildings and neighborhoods is simply a matter of economics. If preservation efforts are to succeed, respect for what is called the owner's bottom line is of paramount importance.[53]

In contrast to this approach, the Kenyan gazetting system has been driven by the well-intentioned academic concerns of the National Museums of Kenya. This benevolent despotism certainly worked in the colonial period, when the 'public' had little say about anything, and with palaeontological and archaeological finds on public land, where the American system is not very different.[54] It worked reasonably well with coastal sites and ruins, although some clashes with local owners and inhabitants occurred. But more recently, when dealing with living communities like Lamu and Mombasa, or with colonial-era buildings

still in use, Museums officers responsible for conservation recognise that economic incentives should be provided.

Suggested preservation incentives

The most successful such incentive in the American experience has been a national income tax credit for owners. Investors who rehabilitate a historic building appropriately may reduce their income tax by up to 25% of the rehabilitation costs. The private sector's response to the introduction of these tax incentives in 1976 exceeded the wildest expectations of the preservation community. Kenya should look at such a scheme.

Kenya has one example of a tax advantage for historic properties: the 50% reduction in local property tax rates for buildings in the gazetted historic district of Old Town Mombasa. This advantage could be extended to gazetted properties elsewhere, perhaps more precisely targeted to owners who renovate or maintain well.

Kenyan capital gains tax on profits from the sale of real estate has now reached 30%.[55] This is particularly disadvantageous for the long-term owners of old buildings, whose appreciation over time means virtually the entire sale value is profit. A speculator who buys and sells a building from one year to the next, by contrast, is taxed only on the small increase in value. Owners of historic buildings should be granted some type of capital gains real estate sales tax relief.

"Easements" with financial advantages exist in Kenyan environmental legislation,[56] and could be extended to preservation uses. A preservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement attached to a historic property that protects it in perpetuity. For example, an owner agrees to an easement on his building saying that the façade may never be changed. This easement has a value, since the owner has relinquished part of his property rights, in the sense that he (and his successors) can no longer change the façade. This reduction in value is appraised and applied, resulting in lower local rates or other property taxes. Of course the local government must approve, and even promote, such easements.

Changing depreciation rules, particularly in the commercial sector, to make reinvestment in old buildings more advantageous, should be considered. Accelerated depreciation, an incentive that reduces business taxes, is customarily allowed for new construction to promote investment, but not for rehabilitation of historic buildings. This has been changed in the US (where a tax write-off for demolishing historic buildings was also eliminated) in order to encourage re-use of old structures.

Also, the Kenyan Retirements and Benefits Act has set a limit on the proportion of real estate that insurance and retirement funds may hold in their portfolios. Institutional investors could be attracted to historic buildings by excluding them from the real estate cap.[57]

Such incentives are 'off-budget', requiring regulatory changes but no allocations of specific new funds. Kenya is a developing nation with tremendous practical and humanitarian needs; it is difficult to imagine that major new government resources will be available to the Museums any time soon. The incentive approach avoids parliamentary wrangling, invidious comparison to other needs, ministerial competition, and diversion of funds to other uses. Thus strategies like those just described may be particularly practical alternatives to seeking scarce funds from an unresponsive parliament.

Conclusion

Kenya has a highly centralised heritage preservation system motivated by academic interests that has met with much success in a difficult context. Indeed, the efforts of the Museums' conservation officers are often near-heroic. The problems such a system has encountered include lack of resources, corruption, institutional and legal obstacles, lack of public understanding, and difficulty applying the punishments to enforce the law.

Kenyan heritage conservation has now moved beyond the Swahili ruins and sites of early man that first inspired it. It faces new challenges to prove it is relevant and useful

to the public in the framework of living communities, economic needs, and historic buildings still in active use. The logical response to such preservation challenges should be economic rather than academic, local rather than central, and based on incentives rather than punishments.

Notes

1. Observant visitors to the present neoclassical State House will notice the strange whitewashed half-timbered walls at the south end — the remains of the smaller 1907 Tudor-style governor's residence, which was greatly expanded and restyled in the 1930s.
2. Government of the Crown Colony of Kenya, *The Official Gazette* (hereafter cited as Gazette) (1927), Ord. 17.
3. *Gazette* (1927), 687.
4. John Delafons, *Politics and Preservation: A Policy History of the Built Heritage* (London, United Kingdom: Chapman and Hall, 1997), 25, 30, 31.
5. In the 1913 *British Ancient Monuments Act*, for example, penalties for damaging a monument could be levied only on non-owners; the Indian and Kenyan laws could (and can) fine or imprison owners for altering their own property. Further, punishments were less severe in Britain: a maximum of five pounds versus 100 in Kenya, and one month's maximum jail sentence versus six months.
6. Government of India, *The Ancient Monuments Preservation Act of 1904*, Indian Bare Acts, http:// www.helplinelaw.com/bareact/index.php?dsp=anc-monu-pre, accessed 2 November 2006. Also confirmed by Martin Pickford, interview by author, Nairobi, Kenya, 12 October 2002.
7. 'To gazette' has therefore become the verb for protecting monuments in a variety of forms used here, such as gazetting, gazetted, etc.
8. *Gazette* (1934), 249.
9. Biography Resource Center, "Louis Leakey," http://www.galenet.com/servlet/BioRC, accessed 2 October 2002 (subscription service).
10. *The Preservation of Objects of Archaeological and Paleontological Interest Ordinance, Laws of Kenya* (1962), Ch. 215.11.1.
11. *The Antiquities and Monuments Act, Laws of Kenya* (rev. 1984), Ch. 215.
12. George Abungu, interview by author, Nairobi, 3 December 2002.
13. *The National Museums and Heritage Act of 2006, Kenya Gazette*, Supplement No. 63 (Acts No. 6), 123.
14. Gazette (1929), 507.
15. Pickford, interview; *Laws of Kenya* (rev. 1962), Objects and Areas of Land Declared to be Monuments, Cap. 215, Subsidiary Legislation. Between 1948 and 1970 the Kenyan National Park Service played a role in coastal sites since it had expertise operating public areas. During this period Fort Jesus and Gedi, for example, were degazetted and operated as parks.
16. Pickford, interview.
17. National Museums of Kenya, Sites and Monuments Department, "Inland and Coastal Monuments" (unpublished typescript, n.d.).
18. Waziri Sudi, Kalendar Khan, and Wycliffe Oloo are among those individuals who studied architecture and then joined the Museums' staff .
19. These include Athman Lali Omar, Kalendar Khan, Jimbi Katana, and Waziri Sudi.
20. *Daily Nation* (Nairobi, Kenya), 21 October 1982.
21. *Kenya Subsidiary Legislation*, 1991,

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Thomas Hart (with his research assistant Catherine Muia) compiled most of the material on which this article is based for his MA thesis in historic preservation while attached to the American Embassy in Nairobi from 2000 to 2003. *Kenya Past and Present* readers may recall his article on the art deco houses of Parklands last year, and the present article appeared in an earlier form as "Gazetting and Historic Preservation in Kenya" in *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship (Winter 2007)* published by the US National Park Service. Educated at Princeton, Oxford, Columbia, and Goucher, Tom recently moved to Surinam, where he is involved in the UNESCO Paramaribo Old Town world heritage site. He looks forward to spending more time in Kenya.

"The Lamu County Council (Lamu Old Town Conservation) Bylaws" (1991), Legal Notice No. 292.

22. Ahmed Yassin, interview by author, Nairobi, 28 November 2002.
23. Compare the text for Lamu: "the Lamu County Council makes the following By-Laws" to that for Mombasa: "the Minister for Local Government makes the following order."
24. Yassin, interview; Jimbi Katana, interview by author, Mombasa, Kenya, 23 January 2003.
25. Kalendar Khan, interview by author, Mombasa, Kenya, 22 November 2002.
26. Khan, interview.
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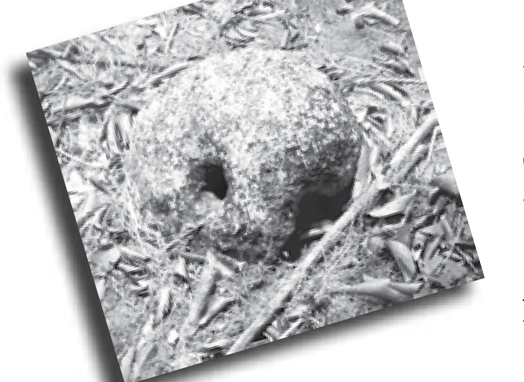
The legend of Mwaozi Tumbe:



History, myth and cultural heritage on Wasini Island

Martin Walsh

One of the most enduring oral traditions on the southern Kenya coast is the story of Mwaozi (or Mwana Ozi) Tumbe, the daughter of a local ruler who betrayed her people to their enemies and was then betrayed by the latter in turn. Several versions of this popular tale of treachery have been documented since the 1920s. Anthropologist Martin Walsh summarises the content of all available texts and traces their evolution over the years.

Like many traditions of its kind, the legend of Mwaozi Tumbe appears to hang between history and myth. The historical details included in early versions make it clear that the legend of Mwaozi Tumbe has its origins in events that took place in the first half of the 17th century. In later accounts, this history is increasingly condensed into clichés that are shared with other oral traditions and folktales in the region. Versions collected in Mkwiro on Wasini Island also provide more information about the fate of Mwaozi Tumbe and the rites that used to take place in the village and at her nearby grave. In this local context the legend resembles a

Photo above: The anthropomorphic gravestone marking Mwaozi Tumbe's grave on Wasini Island.

Right: Map of the southern Kenya coast and islands.

charter for ritual action, though the rites have since fallen foul of religious authority. Instead, the latest versions of Mwaozi Tumbe's tale have been collected and compiled for a very different purpose — to promote community-based tourism in the village, with her gravestone as the focal point for a cultural tour.

The legend of Mwaozi Tumbe as history

The earliest version that I know of was collected by Harold Lambert when he was working as Assistant District Commissioner at Shimoni in 1923-24. Lambert studied the Chifundi and Vumba dialects of Swahili spoken on the southern Kenya coast and later wrote at length about them.[6] His version of the Mwaozi Tumbe legend was published in 1953 under the title 'The Taking of Tumbe Town'. Lambert notes that the story is in the sub-dialect of the Chifundi living on Wasini Island, but does not say where or when or how he recorded it. This variety of the Chifundi dialect is mainly spoken in Mkwiro at the eastern end of Wasini Island, though Lambert does not refer to the village by name. As well as reproducing the Chifundi original, he also provided a close translation of the story in the Unguja dialect of Swahili as spoken in Zanzibar. These two texts are accompanied by an introduction and notes, but no English translation of the tale.

Lambert described the story of Mwaozi Tumbe as "the traditional account of a historical event", namely the capture of the Chifundi capital Tumbe by the Vumba of Vumba Kuu under Mwana Kyambi Kyandi Ivoo, an event he dates to about 1640 AD. The recorded text opens with the statement that Ivoo had conquered seven other Shirazi towns along the coast, but had struggled unsuccessfully for nine years to overcome the Chifundi under their ruler Guo Kuu Mwatumbe. Ivoo's chance came when Mwatumbe died leaving no male heir. Mwatumbe's daughter Mwaozi claimed the throne but was rejected by the Chifundi because she was a woman. She responded by making a secret pact with Ivoo to deliver Tumbe to the Vumba in return for being made queen. The text then goes on to describe at length how Mwaozi deceived the people of Tumbe by lulling them into a false sense of security. On two separate occasions she came out of her house at night to warn that war was upon them, ranting and raving until the morning. Assuming that rejection had made her mad, the townspeople took no notice when she did this a third night. This time, however, she called the Vumba army in, and Tumbe was captured with relative ease.

Ivoo received the submission of the Chifundi, but because they had been the last of the Shirazi to submit to his rule he decreed that they should sit by the doorway and not in the main hall whenever the Vumba held feasts. Reminding him that she had delivered her half of the bargain, Mwaozi Tumbe then asked Ivoo for the throne that he had promised her. He told her to return home, and that he would call

Recorded versions of the legend of Mwaozi Tumbe

Year	Place	Informant(s)	Collected/compiled by
1923/24	not stated	An unidentified speaker of the Mkwiro variety of Chifundi	Harold Lambert, British administrator[1]
1972	Bodo	Hasan bin Mjaka Mshirazi of Bodo, born in Funzi	William McKay, historical researcher[2]
1972	Vanga	Mwenyi Msa Mwangombe, Segeju from Jimbo	William McKay[3]
1986	Mkwiro	Mwanamize Haruni ('Madudua'), Shirazi woman, speaker of the Mkwiro variety of Chifundi	Martin Walsh, anthropologist[4]
2006	Mkwiro	Unidentified Mkwiro villagers	Staff and volunteers of Global Vision International[5]

Mwaozi Tumbe's grave at Bogoa on Wasini island, 1986.

her back to be installed as the ruler of her people. But Ivoo wondered what Mwaozi might do to him, given what she had done to her own relatives. So he wrote her a letter calling her to come to him, and when she arrived he tied her up and took her to the (uninhabited) islet of Kisite, where she died. However, around the same time the rains failed, and the ensuing drought saw people reduced to dire straits. The elders interpreted this as a consequence of their discarding an owner of the land. So they went to Kisite to gather the bones of Mwaozi Tumbe and bury them at Bogoa on Wasini Island, whereupon it poured and poured with rain. As a result the Vumba will always visit Mwaozi Tumbe's grave and pray to God there.

Thus ends Lambert's version of the tale, which describes Mwaozi Tumbe's betrayal of the Chifundi as the final episode in the Vumba conquest of their Shirazi neighbours. 'Shirazi' is an ethnic label that is still widely used on the coast and islands south of Mombasa; it incorporates a claim to Persian origins that is shared by many of the oldest groups of Swahili speaking settlers, as well as by others who have assimilated with them. The Chifundi count themselves as Shirazi, but have also retained their own separate identity.

Under Mwana Kyambi Kyandi Ivoo, the Vumba of Vumba Kuu engaged in a programme of aggressive expansion, forcing the submission of all the Shirazi communities between Gasi in the north and Tanga in the south. All available accounts agree that the Chifundi were the last to submit to Vumba rule. We know very little, though, about Mwaozi Tumbe, her father Guo Kuu Mwatumbe, and earlier rulers of Tumbe, which is now a ruined site to the north of Msambweni. We know rather more about the rulers of Vumba Kuu and their successors, who claimed descent from the Prophet and thereby distanced themselves further from their Shirazi and other subjects.[7]

The exact dates of Ivoo's reign are unknown, though he is generally agreed to have ruled in the first half of the 17th century, when the Portuguese held sway over much of the coast. He was the last of the Vumba rulers to be buried at Vumba Kuu, which was abandoned in subsequent conflicts (later Diwans ruled from Vanga and/or Wasini). Ivoo derived both his name (which denotes a ceremonial arm-

The uninhabited coral islet of Kisite where the treacherous Mwaozi Tumbe met her end. Photo by Heather Stevens.

bracelet) and much of his military strength from the Segeju, renowned merchants and mercenaries from central Kenya who had recently migrated down the coast. In return, the Segeju were allowed to settle on lands that they had conquered for the Vumba.

Most Segeju now live on the Shimoni peninsula in Kenya and in a string of villages along the northern Tanzania coast, where they speak Vumba and related varieties of Swahili. The Daiso, a small community at the north-eastern edge of the Usambara Mountains, still speak a Central Kenya Bantu language that is directly descended from the speech of the historical Segeju.

In his doctoral thesis, William McKay gives a Segeju version of Mwaozi Tumbe's betrayal, part of a longer account of Segeju history and relations with the Vumba.[3] In this version of the legend, Mwaozi Tumbe is married to a Segeju ironsmith living and working among the Shirazi during a break in hostilities, and it is he who persuades her to betray her people to the Vumba. This is the main point of difference with the Chifundi tradition recorded by Lambert. Otherwise Mwaozi is reported to have employed the same ruse to deliver her town to the Vumba, and she meets the same fate — exile to Kisite and death from starvation. This Segeju version was provided by an informant from Jimbo, close to the Kenya-Tanzania border. In the English translation given by McKay it is shorter and less detailed than Lambert's text.

McKay also recorded a version of the legend from a Shirazi (presumably Chifundi speaking) informant from Bodo, but notes that this merely repeated the tradition published by Lambert, minus the part about Mwaozi Tumbe's fate.[2] It is easy to see why Segeju versions might give them an active role in Mwaozi's story, though we can only speculate on the significance of her husband's identification as a smith.

The legend of Mwaozi Tumbe as moral tale and myth

In February 1986 I tape recorded another Chifundi version of Mwaozi Tumbe's tale in Mkwiro village on Wasini Island. This was different from earlier versions in a number of ways, not least in that it was recounted by a local woman, Mwanamize Haruni, nicknamed Madudua. Her account lacked the historical references given to Lambert in 1923/24 and incorporated a number of clichés and topographical anachronisms that suggest that earlier knowledge of the setting of the story was in the process of being lost. As well as describing Mwaozi Tumbe's betrayal of the Chifundi to the Vumba, Mwanamize's version gives equal weight to its consequences: Mwaozi's ongoing treachery, her exile to Kisite, the events which led to the burial of her bones on Wasini Island, and the institution of an annual rain-making ritual in her memory.

Coral rag farmland in Mkwiro, Wasini Island. Lack of water on the islands gives greater significance to rain-making rituals and legends.

In this modern transformation of the tradition, Mwaozi Tumbe's story has become a cross between a moral tale and a charter for (past) ritual action. This no doubt reflects in part the circumstances of its telling — by a woman in Mkwiro who had participated in the ritual, to an audience comprising an anthropologist who was evidently interested in these matters.

In Mwanamize's version it is the Vumba of Wasini Island who are at war with the Chifundi, who live on the mainland. The young men of Wasini persuade Mwaozi

Low tide on the shore at Bogoa, Wasini Island, where Mwaozi Tumbe's grave lies.

Tumbe to betray her fellow Chifundi, using the ruse of false alarms to let them into the town in which she lives, so that they can steal its beautifully carved and well-preserved drums. Despite promising her a great reward in return, they conclude that she cannot be trusted, so bring her to Wasini along with the stolen drums. After some time on the island she marries and her new husband (whose identity is not given) moves in to live with her. But she continues to behave treacherously, luring visitors from Shirazi (on the mainland) into her house, welcoming them to sit on a fine mat which covers the frame of a bed, below which there is a deep pit into which they fall and are left to die. Fearing what she might do to them, the people of Wasini therefore trick her into sailing to Kisite, where she is abandoned and starves to death.

Following Mwaozi's disappearance, the annual rains fail on both Wasini and the mainland. The islanders turn to divination for a solution to the drought and are told that they must bring Mwaozi Tumbe's remains back and bury them properly. So they sail to Kisite and gather up her bones. On their way back to Wasini, however, a storm casts them ashore at Bogoa, at the opposite end of the island. Here they solicit the help of the villagers of Mkwiro, who provide a coffin, dig a grave, and place a small stone over it. After a while the visitors return to Wasini. But there is still no sign of rain on the island, so the elders of Wasini and Mkwiro return to Bogoa, sweep the grave, and pray to God there. Before they reach home it begins pouring with rain, and continues raining until the end of the season.

The next year and every year after that they did the same, praying for rain at Mwaozi's Tumbe's grave. In Mkwiro, after the evening prayers, adults and children used to go through the village singing the following song at every door:

"Mwaozi Tumbe give us our rain;
If you're going to send it — then send it;
If you're not, then take this rubbish!"

In response the owner of the house would throw water over them — whoosh! soaking them through. This happened at every house until they had been round the whole village.

This brief description of the village ritual ended Mwanamize's telling of the story. I was led to believe that these rain-making rites were abandoned in the late 1960s, following conflict with the religious authorities in Mkwiro. But Mwaozi Tumbe's gravestone could still be seen at Bogoa, close to the beach. It looks like a small hemispherical boulder, about 30 cm in diameter, with two deep round holes cut into it at one side. These are said to represent Mwaozi Tumbe's eyes, and when the annual ritual was performed women would rub this anthropomorphic stone with oil and daub kohl around the eyes. In 1986 I could see that one of the eye sockets was chipped and disfigured, and was told that this was the result of an act of vandalism by young men from the mosque in Mkwiro, incensed by its un-Islamic associations.

The tale itself had certainly changed since it was first recorded by Lambert. Historical detail has been converted into clichés: the theft of the Chifundi drums is evidently a shorthand for the seizure of power by the Vumba, and the story of Mwaozi Tumbe's continuing treachery and concealed pit is an adaptation of a widespread motif which is also found in other historical traditions on the coast.

At the same time locations have been muddled — the setting of the legend is being progressively shifted from the mainland to Wasini Island, where it holds greatest contemporary relevance. Although Shirazi claim to have been settled there earlier, the Vumba did not move to Wasini until the first half of the 18th century; the mainland village of Shirazi did not become the Chifundi capital until after the fall of Tumbe. The first Chifundi settlement on the eastern end of Wasini Island is said to have been at Bogoa: Mkwiro was not founded until Bogoa was abandoned following a cholera epidemic in the second half of the 19th century.

The legend of Mwaozi Tumbe as cultural product

In 1986 Mkwiro was a relatively quiet village with no facilities for visitors. It is still a comparative backwater, but now hosts a dive operation that takes tourists to Kisite Marine National Park and the neighbouring Mpunguti Marine National Reserve. Since January 2006 it has also provided a local base for the UK-registered company Global Vision International (GVI), which organises volunteer expeditions to Kenya focusing on wildlife research, marine mammal studies, and community development. GVI's community work in Mkwiro has included working with the Mkwiro Youth Conservation Group to develop a village cultural tour.

One of the highlights of the proposed tour is a visit to Mwaozi Tumbe's grave at Bogoa, where fee-paying tourists will be told her story. To this end volunteers have helped to compile different English versions of Mwaozi's story and other local legends. The most recent of these compilations draws in part on the version that I recorded in 1986.[8] It also incorporates an apparently independent tradition that was collected at the start of the project.

According to this version, Mwaozi Tumbe was a king's daughter who came to East Africa with the first Shirazi (Chifundi) immigrants. They sailed from Persia in seven dhows under the leadership of Hassan bin Ali, and each dhow landed at a favourable location. The boat which carried Mwaozi Tumbe came to rest in the Diani-Msambweni area, and the village in which the Shirazi settled was named Tumbe after her.

Thereafter the Shirazi spread down the coast, where their closest neighbours were the Vumba of Vumba Kuu and Wasini Island. Fishermen from the Funzi area later settled at the eastern end of Wasini, at a place that they called 'Six Palms', now known as Bogoa. But the Vumba of Wasini became jealous of the beautiful drums that the Shirazi carved on the island and the magical rhythms that they made, and so plotted to steal them. They pretended to be at peace with the Shirazi, and one of the Vumba married Mwaozi Tumbe and persuaded her to use the trick of false alarms so that they could take the village and its drums. Once they had succeeded, Mwaozi went back with them to Wasini. But the Vumba were now afraid that she might betray them in turn, and when they asked her whether she could, she replied in the affirmative. And so they took her to Kisite…

Mwaozi Tumbe's grave is now set to become a tourist attraction, bringing her legend to a wider audience.

The rest of this account is a simplified version of the tradition about the gravestone and rain-making ritual that I recorded in 1986. The first part is fascinating because it represents a further stage in the mythologisation of Mwaozi Tumbe. Her tale is woven into a version of the Shirazi origin myth — the story of seven ships — variants of which are told all along the East African coast. Mwaozi is no longer merely the aggrieved daughter of a local ruler, but a Persian princess who founds a new settlement in her own name. After this

royal beginning, the action shifts to Wasini Island, where the Vumba are envious of the drums and music that her people make. As in the Segeju version of the legend, her deception of the Chifundi is prompted by a husband, in this case a Vumba man. And as in all versions of the tale that we know, this deception is said to have been carried out by means of a clever ruse. The latter is surely a motif borrowed from folklore, a relatively early addition to the tale which gave it much of its original narrative power.

In the absence of independent sources, we may never know the truth or otherwise of Mwaozi Tumbe's alleged betrayal. But we can be sure that it has evolved in response to the changing circumstances of its telling. The tale is now set to become a new kind of product, a bricolage of oral and written versions that serves the multiple purposes of cultural heritage, a legend for our contemporary world.

PHOTOS ARE THE AUTHOR'S OWN UNLESS INDICATED

Acknowledgements

In addition to everyone acknowledged in my 1993 paper, I am very grateful to Graham Corti for providing me with up-to-date information on Global Vision International's activities in Mkwiro, including the unpublished versions of Mwaozi Tumbe's legend that are discussed here. Thanks also to Rowana Walton and Amy Collins at GVI for facilitating this. Further details of GVI's work are available on their website at www.gvi.co.uk.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Martin Walsh is an anthropologist who has written extensively about East Africa. After completing a study of the Sangu of south-west Tanzania he went to Mombasa in 1985 to study women's groups on the Kenya coast, and it was this work that took him to Wasini island and Mkwiro village. Encouraged by the linguist Derek Nurse, he collected data on the Chifundi dialect of Swahili, including a version of the legend of Mwaozi Tumbe. Thus began a love affair with Indian Ocean islands that has continued to the present. He now divides his time between Zanzibar and Cambridge, where he works as a freelance consultant and occasional university lecturer.

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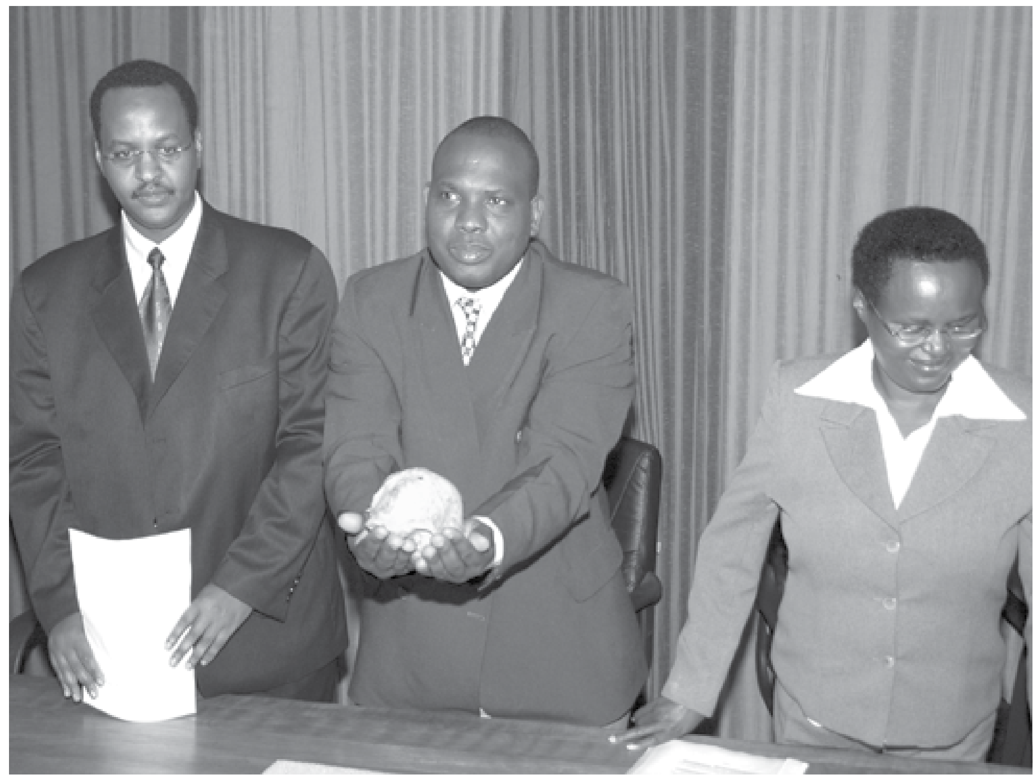

Dr Fredrick Manthi displays the surprisingly small *Homo erectus* cranium at the press conference held in Nairobi to announce the new find. He is flanked by Dr Idle Farah (left), NMK Director-General, and Dr Emma Mbua (right), Head of the Department of Earth Sciences.

Questioning the ancestry of *Homo erectus*

Dr Fredrick Kyalo Manthi, Department of Earth Sciences, National Museums of Kenya

Two new fossils, the main one a cranium discovered by Dr Fredrick Manthi in Ileret on the eastern shore of Lake Turkana, and described in the journal *Nature* in August 2007, have cast new light on the important but poorly understood evolutionary history of our own genus, *Homo*. Both their relative geological ages and their physical attributes directly call into question earlier held views about the ancestry of our own species.

Humans are innately curious about their origins, and a number of theories have been brought to the fore to explain the story of human ancestry. Key among these theories is the evolutionary explanation for human origin, which derives its strength from the human fossil remains that have been found in different parts of the world.

The impetus to provide a scientific explanation for human ancestry became apparent towards the end of the 19th century when scholars, particularly in Europe, intensified research aimed at unearthing fossil remains with potential to shed light on the origin of humanity.

Despite their big difference in cranial capacity, KNM-ER 1470 (right) and KNM-ER 1813 (below), were both originally classified as *Homo habilis,* up to now seen as directly ancestral to *Homo erectus.* The newly-discovered *H. erectus* cranium overlaps in size and age with *H. habilis* and calls into question traditional views of *Homo* ancestry.

This bore fruit, a classic example being the discovery of 'Java Man' on the island of Java, Indonesia, during a field expedition led by the Dutchman Eugene Dubois (1891–1894). After a detailed examination of the skull cap, the specimen was named *Pithecanthropus erectus*, meaning erect ape man, later renamed *Homo erectus*.

Charles Darwin and his cohorts (e.g. Thomas Huxley) had by 1863 observed the anatomical relatedness of humans and African apes, and concluded that pre-human fossils if ever found would be ancestral to both apes and humans and would probably be found in Africa.

For a long time, Africa was, however, viewed as a non-probable place for the birth of humanity. This was particularly evident in 1925 when most Western palaeoanthropologists refused to acknowledge Raymond Dart's discovery of the Taung Child (*Australopithecus africanus*) in South Africa. However, with more discoveries of *A. africanus* in South Africa in the subsequent years, and also the discovery of the famous *Paranthropus boisei* ('Zinjanthropus') in Tanzania by a team led by Louis and Mary Leakey, the earlier perceptions about Africa began to change. Africa became the focus, and has since yielded the richest human fossil record, thus significantly contributing to the understanding of the evolutionary history of our own species.

It is noteworthy that modern humans are a product of a mosaic of evolutionary trajectories, some of which are extremely old (e.g. the ability to habitually walk on two legs) while others are very new (e.g. the large brain associated with *Homo sapiens*, which is only a few hundred thousand years old). Fossils ascribable to the genus *Homo,* to which we belong, first appear at about 2.5 million years ago and have been attributed to *Homo habilis*. This species was inaugurated in 1964 by Louis Leakey and his co-workers (e.g. Caird 1994) following the discovery of a lower jaw and other associated elements in the Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania. The brain capacity of this species was larger than that of earlier species. When Louis Leakey and his colleagues identified *H. habilis*, the new species was treated as an emblem for the ancient lineage of humanity. In simple terms, the species was seen to represent the transition between 'ape-ness' and 'human-ness'; the australopithecines were hominids whose characteristics were primarily ape-like, whereas *H. habilis*, *H. erectus* and *Homo sapiens* were noticeably human (Caird 1994).

In spite of the continually-increasing number of fossil remains attributable to the early members of the genus *Homo*, there is still much to learn about the origin of this species. This is because specimens ascribable to *H. habilis* in particular are so varied that scientists debate whether it is really one or several species. As an example, specimen KNM-ER 1470 from the eastern side of Lake Turkana, Kenya, had a brain volume almost a third larger than that of another *H. habilis* specimen, KNM-ER 1813, among other more ape-like characteristics. This and other observations have led some scientists to reclassify KNM-

ER 1470 as a large-brained *Australopithecus habilis* rather than *H. habilis* or *Homo rudolfensis* (Sloan 2004).

Human evolution in the last two million years has traditionally been portrayed as a linear progression of three species: *H. habilis* to *H. erectus* to ourselves, *H. sapiens*. Two new fossils, the main one (a cranium) discovered by the author in Ileret on the eastern shore of Lake Turkana, and described in the journal *Nature* (Spoor *et al.* 2007) have, however, cast new light on the important but poorly understood evolutionary history of our own genus, *Homo*.

Discovered in 2000 during a field exploration by the Koobi Fora Research Project, led by Dr Meave Leakey and affiliated with the National Museums of Kenya (NMK), the new fossils are significant because both their relative geological ages and their physical attributes directly call into question the earlier held views about the ancestry of our own species.

Dated to about 1.55 million years ago (mya), the cranium, which has been attributed to *H. erectus,* is exceptionally well preserved, and belonged to a young adult or a late sub-adult. One of the striking characteristics of this specimen is its size, as it is the smallest *H. erectus* found so far anywhere in the world. The variation in size of East African *H. erectus* fossils, beginning from the Ileret specimen to a large specimen discovered previously at Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania, almost rivals that shown by modern gorillas. Given that great sexual dimorphism is thought to be a primitive or ancestral feature during human evolution, the new find from Ileret implies that *H. erectus* was not as human-like as once thought (Spoor *et al.* 2007).

A second specimen also found in Ileret is an upper jaw bone (maxilla) of *H. habilis*, dating to 1.44 million years ago, which is more recent than previously known fossils of this species (Spoor *et al.* 2007). Comparing the two specimens (the cranium and the jaw) from Ileret, the late survival of *H. habilis* shows that this species lived alongside *H. erectus* in eastern Africa for nearly half a million years. This co-

The *H. erectus* cranium found at Ileret is the smallest *H. erectus* found anywhere in the world. The wide variation in size of East African *H. erectus* fossils raises the issue of sexual dimorphism, suggesting that *H. erectus* was not as human-like as once thought.

The *H. erectus* cranium (left) at 1.55 mya and the *H. habilis* mandible at 1.44 mya, both found at Ileret, show that the two species lived alongside each other in Kenya for nearly half a million years, making it unlikely that the former evolved from the latter as previously thought.

existence makes it unlikely that *H. erectus* evolved from *H. habilis*, as has traditionally be argued (e.g. Sloan 2004).

Considering that *H. erectus* first appears in the fossil record at around two million years ago (e.g. Caird 1994), it may be noted that both species must have had their origins between two and three million years ago, a time from which few human fossils are known. The fact that they stayed separate as individual species for such a long time suggests that each of them exploited their own ecological niche, hence avoiding direct competition (Spoor *et al.* 2007).

The discovery of the Ileret hominids therefore leads to a number of questions, such as who were the possible candidates for the ancestry of *H. habilis* and *H. erectus?* From the Ileret discoveries, it is apparent that *H. habilis* was a sister species of *H. erectus*, living broadly contemporaneously, rather than the mother species with its evolutionary descendant. Although it is difficult to tell who the possible ancestors of these two species were, it is likely that the two species had a common ancestor living in Africa between two and three million years ago.

The search for human origins continues although, unfortunately, fossiliferous sedimentary rocks representing this time period are rare in Africa.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF KENYA

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Jomo Kenyatta: Manager of Mau Mau terrorists or inspired first president?

This article by James Franks presents information from his book *Scram from Kenya!* an independent and unbiased account of the Mau Mau movement in Kenya based on some 200 printed sources and interviews with all communities affected, white, brown and black.

James Franks

Above:
A depiction of Kenyatta's arrest by the British authorities on the night of 20 October 1952 at his Gatundu home. Artist unknown. Source: NMK Archives.

Residents of Kenya and East Africa need no introduction to *Mzee* Kenyatta and may well know that in 1953 he was tried for 'managing' Mau Mau and held in a 'prison in the wilderness' until 1961.

This article looks mainly at events surrounding Kenyatta before and during the years of his detention and through to Kenya's independence as 1963 came to its end. It asks whether or not he 'managed' Mau Mau.[1]

But first a context commencing with a brief chronology of events between 1945 and 1965 insofar as they concerned Kenya:

- 1945 World War Two ends with defeat of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan by the Allies but with Great Britain deeply in debt to USA and India and

with many British people disenchanted with the concept of empire. The former greatest empire in the world lacked both power and will-power. Nevertheless, in London the *Kenya Settlement Handbook* states of Kenya: "The country is very young…there is still ample room for more white people to speed the economic progress of all its people".

- 1946 Jomo Kenyatta (and demobilised African troops) return home to Kenya.
- 1952-3 a time of mass meetings, state of emergency declared.
- 1953-6 terrorism, civil war.
- 1957-60 suppression and detention of terrorists and their leaders.
- 1960 Corfield Report *Historical Survey of the Origins and Growth of Mau Mau* published by the Colonial Office.
- 1960-63 from colony to independence. Transfer of power from Britain to the new Republic of Kenya.

Jomo Kenyatta, in dark suit, with two friends, 1920. He was known as Johnstone Kamau at the time, adopting the name Kenyatta in 1927.

Kenya was a British colony and protectorate until it became a republic in December 1963. Kenyatta was born in 1897-8 at Ngenda in the Central Highlands. He was of ordinary small-farming *shamba* folk. His name was given as Kamau wa Ngendi when he enrolled at the local Church of Scotland mission school in 1909. His early life was typical of any young Kikuyu boy at that time. He was duly initiated and with time became a member of the warrior class, having taken part in appropriate rites of passage.(2)

When he left school, records show his spoken and written English were below average and his teacher would not, initially, recommend him for employment. In 1920 he married a Kikuyu woman, Grace Wahu, 'outside the church'. About this time he was known to his friends as Johnstone Kamau or KN Johnstone and there are photographs of him looking rather debonair, wearing European dress.

He represented Kikuyu land interests and developed local political affiliations. He 'enjoyed a drink' and by 1925 he was actively employed in the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA), an association that continued throughout his life. In about 1927 he began to use the name 'Kenyatta' as well as 'Johnstone' that he had adopted as a young man.

He represented the KCA in England, where he made influential friends. He visited European countries, including Russia, and contributed articles to left-wing newspapers. The *Daily Worker,* a Communist newspaper, titled him 'Comrade Kenyatta' and showed a photograph of him wearing a military outfit. During the 1930s, with fascist Germany in the ascendancy over the Channel, many British people leaned to the left politically. A slogan later was 'lives there a man with soul so dead he wasn't in the '30s Red'.

Kenyatta at that time attended part-time courses at University College, London and the London School of Economics where he improved his education and wrote *Facing Mount Kenya,* his magnum opus. We will hear mention of this book again later. He gave numerous talks on current issues, lived with several women while in Europe until, in later years, he worked as a farm-hand in Sussex where he married Edna Clarke, a children's governess. He was a popular regular in the local village pub and later said that he was happier with European than African people, adding that the English were wonderful people to live with — in England. In 1946, at the end of his second stay in Europe, he returned to Kenya leaving Edna, his second wife, and two children in Sussex.

He was the first to leave the ship at Mombasa and was greeted by his first wife, Grace Wahu, and their two children. An enthusiastic crowd greeted his arrival at Nairobi railway station. Henceforth his time was to be spent addressing increasingly larger meetings, culminating in 1951-2 with crowds up to 30,000 in Nairobi, Nyeri and Kiambu.

Kenyatta was not the only person to speak at these meetings but he was by far the most effective. Often, during a meeting, he was recalled to the platform several times. Other speakers often included committed Mau Mau leaders but Kenyatta spoke always against that movement. He spoke of *'kazi na uhuru'* (work and independence) as the way ahead for black Africa.

Everyone agreed that the term 'Mau Mau' was not known in any of the African languages and, indeed, an official report from the Legislative Council (LEGCO) stated that there was no convincing evidence of the existence of a secret organisation called Mau Mau and if it existed, which it didn't, there was no doubt that its significance could be only minimal and that its importance was being exaggerated. One cannot be more explicit than that! But increasing numbers of loyal (to the government) Africans were being forced to take Mau Mau oaths or die painfully, and European farms were attacked and livestock killed or cruelly maimed.

On 21 October 1952 a State of Emergency was declared in Kenya. Jomo Kenyatta and many others were arrested. Kenyatta, Fred Kubai, Achieng Onego, Bildad Kaggia, Paul Ngei and Kunga Kurumba were charged with management of an unlawful society known as Mau Mau, conspiring to commit a felony by act of physical force or by threat or intimidation; to compel persons to take an oath; conspiring to promote feelings of ill-will and hostility between different classes of the population and inciting disaffection against the government. Against Kaggia there was a further charge of being a member of Mau Mau. Some years later they might have been dubbed 'The Mau Mau Six' and for convenience, that is the title we will use.

The trial opened at Kapenguria, some 250 miles north of Nairobi, on 24 November 1953. 'Remote' is the word that most readily comes to mind when referring to Kapenguria.

All six were found guilty. The trial was closely recorded and has been the subject of much debate and controversy. Was Kenyatta justly convicted of managing Mau Mau? Delf, Kenyatta's biographer, sounded many people over a period of time. Some suggested that over the years he lost control of events. Fitz de Souza, one of his counsel said, many years later, that "Kenyatta was a full nationalist, he wanted independence, he wanted everything but he didn't want violence". And another barrister added that the Director of Prosecutions "told us during the trial that he, himself, believed that Kenyatta was not the leader of Mau Mau". There were petitions to the Privy Council, which were dismissed.[3]

Jomo Kenyatta addresses a huge crowd in Kiambu, 1952, months before his arrest by the British. Next to him is colonial chief Josiah Njonjo, father of Charles Njonjo who was later to be independent Kenya's first Attorney General.

The other people on trial with Kenyatta

At this point one should, perhaps, consider the backgrounds of the other five people on trial with Kenyatta, the best known of whom was undoubtedly **Bildad Kaggia** who in 1975 published *Roots of Freedom.* His boyhood was not dissimilar to Kenyatta's, 'son of a shamba' and missionary school education. He served in the army in Egypt, Palestine and Britain in the Second World War and later became a Christian preacher. He was arrested for so doing and then formed his own church, *Dini ya Kaggia* which, he wrote, "spread like wildfire". As a general secretary of Kenya African Union (KAU) he made his presence felt; "see Kaggia if you want to know…". He refers to himself as "extremist and revolutionary". He was an active member of both KAU and Mau Mau. On the platform at the Nyeri mass meeting, the meeting which really started the ball rolling, he was one of the speakers who made 'attacking speeches' while Kenyatta 'soft-pedalled'. During the trial he stated that Kenyatta was never a member of the Mau Mau Central Committee, and although Mau Mau looked upon Kenyatta as the national leader, it was not under his direct control. Indeed, when Kenyatta was asked to meet the Mau Mau leaders for the first time he did not know who comprised the committee!

As far back as 1950 **Fred Kubai's** name was linked with that of Makhan Singh[(4)] and both were arrested as 'dangerous and unscrupulous agitators'. He is listed with Kaggia, Ngei and others whose names appear as 'militants' in future years.

Then there was **Paul Ngei** whose name is occasionally listed with that of Kaggia in matters concerned with KAU . He, too, spoke from the platform at Nyeri where he 'openly incited police to disobey orders'. He also questioned the authenticity of Kenyatta's book, *Facing Mount Kenya.* There is reference below to abuse. In 1959 Oginga Odinga, a colleague of Kenyatta and one of the senior African leaders, was 'considerably shaken' when he received a long letter from Ngei denouncing Kenyatta as being 'on the side of the government'.

Achieng Oneko, the fifth person on trial, was yet another speaker from the platform at the Nyeri mass meeting. He 'ranged wide' and spoke for 41 minutes — less than half the time spent by Kenyatta but longer than most. The Administration's reporter regarded Oneka as "obviously fanatically anti-British" and, he said, "speeches of this nature to primitive masses are extremely harmful". This in contrast to his report on Kenyatta's speech which, he said, "laid down the law" and "despised bribery and corruption". He regretted that Kenyatta "did not denounce Mau Mau".

The sixth person on trial at Kapenguria was **Kungu Kurumba** about whom almost nothing is recorded.

But innocent or not, the Mau Mau Six were sent to detention at Lokitaung in the arid Turkana region of northwest Kenya. "Although blessed with a name", wrote Kenyatta after independence, "the amenities at Lokitaung consisted virtually of a police post and a prison compound, the latter thoughtfully constructed while Appeals were being heard." He refers to spindly bush, semi-desert, "a lifeless place except for the occasional *manyattas* of nomadic herdsmen who lived alongside insects, snakes and birds…the place was barely accessible except by air". He added, however, that "this should not be presented as a kind of Devil's Island, with floggings and tortures and wanton neglect, although conditions were bleak."[5]

So much for the background to the detention of the Mau Mau Six. With their leaders incarcerated, Mau Mau activities might have been expected to cease or, at least, lose impetus. However, attacks on European (and other) farms increased in frequency and severity. Livestock was killed and maimed, farms were set on fire and although the feared 'night of the long knives' (when all Europeans would be killed during the course of one night) did not materialise, some Europeans and Indians were murdered. Many African farmers were killed.

Then, in 1953, there was the murder of an African chief and more than 100 African villagers 'loyal' to the colonial government, which became known as the Lari Massacre. A nasty affair where the villagers were burned to death in their huts and the chief cut into pieces. This was followed by a successful Mau Mau raid on Naivasha Police Station armoury which yielded much-needed firearms. Mau Mau was becoming a force to reckon with even though its leaders were in isolation.

Prison in the wilderness

"Prison in the wilderness" were words used by Kenyatta to describe the time he spent in detention. By 1954 there were two prisons in the north of Kenya for leading members of Mau Mau — a small one in Lokitaung for the leaders and a larger one in Lodwar for others. The Mau Mau Six and a few other detainees were lodged at Lokitaung. District Commissioner Leslie Whitehouse governed the district and became known as 'Jomo's jailor'. Whitehouse had been instructed to visit Lokitaung at least once a month, and was instructed that the care of Kenyatta was now his most important duty: The British did not want a martyr on their hands, with all the adverse publicity that would bring. Kenyatta was now 60, a great age by African standards, so he was excused hard labour and appointed camp cook for the six prisoners in the camp. It was a light job but involved long hours and it proved too much for him. There was friction among the prisoners, and as the others refused to share a cell with him Kenyatta was given one to himself. [6]

They slept on string mats on the floor with a single blanket for each of them. Their food was that of a 'common convict'. Kenyatta did not complain or apply for a special diet. There were no radios or newspapers, and correspondence in and out was strictly limited and censored but "Mzee did have access to a few books" wrote Whitehouse. "In particular I recall he studied comparative religion."

The prisoners' appeal to the Privy Council was refused and it was announced that Kenyatta would never be released. He ceased to receive Whitehouse at the prison gate and conduct him round the prison as had been his wont. But even then, Whitehouse wrote, "Mzee himself never uttered a single word of complaint. That was not his way."

With the exception of one other prisoner, Waruhia Itote, (more widely known as 'General China'), a significant Mau Mau leader, Kenyatta was socially isolated from other detainees including the other five of the Mau Mau Six, all of whom treated him with contempt.

Friction between the prisoners increased. A Whitehouse report referred to the antagonism that built up between Kenyatta and younger prisoners as time went by and which came to a head when Kenyatta was attacked by a fellow prisoner with a knife. Had not 'China' (Itote) intervened, Kenyatta would most certainly have been killed.

Paul Ngei, one of the six, was arraigned for having shouted at Kenyatta that he was a thief and reiterated his abuse that Kenyatta had been nothing but an agricultural labourer in England. He was supported by Kaggia and Kubai. They alleged, too, that money sent to them during the trial had never been received by them but had been kept by Kenyatta. The district officer's report made close reference to the tormenting Kenyatta suffered at the hands of the other prisoners regarding his book *Facing Mount Kenya* and his other academic achievements. "It is hardly to be wondered at that Kenyatta became almost paranoid and believed the others were plotting against him". 'China' took no part when the other prisoners went on a hunger strike in protest against what they called the filthy habits of Kenyatta acting as cook.

Turkana, the district in which Lokitaung was situated, received very few visitors in normal times, but in 1954 high ranking officials began to arrive. Whitehouse listed six such visitors from the provincial

The Mau Mau Six minus one — Kenyatta with Fred Kubai, Bildad Kaggia, Paul Ngei and Kunga Kurumba in detention in Lokitaung. Missing from the photo is Achieng Oneko.

commissioner down. Medical officers were concerned for Kenyatta's health. Lt Col De Robeck, with whom Kenyatta and 'China' were on very good terms, occasionally lent them books.

Kenyatta's heart rate was reported to be so high that he was expected to 'snuff it' at any moment. Plans were made for the immediate visit of a high-powered doctor, and an unprejudiced post mortem in the event of his demise. Others became concerned, and 'many important visitors, including the governor, Sir Evelyn Baring, flew into Lokitaung to see the prisoners'.

The Lokitaung annual report for 1955 referred to 'Kenyatta and Co' seeming to attract the attention of all and sundry officials who found it their duty to visit Lokitaung, adding that the prisoners' egos were done 'a lot of good' by the attention, but that they were not in the least repentant. 'The antagonism between Kenyatta and the others continues', the report concluded. There were several attempts to attack him, but the annual report stated that the six Mau Mau convicts gave less trouble than their warders.

Bildad Kaggia describes the routine at Lokitaung, where 'there was little variety'. Kenyatta was awoken at three to prepare breakfast for the others, who were roused at five 'by the guard loudly rattling the huge metal padlock on our front door'. There was no furniture in the place, no curtains and no glass in the windows, only bare rooms with bars. Each prisoner had a mug of maize porridge to eat. Kenyatta stayed behind to wash up while the others were taken away to dig trenches much of the day. They were allowed to talk among themselves, but the guards spoke no Kikuyu and were not allowed to speak to the prisoners. 'We were completely cut off from the outside world,' wrote Kaggia. De Robeck was popular with all the prisoners. Whitehouse had substituted rock breaking for the arduous trench digging, and de Robeck employed the prisoners on using this material constructively within the compound and around other government buildings. He encouraged them to care for their civilian clothes and cultivate vegetables. Nevertheless time passed slowly and it would be more years yet before they would be released.

During the whole period that Kenyatta was at Lokitaung he was never treated by his fellow prisoners as one would expect them to follow their leader. He was constantly apart from the rest in all respects. Never the 'manager of Mau Mau', and never shown the respect one would expect a leader — *the* leader — to be shown.

Words cannot convey the tedium and discomfort the prisoners endured from 1953 to 1961 when they eventually emerged from the arid wilderness of Lokitaung. That said, however, Whitehouse's biographer suggests that "Kenyatta went into prison as a self-seeking and irresponsible agitator, a sick man with a short life expectancy. He came out of prison with his health much improved, a mature, hardworking elder statesman with a breadth of understanding rare in African politics, and a willingness to work with the British to achieve peaceful independence". For this transformation she gives credit to Whitehouse. And Kenyatta's son by his English wife claimed that Whitehouse "saved my father's life by some act of bravery".

The release from prison

The release of Kenyatta came in two stages. The first was to move him from complete inaccessibility to a place where people could see and consult him. If this was successful, his final release would follow. There was no rigid timetable, but it was to take place in the summer of 1961: the date would be announced simultaneously in the House of Commons and in Kenya. Although by then the idea of Kenyatta's release had become accepted, it was still a blow to many Europeans and had to be clearly seen as a joint decision by the governments in Nairobi and at Westminster.

On 4 April 1961, Kenyatta was flown from Lodwar to Maralal, 'an attractive hill station'. Murray-Brown, Kenyatta's biographer, referred to Maralal as "an African

Kenyatta meets the world's press in Maralal, in this first interview after being released from prison in 1961.

delphi which attracted representatives of different political parties, of Christian denominations . . . of racial communities, world powers, lawyers, photographers". They came to see Kenyatta. On the eve of his release he broadcast to the people of Kenya, appealing for calm.

He met 'the world's press' on 11 April, some eight years since judgment at Kapenguria. He wore his leather jacket and his face was thin, almost harsh, his voice slow but controlled. He dismissed the Corfield Report, which referred to him as leader of Mau Mau, as "a pack of lies, collected from needy informers", but said he bore no grudge. He considered the governor to have been "poorly advised". He claimed he had never been a violent man. "My whole life has been anti-violence" and would continue to be so. He sought immediate independence for Kenya and vowed that he would remain an African nationalist to the end. There had been great fear of Russian infiltration into Africa but Kenyatta denied any communist affiliations. His visits to Russia in the 30s had been for educational purposes, he said. As to the future, no one had reason to fear. All citizens of an independent Kenya would be protected in their persons and their property by an African government — both forest fighters and loyalists, "since they are all of them brothers and sisters" — and the Europeans who chose to stay in the country, provided they gave up their 'big boss' mentality.

KP Shah, a businessman cum politician, was one of a group of Indian politicians to visit Kenyatta at Maralal. In earlier years he had supported Kenyatta on the Executive of KAU. Shah was delighted to see, when they were provided with a meal before leaving, that Kenyatta remembered that he was a vegetarian. "Such small things," he remarked, "make a great man." Shah became an active and enthusiastic politician and member of LEGCO in 1961.

Michael Blundell also made the journey to Maralal to visit Kenyatta. It was the first occasion their paths crossed. Blundell, later Sir Michael Blundell, represented the

white settlers in Kenya and at the Lancaster House conferences in London where terms of agreement were worked out between representatives of the British government, European and Indian settlers and the African community.

Blundell's talk with Kenyatta included the land problems of the poorer Kikuyu. In reply to a direct question, Blundell told Kenyatta that the Europeans disliked him because they associated him with "the evil side of Mau Mau" and considered that he had planned and initiated the movement. They felt that he hated them and would not treat them fairly if he ever achieved power. Kenyatta said this was a wrong analysis of his feelings, although he was determined to see that Africans were the leaders and first class citizens in their own country. Kenyatta seemed to Blundell to be one of the ablest and most intelligent Africans he had met. Above all, he was conscious of being a leader of the Kikuyu people. "Every time we mentioned their problems his eyes appeared to light up and his manner became more animated."

Kenyatta was allowed to return to Kikuyuland on 14 August 1961. A new house had been built for him at Gatundu, and his family and retinue awaited him. So did 150 police who were on duty, and some 10,000 Africans who were in festive mood. His text on this occasion was 'love thy neighbour'.

At that time the BBC television series *Face to Face* screened 45-minute celebrity interviews and was among the earliest programmes to encourage penetrating, indeed embarrassing, questions. Kenyatta appeared on 26 November wearing a Luo hat ('to symbolise his national status'), his rings and his carved walking stick. 'He carried the interview well.' He had the makings of a statesman.

His emergence coincided with British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's announcement of 'the wind of change' that was blowing through Africa. A wind of which Macmillan had a vision during the early 1940s when Great Britain was under urgent threat with Nazi Germany poised to invade the British Isles. Now he spoke, in South Africa, of "the wind of change blowing through the continent [of Africa] whether we like it or not".

Kenya was not the first colony to be prepared for independence. Part of the process involved conferences of members of British government with future leaders of the emerging 'republic' in London, at Lancaster House. Now, Kenyatta was a member of the Kenyan delegation to assemble there.

Kenya's governor Renison had referred to Kenyatta as "the African leader to darkness and death who had been sentenced by due process of law to seven years' imprisonment". Renison relied on the government's own Corfield Report published in 1960 for this assessment and Corfield was convinced that Kenyatta was rightly found guilty of managing Mau Mau, from which it followed that he was the man primarily responsible for all which was evil that had happened in Kenya during the Emergency.

Kenyatta's response was typical of many that he would make in the next year or two. "I am not," he said, "for those who have been in the forest or detention camps, I am for the African people. All of them. I do not support or fight for any particular individual, race or tribe, but for all the people." As to the future, no one had reason to fear. All citizens of an independent Kenya would be protected in their persons and their property by an African government. During 1961 more than 6,000 Europeans left Kenya.

Proposals for Kenya included tripling the land settlement measures which improved prospects for 70,000 landless African families in the 'one million acre scheme'. It was designed 'to avoid the danger of tribal warfare and possible bloodshed — African and European alike — on a large scale.

Speeches from African leaders became the order of the day. Kenyatta made one in 1962 which suggests he appreciated the need to get to grips with the outlaws in the forest. "We are," he said, "determined to have independence in peace, and we shall not allow hooligans to rule Kenya. We must have

President Jomo Kenyatta inspecting the last contingent of British troops to leave Kenya, the Sutherland Highlanders, in 1963.

no hatred towards one another." Mau Mau was a disease which had been eradicated, and should be forgotten.

Jomo Kenyatta was appointed prime minister and increasingly addressed as *Mzee* (elder, a term of respect). His government included a Kamba, a Kisii, a Maragoli, a Taita and a European of South African origin, while his parliamentary secretaries included another European, an Asian and a Maasai. Old KAU leaders and men who stood trial with Kenyatta in 1953 were balanced with the new Kenya African National Union (KANU) men who had gained prominence in their absence. KANU had won over many members of the opposition parties by the time independence arrived.

In 1963 Kenyatta became more conciliatory towards the European community. The East African Standard of 24 April recorded a speech in which he admitted that he had himself suffered for a long time but was not bitter. He was aware of the fear and hatred on the part of many Europeans, and he asked those who still had hatred in their hearts to cast it aside. "We cannot build a happy and progressive nation as long as men harbour ill-feelings about the past". He offered "forgive and forget" as a slogan for the future. Then on 12 August 1963 at Nakuru came the speech which made the greatest impression on the European community. Some 300 settlers heard Kenyatta make it clear that his speech was policy, not platitude. "I am," he said, "a politician, but I am a farmer like you . . . I think the soil joins us all."

The most disturbing point among them was suspicion; fear. "We must also learn to forgive one another. There is no perfect society anywhere. Whether we are white, brown or black, we are not angels. We are human beings and as such we are bound to make mistakes. If you have done harm to me, it is for me to forgive you. If I have done harm to you, it is for you to forgive me." It was the government's policy that everyone should work together for the benefit of Kenya. "Some of you may be worried what will happen . . . Let me set you at rest that Kenyatta has no intention whatever to look backwards . . . We are going to forgive the past and look forward to the future."

During interviews 30 years on, Europeans still living in Kenya who attended the meeting or who heard reports at the time reaffirmed that his speech provided them with the confidence they needed to stay on. Jasper Evans (who in 1953 had believed that giving the settlers a free hand to recruit Maasai levies and eliminate the Mau Mau and all their followers was the only course for the Europeans to follow), had been reassured. He stayed. Up at Timau the Murrays had already committed themselves to stay on but the speech gave them encouragement and, Murray believed, produced a more peaceful handover. "We were," he believed, "incredibly lucky having Kenyatta, no shadow of doubt about that." Farmer John Carver recalled a friend "who was very, very right wing" and was involved politically. "He went up to listen and came back a changed man." He had planned to leave Kenya, but he stayed on. The speech was, said Carver, "a wonderful thing".

Blundell confirmed that the apprehensions of European settlers were allayed and the atmosphere created by it enabled the land transfer programme to be carried out over several years without tension or fear. And an 'influential Indian' noticed a new element in Kenyatta's reception: "As he appeared in the hall people stood up in thousands in reverence, as one would expect royalty to be treated . . . he had become more than just a political leader."

A few months after his August speech at Nakuru, Kenyatta made a similar speech to an African audience. 'Forgive and forget' was the message he gave to his own people, who were divided among themselves. He suggested "ignorance, sickness and poverty" as the true enemies, not the Europeans.

The reassurance Kenyatta gave the European and Asian populations was not given for entirely altruistic reasons. Kenya's immediate future depended on the contribution of the immigrants, Asian traders, clerks and craftsmen.

As independence approached, fellow-nationalist Oginga Odinga made a nation-wide tour to explain policy to the people. He spoke of the need for everyone "to re-orientate themselves to a changed condition", and he explained the principle of *harambee*— working together — which had to be carried out in local government.

Jock Dawson recalled that Odinga hosted several informal lunches during which he encouraged European farmers to stay on after independence. During a formal luncheon at the British embassy in Addis Ababa,

This article is based on chapters in *Scram from Kenya! From Colony to Republic 1946-1963,* a balanced account of a significant period in Kenya's history seen through the eyes of people involved. The book is the product of more than 10 years of research, drawing on published materials but also including hitherto unpublished accounts of some 60 people, black, brown and white, who were involved in these momentous events. Audio-taped interviews, biographies, diaries, contemporary correspondence and documents are used to construct an account of significant happenings. The voices of all sides in the struggle are included.

The book's title is drawn from a speech made by the then up-and-coming Kenyan leader Tom Mboya at the Conference of All-African People in December 1958: "Tell these colonial nations — your time is past, Africa must be free, scram from Africa".

For reviews of the book, visit the website www.scramfromkenya.co.uk. Copies may be purchased direct from the website or from ebay.

Franks would like to see the book on the curriculum of all courses concerned with 20th century African history and British imperial history. "We need a balanced view of events", he says.

Ethiopia, the emerging statesman proposed a toast to 'the Queen'.

In Westminster, the transfer of power went smoothly. Colonial Secretary Maudling referred to "an atmosphere of which Britain could be proud". After independence Duncan Sandys, the minister who shortly before independence had abruptly retired Governor Patrick Renison, recorded that "if every Commonwealth statesman was as wise as Jomo Kenyatta, there would be no problems in the Commonwealth".

Sadly, the former Mau Mau leaders did not take so comfortably to *uhuru* (independence). Field Marshal Musa Mwariama who had been an 'outlaw in the forest' since the end of the 'war' could not adjust and a week or so after independence there was 'an incident'. He was sentenced by Judge JR McReady, now working for the Republic of Kenya, to serve 'five years and three months' and taken to Kamiti maximum security prison. He was not alone.(7)

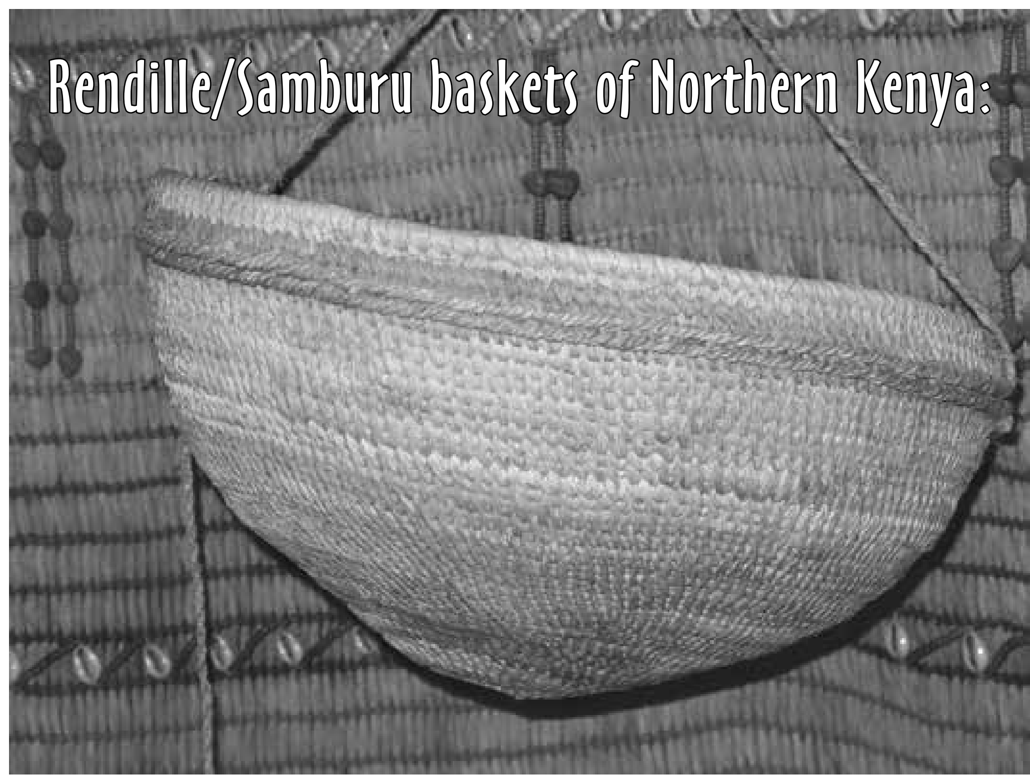
So, was Jomo Kenyatta 'manager of Mau Mau terrorists' or inspired first president of the Kenya? As the tutor might say, "Discuss!"

PHOTOS FROM THE ARCHIVES OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF KENYA

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
James Franks first visited Kenya in 1947 as a young subaltern in the Royal Engineers. He planned to settle in the country when he had qualified in England as a chartered surveyor. In the event it was to be 1989 before he returned. During that visit he came to the conclusion that there should be an objective and balanced account of the post-war years leading to Kenya's independence, and attempted to fill the gap. Franks has practised as a chartered surveyor, expert witness and chartered arbitrator. He was a principal lecturer at London South Bank University and visiting lecturer in Hong Kong and Australia from 1969 until his retirement in 1992. He is the author of four books and numerous papers and articles on aspects of construction procurement and co-author of two other books.

Footnotes and references

1. Much of the information for this article is taken from the author's book, *Scram from Kenya! From Colony to Republic 1946-1963*. Page references follow SFK where the original sources may be found in that book.
2. SFK chapter 3 using Murray-Brown (Quitter Press, 1972). Murray-Brown is probably the most dispassionate and thorough biographer of Kenyatta. He was also the source of much information on Kenyatta's early days unless otherwise stated.
3. The transcript of the trial covers 2000 pages. M Slater (*Trial of Jomo Kenyatta,* Secker & Warburg, 1955) provides what Slater is convinced is a 'fair and reasonable account' in 52pp. EG Rosburg and J Nottingham (*Myth of Mau Mau,* 1966) provide an account and B Kaggia (*Roots of Freedom*, East Africa Publishing House, 1975) provides an alternative perspective. There are others, including SFK 139-142.
4. Makhan Singh, together with Fred Kubai, founded the East African Trade Union Congress, the first central organisation of trade unions in Kenya, in 1949. Singh was arrested in 1950 for speaking out against British colonial rule and was detained without charge or trial in Lodwar, being released in 1961.
5. J Kenyatta, *Suffering without Bitterness*, East African Publishing House, 1968. A memoir prepared from speeches he made etc., written in the 3rd person.
6. E Watkins, *Jomo's Jailor: Grand Warrior of Kenya, the biography of Leslie Whitehouse*, Britwell Books, 1993.
7. For more on this period refer to SFK chapter 14 and the epilogue, which puts questions and hypotheses and makes the assessment which was avoided during this article so that readers might draw their own conclusions.



Typical Rendille doum palm basket, recognised by its conical bottom. Traditionally, a horizontal ridge of wild sisal, *Sanseveria robusta*, is woven into the basket near the rim. Photo by Janice Knausenberger.

The revival of a dying craft

Janice G Knausenberger and Laura Lemunyete

Traditional tightly coiled containers woven from the blade of the leaf of doum palms, *Hyphaene compressa*, have always been important in the lives of the various pastoralist communities occupying the hot and dry country of northern Kenya. Increasingly these handwoven containers are being replaced by plastic and metal containers, which are relatively easy to obtain. Woven water jugs from tribes in northern Kenya are now extremely difficult to find.

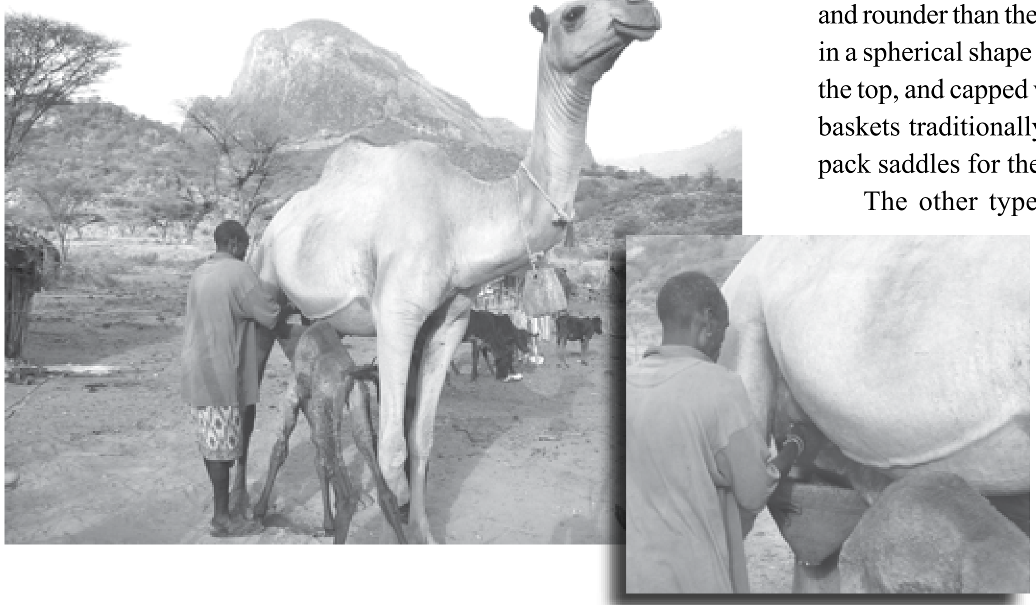
The Rendille/Samburu basket marketing initiative started by Laura Lemunyete among the Ariaal people of Ngurunit in 2001 has been pivotal to the revival and evolution of the almost lost craft of weaving doum palm camel milk baskets.

Ngurunit is nestled in the protective northeastern base of the Ndoto Mountains, south and west of the parched and rugged Korante Plain and the Kaisut Desert. Ngurunit is a full two-day drive from Nairobi of which the last day is entirely beyond all electricity and petrol stations. The residents of this Ariaal pastoralist village herd camels, cattle, sheep and goats. Traditional *khangas* or wrapped cloths are mostly worn, but used European clothing is making inroads in this area. The traditional houses made from sticks and woven sisal mats are still the main type of dwelling away from the village proper, which has block with tin roof style homes.

Milk is an important part of Rendille/Samburu life. The traditional Rendille camel milk basket is made of such tightly woven doum palm leaves that it is not only sturdy, but no fluid drips through.

The Ndoto Mountains that border the southern side of Ngurunit, Kenya. Photo by Laura Lemunyete.

Each wrapping of the weaver over the core is stitched tightly through the upper one-half to one-third of the previous row's wrapped core. The stitches are so precisely positioned over the centre of the previous row's wrap and consistent in size with the stitches of the previous row, that the result is raised vertical ridges, spiraling upwards to the left, around the outside of the basket. Traditionally, a horizontal ridge of wild sisal, *Sanseveria robusta*, is woven into the basket near the rim.



Milking a camel, using a traditional Rendille camel milk basket. Photo by Laura Lemunyete.

When the basket is used for milking, camel colostrum (first milk after birth) is coated on the inside of the basket to make it totally waterproof. The milk basket is regularly smoked with wood smoke to keep it free of milk-spoiling microbes. A variation of the milk basket is the water basket, but the art of making these has almost died out. Laura has only heard of them from the women she works with. The water basket is not coated, so evaporation can occur and the water inside the basket is cool to drink. These water baskets, larger and rounder than the milk basket, are woven in a spherical shape with a small opening at the top, and capped with a woven lid. Water baskets traditionally were made to fit into pack saddles for the camels.

The other type of basket sometimes woven in Ngurunit is the Samburu basket, which is traditionally flat bottomed, used for storage, and not as tightly coiled as the Rendille basket. Samburu baskets are often decorated with

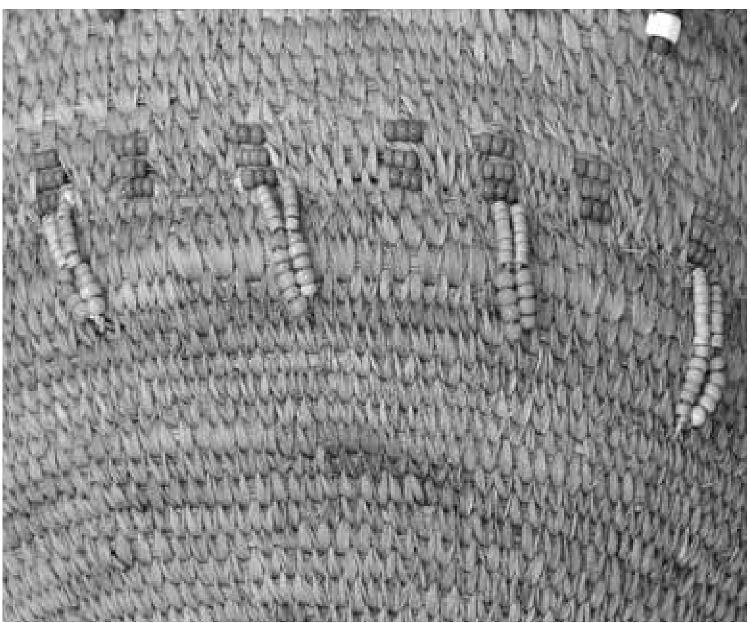
beautiful beads or seeds which are attached in various ways, often resulting in a rather spontaneous smattering of spots of colour.

Reviving basketry

Laura Lemunyete's initial foray into reviving the craft of weaving Rendille milk baskets marked a happy synthesis of circumstances and people, all of whom were responsive to change and opportunity.

There were four key factors involved in the success. The first factor is Laura herself, a woman with energy, vision and enthusiasm. She works with and respects the cultures of the local peoples. The second factor has to do with the Ariaal people. It is hard to then distinguish where the connection between the women and Laura begins and ends, and this is the third factor. The fourth major factor is the buyers of the baskets, who suggested variations that would increase their market appeal.

By 2001 when the first Rendille camel milking baskets were being sold, Laura had lived and worked in the Ngurunit community for over six years. American by birth, she had become Samburu by marriage and was therefore welcomed into her husband's culture. The women she worked with accepted and respected her as one of their own. Laura lived locally within the community and worked as one with the women, exploring ways of solving the many problems that they faced — the distance to clean water for household use, a need for more food and better nutrition for their children, poor education and health care opportunities for themselves and their families. Since 1996, Laura and the women had been exploring the marketing of different Samburu household crafts to create a means of income generation in order to improve the lives of the families in Ngurunit. There were many frustrations in breaking into the craft markets and the 'perfect' product with universal appeal was not being found. Leather items got mouldy. Wooden items attracted insects. Knives, local chairs, spears, dancing belts, traditional bead work and gourd milk



Traditional coiled basketry stitches found in a typical decorated Samburu basket. Photo by Janice Knausenberger.

Janice first met Laura, a former Peace Corps volunteer, at a craft bazaar in Nairobi in 2000. Laura was representing PEAR (Participatory Education, Awareness and Resources) Innovations, an organisation from northern Kenya whose efforts included empowering the pastoralist communities and linking them to the wider world through community development, research and social programmes. PEAR Innovations, marketing traditional crafts for the Ngurunit women, displayed beadwork, wooden items, a sisal roofing mat, and a wedding necklace. Janice's order for roofing mats was filled several months later. At that time Laura, always on the lookout for marketing opportunities, brought with her a camel milk basket made by Gutoiya, an aged and impoverished woman who was one of the few weavers living in Ngurunit still making this traditional basket. Seeing the quality and beauty of the basket, Janice promptly bought it and ordered another basket, requesting that it be decorated with cowrie shells. Laura soon brought other baskets to Nairobi and thus the basketry revival began.

containers were seen as curios with little practical use to the western market and were mainly decorative, without much potential. There was also high competition from Maasai and other tribes closer to Nairobi who provided these items cheaply and en masse. With the discovery of the beauty, uniqueness, durability and practical usefulness of the Rendille camel milking basket, it was felt that a breakthrough had been made.

The growing market

Gutoiya and the few other weavers in Ngurunit started teaching younger women the Rendille and Samburu weaving styles. Within a relative short time, the growing market for baskets brought specific requests for variations from the traditional basket. Positive feedback for the higher quality baskets with more surface decorations prompted the women to experiment and perfect their weaving. New ways of combining both Rendille and Samburu techniques were developed. Samburu flat bottoms became the norm for the baskets, but a tighter weave more like that of the Rendille style was adopted by many women. New shapes evolved — oval, rectangular, concave and convex sides; pedestals and lids appeared. One weaver experimented with a supplemental weave to add surface design on the outside of her basket, a technique that has gained in popularity. In addition to shape changes and technique improvements which have really come a

The Ariaal people of Northern Kenya

Ariaal is the term sometimes applied to the group of people living at the interface of the Samburu and Rendille pastoralist tribes in Northern Kenya. They are not fully Samburu nor fully Rendille but a rich mixture of the two tribal cultures. While the name Ariaal can be used for most of the families along the north side of the Ndoto Mountains — which stretch from Mt Nyiro on the western end to the Milgas River at the eastern end — there is no firm distinction between them and the families in the more purely Rendille and Samburu areas adjacent to them.

The Ariaals are marked by an adaptation of traditions from both tribes that influence their livelihoods, ceremonial activities and style. They often speak both Rendille and Samburu languages fluently. There is a readiness to engage in both the Samburu cow culture and the Rendille camel culture side by side with traditional ways of keeping both livestock species, adjusted freely to fit practical living conditions. Cultural practices from both Rendille and Samburu traditions are blended in the various ceremonies of birth, circumcision, marriage and death as well as dictating how the Ariaals' spiritual life is ordered and blessings sought from God. There is a marked ability among the Ariaal to adopt and adapt styles from both traditions for their house building, bead making and household handicrafts. This interface of families related to both the larger Samburu and Rendille tribes has also been vital to maintaining peaceful relations and a lack of hostilities between these tribes from time immemorial.

Finally, the people identified as Ariaal have developed an ability to be innovative and flexible as they mix and adapt the traditions and ways of life of two similar though different tribes like the Samburu and Rendille. This long experience has taught them to accept change and new ideas more easily and quickly in their search for improved livelihoods and cultural survival.

More on the Ariaal can be found in Elliot M Fratkin's book *Ariaal Pastoralists of Kenya: Studying pastoralism, drought, and development in Africa's Arid Lands, Second Edition,* published by Pearson Education, Inc., 2004, Boston, USA.

Gutoiya Lemago with her granddaughter outside their sisal-roofed home, holding a traditional milk basket covered with cowrie shells, made on the request of a customer. Photo by Laura Lemunyete.

long way in seven years, surface designs and decorations have turned into personal signatures of individual weavers. Random bead adaptations have been replaced with symmetrical additions. The women were encouraged to use their natural design sense that they use in their own jewellery and in their body paint during celebrations. In the past few years, there has been an amazing growth in bolder, unique beadwork and experimentation with basket shapes.

All of these style initiatives and changes, while taking time, progressed at a quick pace within the Ngurunit community compared with some traditional cultures that tend to resist change even when benefits could be realised. Several internal and external factors came together to have a great positive impact on the basket weavers and their ability to embrace change.

One factor is the already inherent ability within the women of the Ngurunit area to accept traditions from different cultures, due to the interaction of the Rendille and Samburu tribes coming together in the communities along the north side of the Ndoto Mountains, of which Ngurunit is one. The people, sometimes known as Ariaal (see box on opposite page), were ready to be flexible and experiment with what was best and useful for many situations in life. This merged with the influence of market demands, brought back to the women through Laura.

In the early days of basket development, Laura would take baskets to Nairobi and get advice on quality and design from Janice as to what was needed to appeal to Western tastes, while retaining the feel and creativity of the women's traditions. Form and design advice came directly from the wholesale buyers within the craft market as more and more shops, both nationally and internationally, became interested in this unique product. This advice, as well as concrete motivation in the form of money received for the quality and innovative baskets (which sold quickly and in greater numbers) was brought back to the women by Laura.

This led to discussions and experimentation on basket designs by the women themselves, aimed at increasing marketability of their product so more baskets could be sold and more women benefit. Quality control, at first done by Laura, has become a largely internal affair by the weavers themselves as they start to understand what the market demands in terms of form and design.

Evolution of shape, decoration and function in the Rendille/Samburu baskets. Photo by Janice Knausenberger.

Ntumulan Lesainia and baby, weaving during a basket group meeting. Photo by Janice Knausenberger.

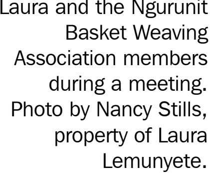
The weaving group has grown from Gutoiya and a couple of others to over 270 weavers and is now called the Ngurunit Basket Weaving Association (NBWA) under the PEAR Group umbrella. Basket weaving has led to higher income and elevated living standards for the entire community, improved self worth among the women as shown in the individualisation of their baskets and new earning power, and a greater camaraderie among the women through their routine meetings which have become social events. Men have taken over the gathering of the palm fronds. The whole community, conscious of the fragility of their environment, insists that the leaves are sustainably harvested so as not to endanger the doum palm.

In recognition of the sustainable difference made in its community, the NBWA was listed as one of the 12 finalists in the 2005 World Challenge sponsored by BBC/Newsweek and Shell. Rendille/ Samburu basketry is no longer a dying craft limited to the very oldest in the society. Women have grown in self-confidence and have revived and evolved a once dying craft into a new fresh livelihood source.

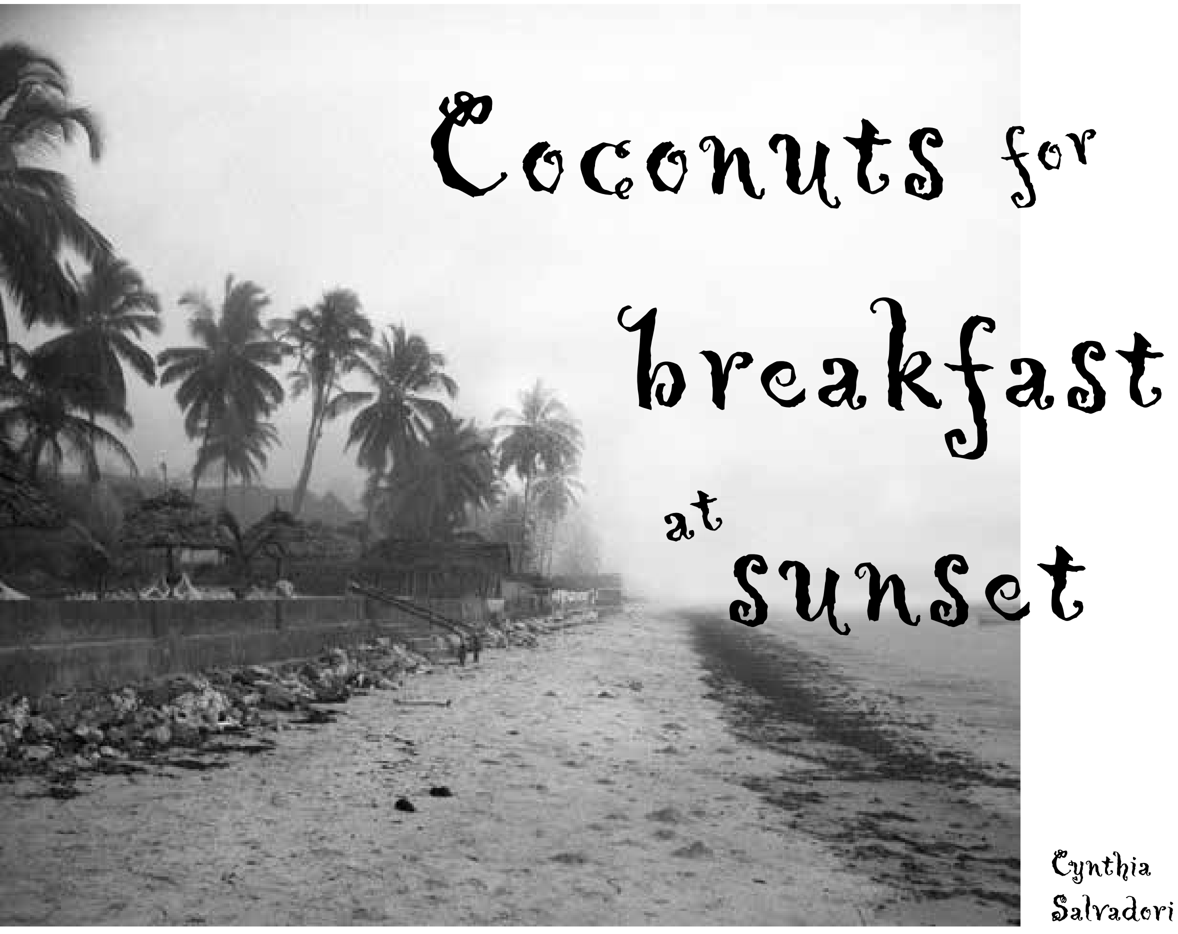
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Janice Knausenberger is a fibre artist who produces unique handwoven pieces that reflect the synthesis of her scientific training as a biologist, her love of nature, and her life experiences. She was raised in California, USA, and has lived in Kenya since 2000. She is committed to promoting small business efficiency, originality and quality in the area of fibre arts. Her website is www.jgkdesigns.com.

Laura Lemunyete is a livestock production expert. Born and raised in America, she has lived in Samburu District since 1995. She and her husband Reuben Lemunyete co-founded PEAR Group, a community-based organisation that facilitates development through self-help groups and community projects, and more recently PEAR Innovations, a non-profit company that helps Kenyan pastoralist communities link to outside resources and also markets their products.



Laura and the Ngurunit Basket Weaving Association members during a meeting. Photo by Nancy Stills, property of Laura Lemunyete.



Coconuts for breakfast at sunset

Cynthia Salvadori

Swaying and rustling over coral-rag shacks and fancy beach hotels alike, the coconut is the essence of Kenya's picturesque coastal scene. Cynthia Salvadori, historian and *madafu* lover, gathers together some surprising facts about the coconut for our consumption.

During Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, the coastal town of Mombasa is sleepier than usual during the day, but livens up wonderfully at dusk. After the sunset prayers, crowds of thirsty, hungry Muslims congregate around street vendors selling tidbits for the faithful to break their dawn-to-dusk fast. There are heaps of sticky dates, skewers of grilled meat, all shapes of sweet pastries; there are tiny cups of spiced coffee, bottles of soft drinks, and piles of *dafu*, the hefty green coconuts full of their own sweet water.

Coconuts are everywhere, all the time. The coconut palm trees are gracefully inclined to shade broad, sandy beaches, swaying and rustling over small coral-rag houses (and some fancy big hotels) thatched with their fronds; the coconut is the essence of Kenya's picturesque coastal scene. In a typical village the *mnazi* is everywhere, in dozens of useful forms.

Over there, in the shade of one palm, a man is husking ripe coconuts, slamming each nut against a metal spike stuck into the ground. To one side there are heaps of the bared brown nuts — his partner is cracking each hard hairy shell open to expose the white 'meat' that will shrivel into copra to be put into sacks and carted away to have its oil expressed. Coconut oil is used for a wide variety of purposes, from hair oil to commercial cooking fats.

A fruiting coconut tree, showing the sprays of flowers and the various sizes of nut. Photo by Gwendolyn Meyer.

On the other side there is a mound of the fibrous husks — the *kumbi* will be carried down to the sea at low tide and buried in the wet sand. There they will disintegrate so the fibres, *usumba*, can be separated and then rewoven into ropes used for everything from leading goats to lashing sails. In the past it was even used for lashing ships, binding the planks of the *mtepe*, the famous shallow-draught 'sewn' ships that were used specially for transporting mangrove poles — and whose single sail was simply an enormous palm-frond mat. Some of this *kamba* (the Kiswahili word is now used for any sort of rope, but the *mb* root shows that it originally meant coconut fibre rope) is being made in the grove close by — one can see it stretched like an enormous spider web amongst the palms.

An old man is sitting in front of his house, working his way through a pile of palm fronds, twisting the leaflets round their spine to form the *makuti* 'tiles' used for thatching all the roofs, and for making some walls as well. Trim little donkeys pass by, each bearing a pair of bulging palm-frond panniers laden with more of the hairy brown nuts. The owner is off to sell them to housewives to prepare the midday meal. Through a doorway one can see a kanga-clad woman seated on a low X-shaped wooden stool, rotating a half-coconut on its protruding serrated blade. The apparatus is called a *mbuzi*, meaning 'goat'. (A unicorn might be more apt but such a creature does not exist in the Swahili bestiary.) The *chicha*, the grated white flesh, is then put in a long narrow basket called *kifumbu* (woven, like the ubiquitous baskets and mats, and the panniers too, of the more flexible fronds of *zikoma*, the palmetto or fan palm). It is soaked in warm water and then the whole flexible strainer is squeezed and twisted to extract the creamy coconut 'milk', the delicious *tui* so characteristic of coastal cuisine.

Virtually everything is cooked with coconut milk, from fish and meat to cassava, beans, bananas and rice. The *tui*-rich sauces are ladled with an *upawa*, a segment of coconut shell fastened to a short stick. When her cooking is done, the housewife will feed her chickens the remains of the *chicha* after the milk is pressed out and sweep out her kitchen with a *kifagio*, a bound bundle of rib fibres.

A woman scraping the 'meat' out of a ripe coconut *(nazi)*, using the ingenuous knife-cum-stool grater called *mbuzi.*

In the coastal villages, huge hexagonal fish traps, woven from the split spines of coconut fronds, are propped against house walls. In the shade of other trees, girls are splitting the leaflets into narrow strips. In the shade of the *makuti*-eaved roof, a woman is sitting on a bare bed, plaiting the short, narrow strips into an endless broad ribbon: a coil of it is growing at her feet. This ribbon has endless uses: some will be woven across wooden frames to form beds such as the one she is sitting on; some will be stitched together to make *jamvi*, the common floor matting, and to fashion *kikapus*, the ubiquitous carry-all baskets. (The finer sleeping mats and baskets are made from similar ribbons plaited from the more flexible doum palm leaflets.)

A grizzled old lady is sitting in front of her house grinding corn using a little stone mill that looks like a two-layered cake. It is placed upon a *tugu*, a large circular palm-frond mat with an upturned edge; the flour dribbling out from between the stones is contained by the high rim.

In some of the Indian temples in town, one sees people sitting on small round mats — individual place mats — also called *tugu,* or *kitanga,* that are also used to put under goods for sale in small markets where vendors display their wares on the ground.

The floors of small local mosques are covered with the large rectangular mats, and so are the floors in some of Mombasa's mosques, though most have ones imported from Arabia or 'Made in Taiwan'.

Outside the village mosque, for the ritual washing before prayer, is an earthen pot of water with a dipper laid across the mouth — this *kata* is a whole coconut shell with its top sliced off, fixed onto a long straight stick. And in all of Mombasa's Indian temples (one Jain and five major Hindu ones) one sees coconuts placed in the shrines. Hanuman, the popular monkey god, predictably gets the most (especially on Saturday, which is his special day), 'because monkeys love coconuts'. Lord Siva also gets a good share, for the three 'eyes' of the coconut are taken to represent the three eyes of that great Hindu deity. Mahavir, the Buddha-like *tirthanker* or guide of the Jains, and other, less historical *tirthankers* are presented with coconuts. The Indians call the coconut palm *kalpavrishka*, the 'wish-fulfilling tree', and the nut *shriphala*, 'honoured fruit'.

If all this sightseeing makes one thirsty, never fear: a coconut will be at hand to revive you. One can have the pleasure of sipping a *dafu* straight from a tree in

Beautifully carved and beautifully practical — a water scoop, or *kata*, made from a whole coconut shell with its top sliced off, fixed onto a long straight stick. Photo by Gwendolyn Meyer.

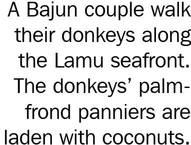
For sale: *Kamba (*rope) made from coconut-husk coir and *kifagio (*brooms) made from split coconut-frond ribs.

the country or bought from a barrow on a street corner. The vendor deftly decapitates the immature coconut (the knife must be lethally sharp) and when one has drunk the clear sweet water from its natural cup (a straw is provided these days), he will carve from the green-yellow husk a little ladle to scoop out the delicious gelatinous lining, the stuff that as the nut matures becomes the hard oil-rich meat. (The famous Lamu cats are also partial to this delectable scum, which they cleverly hook out with their claws.) The growing shoot of the tree can also be tapped to get a sweet wine, *tembo tamu*. Let this ferment a few more days and one has a sharp vinegar called *siki*.

Dafus are sold all year round, for the coconut palm knows no season. But they are sold in Mombasa in vast numbers during Ramadan, the Muslim month when the faithful purify themselves by fasting from dawn to sunset. Many people break the fast each evening not with water nor soda nor tea but with a *dafu*, a purely natural sweet drink.

The coconut is so well rooted in Kenyan soil that each part of the plant, each stage of development, each different object made from it, has its own Kiswahili name. It is difficult to imagine the East African coast and the Swahili coastal culture without the coconut. But once upon a time it was so.

The coconut is an exotic plant in Africa. It is likely that it was one of the first cultigens to be imported from overseas, along with, probably, the banana and the yam. These plants are indigenous to southeastern Asia and have long been cultivated in all the areas where the Malayo-Polynesian peoples spread, sailing round the oceans in their outrigger boats. They not only populated almost all the Pacific islands but some — almost certainly from Borneo — sailed westward to Ceylon, up along



A Bajun couple walk their donkeys along the Lamu seafront. The donkeys' palm-frond panniers are laden with coconuts.

Matting woven from *zikoma (*palmetto) fronds lashed to the sides of the dhow with *kamba (*rope) made from coconut-husk coir.

the southwestern coast of India, across to Madagascar and up the East African 'Azanian' coast, by the beginning of the 1st millennium AD.

Whether the coconut was brought by sailors in person from the Far East directly to the Azanian coast, or whether it came up from Madagascar, or whether it came from India with Indian ships, is open to speculation. But however it got here, it was well established by the middle of the 1st century AD — the *Periplus of the Erythreaen Sea*, a first-hand account of part of the Indian Ocean trade route that was written by an Alexandrian Greek around 60 AD, lists coconut oil as one of the major exports from Africa.

The Malays and Indonesians, growing up amongst coconut palms, presumably saw nothing strange about the wonderful water-filled fruit. And although the Malagasy culture pays as much heed to the supernatural as the natural, and virtually every act, including the growing of many crops, is hedged about with taboos, not one concerns the coconut. In Madagascar there is no ritual significance attached to the coconut, neither to its use nor its cultivation.

To see where the symbolism of the coconut comes in, one has to backtrack to India. It took the imaginative Indian theologians — perhaps encouraged by some enterprising coconut farmers — to develop a coconut mystique.

Coconuts are recorded in Ceylon by the 1st century AD. From Ceylon they quickly took root in India. The coconut became a major crop on the Malabar coast right up to Goa. That it was used as a source of oil is indicated by the word 'copra': this comes from the Malayam (the language of Malabar coast) word *koppara*. But it was not only a practical nut to crack; it came to be endowed with all sorts of religious and ritual symbolism.

One is apt to think of Hinduism in terms of a pantheon of Greek-like nature gods, the Vedic deities of the Aryan pastoralists who invaded and infiltrated the Indian subcontinent in the second millennium BC. But the indigenous, agricultural Dravidian peoples viewed spiritual power as vested in Mother Earth, deified as *Mataji*, Honoured Mother. From the earth emerge the rivers, carrying the water so essential to agriculture. The Dravidians focused their rituals around water and bathing became a means of

A coconut forms part of the ritual of a Parsi wedding, Mombasa. The men in white caps are the three requisite priests, according to Zoroastrian rites.

purification. Dravidian beliefs, along with Aryan ones, all became part of Hinduism.

Hindus were greatly struck by the novel nut, for it, uniquely amongst fruits, has a virtually unbreakable shell containing palatable liquid separate from the pulp. The Hindus took the breast-like nut — pointed and full of liquid — as representing *Mataji*. And the liquid within, coming from the symbolic Earth Mother, was a symbol of river water in ceremonies. To make things complete, the three-'eyed' coconut was seen to represent Lord Siva, the god with a third eye, the personification of the phallus. To have the Ganges, the most holy of rivers, gush out of his head was a stroke of synthesizing symbolic genius.

Since the liquid was purifying, it by definition had the ability to counteract evil, not only by washing it away but by absorbing it. A coconut set in a ceremonial place would purify it, and if people wished to get rid of their sins, they merely had to transfer them to a coconut — which could then be incinerated in a ritual fire or returned by rivers or the sea to Mother Earth for her to deal with! So coconuts were dressed up as *Matajis*, propped on little vessels containing water, placed on ceremonial sites, cracked to purify a place or an event or a person.

The concept of the coconut's purifying powers permeated all the faiths in India, not only the home-grown Jainism and Buddhism but also the prophetic religions introduced from abroad — Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Islam, and eventually Sikhism which synthesized them all. The coconut appears in the rites of every Indian religious group (it appears in virtually every community's wedding ritual).

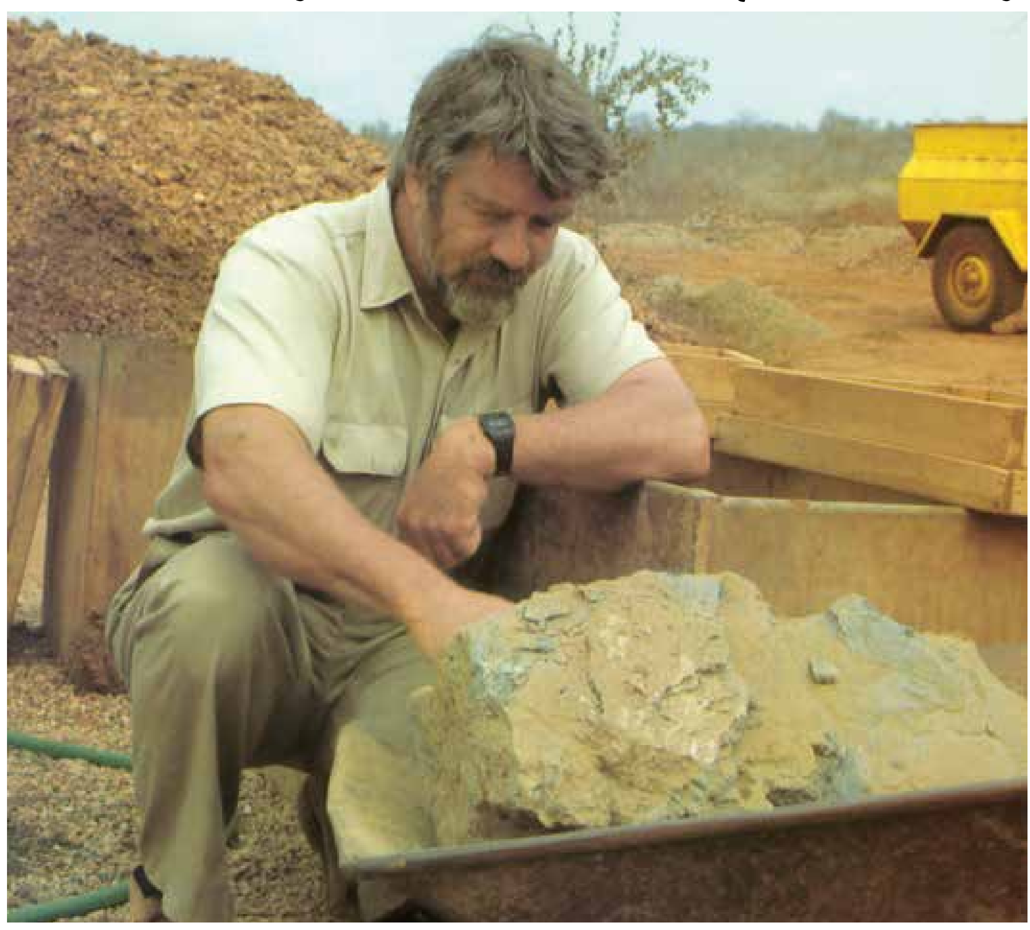
And the concept seems to have strayed over into Swahili culture, the fascinating mixture of Arab, African, Indian and Islamic elements that is the culture of the East African coast. It can never be proved, but it is highly probable that the ancient concept of purification is the reason why many Muslims here choose to drink *dafus* to break their fast at dusk each evening during Ramadan.

PHOTOS BY CYNTHIA SALVADORI UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cynthia Salvadori is a Kenya-based historian and anthropologist whose connection with the Swahili coast goes back well over a century; her mother's uncle-in-law John Haggard was posted as Britain's first vice consul in Lamu in 1884/5 (and the stories he told inspired his brother Rider's classics such as *King Solomon's Mines*). Salvadori is in the final stages of putting together *Lamu, a Historian's Scrapbook*, illustrated exclusively with artwork by Jony Waite, long-time Lamu resident.

Discovering Tsavorite, Kenya's own gemstone:



Campbell Bridges inspects ore from underground workings.

An interview with Campbell Bridges

Lucy Vigne and Esmond Martin

Campbell Bridges was born in London in 1937. His father was chief geologist for the British Central Mining Company and the family lived all over Africa. Bridges graduated from South Africa's University of Witwatersrand with a degree in geology in 1962 and later moved to Kenya, where he has spent nearly all his adult life. Here he tells Lucy Vigne and Esmond Martin about his life as a gemologist and how he discovered Tsavorite, the gemstone named for Kenya.

What brought you to East Africa?

During the British/German colonial period, miners concentrated on diamonds and gold. Gold was mined in the Lupa in Tanzania and in western Kenya, and some diamonds were found in Tanzania, but not in Kenya. East African gemstones were virtually unknown on the world market until the early 1960s when deposits of coloured gems were found — rubies, sapphires, tourmalines, rhodolites and other garnets. Around 1963 I joined a Swiss company, Afrika Edelstein Ltd, with gemstone mining interests in Tanzania. In the mid-1960s, Afrika Edelstein became aware of the Tanzanian government's trend towards socialism and decided to abandon

their projects in Tanzania. They asked me to go to Australia; however, I wished to stay in East Africa and they agreed to allow me to take over their interests in Tanzania.

I started locating further gem deposits in Tanzania, and developing mines in the Umba area, Handeni area, the Pare Mountains and to the south of today's Kilimanjaro Airport in the southeast Arusha area. I found tourmalines and garnets, including the unusual peachy-orange Malaya garnet.

When was Tanzanite discovered?

Tanzanite was discovered possibly by Jumanne Ngoma but brought onto the world scene in early 1967 by Emmanuel de Souza, a Goan tailor whose hobby was prospecting and who promoted and mined it in Tanzania at that time. He probably got his first sample from a Maasai cattle herder in the Merelani hills. This now well-known gemstone is a blue variety of the mineral zoisite. About 90% of these crystals are heated to 380-600º centigrade to bring out the blue. The stone is initially trichroic, showing grey/blue down one axis, purple/blue down the second axis and usually a brown colour down the third axis. Heating the stone eliminates the brown/grey colour and the stone ends up blue-blue or purple-blue to make it more attractive for sale. You can get green or pink zoisite, but the purple and blue ones are found only in Tanzania and Kenya.

In 1967 I took the first rough crystal of Tanzanite (blue zoisite) to the USA to the Smithsonian Institution to be seen by Dr Paul Desautels, then vice curator, for verification. I then brought the stone to Tiffany where Henry Platt, later President of Tiffany & Co., was very interested in it. Platt and I went to Tanzania and Tiffany made a contract with Tanzania Gemstone Industries (a government-sponsored company) to buy all the Tanzanite production. It was Platt who named the gem after the country. I became Tiffany's consultant for these new gemstones. Later the contract was broken as the Germans offered more for it! By now Tiffany had spent more than $100,000 on a major promotion, becoming the 'in place' to buy Tanzanite, so Tiffany bought Tanzanite from the Germans to sell to their customers. Platt liked the blue-blue colour of Tanzanite because it was a sapphire look-alike but less expensive. Tanzanite appears brighter than sapphire as there are fewer inclusions. Tiffany, thus, put Tanzanite on the map. Although Tanzanite is now also mined in Kenya, Merelani in northern Tanzania remains the major deposit for it.

Henry Platt, President of Tiffany & Co., with Campbell Bridges at Tiffany's offices on Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Tell us about discovering Tsavorite

I first discovered this green garnet in 1961 while working for the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority in Zimbabwe. I was exploring a possible area for gemstones, an area with a combination of different interactive rock types. I saw a rocky outcrop with small bright green crystals — this was my first sighting.

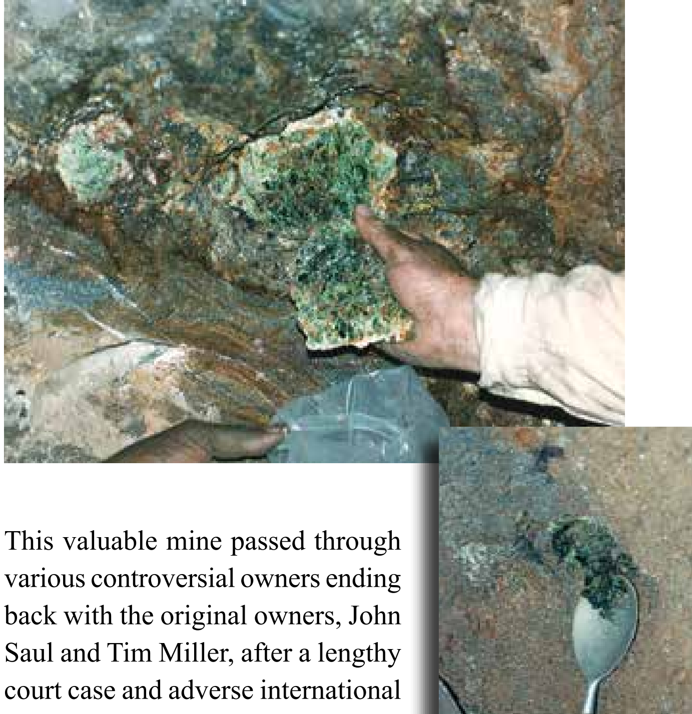
I found the green gem again in Tanzania, in a small hidden valley in a low range of hills in the southeast Arusha area, in 1967. Technically called a green grossularite garnet, it is a calcium aluminium silicate. We pegged an area, registered our claims, and then started mining. Regrettably, I lost the mines due to nationalisation in 1970. My mines were eventually given to a local cooperative. In dismay I left Tanzania and came to Kenya to start all over again looking for gems here. My old mine, near Komolo, southwest of Kilimanjaro airport, remains a major deposit for Tsavorite in Tanzania.

How did your career as a geologist and gemologist first develop in Kenya?

On my arrival, I went through the published geological reports that had been prepared by the previous colonial government and chose three areas with the same type of geology and petrology (*petros* means rock in Greek) as our mine in Tanzania. Having studied structures from aerial photos, my wife Judy (also a geologist) and I went into the field with a small prospecting team and traversed the selected area. We studied the ground at 25-metre intervals looking for gravel deposits, gullies, stream beds, and ant heaps to see what the ants had brought up from depth. We would cut a trench across the strike to bedrock and put down pits to see where the reef (the rock type that contains the minerals) intersected the surface. My initial site, where we first discovered Tsavorite in Kenya in 1971, was in the Mairimba-Kambanga-Mindi-Kandashi area. It was in hunting block 64. No one was there at that time, just wild animals and a couple of tracks. My second chosen site was the Kasigau-Kurasi area just east of Tsavo West National Park.

We covered our tracks when going in and out of the bush as we did not want to be encroached upon by 'claim jumpers' until we were well established. Unfortunately, in 1973 it became known where we had located and were developing green garnet deposits. Soon the area was inundated with prospectors from far and wide searching for this green treasure. A man called Peter Morgan sent his assistant, Andrew Hall, to peg around me. I told him, "the whole range is mineralised – why don't you go north?" He did and found a major deposit. A number of other deposits were later located in this Mugama Ridge range.

John Saul, a geologist here at the time, got permission to mine in Tsavo National Park in the mid-1970s where he found tourmalines and then rubies in 1977.



Top: Pocket of Tsavorite at underground working face in Scorpion Mine.

Above: Rough uncut Tsavorite.

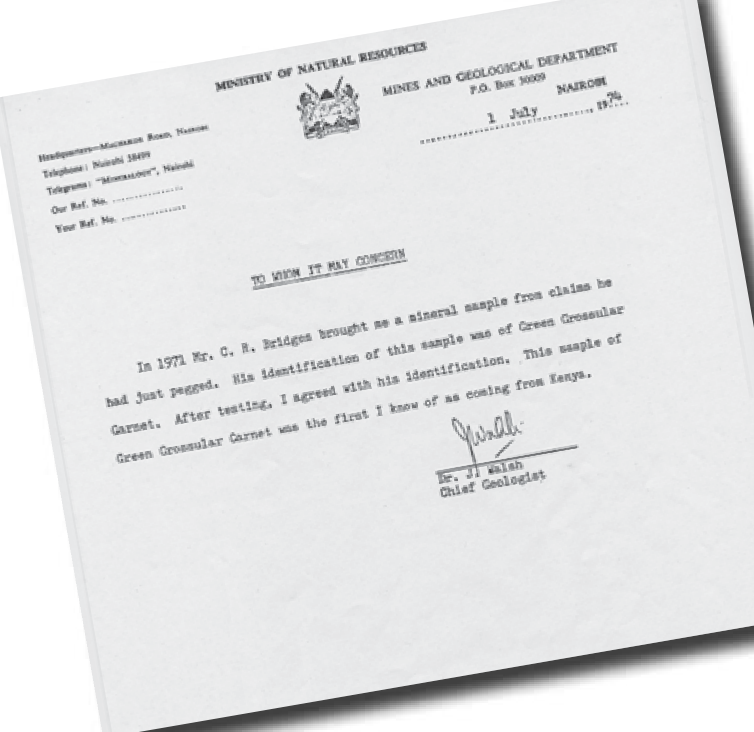
This valuable mine passed through various controversial owners ending back with the original owners, John Saul and Tim Miller, after a lengthy court case and adverse international publicity. They later sold the mine, which is now called the Rockland Ruby Mine. It is still producing rubies. Several other ruby mines were subsequently discovered.

I have also found rubies and tourmalines in my area.

We took out a mining lease in the Mindi-Kandashi area where we have concentrated our efforts on Tsavorite. This mine is called the Scorpion Mine.

When and how were coloured gemstones formed in Kenya?

The rocks in which these gems appear were laid down about two billion years ago in the pre-Cambrian period and the last major metamorphic phase probably finalised the formation of Tsavorite 600-800 million years ago. Hot fluids emanate under high temperature and pressure from the country rock, moving up through planes of weakness. These fluids, being chemically reactive, leach chemicals from the rocks through which they pass. The chemicals then react with rock types of different chemistry to form new minerals and, in some instances, gemstones.



MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

MINES AND GEOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT
P.O. Box 30009
NAIROBI

1 July 1974

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

In 1971 Mr. C. R. Bridges brought me a mineral sample from claims he had just pegged. His identification of this sample was of Green Grossular Garnet. After testing, I agreed with his identification. This sample of Green Grossular Garnet was the first I know of as coming from Kenya.

Dr. J. J. Walsh
Chief Geologist

Official confirmation of the discovery of Tsavorite.

Tell us more about Tsavorite

Platt, by now president of Tiffany & Co., said "Tsavorite is everything that a fine gemstone should be, and then some!" Tsavorite is intrinsically superior to emerald. It has about the same hardness, but is tougher and less brittle. It also has a higher refractive index and a higher dispersion index, making it brighter. When set with diamonds around it, it has a dazzling brilliance. Unlike emerald, it does not have to be treated to hide the cracks with oil; neither is it heated like Tanzanite. It is 100% natural.

From the start I got Tiffany interested in this new gem. I went to see Platt at Tiffany — he was a true entrepreneur who made things happen and again he put this stone on the map. He said that we should give it a trade name before someone else did! He suggested 'Vivianite' after an excellent customer of Tiffany's at the time, but I did not agree as there was already a mineral of that name. He then asked for a list of geographical names, such as hills, mountains and rivers, in the area I was mining. He named it Tsavorite in 1973, after the Tsavo National Park. (All new minerals must end in 'ite' and have their name accepted by CIBJO, the Swiss-based World Jewellery Confederation.)

Tsavorite has never been publicised as much as Tanzanite, as it did not occur in sufficient quantities and sizes to make a major promotion. Tsavorite is at least 1,000 times rarer than emerald and in the beginning only jewellery connoisseurs and some informed manufacturers and dealers were aware of it — there is still a dearth of public awareness.

Tsavorite is about an eighth the price of a similar quality emerald. The price is increasing but a regular and continuous supply is needed to make prices go up a lot. When this happens, the price, in my opinion, will go through the roof. Blues and greens are the most popular gemstone colours in most of the world cultures. The green Tsavorite is presently about a third more expensive than the blue or purple-blue Tanzanite, and costs about $500-$700 per carat wholesale.

What other gems are mined in Kenya and what other gems do you deal in?

Kenya is one of the top countries in the world for the export of gemstones. It is a major source of coloured gems, along with Tanzania. Kenya's gem mining industry took off when I discovered the Tsavorite belt south of the Taita Hills near Tsavo National Park. This area is part of the Mozambique orogenic belt running from Madagascar in the south, up through Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia and Sudan. It is an orogenic mobile belt containing interactive rock types that have produced a Pandora's box of gemstones. The opals in Ethiopia rival those from Australia.

In Kenya, you also get beautiful pinky-red rubies and pink sapphire in the Baringo area, blue sapphires in Garba Tula and Lodwar areas, emeralds from the Wamba area, aquamarine from the Embu/Meru and Samburu areas, also heliodor which

is a golden beryl. Both green and golden tourmaline occur in the Mozambique belt in Kenya.

Explain your mining process

We look for gems in gravels lying immediately above the bedrock below the soil layer (being heavy they sink in soil with gravity). Over eons they collect in areas below the soil layer and are stopped by the bedrock. Sometimes they are exposed by streams or found in ant heaps. Having put down pits to isolate the head of the reef where it intersects the surface, we then mine the reef, extracting the eluvial material. Where the rock is firm enough, we go underground so as not to disturb the surface environment. Two of our tunnels are close to 200 metres deep.

Our Scorpion Mine, where we are presently working, is just north of Tsavo West National Park and south of the Taita Hills. We have another location nearby consisting of claims that contain 'blue zoisite', Tanzanite. Although not as prolific as in Tanzania, the stones are of very fine quality. It is, however, sub-economic so far, as one must mine too much rock for the material it yields.

We have 25-30 people working for us in the field, working at one site at a time.

When does mining damage the environment?

There are two ways to mine. Similar to removing blood from an arm, you can either cut off the arm and squeeze out all the blood (like open cast mining where one bulldozes the entire surface and puts the rocks through a crushing plant) or you can extract blood from a vein (like following a reef deposit underground).

Only occasionally is open cast mining justified as in the case of a mineral being highly disseminated and not concentrated in veins or shoots, e.g. a big granite outcrop with copper in the granite. Gem material often occurs in the crests of folds of the strata that acted as channels for mobile hydrothermal solutions to move along.

I am very conservation conscious so we mine down to where the rock is hard enough to go underground so as to minimise disturbance on the surface. Many non-professional miners prefer open cast mining as it is easier and safer than tunnelling, but also more destructive to the environment.

I have wanted to make an elephant reserve in the area surrounding the Scorpion Mine because we have hundreds of elephants there at certain times of the year. Sometimes we have to chase them off during the dry season when they come to rip the covers off our water storage reservoirs. A game lodge would also bring in tourists and earn money for the local people. Game conservation and mining can go hand in hand, unlike farming and mining.

Two views of Scorpion Mine.

Top: Ramp leading to Bonanza Tunnel.

Bottom: Waste rock being winched out of Eureka Tunnel.

Tsavorite heart with diamonds, in a pendant belonging to Judy Bridges.

A large shield-cut fine Tsavorite.

What happens after you have mined the gems?

The stones are transported to our Nairobi office for sorting. The stones are washed, cobbed (clipped and hammered to remove the flaws) and graded. The better stones are cut by our cutters whom we have trained. We were taught in the early days by the master cutters of Idar-Oberstein, Germany (in my opinion, the best coloured-stone cutters in the world), and we have trained generations of cutters since the 1970s in Kenya — there were none I know of before. Some of the best cutters were trained by us. All our cutters are African. Cutting increases the stone's value before being sold and exported. We send the smaller rough stones to Thailand and India where they do their own cutting.

Sometimes fakes are brought to Nairobi — pieces of quartz filed to look like diamonds and sealed in test tubes with an official looking Mwadui Mine, Tanzania stamp on the seal; synthetic Forsterite, which has the appearance of Tanzanite, and corundum synthetics (you can only tell by the lack of inclusions that these are not genuine rubies or sapphires). I tell the sellers to leave; they say they did not know they were selling fakes!

We do custom designs and specialise in combining tones of colour in harmony with each other. Jewellery should be sold for its intrinsic value, unlike some of the merchandise from famous outlets, say in London, where I recently saw an amethyst set in white gold with tiny diamonds selling for $3,400 yet I estimated its intrinsic value to be not more than $250! The shop was making thousands of percent profit! They justify it by saying they have high overheads. People buy from these outlets for snob value; some people have more money than sense.

What has been your main problem in this profession?

Theft has been a huge problem for us. As with any gemstone mine, an item of high value and small volume is easy to steal. We have a large security force. Sometimes we find stones in people's pockets, hair, and in other places. At the Cobra Emerald Mine in South Africa, where I worked 45 years ago, the emeralds were sorted along conveyor belts with drums of grease at strategic points. The workers would stick their fingers in the grease on their way to the bathroom and grease their backsides in order to stick the emeralds inside. When the supervisors learned of this, they secretly put carbolic acid in with the grease and soon could identify the thieves jumping about with burning backsides. An unusual way to catch a thief!

Bandit raids of local *zurura* (wanderers) are another problem; they carry pangas, clubs and steel bars. In the 1980s they had AK47s, being poachers, but Richard Leakey and his KWS rangers thankfully got rid of that bunch.

Another security risk is the Columbian gangs in the USA who use subterfuge to trick jewellery dealers. I was travelling from Pasadena, California, carrying a briefcase with gemstones and a case with jewellery to Manhattan Beach. I checked I was not being watched (having been visiting dealers earlier). I was waiting on my friends' verandah for their return and a Hispanic woman came around the corner at the top of the street shouting 'Help, no English' and beckoning for me to come; I walked towards her and another woman joined her also calling out for my help, indicating there was a dire emergency just around the corner. As I continued walking towards them, I realised my cases were out of view, hidden by a clump of grass. I got suspicious and demanded they told me their problem — they then gesticulated that it did not matter and quickly retreated around the corner, and I ran back to find my cases were gone.

What positions do you hold as a gemologist?

I am a lifetime alumni association member of the Gemological Institute of America and also a Senior Appraiser for the National Association of Jewelry Appraisers (NAJA) in the USA. I was one of the founding members of the International Colored Gemstone Association (ICA). Also, I was a former Vice-Chairman of the Kenya Gemstone Dealers Association (KENGEM).

How well has the gemstone industry developed in Kenya?

Compared to precious metals and certain basic industrial minerals, the Kenyan gemstone industry got off to a relatively late start.

Since my discovery of the Tsavorite/Ruby/Tourmaline belt in southeastern Kenya in the early 70s, interest in gemstone mining has increased considerably. With a view to helping create a truly viable mining industry that would benefit not only individuals, companies and communities but the country as a whole, the government through the Commissioner of Mines and Geology encouraged and was instrumental in the formation of the Kenya Chamber of Mines in the early 2000s.

Campbell Bridges in grading room at Nairobi offices.

I had the honour of being asked to be the Founding Chairman of the Kenya Chamber of Mines. This organisation's principal function has been to liaise between the private sector and the government in an effort to bring understanding, problem solving, cooperation, harmony and expansion to the mining industry. It encourages firm government control and the enforcement of law and order, which are essential to attracting both local and foreign investment, and the correct application of mining expertise that will help expand the industry in a safe and progressive manner until, hopefully, it is a major contributor to Kenya's GDP.

However, much needs to be done to control illegal gemstone mining which is usually inefficient, messy (e.g. dumping waste rock on top of a reef) and dangerous, with little or no attention being paid to preserving the environment. These miners also usually sell to unlicensed dealers. This puts legal miners and dealers (who pay taxes) at a disadvantage and is not conducive to expanding a legal industry. There are only a handful of well-operated gemstone mines that obey the rules and mine properly and safely.

The Department of Mines and Geology needs sufficient funding and additional staff to be able to properly control mining policy and procedures.

What is the future for gems in Kenya?

There are many more gems to be found in Kenya; however, non-enforcement of mining rules and allowing illegal miners to compete with legal miners will lead to chaos.

If government wants investment in the industry, it must guarantee security of tenure and give licences to competent miners.

We can add value to the product by cutting the rough gemstone and even designing beautiful pieces of jewellery; both value-adding steps create additional employment.

However, it should be noted that non-reclaimable VAT and excise taxes would put Kenya at a disadvantage against other African countries (such as South Africa) where these taxes are either not charged or are reclaimable when visitors leave the country.

In my opinion, the gem and jewellery-making expertise available in the country should be encouraged to help grow this sector of the economy. The raw material is mined here, there are cutters here, the people with expertise in design and jewellery-making are here — all the necessary ingredients to develop a thriving new industry are present. If companies were encouraged by tax breaks to invest in modern machinery and tools needed to produce excellent cutting and fine jewellery, we could market the allure of Kenya's own gemstones to tourists and visitors and compete in price with South Africa or anywhere else.

The future looks good if the mining laws are fairly and firmly controlled by the government working in conjunction with the Kenya Chamber of Mines.

ABOUT THE INTERVIEWERS

Lucy Vigne came to Kenya in 1983 working for endangered wildlife. She has been on the Editorial Board of *Kenya Past & Present* since 1985.

Esmond Martin came to Kenya in the mid-60s to study the dhow trade and stayed on to become an internationally-acknowledged expert on the trade in ivory and endangered species. He is one of the founding members of KMS and Chairman of the Editorial Board for *Kenya Past & Present*.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CAMPBELL BRIDGES

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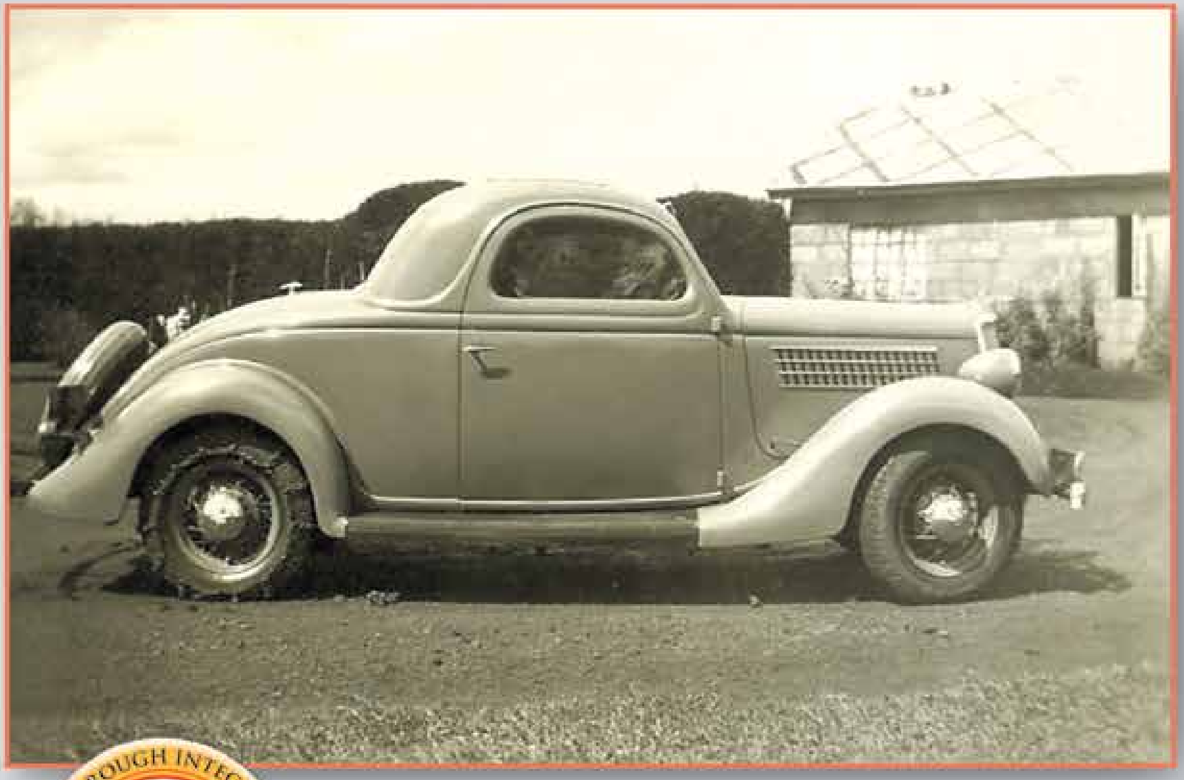

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