

Taita Hills Teacher - a Year in East Africa

Mbale-Dabida, Taita Hills, Kenya:
September 1973 to August 1974



Adrian Hall

Contents

CHAPTER 1: WELCOME TO THE TAITA HILLS	1
September 1973	1
Journey to Kenya.....	1
Limuru and Nairobi.....	1
By bus to Wundanyi.....	3
First days at Mbale.....	3
Mombasa and Shimo-la-Tewa.....	4
Early experiences at Mbale.....	6
Letter to my parents dated 26 September 1973.....	8
Prayer Mount, Aggrey High School and Mbale Church.....	9
Ngangao Forest.....	10
Revival and commitment.....	11
Brief Historical Notes on the Taita Hills.....	12
1850s – Johann Krapf.....	12
1910s – Richard Maynard.....	13
CHAPTER 2: TRIALS IN THE TAITA HILLS.....	14
October 1973.....	14
A day of acute frustration	14
A morning of acute sorrow	14
Day trip to Mombasa.....	14
Thomas' grandmother.....	16
The wheels begin to roll... ..	17
Bus to Nairobi for half-term break	18
Kenyatta Day	18
Opening service for St John's Pumwani	19
Exploring Nairobi and back to Mbale	19
Christian Union Rally at St Mary's School, Lushangoni	20
To the summit of Prayer Mount.....	21
The pure, hard African light... ..	22
CHAPTER 3: THE BEAUTY OF THE TAITA HILLS	24
November 1973.....	24
Hard working days	24
Harambee Day – and a day of 'blacks and whites'	25
Teaching and African choruses	28
Favourite tree stump.....	29
Swahili phrases.....	29
One thing have I asked of the Lord.....	30
Jacarandas and Mlungu trees.....	31
Duty Master	31

Floating dream.....	32
Catharine and the Dietz lamp	32
Storm clouds at sunset	32
Medical mishaps	34
End of term	34
The 'Real Africa' – Part 1	35
CHAPTER 4: CHRISTMAS IN THE TAITA HILLS	37
December 1973.....	37
Handel's 'Messiah' in Nairobi Cathedral	37
Pumwani and Nairobi Cinema	37
Hitch-hiking to Voi.....	38
Visit from Peter and Howard	39
Voi railway station.....	39
Climbing Yale.....	40
Uhuru Day.....	41
CMS Conference at Wusi	41
Mike's visit	42
Walk with Geoffrey to FTC.....	42
Wedding procession	43
Christmas in Kenya.....	43
To Nairobi and Limuru	45
Ascent of Mount Kenya.....	46
Illustrations to follow Chapter 1	49
Illustrations to follow Chapter 2.....	53
Illustrations to follow Chapter 3.....	56
Illustrations to follow Chapter 4.....	59
CHAPTER 5: MOUNT KENYA, TAVETA AND THE TAITA HILLS	65
January 1974.....	65
Return to Mbale	66
' <i>Africa kabisa</i> ' (five days in Taveta)	66
Comet Kohoutek	69
In Search of the Mountain.....	69
The new school year.....	71
New headmaster and new teachers	71
Back to teaching.....	72
Letter to the British Councils, 28 January 1974	73
News of the new term	73
" <i>Akasema Simeoni...</i> "	75
CHAPTER 6: TEACHING IN THE TAITA HILLS.....	76
February 1974.....	76
The first week of February	76
Mount Kulal, Student service and Grace's birthday	77

Teaching in the heat	77
An eventful day	78
Weekend in Mombasa	78
Blue water and parched fields.....	79
The final week of February	80
CHAPTER 7: SCHOOL LIFE IN THE TAITA HILLS	82
March 1974.....	82
The first week of March.....	82
Six months ago... ..	83
The second week of March.....	83
Busy days.....	84
Delirious tea-pickers.....	86
<i>Kazi nyingi sana [very much work]</i>	87
A safari to remember	89
Tea with the Willastons	89
CHAPTER 8: EASTER IN THE TAITA HILLS, MOMBASA AND NAIROBI	91
April 1974	91
April fool's day	91
End of exams and holiday plans	91
Mombasa fellowship	92
Excerpt from Desmond G's Newsletter, April 1974.....	93
The fever of life is over.....	94
The 'Real Africa' – Part 2.....	94
Safari to the top of Yale	95
Good Friday to Easter Sunday.....	96
East African Safari Rally	96
YSA get together at Limuru.....	97
Train from Nairobi to Mombasa	98
Mombasa and back to Nairobi	99
Teaching on the Spirit-filled and Spirit-led life... ..	100
Charismatics at Work Convention, Lenana High School, Nairobi	101
Nairobi prophecy.....	103
Illustrations to follow Chapter 5.....	104
Illustrations to follow Chapter 6.....	108
Illustrations to follow Chapters 7 and 8	112
CHAPTER 9: ZAMBIA AND BACK TO THE TAITA HILLS	117
May 1974.....	117
The conference went well.....	117
Miracle journey to Zambia.....	117
Zambia reflections.....	119
Luanshya and copper mines.....	120
Musi-oa-Tunya (Victoria Falls).....	121

Copperbelt and return to Kenya.....	122
Letter from Elaine H to my mother, 13 May 1974	123
New term and new teachers	124
CU leaders' Training Day.....	125
Coast Province Science Teachers Seminar.....	126
CHAPTER 10: A CHRISTENING IN THE TAITA HILLS	128
June 1974	128
The first few days in June	128
Letter to my parents, 5 June 1974	128
Prayer Mount and beyond.....	129
Peter M at the classroom door.....	130
Winter Solstice	131
An unfortunate staff meeting.....	132
Catharine's Birthday.....	132
Robert Mark's Christening.....	133
Science Club.....	134
Half-term at Mombasa	134
CHAPTER 11: PRAYER WALKS IN THE TAITA HILLS	136
July 1974	136
Prayer walk towards Mgamboni.....	136
Perilous motor-bike ride	137
Witness to students from Mwangeka	139
Visit to Jackson's house.....	139
Long walk to Mgamboni	139
Poised between two worlds	140
'Come Together' weekend	141
Exams.....	143
CHAPTER 12: THE LAST MOUNTAIN.....	144
August 1974	144
Exams and marking	144
Last walk in the Taita Hills	144
Mbale Church Choir.....	145
Nineteenth birthday.....	145
Mgalu farewells.....	146
The 'Real Africa' – Part 3.....	146
Trip to Western Kenya	149
Kilimanjaro	150
Return to Mbale, Nairobi and England.....	154
Last words.....	155
Illustrations to follow Chapter 9.....	157
Illustrations to follow Chapters 10 and 11	161
Illustrations to follow Chapter 12.....	169

CHAPTER 1: WELCOME TO THE TAITA HILLS

September 1973

Journey to Kenya

The journey to Kenya – Nairobi and the Taita Hills – is described in excerpts from my first letters home, and notes based on my diary entries...

From a letter to my parents, written from Mbale [pronounced 'Em-Ba-leh'] on 12 September 1973:

Well! So much to relate and less than a week gone! I am writing this now on 12th (Wednesday) aiming to post it at Mombasa on Friday...

We took off 75 minutes late. We circled over Windsor, and hit the coast at Brighton – my last view of Britain. A few minutes of blackness gave way to the lights of the Channel Islands and the French coast... Over France, then we crossed the French Riviera and followed the coastline of Italy through to Sicily – the moon clearly reflected in the Mediterranean waters. We ran into gathering cloud before reaching the North African coast. I had a sleepless night in various uncomfortable positions. Dawn broke suddenly, the darkness on my right rapidly replaced by views of arid plains punctuated by dry river courses. Spectacular pink mountains and possible glimpses of Lake Rudolph [Turkana]. Breakfast saw us crossing more and more fertile country until we reached Lake Naivasha, where we began our descent to Nairobi. We circled to the south of the city, crossed the twin rail tracks of the Nairobi to Mombasa railway line, before landing at Embakasi Airport, to the east. Fantastic views of parched semi-desert stretching away to hills in the east...

Moment of truth – the wheels touched the tarmac and we entered Africa. I stepped outside. The temperature? 57 degrees [Fahrenheit]! A come down from temperatures in the 80s in London before we left – I really will have to get used to this *cold* weather! Nairobi airport was extremely efficient with health check, passport check, immigration, luggage collection and customs – all over within half an hour of landing (08:30 Kenyan time). We were met by Reverend John R, who drove us through Nairobi, with its landscaped roundabouts, Jacaranda trees, white buildings and red earthworks – these were my first impressions – to St Julian's, a guest house near Limuru, 20 miles west of Nairobi...

Limuru and Nairobi

It was Saturday 8 September 1973, the morning we arrived in Nairobi. We were a group of eighteen young men and women, volunteers with the CMS 'Youth Service Abroad' (YSA) Scheme, travelling to Kenya for postings (mostly in pairs) as teachers at Anglican Church sponsored 'Harambee' (non-Government, self-funded) secondary schools. We were a diverse group, from different parts of the United Kingdom, and from a variety of church backgrounds. Most of us were school leavers, and I had just celebrated my 18th birthday. The CMS representative, the Reverend John R, met us off the plane, and we all piled into a minibus, and were driven through Nairobi to St Julian's, near Limuru, 20 miles to the west and at an altitude of nearly 7,000 feet. This was a beautiful CMS guest house, a 'colonial' mansion, reminiscent of 'British East Africa' in the early part of the twentieth century. As I wrote in the letter, "It was almost as if we were back in England – with silver tea pots, coolness, green grass and 'civilisation'". The idea was that we could recover from the long overnight flight in comparative comfort.

The letter continued, "Soon, however, I was to discover the idiosyncratic phenomena of Africa – the sun goes straight up – and then straight down – no messing about. By 10 o'clock it seemed as if the sun was almost vertically overhead. It was mostly cloudy that first day, but when the sun eventually appeared it bathed us in a gloriously dry heat – much more comfortable than the harvesting sun in Lincolnshire." During the afternoon

our CMS hosts gave us a rather sobering lecture on health and hygiene, emphasising some basic practices such as boiling all water and milk before consumption, and prompt application of antiseptics and dressings for cuts, scratches and insect bites. Outside, a group photograph of us was taken; I was at the back, at the base of the rainwater tank.

My letter continued, "After dark the characteristic, nostalgic noise of crickets and cicadas filled the air, and there was the magical, hauntingly beautiful sound of African singing in the distance. The sky, having cleared, revealed a completely different pattern of stars, and the moon with its face curiously turned (so to speak, on its side). I was accommodated in a wooden annexe with fellow YSAs Mike, Peter and Stephen. The first night in a dark continent..."

The next day (Sunday), I awoke refreshed after a good night, emerging from the depths of sleep: Must-get-out-of-bed, go-downstairs, put-the-coffee-pot-on, draw-the-curtains, listen-to-the-8-o'clock-news... No, no... hang on, wait a minute, where am I? This is... AFRICA!

We were driven to Limuru Bible College, three miles away, arriving just in time for a children's service conducted in Swahili. "*Baba yetu...*" [Our Father] and "*Yesu anipenda*" [Yes, Jesus loves me – sung unaccompanied, except for a solitary drum]. After the service we were taken round the college by students, and I had my first experiences of *chai*, Kikuyu, and chameleons. In the afternoon we played 'vicarage-standard tennis' on a hard and red-dusty court. John and Shirley R came and gave us a final practical briefing, with some more sobering stories of previous YSA mis-haps, including one about a YSA volunteer who was seriously gored by an elephant. The day concluded with an evening service in the St Julian's chapel. John R gave us a very relevant talk on 'service' – being served by Christ, and then going on to serve others.

On Monday morning we left St Julian's, and were driven to the CMS Office and guest houses on the hill outside the City of Nairobi, just above the Anglican Cathedral. Leaving our baggage there, we were taken to the Hilton Hotel as a focal point, and then had time for some shopping – Kenyatta Avenue, Jacaranda Chemist, Woolworths, Kolpro's (for clothing), and a bookshop – and I was done! After lunch at the Hotel Ambassadeur, I saw some of the other YSAs off to Kisumu and Murang'a in *matatus* [taxis]. It was a great spectacle: "You tek my taxi!" "No, you tek mine! He only going as far as Thika!" "He taxi no good!" I then wandered around Nairobi taking some photographs, and feeling a bit low with a slight sore throat. Nairobi struck me as a bright, friendly, modern, fast-moving city. I had some tea (to ease my throat) at a café called The Honeypot, and had no qualms about chatting with the person next to me – we had an animated conversation, ending in his giving me his card – he was the Kenyan representative for an American Insurance Company! I then visited the modern Roman Catholic Cathedral, with its quiet spaciousness and beautiful stained glass: the late afternoon sun bathed the Nairobi skyline in a gentle light.

But Nairobi showed its darker side too: the unemployed queuing at the Ministry of Works; shoe cleaners on the streets, beggars, cripples – and, on entering Uhuru Park later that afternoon, a classic 'hard-luck' story. In some ways it was quite amusing, as it was identical to the story John R had quoted in the YSA briefing the day before – maybe it was the same person. He explained that he was studying for Year 12 examinations, he had good academic prospects but not enough money to go to school, but he could be earning 500/- a day if only he could procure "this two-wheeled cart" from a Kenyan Asian. He wanted £5 for it. "I couldn't possibly give that much!" Ah, but he'd let me have it for £2 if I paid the rest later. His father was killed during the Mau Mau rising a few years before. No, he had no possessions to pawn. I listened carefully to his story, and eventually gave him 2/-, which I felt was an appropriate amount. But before parting with the money I took the opportunity to witness to this man in Uhuru Park, and tried to share with him the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As I recall, he seemed to listen, and went so far as

to come with me to the Roman Catholic Cathedral I had just visited, and I prayed for him there, and he thanked me. Whether this was just a manipulation on his part in an effort to extract some money from me, or whether his interest in spiritual things was genuine, I shall never know. But who knows? Perhaps on that day the seeds of eternal life were sown in that person's heart. I pray that it was so.

I walked back to the R's house (next door to the CMS office), where I stayed the night with John and Shirley and their family. Bath, dinner and relaxed conversation – which included admiring their nine-year-old son Malcolm's pet snake!

By bus to Wundanyi

The next day (Tuesday) I was up at 6 am to catch the 07:00 Wundanyi OTC [Overland Transport Corporation] bus, which left Nairobi Bus Station about half an hour late. Taking the main road to Mombasa, going south-east, the city streets and boulevards gave way to dry scrubland just past Nairobi Airport. We travelled through the Township of Athi River, and then diverted left off the main road to the Town of Machakos, where a friendly civil administrator offered me *chai* (hot, sweet, thick, milky tea). Then, on through desolate, mountainous country to Sultan Hamud. We stopped to pick up some Maasai warriors, one of whom sat in the front seat next to me, complete with spear in hand! We had lunch at Kibwezi, feeling hot and tired; and then we entered the Tsavo National Park, where we saw elephants and baboons, very close to the road because of the current drought. Presently the Taita Hills appeared on our right in the distance, and we reached Voi about 3 pm – a colourful, arid market town.

The bus, which had been almost empty when we came into Voi, suddenly filled with market shoppers returning to the towns of Mwatate and Wundanyi in the Taita Hills – sacks of coal, bananas, and other bundles were loaded on to the roof rack. The road to Mwatate was level and straight, and we travelled quickly past sisal estates, but the ascent into the Taita Hills brought a dramatic change. A slow climb of steep hairpin bends gave us superb views over the coastal plains – and ahead of us were precipitous peaks, rocky cliff faces and outcrops, waterfalls, residual forests, and primitive homesteads clinging to the slopes – almost a strangely oriental scene, like Malaya or rural Japan, but without stepped terrace farms and rice paddy fields. Miss Flora, a young Taita lady, sat next to me, and taught me some of the basic ki-Dabida greetings: “*Kwa sinda mana?*” “*Da sinda to...*” [hard to translate, but literally ‘abide safely’, equivalent to ‘How was your day?’ ‘I’m good, how are you?’ etc.] – until we reached our destination, the Government Town of Wundanyi, where I was met by Don and Lyn S, and their young children, Anne and Iain, at around 4.30 pm. I took a photograph of the OTC bus, just after it had arrived in Wundanyi, with a few local children gathered round it.

Later that evening, Don took me for a walk down the steep hillside and briefly showed me round the house where I would be living, at the foot of the Mgalu valley; but for the first few nights I stayed with Don and Lyn, in their bungalow-style house on a hillside overlooking the valley. Peter M, a Christian teacher at Mgalu High School, from the Kamba tribe around the Machakos area, had dinner with us and read bedtime stories to the children.

First days at Mbale

I awoke early the next morning, my first day in the Taita Hills – it was a fabulous, bright morning, and I watched the rising sun against the blue of the hills across the valley. Don took me down to Mgalu High School, where I was introduced, and met members of staff and students. My first experience of morning Assembly, in the white-washed Form III classroom, was the singing of the well-known hymn, in a sort of breathless, disjointed, rhythmic way: “Just as I am, without one plea... O Lamb of God, I come... I come!” After Assembly I attended my first lesson (in Form I) with Don, which was English. Don invited me to tell the students about myself, so I spoke very authoritatively (in a commanding

voice in order to establish easy control) about farming in Lincolnshire, and about Engineering. After the lesson I met the other members of staff – Peter M, who had joined us for dinner last night, Aggrey O, from the Luo tribe in Western Kenya and a graduate from Nairobi University, who is to share the house with me, Crispin M, George T and Flora M, all from the local Taita tribe. At the end of afternoon lessons I played soccer, managing to bruise my foot badly and get very breathless because of the high altitude (about 4,000 feet). In the early evening, shortly after dark, I walked down the hill to my house, taking a few books with me. Aggrey was not there, so I returned and had dinner with the S family, where I was staying – we listened to some of the Jesus Christ Superstar musical on tape, and the radio news on BBC Worldwide (more IRA bombs in London).

The next day, Thursday, I ‘sat in’ on various lessons, as a ‘guest teacher’ – this was part of my orientation. The first three lessons were with Form III, English with Peter M. Again I was bombarded with questions about England – this time at a more advanced level: demonstrations, strikes, Northern Ireland, the church in England, agricultural methods and industries. Lessons 4 and 5, also with Form III, comprised Religious Education (RE), taken by Flora, focusing on the early part of the Synoptic Gospels. Lesson 6 took the form of an English language crossword with Form I. After six lessons on the trot I was whacked! I spent the afternoon marking Form I English (53 books in all) – crosswords and grammatical exercises. Later that afternoon I walked up the hill to Maynard's Primary School (which has a main Hall) to see the Drama Group in action. I thought it was an excellent presentation, very well dramatized. It was in Swahili, and way beyond my ability in that language, but the girl sitting next to me kindly translated for me as we went along.

At 6 pm, just after dark, I went to see Aggrey at the house. George and Crispin were also there. After some discussion we went, supposedly, for an ‘evening walk’. In fact, as I soon discovered, they took me to the nearest local beer house, which turned out to be an interesting experience, to say the least. Not being a drinker by nature, I found the local African ‘maize beer’ rather repulsive – it tasted a bit like salty water, or aspirin dissolved in water. Unable to find my way back in the dark, I was detained, I thought rather aggressively, by Aggrey. At length, after much argument, and having mastered only a few ‘mils’ of the beer, Crispin and George managed to persuade Aggrey to let me go, and brought me back to the road that led to Don and Lyn’s house, explaining that Aggrey could be a very stubborn person. I had certainly seen his less attractive side. That evening I felt diffident about living in the same house as Aggrey; however, he said he may well leave at the end of the year, so I reckoned it might be a case of just sticking it out.

Mombasa and Shimo-la-Tewa

The next day, Friday 14 September 1973, I was summoned out of the first lesson to explain to Harrison M, the Headmaster, who I was and where I’d come from. Clearly there had been a breakdown in communication – Harrison, Aggrey and the other staff members had not been informed of my arrival: hence the hesitant welcome I had received!

After attending a Maths lesson with Aggrey, who appeared to be in good control of the class, the S family and I set off for Mombasa. Our first stop was the colourful African market at Wundanyi, where we picked up some fresh fruit and vegetables to take to missionary friends in Mombasa. Don and Lyn had also arranged to pick up Cephas, the Headmaster of a nearby High School. We had lunch at a service station on the outskirts of Voi, and spent a brief time watching puffer trains, much to the delight of Anne and Iain. The weather felt soporific as we left the highlands of Taita, and we began to feel the effects of the fierce tropical sun. After crossing the causeway into the Town of Mombasa, we made our way directly to the Cathedral office and saw Richard (the

Bishop's right hand man, standing in for the Bishop as he was away in Nairobi), in order to clarify my position and role as a teacher at Mgalu High School, since that school was an Anglican one in the Diocese of Mombasa, and therefore ultimately under the control of the Bishop.

My first impressions of Mombasa were recorded in a letter to my parents, written from Mbale on 19 September 1973:

Saturday was spent buying a Chinese pressure lamp and cooking things, in the very oppressive, heavy heat, as it was a cloudy day. We drove round Mombasa Island, through the famous elephant tusks archway on Kilindini Street, past the docks and on to the sea front at dusk. We watched the gentle waves breaking on the coral reef, with palm trees sweeping the twilight beaches – my first sight of the great Indian Ocean! As we were watching your films of Lamu and Mombasa at Legbourne, Dad – then such faraway, unreal places – little did I realize that in two short weeks I would be there! [Here I was referring to the ciné films my father used to take on board his survey ships, to send home to my mother, who could watch them on the projector at home. HMS Owen was surveying in the Indian Ocean in 1961-2, and these films were taken during that time.]

Mombasa in fact is a terrific place! A mixture of European, Indian and Arab cultures – no high-rise flats or Hilton hotels as in Nairobi. There's a wonderful narrow street called 'Bia-Shara' running the entire width of the island, from north to south, very narrow and lined each side with Arab or Indian *dukas* (small shops) selling antiques, coloured shirts, carvings, and other miscellanea. You fly back through the centuries, until you turn round to find you're looking at a Lyons ice cream van! We stayed at the guest house of CITC (Christian Industrial Training Centre), which overlooks the North Creek – which is spanned by the famous Nyali Pontoon Bridge...

In the late evening we all had a swim at the Missions-to-Seamen pool – which was very refreshing after a hot day. I was then taken by Ken F, the CMS missionary in charge of CITC, to a Charismatic Christian Fellowship Meeting at the J's family (also CMS missionaries) at Shimo-la-Tewa, a small town about 20 miles north of Mombasa along the coast. This meant we had to cross the Nyali Pontoon Bridge, which, as the above letter described, "looked very romantic by moonlight."

I recall that the meeting, which was attended mainly by English and American missionaries, with some Kenyans, was very inspiring, and I found it exciting to discover that Christians are the same anywhere. At one point during the course of the meeting a prophecy was given – it spoke about trials and suffering – and I did not pay any particular attention to it at the time. But at the end of the meeting the person who had spoken the prophecy came up to me and said he thought that the prophecy applied *particularly* to me! This took me by surprise, and I found it somewhat disconcerting, but it set me thinking. It certainly proved to be true during the difficult series of events that unfolded over the coming months... We returned to Mombasa somewhere around midnight.

On Sunday morning we arrived at the Cathedral just as the Swahili service was breaking up. There I met my employer, the Bishop of Mombasa, The Right Reverend Peter M, and also shook hands with the Archbishop of Kenya, the Right Reverend Festus Olang – the Cathedral had been packed because of his presence there. We attended the English service taken by the Reverend Canon Desmond G, the Provost of Mombasa Cathedral. I noticed that the weather had much improved owing to some rain the previous night; there was a fair wind and a few heavy clouds.

We left the CITC guest house mid-afternoon, and the road seemed to climb quickly, once we were clear of Mombasa. The scrub-land appeared dark against the sun's slanting rays. Endless stretches of road opened before us, and the blue line of the Taita Hills loomed ever nearer, until we reached them at dusk. We stopped off at Wusi, just off the road between Mwatate and Wundanyi, and called in on Miss Kate C, the CMS missionary who had founded Mgalu High School some three years previously, and who

was now Headmistress of Murray High School, a prestigious Government girls' secondary school. Dynamic and vivacious, she struck me as altogether a remarkable lady – she gave us words of wisdom to encourage us amidst the present frustrations of the Mgalu school situation.

Early experiences at Mbale

I spent Monday afternoon moving into our house and unpacking. In my diary I wrote:

It is indeed a wonderful house with spacious rooms, a good kitchen with a gas stove (to which we applied a new LPG cylinder), and kerosene fridge on the way. My bedroom is especially well furnished.

A steep red-earth driveway led down from the main (but unsealed) Mbale-Iriwa road to a covered porch at the back of the house. The back door opened on to a central corridor, with doors on the right leading to my bedroom first, then Aggrey's bedroom further along. The bathroom and kitchen were off to the left, and there was a side door from the kitchen to an open area containing the main circular rainwater tank and other smaller rectangular tanks for river water. A short walk from the kitchen door past some banana trees led to a small out-house, the *choo*, ['long-drop' toilet]. There was, of course, no electricity, and no running water or sewerage.

The living room and dining room were at the far end of the corridor, and there was a 'front door' which we kept permanently locked. If you went out of the kitchen door and turned sharp right, and followed a cement path running along the side of the house, then turned sharp right again, you reached the verandah that spanned the full width of the front of the house, where there was a small wooden table and two or three wooden chairs. The most stunning feature of the house was the view from the verandah, which was superb. The narrow 'garden' of grass and flowering bushes fell precipitously away to a series of steep hills, and down to a valley bearing right, then curving left, until it fell away into the desert plains of Tsavo, and distant hills so clear you could almost reach out and touch them. In the far distance you could see the flat-topped mountain peak of Kasigau, some 40 miles away towards the coast!

When I first moved into the house in mid-September, there had been no rain for several months, and the countryside was in a state of drought – parched, brown hills and clear blue skies. When I first checked the main rainwater tank, it seemed to be almost empty, with the water level at about 7 or 8 'rings' out of 24. When you turned on the tap only a dribble of water came out, and it took ages to fill a *sufira* (handle-less saucepan) with water that I could boil to make tea. These were the climatic conditions I experienced when I moved in, and so the view from the verandah was ever clear and spectacular. But then in November the rains began, and the hills – almost overnight – turned green. When the rains came, the clouds rose up from the valleys below and mists closed in and swirled about the house. Then it was like a ship at sea, fogbound or storm-driven, shut off from the outside world and all its troubles – a place of perfect privacy, perfect freedom. I learned later that this house, called the 'Diocesan House', had been Miss Kate C's home when she founded Mgalu and became its first Headmistress, and she used to park her Land Rover in the porch at the back of the house, but I was unaware of this 'history' at the time.

After unpacking, I climbed back up the hill to Don and Lyn's house. Don showed me how to work the pressure lamp. I put the glass casing on one side, and on returning from the kitchen accidentally kicked and broke it! The casing is only replaceable in Mombasa, but Don and Lyn were going there at the weekend – so, one Chinese pressure lamp out of action for a week! Later in the afternoon I walked down the main road to the village of Iriwa, where I bought some tinned fish and other basic groceries. The shopkeepers there were very appreciative of my laconic ki-Dabida (about seven words)! I spent the evening marking Maths books and preparing the first meal in the new house, with Aggrey.

On Tuesday morning I met Catharine W for the first time – the Reverend Andrew and Catharine W and family were CMS missionaries living ‘next door’, so to speak, up the hill between our house and Maynard Primary School. She had written a long, interesting ‘welcome’ letter about Mbale-Dabida, and life in the Taita Hills, which arrived at my home in Lincolnshire exactly on 7 August 1973 – my eighteenth birthday! It was good to meet her at last, and she drove me, in a pinkish Renault 6 (nick-named the ‘Pink Panther’), to Wundanyi, as it was her shopping day. It was market day, and I was amazed by the bright colours of fruit, vegetables, linen and clothing – a vivid contrast to the drab shops of rural Lincolnshire. After spending *an hour* in the Kenya Commercial Bank cashing traveller’s cheques (one quickly learns the art of patience), I had leisure to wander round the open-air food market. I was staggered at the prices: piles of tomatoes for only 10c (½p) a pile, a large cabbage for just 50c (2½p), watermelons and pineapples for 1/- each, carrots and potatoes also very inexpensive, 1 kilo of good quality beef for only 3/50 (50p per pound in the UK). I walked back – a three mile journey, mostly downhill – and had oat porridge for lunch.

After lunch I taught my first lesson: RE (Religious Education) Form III, teaching the students to make their own notes on the Temptations of Christ. After school it was ‘*Harambee* time’, which involved carrying cement blocks for the new classrooms, which were still, sadly, annoyingly, at the foundation stage. Peter, Flora and I were invited to dinner with the W family, although Andrew had not yet returned from Nairobi and Mombasa – a good English roast, which did not come amiss, and cheery conversation and Christian fellowship till late. It was a dark, moonless night, and the tropical stars were incredibly clear.

On Wednesday Aggrey and I installed the kerosene-powered fridge, and made *sima* (stiff maize porridge) for lunch – it turned out to be a surprisingly good meal, but very heavy and filling. I spent the afternoon reading and writing letters. ‘Agriculture’ at the school involved watering the gardens (a few rather sorry cabbages), with muddy river water carried in *debes* [empty kerosene tins]. Some of the students kindly offered me some sugar cane to chew on – another ‘first’ experience. I prepared for teaching the following day, and cooked steak and chips for dinner on my own. Aggrey came in very late, rolling drunk and reeking of ‘beer’.

On Thursday I helped teach Don’s English class: “You are a Voice of Kenya (VOK) radio commentator. Write a commentary on Uhuru Day from Kenyatta Avenue, Nairobi.” An afternoon class comprised Singing, led by Peter M – hymns and praises in full African style. I was struck by the tremendous enthusiasm, and incredible clapping rhythms. The language barrier was of little consequence: “*Asante Bwana*” [Thanks, Lord] was all one needed to know – and indeed this was the essence of all their singing; but later in the day I got caught in the cross fire with Aggrey and George, who disapproved of what they called ‘emotional fanaticism’. Then on Friday there was a Christian Union (CU) meeting in Form III. My diary records:

The place was packed – a thrilling sight, particularly for Peter who has laboured hard, and suffered many frustrations, to see such a miracle take place at Mgalu High School, as is taking place at this very moment. A time of song (both English and African style), and testimony. I’ve never seen anything quite like it – singing and preaching with great enthusiasm! At times the noise was terrific. There seemed to be an openness, a complete lack of embarrassment or self-consciousness, characteristic of the Kenyan people as a whole, that I found very refreshing and attractive. And while it is possible to question the depth of their understanding of the Christian Faith, the sheer zeal of these young Christians is something to be admired...

In the evening, Andrew W dropped by, having just returned from Nairobi and Mombasa. I clearly remember him turning up on my doorstep, after dark – a tall, handsome figure,

well-spoken and articulate, and with a positive air of confidence and capability that I found instantly reassuring. We quickly found we were on the same wavelength, and 'of one mind'; our communication felt natural, and our conversation, especially about spiritual matters, flowed easily.

Letter to my parents dated 26 September 1973

The next few days are described in a letter to my parents, written from Mbale, dated 26 September 1973:

I think I've settled into the house by now, though I got a bit of a shock, when returning at dusk on Saturday. With no lights on in the house, I observed a ghostly figure reclining on Aggrey's bed. A woman's voice – I got a hurricane lamp. Was she a friend of Aggrey's? No, she was his wife! She also had their two-year-old daughter with her. She had travelled all the way from Nairobi that day, to find Aggrey out and with no one to meet her! I had not been warned of her coming (let alone Aggrey himself), but apparently this is the African way – you just drop in unexpectedly on relatives. Anyway, Mrs O is here for the week, and treating us to some good African cooking!

Another domestic incident: on Monday, Aggrey called me to the back door. A snake, writhing around with a lizard stuck in its mouth, just outside the back door! We hurled stones at it until we got its head. I then got a photograph taken of me holding it up by its tail. It was green, about 2½ feet long, with a yellow underside. Mrs W 'fears' that it might have been just a harmless grass snake, but I am reluctant to admit it or to believe that it was! I have been assured that snakes are frightened of humans, and so should not intrude into the house.

Last Saturday I climbed to the top of a nearby ridge, 1,500 feet above Iriwa. The inhabitants of the houses I passed were pleased to show me the best route up. Frequently, not only did they point me in the right direction, but sent one of their children to escort 'the white stranger with a camera' to the next turning point. Such is the hospitality, friendliness and openness of Kenyans. Another example: it is considered the height of bad manners not to exchange greetings with everyone you meet on the road – "Kwa sinda?" "Da sinda". "Kwa sinda mana?" "Da sinda to" (in ki-Dabida). Anyway, the top of the ridge commanded a fabulous view – right over the Tsavo plains and the sisal estates just outside Voi, and towards Kasigau, a mountain about the height of Stac Pollaidh [in north-west Scotland] which I can see from my bedroom window, about 40 miles away; southwards almost into Tanzania; and westwards to Wesu rock and Wundanyi. Immediately below me: the Mbale District and Iriwa spread out like a map. I took some photographs, and when I go up again I shall do a sketch.

That afternoon, Mr W took me to a Government school near Wundanyi to see a foundation-laying ceremony by the local MP (reminiscent of Haileybury Speech Day). The schooling situation is that if you attain a certain grade at the end of primary school examinations you gain a place at a Government secondary school. Those who fail can only receive secondary education at Harambee schools, where the students have to pay fees. Thus Mgalu is composed of students who are either not so bright, or badly taught – quite a challenge for teaching! The classrooms for Forms III and IV are still at foundation stage: our \$1,000 question which was 'find the right angle' has been abandoned: it now stands at 'find the horizontal and the vertical'!

As to my appointment, Mr W assures me that as a YSA volunteer I was posted to Mgalu High School long before the current over-staffing crisis. However, the Headmaster Mr Harrison M refuses to allow me to teach until the official forms, signed by the Bishop, arrive from Mombasa. Communication is very slow and sometimes frustrating. As you always say, Dad, and now I *heartily* agree with you: Centralised Administration is a Great Mistake! Mr S and Harrison M have been battling it out in Mombasa, with Richard and the Bishop. Mr S assures me that Mr Harrison M is being removed (hopefully by the end of term), to be replaced by a strong, Christian Headmaster, and that two thirds of the present staff are due to be transferred to other schools – one of them by the end of the week,

which means I'll definitely be teaching by next Monday. Until then I have had rather less on my hands than I would have wished: helping marking, learning Swahili (the most logical and easiest language imaginable), but I should be able to prepare for the syllabus courses I shall be conducting for the rest of this week.

There are some terrific people around here that I'm getting to know. Christianity here is by no means shallow or artificial. Students who have become Christians tend to get very excited and worked up – but there is a genuineness and maturity in Peter M, who has laboured hard, and suffered many frustrations, to get the Christian Union at Mgalu into the shape that it is. The W's too are wonderful missionaries, always full of hope and calm, a great help to me during the present staff upheavals...

Prayer Mount, Aggrey High School and Mbale Church

The climb up the ridge behind the village of Iriwa on my first Saturday in the Taita Hills was significant, in that I discovered a mountain that I would later call 'Prayer Mount'. Although I did not reach the 'summit' on this first ascent, there were several later occasions when I climbed Prayer Mount. I gave the mountain this special name because it commanded superb views over the entire Mbale District and beyond – out over the hills and on to the plains, dappled with the blue-grey shadows of clouds, away from the 'island' of the Taita Hills, to where my far-reaching gaze could make out the beginnings of the outside world. Here I could pause and meditate, and so to speak 'pray over' the various crisis situations I was facing – immediately below me, or away beyond the horizon.

On this occasion I set out at 08:30 on Saturday morning to climb up the ridge above Iriwa, taking a route up a steep spur through several *shambas* [farms], then on through forests of ferns and palms. Though this was not (as I was later told) the really old residual forest of East Africa, I nevertheless felt myself slipping back through time into a primeval woodland. A rocky outcrop afforded my first view over Mbale, and my gaze took in the road to Wundanyi past Espy's corner, the W's house, over the bridge and on through Iriwa – almost every house in the area visible. The two photographs I took link together to form a striking panorama of the Mgalu valley, and panning to the right, the ridge above the path leading up to Wundanyi. Everything looking parched yellow-brown in the grip of a severe and prolonged drought.

That afternoon Andrew W took me to Aggrey High School, near Wundanyi, for a foundation-laying ceremony. Looking around the buildings, which included a well-equipped science laboratory, one could well understand why Government school students are to be envied! The foundation plaque for the new school hall was laid by the Minister for Tourism and Wildlife, and also the MP for Wundanyi. This was the Honourable Minister Shako, who was also the organist for Shigaro church. It so happened that on Christmas Day, Andrew W and I went to this church for the main morning service, and Minister Shako was there, playing traditional (African-style) Christmas carols on the organ! The proceedings at Aggrey High School, which were conducted mainly in Swahili, ended with the National Anthem, during which the Kenyan flag was raised, and the Pledge of Loyalty given: "to strive to build this country in the living spirit of our motto, *HAR-AM-BEE!*" The word '*Harambee*' is a Swahili word that means 'Pull together', or 'Everybody strive together', and it is a popular Kenyan motto. So, when the Minister ended his speech by shouting this word loudly, it was like a rallying cry, with everybody joining in a rousing chorus – it was a heart-warming experience!

That evening I was invited to have dinner with the W family, and afterwards we went out on to the expansive lawn in front of their house and gazed at the stars: Pegasus, Cygnis, Saggiarius, the Summer Triangle (Arcturus, Deneb, Vega), and Jupiter. Through Andrew's powerful binoculars we could see four of Jupiter's moons – like tiny pin-pricks of light, evenly spaced in a perfectly straight line, because we were observing their

orbitals side on. We also saw the uncanny glow of a bushfire down on the Tsavo plains, in the far distance.

The next day was my first Sunday in the Taita Hills, and I attended Mattins at the Mbale Anglican Church, which was situated further up the hill, just above Maynard's Hall. The church was full, the men in white shirts or suits, the women brightly dressed. It was a normal, Prayer-book Mattins service, but – in true African style – it lasted nearly two hours! The sermon was preached by the Reverend John N, using a mixture of ki-Swahili and ki-Dabida. After lunch with the W's, we all drove over to Murray High School to see Miss Kate C. The S family and Peter M were there as well, so it was a like a family gathering! I attended the students' Christian Union meeting, where the guest speaker was Cliff B, from the UK. Once again the singing was pursued with rare zeal.

Ngangao Forest

The next week, at the school, was fairly uneventful, and I spent some time learning Swahili and beginning a cataloguing process for the library. The highlight was setting an English dictation for Form I. I made the mistake of selecting a passage from 'Journey to the Jade Sea' by John Hillaby, which included several difficult words such as 'horns', 'promptly', 'plunged', and 'rifle'. Together, the class generated a total of 27 permutations of 'rifle', including 'rightfull', 'right food' and even 'rough wog'!

On Saturday morning Aggrey and I set out to walk to Wundanyi. We were picked up by an English couple driving a Datsun, members of the Trinity Fellowship, who had stayed with the W's overnight and were on their way back to Maseno [in Western Kenya]. They kindly gave us a lift into town, and once there we shopped for groceries, having abandoned plans to go to the Kenya Commercial Bank because of the end-of-the-month cash scrum.

In due course the W's picked me up, and we drove uphill past the peaks of Wesu and Yale (pronounced 'Yah-lay') to Ngangao ('Ng-gang-gao'), a mountain plateau surrounded by 'the old residual forest of East Africa'. We had a picnic lunch in thick, but very cool jungle – a beautiful forest of old trees and enchanted ferns. The air was filled with the magical sounds of tropical birds, and possibly monkeys, the wind sighing overhead. But then we were shocked into reality when on setting out for the highest point, Catharine very nearly stepped on a snake! Long, thin and bright green, it slithered away along the lower branches of a bush, coiling itself around them – a green mamba, the first snake the W's had ever seen at Ngangao. Unpleasant too were the safari ants, which were adept at penetrating socks and trousers! Such hazards overcome, we climbed through the coolness of the forest, enjoying the distinct visual beauty of each kind of tree, and inhaling the rich fragrance of strange flowers and ferns. Deciduous vegetation suddenly gave way to pines, where the silence was deepened by the rich red carpet of pine needles under our feet.

Presently we emerged on to an expanse of smooth grey rocks interspersed with pine trees and gorse bushes (looking almost like the Highlands of Scotland), from which the view was sensational. Immediately below us the densely populated and fertile Taita plateau stretched away, rising gently towards the highest peaks – Vuria, Yale and Wesu. Behind us, in the distance, lay the township of Voi, distinct in the sunlight, and the Tsavo plains – a patchwork of sunlight and shadow. In front of us the plains of Tsavo West stretched away into Tanzania, and Kilimanjaro – its peaks hidden by cloud. Panning from the left, the North Pare mountains in Tanzania overlooked Lake Jipe on the border – a strip of light clearly visible without binoculars; and where the mountains jutted out like a promontory on to the plain, stood a single white building, Eldoro Secondary School, 50 miles away! Bushfires sent out slanting columns of smoke, in Tanzania, to the right towards Taveta. Panning further to the right, the lower slopes of Kilimanjaro itself, a huge grey-blue silhouette, rose above the dark grey desert plains.

We made our way back down through the forest, pausing to observe palms and firs growing side by side, and a tree against the sun covered in bearded lichen. And so we descended back into the Taita Hills, again looking distinctly oriental in the grey clouds and mists.

On Sunday (30 September 1973), Mrs O and her daughter Winifred left in the early morning, Aggrey accompanying them as far as Voi. I went to Kenyatta High School, near Mwatate, with Andrew W for Communion (in English), followed by a Christian Union meeting in which I was asked to speak for two or three minutes. Public speaking, unprepared, was quite a test – but I think my words were well received. I was then shown around the school: a Government Boarding Secondary School with three streams up to Sixth Form A level – very superior, with dormitories, well-equipped class rooms, laboratories and workshops. Being on the plains, the atmosphere was hot and sleepy compared to that of Wundanyi.

Revival and commitment

In a summary of the year written in 1978, shortly after I left Cambridge University, I wrote:

When I arrived in Taita, revival was in full swing – part of the great East African Revival, sweeping across the continent like a bush fire ablaze – the ‘Breath of Life’, as described by Patricia St John. At Mbale, students were witnessing to one another; many were being saved, and some were baptized with the Holy Spirit. During the morning service on Sunday 30 September 1973 at Kenyatta High School, Mwatate, I came before the Lord in prayer and, as an act of commitment, asked him:

1. to make me a soul-winner – one able, by the Holy Spirit’s power, to lead others to a personal faith in Christ, that he would grant me the gift of evangelism and the privilege of seeing people saved and born again: “You shall receive power when the Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses...” (Acts 1 v 8);
2. to make me above all a man of prayer – one who knows how to pray with power – for the conversion and salvation of sinners, for sanctification and maturity in fellow Christians, that “Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith” (Ephesians 3 v 17) enthroned as Lord: “Pray at all times in the Spirit... for all the saints...” (Ephesians 6 v 18).

Brief Historical Notes on the Taita Hills

1850s – Johann Krapf

Despite early contact with missionaries, little is known of the Taita before the Kenya Christian era (mid-1800s onwards), although the existence of six major divisions (or clans) would suggest that the Taita are in fact an amalgam of several different peoples, who probably arrived in the present-day Taita-Taveta District in separate migrations possibly spread over several hundred years.

As to why they migrated here, this would most likely have been to avoid cattle raids and attacks, from both the Maasai to the west and the Oromo-speaking peoples from the north, and migrations by people who had lost their herds in such attacks. The hills, with their steep, fortress-like flanks, were an ideal refuge, being not only easy to defend, but also well-watered and lush, making agriculture a more than viable economic alternative to herding.

In the 1850s, the Reverend Johann Ludwig Krapf, the first missionary to travel to the Taita Hills (*en route* to ‘discovering’ Kilimanjaro, together with Johannes Rebmann), was positively enraptured by what he saw as:

Its rich variety of mountain, hill and dale covered by the most luxurious vegetation! I could have fancied myself on the Jura Mountains near Basel... so beautiful was the country, so delightful the climate. Our way through plantations of Indian corn and beans, past small herds of cattle ... then along fields of sugar-cane and banana, till we descended into the valley with its rich pasture lands...

In this lovely green country of hills and valleys and running streams, exhilarating air that puts new life into limp and tired Coast residents, the natives are naturally brisker in their movements than those of the lower lands, and they have not so many unwholesome microbes to contend with! This beautiful land, however, cannot be reached without passing over the dreary and monotonous plain...

The name Taita itself is commonly said to originate from ki-Swahili-speakers, who heard the inhabitants of Sagalla describe the region as “Teta” (‘defensive’, ‘quarrelsome’ or ‘aggressive’). By the beginning of the nineteenth century the Swahili had corrupted Teta into Taita and the name came to be applied both to the entire area and to its principal inhabitants. True or not, this story – as well as linguistic similarities between ki-Swahili and ki-Taita – points to the historical involvement of the Taita with the Swahili-dominated caravan trade. It is known for a fact that the Taita participated in the caravan trade with the Pare and Usambara in Tanzania, with which they traded ivory and rhino horn in return for manufactured material goods.

Things changed suddenly – and violently – at the end of the nineteenth century, when the British began construction of their railway from Mombasa on the coast to Kampala in Uganda, which included a branch line from Voi to Taveta on the border with German East Africa, now Tanzania. To build the railway, the British needed both the land it would pass along, and the ‘pacification’ of the tribes whose territories they passed through. Obtaining the land was easy enough – they simply stole it. But obtaining ‘peace’ was more difficult, and the Taita, along with the Giriama, Kamba, Kikuyu, Kisii, the Nandi and the Elgeyo were all the receivers of brutal and vicious ‘patrols’ which many times ruthlessly killed men and women and exterminated their stock.

With the railway, of course, came European culture and religion. Attempts to convert the Taita to Christianity began in earnest after 1885, when the Church Missionary Society (CMS) began to spread its activities inland, and by 1892, the first Catholic Mission was established at Bura, which is now Bura Girls High School. Mbale Mission Centre, near Wundanyi, followed in 1900, and then what is still one of the biggest Taita Churches, at Wusi Mission, in 1905.

More than a century of contact with Europeans and Christianity has considerably ‘westernized’ the Taita, although they have culturally also been exposed to Kenyan influences, notably from Kamba and Kikuyu traders. Yet despite these changes, the Taita remain a remarkably homogenous group, due in part, I have no doubt, to the respect they continue to show their ancestors...

(Source: Jens Finke (2000 to 2007), Traditional Music and Cultures of Kenya, a multimedia encyclopedia dedicated to Kenya's tribes and people)

1910s – Richard Maynard

MAYNARD, RICHARD ABSALOM (b. c. 1870 [in Queensland, Australia]; d. 5 February 1953). Anglican missionary clergyman. Maynard went to Kenya in 1894, being the fifth missionary to be sent out by the Victorian CMA which had been formed in 1892. In 1903 he married Miss M A Austin, an Hon CMS missionary. He was made deacon in 1910 and ordained priest in 1912. After missionary service on the Kenya Coast, he and his wife commenced a mission station among the waTaita at Mbale in 1910, where they worked with great acceptance until 1921. They then worked at Dabida, also in the Taita Hills until they retired in 1933. He was archdeacon of Mombasa from 1926 until 1933.

Besides having the overall responsibility for pastoral and evangelistic work among the waTaita, Maynard translated the New Testament and the Prayer Book into ki-Dabida and compiled a hymn book in that language. [I recall the beautiful ki-Dabida language sung by the members of the Mbale Anglican Church.]

In recording appreciation of their 38 years' missionary service, the CMS stated: 'His work as an evangelist, trainer of native teachers and clergy, and translator of the Scriptures, laid foundations on which much of the present work in Kenya is built'. They retired to England where he had a notable ministry in Eastbourne.

(Source: Keith Cole, unpublished ThD MS 'The Growth of the Indigenous Church in Kenya'; in A History of the Church Missionary Society of Australia, 1971.)

CHAPTER 2: TRIALS IN THE TAITA HILLS

October 1973

A day of acute frustration

Monday 1 October 1973 turned out to be a day of acute frustration. First, there were no signs of a delegation from the School Committee having seen the Bishop at Sungululu – to ask him to transfer one of the other members of staff to a different school and to authorise my appointment as a teacher to the Mgalu High School. Then, to crown the situation, Mr Harrison M was ‘ill’, and was therefore not in a position to make any decision. I therefore spent the morning wondering whether I should step in as Duty Master, because Don was officially ‘not on duty’. A headache and peculiar insides, resulting from eating undercooked cabbage for lunch, did little to improve my feelings – and by evening Assembly time I was ready to drop. However, what annoyed me most that day was the Staff Room atmosphere of petty slandering, quarrelling and mutual distrust: “I wouldn’t believe everything that Don tells you. How do you know that he isn’t trying to mislead you? Oh yes! According to Don...” Needless to say, I had my own reservations as to whom to trust, whose advice I should take and whose I should discard. As recorded in my diary:

The days slip by, and there are no visible signs of improvement. The future seems entirely to be in the hands of higher powers. All the while, the students suffer...

A morning of acute sorrow

The next day, Tuesday 2 October 1973 was a day, or rather a morning, of acute sorrow. The Headmaster, Harrison M announced the news that Peter M had been transferred – by order of the Bishop – to Kituri High School, Werugha. The news was greeted by a wail of lament by the students. A member of the staff when the school first started three years ago, Peter was surely the most admired, respected and best loved of all teachers. This was a blow for the administration of teaching in the school, as this left us with one Arts teacher and four Scientists. It was a blow too for the members of the Christian Union which, particularly during the previous two weeks, had flourished under his strong, ‘fatherly’ leadership. I helped Peter pack up his house – a tiny *kibunda* – and had a sorrowful, yet resigned, last meal with him. Then there was a meeting of the hostel students at Maynard’s, at which he gave a few final words of encouragement and closed in prayer.

I did some teaching in the afternoon, and helped some of the students with their ‘prep’. I realised that – the forms not having arrived and my salary still unpaid – I would have to go with the W’s to Mombasa, in order to get matters such as my appointment to the school sorted out with the Bishop once and for all. Francis M, the Student Chairman of the Christian Union, called an emergency meeting. It was a time of tremendous encouragement, in spite of Peter’s leaving, in which Francis spoke with great clarity and conviction, which I found admirable. Later that afternoon I saw Don, whose only wish, at the time, was that Bishop M would come to the school and personally put a bomb under it! I had dinner with the W’s, who were of a distinctly more optimistic frame of mind.

Day trip to Mombasa

On Thursday morning I was up at the W’s house at 6 am for breakfast, as the sun rose above the eastern hills in a sudden blaze of red. We set out by car at quarter to seven, winding our way through the villages of Iriwa and Figinyi, down the Mbale valley. I was able to see my house after a good 20 minutes of twisting and turning – the mud-road was as if someone had tried to construct a ‘Scalextric’ model car track layout using only curved pieces! We contoured down, gradually losing height, until the road suddenly

levelled and straightened out, and after crossing two or three dry river beds, we emerged on to the Mwatate to Voi tarmac highway. We then proceeded through Voi to Mombasa, stopping briefly to take a cutting from a succulent, flourishing desert rose. We were in town by half past nine and made our way straight to the Diocesan office. We chatted with Miss Grace C, the Bishop's Secretary (an Australian CMS missionary), while Andrew had a private word with the Bishop of Mombasa, The Right Reverend Peter M. After cool refreshments in Grace's flat, I was ushered into the Bishop's presence, where I recall that a very cordial and pleasant conversation took place. The outcomes, in brief, were as follows:

1. The letters of appointment and my salary package had not been sent off to Mbale, because the Bishop, quite honestly – and apologetically – forgot!
2. A Letter of Appointment was written (in Swahili) to Mr Harrison M, the Headmaster of Mgalu High School.
3. My salary was fixed at 500/- a month, with all taxes paid by the Diocese. 1,000/- was to be given to me, immediately, in cash – being my salary for September and October.
4. Mr George T was to be transferred immediately to Cephas' school, and Miss Flora M was to be transferred to Kituri High School.
5. The Bishop confided to us his real intention (as yet not even a promise, yet I could not see how things could be otherwise): at the end of the year Mr Harrison M was to be removed, and Peter M would return to Mgalu as Headmaster! His transfer to Kituri was, the Bishop said, designed as an opportunity for him to consider the work which lay ahead.

The Bishop's Letter of Appointment (dated 4 October 1973) reads as follows:

DIOCESE OF MOMBASA

Mr M, Mgalu High School, PO IRIWA, Via-VOI

Mpenzi Baba, Salamu sana. Tafadhali umpe kazi mtakavyo panga katika Staff. Mr Hall amewekwa huko

[Literal translation: Dear father, many greetings. Please provide (him) work depending on how you plan to arrange your staff. Mr Hall has been posted here.]

Wako [Yours], Peter Mombasa

After the meeting we bought some fresh citrus fruits in the market, then had lunch with the F's at CITC. The afternoon was spent shopping in the unforgettable Bia-shara [*bazaar*] Street. This turned out to be early Christmas shopping, so that I could post presents for my family back in England in time for Christmas. I settled on a wicker basket for my mother, which was to form a useful container for the other gifts. I remember there was intense rivalry between two adjacent basket shops – *his* basket was much, much better quality, far better value than the other. As the one was going strong at 18/-, and the other's price had fallen to 10/-, I bought the latter. I then procured a *kitengi* [traditional coloured] shirt for my brother at 30/-, where no shop window price fell much below 45/-. For my sister a carved stag, priced 8/50, for which I paid 7/-; for my father, an engraved brass mug, originally priced at 25/-. The vendor, seeing that I was a hard bargainer, immediately cut the price to 15/-. I tried furiously – including staging a dramatic exit from the shop (twice) – to get the price down to 10/-. "It's bent at the bottom. Now if it wasn't bent, I'd gladly pay 15/-, but as it is..." "*But the engraving round the top, is it not beautiful? Well worth 15/-. I've already lowered it by 10/-*" "From 25/-? Only some fool of an American would buy it at that price!" "*I bought it myself for this shop for 14/-.*" But with Catharine's help I managed to get it for 13/-!

We then drove across the pontoon bridge to Nyali Beach – a beautiful scene of white sands, turquoise sea, breakers on the reef about a mile out, wooden fishing 'dug out' boats moored at the water's edge, a large cargo vessel out to sea steaming towards Mombasa, and a small *dhow*, following the coastline southwards; palm trees and slanting sun. We swam in the sea, which was translucent and warm, and then picked up some

fresh fish from a boat that had just come in. Back to Mombasa for some final shopping, *samosas* and *chai*. We hit the trail for home around half past five – a beautiful time for travel, as the setting sun shone through the palms and flat-topped thorn trees of the coastal plains. We reached Voi on nightfall, and climbed through the hills back to Mbale by moonlight. We enjoyed the fresh fish cooked for dinner, and later that evening I was able to tell Don about the Bishop's decisions, as the S family were to leave for Turi (in Western Kenya) the following day.

Thomas' grandmother

The next day, Friday, one third of the school went on safari to Tsavo East. In some ways I was sad to have missed out, but the numbers were full when I put my name forward. But this wasn't really such a disappointment, as my Letter of Appointment to the school had just been signed, and I did not really want to leave the school at this juncture. I spent a happy morning teaching informal Mathematics in Form III and English in Form II, and I spent the afternoon helping Thomas M and a friend with O-Level Cambridge papers in Maths.

I went for an evening walk with 'Baba' W – a 20 minute sprint up to the top of the Iriwa ridge: it was a beautiful time of day to travel, when the slanting rays of the sun give a warmth to the villages and hills below. We saw Lanner falcons, clearly and closely, augur buzzards, and the distinctive Wahlberg's eagle. Dusk afforded us a dramatic view of the solar system: Venus, the moon and Jupiter in a straight line – no other stars visible – with Mars following up from the east.

On Saturday morning I had a ride with the W's up to Wundanyi to collect forms for opening a bank account. I walked back down, a three mile journey following the ridge path, and practising Swahili with everyone I met: "*Ninataak kilo moja wa mpunja mzuri. Nitafundisha Mgalu, Jumatatu au Jumanne. Jambo. Jambo. Habari? Mzuri – yako? Eyh! Mzuri. Salama.* ["I would like one kilo of good rice. I will teach at Mgalu, on Wednesday or Thursday. Hello. Hello. How are you? Good, and you? Yes, good. Greetings."]

Around 3 o' clock in the afternoon Thomas and his friend picked me up to take me to Thomas' home – or rather, his grandmother's house, since he lived in Taveta, some 50 miles away on the Tanzanian border. We saw a snake on the roadside on the way (making my average one snake sighting per week!), and encountered the locally famous 'mad runner' as we entered the village – he was a tall, strong-looking man who just never stopped running and panting, and had a wild look in his eyes, but was otherwise friendly enough. We arrived, after a long walk following narrow winding paths, at Thomas' mud-brick house, where his grandmother was there to greet me. I was invited to sit down on a wooden chair in a dark, smoke-filled room, with *kukus* (chickens) around my feet, and my hosts kindly provided me with a plate of chopped up sweet potatoes, which tasted very like roast chestnuts, and *chai*, followed some time later by a hard-boiled egg. I was introduced to various aunts, an uncle, and several small children. After some hilarious attempts at mutual language-speaking, the subject of Mgalu's state was discussed, and the story emerged that on Thursday a number of Form II students had been expelled owing to a refusal to attend lessons in protest against Peter M's transfer the previous Tuesday; however, this later proved to be only a rumour. It was clear that the school at that time was pretty well at 'rock-bottom' – and things, if they were to 'go' at all, could only go uphill. I walked home by moonlight, after a very successful and enjoyable evening.

On Sunday morning I awoke to discover that Aggrey had not returned the previous night, which caused me some consternation. But after a leisurely breakfast, I went to the Mbale-Dabida church for the 10:30 am service. Once again the church was full of people in their best clothes, the women very brightly dressed. The service was a full two-hour

Mattins and Communion – all in ki-Dabida. Then in the later afternoon I attended a Christian meeting at Maynard Hall led by Flora, during which I was asked, without warning, to give a short talk to the assembled company, numbering about 50. I spoke in clear, simple English, and my ‘talk’ was then translated phrase by phrase into Swahili by Flora, who was acting as an interpreter. I thought this was a great arrangement – her speaking of the Swahili translation gave me time to think of what to say next!

The wheels begin to roll...

Over the next two weeks I felt the wheels beginning to roll at last, leaving me with a series of impressions:

Tuesday, the first really active day, began with a staff meeting that lasted four hours. We compiled a completely new time-table: I was to teach 32 periods a week – Forms II and III for English; Forms I to III for RE; and Form III Physics – a fair workload for a novice teacher! The time-table was arranged with much ease and cooperation, leading to – in everyone’s opinion – a highly satisfactory result. Next we reappointed the School Captain and Prefects, choosing students who were mature and had a sense of responsibility. Finally we compiled a comprehensive list of rules, resolving to improve, beyond measure, the standard of School Discipline. It seemed that Aggrey, and not Harrison, was the driving force behind the meeting, and I felt that was to his credit. My extra-curricular responsibilities included being Library Master, Music Master, Assistant Housemaster of ‘Chui’, and Sponsor to the Christian Union. There were two houses – Chui, meaning ‘leopard’, and Simba, meaning ‘lion’. There was great mirth and merriment when I realized, and publicly admitted, that *Simba* did not mean ‘tea’! ‘Simba’ was the trade name for a popular brand of packet tea in the Taita Hills, and the packets were labelled, in large red letters, ‘Simba’.

One morning the Bishop took morning Assembly, and then set off in his Land Rover, with Grace and Flora, bound for Kituri High School, near Werugha, in the high country above Wundanyi. The previous day, news had come through that Flora, the RE teacher, had been transferred to another school – this news was greeted with a mixture of resignation and exasperation. As I recorded in my diary:

The situation is past all pretence of seriousness. It really is quite laughable: we now have five Scientists and zero Artists! The Bishop has failed to grasp one important fact: you can’t make members of staff teach subjects about which they know *nothing*.

On Friday, we witnessed the first of the heavy, ‘short rains’, which intensify around November and December. It was my first experience of the hard, heavy, tropical rain, and I trudged up the path from my house, and around the school, with an umbrella and Macintosh. The lesson I was teaching in Form II was temporarily abandoned, owing to the noise from the rain hitting the roof, and to the fact that students at the back of the class were slowly drowning. Since the new classrooms were still under construction, Form II had to be accommodated in a galvanised iron ‘shed’ next door to the W’s house – this was far from ideal, as it became unbearably hot during sunny days, and (as we had seen) prone to flooding during rainy weather.

Then there was a day when I was teaching RE to Form I, and for some reason decided to read aloud several chapters from the Book of Exodus, resulting in a sore throat! I had lunch at the students’ hostel – this consisted of a huge helping of stodgy rice (which was very similar, both in consistency and taste, to the more traditional stiff maize porridge) and brown beans on a metal plate, washed down

with a tin mug of very hot and sweet cocoa, which had the effect of anaesthetising my sore throat.

Saturday brought soft and intermittent rain all morning, but – armed with my umbrella and Mackintosh – I walked the three miles up to Wundanyi to open an account at the Kenya Commercial Bank. There I learned that war had flared up between Israel and Egypt, that Russia had been supplying arms to Egypt, and that Britain was sending troops to Israel.

Towards the end of the following week, the Government Inspector for Kenyan schools – an Englishman, Mr N – came to visit. He listened in on my Form II English lesson, which included a class discussion on the Art of Précis. Fortunately the lesson went well, and the students were alert and cooperative. He did nevertheless warn me about the danger of my ‘not being heard’ – he pointed out that my strong British accent could prove to be very foreign to them! Then he made several constructive criticisms to the Mgalu staff, including the pressing need to obtain some apparatus for scientific demonstrations. Some of Harrison’s reactions were cause for amusement, especially with Aggrey, but we gained the overall impression that Mr N was the sort of person who got things done – and so we finished the week on a high note of optimism.

Bus to Nairobi for half-term break

Friday 19 October 1973 dawned after a disturbed night – snatches of sleep came and went like shadowy visitors, vanishing as soon as you realised they were there. 4:45 am brought the alarm into action, and by 5:15 a substantial breakfast of oat porridge, eggs, toast and coffee was under way. Aggrey and I left the house promptly just after 6, with suitcases distressingly heavy, and a cold hurried walk ahead of us. We reached Wundanyi just on 7 am, and the OTC bus left 10 minutes later. I remember it as an exciting journey winding down the edge of the Taita Hills towards Mwatate – a dramatic view over the Tsavo plains with a watery sun breaking through the thick grey oceans of cloud. The weather cleared steadily as the bus made its way from Voi to Kibwezi, and just as we passed Hunter’s Lodge, on our left the clear blue shape of Kilimanjaro rose above the clouds and the nearby hills – breathtaking as the distant clouds drew aside to reveal, for a few fleeting moments, the rounded snow-capped peak.

Just as on the way south some six weeks previously, we turned off the tarmac road and diverted on to a gravel road to the Town of Machakos, where the vibrations were so intense that the front windscreen shattered in a shower of splintered glass. In consequence the rest of the journey was, to say the least, draughty, and for the front seat passengers somewhat wet, as presently it began to rain. We stopped in Machakos, where I met the very same Government official, at the same café! Finally, we reached Nairobi with its familiar skyline arrayed before us. Immediately the bus arrived at the station we were accosted by taxi-pushers who stuck to us like leeches until Aggrey, somewhat enraged, told them quite plainly to make themselves scarce!

We waited for a few moments till Mr [Harry] C arrived, and Aggrey telephoned his wife to make arrangements to be picked up. Mr C, who with his wife Olive were missionaries and my appointed ‘Town Cousins’, drove me to their home, and we enjoyed a relaxed family evening reading stories to the four children: Judy (9), John (7), Elizabeth (5) and Philippa (3), and listening to Brahms’ 4th Symphony. Early bed and a good night’s rest – in the first European civilization for six weeks!

Kenyatta Day

Saturday was Kenyatta Day, the 21st anniversary of Mzee Jomo Kenyatta’s escape from prison, and the 10th year since Independence. After a leisurely breakfast, we reached Uhuru Park just on 11 am, the time at which the prayers and speeches were to begin.

The crowds were immense – a colourful spectacle of people, the park full of brightly coloured flowers and plants, and pools with fountains. The complete Nairobi skyline formed a backcloth well-suited to the occasion: high-rise offices, hotels, the Roman Catholic Cathedral, the Houses of Parliament, and the climax of technical achievement, the new Kenyatta Conference Centre – all built during the past ten years. The President, escorted by scores of police mounted on motorbikes and Mercedes cars containing Members of Parliament, Ministers of State and Ambassadors, filed along Uhuru Highway in procession. Mr Daniel Arap Moi, the Vice-President, and Mzee Jomo Kenyatta himself made speeches from the covered dais, whose roof and columns were covered with red, green, black and white coloured cloth, the colours of the Kenyan flag. The President was dressed in a leather jacket, and carried his famous white horse-hair ‘fly-whisk’, which he waved from time to time. He spoke first in English, then in Swahili. I couldn’t really remember what he said, except that he ended with the familiar “Hara-a-a-ambEE!”

All the tribes of the Earth, it seemed, then filed past him in procession, leaping and singing and dancing, beating their drums and waving painted shields and spears. The ceremony was both colourful and meaningful. As I recorded in my diary:

One warms to the fact that all the country is behind her President – grateful for his work and resolved to follow his leadership: a sign that the country is moving in the right direction, unmistakably *forwards*. Mr C is reputed to have said, on leave in England, “Well, whatever else you can say against Kenya, it’s good to be in a country that is moving forwards!”

Opening service for St John’s Pumwani

One of the reasons for travelling to Nairobi for the half-term break with Aggrey was that he had kindly invited me to the opening service for St John’s Anglican Church, Pumwani, which was near Aggrey’s family home. So on Sunday morning I took the bus to Pumwani, in the eastern suburbs of Nairobi, arriving at the New Flats close to ten o’clock. Aggrey was not in, as he had already entered the church. I was running slightly late, but a very helpful church elder gave me admission at the last minute. I remember watching the new Vicar symbolically knocking three times at the door. The service itself was led by the Archbishop of Kenya, with Richard M also present. There was an assortment of choral singing including *The Heavens are Telling the Glory of God*, from Haydn’s *Creation*. It was a very modern church, and looked rather like a university lecture hall. Both the floor and the roof were set on a slant, higher at the west end, to give an ‘auditorium’ feel. Several jokes were made about St Johns revealing a ‘new slant’ on church architecture, or at any rate portraying a ‘modern angle’!

There was a salad lunch for everyone after the service, and I met Richard H, a fellow YSA, outside the church. I then relaxed briefly in Aggrey’s flat, meeting once again Mrs O and Winifred. In the afternoon we visited the Nairobi Natural History Museum and Snake Park – there were snakes galore, the most sinister of which were the puff adders, not to mention ungainly giant tortoises and contented crocodiles! I was invited to dinner with Mr and Mrs O, Aggrey’s parents, who were keen Christ-followers, so that we enjoyed some good Christian fellowship, while we dined on rice, meat, potatoes and cabbage. Aggrey drove me back to the C’s via the Kenyatta Hospital, where Job (Aggrey’s brother) was studying.

Exploring Nairobi and back to Mbale

Over the next couple of days I explored Nairobi, meeting one or two friends, taking ‘artistic’ photographs of Nairobi buildings, as examples of the modern architectural design that permeates the city, walking around Uhuru Park and photographing a full, three-part panorama of the city skyline. I attended Mass in the Roman Catholic Cathedral, which turned out to be one of the most moving services I have been to. Aggrey and I spent some time looking round the main campus of Nairobi University,

paying particular attention to the Physics and Engineering Faculties, and modern architecture.

The following day I left the house at 7 am, saying sad goodbyes to the C's. Aggrey and I made our way back along the Mombasa road. When we reached Voi it was clear that no further rain had fallen during our absence, and the Tsavo plains were dry as parchment. We took the bus to Wundanyi and then had an arduous walk back home with very heavy suitcases. As we arrived back at Mbale, the bus from Wundanyi to Mombasa (via Mbale) came along, taking the exact route we had just walked – if only we had known!

Christian Union Rally at St Mary's School, Lushangoni

On Saturday morning, I attended a Christian Union rally at St Mary's Lushangoni. I set out early and cashed a cheque at Wundanyi bank, and also paid in my salary cheque from 'Peter Mombasa' for 500/-, making it the second time he has paid my October salary! I then met the 20 or so members of the Mgalu Christian Union, and together we walked up to St Mary's, the Roman Catholic school nestled beneath the tall cliff face of Yale.

As I recorded in my diary:

We arrived there at 11 (an hour late), and I sat in the front row with Peter M. Almost immediately I was asked to give a short introductory talk – at 5 minutes notice! Mrs M then spoke, very clearly and gently, till lunch time. Nearly all the leading secondary schools in the area were represented – Murray, Aggrey, Kituri, Mwangeka and St Mary's. It was good to meet many of the students from those schools. The afternoon began with testimonies and choruses. The Mgalu members sang a beautiful Swahili chorus, which will long remain in my mind: *"Amezaliwa, amezaliwa... mNazarethi, wa Daudi; ni fura-a-a, wa watu wote..."* [He was born, the Man from Nazareth and from David; all men rejoice – a Christmas song.] Francis then spoke, brilliantly, for some minutes, including his latest anti-drink slogan: Guinness for POWERLESSNESS! The next speaker was Ambrose, the new Headmaster of Aggrey High School. For the next two hours I witnessed some of the most dynamic preaching I have ever heard: a sublime combination of humour, intellectual appeal and power. The events of the day were enough to give one the impression that Kenya really is a Christian country – and seriously so. I publish the programme here in full – though after the lunch break the suggested course of events was not followed:

ST. MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL, LUSHANGONI.

CHRISTIAN UNION RALLY – 27 OCTOBER, 1973.

PROGRAMME.

MORNING SECTION:

9.45 – 10.00	HYMN AND PRAYER "WELCOME" – S. MWAKESI
10.00 – 10.30	<u>SINGING AND TESTIMONIES:</u> 1. St. Mary's High School 2. Kituri High School 3. Aggrey High School 4. Murray High School
10.30 – 10.55	"LET US SING CHORUSES"
10.55 – 11.00	S H O R T B R E A K
11.00 – 12.00	Speaker: "ASSURANCE OF SALVATION".

12.00 – 1.15	L U N C H.
<u>AFTERNOON SECTION:</u>	
1.35 – 2.00	1. C H E E R U P !!! 2. Hymn and Prayer
2.00 – 2.30	<u>SINGING AND TESTIMONIES:</u> 1. Mwangeka High School 2. Kenyatta High School 3. Mghalu High School “Let us all sing choruses”
2.30 – 3.30	Speaker: “HOW TO OVERCOME TEMPTATIONS”.
3.30 – 3.35	S H O R T B R E A K
3.35 – 4.00	QUESTIONS ON THE TWO TOPICS
4.00 – 4.30	TEA AND “SPEECHES AT THE SAME TIME”. B L E S S I N G P R A Y E R.

GO IN PEACE ALL MY BRETHEREN! COME AGAIN NEXT TIME. (Isaiah 12:2)

[Behold, God is my salvation;

I will trust, and will not be afraid;

For the LORD GOD is my strength and my song,

And he has become my salvation (Isaiah 12 v 2)]

The diary continued:

I tried to round up the Mgalu students for a prompt departure after the rally ended at 5 o’ clock. We were back in Wundanyi by 6, and miraculously we arrived back at the hostel exactly on 7 – when it was literally *just* light enough to see the road. I had a long talk with Willingstone (Form III boy, very tall) on the way back. I would very much like to stay with him in the holidays – he lives between here and Voi. I had dinner with the W’s. The stars were once again fantastic – the Pleiades, Mars and Jupiter, Orion rising in the east, exactly on the astral equator. In three months’ time Orion will be vertically overhead, dominating the entire sky. To the south, constellations I have never seen before...

To the summit of Prayer Mount

As recorded in my diary:

Sunday 28 October 1973 – Oat porridge and toast on the verandah, enjoying the beauty of the fresh morning sun. Very hot day. Mattins: “*Kwala na kwala, Amin.*” Busy day writing letters, and marking English homework – a rare gem: “According to my health I am just like a fiddle”!

The next day, Monday, was a Muslim public holiday. After a busy morning helping Form II with English, and Patrick with Maths, in the late afternoon I walked down to the village of Iriwa, and then clambered up the ridge, to the top of the same mountain I had climbed about a month before, and which I later called ‘Prayer Mount’. However, this time I took a much easier and prettier route, reaching the moorland top that marked the true summit. The view was heavenly: east and south-east to Sagalla and Kasigau, towards the coast ridge; north over the Tsavo plains towards the Hatta plateau (geological earthfall); and west towards the higher peaks of Vuria, Yale and Wesu; the town of Wundanyi, the road and the cross-country path via Serenyi; and down over Iriwa and the Mbale valley. I watched a truck crawling painfully up the road – it seemed to take literally hours to get from the Mdongo-dongo Bridge to Mwasungia. The scene was much enhanced by the declining sun bathing the hillsides in a warm glow, which contrasted with the deepening

valleys. As darkness was approaching, I dropped quickly down, reaching Iriwa exactly 20 minutes after leaving the summit. Rushing down the zig-zag deep-cut paths was a bit like skiing – ‘stem-christie-ing’ with the sides of my feet!

Tuesday turned out to be a successful day’s teaching, with the Form III Physics class appearing to understand what ‘power’ was, and having at last acquired the ability to measure current in amps and resistance in ohms. Jackson, my ‘helper’, came round at lunch time so that he could make a *mwanza* [start] on his *kazi* [work]. Wednesday was the last day of October, and for the Form III RE lesson we embarked, somewhat by accident, upon a stimulating discussion on predestination and free will. Later that day, with the Christian Union Committee we discussed proposals for the Mgalu Students’ Sunday Service, to be held once every second week.

The pure, hard African light...

(from ‘The Real Africa’, written a few years later)

This is a land of blacks and whites, where distinctions are as clear as the pure, hard African light – the vivid contrast of landform in sharp relief against the deep blue sky, or the dazzling brilliance of the sky at night. In spiritual terms you are either ‘saved’ (*nimeokoka*) or ‘not-yet saved’ (*bado kuokoka*) – everyone seems to know exactly where they stand. Thus it is easy to see how people can turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the power of God.

Those who are Christians rejoice as they walk together in the light, for they know that they have been delivered from the dominion of darkness and transferred to the Kingdom of light – the Kingdom of God’s beloved Son, in whom they have redemption and forgiveness of sins. Such is the joy with which they sing, ‘Born, born, born again, I’m glad I’m born again... born of the Spirit, water and blood’ (*Nimezaliwa kwa mara ya mpili... kwa Roho, maji na damu*), or ‘I’m so glad that Jesus set me free, I’m singing Glory Hallelujah! Jesus set me free!’ Such is the exuberance and zeal with which the new converts sing and testify to the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. You are either ‘in the Kingdom’ – part of God’s family – or you are outside. Either you are saved, or you are not. Black and white. No greys, no compromise...

The great truths of the Christian life are learned and expressed in song – such as the quiet, slow devotional ‘Oh, the blood of Jesus, it washes white as snow’ (*Damu ya Yesu, husafisha kabisa!*) Another verse goes, ‘My brother, let’s go forward (together) in peace’ (*Ndugu, twende mbele kwa Imani...*)

In Kenya there is a sense of belonging, for the new convert, to a family – the Body of Christ – a sense of togetherness, oneness, and wholeness in being one. It means losing your individuality in order to become part of the one body – the living fellowship of true believers – sharing together, ministering to one another, not kept apart by differences of colour, age, nationality or background, but working together as a team, complementing one another with different gifts and skills in the task of effective witness and outreach.

This ‘coming together’ of God’s people is something Africans find natural, but as Westerners we find less easy – so much of Western culture and philosophy has emphasized the individual rather than the corporate aspect of our lives – and this is no less true of the Western Church, with its emphasis on private devotions and individual accountability towards God. But when the Spirit comes, barriers are broken down, and healing and reconciliation begin to take place.

Then we can truly sing, as they sing in Kenya, ‘We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord’. In this realm, as in others, we have so much to learn from our African brothers and sisters. From their background of family and community life,

when they become Christians they do not naturally become 'lone rangers' – neither should we, as members of Christ's Body, the living Church throughout all the world...

CHAPTER 3: THE BEAUTY OF THE TAITA HILLS

November 1973

Hard working days

As recorded in my diary:

Thursday 1 November 1973 – Jackson is brilliant: my eyes were nearly dazzled by the brightness of the polished baths! Dinner with the W's – Andrew had just returned from a long conference at Kilifini, near Mombasa, and was thus very tired.

Friday 2 November 1973 – Catharine W's Swahili translation of *Cogito ergo sum* (Latin for "I think, therefore I am") is quite superb: *Kama nilivyofikiri, hivyo ndivyo nilivyo!* James (from Kenyatta) and Sammy to dinner. The end of my eighth week here in Africa. Work is hard, and the pace of life here is FAST. Life seems almost fuller than in the 'Oxbridge' [Oxford and Cambridge Entrance Examinations] term at Haileybury – though perhaps less intellectually stretching. A weekday time-table:

06:30	Rise
07:05	Breakfast (maize porridge, toast and coffee)
07:40	Assembly
08:00	Lessons 1, 2 and 3
10:00	Break
10:15	Lessons 4, 5 and 6
12:15	Lunch break (<i>ugali</i> , vegetables, tea)
14:00	Lessons 7 and 8
15:20	Prep
16:00	Prep ends
16:15	Games (soccer), clubs, activities
17:00	Closing Assembly
18:00	Housework, homework or seeing people if necessary
20:00	Dinner (main meal) – to be prepared, cooked, eaten and washed up
20:45	More work if necessary
21:30	Bedwards, wash, 'bath'
22:00	Lights to be blown out [Dietz or pressure lamp]

Saturday 3 November 1973 – Hard working day marking essays and preparing lessons. Dinner with the W's and Flora. Listened to Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto, which brought tears to my eyes. Solar system very clear: Venus, the Moon, Jupiter, Mars – all in a line on the astral equator.

Sunday 4 November 1973 – Went to church with Aggrey – the service lasted over two hours. Singing by the waTaita *dadas* [womenfolk] was magnificent. In the afternoon I walked up on to the ridge above Iriwa, following the very beautiful ridge path. I sketched the Mgalu valley from the top, until it started raining. *Mvua kidogo* [light rain], so I took shelter and tea at the nearest house. The children looked at my pencil sketch and were quick to recognise their school, Maynard's! I walked beyond, and round to the right, entering a green cool valley, flanked on all sides by ridges, and dominated at one end by a spectacular hill which I was unable to climb [I later named it 'Kulal', after a mountain near Lake Turkana]. The vegetation and beauty were utterly different from that of the Mbale valley. For a while I forgot I was in Africa – the prospect before me was reminiscent rather of Switzerland or Sweden. I returned at high speed, in order to be

back at Iriwa before dusk. I fell (twice) – which will perhaps teach me to treat steep paths with greater respect! In the middle of the night I had an argument with Aggrey concerning the use of drink. Result: an agreement that he would not drink during term time.

Monday 5 November 1973 – Form II set for KJSE. More time for marking and planning. Planned structure for Mgalu Students' Service – hopefully Peter M will give the first talk. Played soccer and (accidentally) handled the ball no less than three times in the course of 5 minutes!

Thursday 8 November 1973 – A good day. Nothing wildly exciting or spectacular. Time spent setting end-of-term examinations. Harambee work involved cutting grass with *pangas* in preparation for Harambee Day.

Friday 9 November 1973 – Fetched water for the visitors tomorrow from the Mdongo-dongo tributary (a waterfall). *Mvua imekuja* [the rain has come]. Our rainwater tank level has now risen from 5 rings (out of 24) to 11. The only thing is – there's a lizard or something stuck in the pipe and we can't get any water out of it!

Harambee Day – and a day of 'blacks and whites'

Saturday 10 November 1973 was HARAMBEE DAY. The morning was spent getting chairs for visitors. The programme started 1½ hours late, but it then proceeded roughly as follows [transcript of the official programme]:

PROGRAMME YA KUCHANGIA MGALU HARAMBEE HIGH SCHOOL:

10TH Nov. 1973. [PROGRAMME FOR CONTRIBUTIONS...]

- Saa 5.00 (11.00 a.m.) Chakula cha alasiri kwa wageni walioalikwa
[Afternoon food with invited guests]
- Saa 6.00 (12.00 Noon)
- (a) Kufika katika kiwanja cha Mgalu
[Arrival at Mgalu field]
- (b) Maombi kuongozwa na Padre Hubert M
 halafu Archdeacon J. K.
[Prayers led by Padre... afterward by...]
- (c) Kwaya kukaribisha wageni.
[choir welcomes visitors]
1. Mgalu High School
 2. Kwaya ya Kilili
 3. Kwaya ya Mothers Union
 4. Kwaya ya Figinyi Primary School.
- Saa 6.30 (12.30 p.m.) Hotuba *[speeches]*
- (a) Mwenyekiti
[Chairman of the School Committee]
- (b) Chief Herbert M
 (c) D.C. (au D.O.)
 (d) Hon. J.L.M. Shako
[Minister of Wildlife and Tourism]
- Saa 7.15 (1.15 p.m.) Kuchanga kuanzishwa *[commence donations]*

Saa 10.00 (4.00 p.m.) Kwaya nzuri iimbe na kufungu kwa maombe.

[best choir to lead singing and prayers]

I sat with the W's, Miss Kate C and Peter M, underneath the makeshift corrugated iron covering, while Archdeacon Jeremiah K opened with a prayer; zealous songs were sung by the choirs of Mgalu and the Pentecostal and Anglican Mbale churches. These were followed by speeches by various District Officers, and ending with a superb address given by the Hon Shako, the Wundanyi Minister (MP) – for one thing he spoke very resolutely against drink, which is a brave thing for a Government official to do. A diversion from the formal proceedings was offered by a very 'happy', but slightly eccentric, old man, who would occasionally blow his whistle and stand up, shouting through a paper loud-hailer: "Mgalu-mgalu-mgalu-mgalu-mgalu-MGALU!"

Finally a list of completed *Harambee* contributions was read out by the Chairman of the School Committee, accompanied by loud applause in the following style: clap! clap! clap! (pause) clap! clap! clap! (pause) clap! clap! clap! (pause) CLAP! The crowds, who were gathered at the head of the Mgalu valley in front of the 'stage' were then invited to surge forward in the true spirit of *Harambee*. The response was terrific – Mbale people, mostly women, came with their one or two shilling notes, or even 5 or 10 shilling notes, and for a solid hour or more the money poured in. Minister Shako gave a continuous commentary throughout: something like "*sasa shillingi tano MAKOFI* [now, five shillings, CLAP!], *Mama Mwachoni shillingi mbili MAKOFI, na shillingi kumi MAKOFI, sasa shillingi kumi na moja MAKOFI, asante sana kwa shillingi tano MAKOFI...*"

The level of giving quickly soared into the thousands – Voi alone had raised nearly 1,000/-. Then there was auctioning – *kukus* [chickens], *mayai* [eggs], wood, sugar cane. I bought five enormous pawpaws for *shillingi nne* [4/-], and I immediately gave one to Catharine W. David J, a VSO volunteer from Taru School, between Voi and Mombasa, came on his motorbike. I was interested to hear his impressions of the country and work, as he had been in Kenya for 15 months. Finally, the reckoning of the accounts: Grand Total 7,996/- announced, and immediately and spontaneously (I can still remember Andrew W eagerly reaching into his pocket) more money flowed in to reach the auspicious eight thousand shilling mark. The final total was 8,037/- (nearly £500), an incredible achievement!

I then discovered that Peter M was unable to come to the Mgalu Student Service the next day, which meant that I was faced with the task of preaching – in this very first school service – my very first ever sermon! So I spent the evening in urgent preparation. It rained hard. The tank was now full, and we discovered that some 'joker' had closed the outside tap, which was why we couldn't get any water out of the tank! Thereafter the water system worked beautifully.

The next day, Sunday 11 November 1973, which happened to be Remembrance Day, the Student Service was scheduled for 09:00, my having requested that the time for the hostel breakfast would make this possible. The hostel breakfast was, therefore, ready by 10 past 9! So I spent about $\frac{3}{4}$ hour chasing the students up – it was almost a case of recruiting my own congregation from the start! Eventually at 09:50 the service began, and it was attended by nearly 50 students, mainly hostellers. However, of the staff, only the Headmaster, Harrison M himself, turned up, a state of affairs that made me very disappointed, as I had especially asked the members of staff to come and give me 'moral support'.

Well, the service went with a real swing – choruses, hymns and prayers, readings led by the students. The programme was designed as follows:

1. HYMN 90
Followed by selected choruses

2. PRAYERS i) Adoration, worship
ii) Confession of sins
3. READINGS – one Old Testament reading and one New Testament reading, related both to each other and to the talk
4. HYMN 211 “Rock of Ages, cleft for me...”
5. THE TALK – (That’s me!)
6. HYMN 99
7. PRAYERS i) Thanksgiving
ii) Intercession
8. Selected choruses followed by HYMN 271
9. THE GRACE

To be frank, though I was somewhat apprehensive about preaching for the first time, I found the actual talk (or ‘sermon’, for want of a better word) a thrilling experience. I preached about the words of Jesus: “Repent and believe the good news” (Mark 1 v 15) – to my mind, important subjects. I kept close to the Bible, partly in defiance of the many so-called ‘modern ministers’ with which we (in Britain) were afflicted, who preach their own fairy-tales and who expound clever theories at the expense of the truth contained in God’s Word, the Bible. Thus in my sermon I did my best to avoid anything of that kind. The service went well, and many students expressed their appreciation of it, advocating that it had been a success.

An hour later, the Mgalu Christian Union set off for Kituri High School, near Werugha, a town above Wundanyi. It was a fascinating journey winding up through the hills, now much greener with recent rain. We bypassed the village of Sungululu and reached Kituri at 13:30, greeted by Peter M and Martinah (the CU Chairperson). The meeting began at 15:00, and the atmosphere was terrific. The Mgalu students in particular were pleased to see Peter again. After a meal together, we left for home. We met the Bishop of Mombasa on the road, as he was driving up towards Werugha in his Land Rover. He got out and talked to us, and then he drew Peter and myself aside, and assured us that he was going to send Peter back to Mbale in January as the new Headmaster of Mgalu! Terrific! (Peter had already been told about this.) A couple of minutes later an empty bus bound for Wundanyi passed us, then stopped and gave us all a free lift there. Singing various choruses in the bus was a deafening, though exciting, experience. The singing continued all the way till we reached Mbale– such had been the spirit of the day!

No sooner had I got home, however, than I found that a very different progression of events had taken place here. From what I could piece together from Aggrey, there had been a regular *furor* between Mr W, the Padre, and Aggrey and George. I heard the full story from Andrew when I went up to the W’s house for dinner. The ‘*Mdongo-dongo Boogie*’ (= dance with immoral connotations, accompanied by binge drinking) had been forbidden, as the licence had been withdrawn by the church. Anyway, the dance had then taken place – allegedly under the sponsorship, but not under the supervision, of Aggrey and George – IN OUR HOUSE! In MY house! Fortunately I had taken the precaution of locking my own room! Flora had observed that several members of her Church Youth Club had left her meeting and gone down to the house, so Mr W and the Padre went down to investigate, and found the entire house full of Mgalu students, various primary school children, as well as students from Aggrey High School; all had been charged 50 cents, and were dancing, ‘boogie-fashion’, to a record-player. The dance was stopped immediately, the participants summarily dismissed, and the following morning (Monday) Aggrey and George were busy battling things out with the Padre, Mr W, Mr Harrison M, the Mbale Chief and the Chairman of the School Committee! The end result was a series of unpleasant relationships, a lot of hot air, much frustration on the part of the W’s and others – and on my part a mixture of disappointment and ‘fed-up-ness’ (for want of a better word) – and finally, a scandal throughout the entire Mbale

Location, for which I felt partly responsible, as it was *our* house that had been used as the dance venue!

But after all of that, I enjoyed a relaxed evening with the W's, listening to Mozart and Brahms, and generally chatting over the day's events – a day, perhaps, of 'blacks and whites', in the true African spirit.

Teaching and African choruses

As recorded in my diary:

Monday 12 November 1973 – The following letter is the result of today's discussion. Would that such an atmosphere may continue:

Good afternoon, Hope you are fine. Sorry I was not able to come for lunch. Had a meeting with the Vicar and Rev W in the morning. We had a cordial discussion, which ended in an atmosphere of understanding upon which apologies were exchanged. Jackson tells me you have the gas now. Fine. I will be coming at about 4 pm to change for football. Greetings from Hellen. She has a new maid now. Yours, Aggrey.

Felt like death, with a heavy tiredness and headache – partly due, I expect, to the prevailing weather. Group singing during games time, as it was pouring with rain. A relaxed evening meal of tea, brown bread, fried eggs, fish, good-quality rice, and banana and paw-paw salad.

Tuesday 13 November 1973 – W's off to Mombasa. Moved bundles of sticks and helped maize plantation for Harambee afternoon. The waTaita seem to be inherently lazy – unlike, as Aggrey tells me, the other tribes of Kenya. Certainly the local attitude to anything that resembles 'work' is a refreshing contrast to the rat-race mentality of Britain.

Wednesday 14 November 1973 – Africa hospitable at the moment – she is mercifully kind to me. Stimulating lessons. Wrote home at length, using school duplicating paper. Early bed, overslept till 07:05 the next morning – help!

Thursday 15 November 1973 – Extensive shopping at Iriwa: everything looking so much greener and more beautiful. Discussed at length a terrific poem by John Mbiti with Form III: "Time moves fast... Round turns the earth, Round itself round... matches burning the night... Time moves fast, bitterly fast." Wonderful time reading letters from home, which included one of the best Snoopy cartoons I have ever read. I sat on my favourite tree stump, commanding a view over the great Simba vs Chui League Soccer International, played for the first time on green grass. Listening to the now familiar African choruses from the school: "*Amini, amini nakwambia, Amini, amini ujumbe mpya; yeye aliye amini mwana ana-o uzima*" [Truly, truly I say to you; truly, truly this is the good news; he who believes in the Son has eternal life...]

Friday 16 November 1973 – Physics and RE revision with Form III. Christian Union in the afternoon: Bible study groups on Psalm 27, KSCF style. Split into three groups. The first meeting of its kind I have experienced out here (group Bible study), which is the norm in Britain. The emphasis here seems to be so very much more on singing and praising, rather than on discussion and study. As St Paul wrote, "For this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge" (2 Peter 1 v 5). I wrote home at length, enclosing some Snoopy cartoons.

A bad night – Aggrey came in, mentally uncoordinated and apologising profusely for disturbing me, some time after midnight.

Also, to show the importance of paying one's debts on time!

To the School Master: May I remind you of your debt with me Sh 3/20 for milk supplied by me on 10th together with three empty bottles. Please give them to the bearer. I am yours, Dairy Woman.

Favourite tree stump

(from 'The Real Africa', written a few years later)

At the end of October I received a letter from a member of my family with disturbing news... there was a pause, and then the inevitable storm broke – and though coming from afar, it seemed as if I was being bombarded from all sides at once. As in the upheavals at Mgalu, so once again I seemed to be caught in the cross-fire of a situation that was not of my own making. In many ways it was providential that I was not in England – the outrage and hysteria and bitterness within my family were unpleasant enough when I felt the reverberations 5,000 miles away, and after a time-lag of some 10 days.

The unreliability of the postal system caused problems of its own, and in one letter home I had to explain the local situation by admitting that postal communication with Mbale depended upon:

1. the efficiency of the Voi postal administration;
2. the reliability of the Voi to Iriwa bus service;
3. the competence of the Iriwa post-mistress; and
4. the loyalty of the runner between Iriwa and Mgalu!

One occasion I remember vividly – sitting on the terraced slopes of the 'amphitheatre' that formed the head of the Mgalu valley – overlooking the games field where a soccer match was in progress. I sat on my favourite tree stump, reading family mail – when the hiatus was at its height. I could hear the exuberant, rhythmical singing of the Christian Union from the school buildings below. I looked up and watched the game of soccer. It had been raining recently and the terraced hillsides were a rich, vivid green. The warm evening sun was about to dip behind the far range of hills. Suddenly I felt completely at home – here in Mbale, Kenya. How beautiful and hospitable Africa was! At that time in particular I felt that Africa was mercifully kind to me...

Swahili phrases

From a letter to my parents, written from Mbale, Friday 16 November 1973:

Thank you very much indeed for your letters... Actually I read them sitting on my favourite tree stump, half way up the hill below the Maynard teachers' houses on that side of the valley, shaded by some trees and commanding a superb view of the great Simba vs Chui League Football International Match taking place below me – for the first time on *green grass* (as opposed to brown earth)! Actually I usually play, but I wasn't feeling very energetic on Thursday. Blue sky above, slanting rays of the sun, and enthusiastic singing coming from the school building in the valley below – now familiar songs, mostly in Swahili, which I find I hum to myself almost without thinking!

I was delighted with the Snoopy cartoon. Yes, Snoopy says, "Happiness is a piece of fudge caught on the first bounce." I disagree. Happiness is a Friday evening, relaxing on the verandah with its superb, clear view of Kasigau Mountain, drinking Earl Grey tea, eating toasted scones with home-made lemon marmalade, and reading Snoopy [from Peanuts] cartoons! Oh yes, and whistling Rachmaninoff, Beethoven, Mozart, Handel, Bach chorales, hymns, choruses or Christmas carols on the wooden Snake-charmer [recorder], which, believe me, is worth its weight in gold. I spend many a restful hour, sitting outside my mud hut in the cool of the day, charming the snakes – if any happen to be around!

I am writing tonight because I fear that next week will be chock-a-block with the invigilation and marking of exams. I'll try and drop a line midweek, though.

One thing I notice about the local language is that many of the Swahili words are wonderfully onomatopoeic and superbly expressive. As I mentioned previously, the word

dudu ('doo-doo'), meaning 'insect', has connotations with 'doodle-bug' – i.e. unpleasantly destructive vermin. On a more domestic level, the expression as you knock at the door (if there is one), wanting to enter someone's house or mud hut, is "*Hodi!*" (pronounced 'hodee') – to which the (automatic) answer is "*Karibu*" ('ka-ree-boo'), meaning 'welcome!' I expect that expressions like these will come naturally to me after my return (you will have to put up with Swahili-isms every other sentence!) *Mafuta* ('ma-foo-ta') is 'kerosene' – never called kerosene, even by *wazungu* (Englishmen).

The word for 'cow', as in the Bishop of Mombasa's name, is *ng'ombe* ('eng-orm-bay'), which is phonetic, if you imagine a cow going "*eng-oooooOOOOOORrrmbay!*" Similarly, the ki-Dabida for dog is beautifully onomatopoeic: *mbwa*. Yappy African dogs: "*Mbwa! mbwa! mbwa! mbwa-bWA-bWA!*"

The word for a din or squawking noises made by many children – crying or wailing – is *kalele* ('ka-ley-ly'), as in "the children were making a regular *kalele* when I came in." A child is *mtoto* – plural *watoto*. Small = *dogo* with an appropriate conjugatory prefix. Thus, *watoto wadogo walifanya kalele* = "the small children were making a racket."

Finally, the unbeatable word, meaning literally 'sharp' – used for knives, sour fruit and sour people. The word is *kali* ('car-ly'), e.g. *kisu kali* = a sharp knife. But, for example, the Mgalu story goes that a wonderful Headmistress though Miss Kate C was, she could also be very *kali* indeed, if students did not pay their fees on time (I'll leave that to your imagination!).

Well, it's getting late. The crickets are chirping. The stars are shining. The night is moonless and black. Banana leaves are gently swaying in the breeze. The house is empty – rather spooky it can be too! Early start tomorrow, to be at Wundanyi Bank by 08:30 when it opens – unless you're first in the queue the waiting time is approx. 1 hour for any single operation! The W's are thinking in terms of an afternoon's outing tomorrow, which will be a welcome break – the first time I've really 'got away' since half term.

So – oh yes, the final word. The Swahili equivalent of *voila!* or 'OK, that's fine'. *Bas!* Pronounced between 'bass' and 'bus', 'Bahs!' If you're satisfied, you lift up both hands, as if to silence an audience, and say – in a deep, resonant, authoritative voice, "*BAS!*"

So that's all. *Bas.*

One thing have I asked of the Lord

(from 'The Real Africa', written a few years later)

*One thing have I asked of the Lord,
that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the Lord
and to inquire in his temple (Psalm 27 v 4)*

Times I remember when the house was like God's house, filled with praise and intercession. "For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit" (1 Corinthians 14 v 2). Hours at a weekend, alone in the house, pacing up and down the corridor, or to and fro across the front room, the view from the verandah: green hills falling away into the desert plains; distant mountains so clear you could almost reach out and touch them.

Better still were the days when the rains came, when the clouds rose up from the valleys below and mists closed in and swirled about the house. Then it was like a ship at sea, fogbound or storm-driven. Shut off from the outside world and all its troubles – a place of perfect privacy, perfect freedom. Then I could really take time to pray – for the fearful situations at hand – that the flood-tide of God's salvation and grace and blessing might be poured out, as a torrent of water

revives a desolate land: “The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom...” (Isaiah 35 v 1, 2)

On fine days it was wonderful to go up ‘Prayer Mount’, which looked over the Mgalu valley and commanded superb views over the entire Mbale Location and beyond – out over the hills and on to the plains (dappled with the blue-grey shadows of clouds), away from the ‘island’ – to where your far-reaching gaze could make out the beginnings of the outside world. Here you could meditate and pray ‘over’ the entire situation – immediately below you, or away beyond the horizon...

Jacarandas and Mlungu trees

So, as indicated in my Friday letter, the next morning was Saturday, and I made a very early start for Wundanyi, taking a short cut in the fresh day’s dawn, and reaching the bank precisely at 08:30 – *saa mbili na nusi* – when it opened. In town I met Peter M, Mrs S, Julias R, Martinah (from Kituri High School), and an American missionary who had just moved up into the hills to work at Werugha Pentecostal Church.

After lunch I left with the W’s, intending to climb Susu, the mountain rising above Wusi. However, no sooner had we started out than it started to rain. We took rapid shelter under a palm bush, which held the main force of the rain at bay for a limited period. But we emerged just 10 minutes later, *very wet*, and slithered back down to the car! We visited Liz at the Farmers Training College, a curious Scandinavian ‘oasis’ of advanced civilization in the middle of nowhere. We then tried a second ascent of Susu, but squalls of rain were sweeping towards us across the plains – so we abandoned the climb for another day, and dropped in at Murray High School to visit Miss Kate C on our way back. The colours after the rain were simply magnificent: rainbows, the soft pink glow of the setting sun on the plains, the Sagalla and Kasigau mountain ranges a rich blue in the near distance, violet Jacarandas, and coral-coloured, soft pink ‘Mlungu’ trees. And in the distance, fabulously clear, the lower Pare Mountains of Tanzania, perhaps as far as the Usambara mountain range, just inland from Tanga, 70 miles away!

Duty Master

From a letter to my parents, written from Mbale, Wednesday 21 November 1973:

I’m afraid – sad though I am to say it – that I am writing this letter sitting up in bed, having retired earlier this morning with a severe headache and general fluey feeling. I was warned yesterday, by Mr W, that there was a bug going around, so I presume this is just it. I feel the same as I did – now almost a year ago – at the end of last Christmas term at Haileybury, after my Cambridge results, during the famous flu epidemic there. Sorry if this is not clear or coherent – sustained concentration is difficult – I am doing my best! Actually I hadn’t really been feeling well since Sunday, but – perhaps rather foolishly – I carried on, hoping it would pass after a series of good nights’ rests.

Well, this morning – I don’t know what to make of Aggrey; I would say almost semi-dipsomaniac, semi-schizophrenic – try living with one of them! Anyway, he was drinking heavily last night, and he came home in the very early morning, waking me up (as usual). Anyway, this morning at 06:40, while I was dressing, he burst into my room, still far, far gone, uttering a torrent of incoherent abuse and accusations, telling me in so many words (so *many* words) what a useless Duty Master I was, and why hadn’t I done this, and why hadn’t I done that, and why didn’t I know how the school was – and this thing and that thing and the other thing – in fact what a hopeless person I was altogether!

Well I pushed him gently out of the room, taking the precaution of locking the door, and took it all with a large pinch of *chumvi* [salt]. I at least like to get *dressed* in peace! How Aggrey managed to sober up before the school examinations began, if only slightly, I don’t know! However, he still smells strongly of beer, so I don’t know what the students think of all this.

What has rather compelled me to keep on my feet is that we are doing the school exams – invigilation for 7½ hours yesterday, and then marathon marking (on which I’ve scarcely started). I think a combination of this – intense work, the increased heat, bad nights etc. has put me out of action – so I’m enjoying a brief respite. To think, only last term (4 or 5 months ago) I was *taking* exams – now I’m *invigilating* them! Poor friends back at Haileybury taking Oxbridge Exams! The work however is not without its humorous side. Yesterday, marking Physics, we had students measuring current in Ohms and power in Amps – and one student, obviously unwilling to commit himself either way, measured something in “Ohmps”!

Floating dream...

As recorded in my diary:

I have only a hazy recollection of the next 48 hours. All I know is that I was flat on my back in a kind of floating dream, a euphoria of forgetfulness, ‘out of the land of the living’. Mrs W came down, acting as a nurse (bless her!), diagnosing my state as one of utter exhaustion, possibly catalysed by a flu bug, and perhaps aided by a touch of malaria! I spent the first night at home, and moved up to the W’s for the next day. I listened to some music: Schubert’s Trout Quintet, Beethoven’s First Symphony and Handel’s Messiah. In a waking dream, my eyes completely unable to focus, bog-eyed, blotto. I still have difficulty in distinct close-up vision – that’s why I’m writing so slowly...

A cyclorama of events and impressions and aspirations and hallucinations, and disconnected imaginings swimming circling illogical in my mind. Britain, England, Cambridge, people home-life farming Scotland gliding flying mountains bedsitters examination cold cosiness bright lights red paper frozen milk leaden skies torn clouds icy stillness fog and silence epidemics illness food distribution telephones people dreaming white sheets lighted winter cities carols cathedrals skiing blue skies white rocks dark trees starry nights dancing and drink swirling forwards pressure on and on drama spring trees wet leaves quiet foliage rains darkness white water music death-beats drumming a tight bank to starboard and down swirling through the clouds suspended above the world the rush of wind the whistle of wings lower straighten up wheels down hard grass fresh silence cool wind...

Catharine and the Dietz lamp

(from ‘The Real Africa’, written a few years later)

Late November, 1973 – illness, after an unpleasant brush with Aggrey (who was drunk), and an unsuccessful attempt at invigilating and marking examinations... I spent the afternoon lying flat on my back, in a kind of floating dream, my eyes completely unable to focus...

It was then that a wonderful thing happened. I suddenly came to – Catharine had come into the room, with a Dietz lamp, as the light was beginning to fail. She had brought me a plate of home-made scones and a pot of tea. Outside and overhead there was a deafening roar – the unforgettable, delicious sound of heavy rain falling on the *bati* [tin] roofs. The oppression of the hot and sultry atmosphere lifted – and the long-awaited arrival of rain brought thankfulness to our hearts: “Joy is like the rain...”

Storm clouds at sunset

I recall the next few days as a series of impressions:

On Friday, after a couple of days ‘out of the land of the living’, I got up with an effort, after a good relaxed night. A November morning of mists and cold. Still *hapana mzuri* [not well]. Still not really ‘in the land of the living’. But it was a relaxed day, up and doing. I managed some marking in the evening. An American couple living at Wundanyi came to visit the W’s in the evening, and I

welcomed an invitation to join them for the evening meal, for some conversation and fellowship.

On Saturday I managed to walk up to Wundanyi, and further on to Wesu Hospital, perched beneath Wesu Rock – a very good establishment with an electricity generator. The whole countryside looked much greener and fresher after the recent rain. Members of the Kituri Christian Union came down, and we spent the afternoon together at Mgalu. It was good to see Peter M again – he is staying with the S's overnight. I read, for the very first time, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, which is the first of the Narnia books by CS Lewis. A student notice posted outside the main classrooms read: 'Is this a school or a beer house?' – which is a sign that the situation at Mgalu is desperate.

On Sunday I felt down again, but I revived considerably during the second Mgalu Student Service at which Peter was preaching – a terrific sermon, full of wisdom, clear thinking, simplicity and challenge. Surely we need more preachers like this in our churches in Britain! Attendance – about 30 hostellers, and the service started over ½ hour late. In the afternoon John and Sue K came over from Werugha – a wonderful American couple (anthropologists) from Southern California.

At dusk I witnessed one of the most incredible sights I have ever seen – storm clouds billowing turbulently towards us over the hills, caught by the last glow of the setting sun. Contrasts of sky-blue, golden-yellow and deep grey, where a nearer cloud, bulging uncannily forwards, partially covered a much higher, thinner cloud belt. Heavy greys and pinks over the distant hills; flamingo pink and lilac where thin wisps of cloud merged with the blue sky; a curious duck-egg blue-green colour at the edges, where offshoots from the main cloud mass crept along the ridges of the valley on either side of us; an ever-changing array of mysterious colours – their beauty vanishing with the failing light.

Then at half past six we set out for Murray High School, encountering thunder storms and heavy rain on the way. Everyone was there: the S's, Peter, Levi M and Miss Kate C, or 'Aunty Kate', as she was affectionately known. It was the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols followed by a Nativity Play – full of angels holding blankets and saying, "And the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid!" Margaret W (aged 3) was particularly enthralled – she had decided that in her next Nativity Play at Mbale around Christmas, Aunty Kate is going to be an angel!

On Tuesday the hostellers were late for school again because of wet firewood. Why they don't store sufficient wood inside at night so that it will be dry the next morning I can't think – it seems such an obvious solution to such a simple problem! It had rained heavily during the night, so I took a dawn walk (with the sun rising above wisps of mist) to the bridge over the Mdongo-dongo to see the river in full flood – very rocky and precipitous, with a torrent fairly thundering past, the water bright red-brown with churned up earth and sand – a dramatic experience. A hard working and productive day, including a lively Physics lesson explaining elementary electrical theory – a case of 'back to square 1' following abysmal exam results. I pretended to be an electron going through a resistor – a very painful process! In the English lesson I showed the students some photographs of my home back in England – there were some blank looks of amazement on their faces!

The sky was an unbelievable sight. A crescent moon setting in the west, with the dark part uncommonly bright – we reckoned that she was enjoying full 'earth-shine' – in line with Jupiter, Venus and Mars. By 10 o' clock Orion was well up, with Sirius, as bright as a planet, now some way above the horizon. The rain had

made the atmosphere amazingly clear, and the stars flashed like burning fires. My mind went back to Britain – I could have been wandering aimlessly up and down the Art school on a wet Sunday afternoon, or deafened by uproars in the Dormitory Classroom – but that is now a thing of the past, 5,000 miles away. *This is Africa*. The shapes of banana leaves against a star-bright sky. Terrific!

Medical mishaps

From a letter to my parents, written from Mbale, Tuesday 27 November 1973:

This last week has been coloured by a few medical mishaps. Today I ripped open the top of my finger on a thorn down at the river (not serious!). Yesterday morning I burned the back of my throat in an attempt to wolf down porridge rather too quickly – better now, but I was sucking peppermints like billy-oh yesterday.

And of course last week! I hope it wasn't cause for too much alarm. Indeed I am now much better, though not perhaps 100%. In a few days I shall be able to say, "According to my health I am just like a fiddle!" [student quote]. Yes, quite a dramatic experience. Soon after I sent off my last letter, Mrs W came down, acting as a nurse (being qualified as such). She is wonderful! I was given aspirin and quinine – in heavy doses – just in case I had malaria. For the next 48 hours I was on my back in a kind of floating dream, a kind of euphoria or limbo of forgetfulness – 'out of the land of the living'. The next day I moved up to the W's and listened to some Beethoven and the Trout Quintet, surrounded by pillows (to keep my head from exploding, or so I thought) – unable to read as one eye could hardly open, and the two together were completely unable to focus – absolutely blotto! Eventually on Friday morning, after many, many hours sleep, I banked to starboard, spiralling through the clouds, down, down, level out, straighten up, wheels down, LAND!

I came back to earth and spent a relaxed weekend, doing a little work, but taking life fairly gently. It was diagnosed as severe exhaustion, catalysed by a flu bug, and possibly aided by a touch of malaria! I think a culmination of various pressures – bad nights (not due to coffee, as I rarely take it after breakfast, and we have a delicious chocolate drink, Nestlé Milo); pressure at school, setting, invigilating and marking examinations; the generally touchy atmosphere in the staff room; an inconsistent relationship with Aggrey – meaning that the atmosphere in the house is never completely relaxed – and, to be honest, the current family hiatus and uncertainty not playing an insignificant part.

And if you think, really an *inevitable* culmination, aided by the much less obvious psychological strains (which I was warned about) – being in a new country, being a householder for the first time, learning a new language, adapting to a new way of life, experiencing a very different – though agreeable – climate, always being confronted by new impressions, new faces, new experiences, and not having *really* relaxed all my time in Kenya so far! Don S actually predicted this would happen – when I mentioned I was ill, he said, "Yes, that probably means being flat out for 48 hours!" How did he guess?

Anyway, it gave me a real chance to 'unwind', rest, relax and feel refreshed again – though I have a considerable marking pile-up as a result! I read the first part of the Narnia books – The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. It was superb and very good light reading material, very much in the same vein as The Hobbit or Lord of the Rings. Last Sunday we witnessed a fantastically beautiful spectacle: storm clouds, billowing turbulently towards us over the hills, caught by the last glow of the setting sun. Lots of love, always. Adrian.

PS The whole of the Taita District (including Voi) has run out of sugar!

End of term

As recorded in my diary:

Wednesday 28 November 1973 – A day of solid hard work – marking Form I RE and the Form III English essays, some of which were very imaginative. I was encouraged by the fact that only nine students (out of the whole form) got under 45%, on a hard paper. I

worked from 08:00 to 12:30, and almost solidly from 14:00 to 21:00 – nearly 12 hours work – but I finished all the marking completely, putting the marks down in the Form III reports, thus rendering them complete. Dinner at 10 pm, then I collapsed, exhausted!

Thursday 29 November 1973 – I spent most of the morning flat out, recovering from yesterday's efforts. It had been, however, essential for me to have finished the marking by this morning. I was greeted by a salvo of complaints when handing back the papers: "Please sir! I don't understand your marking! The addition is wrong" – I was so fed up by the end of it that I felt like saying, "Well, if you don't like the way I mark, then I shan't bother to mark your work in future!" In the afternoon – the great end-of-term Mgalu vs Maynard Football [Soccer] League International Match was hazarded by light rain. Kick off was at 16:15. Mgalu won 4 – 3 after some very untidy play early on.

At 19:00 or thereabouts I was 'fool' enough to venture out to Iriwa to buy some eggs. My only guiding light was the feeble illumination of a rapidly failing torch and the intermittent flashes of lightning, now increasing rapidly in both intensity and frequency. Rain quickly followed – and I just managed to reach Dixons [shop] before a cloud-burst, in which I would have been soaked to the skin in a matter of seconds, even with an umbrella. I tried to contact George [who lived nearby] when the worst was over, but he was not at home. So I took refuge in another *duka* [shop], where I bought some eggs and was given some roast banana to eat. The rain showed no signs of easing; my torch had failed, and the Iriwa road was becoming more slippery and dangerous every minute. *Que faire?* Just as I was wondering, Lo and Behold! The Voi bus came along, lights blazing! We (that is to say, myself and the person who was helping me, from Dixons) were some way above the road, and by the time we reached road level the bus had passed without seeing us. So we dashed after it shouting "Ngoja! Ngoja!" [Wait!] at the tops of our voices. Fortunately, the driver heard us and stopped the bus. Thus I was driven back to the Maynard stop, free of charge, whence I made my way cautiously back to the house in safety.

Friday 30 November 1973 – Last day of term. I tried desperately to persuade students to shift bundles of firewood, but the inherent laziness of the waTaita prevailed. This was coupled with the excuse that "It is our tribal custom that the women do all the work"; taking this with a pinch of salt, I replied, "The Kenyan motto 'Harambee' means *everyone* pulls together!" We closed the school at 12:00 noon after a final Assembly and distribution of Uhuru Day badges. 'Boogie' in our house – mercifully with soft drinks – for the football team that had won the match. I got away from the house at 2 o'clock, by which time hard booze was beginning to infiltrate. I took a good long invigorating walk up along the ridge to the highest point [Prayer Mount]. The heat was at times terrific, and when I sat down, at the summit, I felt myself glowing from tip to toe like an electric heater. I didn't stay too long, as storm clouds were beginning to roll in from the Sagalla Hills to the east. I was much refreshed by the experience, however, and spent the evening at the W's, relaxing, listening to music, and reading about pulsars and quasars.

The 'Real Africa' – Part 1

(from 'The Real Africa', written a few years later)

So, what of the real Africa? The Lord had put me in a situation – isolated, remote from the compromise and complexities of the Western world:

- (a) I was *detached*, free to be my true self as a Christian. I was free to express my faith, sincerely and openly, encouraged by the warmth and joy of the Christian community in Taita – fellow missionaries, and African brothers and sisters in Christ. I had to live up to expectations, it is true, but these were the expectations of fellow Christians, who could sympathize with my weakness and help me when I stumbled. I was under authority, true, but it was a Christian hierarchy based upon the authority of God – a 'theocracy' – and to serve him is perfect freedom. Here, safe in the remoteness and vastness of Africa, no longer could anyone ask awkward questions about my thoughts and beliefs, or my experiences: I was free to live them out and be true to myself, without having to put on appearances. For I was *immersed* in Africa. News

did come from outside – ‘wars, rumours of war’, family upheavals, distant unrest. But news often came too late, when I could do nothing to help: separated by distance and time, those events were somehow unreal, remote – they seemed to belong to some other world, forgotten like a fading dream. For Africa was all around me, bright and colourful, in its fullness and reality – in its vivid contrast of good and evil, pain and joy.

- (b) I was *committed* to the Lord – to his death and resurrection, to his suffering, to his life – and the people he had given me to serve. The verse which perhaps impressed me most vividly when I went out to Kenya was Mark 8 v 34: “Anyone who wants to be a follower of mine must leave self behind; he must take up his cross and come with me. Whoever cares for his own safety is lost, but if a man will let himself be lost for my sake and for the gospel, he will find his true self” (NEB, approx.) And perhaps the most significant experience of the year was the time when, in the midst of frustration, disappointment, sickness confusion and suffering, I could see, suddenly, clearly – like a single shaft of sunlight in a dark forest – the loving hand of God at work, wanting to reach out and save those who were lost and helpless. This was altogether the most important thing, the gospel, “the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith” (Romans 1 v 16) – and it was for the sake of the Lord Jesus and for the gospel that I had to give myself up entirely for him to use, to die to self, to ‘get lost’ in Africa for the Lord. So I was able to experience (perhaps only momentarily) the thrill of being not just immersed in Africa, but ‘lost in Africa’ as well. And perhaps it was just this – a glorious sense of *lost-ness* – that gave rise to the whole concept of the ‘Real Africa’. For the moment I stopped holding on to my own self, and my own happiness, as soon as I was prepared to let go and lose myself for the Lord, I found complete fulfilment, deep joy – even in the suffering, especially in the suffering – satisfaction and wholeness: I had found my true self.

This experience of total self-forgetfulness and self-loss was only momentary, at most a fleeting glimpse – but it was a glimpse of a great truth, a foretaste perhaps of deeper and greater things to come. And this truth, together with the art of praising God – which is in fact very closely linked – was perhaps the greatest single discovery I made. I thought at the time that this is the lesson of the Real Africa, the lesson that I needed to put into practice more and more, both in Britain and in the years ahead in countries far away – the art of deliberately letting go, forgetting self, looking to God, praising him in all circumstances, rejoicing in him...

CHAPTER 4: CHRISTMAS IN THE TAITA HILLS

December 1973

Handel's 'Messiah' in Nairobi Cathedral

Saturday 1 December 1973 – Up at 04:45, stars still brilliant. I looked towards the south to unknown constellations, but alas there was no Southern Cross yet. The Plough was still visible in the north, with its feet stuck up in the air, the pointers leading vertically downwards to the horizon. Breakfast, and a dawn-pink walk, carrying both suitcases as Aggrey is a slow walker. We caught the 7 o'clock OTC bus from Wundanyi, with views above the clouds from the Dembwa road. We took in a woman at Mwatate who was very ill with childbirth, and rushed her to Voi District Hospital, but sadly she died before we got there. It was a sad and disturbing scene, with much wailing.

From then on it was an uneventful journey north-west, with the bush looking almost unnaturally green and lush. Parts of the landscape around Mtito Andei looked almost English in composition – a far cry from the parched grass and black leafless bush of a few weeks before. Soon the Ngong Hills rose above the horizon on our left, a plane came into land from the south, and the buildings of Embakasi Airport, and finally the Nairobi city skyline itself, came into view.

Hellen very kindly drove me to the C's, who were just returning from a Messiah rehearsal. Mike, a fellow YSA, called round to arrange plans for his forthcoming stay in the Taita Hills. He sounded very depressed about his school and the YSA experience in general. The Messiah performance started at 8.30 pm. The Anglican Cathedral was packed with *wazungu*, with scarcely an African to be seen! I saw the R's, and Jonathan and Richard, fellow YSAs. The music was terrific – it was the first time, I think, that I had actually listened to Messiah from beginning to end! We returned, very tired, at midnight.

The next day, Sunday, I went to the Cathedral service, Mattins at 10.30 am. The preacher was the Provost, recently appointed as the new Bishop of Maseno. It turned out to be a slightly unfortunate sermon, in which he recited two jokes, both of which went wrong (something about Bishop 'Upper Nile' and Bishop 'Up a Gum Tree') – and then made three attempts at getting the right verse for his text! He is renowned as a good preacher, however, and apparently he is not afraid of speaking out against the Government, which means that he is unpopular in some Government circles.

I had a relaxed afternoon, and then went to the 'Messiah' performance again in the evening. We musical fanatics! "Ev'ry va-alley, ev'ry valley, sha-all be exa-alted. Shall be-e-e exa-a-a-a... a-alted!" In the last chorus, just as the exposition of the 'Amen' fugue was ending, there was a resounding Bang! The orchestra stopped momentarily, and then continued as if nothing had happened. I looked around confused, and then suddenly my speculations were greeted by a shower of hot glass: an electric light bulb had exploded vertically above my head!

Pumwani and Nairobi Cinema

On Monday once again I had arranged a *rendez-vous* with Aggrey at the Hilton at 10 am, but he failed to keep it. After a busy morning shopping, I took the bus to Pumwani, but Aggrey was not in. "*Ametembea*" – he has gone for a walk. So I looked in on Jonathan at CITC and found Peter and Howard, YSAs, who are off to Zambia tomorrow. They both seem to be really enjoying the YSA 'experience'. In the early evening the three of us went to see 'The Day of the Jackal' at the Nairobi Cinema. I thought it was an excellent film, bringing back happy memories of Paris. There was a desperately exciting climax at the end, and when we came out of the cinema it was dark.

I was supposed to have met Harry C there but, as I later discovered, their car had broken down. So I had a rather apprehensive walk to the Post Office, hoping that a bus would take me to the right place fairly quickly. Nairobi is not such a pleasant city at night. But I got on the wrong bus. I alighted at a bus stop I was assured was only 200 yards away from the Argwings Kodhek shopping centre and service station (near where the C's live). I started running down the road – as there was no lighting. Some people I passed started shouting, and some, I felt, were giving me the chase. All the unpleasant scenes from 'The Cross and the Switch-blade' came to mind. Eventually, after running hard for a good half mile, and just as I was slowing down for lack of breath, an English woman drove past me in a van, picked me up and took me back to the service station – whence I was able to make my way back to the C's house, with a feeling of exhaustion and relief!

The next day I made the trip to Pumwani once again to look for Aggrey. Once again, he was not there: "*Ametembea.*" I gave up! But I had a successful day, getting all necessary shopping done, from camera films to a plastic table cloth. I took photographs of the Kenyatta Conference Centre and Houses of Parliament, had lunch at the 'Honeypot' café, and then took a bus up to the Kenya Science Teachers College, where I looked at some Physics demonstration equipment, which I am hoping to buy for the school. Relaxed evening, early to bed.

Hitch-hiking to Voi

On Wednesday I tried hitch-hiking to Voi. The day started with a perilous bus journey from Argwings Kodhek to the Hilton Hotel. I felt myself being squeezed out of all recognition, and almost pushed out of the bus. Getting at my purse (in the side pocket of my rucksack) to pay my fare was a Herculean task! I managed to alight at 5 minutes to 8, and ran to Accra Road and the Mombasa coast bus, which was due to leave at 8 o' clock sharp. I arrived just as it was about to leave, shouting "*Ngoja! Ngoja!*" [Wait for me, please], waving my arms wildly in the air and brandishing a cardboard notice which read *VOI TAFADHALI*. Everyone aboard the bus erupted in laughter. The conductor, seeing that I was a hitch-hiker, said he would take me as far as Athi River for free. I said, "Will you take me to the Machakos turn, free?" "Well, OK." So I arrived at the Machakos turn-off at 9, having enjoyed a steady view of Mount Kenya (Kirinyaga) 70 miles away, its distinctive, dramatic volcanic shape rising clear above the morning mist.

After an hour and a half's wait, during which a seemingly endless procession of 'empty' cars (with no passengers) roared past me, the 31st car – a Toyota Land Cruiser with English farmers from Nanyuki on their way to Mombasa – picked me up. The sudden transition from the harsh, arid roadside to a comfortable seat, air conditioning and stereo music was worth the waiting! We reached Voi at 1.30 pm, having covered the distance from Machakos in just three hours. I intended to wait for the first bus from Voi that took the Msau route, as I had a very heavy suitcase. However, as the next one did not leave till 5, I figured that $\frac{3}{4}$ hour's stiff walk in the Taita Hills was better than 3 hours wait in Voi, so I took the OTC to Wundanyi at 2 pm. The hills were looking lovely, and I enjoyed a good walk down the cross country path, greeting friends who seemed pleased to see me back.

Yes, it was *good* to get back into the countryside again! I had found that in Nairobi – with its tall buildings, busy crowds and reckless traffic – I had felt genuinely scared. However, when I realised that for the first time in my life I had been away from modern civilisation for 13 weeks – seeing nothing bigger than a one-storey house and hearing nothing louder than the occasional lethargic bus – and had then suddenly been plunged into the millstream of modern city life, the sensation was not so surprising. Anyway, it was good to be back in a familiar place, and amongst people that I knew. Andrew and Margaret W were at home. Catharine was just about to leave for Nairobi on the night train. So I spent the night there, baby-sitting Margaret, while Andrew drove Catharine to Voi station.

Venus was incredibly bright, and the first sightings of the arrival of the comet Kohoutek had just been reported in the East African Standard.

Visit from Peter and Howard

As recorded in my diary:

Thursday 6 December 1973 – Leisurely morning unpacking and making lemon squash. I was glad to see that the school building was progressing rapidly. Then in the middle of the afternoon, I heard some people coming down the path towards the house. Opening the back door, who should I see arriving but the Padre (the Revd John N), followed by Peter and Howard! Apparently Tanzania – part of their original itinerary *en route* for Zambia – had turned out to be a ‘bad trip’. They had got as far as Arusha, but no further. Travel, they said, was almost impossible, the people unfriendly, the regulations strict, the prices exorbitant. So, after a night at Moshi, they headed for the Taita Hills – which have now acquired the reputation as a rescue ground for ex-Tanzanian tourist refugees! They were most welcome. Howard had a head cold, so he was pretty well out of action. But Peter and I looked around the place. He was very impressed with everything. We bought some avocados from Geoffrey.

Friday 7 December 1973 – Peter and I walked up to Wundanyi, Howard remaining at home. Market Day. Met Don and Lyn S. We bought cabbage, bananas, green maize etc. between showers of rain. We spent ages getting the meat (= hunk of cow), though waiting and watching was fascinating. Wet afternoon. We walked to Iriwa when the rain had eased off, to look at the Mdongo-dongo River in full flood. On our return it rained again, just as we were crossing the bridge, and by the time we reached the house, less than 5 minutes later, we were soaked through and through and through! Full dinner of stew, rice and avocados – and hilarious conversation about Suffolk and Lincolnshire farming.

Excerpt from a letter from the Bishop, referring to a choice between going to the CMS Conference and the Harambee Schools Conference:

Dear Adrian,

Thank you very much for your letter. I think you attend which you think will help your work here.

Yours faithfully, Peter Mombasa

Bishop of Mombasa:

Manager, Diocesan Harambee Schools

Voi railway station

As recorded in my diary:

Saturday 8 December 1973 – Busy day reading and writing. Tea with Samuel M. Felt ill in the evening.

Sunday 9 December 1973 – Quiet day, as I was not feeling too good. I had intended going to Taveta, but decided to stay put instead. Sketched Kasigau from the house.

Monday 10 December 1973 – Felt much better in the morning, so I kitted up for a ‘safari’. Beautiful start to the journey to Voi, down the back way, on Kireti’s bus. A clear, crisp morning, with everything looking fresh and green. Perilous journey following the contours of the hills, on a road now ridged and furrowed because of the recent rain. We descended to the village of Msau, and thence off the hills and on to the plains. I began to realise, during the course of the journey, that perhaps it would be unwise to go to Taveta, since I had arranged to meet Thomas the previous day. And on arrival at Voi the Asian proprietor at Patel’s Café warned me that Taveta had no hostel or hotel, and that most of the people lived in the wide-reaching hinterland, so that I thought I would be unlikely to find his house before dark. I therefore decided to postpone my visit to Taveta, and to spend some time at Voi instead. I went to look at the steam trains at Voi railway station. It was like swinging back 50 years, into the 1920s, with telephones, bells and offices. The

great engines themselves, some new and smart, others old and rusted; the engine shed, dark, covered with black oil, housing several locomotives in various stages of disrepair; the water tanks with pipes hanging down like elephant trunks; huge metal wheels, the hissing of steam, hot water spraying puddles on the oil-soaked sleepers. A small steam engine was shunting trucks from one line to another. Fierce sunlight, increasing steadily as the day wore on; in the background the Sagalla Hills. A huge sign read:

VOI. JUNCTION FOR TANZANIA LINES. 1836 FT.

I talked (in Swahili) with some people who were waiting for the Nairobi train – considering it arrived at 10:00 pm, they had a long wait! I discovered that the Swahili for steam engine was *gari la moshi*. I took the Taita bus back at 12:30 pm, glad to ascend into the hills once again, away from the oppressive heat of the plains. I reached Mbale at 3 pm, and then walked to Wundanyi to buy groceries. Everyone was surprised to see me back from Taveta so quickly.

Climbing Yale

The following morning started with a frantic rush at 5 am to see if I could see the Comet Kohoutek. In this I was disappointed, as it was nowhere to be seen. The dawn itself, however, was worth watching – a pink haze in the east towards Kasigau, with curious, animated shapes of dark purple cloud rising up out of it. I set out later at about 8 o'clock, intending to go for a long walk, possibly climbing mountains. I took a short cut route to the Werugha road. Though it became progressively warmer as the sun rose higher, a fair breeze began to blow as I gained height steadily, eventually reaching Kituri and Werugha.

I took a long, thoughtful look at the various peaks surrounding the 'northern plateau' – as I sipped Coca Cola – trying to assess which one would be best to climb. Eventually I settled for a high hill towering up on my left, whose foot seemed only about a mile away. I later discovered that this was the lower peak of Yale, the second highest mountain in the Taita Hills. I set out once again, the time being just after 10 am. A farmer guided me up the first part of the ascent, until the path left the undergrowth and trees, and began to climb the bare and rocky hillside. I followed the top of a spur inclined at about 30 or 40 degrees. This meant scaling huge expanses of glistening rock – with my new climbing boots I had no fear of slipping and falling. Nearing the top of the peak I had my first view of Kilimanjaro, whose snow-capped peak was once again in cloud. At the top of the first rise, the main peak of Yale loomed ahead, tall and sheer. The way up was more difficult than I had anticipated, because the path kept plunging into deep jungle, in which I feared there might be snakes.

Yale is a three-peaked mountain, with the top two peaks connected by a veritable knife-edge (only 20 feet wide). In some ways it was an easy climb, the only difficulty being that I kept losing the path. African paths have a curious habit of petering out, or of disappearing, and then reappearing like the Cheshire cat. Then I realised that it's not a case of 'people going where the paths are made', but 'paths are made where people go'. And who'd want to go all the way to the top of a mountain? Only crazy English tourists!

At last I emerged on to rock and scrub, and reached the summit at a quarter past eleven, about three hours after I had left the house. The view was cause for initial disappointment, for though it was a clear day, the slopes of Kilimanjaro rose in the distance to meet with thick cloud. The summit of Yale however commanded a view of the entire range of the Taita Hills, giving me a clear impression of the general outlay of the district. I was struck by how densely populated the hills were, with scarcely an acre of land without a house and *shamba*. Wesu rock, normally towering above us at Wundanyi, was now way below me, singularly undramatic. To the west I looked across to Vuria, the highest peak in the Taita Hills, with its radio mast on top – a 'blockish' or 'chunky' looking mountain, not a very elegant shape. I did a quick watercolour sketch of

it from the top of Yale, with the North Pare Mountains of Tanzania in the background. Watercolours are very difficult in hot climates – the water dries up so quickly!

I came back down the way I had come, just as the thunder began to roll in, and met Peter M on the road, on his way back from Rong'e. I got back home exhausted at about 3 pm, and looked at myself in the mirror – I had certainly caught the sun and was now very red in the face!

Uhuru Day

The next day, Wednesday 12 December 1973, was Uhuru Day, one of the most important days in the life of the country; for on December 12th 1963, exactly ten years ago, Kenya was made an independent nation.

I arrived for the celebrations two hours early, but spent the time profitably, walking to Kungu and back, enjoying the fresh morning sunshine. The Wundanyi 'football field' provided the perfect setting for the ceremonies to take place. By 10 o' clock more than eight thousand people had arrived. Most had come in a procession, clapping, waving branches of leaves in the air, chanting songs in praise of President Kenyatta or in loyalty to Kenya. All were dressed in their most colourful clothes, and they lined the four sides of the arena, some taking refuge from the sun by sitting under the shelter of a grandstand on one side of the field. On the other side a dais had been constructed. This was for the District Commissioner (DC), the Minister, the Archdeacon and various District Officers (DO's). Every building in sight was decorated with bands of black, red and green cloth, sisal poles of the same three colours lined the streets and marked the arena boundaries. Flags were flying; the sun was shining.

Presently a command was given over the loud-speaker system, and everyone stood up to sing the National Anthem: "*Ee mungu nguvu yetu, ilete baraka kwetu...*" [O God of all creation, Bless this our land and nation...] – a beautiful hymn composed by an Englishman! The DC then read the Presidential speech, which was very long and (I gather) very good. Unfortunately my Swahili was not yet up to standard! This was followed by singing, with various church and school choirs making vigorous contributions. The mostly Christian songs were intermixed with some rather half-hearted tribal dancing and drumming, giving me the impression that these pagan practices are becoming increasingly a thing of the past. This was followed by various competitions (including sugar-cane chewing), but I left around half past one, as the sun was hot and I was still feeling the effects of the previous day. I had dinner with Don and Lyn S and family – the stewed rabbit was delicious. Don advised me to go to the Harambee Teachers' Conference on Saturday. As he is going, returning there from Wusi for the day, I planned to accompany him. We spent a very happy evening chatting, looking at slides and listening to tracks from the 'Godspell' Christian musical.

CMS Conference at Wusi

So, a couple of days later, at 3 o' clock I accompanied Don and family to Wusi for the CMS Conference. The *siafu* (safari ants) were terrible, and as soon as John R (from Nairobi) stepped out of the car he lifted up the front of his shirt and reported that he was undergoing a 'navel attack' (Don's joke)! The evening was spent introducing ourselves and sharing experiences and concerns. Ken and Betty O and family were there, still unable to get into Uganda because of visa restrictions; Pat H from CITC Mombasa; Miss Kate C, who was very sympathetic about the drinking problem at Mgalu; and John R who sounded really frustrated. His problem, he said, was trying to work out what it really meant to be the representative of a Missionary Society. At night I was kept awake by mosquitoes!

Saturday was the day of the Harambee Teachers Conference at Maynard Hall, to which Lyn drove Don and myself. In some ways it was a tough day, as everything was in

Swahili, and my language proficiency was not up to the required standard – but it was necessary that I was there, and in the end very worthwhile.

As recorded in my diary:

Archdeacon Jeremiah K spoke out very strongly against alcohol, warning that in the future any teacher caught drunk would be asked to leave. Don seems to have been given an interesting job, travelling around the Diocesan schools, checking on administrative issues, while Archdeacon K would be responsible for the spiritual side. Peter M has now been officially appointed as the new Headmaster of Mgalu High School. George has given up teaching; we shall be a five-form school next term, double-streaming Form I, and we now have eight members of staff, including three new female teachers.

We returned to Wusi in time for tea, and the evening was spent profitably, listening to and discussing an interesting tape on Christmas Meditations, and joining in a Bible study, led by Melvyn M, all about Teilhard de Chardin and 'cosmo-genesis'.

The W's arrived early the next day, Sunday, having just returned from a holiday in Mombasa. Old Mr and Mrs W (Andrew's parents), and the three children, Susanna, John and Margaret, were all there. In the afternoon there was Bible discussion, and questions on more general topics, ending with a celebration of Holy Communion together. I travelled from Wusi with the W's, and met Mike F at Wundanyi – he had hitch-hiked from Nairobi that day. We walked down to Mbale together, taking the short cut path, and arriving home for a dinner of scrambled eggs and toast.

Mike's visit

Mike stayed with me for three days. On Day 1 we went shopping up at Wundanyi, returning via the S's, where we had an amusing conversation with them. We then met Peter M, who was in the process of moving into Harrison M's old house. It was rather a depressing evening, talking about Mike's problems. He was very disillusioned with Africa, wondering whether he should have come here in the first place.

On Day 2 we made an expedition to climb Wesu rock. We called in at the Wundanyi Market, on the way, pausing there for *chai*. We then proceeded to follow a path which began just in front of Minister Shako's house, and wound its way through some spectacular jungle, and round the back of the rock face, from which it was a short and gentle climb to the top. The time for the Wesu climb was calculated at: 1½ hours up, 4 seconds down! The summit of Wesu commanded a fairly extensive view over Wundanyi, Kungu and the hospital, but not as spectacular as the view from Yale. Down and round the back, ending up at Kituri High School, taking the short cut route home via Mwanguvi. Dinner *en famille* with the W's, with singing and discussion afterwards, though Mike did not seem to be all that 'turned on' by it.

Day 3 started with a leisurely morning, during which I set myself the task of writing some rather difficult letters to family members. We walked up to the ridge in the afternoon, and I was surprised that Mike was much more impressed with the view from there, than with the view the previous day from the top of Wesu. Some parts of the landscape looked very beautiful as the sun began to sink. The gentle, wooded slopes curved gracefully towards the valley, and assumed an almost unearthly appearance as the sun shone from behind them. We were invited to dinner with the S's, and enjoyed an evening full of funny Liverpool stories, dramatized by Don.

Walk with Geoffrey to FTC

The next morning Mike was off back to Nairobi, hitch-hiking from Voi, setting out on the 07:45 Kireti bus. I then joined Geoffrey (pronounced Ge-ohf-rey), a Form II student, and we set out on foot for the Farmers Training College (FTC), about 4 or 5 miles the other side of Wundanyi. I began the day feeling pretty depressed: it was hot, I was tired, I'd had a bad night, and there was a lot on my mind. But with a *chai na chapatti* at

Wundanyi, and three miles behind us, I cheered up considerably. And it became progressively cooler and more beautiful as the path wove its way through the hills, past Kungu, over streams and up a wooded hillside, looking very English (like Stourhead, Wiltshire), at the top of which stood the buildings of the FTC.

We met Harry and Liz, who said “*Karibuni*” and invited us to lunch, during which we had a fascinating conversation about the European crisis and Kenyan politics. Liz then showed us round ‘the works’, which abounded in lavishly equipped communal rooms, luxurious accommodation, high quality farm buildings, superb cattle and sophisticated machinery – including two mini-buses, a tractor, a Land Rover and a diesel generating plant with sufficient power to provide the whole of Wundanyi with electricity! A farmer’s dream, you would think, but as Liz explained with conviction, the set-up was so totally beyond the experience of the average rural farmers of the Taita Hills, that it was almost impossible for them to apply what they had learned during courses they attended there to their own home situations. However, the scenery was beautiful, with spectacular views of Yale, Vuria, Susu and over the plains. Liz then drove us back to Wundanyi, as she had to go there in any case, and eventually back to Mbale, with all of us calling in for tea at the W’s.

Wedding procession

Saturday 22 December 1973 was the day of the Wedding at Mbale Church. By 12 noon, singing, clapping and shouting could be heard all over the Mbale valley, so I went up to investigate, finding myself carried along by the bridal procession. I was joined by Susanna (9) and John (6) W, and found that I was to ‘look after’ them for the next four to five hours! The procession took nearly two hours to reach Mwanguvi and the bridegroom’s house. The bride, Patricia, retained the solemnest of expressions throughout, even though in front of her young girls were dancing, singing, moving forwards by degrees, kicking up clouds of dust, and generally presenting quite a road hazard for the cars and occasional bus that wanted to pass: one vehicle got so scared that it actually turned back on its tracks!

Crowds milled around the bridal pair, as prayers were said, donations collected, and the cake cut – to the accompaniment of Mbale Church choir singing. Luckily Susanna and John were given VIP treatment, and my task at that time was to keep track of two small heads of brown hair in a sea of black! Further VIP treatment – which I accepted with gratitude rather than embarrassment – included a meal of rice and meat in the bridegroom’s house. After saying goodbye to the bride, we made tracks for home – literally ‘tracks’, as we all pretended to be express trains!

Christmas in Kenya

Christmas 1973, in the Taita Hills, Kenya, was a very special time. On Sunday I entertained the entire W clan – Granny and Grandpa, Aunty Ruth (Andrew’s sister, a CMS missionary stationed in Dodoma, Tanzania), Andrew, Catharine, and the three children, Susanna, John and Margaret, to Sunday lunch. Busy preparations all morning (except for church) with Jackson to produce a chicken casserole (with two *kukus* – one with eggs!), mashed cream potatoes, cabbage and white sauce, followed by a delicious fruit salad of pink paw-paw, pineapple, mangoes, bananas and lemon juice; orange juice with our meal, and coffee to follow. We enjoyed a relaxed afternoon, then ‘high tea’ and carol singing with the family. Here there was a real Christmas spirit, with solos sung by the children.

The following day was Christmas Eve. I spent the morning at Wundanyi, persuading the Bank Manager to lend me 100/- (which he very kindly agreed to do) as ‘safety money’ for the Mount Kenya expedition. I had experienced some slight financial difficulties caused by delays in receiving my December salary, and the effects of having supported two people on one salary during the previous month. Lunch and stay with the W’s, with a

camp bed rigged up for me in the study. The afternoon was spent gathering ferns, leaves, flowers and greenery for Christmas decorations.

I remember it was a beautiful evening, the golden sun streaming through a light mist, which accentuated the relative distances of the further mountains and nearer ridges. A crooked tree with widespread, bare branches, posed like a statue on top of Maynard Hill, a dramatic foreground to the impressive mountain scenery behind. The children were sent to bed early, after they had carefully selected their stockings.

For the next two hours, we – the ‘Christmas angels’ – were busy blowing balloons, wrapping presents, constructing angel chimes, hanging red streamers and ferns, filling stockings, lighting candles – and listening to the world news: petrol rationing in England, bombs in Northern Ireland, freezing fog in London. By the time we had settled a gentle dispute over the correct mathematical harmony of the coloured paper streamers hanging as catenaries, we were through and ready for bed. The moonless night was still and warm, Orion burning high in the heavens, the stars casting a pale light over the *bati* [tin] roof. Inside, the warm glow of candle-light, green ferns, balloons, streamers, a decorated sisal pole casting shadows in the corner of the room, and a night-light in front of the Nativity ‘crib’ – all this was enough to tell me it was CHRISTMAS!

Christmas Day – Early rise with ‘Happy Christmas’ ringing in the air. Holy Communion taken by Mr W (senior) in the main room – his sermon revolved around the three words “Joy, simplicity, and forgiveness”. Don S and Aunt Kate came, but not the S children, as it was feared that John W had mumps. It was a ‘cold’ day, with low clouds and steady winds. Drive to Shigaro church, beyond Wundanyi and overlooking Msau, where Andrew was preaching. The service lasted two hours, with the church was full of beautiful singing and withered flowers. Mists swirled outside, and at one moment I thought I was going to catch pneumonia – there was a howling draught of cold wind coming through the open doorway behind me! The Hon Shako, Kenya’s Minister for Tourism and Wild Life, played the organ, and Andrew W preached about the ‘the Prince of Peace’, *Mfaulme kwa Amani*.

Late lunch when we returned. Present-giving in the afternoon; I felt slightly awkward receiving wonderful presents from all three of the children (and everyone else), while I had only given one present for everyone – but presents are not everything, and the children seemed to have had their full share of badminton rackets and xylophones and printing outfits and colouring books. Later we all assembled on the front lawn for group photographs. After Christmas tea and cake, Susanna, Margaret and I went for a ‘secret’ walk. They took me to some spectacular parts of the Mdongo-dongo River, where the water fell and swirled, rushing through narrow rifts in the rock, and carving curious spiral shapes on the sides of a rocky pool. For a long time the sound of rushing water filled the air, drowning out all other sounds. We came back, refreshed, for Christmas Dinner – roast chicken, fruit salad, nuts, chocolate and Tanzanian delicacies – to the warm light of candles and the gentle ringing of angel chimes.

On Boxing Day we woke to mists and rain, which temporarily daunted our plans for a day’s mountaineering. However, by 10 o’clock the weather showed signs of improving, with the mist beginning to clear from the hilltops. Catharine, Ruth, Susanna, John and I were driven to Wundanyi, and we set out to climb Wesu as the Advanced Party, the rest intending to bring up the rear (and the picnic). It was an hour’s walk through the woods, with pockets of mist hiding in the valleys; across streams and up a long, grassy slope to the supposed *rendez-vous*. We waited there for well over an hour, feeling very cold, playing I-Spy and giving piggy-backs to pass the time. We realised that something had gone wrong, but after finding the car at the bottom of the hill, locked and empty, and the other party on top of the rock, well into the picnic, we realised that it was simply a case of misunderstanding the *rendez-vous*. *Their* plan had been to meet us at the top!

We all enjoyed a delicious picnic lunch, to a view of Wundanyi (through the clouds), Susu, and to the extreme right, the Pare Mountains blue in the distance – also to the sounds of bangs caused by fireworks let off by some very inconsiderate African children, who were clearly enjoying observing the strange habits of the *wazungu* [white people]. For some curious reason, they thought, these crazy *wazungu* have to go all the way to the top of a mountain, carrying baskets of food and drink!

After lunch, Andrew, Susanna and I went on to climb Yale, following a wooded ridge running between the two mountains. The path climbed through deciduous forest, past rock faces catching the golden rays of the afternoon sun streaming through the fresh green foliage. Up on to the saddle where Andrew was convinced he saw the car ('pink panther') turning round Espy's corner, 5 miles away. At the summit clouds and mists swirled around and below us. It was rather like the view from an aeroplane, when after rising above the airport, it meets the first layer of cloud at about 5,000 feet. When the mist cleared, the panorama of hills, ridges, roads, *shambas* and settlements was once again breath-taking. From the extreme end of the mountain (the left hand peak), we could look almost vertically down for 1,000 feet. We calculated that it would take an average person a little under seven seconds to reach the bottom, allowing for air resistance – somehow I was reluctant to verify this experimentally! Kilimanjaro was again in cloud, but on our descent we did manage to catch a glimpse of Mawenzi, the rocky, pointed peak just in front of Kibo, as the farthest cloud mass cleared for an instant. Once again, with the Tsavo plains stretching far out, merging into the blue haze of distant mountain ranges, we were given the wonderful sense of the Taita Hills being an island – self-contained, and historically without much danger of intrusion by neighbouring tribes.

Down, down, down, winding through the forest, gathering bunches of strange, heavy-scented flowers, Susanna fairly leaping down the path in an effort to keep pace. Evening brought us back to Wesu hospital. Wesu Rock, catching the full beams of the slanting sun, towered above us, brilliant cream-white against a deep sea-blue. Far above the palm trees that clung to the sides of the cliff face, an augur buzzard, white-winged, wheeled and turned. And then the Rock itself turned to gold, the shadows lengthened and sprang out of the forest depths, and across the valley the wooded ridges became waves of rich dark green, fading to softer blue-green in the extreme distance.

We reached the car on the Wundanyi road about 1½ hours later, on nightfall, with me having to carry Susanna 'piggy-back' for the last few hundred yards. Then I returned home and packed for Mount Kenya, but spent the night again in the W's study, after an unsuccessful search for the Crab nebula near Aldebaran, and after a sensational view of the Large Magellanic Cloud, a satellite galaxy of our own Milky Way, and only visible from the Southern Hemisphere.

To Nairobi and Limuru

Early breakfast, many thanks and goodbyes, and I caught the Kireti bus at the usual time. I felt somehow saddened, leaving the Taita Hills after such a wonderful time, and as the hills had been looking so beautiful. Hitch-hiking from Voi with an English / American couple, Bill and Maizie, in a Peugeot, it was a steady haul up to Nairobi, discussing Kenya's history and current affairs, looking hard (unsuccessfully) for a sight of Kilimanjaro. We stopped at a very *safi* (posh) place at Mtito Andei for coffee and *samosas*, then climbed up through the Kamba hills, and on to the Athi plains, to Nairobi – with the Ngong hills and the Aberdares visible ahead. Uhuru Day 1973 celebrations were still very much in evidence. Julia was in the city doing some shopping, and it was arranged she would pick me up from the front of the Hilton at 4.30 pm to take me to St Julian's Guest House. I was thankful to be out of the city and up into the green, wooded, European looking hills near Limuru – all amazingly different from the more familiar terrain east of Nairobi. I slept long and soundly in the Games Room – the very room where I had spent the famous 'first night in a dark continent', that seemed so long ago.

The next day I spent a quiet morning writing letters. After lunch I was driven to the main Limuru road, intending to hitch-hike as far as the Rift Valley escarpment. A Coca-Cola van took me to the main Nairobi to Nakuru road, and an American on his way to Naivasha took me at nearly 80 mph onwards, through the fir forests and gentle hills of Kikuyu country, until quite suddenly a notice warned us: 'You are now Entering the Escarpment'; there was a sharp corner, and then the land dropped away dramatically to 30 miles of arid plain, stretching away towards the Mau escarpment on the other side. I got out at a lay-by and surveyed the scene, as the Nakuru-bound traffic thundered past, or groaned painfully up the steep, twisting slope coming the other way. The valley was spread out – deserted, inhospitable and featureless save for a radio telescope satellite tracking station, like a huge white saucer, in the middle. To the north rose the volcanic shape of Mount Longonot, and beyond it the higher foothills of the Aberdares range. I climbed above the road and walked along a track that followed the escarpment down through the trees. It was hot, dry, dusty, and almost bare of wildlife – a far cry from the rich greens of the Taita Hills. I walked back to the top of the escarpment, after an unsuccessful attempt to hitch-hike. Eventually I got a private bus to take me right to the St Julian's turn. I enjoyed a relaxed evening, with a beautiful sunset spreading through the Ngong Hills.

Ascent of Mount Kenya

Next morning one of the guests from St Julian's kindly gave me a lift into Nairobi, to the door of the CMS Office, where I met Jackie and Howard. We discussed various plans and arrangements, with the result that Jackie and Howard were to shop in Nairobi and then be taken to Mutithi by friends. I hung around for Philip, who arrived at 10.30, and together we walked around Nairobi, did a little shopping, and then got a *matatu* [Peugeot taxi] to take us to 'Philip's turn' beyond Sagana. There was dual carriageway to Thika, the countryside becoming steadily greener and hillier – until, from the crest of a hill, the Mount Kenya plains stretched before us, and the mountain itself rose beyond, the rocky peaks obscured by cloud. A truck took us to Philip's house, which was wood-built and open plan, where we had lunch and repacked. The spoken language was Kikuyu: "*Nikwega, vinawega, tigonawega etc.*" We got a lift back to the turn, and a bus back to Sagana. As we alighted, a bus was waiting for us to take us to Kagio, where a *matatu* was just about to leave for Kandongu! Down long straight evening stretches of hot dust track, cutting further and further into the rice plains. We reached Mutithi Girls High School around 5 pm, and were greeted by Jackie, Rosie, Anne (from Limuru), Stephen and Howard. For a few moments that evening, the cloud parted to reveal the snow-covered, craggy peaks of Mount Kenya.

Based on my diary notes:

Sunday 30 December 1973

18:00, full sun blazing from behind. A golden oriole has just alighted on to a tree immediately in front of me. Across stretches of moorland and forest rise the slopes of Mount Kenya, grey gullies and golden ridges standing out in sharp relief in the late evening light. The upper reaches are once again clothed in cloud, while to the south dramatic shapes of cloud seem to be gathering for a storm. The evening before the Ascent...

It had been a bright morning, with an early start; the entire mountain free of cloud. We took a *matatu* to Kagio, a bus to Sagana, then a bus to Nyeri. On our left the Aberdares came into full view, and by the time we reached Karatina we could see the entire range from south to north. The terrain became progressively greener, hillier and generally more pleasant with increasing height. Nyeri, normally a busy town, looked rather deserted as it was Sunday. We waited in a bus for well over an hour, until at last it left for Naro Moru – mountains, uncultivated moorland, reminiscent of Scotland. Then we had a long walk from the Naro Moru bus stop to the River Lodge, where the caretaker very kindly reshuffled residents in camping huts so that we could be accommodated. The hiring of a

Land Rover and guide was then arranged, and there were some anxious financial calculations to find out how much the expedition would cost in total – the latest estimate was around 150/- each! On an open wood fire we cooked the first of our climbing rations, the peaks of Mount Kenya fully visible in the evening light. We retired early to bed, full of relief and anticipation.

Monday 31 December 1973 – Early breakfast of hot ‘Alpen’ muesli; clear morning. At 8 am we departed Maro Moru in the Land Rover. We stopped at the entrance to the Mount Kenya Game Park, where we paid our park fees and were issued with various warnings and instructions. We then drove through pine forests, which covered the lower slopes, snow-capped peaks rising clear ahead. We began the climb proper at 09:45 – six of us (Philip, Stephen, Howard, Jackie, Anne and myself), and our Guide. We ascended through bamboo forests and trees with branches hanging with ‘old man’s beard’. We encountered some buffalo, but passed them by at a distance, without incident. Once clear of the forest, we commenced our ascent of the ‘vertical bog’ – 1,500 feet of coarse grass and soft mud, set at an inclination of around 30 degrees. Eventually this began to level out and it became less wet underfoot. The grassland contained other vegetation, notably isolated groundsel plants like huge pale green cabbages. Clouds and mist now prevailed, giving us only a vague idea of the peaks, ahead of us and to the left.

We had lunch at the top of the ridge, and then descended into the Teleki Valley. The temperature fell steadily, while we climbed along the bottom of the valley following the course of the icy Naro Moru River, which was fed by two glaciers. We reached Teleki Hut at an altitude of 13,500 feet at 3 pm – a corrugated iron structure with a raised wooden platform covered by foam rubber, providing sleeping room for six. By this time I had a slight headache due to the high altitude. I washed, and read CS Lewis’ *The Voyage of the Dawntrader* beside the river, whose ice-cold waters flowed precipitously over rocks and down gullies. All around us were giant groundsels, giant lobelias and other strange ‘animal-like’ plants, and the Teleki Valley was surrounded by high, rocky slopes, rising up to steep fortress-like cliffs that formed the skyline. Only in the late evening did the cloud clear sufficiently to reveal the mass of rocky peaks of Mount Kenya above the valley ridge. We turned in at sundown, sleeping side by side for warmth. The temperature outside was well below freezing. Little sleep...

Illustrations to follow Chapter 1

Arrival at Nairobi Airport, early morning, Saturday 8 September 1973



Above: My very first day in Africa, St Julian's Guest House, Limuru

Above right: Jonathan playing the guitar, Ian sitting in the back garden at St Julian's

Right: The YSA group outside St Julian's Guest House. I am at the back, at the base of the rainwater tank (8 September 1973)





*Left: Hilton Hotel,
Nairobi*



*Right: Roman
Catholic
Cathedral, Nairobi*



Left: Arrival at Wundanyi (11 September 1973)

*Below right: Tea on the front verndah of the
house, with geraniums in the front garden*

*Below: Mgalu High School, set in the floor of the
valley. Main building, with staff room and library
(far left), Form I (middle) and Form III (right). The
foundations for the new school building can be
seen in the foreground*





Left: Mombasa North Creek, from the CITC compound



Right: Mombasa Anglican Cathedral



Left: View along the front verandah



Right: View towards Rong'e



Plan of the house – sketched in late September 1973



View over Mbale-Dabida District from the first ridge (22 September 1973)



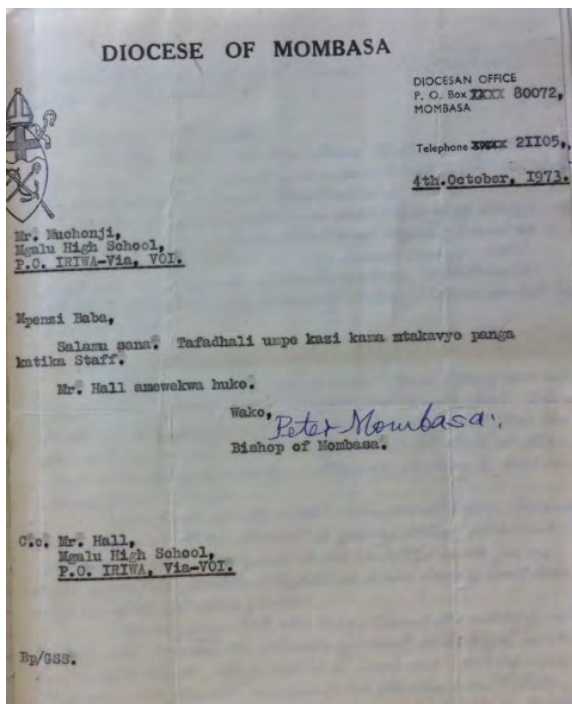
Left: Bridge over the Mdongo-dongo river, during drought

Below left: View from the summit rocks of Ngangao Forest; Andrew, Catharine and Margaret W

Below right: Self at Ngangao Forest, with the township of Werugha and the sharp peak of Yale in the distance, and Susu on the far left (29 September 1973)



Illustrations to follow Chapter 2



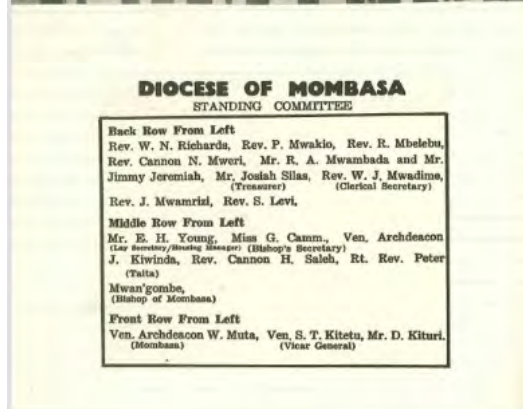
Left: The Bishop's Letter of Appointment, dated 4 October 1973

Right: Diocese of Mombasa, Miss Grace C (secretary) is on the far right of the middle row



Archdeacon Jeremiah K (Archdeacon of the Taita Hills) is on the far left of the front row

Bishop of Mombasa, the Right Reverend Peter Mwan'gombe, is in the middle of the front row



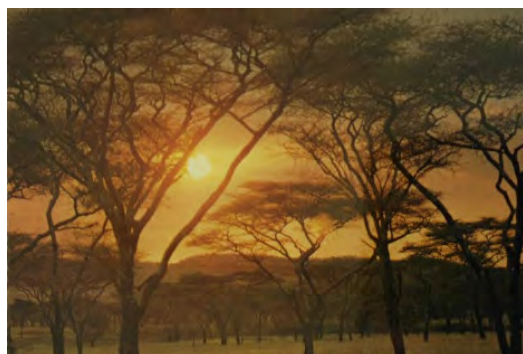
Left: "We then drove across the floating pontoon bridge to Nyali beach..."

Right: Nyali Beach, Mombasa



Left: The famous tusks on Kilindini Street

Right: "Hit the trail for home around half five – a beautiful time for travel, as the sun shone through the palms and flat-topped thorn trees of the coastal plains..."





"on our left the clear blue shape of Kilimanjaro rose above the clouds and the nearby hills – breathtaking as the distant clouds stepped aside to reveal, for a few fleeting moments, the snow-capped peak..." (19 October 1973)

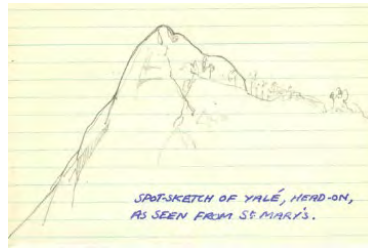


Kenyatta Conference Centre, Nairobi



Houses of Parliament, Nairobi

View of Yale from St Mary's Lushangoni (14 October 1973)



Left: Terienyi House (the W's house)



Right: Mbale Anglican Church

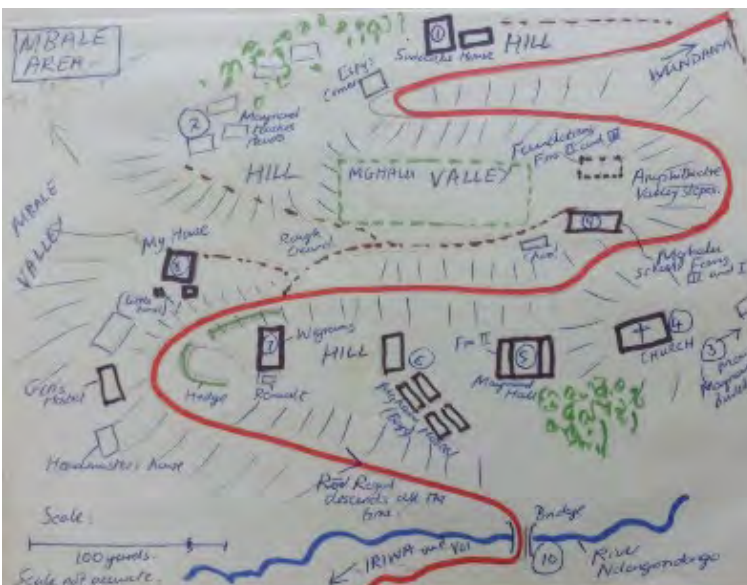


The road to Lushangoni, with the impressive shape of Yale in the background (27 October 1973)

Illustrations to follow Chapter 3



View from the front of the house – on a clear day... and on a misty morning...



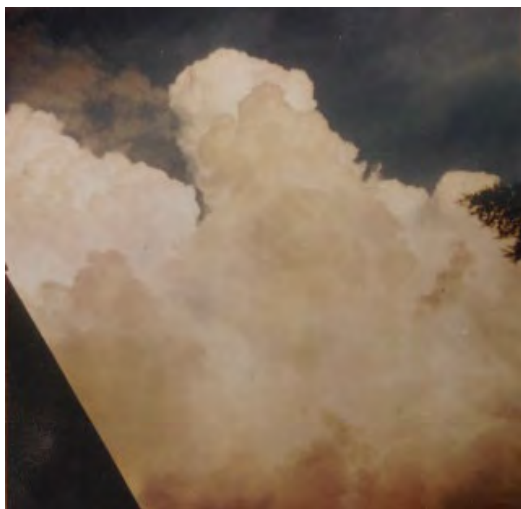
Sketch and map of Mgalu Valley and Maynard Ridge (November 1973)



"The colours after the rain were simply magnificent: rainbows, the soft pink glow of the setting sun on the plains, Sagalla and Kasigau a rich blue in the near distance..."
(17 November 1973)



"...violet Jacarandas and coral-coloured [soft pink] 'Mlungu' trees..." View towards Wusi – historic church built in 1905 on left, Murray High School on right, hills around Wundanyi in the distance...



Storm clouds billowing turbulently towards us over the hills, caught by the last glow of the setting sun



Favourite gum tree, Mgalu valley (November 1973)

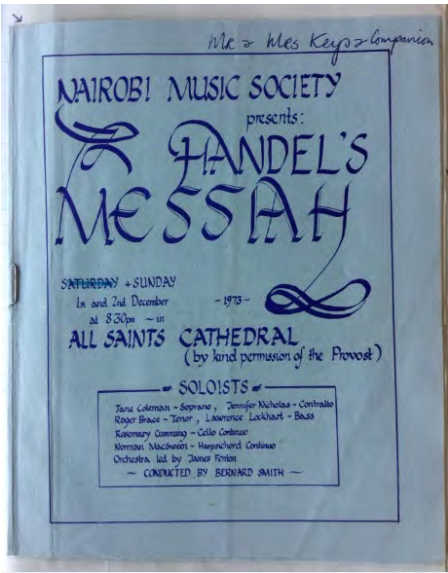


View across Mgalu valley towards Maynard's hall, with the ridge above Iriwa in the background (November 1973)

Illustrations to follow Chapter 4



Panorama of Nairobi skyline from Uhuru Park...



Copy of Messiah Programme

Map of central Nairobi, showing key places visited

Below: Aggrey at Mtito Andei, on the way to Nairobi

Right: Kenya's National Anthem





Nairobi skyline from Uhuru Park...



Old Nairobi



Top of Kenyatta Conference Centre



Nairobi street scene



Modern architecture



Nairobi University...



Right: Ngangao Forest, with the township of Werugha and the sharp peak of Yale in the distance, and Susu on the far left

Below: Kenya Commercial Bank, Wundanyi



Above: View towards Figinyi, Rong'e and Sagala



Left: Voi Railway Station (December 1973)

Right: Gari la moshi, steam engine at Voi





Left: View towards Kasigau from the house at Mbale, Watercolour sketch (9 December 1973)



Right: View towards Vuria (the highest mountain in the Taita Hills) from Yale, Watercolour sketch (11 December 1973)



Views from the top of Wesu and Yale south over Wundanyi and Wesu Hospital, with Susu in the distance



Uhuru Day Celebrations, Wundanyi (12 December 1973)





The CMS group at Wusi – note Andrew and Catharine looking anxiously at Margaret, who was climbing a tree; the O family group is in the distance, with Ken talking to Don S (16 December 1973)



Left: The W children blowing bubbles on Christmas Day – John, Susanna, Margaret



Right: The W family on Christmas Day, with Kate C

The W family on Christmas Day

Back row from left to right: Catharine, Mr W (Andrew's Father), Andrew, me

Front row from left to right: Margaret, Susanna, Mrs W (Andrew's mother), John, Ruth (Andrew's sister)

(25 December 1973)





Entrance to the Mount Kenya National Park (31 December 1973)



Giant groundsel and giant lobelia, Teleki Valley



Mount Kenya peaks from Teleki Valley: From left to right: Batian, Nelian, Point John rock spire, Point Lenana (31 December 1973)



St Julian's Guest House, Limuru (27 December 1973)



Left to right: Philip, Anne, Steve, our guide, Jackie, Howard

CHAPTER 5: MOUNT KENYA, TAVETA AND THE TAITA HILLS

January 1974

Based on notes recorded in my diary:

Tuesday 1 January 1974 – The alarm went off at 03:00, and we had breakfast of hot 'Alpen' muesli, but I felt dizzy and sick. We set out slowly in pitch dark, following the valley floor as far as Mackinders Camp, where we picked up our Guide. It was bitterly cold, ice on the marsh-water, frost underfoot, summit dramatic by starlight – trudge, trudge, trudge – singing Good King Wenceslas and other Christmas carols silently in my head. We left our rucksacks at Rangers Post at the head of the Teleki Valley and then, as the morning light began slowly to replace the darkness, we started the final ascent up the scree. It was slow, arduous work. I began to feel worse; faintness and nausea almost compelling me to turn back. But I revived considerably when, with a conscious and sustained mental effort, I slowed my pace and increased my breathing, averaging a full deep breath for every upward step.

The sunshine breaking on the peaks above was reflected in the opaque blue-green water at the foot of the Lewis Glacier. We came across patches of snow towards the top of the scree at an altitude of about 15,000 feet. We reached the Austrian Hut at 08:30, where we enjoyed our first views over the ridge and to the east, with much of the surrounding plains covered by a layer of cloud below. Behind us, the sun had now filled the Teleki Valley, which curved down and to the right, with the foothills, plains and Aberdares stretching out beyond. We had a brief rest at the Austrian Hut; by now there was full sunshine and it was much warmer. The main peaks of Mount Kenya rose sharp ahead, the cragged pillar of the 'Point John' rock spire like a gigantic cathedral buttress, its sheer sides golden brown with the rising sun, the higher twin peaks of the 'Bishop's Mitre', Batian and Nelian, looming behind – too impressive to describe, and looking virtually impossible to climb. Point Lenana, lower and less dramatic, our objective, rose gently to the right of the Lewis Glacier, with the left side of the ridge bounded by snow. We followed this ridge, partly on rock, partly on snow, passing close to some dramatic ice caves and crevasses. We had several rest stops to admire the view, the climb ending with a long steep ascent over snow to the summit at 16,533 feet.

09:45 – fortunately there was no cloud forming. The view all around was incredible, but particularly the cragged shape of the Point John rock spire towering over the glacier; the Aberdares, and visible through the saddle, the outline of the Mau escarpment on the other side of the Rift Valley, the NFD (Northern Frontier District) stretching to the north, with a possible view of the Matthews Ranges in the far distance. Mount Kilimanjaro was not visible, but its position was clearly marked by the gathering of clouds on the horizon to the south-east, over a continuous layer of cloud cover, as if seen from an aeroplane. To the east, immediately below us, stretched the vast area of the Mount Kenya foothills – moorland, tarns, cliffs, gorges; and then entire ranges of further peaks.

We left the summit after brief New Year celebrations and photographs. We were anxious to begin our descent, as most of us were feeling the adverse effects of high altitude. We descended rapidly, losing the sunshine as clouds began to form. I had a severe headache, and felt terrible on reaching the valley, but I managed to stagger unsteadily to the hut, arriving there at about 14:00. I lay down immediately, suffering from a headache and nausea, which only cleared after a couple of aspirins and two hours of the most solid sleep. I awoke at 17:00, with the sun streaming in through the window. It took Jackie a long time to convince me that it was only 5 pm, and not 5 am the next morning! Our dinner consisted of soup, beef and baked beans. Early bed – tired, and slightly unwell, but glad we had achieved our objective. It was difficult to sleep once again.

Wednesday 2 January 1974 – We were grateful to get up in daylight; breakfast consisted of cold Alpen. By the time we were ready to leave, sunshine had filled the Teleki Valley, making our journey warm and comfortable. We followed the same route back, over the ridge and down the vertical bog. The weather was very clear, and we enjoyed superb

views of the peaks above and the plains below. We made good time, and reached the bamboo forest and Land Rover at 11:00 am. We spent the afternoon relaxing and washing, and cooked dinner of corned beef-in-oxtail soup, macaroni and peas, on an open wood fire, as our gas cylinders had run out. We had drinks in the Naro Moru Lodge bar afterwards.

Return to Mbale

The next morning we enjoyed our last view of Mount Kenya, as the sun rose from behind the peaks, and we were on the road by half past eight. We waited at Naro Moru village for a bus, or a lift, and after half an hour an Asian took us all to Nyeri at breakneck speed in an open van. At Nyeri Anne, Howard and I caught a bus to Sagana, a distance of 40 km – a journey that took more than 2 hours. The bus was stationary at Nyeri for $\frac{3}{4}$ hour with the engine running and occasionally revving – rrRRmm! rrRRmm! rrRRmm! – no regard for the world petrol shortage! We waited at Sagana until at 1 o' clock, when the District Medical Officer kindly picked us up and took us not only to Kagio, but right down the dust track to Mutithi – which was certainly out of his way!

We had a quick lunch and repack at Mutithi, said goodbye and thanks to Steve and Jackie for all their hard work and organisation, and hit the trail again in the early afternoon, this time foot-slogging our way up to Kagio, as there was no transport available. It was a hot, long, thirsty walk, in silence. Nearing Kagio an hour later, we flagged down a *matatu* which took us to the main road just in time to catch the Embu bus back to Nairobi. It was a long bus journey via Murang'a and Thika, with the sun ahead of us all the way. We reached the country bus station at Nairobi just on 6 pm, and walked to the Hilton Hotel, where Anne rang her father, who picked us up and took us to their home in Limuru. Dinner, bath and bed – in civilisation!

The next day, Friday, Anne's father took me into Nairobi, where I caught the Machakos bus. I reached the turn-off by 10 am, and after a ten minute wait, an African Seventh Day Adventist, on his way from Kisumu to Mombasa, picked me up, taking me as far as Voi, where I caught the OTC bus to Wundanyi, arriving there at half past five.

So I returned to Mbale as the sun began to set and the hills looked greener than ever – but several shocks awaited me. Firstly, there had been no progress whatsoever on the school building. Secondly, Jackson had taken my request for him to *panga* [scythe] the grass surrounding the house with a little too much enthusiasm: he had succeeded in removing most of the bushes outside the verandah, including *all* the flowering geraniums – a precaution, he said, against snakes! Thirdly, I received a very sad note from Thomas M, asking me why I never came to Taveta as promised – as he had invited me to visit his family during the Christmas holidays, and I had accepted his invitation at the time. There were valid reasons, of course, but I felt thoroughly ashamed that I had not made more effort to find his address, so that at least I could have written to tell him I was unable to come. However, he kindly extended an open invitation, and as there was the prospect of a week's extra holiday, I saw that there might be an opportunity to spend the following week with him at Taveta...

'Africa kabisa' (five days in Taveta)

On Sunday (6 January 1974), after a long church service at Mbale, I was just in the middle of writing home, when Peter M appeared at the door. He was just back from a Christian camp for girls at Mount Meru, near Kilimanjaro, and he told me that Mgalu would not reopen till the following Monday January 14th, so I decided to leave for Taveta the next day. That evening I went up to the W's, and Andrew lent me a mosquito net, and gave me some valuable advice and directions concerning Taveta, including a contact (Jacob K) who would, Andrew was sure, help me to find Meshack, Thomas' father...

The next five days were recorded in detail in my diary, and the following account is largely based on those diary notes. I was wise not to take my camera to Taveta, as it might have provoked unwanted attention, and in any case I had run out of film after the Mount Kenya expedition. But I had some time on my hands while I was there, so I took my sketch pad and some pencils, and did some sketching.

Monday 7 January 1974 – up at 5 am, and I was rewarded with a superb view of the Southern Cross, with Alpha and Beta Centauri close beside her. I left the house at dawn, taking the Mwanguvi short cut, and leaving Wundanyi on the OTC bus close on 7. Fantastic views from the road – the sun rising above a layer of thin white cloud below us, palm trees silhouetted in the foreground. I alighted at Mwatate and walked down the tarmac road towards Taveta, hoping for a lift. At a time when I was fairly struggling with ki-Swahili, trying to get my language into better shape, a car with a European-looking couple happened to come by and stop; the driver got out.

“Unakwenda Taveta?” [Are you going to Taveta] I asked, in my ‘best’ Swahili. “Pardon? Est-ce que vous voulez voyager en Tanzanie?” Help! My French began to flow at last, though for a time I kept saying “Ndio” instead of “Oui” and “Hapana” instead of “Non”. It turned out that *ils viennent de retourner en Afrique, après des vacances en France, et ils voyageait de Mombasa en Burundi traversant par Tanzanie. Ils étaient passés la nuit en voiture* [they had just returned to Africa after holidays in France, and they were travelling from Mombasa to Burundi via Tanzania. They had spent the night in the car.]

It was a swift journey past the enigmatic Salt Lick Game Lodge, and we left the last of the Taita Hills behind. Almost immediately the snow-covered peak of Mount Kilimanjaro lifted above the horizon, and finally came into full view – very dramatic, and so ‘big’ that it threw all the surrounding hills and landscape out of all proportion. On our journey we encountered elephants (“*drôle de nez*”), antelopes, gazelles and innumerable highly-coloured birds.

Taveta. I contacted Jacob K (though that was not actually his name). After *chai* and omelette at the back of his shop, he was kind enough to run me through the sisal estates to Riata Kitobo in his van. I remember the scene at the back of his shop – a young teenage girl was holding her baby brother, bouncing him up and down on her knee, rocking him and making ‘swishy’ noises. There were some other teenage girls present. Jacob knew Meshak M (Thomas’ father) well, and so he took me right to the door of his house.

I entered *Africa kabisa* (total Africa). Thomas greeted me, and when I said I was very sorry about the delay, he seemed to think nothing of it and said, “Just tek it easy, sir” – the motto for the next few days. We had lunch with Thomas’ ‘cousin’ in a mud-wattle and thatch house across the compound. After a siesta and a good wash, I was shown around the Riata *shamba*, as we forged our way through maize, rice fields, banana, mango and citrus plantations, and fields of sugar-cane in the afternoon heat – molested by countless flies, but somehow feeling that I was ‘in the heart of Africa’ for the first time.

Heat. Plantations. People. Dust. The North Pare Mountains rising full ahead. *Chai* by the quart. I met the other members of Thomas’ family – his father and mother were both ardent Christians, full of “*Bwana kaso!*” [Praise the Lord!], and “*Alleluyah, ndugu!*” Terrific. I also met Thomas’ brother’s wife, his nephews and his nieces, five cows, six calves, innumerable chickens and one *pusi* [cat]. Dinner consisted of stewed chicken, served at 9:30 pm. Bed under a mosquito net.

Tuesday 8 January 1974 – I rose early in order to sketch Kilimanjaro, when the mountain was reasonably clear of cloud, to an appreciative audience of children. *Chai* at 07:30 and breakfast at 9.00 am. Thomas and I then took bicycles and, having stopped first to look at the Church and Primary School at Riata Kitobo – walls in precarious condition, great chunks liable to come away in your hand – we made for the famous ‘Njoro Springs’. We entered the forest, green and silent, and descended to a rapid stream of cool water, fresh and clear, coming – it appeared – from under the tenuous roots of a huge tree. We looked closely at three such springs, in the third of which an old man was washing himself. The waters come from the snows of Kilimanjaro, and travel a great distance

underground, until they emerge at Njoro Springs. The name 'Kilima-Njaro' is actually formed from the words '*kilima*' (the Swahili for 'hill') and Njoro (the name of the river).

We then proceeded by bicycle along the Voi-Moshi railway line to the Kenya / Tanzania international border. I sat against a wooden post, with half of me in Kenya and the other half in Tanzania! Then I took my first walk in Tanzania, across a *shamba* to the nearest trees. I remember a very old man, with almost no teeth, pointing at the ground and the trees and saying, excitedly "*Iko Tanthania! Iko Tanthania!*" [This is Tanzania, right here!]

We returned for a late lunch and a long siesta. I sketched the front of the house in the afternoon, and as the sun declined I took a walk with Thomas' cousin in the fruit *shamba*, conversing at length in ki-Swahili, beginning at last to get the noun and adjective prefixes right. I taught him a little English, at his request. Thomas' father cooked us an 'Englishman's dinner' of omelette, fried tomatoes and onions, *ugali* and beans – very nice it was too. After sundown the moon was full and high, the air warm – a scene of mud-huts, moonlit dust and sisal poles, beneath the ever-present shape of snow-covered Kilimanjaro.

Wednesday 9 January 1974 – The next few days crystallized in my memory as a series of impressions, rather than a succession of events in strict chronological order. Memories of long hot walks around the heavily irrigated *shambas*, pursuing agricultural conversations in Swahili; meals of *ugali* and boiled eggs; endless *chai*; flies; the smell of wood-smoke; the screaming of children; fitful nights recovering from the day's heat. It struck me that this surely is the background of so many African secondary school students. A compound of primitive dwellings. No rain for four years. No books, no opportunity for learning and study. The simple, rural life – milking a few cows each day, harvesting cotton and selling it at the local market for a family living – a life-style attractive in its sheer simplicity?

Cycle to Taveta market. Very, very hot. The combination of wind and fine, gritty dust was another factor that added to our discomfort. For periods of several seconds the entire surroundings would disappear in a storm-cloud of dust. Thomas and I visited the historic Maho Church – one of the oldest churches in Kenya, for Taveta was the first inland missionary settlement. The church was octagonal in shape and set upon a small hill, with large windows on all eight sides commanding superb views over the township of Taveta and the surrounding countryside. I recall inviting Thomas to pray with me. I prayed for him, for his salvation – I'm not sure how genuine his response was, but he seemed appreciative and he thanked me. Eternity alone will show what fruit has been borne as a result. We returned via a sisal factory, where we saw the pointed leaves of sisal enter a huge machine and emerge as the fine white fibres from which sisal rope is made. The manufacturer's name plate on the water pump engine made my heart leap: 'Ruston-Bucyrus, Lincoln, England'! We also saw the Mombasa-Moshi Express Train standing in the station and were shown the engine – a school boy's dream! Evening not feeling well.

Thursday 10 January 1974 – A day of much sensation, and yet the day which took me ill, as it involved a 25 mile cycle ride in the sun, which Thomas' father described as "*jua kali sana*" [a very 'sharp' or fierce sun]. Ten miles the other side of Taveta rose what any casual observer would consider to be a very ordinary-looking hill, low and smooth – covered only with sparse bush, and otherwise as arid as the plains in which it was situated. We struggled to the top of this hill, and it was there that we were met by an incredible, wholly unexpected sight: surrounded by wooded cliffs hundreds of feet high – a huge lake of dazzling dark blue! Lake Chala, the third deepest lake in the world – the remains of a volcanic crater, filled almost to the brim with water. We made our way down to the water's edge, where we saw some fishermen putting out against the wind in little log rafts. We climbed up to the rim again, and I sketched part of the lake, with the peaks of Mawenzi in the background. At midday we cycled back, downwind and downhill. I collapsed into a couple of Fanta's [bottled orange fizzy drinks] at the Asian shop in Taveta. Little else, as I was feeling wretched.

Friday 11 January 1974 – Farewells and many thanks. I left the house by bike, with my rucksack strapped on to my back, accompanied by Thomas. After a mile the rear tyre valve broke, so I had to walk (fast) along the railway into town, arriving just in time to catch the Moshi-Mombasa bus. I said goodbye to Thomas, and then proceeded towards the hills. I was fortunate to get a lift in an open van from Mwatate to Wundanyi – such a

relief, as the sun seemed so much more gentle in the Taita Hills. Some English missionaries serving in Uganda were at that time staying with the W's, and Andrew W had just heard that the comet Kohoutek had been sighted in Nairobi the evening before, north-east of Venus. His idea was for all of us to go up to Ngangao Forest to see it...

Comet Kohoutek

It was a fabulous evening walk, watching birds – the Taita White-eye (exclusive to these hills), kites, falcons, and buzzards spiralling in front of the Ngangao rocks. The plains over which I had just travelled were spread out towards the now familiar North Pare Mountains, and to the conical shape of Kilimanjaro – the most dramatic view of the mountain I had seen, as from the Taita Hills the two peaks are in line, and the mountain assumes a truly volcanic shape – like a shallower version of Mount Fuji in Japan. And as the sky reddened in the west, the mountain took on an 'other-worldly' appearance, recalling scenes from CS Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia. There were two palm trees silhouetted against the sky, with Venus, bright as ever, framed between them. We climbed through the forest to the top – shafts of orange light breaking through the gloom of the trees. The first car party returned home around 7:15 pm, as the children were tired, and there seemed no hope of seeing Kohoutek. Indeed it was not until after 8 pm, when it was completely dark, that Andrew found, through his binoculars, what appeared to be a blurred star. And as we watched, almost imperceptibly, the comet's tail began to fan out behind, like the wake of a small boat on still water... We made tracks for home half an hour later, after seeing an African civet which ran across our path.

The next day was Saturday, but I felt too ill to do much. Andrew kindly drove me up to Wundanyi to cash a cheque, and to collect Christmas mail from England – four slide films for the camera, a slide previewer, a notebook, a diary, a wall hanging, and some ginger fudge. The following day, Sunday, I did not go to church, as I was still not feeling well. I spent the morning helping Don re-categorise the school library, and spent a relaxed evening with the W's, playing some Badminton, looking at slides with the viewer, and having an early night.

In Search of the Mountain

Poem written about a year later, at Cambridge

Drawn by instinct to the forest edge

pushing westwards through cool jungle

I catch faintest whispers, stirring the crests of pine;

strange voices, receding from twilight avenues of pine,

richly carpeted; swift footfall, silent

Dense light searches primeval depths;

I sense the ancient magic, arrested

in each tree and fern and forest flower

Fantastic roots that curve and fall

prostrate before ancestral trees;

proud as chieftains they rise in zenith,

crowned by highest branches that embrace,

and weave themselves a vaulting for the jungle sky;

and other trees I saw, their glory passed,

and now whose splendour slept,

embalmed in moss, and scented ferns
 and lichens hung like stalactites, glistening;
 deep crimson orchids, mauve and purest white
 breathed incense strange and sweet...

Like a child waking from a dream
 I sense the forest open,
 the clamour of magic stilled;
 through heather gaunt against the burning west
 striving
 over smooth rock bright as bronze
 wary of silence... Summit

On highest peaks
 last embers catch
 in shimmerings of distant snow

Still the forest climbed, and steep
 as on I sped – through glades
 that flowed in cataracts of wild flowers;
 anemone and aconite,
 bright flames of saffron, scarlet, gold,
 tumbled like a mystic garden
 in a sacred dynasty

Alone, lost
 above huge and empty plains
 watching the last sun surrender
 blood-red upon the ashen plains
 I search, I strain
 till, beyond the shadows, rising
 above the gathering darkness, climbing
 with colossal wings outstretched
 in perfect symmetry
 the Mountain;
 immense, magnificent, remote

And as I gaze, entranced
 the visions fade
 and night advancing
 like an ocean
 carries them away...

The new school year

(from 'The Real Africa', written a few years later)

14 January 1974 – The first day of a new year at Mgalu High School. Peter M, back now as Headmaster, took morning assembly, opening the term with Psalm 103:

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name!
 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,
 Who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,
 Who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
 Who satisfies you with good as long as you live, so that your life youth is renewed like the eagle's (Psalm 103 v 1 to 5).

A wonderful psalm of praise to God – for his goodness, his steadfast love and faithfulness.

And from the very beginning there was a perceptible change in the atmosphere and general quality of life at the school. The complement of staff had changed radically; many of the hard drinkers of the previous term had left, and we were joined by three very nice young ladies (sixth form leavers): Jacinta, Philicia and Grace. But to begin with the new regime meant hard work – getting the wheels turning smoothly once again – and the steady instilling of discipline into the school was a slow and painful task.

Later on, when the primary school results were out, the Form I's arrived (with double streaming), the time-table was redrafted – leaving me with a full quota of periods and a wide range of subjects to teach, and we all began to work to full capacity as a team – like a sailing ship that lies becalmed, when suddenly a fair breeze springs up, the sails billow out, and at once the ship begins to make way, surging swiftly through the sea...

New headmaster and new teachers

From a letter to my parents, written from Mbale, Wednesday 16 January 1974:

Just to say that the term has started, and the school curriculum is now fully under way. Peter M is the new Headmaster, and it is incredible to see what a difference he has made to the school already! Yesterday, all those who arrived in the morning later than 07:40 were given extra work to do at the end of the day; and students without a full first deposit of school fees, in cash, were sent home immediately and told not to return until they had the money! The effect on the general discipline of the school has been remarkable. I think all the students now know that Mr M means business! The atmosphere in the staff room has also so far been completely different – improved beyond measure. Of last term's staff, only Crispin remains. George has given up teaching, and Aggrey has not yet returned. (We still do not know whether he will, or not, but we have found that the teaching curriculum is able to function quite adequately without his being here.)

We have three new lady teachers – Jacinda, Philicia and Grace – they are all very nice. We also have a new Biology teacher called Jared. There are seven teachers (including Peter) for five forms, though at the moment we have no Form I's, because (a) the CPE (Certificate of Primary Education) results are not yet out, so that the secondary schools cannot make their selections; and (b) the buildings are not yet finished, although some progress is being made again at last. When our numbers are complete (probably early to mid-February) we shall all be teaching between 30 and 35 periods a week. My subjects could not be more radically different from those of last year. I'll be teaching Mathematics for Form IV (coaching for EACE), and Forms IA and IB (new SMP syllabus), Physics for

Forms III and IV, Religious Education (RE) for Form IV (as last term), and Chemistry for Form IA. Chemistry will be very basic, but probably useful for me, as I may well be meeting Chemistry ideas in my Engineering course at Cambridge. So I have a fairly full teaching program, barring extra-curricular activities. At present much time has been taken studying the syllabuses, compiling schemes of work, and ordering text books.

Also, two pieces of good news: one is that I'm feeling well once more, making all the difference to my outlook on life, after really quite some time feeling lousy – an inevitable price I think for my experiences at Taveta. Secondly, the night before last saw one of the heaviest falls of rain, accompanied by wind, for a long time – the result of much praying at Mbale Church on Sunday! The countryside is green and fresh once more, though the storms did bring some problems. That night I had a veritable river coursing through the main hallway, with water coming in through the back door and going out through the kitchen. The S's had similar problems. In fact Don – with his characteristic dry sense of humour – remarked "Our house now has all the conveniences of the modern city dwelling: running water in every room!" Don, incidentally, is now in charge of the Administration of Diocesan Schools. At the moment he is doing a lot of the administration work here at Mgalu. My December salary arrived yesterday, Hurrah! – with many apologies from Miss Grace C, the Australian missionary who works at the Diocesan Office in Mombasa. So I was able to go to Wundanyi this morning briefly, to draw some cash, pay various bills, and generally feel straightened out...

Back to teaching...

I recall the first two weeks of the new term as a series of impressions:

One morning during the first week back there was a real stampede among the latecomers, all of them running as hard as they could while the bell was ringing for Morning Assembly! I took my first Maths lesson with Form IV, discussing Standard Form Notation.

At the end of that first week, the Christian Union held its first meeting of the year. There was plenty of singing, the familiar songs beginning to take on new meaning as I began to understand the Swahili. Francis talked about the Kisumu Conference. Apparently General Idi Amin 'dropped in' by helicopter on one of the open air healing services! Peter M talked about the camp at Kaga Girls' High School, Meru.

On Sunday I attended a somewhat 'arduous' service at Mbale Church. I left after some 2½ hours, which was as much time as I could afford, let alone stand! The Padre explained some 'arithmetic' concerning fund-raising for the nearby Choke Church. Also Samuel M – with a lack of both tact and wisdom – rebuked Mgalu for misbehaviour during church services, thus making the school a public example. I found this hard to understand, as this was the very first Sunday of term!

That evening I took a walk up on to the ridge with the W's, once again enjoying the soft light on the green *shambas*. We made for a prominent rock half way up the ridge, bright flowers taking on a luminous intensity against the dark green background of foliage as the light began to fail. Peter called in to say that Don had returned from Mombasa, having injured his arm falling off a motorcycle which he was learning to ride; and that Aggrey had been seen, and was due to report back at Mgalu.

So, the following Tuesday, who should turn up but Aggrey! He was in good form, though he had been through quite a lot – his wife Hellen had been very ill, but had now recovered, but sadly his grandfather had died the previous Friday.

The next morning there was an earth tremor at 05:30 – a sustained rumbling and slight vibration, and a small piece of plaster from my bedroom wall fell away. Aggrey's arrival meant yet another rearrangement of subject allocation in the Science faculties. The result, as far as I was concerned, was that I was now teaching Form III Maths instead of Form IV, as the former were starting a new course (EACE). Also, I would only be teaching Form IA SMP Maths, thus lightening my load to some 25 periods a week – which I thought was a good optimum.

Letter to the British Councils, 28 January 1974

Circular letter to the British Councils, Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu, which I wrote on the school type-writer from Mgalu High School, Mbale, dated 28 January 1974:

Dear Sir, I am writing to you from a secondary school which trains students for the EACE examinations (Form IV). It is a Harambee School, which means that its financial requirements are met only by fees paid by the students themselves. It is located in a rural area, 130 miles from the nearest large town. The students who attend this school all come from rural backgrounds, which means that their families rely entirely on the produce of their *shambas* both to feed themselves, and to pay for their children's education – at both secondary and primary schools.

Once again the rains have been poor, so that it has been even harder this year for families to find enough money to meet their children's educational requirements. Thus, as I'm sure you will appreciate, it is difficult to ask students to pay an extra fee, necessary for the building of an adequate school library. Nevertheless, the importance of such a library for students who are being trained, both for EACE and in the hope that they will become mature citizens of Kenya, cannot be overemphasized.

I am asking therefore, in the light of such a situation, whether you would be in a position to make a voluntary donation to the Mgalu School Library, of books which you would consider suitable for the academic enrichment of their minds.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully, Mr A M D Hall (English Master).

News of the new term

From a letter to my parents, written from Mbale, Wednesday 30 January 1974:

It was lovely to get your letter first thing on Monday morning! How interesting that the Editor for the Louth Standard would like an article from me! "And this is our East African correspondent..." or should it be "Adrian Hall, News-at-ten, Mbale-Dabida"? Anyway, I'd love to write an article. "Africa – personal impressions", an account of life and work here under various headings, e.g. (1) The YSA scheme; (2) the Harambee schools of Kenya; (3) Mgalu High School; (4) Taita – geology and fauna; (5) the *watu* (waTaita), people of the Taita Hills; (6) the English in Kenya; (7) East African safaris... or something like that. Is there any date the editor would like it in by? I'd rather have plenty of time and do it well!

Life at the moment runs on a tight schedule. Don't worry about my financial upheavals. My situation has been greatly improved, and I think I should learn to battle these things out on my own. Yesterday Peter came back from Mombasa with our January salaries IN CASH. And mine has been increased to 600/-. 'They' say however that now no staff houses are to be free, and that therefore I will have to pay rent on the house; but I'm pretty sure that the CMS/YSA regulations cover me against this. I'll ask Mr W for the letter of appointment, which goes into my conditions of employment. Aggrey has responded well, and having cleared his debts with a local shop a week ago, also cleared his debt with the W's today. Tomorrow (31st) we have agreed to do a 'reckoning up' for the month, as I have been buying all the food, and I think everything will be squared up then. A very full and busy week, really settling into the new term:

Thursday: I had another sudden bout of sickness, but it only lasted a day. I haven't had any trouble since, but I think it's a fact that has to be faced – that in Africa, however careful you are, sickness is never very far away.

Friday: we had a massive staff meeting, as a result of Peter having just attended the School Committee meeting. Results:

- (1) Yet another rearrangement of the time-table, in order to level out the teaching loads. I am now teaching English for Form IV (at my own request), giving me an extra 9 periods, and pushing up my total to 34 periods per week. So, English Form IV, Maths Form III, Maths Form IA, Physics Form III, Chemistry Form IA, RE

Form IV and Current Affairs Form III! Thus I am likely to be *very* busy in the weeks ahead.

(2) Regardless of the state of the new building – on which there has been little noticeable progress since Dec 10th – the Form I's are arriving on February 4th. By order of the Bishop. *Bas*. "Accommodation? Committee's problem!" So, the arrangement is that we are hijacking some form rooms from Maynard Primary School for hostel accommodation and classrooms; and there's to be a reshuffle in Maynard Hall (which is a Diocesan property). We are also occupying the Committee Room, next door to the W's. The new building may not be ready till next term, though some progress is beginning to be made.

(3) Appointments. Aggrey is appointed as Deputy Headmaster, which should do him a lot of good. So far he's shaping up to it well. Crispin, Hostel Master, a post which he is reluctant to take; Grace, Hostel Mistress; Gerald, Games Master; Philicia, Games Mistress; Jacinta, Stationery Mistress. I retain my post as Library Master. On Monday I wrote to the British Councils at Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu asking for donations of books to the library. The school is to be divided into three houses: Nakuru, Magadi and Chala (named after famous Kenyan lakes). I have been appointed House-master of Nakuru!

Saturday: long meeting at the W's for leaders and sponsors of Christian Unions throughout the Taita district, entitled 'Leaders' Training Day for KSCF – Taita Area', as Mr W is the KSCF representative for the district. There were eight CU's represented: Mgalu, Kituri, Mwangeka, Mwaghogho, Voi, Aggrey, St Mary's, Murray and Kenyatta. Long and useful discussions, mainly to do with CU programs for the year, and ways they could be improved.

Monday: Peter was down in Mombasa for the Form I selection, in the light of the primary school CPE results. He returned yesterday with books for the school, including the course book for SMP Mathematics Form I – real efficiency! I must say, Peter is terrific – maintaining a cheerful attitude, while working very hard indeed. I've had a look through the SMP course book, and I see that Chapter 1 starts straightaway with the Binary System, and goes on with fascinating studies on sets, Venn diagrams, topology etc., which should be *very* interesting indeed. I'm teaching both the modern SMP Maths and the traditional Mathematics, at the same time, to Form III – at the moment we are struggling over indices and logarithms. The atmosphere is good – friendly and cooperative.

I threw my first brick yesterday – literally. I was invited by the *fundhi* [artisan, builder] to shovel 'concrete' into a wooden mould, press it down, remove the mould, and hey presto! I've laid a brick! It was rather like making a sand castle. If the new building falls down, whose fault will it be? Last night Aggrey and I were invited up to the W's for dinner, one reason being that Aggrey had never yet tasted traditional English fare: roast beef, Yorkshire pudding, roast potatoes etc. He seemed very intrigued and impressed. Afterwards we played Scrabble.

A little more rain this week. The weather should be hot and building up for the monsoon, but at the moment it's really quite cold still – very chilly in the evening and early morning. I've found that after five months in Africa my attitude to rain has been completely Africanised. The sun is the killer, drying the streams, scorching the young crops. *Jua kali sana* – nasty old sun! Rain brings blessing, coolness – the countryside looking fresh and green, revived by a heavy fall of rain that enables the crops to grow and the farmers to prosper. Biblical metaphors take on new meaning – I now know what it means when it talks about the 'early and latter rains'. So when I return in August, after a typical English summer, and on Saturday afternoon it begins, as is customary, to rain, don't be too worried or surprised if I rush out on to the lawn, getting soaked, leaping wildly and waving my arms in the air!

Anyway, it was lovely to hear your news. Your description of a "quiet gardening weekend" really brought me a touch of home...

“Akasema Simeoni...”

From my diary notes:

Thursday 31 January 1974 – Situational composition for Form IV about the Marathon race – very topical, as Ben Jipcho [a Kenyan] won several medals at the Commonwealth Games [held in Christchurch, New Zealand]. Christian Union meeting, and the singing really went with a swing. “*Akasema Simeoni; nitakwenda kwa amani...*” [And Simeon said, ‘I will go in peace’ – the Swahili version of the Nunc Dimittis.]

In the evening, Jackson returned from Wundanyi, drunk. It was the first time I had seen him in such a state. Not a pleasant sight. Very sad.

CHAPTER 6: TEACHING IN THE TAITA HILLS

February 1974

The first week of February

From my diary notes:

Friday 1 February 1974 – a hard day's teaching. Aggrey cleared his debt of 130/-. As I was marking essays on The Battle of Marathon, I came across the following:

"The Battle of Marathon Race was being held by the heroic Greeks. Their battle was to give up their lives to save the Athens and all Greece..."

"The Battle of Marathon took place from 490 BC to 192 BC..." [that is, an interval of 298 years!]

"He ran twenty-six miles which is three hundred and eighty five yards..."

Saturday 2 February 1974 – Morning walk to Wundanyi, taking some photographs on the way. I did not go to the bank, as the crowds were phenomenal. I gave some private tuition to two Form III students, to enable them to catch up with the class's Mathematics. Worked busily.

Sunday 3 February 1974 – Holy Communion at Mbale, taken by Andrew W. I managed to follow the course of the sermon in Swahili, which was about the Eucharist. Evening *safari* to Figinyi, following the road to Choke. I attempted to climb 'Kulal', but it was covered with dense pine forest and there was time only to contour round until I found the upward path – so the ascent had to be postponed for another occasion. The countryside was looking truly beautiful in the late evening sunshine.

Monday 4 February 1974 – Arrival of Form Is, and a very warm welcome to them all! We managed to persuade the Headmaster of Maynard Primary School to vacate two classrooms so that members of Mwashigadi Hostel could move their beds down there. Form IA was installed in the former Form III; Form IB was in the former Mwashigadi Hostel; Form III moved to the Committee Room [iron-clad structure resembling a garage or large shed]; the examinations forms were unaffected. Peter had put an order for desks for Form I's while he was still at Kituri at the end of last term. He went up on Friday to see if they were ready, but they had 'forgotten'! So Form I's had to sit on forms borrowed from Mbale Church.

Tuesday 5 February 1974 – Full day's teaching. Peter came for lunch. Amusing conversation concerning the now world-famous 'Mgalu Mango-eating Society'. Its motto: MHS – not Mgalu High School but *Maembe Husaidia Sana* [mangoes help very much], the Swahili equivalent of 'a mango a day keeps the District Medical Officer away'! The reward for outstanding loyalty is the ORM (EA) or The Order of the Rotten Mango (East Africa). When I return to the UK, I am to be Overseas Representative (London Branch)! Fellowship with the W's in the evening. We listened to an American tape of gospel singing by the 'Jesus people' [this would have been the 'Come Together' musical].

Wednesday 6 February 1974 – [referred to later as 'the day I forgot I was white']. The Schools Inspector, Mr N arrived at Mgalu to conduct his inspection. It was not very encouraging – in fact, it was acutely embarrassing, as he listened in on my English lesson with Form IV. A student came in late and sat down at her desk – thus (unfortunately) displacing the person of Mr N, so that he had to stand. I took no particular notice and continued with the lesson, tolerating as few further interruptions as possible. Then without warning, a high-pitched, squeaky voice rang out across the classroom: "Thank you, Mr Hall, so nice of you to offer me a chair!" I had been too interested in the lesson... In the staff room afterwards (when the Inspector had gone), we kept making jokes about him – but I kept thinking, what was so strange about him? Then it dawned – he was white! Then I thought, but I'm also white... no, I had forgotten, I felt more at home being black!

Thursday 7 February 1974 – Chemistry Form IA: experiments to demonstrate the properties of elements. These included burning a piece of magnesium ribbon with a candle. The whole thing flared up in my hand! The tweezers scorched – so I let go of them. Then the brightly burning ribbon fell on to the newspaper that was covering the desk, immediately setting the paper on fire and burning its way into the desk at the same time. So much for Chemistry! Evening Assembly was also dramatic. After Peter had given the school a thorough dressing down on discipline (i.e. stealing, drinking, smoking, immorality and bullying of Form I students), those who had been bullied were asked to come out in front and indicate the culprits. Three were chosen, all Form II ‘lads’; they came out in front and were caned on the spot [“a rod for the backs of fools”]. This gave the school a very sobering effect. However, one had the impression that it was done not out of anger, but out of love and discipline [see Hebrews 12 v 1 to 3].

Mount Kulal, Student service and Grace’s birthday

The following weekend was eventful. After a busy Saturday morning’s work, I went on *safari* in the afternoon, making, at last, a successful attempt at ‘Mount Kulal’ [see note on 4 November 1973 for this name]. It was a real struggle to get through the forests to the summit, from which (as the forest was still very dense) a view of no more than 20 feet in any direction could be obtained. Then I struggled down the mountain, and it was like trying to find my way out of a snake-infested maze! There was fabulous scenery, however, once I was below the tree line – down into the dark steep sides of a valley, with the sun ahead cresting the tops of trees with rich yellows and greens, the contours of hills and ridges brought suddenly into sharp relief in a soft horizontal sun.

On Sunday we held the third of our Mgalu student services. Francis M, the Chairman of the Christian Union, preached a really sound sermon – a very difficult thing for him to have done. It was also Grace’s birthday, and she invited us all up to her house – the ‘Helicopter’, so named because of the steep flight of steps which led to the front door – for tea. Aggrey rolled in, mildly drunk, and got a bit annoyed when, after half an hour of disconnected monologue, he was accused of being a ‘chatter box’! However, it was a pleasant occasion, and as many of us remarked afterwards, the first time in Mgalu’s recent history that all staff members had been together on non-school business. This was very encouraging for us all, as it helped to engender a true spirit of ‘working together’.

Teaching in the heat

From a letter to my parents, written from Mbale, Wednesday 13 February 1974:

Posts have been a bit delayed this month. On Monday the bus *forgot* to pick up the mail at Voi (this frequently happens), and the next day it went into Mombasa for servicing, as it does once a month! Not very much news as such, from this end. Also, not much time, so I’ll have to be brief in any case. On Sunday morning we had the third of the Mgalu student services – in English. This time it was really run by the students, with the sermon (and a very good one) preached by Francis M, the Chairman of the CU. Sunday was Grace’s 20th birthday (Grace is one of the new lady teachers), so she invited us all up to her house for tea and a get-together...

The new building progresses at last. They have made wooden moulds over the window spaces, and have been pouring liquid concrete into them, to make a continuous brick ‘intel’ across the top. I had to retire early from school this afternoon, for the second time this week, due to exhaustion. I think it must be the heat, which has just begun in earnest (pre-rain thermal build up). Also teaching, for any length of time, in the corrugated iron structure which houses Form III doesn’t help much – in the afternoon it becomes a room-sized oven! I’m not sure what the answer is. At the moment I feel I’m letting the school down, though I do try to fulfil my quota of teaching periods.

I hope to go to Mombasa on Saturday. I will tell you all about it when I return. Chris D (YSA last year) has just written – in reply to a long letter I sent him. He strongly

recommends Kilimanjaro for August, and suggests that if I'm organising it, I should start with recruiting, bookings etc. now. So I'll put a notice in the YSA page of the CMS monthly newsletter – which gets circulated to all CMS members. Finally, some literary gems. "I shot a bird, but it was not *sweetable* to eat." "A snake bit me on the *kneel*." "After travelling for many years at sea, our ship had a wreck."

Oh yes, please don't return the slides. The less travelling they do the better, and they keep better in the British climate. I'll send another batch from Mombasa...

An eventful day

Thursday 14 February 1974 was an eventful day (based on my diary notes):

1. English lesson – we discussed how to compile a circular letter informing students of the new world-famous Taita Hills Secondary Schools Marathon Race, from Wundanyi to Wanganga. This they did, outside in groups. The exercise was voted to be very successful.
2. Archdeacon Jeremiah K and Don S came round on a routine visit. The Archdeacon addressed the whole school. Don informed me that I was guilty of (unknowingly) feeding the school library to termites: the library had become infested with white ants!
3. The Chemistry lesson with Form IA involved experiments to illustrate the difference between a physical change and a chemical change. These included burning magnesium ribbon (this time without setting the classroom on fire!), and adding concentrated sulphuric acid to sugar to produce carbon: effervescence, squeals of excitement and general drama: "*Ai, bwana! You must be a genius!*"
4. News came through from the School Inspector from Mombasa, Mr N, that Mgalu remains Grade D, and that therefore no General Science will be taken by Form IV.
5. The Christian Union open meeting was attended by guests from Kilili Pentecostal Church Choir. The Form IV classroom was full to capacity, and the joyful noise of singing was quite overpowering.
6. There was an uproar in the hostel over students refusing to collect water: the girls, having had their lunch 2 hours late, now go without dinner.
7. I spent the evening with the W's – it was good to relax. Andrew told me that Crispin M has been offered a teaching post at Mwatate Full Primary School. So he leaves us. Yet another timetable reshuffle!

Weekend in Mombasa

Friday was another tough day. I spent the afternoon drilling holes in the library floor, and pouring lethal *dawa* [termiticide, perhaps Aldrin] into them, in an effort to get rid of the white ants, and made preparations for Mombasa.

On Saturday morning I was up at 05.00 and had an early breakfast. I set off in the cool of the morning, watching the stars of the Southern Cross, now beginning to tilt to the right, and fade as the sky paled in the east. The orange glow of the rising sun was striking the summit of Wesu as I scrambled aboard the OTC bus, which despite a premature 'rev-up' – which put panic into my heart as I was still half a mile short of Wundanyi – did not leave until 07.15. There was a further delay at Mwatate when the driver – having at last got back in the bus after his 20 minute 'rest' – drove the bus forward a further 20 yards, got out again and started queuing for meat! Our journey took us through the Townships of Mackinnon Road, Taru, Mariakani and Samburu, and we arrived in Mombasa at midday. I met Chris L for the first time; we got on really well. He was a graduate from Belfast and had a 12 string guitar – so he played (and I sang) various hits from 'Come Together', the Christian musical that was popular at the time in Britain and America. We drove into town (in a CITC car) to find that the shops did not open until 3 pm on a Saturday afternoon, so we went on to Nyali Beach and spent a

happy hour swimming and walking along the beach. Though the water was cool and refreshing a little way out from the shore, close in it was very warm. After wallowing in the shallows for twenty minutes I felt it was 'time to pull the plug out' and let the water out of the bath! White sands, palm trees and clear blue water, its colour almost fierce in comparison with the gentler hues of the English coast. We went back into town to do some necessary shopping (e.g. for a new pair of shoes), and had an evening meal of Spanish rice; we then set out for the Saturday evening Christian fellowship, stopping on the way so that Mrs O could bandage a boy's broken wrist. The fellowship took place at the house of an English Roman Catholic near Kilindini Harbour, and was attended by CMS missionaries, Southern Baptists from America, several Africans, two Officers from Royal Navy ships in the Port of Mombasa (HMS Scylla and HMS Ariadne), and Chris with his 12 string guitar. There was a terrific sense of unity, although there were so many of us from different backgrounds and walks of life.

On Sunday I saw the F's and had a long chat with Mary. I also had an interesting conversation with Ken and Betty O, who were waiting to get into the Sudan, the land of their calling. Although the Church of Sudan had specifically asked them to return, their entry visas had been refused by the Government twice. Nevertheless they felt they were called, and so they were confident that sooner or later the doors would open. Mattins at the Anglican Cathedral was taken by The Very Reverend Desmond G, the Provost. Then after lunch, I took the OTC bus back to Wundanyi. After an interesting wait in the dark, outside the Police Station, I was picked up by the W's, who happened to be returning from a day at Murray High School. I had dinner with them, and enjoyed a relaxed evening, recounting the weekend's events.

Blue water and parched fields

From a letter to my parents, written from Mbale, Wednesday 20 February 1974:

Thank you for the newspaper cutting. What gave me almost a shock of surprise was seeing the people [in the photograph] on Donna Nook beach [in North Lincolnshire], clad in duffle-coats, Wellington boots, scarves, gloves etc. – somehow I just can't appreciate it – cold is now something almost completely out of my experience! On Saturday afternoon, at around half past two, I was wallowing contentedly in the waters of Nyali Beach, just north of Mombasa. And though the water a little way out from the shore was cool and refreshing, the shallower water further in was very warm. Mombasa beaches – blue skies; white, white sands; peaceful palm trees; and the water – oh so blue – a colour almost fierce in its brightness when compared with the gentler hues of the English coast!

My attitude to rain, I think, *will* survive, if only partially, back in England – unless we're flooded out of our homes. I can't describe how sad I felt, coming back from Mombasa on Sunday, and seeing, just outside Voi, field upon field of maize mercilessly destroyed by the sun – just yellow stalks bearing a few shrivelled leaves, set in parched fields as dry as dust. And Kenyans rely on maize for their staple food. In the Hills here, the situation is not much better. In November, when the rains finally came (a month late), people furiously started planting their maize. The plants have grown up – the people pray for rain sufficient to see them through to maturity and to a good harvest. But now they're just drying up. Only the *shambas* with irrigation stand a good chance of producing a harvest this year. The grass on the football pitch and on the W's front lawn has turned from rich green to scorched brown. Flowers are wilting and dying. The hills are losing their beauty. The water level in our tank is going down and down. In a few weeks' time, we'll be back to drinking river water. This is a picture of the Dry Season – a time of waiting. Just as in winter, one 'traditionally' waits for the arrival of spring and new life, so here, in the long drought, we are waiting patiently and prayerfully for the long rains (the 'early' as opposed to the 'latter' rains), which may be here by the end of March. Perhaps I'll get sick of too much rain when I return to the UK; but at least things grow in the rain, and the countryside stays green.

[Next follows a detailed account of my weekend in Mombasa.]

Mattins at 11 at Mombasa Anglican Cathedral. It was good to attend an English service once again. And It was good to see the Provost again, the Very Reverend Desmond G, who was at the CMS weekend at Murray. He has given me a standing invitation to stay at his house, so next time I go down to Mombasa, probably towards the end of term, I'll do that.

A good week, school-wise. Lessons have been interesting, and I feel greatly refreshed after a short holiday. At the moment, in English Form IV, I am attempting to improve their conversational fluency by constructing imaginary telephone conversations. I supply the students with the receiver's part only. They in turn have to make up the caller's 'speeches' to fit into the story – which I have made up and tried to 'Africanise'. The result is quite amusing: "The arrival of Mr Owengo":

Telephone: Rrrrrrrrring! Rrrrrrrrring!
 Jeremiah: Mombasa 2747. Jeremiah Mwazenge speaking.
 Enos *Oh, hallo Jeremiah! Is Enos here! How is it?*
 Jeremiah: Oh, hallo Enos! Good to hear from you! Where are you calling from?
 Enos: *From the phone box just outside Abdul's. Do you know it? Top of Kilindini Road...*
 Jeremiah: I know. It's a long way for you to walk just for a phone call...

And so on. I give them Jeremiah's parts. They have to make up Enos' parts.

Also I am Housemaster of Nakuru House. I am mainly responsible for the House's sporting activities (and success), in football, netball, and volleyball. We have a league competition with Chala and Magadi. So far, in football, we have played two matches, and lost both of them. So I'm going to have a few words with the house team before they play their next match! Very little offensive, that's their trouble; sound defensive tactics and an excellent goal-keeper, but no attack! I'm also in some way responsible for the welfare of Nakuru students as a whole. At the end of term I will have to write a Housemaster's report...

The final week of February

As recorded in my diary:

Thursday 21 February 1974 – Christian Union lacking life, because many members were diverted by a rival attraction, some match against Maynard, I think.

Friday 22 February 1974 – Very busy day. Grace, Jacinta and Philicia were invited over to a meal. I had to excuse myself and retire early, as I was not feeling well.

Saturday 23 February 1974 – Early run up to Wundanyi to conduct various miscellaneous business. I took the Mombasa [Kireti] bus down, then worked pretty well flat out, marking mainly. Prepared for tomorrow's sermon.

Sunday 24 February 1974 – Mgalu Service – well attended and well organised. Form IV really did look like a chapel, with a cross drawn on the blackboard and the chairs in rows. I preached my second sermon, taking as my text I John 4 v 19. Some lovely hymns – Grace led the singing. Milo and chai up at the 'Helicopter' afterwards. Afternoon writing letters.

Sermon Notes: "We love because He first loved us" (1 John 4 v 19).

1. Do you love (a) your neighbour? (b) God?
2. Do you find it hard to love God?
 - you try: "I must love God"
 - you ask your friends, "Help me!"
 - you pray, "God help me to love you."

3. The secret of loving God: "We love because He first loved us."
4. We need a vision of God's love for us:
 - "He crowns you with steadfast love and mercy" (Psalm 103 v 4)
 - His love is revealed in His Son Jesus: "For God so loved the world..." (John 3 v 16)
5. The Bible says this about Jesus: "He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53 v 3).
6. Jesus suffered. Why? For you and for me. Upon the cross – physical agony. The spiritual burden for our sins, laid upon His shoulders.
7. Let us be drawn to Him by that love.
"We love because He first loved us." Let us pray.

Monday 25 February 1974 – Nakuru played Chala at football, and in spite of good play and a determined effort, we were once more put to shame. Time spent marking Form II English essays: "You are alone on a desert island", following our reading of Robinson Crusoe. Sophie T, a rather timid girl with a stutter, wrote about a giant cobra that reared up in front of her and opened its mouth "so wide that I was able to count its teeth"! (One, two, three...)

Tuesday 26 February 1974 – Clubs organised at last. We now have (1) Drama; (2) Debating; (3) Singing; (4) Wild Life; (5) Science; and (6) Young Farmers. I am the patron of the Singing Society.

Thursday 28 February 1974 – Jackson went into a real tizz about his salary – accusing us, practically, of not giving him his full share (because he had most of it in advances earlier this month), and demanded we give him another rise. Aggrey handled the situation fairly decisively.

CHAPTER 7: SCHOOL LIFE IN THE TAITA HILLS

March 1974

The first week of March

Based on my diary notes:

Friday 1 March 1974 – Beginnings of the first signs of rain. General Election in the UK.

Saturday 2 March 1974 – I spent the morning doing battle with the library, arranging all books into shelves, dividing them into 'Student Library', 'Staff Library', 'Text Books' etc. – and indexing new books. The result was very satisfying as the room looked well organised. A dark, rain-laden day – two falls of rain, giving (amongst other more important things) 150 gallons into our tank. The W's had returned from Naivasha, after seeing the children for half term. Guests were staying – second cousins from the UK, mother and daughter, recently bereaved and spending three months in Kenya. I spent a fascinating evening in the refreshing company of English folk, recounting various travellers' tales, including seeing their Northern Lights on a plane journey to Finland. We listened to the BBC worldwide news at 9 o' clock. Election results: Labour 301 seats, Conservative 296 and Liberal 14. The Liberals thus hold the balance of power, and at present Ted Heath is trying to persuade the Liberals to form a Coalition Government with the Tories. Perhaps this is the answer?

Monday 4 March 1974 – I was called out of third lesson (Maths Form IA) by Peter, who told me that a new member of staff (Venant M) had arrived from Kituri, transferred by the Bishop's orders, and against everybody's wishes – and really against common sense! However, I'm making a point of trying not to complain or to be critical, in any way, of the various situations that arise. An attitude of criticism, I have found, only engenders bitterness and resentment. So I am accepting whatever comes my way, determined to do my best in the circumstances. The main point is that our new teacher is physically handicapped: he has a wooden leg and has to move about on crutches. He cannot possibly be accommodated in Crispin's old house because it is situated miles up the hill. So perhaps he'll have to move in here – which means that unless I share my room with him (which I want to avoid at all costs, as I need privacy), either Aggrey or I may be asked to move into Crispin's house. Still, as nothing more has been said at present, there is no use in answering unasked questions. For another thing I learn here is the uselessness of speculation. Life here in Kenya is full of uncertainty: life's fortunes are liable to sudden, unpredicted reversals, for better or for worse. Here again I think that acceptance is the key: not allowing myself to fall into the trap of wishing things (over which I have no control) to be otherwise.

Today I was on duty. Football match – Nakuru vs Magadi. Nakuru won! A terrific victory, as our team was really playing hard and well. Great cheers in Assembly as the result was announced. In the evening, I played some Bach chorales on my 'flute', in the moonlight.

Tuesday 5 March 1974 – Venant seems to be settling in OK. At present he's staying with Peter at his house. An unpleasant incident – I went up to the W's house at lunch time (to clear my February debt), to find Catharine bandaging a Maynard boy's head. Standing beside him were a number of Mgalu students, one of whom (he will remain nameless) was responsible for the injury. Apparently they had been carelessly throwing stones against a wall, and one of them, thrown by the boy in question (a IVth Former at that), rebounded, striking the primary school boy on the head. Catharine said it was a deep cut; if the stone had hit him slightly further forward (i.e. on the temple) it could have killed him. When Catharine told this to the student responsible for the accident he was profoundly shocked.

Singing in the afternoon: "All hail the power of Jesus' name", in Swahili –

Jina la Yesu salamu

Lisujudieni, lisujudieni,

Ninyi mbinguni hukumu,

Na enzi, enzi, enzi, enzi,

Enzi, enzi, enzi-iii-iii-iii,

Na enzi mpeni.

A fabulous evening with bright moonlight, and wind in the trees swaying above. Fellowship at the Helicopter. Jenny (the guest from the UK) came along. Some good singing.

Thursday 7 March 1974 – I was on duty, with Peter away at Mwatate registering our first EACE candidates, and the Deputy Headmaster still not returned. Thus I felt like being on the bridge of a ship – in temporary command of her course. Christian Union singing – meeting not very inspiring, as has been the rule in general this term. Something (or Someone) is lacking – attendance is half-hearted, both in number and spirit. Let's hope this will be put to rights in the weeks ahead. HCS (A-level) results came through. Jacinta did well to get 3 'principals' (passes) and 1 subsidiary. Grace and Philicia did not do so well, which is a pity – they are feeling a bit down-hearted at present.

Six months ago...

From diary entries:

Exactly six months ago... Hoddesdon, Haileybury, Heathrow... up, up into the darkness, the last lights of England slipping beneath... Brighton, the coast... Channel Islands, France, the Riviera, the Mediterranean, Sicily, the Sudan... dawn breaking over Kenya, and then down, down across the Athi plains, crossing the Mombasa road, on to the runway, temperature 57 degrees F outside... the clear skies of Africa...

I'm more than half way home now. I have mixed feelings, 'though I look forward to being in Britain and at home once again. My brightly painted wooden three-masted model galleon above my desk [which my grandmother gave me before I left England] carries me home across the waters of time. Above and to my left the familiar mountains of the Coigeach [in the black-and-white photographs stuck on to the side of the wooden wardrobe] draw ever closer. I am past the point of no return. My outward journey is complete.

Though these thoughts are perhaps premature, and there is still a long, long way to go – and much opportunity – nevertheless, there's a sense in which I feel that the anchor has been weighed, and my course is now set for home...

The second week of March

As recorded in my diary:

Friday 8 March 1974 – Evening meeting up at Aggrey High School with Ambrose M (Headmaster). Andrew drove Peter and myself up. Miss Phoebe K from Murray High School and Miss Kate C also came – it was the first time I had seen Kate in three months.

Saturday 9 March 1974 – Busy working day, marking books and preparing lessons for the following week. Dinner with the W's, during which the moon came up out of the east, bright orange, and then disappeared behind a thick black bank of cloud – its rays shining through from behind. We listened to the 'Come Together' tape – from an American Gospel musical, which has become very popular among missionaries here in Kenya, and I imagine is catching fire in Britain too.

Sunday 10 March 1974 – The Mgalu service was at 10 o' clock – Phoebe preached a brilliant sermon on 'One's Goal in Life'.

Monday 11 March 1974 – I refereed the football match between Chala and Magadi, which was quite a shattering experience. The players didn't like my rules of refereeing or something, because they were arguing over every decision I made! Towards half time the game began to degenerate into anarchy. So, during a quarrel over whether it should be a corner or goal kick, I blew the whistle, long and loud, summoned both teams to the centre

of the pitch, and blew my top! Finally, I stated that during the second half of the game, if there was any more shouting, quarrelling or needless arguing with the referee's decisions, I would simply blow the whistle and close the game. The effect was satisfactory, and the game proceeded until its end in an orderly manner, though it was not always easy to discriminate correctly in every situation. By the end of the game I was pretty well through! As I was having dinner, who should walk in through the kitchen door but – Aggrey! Eight days late. He said he had been ill with a fever he had contracted last Monday. He said he had tried very hard to ring Mombasa and to send telegrams.

Tuesday 12 March 1974 – Interesting afternoon singing various Swahili songs, which I managed to write down in a notebook. Margaret W (aged 4) almost joined us, until she was rescued by anxious Mum, though she admitted afterwards, she had been anxious for our sakes!

Wanadamu wote watalia
Watakapo tupwa motoni,
Watalia "Woe-woe-woe,
Woe-woe kama tungejua!"

[Everyone will wail, when they are thrown into the fire, they will wail "Wo-ey, wo-ey, if only I had known Him" (Jesus) – from Revelation Chapter 1]

ki-Swahili *Mungu ni njema x 3*
 Ni njema kwangu...

[Oh God is good x 3, He's so good to me...]

Turkana *Akoju naramba kuchu x 3*
 Ramba kuchu x 2

Venant M left us – transferred to Mwangeka High School by order of the Bishop!

Wednesday 13 March 1974 – I attempted to settle the February accounts before breakfast. Aggrey had spent (as recorded) 113/- on food and groceries during February. I had spent 302/- (including gas, kerosene and Jackson's salary). When he heard this he upped and went out in disgust and disbelief, leaving his debt of approximately 100/- unpaid.

Fairly interesting lessons teaching the art of note-taking to Form IV – Shaka and the Rise of the Zulu Empire. Physics involved lifting a kilogram mass of sugar, and pushing a ball around to illustrate the concept of force. Exciting finish to the Nakuru vs Magadi football match. With 20 minutes to go, Magadi was winning 3 to 1. Nakuru fought with fury, and managed to push the score up to a 3-all draw finish!

Busy days...

The next few days were very busy. On Thursday there was still no debt paid, as Aggrey left again during breakfast, with scarcely a word. Then there was confusion over lunch as Aggrey had allegedly told Jackson that both he and Gerald were coming for lunch, but Jackson hadn't understood that he had. As all the conversations were in Swahili, I was (fortunately) unable to act as an independent witness! The result was that Aggrey and Gerald hived off while we were saying grace, again without a word. Jackson's move was now to refuse to work for Aggrey, but for myself alone, and to refer the matter to the W's. Aggrey's plan of attack (or defence) was therefore to buy all his own food and groceries, and to kind of 'segregate' himself from the rest of the house – which is really very juvenile (perhaps he still has a fever). Really, the situation is becoming beyond a joke – everyone, as I see it, behaving like little children!

But the Christian Union address by Catharine W, on the subject of Christian giving – a highly relevant topic – provoked some intelligent questions. The singing was much livelier this time, which may be a sign that things in the Christian Union are beginning to

turn for the better. Also, in the same vein (only on a much larger scale), I received a letter from Andrew G [school friend, studying at Durham University] to say that he had just received an unconfirmed report from Haileybury concerning the success of the Lent Mission with Revd David Watson – that very many (perhaps 100 or so) boys had been touched by his message and had come to faith in Jesus Christ as a result! I hoped to hear more direct and detailed news from friends at Haileybury over the next few days, but this, during a period when here the strength of Christian commitment has definitely cooled, was encouraging news indeed.

Friday was a hard day's teaching and marking. Aggrey agreed to pay his debts. When? Sometime. Soon? Perhaps. I spent an amusing evening correcting newspaper article contributions from Form IV. Livingstone M wrote about horse racing at Ngong in true journalistic style: "Cowboy Roger Clerck Puzzles Kenya Onlookers at Ngong. Cowboy Roger was yesterday a subject of interest after winning the Ngong Race, with a very fascinating style at the end." We also had Vice-Minister Daniel Arap Moi discussing the Advantages and Disadvantages of Co-educational Schools –with the rest of the Government!

On Saturday I got up early to go to Wundanyi carrying a pressure lamp, which I hoped a *fundhi* would be able to mend – the problem being that the valve had gone, so that when pressure was introduced into the container, liquid kerosene had a habit of rushing out through the pump. I left it with the cobblers because the *fundhi* had not yet arrived. Then I took the Mombasa bus back to Mbale, and sat in the front. We very nearly had a head-on collision with a safari car – we met on a blind corner just between Mwasungia and Mwanguvi – the car managed to swerve out to the left and round our front, missing us by inches! Christian Union Rally at Aggrey High School: I had intended to set off at 12.30 pm with 40 students who had put their names down, but we actually left half an hour later, with (to begin with) less than half that number. After initial delays things went well. The rally was led by Mr M, and the address was given by Peter M on: "How shall a young man keep his way pure?" [Psalm 119 v 9].

On Sunday I attended morning worship at Kilili Pentecostal church. The service went on till 2 o' clock, but I left at 1.30 pm, as it was very hot. I spent a relaxed afternoon, managing to get some letters written. Then I had dinner with the W's (apple pie and cream), after which we looked at photographs and the latest films of slides. The stars were brilliant – the plough, upside down in the north, and below the Southern Cross, two stars, one below the other, further south – as I called it – the 'Star of the Utter South'.

The timetable for weekdays this term has generally been as follows:

- 06.15 Rise
- 07.00 Breakfast – *uji*, [liquid maize porridge], toast, coffee
- 07.30 Jackson arrives – briefing on day's work – money and list if he is to go to Wundanyi
- 07.40 Assembly - notices
- 08.05 Morning registration
- 08.10 Lesson 1
- 08.50 Lesson 2
- 09.30 Lesson 3
- 10.10 Break – medical cases
- 10.25 Lesson 4
- 11.05 Lesson 5

- 11.45 Lesson 6
- 12.25 Lunch, prepared by Jackson – meat, vegetables, *ugali* [stiff maize porridge] fruit
- 14.00 Afternoon registration
- 14.05 Lesson 7
- 14.45 Lesson 8
- 15.25 Prep – optional lesson
- 16.15 Games, matches, clubs, Christian Union
- 17.30 Evening assembly
- 17.45 Marking, preparation as necessary
- 18.30 Dinner – Alpen cereal [muesli], boiled egg, bread, tea
- 19.15 More work, as necessary
- 21.00 Finish work
- 21.45 Light out [blow out the Dietz lamp]

Monday was a busy day marking books. There was no football, as there was a match between Choke and Figinyi Full Primary Schools.

On Tuesday I retired after the third lesson feeling distinctly unwell. I slept and rested until the afternoon, when I managed to get a few letters written.

Delirious tea-pickers...

From a letter to my parents, written from Mbale, Wednesday 19 March 1974:

Welcome news that Box No 5 of slides has arrived! I now have Films 7 and 8 with me, but I think I'll keep them here until after the YSA conference in April, as we'll be sharing some of them with each other then. These films are mainly of local views, including ones taken during various walking *safaris* in the hills – some very artistic too. I feel what I need to concentrate on now is taking close-ups of people doing things – e.g. *fundhis* at work, members of staff, Jackson cutting grass, students queuing for hostel lunch, lessons in progress with myself teaching (!) – Photographs will be difficult to take, as Africans, if given half a chance, *will* pose (and very solemnly!) I have taken most of today off after a fairly unpleasant headache this morning. I think my body must have a defence mechanism against over-work, and so this will give me a chance to catch up on myself, and I hope be fit for tomorrow. (I hope, even though symptoms are similar, it won't be anything like as long-drawn out as last term...) There's a difficult period ahead, with setting exams and then marking them afterwards. The term then should probably end around April 9th, and in any case I hope to go to Mombasa for the weekend on April 6/7th, and see Chris and others again.

On Thursday, Mrs W gave a talk to the Christian Union on the subject of Christian giving – which was well received and provoked some intelligent questions. On Friday, I had a hilarious and very interesting evening marking the 'Newspaper Articles' from Form IV, in which each student was given a picture, cut out of a recent edition of the Daily Nation, and was then asked to write an article with a headline and sub-headline to which that picture would have been relevant. We had one student, Norman M, who wrote a documentary about tea-picking in western Kenya. "Lorries and vans take tea to shops, where it is sold to buyers to make a very good and *delirious* tea." Accompanied was a picture of *delirious* tea-pickers! Another student who had a picture of a crowded refugee camp, wrote about Nairobi during the tourist season. And with a picture of

Maggie Smith demurely seated upon a donkey, Livingstone M wrote a very erudite article about horse-racing at Ngong!

Kazi nyingi sana [very much work]

Based on my diary notes:

Wednesday 20 March 1974 – Feeling much better. I managed some simple experiments in Chemistry: separation of mixtures – salt + sand, solution, filtration etc. Much time setting examinations in Chemistry, English and RE.

Thursday 21 March 1974 – Today is the first day of Spring [in England]: outside it is dry and hot – living things parched, dust everywhere. Again I was feeling slightly wuzzy. The Christian Union meeting was addressed by Sister Clara, an American missionary who has recently joined the Rock Pentecostal church at Werugha. She spoke (very well) on the Gift of the Holy Spirit. The substance was well received by the students, who listened attentively, without the usual distractions (vocal or otherwise) at the back – perhaps because some of us staff members were also sitting at the back. Her long, slow, full trans-Atlantic accent was beautiful to hear. After she left, a Maynard student bust his knee whilst playing football. Dreadful *kalele* [= loud commotion]. We managed to get him transported up to Catharine W, who found that nothing was broken and that a cold press was all that was needed.

Friday 22 March 1974 – The entire day was spent setting Maths papers for Form III. It was quite an entertaining exercise, as some of the examination was in the form of a multiple choice, and this meant making up the wrong answers as well! It came as quite a shock to discover that I found difficulty in answering some of the questions myself! “If 17 labourers dig a ditch 88 m long in 9 days, how many labourers are needed to dig a ditch 51 m long in 5 days?” Interesting question. More relevant, perhaps, would be: “How long does it take a team of African builders to complete a two-room classroom block at a Harambee school in the Taita Hills?” The *fundhis* [skilled workers] seem to have deserted us yet again – engaged, I suspect, in some other money-making project. I went over to see Miss Kate C at Murray High School with Catharine, Peter and Grace. We nearly ran into several wild animals on the way back.

Saturday 23 March 1974 – A full morning tidying up my desk, room etc. I discovered various items I had taken out with me from England (e.g. a folding hard-board screen), which I had never used. I finished a bout of mathematical marking, and then cooked myself a delicious stew with rice – with which I was rather pleased. I got a bit despondent in the afternoon – what Andrew W describes as his ‘Sunday afternoon’ feeling. A sudden lull in the middle of a period of intense activity, a sudden ‘passivity’, a disinclination to do anything or to go anywhere. If only I could lay my hands on a really good book...

This mood was rapidly dispelled by my managing to go out (almost the first time in six weeks), on my own, walking in the Hills. I only managed to get up the ridge and a bit beyond, as I’d left it rather late, and I was not as ‘in trim’ as I had hoped. But there were terrific views, now so familiar. I returned thoroughly refreshed, calling in at the W’s to ask if I could borrow *Lord of the Rings* – which I could! I picked up the story half way through *The Two Towers* (from where I’d left off the previous year, back in England) – and everything flowed back into place. I felt the story was enhanced greatly by the magic of the language, the first ‘good’ English literature I have read for quite some time. I was held in its spell until a quarter to eleven – ‘deliciously’ late by African standards!

Sunday 24 March 1974 – Church at Mbale, Holy Communion – which took a very long time, as there was some *shauri* [business] afterwards concerning the fund for the translation of the Old Testament into ki-Dabida. I found myself in something of a missionary capacity in the afternoon – helping to bring a group of Christian Union members together (at their request), to discuss plans and problems, and to read the Bible and pray. The great thing was that, although I played my part in the discussion, I need not have been there. The students were leading the meeting themselves; and if this continued, much was to be gained.

Monday 25 March 1974 – School examinations began. I only had Chemistry Form IA to mark. Only three forms can do examinations at any one time, because there are still no

desks in Form IA or IB. That is why the examinations are spread out over the whole week. This, however, gives Rhoda a chance to keep pace – it has been calculated that she has 38 examination papers to type and duplicate!

Tuesday 26 March 1974 – Still no progress with the school building. Though this does not accurately reflect the situation at present, an imaginary interview with the *fundhi* might reveal problems in the network of African administration such as this one:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Layman | Tell me, why are you unable to work today? |
| <i>Fundhi</i> | We have no nails. |
| Layman | Can't you buy some? |
| <i>Fundhi</i> | We have no money. |
| Layman | Who keeps the money then? |
| <i>Fundhi</i> | The Treasurer of the Building Committee. |
| Layman | Have you seen him? |
| <i>Fundhi</i> | Yes. |
| Layman | What did he say? |
| <i>Fundhi</i> | He said he can't give any money unless he has permission from the Chairman. |
| Layman | Is he able to get permission then? |
| <i>Fundhi</i> | No. |
| Layman | Why not? |
| <i>Fundhi</i> | The Chairman is ill... |

= in Mombasa hospital, where he has been for the past six weeks. So. *Bas*. End of story. No more need be said.

Wednesday 27 March 1974 – Still no post. Why? Because the Kireti bus is in Mombasa (where it has been for the past week) being serviced. Or it has broken down. Why are other buses unable to collect the post from Voi? Because they are not licensed to do so. At 5 o' clock the examination papers came flooding in – English 2 for Form IV, a paper with which the students found much difficulty.

Thursday 28 March 1974 – *Kazi nyingi sana* [= very much work]. Flat out the whole day. Peter went off to Mombasa. I learned how to operate the (extremely temperamental) duplicator, so that I could help Rhoda with her overwhelming work load. Jackson went home because his wife was not well, and one of his children was very ill.

Friday 29 March 1974 – Tricky re-organisation of the time-table because the Maths Form III papers were not ready yet. There was an argument as to what should be done. I confess I nearly lost my temper with Aggrey – in the staff room – over deciding the best course of action... My complaint is that he simply refuses to listen to my suggestions, cutting me short immediately I open my mouth. I am sure, though, that I was equally to blame!

Morning and early part of the afternoon spent duplicating – clank! clank! clank! Difficulties over the fact that we had the wrong paper, the wrong ink, and the wrong stencils (or perhaps alternatively we had the wrong duplicator!) Often a turn of the handle would cause a dozen sheets to go through the works, with the top one printed beginning half way down the paper. I managed to complete, however, the bulk of the marking. It was a miracle that we managed to finish all the exams before the day was out – we thought we would have to reassemble on Saturday morning!

Saturday 30 March 1974 – Morning spent finishing the last of the marking. Form III results were abysmal – true, they were hard papers, but even so, when they can't even

get the simple things right one feels it is unjustifiable to continue with the EACE syllabus until they have mastered the basics...

A safari to remember

(from my diary and 'The Real Africa', written a few years later)

Beautiful walks among the complex of hills and ridges above Mbale continued, though less frequently. I remember particularly one Saturday afternoon at the end of March, when I set out on *safari* with a 'mac' and umbrella, because of the storm clouds gathering in the east. At once I noticed all about me a sense of heaviness and ominous silence. There was not a breath of wind, and no melody from the birds – only a single-noted call, like a warning signal. I climbed through forests tense and silent, feeling the damp heat contained in the slow and sticky air. The heavy sky hung, poised and menacing above the hills. As I gained the rocky outcrops near the top of the first ridge, the moisture-laden air eased itself at last into soft fine rain, and the mists rolled in from Sagalla. I made a brisk descent and reached Iriwa before the storm – observing how the dark grey skies made a dramatic contrast with the golden expanse of the Tsavo plains and hills catching the last rays of the sun. At Iriwa I did a little shopping and was invited in for tea and wafers with Benjamin, the Jehovah's Witness brick builder. I was soaked to the skin, having come down through the wet undergrowth, and the foliage from bushes and small trees, which had a habit of stretching out over the path at chest height.

I returned home, changed rapidly into dry clothes, and set off again for the W's to make some arrangements for Sunday. It was 6.30 pm and a few minutes before it had been almost too dark to see – but now, all of a sudden, it was curiously bright. Grey clouds still covered the sky, yet everything was filled with a thick yellow light coming from the hills to the west. This was particularly noticeable in the way it reflected off the red surfaces of the roads and paths, which took on a vivid orange glow. And as I turned into the front drive, the red poinsettias in the W's garden, set against the grey hills and skies, were enhanced by an unearthly brightness. That momentary contrast between the vivid scarlet of the flowers and the backcloth of rich blue-grey is something I shall never forget. As I reached the house a light rain was falling. I said hello to Susanna and John who had travelled from Turi last night and had been picked up from Voi at 4 am this morning. Then the heavens opened and rain fell in torrents. The children were dancing with delight. Flashes of lightning, followed almost instantaneously by long fearful peals of thunder. It was some time before I could leave, cautiously feeling my way down the flooded paths in the gloom. At about 9 pm Aggrey rolled in, soaking wet, and far gone – blind drunk. He spent several minutes just trying to open the front door...

Tea with the Willastons

The following day, Sunday (31 March 1974), Aggrey left the house when I was scarcely awake. I was told the next morning by Jackson that a friend of his had seen him boarding the OTC bus for Nairobi at Wundanyi – though he had told us nothing of this. The Mgalu student service was at 09:45 (or thereabouts). Mr and Mrs M, the Headmaster of Aggrey High School and his wife, came to preach. Slowly the room filled with worshippers. At the scheduled time for starting there were four, desperately trying to fill the room with their spirited chorus singing. However by 10:15 there were 20 or 30, and with the other students drifting in throughout the service at a rate of about 10 per hymn, everyone seemed to be present by the time Mr M got up to give the address. He preached for a whole hour, managing to hold everyone's attention for as long. His terrific use of humour, combined with his theatrical touches, helped to bring the message

across. It was a successful (if that's the right word) service in many ways. The singing was up to standard, and the lessons and prayers were well read by students. Afterwards I invited Mr and Mrs M in for refreshments – luckily I had made some scones the night before.

In the afternoon I attended Communion – in English – at Werugha, at which Andrew was ministering. In case it sounds like overdoing it, going to two services in one day, Holy Communion services are few and far between as it is (whether in Swahili or ki-Dabida); however, opportunities for taking Holy Communion in English are too rare to be missed. Also it's a long time since I'd been up Werugha way – looking as lovely as ever, now that the rains have come. The service started an hour late (it's not only at Mgalu!) and was not well attended. The Willastons [not their real name], a very nice Indian family with a small boy Robins, invited us in after the service. We chatted about various things like education in India, Uganda, Kenya and the UK, over strong tea and exotic Asian delicacies. After working in Uganda, the Willastons came here about a year ago, and until this January when they were transferred to Kituri by the Bishop, they were teaching at Mwangeka.

We played 'tenni-quoist' over the goal posts on the school's football pitch – as the light failed and the mists rolled in. Just at the finish of the third game, Catharine returned with the car on her way back from Murray High School, so she picked us up and took us back to Mbale – and then went to collect Peter, Grace and the W's children, who had been walking down from Wundanyi. We all had dinner together, and then followed a long, fascinating conversation with Andrew about the differences between Africans and Europeans – family relationships, attitudes to life and death, intellectual approach, simplicity of understanding and acceptance, fear, anxiety, psychological stability, leadership, sense of responsibility, enterprise...

CHAPTER 8: EASTER IN THE TAITA HILLS, MOMBASA AND NAIROBI

April 1974

April fool's day

Monday 1 April 1974 – The beginning of Week 12, Term 1, 1974. Peter announced that we would be closing on April 10th – which meant that we planned to forge steadily ahead, if necessary starting new work. A week's worth of letters arrived in the morning, as the Kireti bus was, at last, back from Mombasa, and managed to bring the post from Voi over the weekend. Particularly exciting was a letter from Elaine H from Luanshya, Zambia. She wrote they were really hoping I would pay a 'flying visit' – perhaps at the end of the coming holidays, early in May. She also said that the expense of flying could be arranged at their end – which was tremendous news. I hoped very much to be able to accept her invitation, making plans for the rest of the holidays accordingly. Teaching time was occupied with giving back exams papers and going through questions. Except – towards the end of the double Maths Form 1A – I was summoned to the door by Winnie T (Form III), who gave me this message:

Excuse me, Mr Hall,

May I see you right now? I am in the office please. There is an urgent matter for you.

By Miss Grace.

I rushed down to the office, explained myself to 'Miss Grace', and handed her the message. She had never written it – it was all a hoax... APRIL FOOL'S DAY!

Tuesday 2 April 1974 – Giving back exam papers – a hot, heavy, headache-y day. I relaxed (or was it 'collapsed') in the afternoon. Christian Union with Catharine, who spoke on 'Christian behaviour in boy/girl relationships', following a theme suggested by one of the Committee Members. Rain fell as the meeting was in progress, and this relieved our feelings considerably. Slides were taken and a tape made, for the W's to send to one of their 'link parishes' in the UK. Afterwards Andrew interviewed the Chairman, Francis M, a CU member, Willingstone M, and myself as staff sponsor. "And on my left... Willingstone, I wonder if you could tell us..." Proceedings were delayed by loud thunder claps, and the roar of rain on the roof!

Wednesday 3 April 1974 – My patience gave way, owing to heat and tiredness. I talked to Don about this, who was very helpful, as he also had experienced the same problem.

End of exams and holiday plans

Excerpts from a letter to my parents, written from Mbale, Wednesday 3 April 1974:

At the moment I'm beginning to feel the effects of heat, heavy thundery weather and the usual end of term strain. I've been taking your advice about not overdoing things; last night I went to bed around 8 o' clock with my head 'swimming' after a very head-achy day. Now, as a result of about 10 hours sleep I feel much better! I'm finding also, however, that it's becoming increasingly easy to lose patience – over little things, in class – and general discipline, which at the moment is very low.

I was talking it over with Don, together with other things, just now as we were walking up the hill. When I mentioned 'discipline', his immediate remark was "What discipline?" He understood completely, as he often finds himself in similar situations. He also gave me some really good advice – in the short term: "If you feel you're about to lose your temper in class, change your piece of chalk!" Very scientific – the action takes your mind off the situation for just long enough for you to regain control! Also, long-term policy: do lots of crosswords and read plenty of novels. I've picked up Lord of the Rings

again, and finding this a great help. Novels are more essential here, I would say, than in the UK.

Our term is drawing to a close, and 'though it has been in many respects an enjoyable, well-organised term, I'm not sorry we're near the end. We close on April 10th, the Wednesday before Easter, which gives us plenty of time for handing back exams, writing reports, and generally winding up. Keeping the students occupied is the problem! We've come to the end of a fearfully busy week. Thursday and Friday were spent, for the most part, helping Rhoda, the clerk, with the overwhelming business of getting exam papers 'off the press', so to speak, in time. I learned how to operate the very temperamental duplicator...

After I'd finished *all* marking on Saturday afternoon, I set out on *safari* into the hills, equipped with raincoat and umbrella, because storm clouds were rising in the east. An ominous silent heaviness – coinciding, very appropriately, with similar conditions in Lord of the Rings, as Frodo and Sam approached the walls of Mordor. Terrific heat. Not a breath of wind. No sound, except for the monotonous and incessant calling of birds...

This week has not been so full, teaching-wise, but there are reports to cope with. The staff is a bit depleted. Aggrey left for Nairobi on Sunday (we suppose), after being roaring drunk all Saturday, and without having informed anyone or left any written message – what I call highly irresponsible. It's made things pretty difficult, especially for Peter, who wants things to be ship-shape. Gerald's uncle died yesterday, so he left today. Grace has been ill. Still, we are managing.

This weekend I hope to go to Mombasa, to see Chris and others, though I'll have to be back on Sunday, as our term doesn't send till Wednesday. Then I'm here over the Easter weekend. I mustn't miss the East Africa Safari Rally, which passes through here on Easter Sunday – I'm told it's quite an event! Cars on trial runs have been passing through all week, amid cheers of applause from children and students who line up to watch. After Easter I go to the YSA 'Get Together' Conference at Limuru, near Nairobi – where we can discuss further holiday plans... All love, Adrian.

PS Plenty of rain. Terrific. About to make some supper of muesli, scrambled eggs, rolls and tea.

Mombasa fellowship

Based on my diary notes:

Thursday 4 April 1974 – Chromatography on coloured inks and leaf juices with Form IA.

Friday 4 April 1974 – after Assembly I went up the hill to Form III to (attempt to) teach them Mathematics. The class was not ready for use, as it had not been swept the night before. I turned to go, and returned home feeling suddenly very sick – similar to last November. I spent the day in bed, rising only for lunch and afternoon lessons, but having to withdraw before they began as I was still not in a fit state to be up, let alone teach. Jackson expressed his sympathy, adding, as his comment, "*Hapana mzuri... mbaya sana!*" [Not good... very bad!] My hopes for the Mombasa trip the next day disappeared. But in the evening Peter came round, and he asked whether we could pray about it. As we were praying, it seemed that I was suddenly made well, and by 9 o' clock (some two hours later) I was suffering from nothing more than a healthy, end-of-day sleepiness! So I decided I was able to go to Mombasa after all.

Saturday 6 April 1974 – I was up at a quarter to five, feeling fine, 'just like a fiddle!' I left the house at a quarter to six, with a glow in the west as the moon began to set behind the hills, and a brightening in the east as the stars began to fade, and the silhouette of Rong'e became stronger with the sun rising from behind. It was an uneventful OTC journey to Mwembe Tayari (Mombasa bus station), where I alighted and made for CITC in the midday heat, covering the distance in 20 minutes, with much loss of moisture. My clothes were soaked, and after greeting Chris, who was cooking sausages, I had a shower and

changed into cooler clothes. We swam at Nyali Beach, where the sea was cool and rough. The sun was behind a bank of cloud, so that the colours were not as impressive as the time before. Nevertheless it was exhilarating to splash around in the foaming water and seaweed, as the rollers broke upon the shelving sand.

The Saturday Christian fellowship meeting was at 8 pm at the O's house, at CITC. It was Trevor and Vivian H's last Saturday before they returned to the UK (they had been working at Missions to Seamen, Kilindini) – so we celebrated Holy Communion. It was midnight by the time we had finished chatting and saying farewell after the meeting was over. As we crossed the compound, the moon was full and vertically overhead, shining down upon the waters of Mombasa Creek, evoking memories of my first Saturday in Africa, now nearly 7 months ago.

[I remember clearly that we prayed for Trevor and Vivian as they faced 'choppy seas' on their return to England, and I remember listening to the haunting harmonies of an unaccompanied choir singing, 'Jesus I love you, Jesus I love you, Jesus I love you, Take my life. Life is your gift, I give my heart; kneel and adore you, and I know that Jesus I love you...']

Sunday 7 April 1974 – A gentle start to the day because of the heat. I went with Lyn S, Anne and Iain to the English service at Mombasa Cathedral. It was Palm Sunday, and Ken F preached. I saw Desmond G [the Provost] after the service to make some arrangements, as he had very kindly invited me to stay with him in two weeks' time; Don, Lyn and the children were going to be staying too, as Lyn would be in hospital to have her baby (Caesarean operation).

Final lunch with Chris, and then goodbye to the O's, F's and S's. I caught the bus in good time, which was just as well as it was very full. As we steamed westwards over the coastal plains I was aware of a line of deep blue in the distance ahead, contrasting with the white sky above. At first I thought it was just clear blue sky, but as we drew closer the darkness deepened and I realized we were entering a storm. Rain squalls seemed to be moving across the plains to our left, and though we ourselves did not run into heavy rain, the roads were wet. The bush looked strange soaked with rain, as I was used to seeing it so hot and dry. The centre of the storm appeared to be over the Sagalla Hills, and as we passed through, it was possible to see the Taita Hills, clear of cloud, on the other side. Beautiful the clouds looked, on the edge of the storm, as they curved with graceful commotion and many different colours – some deep grey, others white and sunlit – the kind of sky you might see in a Turner painting. On reaching Voi, I discovered, as I had feared, that there was still no Kireti bus [which goes up to Wundanyi via Mbale], so I decided to stay on board the OTC, which was due to arrive at Wundanyi around 7 pm, and risk walking down to Mbale in the dark.

The last part of the journey was accompanied by some beautiful singing by members of the Shigaro Church, which I had visited on Christmas Day – [I still remember a particular hymn they sang, to this day, more than 40 years later, a beautiful, haunting melody]. We reached town at dusk, just as the last sun was striking the Sagalla Hills with a faint evening glow. I set out down the hill at a good pace as the darkness began to close in. I met a *mlevi* [drunk man] after walking about 500 yards, who let out a torrent of indignation in Swahili, some of which I could understand – "*Hapana ubaya*" [nothing evil] – as I overtook him. He urged me to walk slower, but I went on – faster! Presently I became aware of a car creeping up behind me, with both its engine and headlights off. It turned out to be the Headmaster of Figinyi Primary School, and he kindly gave me a lift the rest of the way, saying as we sped silently down the road that he wished to conserve petrol, as it had gone up to over 9/- a gallon! [This was due to the April 1974 Middle East fuel crisis and global price hike.]

Excerpt from Desmond G's Newsletter, April 1974

If this were England one would wish all readers a very happy and warm Easter, but my wish, which will fit in with that even of the East African Safari drivers, is that we all enjoy a nice wet one, which may also be cooler than our present weather. The EA Safari

drivers nearly all seem to prefer wet conditions, though the photographs of the muddy roads experienced in past years are alarmingly like those we remember a few years back, when few drivers cared to go out in the wet season without chains. I remember once driving in the Taita Hills after heavy rains with chains on all four wheels.

Anyway, may God bless us all and make it a really happy Easter. Very recently I have been reading with Form IV in St Luke's gospel of the surprise and joy of the disciples when Jesus really came back on Easter Sunday. It is rather lovely to try to recapture the delight (not too strong a word) of those men and women who longed to believe in the resurrection but could not do so until they saw Him with their own eyes...

Yours in our Lord's Service, Desmond P G (PROVOST).

The fever of life is over...

On Monday (8 April 1974) I had a long chat and coffee with Don in the morning, as I had finished all my marking and almost completed the reports. When I got home I had to do some of Aggrey's marking as he *still* had not returned. I taught afternoon lessons in English Form IV, and then finished the day furiously writing reports and marking post-exam curricular work.

On Tuesday we had a furious 'set-to' with reports, hoping that we would all be finished by the evening, when we could then close the school. In the afternoon I was supervising the various activities that comprised 'cleaning up the school' – that is, sweeping classrooms and hostels, washing the kitchens, and cutting vegetation with *pangas*. Then at 2:30 pm Peter called the school together, and allotted the students their various tasks, promising that the school would close if all were finished satisfactorily. Thereafter, for close on 10 whole minutes – I could hardly believe my eyes – the whole school was a hive of intense activity: the swish of brooms in the classrooms, and students hacking away at grass and bushes like an army in battle! And then, in true African style, the 'activity graph' fell steeply – till after about half an hour I could safely report: 'The fever of life is over, and the busy world is hushed...' It was an effort to get the students to finish off their work properly!

After reports had been put into envelopes, the school assembled at 4:30 pm. The Form IV classroom was packed with students – which shows that the average morning attendance is not very good! Hymns were sung, a general report on the term was given, prizes were awarded to the top students in exams, and miniature silver cups were presented to the winning houses at football (shared by Chala and Magadi – in other words, *not* Nakuru!) Grace and Philicia gave their farewell speeches, as they would not be with us next term. Then Peter dismissed the school after the hymn: 'Lord dismiss us with thy blessing'. This was followed immediately by a special meeting for those going to the KSCF Christian Union Camp at Murray High School later in the month. Peter and I helped students in financial difficulties by doing some sponsoring. This evening marked the end of Term 2. The joys of the holidays lay ahead!

The 'Real Africa' – Part 2

(from 'The Real Africa', written a few years later)

One day, in the course of conversation, Catharine suggested, "I see... you mean, you will be judged not so much on what you've done, as on how well you've related to other people?" Learning to relate to one another in love – this is the lesson of the Body of Christ, which is the living fellowship of all true believers. In this New Year [1974] we began to learn something of the importance of the Body – commitment to the Lord, and to one another in the fellowship of the gospel. In Mombasa I was able to take part in a fellowship group that was more experienced in corporate ministry. It was there, in the meetings I attended, that I could really see the power of God at work, as we ministered to one another with the gifts of

the Spirit; as we taught and admonished one another, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in our hearts to God. It was exciting to see prayers answered, and to experience something of the power of prophecy – and to see those who were sick healed and encouraged.

But still more exciting was the creation and development of our own ‘home-grown’ fellowship group in the Taita Hills. Comprised mostly of missionaries and local teachers (the W’s, the S’s, Peter M) we began to meet at Terienyi House [the W’s home], Mbale, and later on at Wundanyi, where our fellowship was extended and we were joined by others in the district (Miss Kate C, Ambrose M, Harold M). Here again music – hymns and choruses – formed an essential part of our worship, and as a generally smaller group we were able to share our personal problems and joys – and to bring them all before the Lord in prayer. We discovered the value of fasting together, as we prayed and prepared for evangelism and outreach through the local churches and schools. Above all, we found it was important to be completely open to the Spirit – for Him to guide and direct us – and lead us on to new things. How important it is to be sensitive and listen to what God is saying: “Behold, I am doing a new thing: now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” (Isaiah 43 v 19)

But more often it was outside the weekly fellowship meetings, in everyday living and working together, that the concept of the Body of Christ really came into its own – greeting each other as we met (“*Bwana asifiwe!* Praise the Lord!”), praying together spontaneously, and speaking the truth to each other in love...

Safari to the top of Yale

On Wednesday I was up at half past five and out the door before 7 for a full day’s *safari*. Early sunshine promised a day of heat, but on reaching Wundanyi the clouds lay thick, covering the tops of Wesu and Yale. I entered mist as I climbed up to Wesu Hospital, and began to ascend towards the saddle. I managed to keep to the correct path as the familiar shape of Yale rock loomed out of the mists. A swift passage through the cool, green upper forests brought me on to the ridge, from which it was a short steep sprint to the summit. I lay down exhausted, taking the water and rolls I had made for lunch (even though it was only half past nine) – and peered into the mist. I was rewarded at length by superb, though interrupted, views as the clouds cleared at intervals. It was possible to see, at different times, the full spread of the Taita Hills, now green and fresh because of the rain – which in places seemed even then to be falling. Vuria, the highest mountain in the Taita Hills, was constantly in cloud, but at times there were views over the plains to the Chulyu Ranges in the north. Immediately below me, the rock of Wesu stood clear and occasionally sunlit; farms, roads, and homesteads rising to the very edge of the cliffs – until, suddenly, the nearby trees became vague shadows, the third peak of Yale pushed its way into the rising mists, and a screen of cloud swept across like a drawn curtain.

I began the descent, making my way down to Werugha and thence to Kituri High School, just as heavy rain began to move in. I sheltered under the eaves of the Willastons’ house, as they were not yet back from closing the school. Presently they returned home and were very pleased to see me, kindly inviting me in to a delicious lunch of *chapattis*, tomatoes, eggs and onions. Robbins returned from the Primary School, having come third in his class. I then made the last part of the journey home in just over an hour, running into some rain between Kituri and Mwanguvi. I reached home feeling very weary, and slept like *kuni* [wood].

Maundy Thursday was a fairly relaxed day. There was a meeting concerning the upcoming KSCF camp at Murray High School, at Terienyi house in the evening.

Good Friday to Easter Sunday

Good Friday began with Mattins at Maynard Church, and then I joined the W's on a moss-collecting expedition to Susu. We had a picnic lunch just beyond the Farmers Training Centre, with views over to the Sagalla Hills. We then climbed up to Susu forest as columns of rain swept across the plains below – a delicate composition of soft greens, blues and greys, looking back across the Taita Hills which rose to the Wesu-Yale massif. There was dismay on reaching the forest, as we found that there had been some tree-felling, with logs systematically sawn up into timber planks – in places the devastation was heart-breaking, particularly for the W's, who had known the forest's former magic. Some of its beauty still remained, however, conveyed in the deep silent carpet of moss, the tall trunks, and the restful hush of wind in the branches high above. Finally we came out on to a spur of rock which formed the head of the mountain. At the foot of the cliff face, which fell away before us, the wind swept over a forest of trees, causing them to sway in harmony like the waves of a turbulent sea. Beyond this lay a ridge that fell steeply on either side, towards Wusi, Murray and Dembwa on our left, and further down into the Bura valley on our right. The latter, a vivid green, rose swiftly on the other side towards the Vuria massif, and beyond it lay the vast expanse of the Tsavo plains – a sea of golden-brown dappled with the blue-grey shadows of clouds. We came down, collecting moss, orchids and ferns for the Easter garden. We then called in at Murray High School and had tea with Aunty Kate, watching the rain sweeping in, once again setting red poinsettias off against a soft grey background.

Easter Saturday saw another attempt at my doing some entertaining, inviting the W's to lunch. It was mostly successful, apart from some minor hitches – the yellow jelly having set hours ahead of the red, which obstinately retained its liquid state; and the coffee having the unmistakable flavour of burnt milk! However, the roast itself was delicious: the best beef I have tasted in Africa, a solid chunk of lean meat weighing nearly 2 kg, purchased for Ksh 8/80 (= 50 to 60p). After lunch, Catharine gave me a much needed haircut.

Easter Sunday 14 April 1974: "*Bwana amefufuka! Amefufuka kweli!*" [The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed!] Holy Communion began at 10.30 am, though the Eucharist itself took place nearer 12.30 pm. This was particularly meaningful, because with a three-hour time difference, I could guess that my family in England would be taking Communion at Legbourne Church (in Lincolnshire) at around the same time! The hymns we sang, though in ki-Dabida, were also the same as the Easter Hymns at Legbourne, and often to the same tunes: "Jesus lives! Thy terrors now can no more, O death appal us... Hallelujah!" Easter lunch of *jogoo* [roast cock] – Peter joined us. Susanna, John and Margaret had made an Easter garden – a green hill of moss on which stood three wooden crosses; a moss-covered tomb of stones surrounded by trees of various descriptions; purple flowers and thorns in front of the hill, to symbolise Christ's passion and suffering; pure white flowers beside the tomb to represent His resurrection. Though the tomb itself had been closed yesterday, the stone was now 'rolled away', and a linen cloth could be seen rolled up on the floor beside. A candle burned at the entrance, to draw attention to the empty tomb and to the miracle that had surely taken place...

East African Safari Rally

Easter Day (continued) – with the afternoon came news of the East African Safari Rally – the third stage, which takes cars through the Taita Hills to Malindi and Mombasa, had started, with cars leaving Nairobi at 1 o'clock. There were now only 20 cars left, out of over 100 starters – such had been the test of the first two stages, in which, for example, many competitors had literally got stuck in the mud near Meru, Mount Kenya. The route from Nairobi would bring cars through Kitui, Kibwezi and into the Taita Hills, via Mbale and Bura. Presently we heard the distant sound of the press / radio aeroplane, herald of the cars themselves. The first car was then sighted at the far end of the Mbale valley, as

Susanna, John and I made our way up to Espy's Corner, one of the toughest hairpin bends of the entire rally. Ten minutes later and the first car was through, skidding around the corners, picking up rapidly on the straight, accelerating towards Espy's Corner – brakes full on, slithering round, tyres ploughing into the road – a momentary pause to allow the back of the car to swing fully round without quite hitting the far bank – gear change down, revs up, and then on up the hill to Wundanyi! Next through was Joginder Singh, the famous 'flying Sikh', in his Mitsubishi Colt Lancer. A dozen or so cars came through over the next hour, after which the activity became less intense, subsequent 'stragglers' limping along with rather less flair. Then it was time for high tea with Easter cake; afterwards I went down to my house and packed for tomorrow's *safari*.

Easter Monday (15 April 1974) – I left the house between half past five and quarter to six, and started walking up the hill to Wundanyi in the dark, and then through a spectacular sunrise. Mwanguvi bridge – "An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'crost the Bay!". Bus down through Mwatate to Voi, arriving at half past eight, before the Safari Rally had returned to the Taita Hills for its final homeward stretch. At nine o' clock, standing on the Nairobi / Mombasa / Voi / Taveta crossroads, I was picked up by a lone Englishman in a red MG sports car. We 'took off', and the speedometer needle quickly swung round to over 160 kph (= 100 mph!). We sped through Ndi, just before the Safari cars were due to emerge from the Taita Hills once again. Crowds were waiting, lining the sides of the roads and at the checkpoints, as on we flew, with press / radio planes circling overhead. Suddenly and without warning, just as we were cruising at over 100 mph between Emali and Sultan Hamud, there were flashing lights behind, and, horns blaring, the two leading Safari cars swept past and streaked on ahead (they must have been doing at least 130 mph!). Again we overtook them as they detoured north to Machakos; and as we approached the City of Nairobi we were still just ahead – the waiting crowds were prepared to cheer us through, some even taking ciné films of us, thinking that we must be one of the Safari cars! By half past eleven, after a hair-raising last stretch, I had got out and was standing on Uhuru Highway among the crowds waiting to cheer the winning Safari cars as they came in to finish the race!

Later that day I booked my rail ticket to Mombasa for Friday. I called in at the CMS Office, which was closed, but had lunch with the R's, where half a dozen other YSAs were gathered. I reached the C's house in the evening. It was good to see them again after nearly five months – the children had grown in leaps and bounds! I enjoyed a relaxed evening, listening to Beethoven's Emperor Concerto, and went to bed early, after a long and eventful day.

YSA get together at Limuru

The following morning I left fairly early and helped Mike F and Steve L get various vehicles either started or mended. There were frustrations at Central Bank trying to obtain permission to buy traveller's cheques, and I managed to get myself into a fair muddle. I met the other YSAs at the Hilton Foyer, and then took a country bus to the Limuru Girls' School for the YSA 'Get Together', arriving just before five pm. It was good to see some 'old' friends again – Ian K, Peter H, Jo and Jackie, Chris L, Laetitia B – and to make some 'new' friends, YSAs who had come out in January: Justin Welby, an old Etonian [destined to become the Archbishop of Canterbury], and Beth and Julia, two very talented musicians who were 'singing the gospel' around the Nakuru Diocese. Dinner was followed by 'Travellers' Tales', an opportunity to show our holiday slides (including Central Province, Turi, Taita Hills and Lake Rudolph). But the session did not last as long as programmed; and as a result we were temporarily at a loose end, and the evening never really 'gelled'.

[In 2014 I sent an email to some CMS friends: "Our (relatively) new Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby was a YSA in Kenya in 1974 – the same year as me, but joining us in January after sitting the Oxbridge exams (from Eton, gaining a

place at Trinity College, Cambridge). I do remember meeting him on one or two occasions at YSA get-togethers, particularly at Limuru in April 1974, at our post-Easter Conference. I remember he struck me as having a 'spiritual awareness' of the things going on around us in Kenya, because in conversation, when we both agreed we were 'really tired' he remarked, 'Yes, and it's also a tiredness that is *not* of this world', i.e. recognising the spiritual dimension to our trials... Interesting!"]

On Wednesday morning we attended a Bible study on Jonah led by Chris C, followed by discussions in groups, and a time of sharing experiences and problems as YSAs. We spent the afternoon singing and listening to songs in the open air, with Chris, Laetitia, Beth and Julia. One song that Chris L sang, I recall, was Adrian Snell's song responding to the popular musical Jesus Christ Superstar; the lyrics went: 'Jesus was no superman, he cried like you and me; and when he died upon the cross, he died in agony'. We then had a short swim in the open-air unheated swimming pool – the surroundings were very English, temperature included! The evening concluded with a CMS film on Kenya: 'Mission Incomplete'.

On Thursday I was a member of the panel for 'Any Questions' Brains Trust, together with Peter H, Rosemary C and Liz D. The questions varied enormously – some simple to answer, others controversial, subjects gravitating around YSA suggestions, Christian ethics and Africa. I remember one of the questions was on which Christian book, apart from the Bible had helped us most. I answered David Wilkerson: 'The Cross and the Switchblade'; but on reflection afterwards, I probably should have answered 'How to Pray' by RA Torrey. The afternoon was spent swimming and in preparation for the evening concert, singing bass in 'And the glory of the Lord...' (from Messiah). The evening entertainment combined some hilarious sketches with some more serious music.

On Friday morning the conference ended with Holy Communion. During the journey back to Nairobi, we discussed holiday plans. Some folk were heading for the coast, with Lamu as their objective; four YSAs were flying to Mombasa by private plane. Others were bound for the west – Kisumu and Eldoret (for a music and drama training festival), and six were making for the Victoria Falls, Zambia, starting with a bus to Dar-es-Salaam. I left my rucksack at the CMS office and rushed down to the Central Bank to try and obtain permission to buy ex-East African travellers cheques. The venture was not wholly successful, as 'they' had retained relevant documents for consideration. Pam (the CMS secretary) said it was just a case of their being difficult, and what I am doing, though unusual, is perfectly legal. I met Peter W in Uhuru Park, as he was taking the R's children for a walk. We treated them to ice creams and rowing around the lakes – which was very reminiscent of Greenwich and London's Regent's Park!

Train from Nairobi to Mombasa

Later that evening I arrived at Nairobi Railway Station in good time, discovering that John P (headmaster of a Harambee school) and Andrew S were also travelling, together with Howard, Laetitia, Anne and Sally. There was a spectacular lightning display over the Ngong Hills as we pulled out of Nairobi at dusk, and it was wonderful to feel the 'rumble of the rails' once again. I had dinner with John and Andrew, and then retired to my compartment at the other end of the train, shared with some American students doing a round-the-world trip, and suffering from 'cultural shock'. The restful, rhythmical movements of the train along the rails soon put me to sleep...

Next morning I awoke as it grew light. It was not quite the same as winding through the Cairngorms in Scotland, as we were very definitely in the middle of the African bush! The sun rising out of the plains on our left was very beautiful, taking me back to that memorable first morning over Kenya as we came into land. Breakfast was announced by a waiter walking up and down the corridors striking chimes on a xylophone! I treated myself to a light breakfast in the dining car – the food was plentiful and the service

excellent. Then there were palm trees, we crossed the causeway, and rolled into the station signed “MOMBASA 54 feet” (indicating the altitude of the station above mean sea level) – the very beginning of the trans-East African railway.

Mombasa and back to Nairobi

We were met by Betty O, who was not expecting a tribe of YSAs! The forenoon was spent in Chris’ house – making plans, catching up on rest and sleep, and getting used to the heat. We walked through the Old Arab Town and ‘did’ Fort Jesus – sadly ‘restored’ in such a way that, from the inside, its romantic charm was lost. Still, the old parts of the fort were very beautiful, and unusual to one used to English architecture. Portuguese in origin, it was used to protect the Town of Mombasa against Arab invasion from the sea. Certainly it commands a fine position, and one can well imagine its having been virtually impregnable from both land and sea (it was not, in fact).

The Saturday evening Christian fellowship meeting was at ‘Pa’ L’s house at Likoni – ‘Pa’, as he was affectionately called, was the former Headmaster of St Andrews School, Turi. This meant we had to cross over from the island by ferry. There I met the two VSOs [Voluntary Service Overseas, a UK Government sponsored organisation] that Chris was telling me about: Paul, teaching at Rabai Secondary School, near Kaloleni, and Ray, working at Mombasa, the Choir Master at the Cathedral. They are both very keen Christians and full of life.

On the Sunday morning I woke up at 09:15, which must be my record for a sleep-in, but I really needed it – the heat fairly knocks you down unless you have a good amount of sleep! We went as a group through the Old Town, seeing the Old Harbour where several *dhow*s were berthed (some YSAs were planning to travel up to Lamu by *dhow*). I am told that with canals instead of streets, the Old Town would be a bit like Venice, though on a less elaborate scale. Certainly it is impressive, though the decay, the crumbling paint and stonework gives one the sad sensation of splendour that has long passed. We had a picnic lunch of bread, garlic sausage, mango and paw-paw in front of Fort Jesus.

In the afternoon we managed to hire taxis to take us to Nyali beach, where we swam in gloriously rough sea with a high and incoming tide. Surfing the waves as they broke was sometimes alarming, as you were likely to be knocked right over by their force, propelled helplessly through the churning waters and thrown on to the shore! It was thus necessary not merely to avoid waves too small to do any good, but also waves big enough to cause possible harm! With this philosophy firmly in mind, we spent a thoroughly enjoyable and exhilarating afternoon.

The day ended with the evening service at the Cathedral, in English. Ian K and I arrived late, having walked all the way – as plans to be collected and driven there had gone curiously astray. It was Evensong, and the Cathedral was much fuller than I had seen it during the morning services. Afterwards we all came together at the O’s to sing and share, over toasted cheese sandwiches, chocolate cookies and iced orange juice.

On Monday morning I made my way to Desmond G’s house, next door to the Catharine Bibby Hospital. Don S and the children were also staying, as Lyn had just had her baby, a boy named Mark, born on 17 April. Desmond decided to take me ‘goggling’ at Nyali, as it was his day off. We spent a fabulous morning taking a rubber dinghy through the shallows, out towards the reef, until we found underwater rock and coral. Then we put on masks and glided under the sunlit waters, over rock formations with outgrowths of coral, which sheltered shoals of brightly coloured tropical fish. For the next hour or two I was transported into a completely different world, and it was difficult to escape from its fascinations – gliding over beds of green weed, through the warmer shallows, and on to the shore again.

We had lunch with the Deputy British High Commissioner at his luxurious house just above the beach. Among those also present were the Chairman of the British Council (Mombasa) and the Liaison Officer for the Royal Navy. It was interesting to be in this kind of society, having also stayed in the homes of rural Africans. A comparison of the two 'societies' enabled me to see them both in a completely different light. In the late afternoon we returned to Mombasa and I swam in the Mombasa Club pool, which I had seen previously from the top of Fort Jesus – palm trees; stone walls mellowed by evening sunshine; deepening sky above; innumerable birds spiralling upwards into the dusk. In the evening we went to Nyali once again, this time to a Gramophone Record Society evening at the aforementioned British Council Chairman's house. The musical program included some Elgar, Bruch's Violin Concerto, and Beethoven's 'The Eroica' Overture.

The next morning I said 'thank you' and goodbye, and took a bus off the island to Changamwe, where I waited for over an hour for a lift to Voi. Eventually the Kaloleni Hospital van took me to the turning, where I waited until the Mombasa to Wundanyi bus came along. Beyond Voi, ascending into the hills the 'back way' (via Mbale), we were suddenly confronted by a stretch of road rendered impassable by a combination of heavy rain and roadworks. The bus stopped and the driver was unable to start the engine again. So he let the bus free-wheel backwards, downhill, until it was stopped by more earthworks, whereupon we all bailed out, and with cries of "*Harambee!*" (in the most literal sense of the word), we all pushed together – uphill! Eventually, after repeated attempts, failures and consequent frustration, we got a roadworks vehicle to give us a tow until the engine could be restarted. Another perilous two hours twisting and turning through the Hills (almost becoming stranded on several occasions) brought me home.

The following day, Wednesday, it was back to Nairobi again, this time in the 'Pink Panther' with the W's, as we were all going to a Conference with Trinity Fellowship (except Susanna and John, who had to go back to school). It was a fast and uneventful journey to Nairobi, and the W's dropped me off in the city centre, after visiting the A's (at Westlands), where the W's were staying. The C's welcomed me warmly when I arrived, after an arduous trek with a heavy rucksack – even though I arrived the day before I had arranged, having got all the dates into a complete muddle! We spent a very enjoyable evening together, shared also with Jess H, the Travelling Secretary for Scripture Union for the whole of Africa. He had visited no less than 46 African countries – a fact that gave rise to much interesting, if mainly political, conversation.

Teaching on the Spirit-filled and Spirit-led life...

From a letter to my parents, written from Nairobi, Wednesday 24 April 1974:

I came up to Nairobi yesterday with the W's, to go to a week's conference with the Trinity Fellowship (equivalent of Fountain Trust in UK), entitled 'Charismatics at Work Convention', and taking place at Lenana School on the Ngong road out of Nairobi. I'm not exactly sure what we'll be in for, but in the words of the programme, the purpose is as follows:

"To understand more clearly what the Holy Spirit is doing and saying throughout the world today; to share teaching on the Spirit-filled and Spirit-led life; and to help Christians enter into their ministries and develop in the spiritual gifts."

It sounds very high-powered I know, but I think the teaching should help me see the Christian life, and the work to which I may be called in the future, in a fuller and more balanced perspective.

This Convention ends on May 1st, after which I'll probably have to return to Taita to collect mail – I have still had no reply from the H's at Lusaka, so that at the moment Zambia is uncertain...

Thursday – a third day of *shauri* with Central Bank. They assured me that permission to obtain non-East African travellers cheques had been granted, and they had sent all relevant documents to the CMS address. I bought a *kitengi* shirt, and had lunch with John C [son of the Bishop of Grimsby] at the Grosvenor Hotel. He brought news from home. He was about to return to Britain to get married. He drove me to Lenana School on Ngong Road, some way out of Nairobi, for the 'Charismatics at Work Convention'. The Convention was opened by Godfrey D, son of the Chairman and founder of Trinity Fellowship (and who had given me a lift in the Taita Hills during my first month in Africa). There was a feeling of slight apprehension that first evening, not really knowing what we were in for, and it was very, very cold at night!

Charismatics at Work Convention, Lenana High School, Nairobi

As recorded in my diary:

Friday 26 April to Wednesday 1 May 1974 – Lenana High School is set in a beautiful forest, looking out on to brilliant flowers and green fields. The temperatures are decidedly low, with nights accompanied by rain, so that they do not differ very much from English April evenings! Those attending the Convention included several missionaries and volunteers (*wazungu*): American, Canadian and English (VSOs). One VSO, John M has just finished Engineering at Cambridge and attends St Matthews Church! There was only one other YSA, Kay T from Kisumu, who arrived on Saturday. There were some missionary families, including of course the W's, and the Convention was run by Trinity Fellowship, an inter-denominational, evangelistic organization, staffed mainly by Africans. Those who spoke at the teaching sessions included David A, an English missionary from Dar-es-Salaam, Bob M, on tour from America (New York), Godfrey D, Nelson M (also from Trinity Fellowship), Miss Sylvia S (Headmistress of a Secondary School in Western Province), Ted K and George N (from Nairobi), Elijah A and Dr David G (from Kenyatta Hospital)...

I recall that John and Brenda F, missionaries from Nakuru, were also there, since they were the ones who recorded the prophecy given to me later on during the Conference. There was also a Swedish missionary couple working in Dar-es-Salaam, and a single Canadian lady.

The aim of the talks was to instruct as well as to inspire – and this was definitely achieved. It was certainly good to hear uncompromising and clearly reasoned teaching on subjects such as dedication, the Church as the Body of Christ, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, sacrifice, growing in the Christian Faith and suffering. The talks were well related, both to the Scriptures and to present-day Christian experience.

We all came away having benefitted a great deal – refreshed spiritually, and better equipped to continue as Christians in our various places of service. Particularly exciting were the times of corporate worship, highlighted at the Sunday Communion itself, in which it seemed that all barriers of denomination, nationality and colour were completely broken down. This I felt was the much desired 'Ecumenical Movement' – not preached in theory, but actually experienced.

My notebook records many of the talks given during the Conference:

The theme of the Conference, as it turned out, was really on 'Knowing Jesus'. A chorus we sang frequently went: "More about Jesus would I know..."

*More about Jesus I would know,
More of His grace to others show;
More of His saving fullness see,
More of His love who died for me.*

*Chorus: More, more about Jesus,
More, more about Jesus;*

*More of His saving fullness see,
More of His love who died for me...*

Paul wrote to the Philippians:

Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things... in order that I may gain Christ... *that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings...* (Philippians 3 v 8, 10)

that I may know Him...

Our faith becomes firm when we find Jesus to be real. The promises of God find their fulfilment in Him:

Jesus Christ... was not Yes and No; but in Him it is always Yes. For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him. That is why we utter the Amen through Him, to the glory of God. (2 Corinthians 1 v 19)

In Revelation 3 v 14, Jesus is described as “the Amen, the faithful and true witness”. We need to know in our hearts by experience that He is utterly trustworthy, so that through Him we can say with conviction, “Yes, the promises of God are true for me today; Jesus Christ is real to me”.

Because thy steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise thee. So I will bless thee as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on thy name. (Psalm 63 v 3, 4)

And we sang:

Who is like unto Thee, O Lord among gods?

Who is like unto Thee, glorious in holiness?

Fearful in praises, doing wonders, who is like unto Thee?

and the power of His resurrection...

This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this which you see and hear. (Acts 2 v 32, 33)

And in one day a new nation was born – the community of new believers – a new people who could satisfy God, a people who had a heart for God, through whom he could communicate his manifold personality... Bob M went on to describe some of the characteristics of the New Community – brought into being by the power of the Resurrection – the manifestations and gifts of the Holy Spirit:

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be uninformed... (1 Corinthians 12 v 1)

We talked about the life of the early Church, and the blueprint of the New Community:

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (Acts 2 v 42)

and may share His sufferings...

There was a talk on Moses, the man who made right choices:

He considered abuse suffered for the Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he looked to the reward. (Hebrews 11 v 26)

The challenge:

So Jesus also suffered outside the gate... Therefore let us go forth to Him *outside the camp*, bearing abuse for Him. (Hebrews 13 v 12, 13)

Are we willing to pass through the gates – of security, popularity, respect – to bear the reproach that comes from obeying God? In the midst of rejection, loneliness, despair, we can ask, “Is this how *you* feel, Jesus?” And he will reply, “Yes, and I’m so glad to have you to share it with me.” We are seated with Him in the heavenly places, to share His sufferings, and for Him to share in our sufferings.

For we are His workmanship (Ephesians 2 v 10) – Greek *ποίημα* = literally ‘poem’ or beautiful created work of art. God is working meticulously in each one of us, so that we become conformed to the image of His Son. He looks not at ourselves as we are now, but at our fulfilment in His Son. As a potter perfects a piece of clay because he sees in it a beautiful vase, so – as the Father works in us – He keeps His eye on His Son, until He sees in us a perfect replica of Him...

that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. (Philippians 3 v 10)

Nairobi prophecy

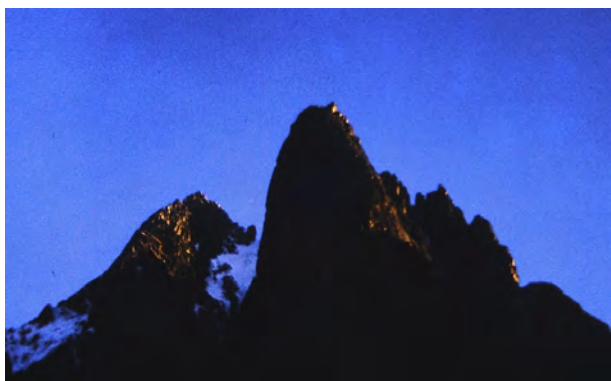
One morning, towards the end of the Conference, we came together before the Lord and waited upon Him. Bob felt he could not give the talk he had prepared – he wanted to see what the Lord would do. There was an air of expectation, of anticipation, as we watched and prayed... and then the Lord ministered to us in the power of His Spirit. Those needing special ministry came forward, and as Bob prayed for each person in turn, words of prophecy were given.

When my turn came, the Lord spoke to me [actual words, as recorded on tape, and later transcribed on to a sheet of paper, handwritten in pencil, and given to me – and I still have that piece of paper]:

My son, the Lord would say to thee that thou shalt stand firm and shalt not waver. Thou hast been easily influenced to go here, to go there, to do this and to do that, and I have not always led you. You have always thought that I have led you, but I have not always led you.

The Lord would say to thee that I am bringing a fresh stability into thy life and I will truly lead you by My Spirit, and there shall be a strength imparted to thee that shall be a wonder to those around you, and they shall see what I have done in thy life; they shall see the breaking, and the melting, and the softness and the gentleness that I am bringing about in thy life, and rejoice, and that also I will lead thee in such a way that they shall not be able to influence thee, but thou shalt influence them – even the people you work with shall be influenced by that which I am doing in thy life, and they shall be drawn to Me as they see the strength and stability in thy life which I am doing, says the Lord.

Illustrations to follow Chapter 5



Left: Mount Kenya peaks at dawn – 1 January 1974



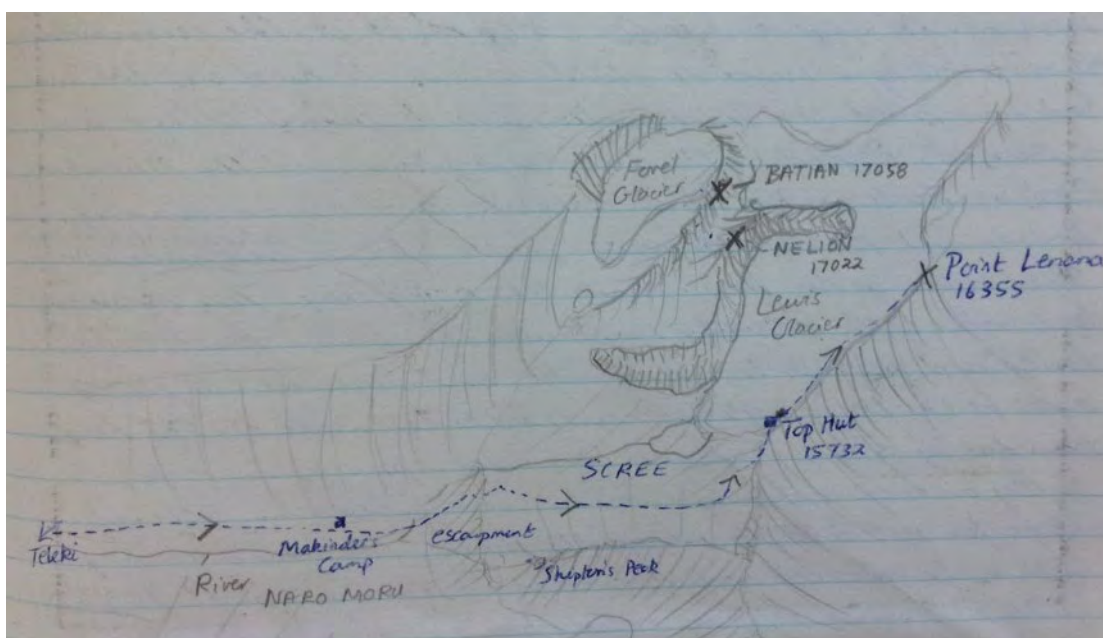
Right: Point John rock spire at dawn



Teleki Valley, Aberdares in distance



Near Top Hut and Austrian Hut





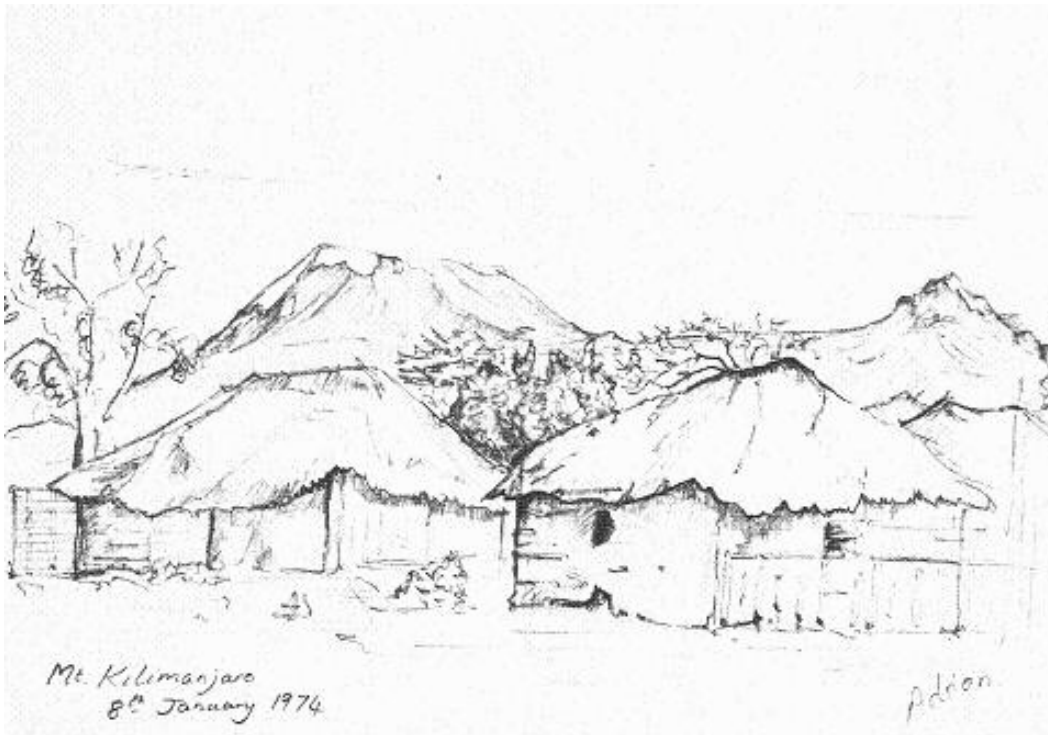
Point Lenana summit – 1 January 1974

Left to right: Philip, Anne, Steve, our guide, Jackie, Howard

Left: Point Lenana in the distance



Ice caves on the way to Point Lenana



Sketch of view from the Ms' house, towards neighbouring houses at Riata Kitobo - Mount Kilimanjaro in the background

8 January 1974



Front of house of Thomas M, Kitobo Riata, Kenya (Taveta)

8 January 1974



Thomas M's father, Meshack M –
photograph kindly given to me during
my stay with Thomas' family in Taveta



Sketch of the North Pare mountains, Tanzania, from Riata Kitobo
9 January 1974

View over Lake Chala, Mawenzi in the
background

10 January 1974



View over Lake Chala
10th Jan 1974

Illustrations to follow Chapter 6



Mgalu High School – main school building from the foot of the valley close to my house

On the way to morning Assembly

February 1974



Form I students after Assembly filing out of the Form IV classroom. Students in higher forms have uniforms (far left of right picture)



The road to Figinyi, showing the village of Iriwa in the middle distance

Prayer Mount in the far distance

(3 February 1974)



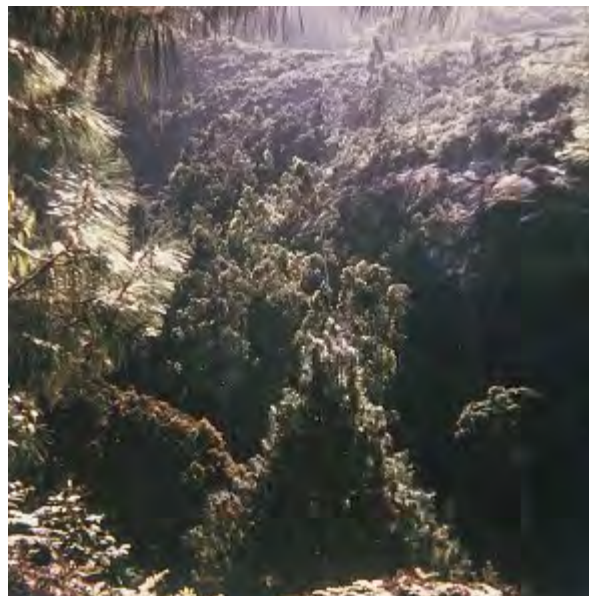
"give thanks in all circumstances..."

A flamboyant tree



"Down into the dark steep sides of a valley, with the sun ahead cresting the tops of trees..."

(9 February 1974)



Mgalu High School – main school building, on the way to morning Assembly, on a sunny morning...



Left: lunch at the boy's Boarding Hostel



Right: Aggrey (centre) and two other teachers!



Lunch at the girls' Boarding Hostel...



Left: Nyali Beach, Mombasa

Below: shipping – modern (left) and traditional dhow (right)



Chris at Nyali Beach...



Illustrations to follow Chapters 7 and 8



Photographs of North-west Scotland –

Top left: Cul Mhor

Top right: Suilven

Bottom left: Inverpolly Lodge (near Lochinver)

Bottom right: waves breaking



My desk, and the black-and-white photographs of Scotland that inspired and encouraged me as I worked...

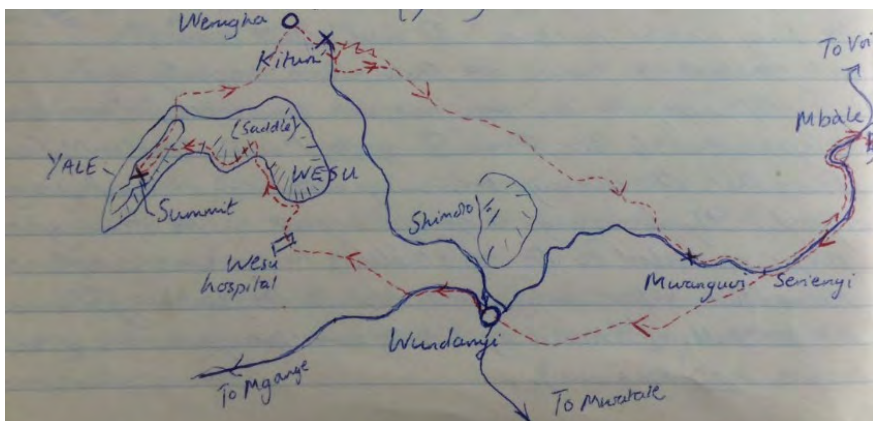
(some of the photographs are shown above)



Left:
Delirious tea-
pickers



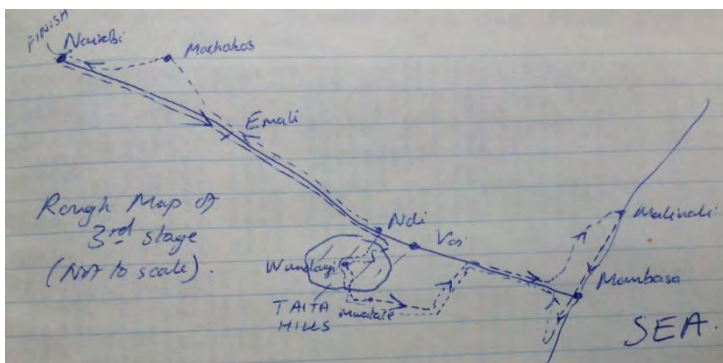
Right:
Maggie
Smith seated
demurely on
a donkey



Map showing safari to the top of Yale and back
(10 April 1974)



Good Friday (12 April 1974, top of Mount Susu: W family (left to right), Margaret, Susanna, Andrew, John, Catharine



The route of Stage 3 of the East African Safari Rally



Joginder Singh ('the flying Sikh') negotiating Espy's Corner



Approaching Espy's Corner



Joginder Singh arriving in Nairobi

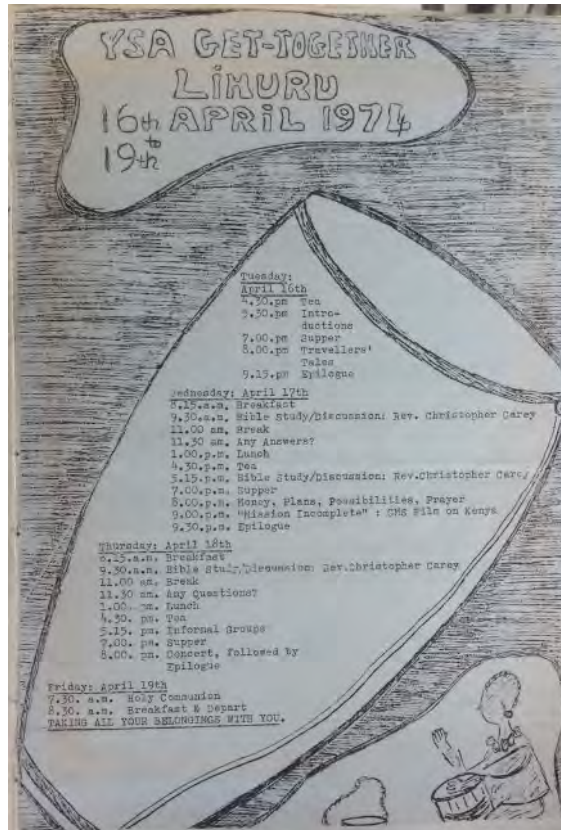


Arrival in Nairobi



Above: Our Nairobi to Mombasa overnight train was like this (Source: Google images)

Right: Invitation and programme for YSA Conference at Limuru



Some YSAs after the YSA Limuru Conference: second and third from left are Beth and Julia, who were singing the gospel round Kenya; Chris in the centre; Laetitia and Richard on far right



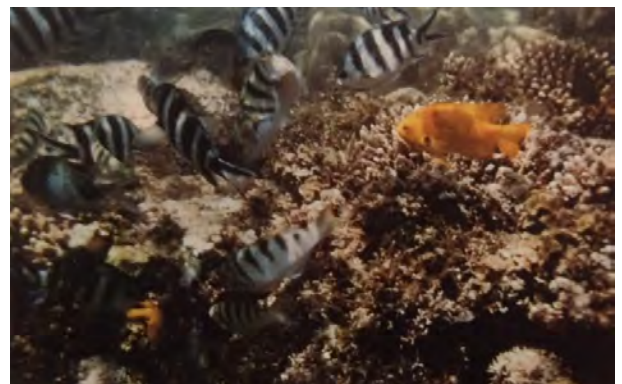
Nyali Beach, Mombasa



Fort Jesus, Mombasa



Fort Jesus, Mombasa



CHAPTER 9: ZAMBIA AND BACK TO THE TAITA HILLS

May 1974

The conference went well...

From a letter to my parents from Mbale, Thursday 2 May 1974

The Conference went well and I felt it was really worthwhile. It was held at Lenana School, between Nairobi and Ngong, in a beautiful setting of forest, flowers and green fields. However it was very cold at times! We had rain most evenings, and they were really no different from April evenings in England! There were a lot of young people there: American, Canadian and British... One of the VSO volunteers was John M, who has just completed Engineering at Cambridge, so we had some long conversations, and he gave me some useful tips about Cambridge life. There were also overseas missionaries from other parts of the country.

The Conference was run by the Trinity Fellowship, an inter-denominational organisation based near Kisumu, so the staff were for the most part African. The spiritual side was valuable. The talks were given by a variety of people – one a missionary from Dar-es-Salaam, another on tour from America. Their purpose was to instruct as well as to inspire – and I think they did both. It was certainly good to hear uncompromising and clearly reasoned teaching, related both to the Scriptures and to present-day Christian experience. It was also exciting to see, in times of corporate worship, and the Communion itself, denominational, social, national and colour barriers almost completely broken down. This, I felt, was the much desired 'Ecumenism' – not so much preached in theory as actually put into practice...

Miracle journey to Zambia

Based on my diary notes:

Wednesday 1 May 1974 – returned to the Taita Hills in the 'Pink Panther' with the W's, to collect mail. We called in at Kibera New Flats to see Harold and Gladys M (Gladys had formerly been teaching at St Mary's Lushangoni) – who had just had a daughter named 'Asante'. This means 'Thank you' – an expression of appreciation for her safe arrival, as their previous offspring had died in infancy. I called in at the C's to see if mail had arrived from Luanshya, but they were out. Pleasant arrival in the Hills, looking luxuriously green and well-forested in the late evening sun.

Thursday 2 May 1974 – Jackson arrived early with the mail. The long-awaited letter from Luanshya to inform me of travel arrangements was at last in my hands. Eagerly I opened it and read:

Dear Adrian, Thank you so much for your welcome letter dated 1st April, which reached me only on the 9th. I went straight to the local travel agent, and this is what he came up with:

Depart Nairobi 2/5/74 at 14:25 hrs on QZ 511
 Arrive Lusaka 2/5/74 at 17:30...
 Arrive N'dola...

But "2/5/74" was today, so I thought all was lost! However, Andrew saw my predicament and advised me to make a telephone call to the Zambian Airways Office as soon as possible, to have my flight changed.

Why had the letter taken so long to reach me? Well, it had arrived at Iriwa on April 19th. It was then unexpectedly collected and retained by Rhoda, the School Secretary. When I came to collect the mail on April 23rd, the Post Mistress gave me to understand that *all* my mail had been collected by the W's. In fact only two letters, received on request, came

into their hands, the rest being with Rhoda. I was not aware of this, and had assumed that no other letters had arrived.

So I went up to Wundanyi with Andrew, who had some shopping to do (Catharine was in bed, down with malaria). I tried to book a call through to Nairobi, only to be told by the operator that all the telephone lines were down. Andrew saw the absolute necessity of informing the Zambian Airways Office of my cancellation before the time of departure, so he very kindly took me on to Voi. After two attempts, taking nearly 2 hours (and when Andrew was about to give it up as a lost cause), I *finally* managed to contact the office and book a reservation for the next possible Zambian Airways flight to Lusaka: May 8th. Then I sent a cable to Luanshya; and resolved to return to Nairobi the next day, and carry out full negotiations with the airline office, to see if I could get an earlier flight.

Friday 3 May 1974 – Lift to Voi, as Andrew and the Rev John N were on their way to Mombasa for a conference. I began hitch-hiking at 07:30, and within 15 minutes, some Asians in a Peugeot 404 picked me up, taking me as far as Mtito Andei (though, not being very communicative, they never said this and I assumed they were going to Nairobi). The early morning views of Mount Kilimanjaro were superb. After waiting another half hour, I managed to 'pick up' a Mercedes (one of my ambitions fulfilled!), and thus met Mr and Mrs Rudra de Z, who were returning to Nairobi after a holiday in Kenya, hiring a Mercedes, and were booked to fly to Lusaka and N'dola, Zambia, where they lived (= my destination) the very next day! Amazing! They were able to give me some useful information about the frequency of flights from Lusaka to N'dola and the relative locations of N'dola and Luanshya! The rest of the journey was whiled away in a fascinating conversation about the 'usefulness' of missionary work in African countries – though Mr de Z was convinced that they had failed, because the people of Africa were much more effectively ministered to by the indigenous Church (which is mainly true). I pointed out that the strong indigenous Church which exists today (certainly in Kenya) would not be possible without a history of foreign missionary activity – and that the role of the missionary in Africa today was as much to enrich and instruct the Church, as to preach the Gospel to Africans directly.

I was in Nairobi by 12 noon, for the second time running! Within the space of an hour, I met six other YSAs, including Laetitia and Howard who had returned from a blissful six days in Lamu. I was in the Zambian Airways Office at 2 o'clock, when it opened. Much to my relief I found that cholera inoculations (which were liable to delay me some time) were not necessary for Zambia; and although they had nothing to offer in the way of flights until May 6th at the earliest, East African Airways (EAA) had room for me on a flight leaving for Lusaka at 09:30 the very next morning! So, I made reservations, got my tickets, and, after collecting the permission letter from the Central Bank at the CMS office, managed to buy some travellers' cheques a few minutes before the commercial banks closed.

I reached the C's just in time for a children's Sunday school party. I remember they sang; "Stand up, clap hands, shout 'Thank you Lord, thank you for the world I'm in'... for happiness and peace within..." and I spent an interesting evening with CMS missionaries from Uganda who were staying. The missionaries said they had no time for President Idi Amin – living in Uganda they suffered the constant insecurity of being ruled by a 'dreamer'.

Saturday 4 May 1974 – Mrs C ran me into Nairobi in time to catch the Airport bus from the EAA terminal in Koinange Street. There I met the de Z's again, who had spent the night in the Panafric Hotel. The bus left at 07:30 in order to be at Embakasi Airport by 08.00. Five miles from the airport, we slowed down, drew into the side and came to an ominous standstill. We were out of petrol! I'd hate to think what would happen if EAA were as careless with their planes as they are with their buses! Eventually another vehicle was flagged down and we arrived in plenty of time.

We took off around 10 o'clock, bound for Dar-es-Salaam and Lusaka. Our view of the Athi plains, where we crossed the Mombasa road and railway, was soon obscured by cloud. However, a few moments later Mount Meru, rising above the cloud level could be seen on the horizon on our right, and finally the familiar shape of Mount Kilimanjaro came

into full and spectacular view. Kibo, Mawenzi, and the saddle between were all clearly visible, as was the Kibo crater itself. I made a mental note of the relative positions of Gilman's Point and Uhuru peak – the highest point in the whole of Africa.

The next excitement was the coast, which we seemed to follow from Tanga down to Dar-es-Salaam. We had a fine view of the harbour and historical part of the city, until we came into land amid palm trees and in overwhelming heat. For the next part of the journey, from Dar-es-Salaam to Lusaka, we flew over vast stretches of forest and bush, cut by occasional tracks and rivers overflowing their banks, and we crossed over Lake Malawi, before coming into land at Lusaka at 13:15, Zambian time. First formality, health check: I was afraid they would ask to see cholera certificates, which I had not had time to renew; I was just getting prepared for explanations, when the health official informed me that he only wanted to see the smallpox certificate. The passport check and immigration questionnaire were also accepted with little comment. I was then passed through customs without challenge, even though the people before me had every part of their baggage checked. I rounded a corner, and found myself in the main hall of Lusaka Airport, and so I entered ZAMBIA.

There was a three-hour wait until the next flight to N'dola, which was fortunately not yet full. After watching the sun set over the Zambian bush, we took to the air once again, and enjoyed the unusual sensation of seeing the sun 'un-set', and the vivid orange glow increase as we gained height. 20 minutes after take-off we were told to fasten our seat-belts for landing at N'dola – on the Copperbelt, near the border with Zaire. 19:00 – I walked to the airport shed, to find there was no one to meet me. My latest Telex message from Nairobi, to say that I was due on this flight, had evidently failed to get through. As I was discussing the possibilities of taxis with the de Z's, fortunately someone who was going to Kitwe offered to drive me to Luanshya (which was almost on his way). When we reached the township, he very kindly found Funyama Avenue, and left me at No 90.

So I had arrived – only to find that the H's were out! Since the lights were on and the dog was at large in their backyard, I could be sure that they had only gone out for the evening; so I waited... and waited... and waited... as it seemed the whole of Luanshya passed by – either in cars, or on motorbikes, or in buses, or as pedestrians chatting and holding lighted cigarettes. Alone, in a strange country, at night, and forewarned that the crime rate in this area was high – and yet, for hardly a moment did I really feel lonely or afraid...

Then just after midnight, cold and exhausted, a Mercedes drew up, with Maurice and Elaine H and their 15 year old son Graeme! I was duly swept into a hot bath, followed by a very welcome hot meal, and much conversation and explanations, and eventually got into bed at about half past one!

Zambia reflections

(from 'The Real Africa', written a few years later)

Perhaps the highlight of the Easter Vacation was a trip to Zambia – though its real value lay not so much in the holiday itself as in the incredible journey out there, and the vivid impressions on return...

[Then follows an account of the journey that closely follows the diary entries recorded above. Picking up the story...]

The domestic flight to N'dola left some three hours later, after I watched the sun go down over the Zambian bush. When we took to the air again, we enjoyed the unusual sensation of seeing the sun 'unset', and the orange glow in the west increase as we gained height. Then it was only a few minutes before we saw the lights of the Copperbelt towns, near the border with Zaire – a chain of civilization amid the dark expanse of the African bush. Finally N'dola airport – no one to meet me, but after some discussion with the holidaymakers I had met in Kenya, a kind man (God's helper!) who was going to Kitwe came up and offered to take me

into Luanshya (which was sort of on the way) and even helped me find the house on Funyama Avenue – but the H's were out, and for four hours I was left sitting on the front door step – watching, it seemed, the whole of Luanshya go by – in cars and buses, or as pedestrians with cigarettes...

...alone, in a strange country at night. I read Psalm 27, written by David when he was running away from Saul, and was not a little comforted:

The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?

²When evildoers assail me
to eat up my flesh,
my adversaries and foes,
it is they who stumble and fall.

³Though an army encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;
though war arise against me,
yet I will be confident.

¹³I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living!

¹⁴Wait for the LORD;
be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for the LORD!

(Psalm 27 v 1 to 3, 13 to 14)

Luanshya and copper mines

The diary continued:

Sunday 5 May 1974 – Breakfast around 10 am. Maurice took Graeme and me on a quick tour of the copper mines around Luanshya. We saw places where the land had completely subsided, because copper sulphide ore had been extracted from the boat-shaped ore-body beneath. At Baluba shaft we saw electrically operated ore and personnel lifts in operation. We also passed one of the longest conveyor belts in the world, for transporting freshly mined copper ore to the smelters in the industrial area of Luanshya. We took a close look at slime settling tanks, close to the smelters. After lunch I was completely flat out, waking up in time for tea, and looking at H family photographs, including ones of Whatton Manor in Nottinghamshire, where Thomas Dickinson H, our common ancestor had lived in the eighteenth century. I took part in a long-drawn-out conversation on African politics, in particular: a comparison of life in Zambia during Federal days and after Independence; the relationship between Zambia and Rhodesia [now Zimbabwe]; Britain's 'misguided' financial support of anti-Rhodesian freedom fighters; South Africa and the Apartheid regime.

Monday 6 May 1974 – I spent the morning in the township of Luanshya, choosing some *kitengi* material to take back to my family back home. Maurice took me round the industrial and mining sections of the town, and I observed that the African miners' compound was in the direct path of the smelter fumes, except during the rains, when the wind blows the other way and it is the Europeans' turn to 'enjoy' industrially polluted air! In the afternoon we took a trip to Kitwe, one of the largest towns on the Copperbelt, and very European in architectural style. In the evening we took Digory, the black Labrador, for a walk on a nearby golf course. The moon rose as dusk fell; and I observed that the face we are used to seeing in Britain was now completely on its side, so that we now saw a sadder, gentler face – the Zambians say they can see a rabbit-in-the-moon! The

Southern Cross was unexpectedly high, and I was able to plot a rough position of the astral South Pole, by bisecting the angle between the upright of the Cross and a line joining the pointers. In this respect I was quite surprised to be able to see the Plough, upside-down, its pointers leading the observer towards the North Pole, now about 15° below the horizon. We made preparations for an early departure for Livingstone.

Musi-oa-Tunya (Victoria Falls)

The next day Maurice took Graeme and me on a trip to Livingstone and the world-famous Victoria Falls. We left Luanshya at 06:45, making good time down the main N'dola road, through Broken Hill (where the first mining in Zambia took place), and reaching Lusaka, the capital of Zambia, by 10 o'clock. We passed through dense and unvarying bush, whose trees were much higher and fuller than those of the Kenyan bush. We did a quick tour of the city, which looked similar to Nairobi, but not as impressive, and containing many architectural 'follies', such as blocks of flats with circular windows! We had lunch with the V's, bankers from England and Luanshya. To get to their house, we had to pass President Kaunda's residence, which was built in an English style, with its entrance ominously guarded by armed troops.

Then we were on our way to Livingstone, passing through the township of Kafue, which derives its name from the second largest river in Zambia, which we crossed before winding through hill country, and levelling out on to more plains of bushland. Darkness fell before we reached the 'Tourist Capital of Zambia'. We proceeded 5 miles south, to the Musi-oa-Tunya Hotel, located within a few hundred yards of the Victoria Falls. We caught fleeting glimpses of the Zambezi river as we approached, and within a few minutes we were able to see a bank of mist rising up out of the river: spray from the Victoria Falls, called by the Zambians, 'Musi-oa-Tunya', the 'smoke that thunders'. After checking in at the hotel, we walked to the East Cataract and saw, for the first time, the Victoria Falls by night, sideways-on and brilliantly floodlit. Because there had been heavy rains in West Africa two months previously, the river was now in full spate. Colossal volumes of bright blue-green luminous water cascaded over the edge of the gorge, disappearing in a deep thunderous roar, partly re-emerging as mist clouds so dense that it was possible only to see a section of the Falls at any one time. The view, upstream, of pale water falling against the deeper background of the night, was most dramatic. We had dinner, then early bed – I was sharing a room with Graeme, which contained an *en-suite* bathroom.

Next day we spent the entire morning looking at this amazing geological phenomenon, where for 360 feet, the great Zambesi river, nearly a mile wide, suddenly becomes vertical, and emerges through a narrow system of gorges, not more than 100 yards in width. The Victoria Falls looked very spectacular in daylight because of the rainbow, which became especially distinct when the sun came out. In the other direction, downstream, was the famous single-span railway bridge that connects Zambia to Rhodesia, though for scandalous political reasons the border was officially closed. I took an incriminating photograph of a stationary train that was carrying illegal Rhodesian coal into Zambia!

Graeme and I crossed the 'knife-edge' pedestrian bridge, having to pass through a rain-cloud of spray, on to an island in the middle of the river, enabling us to obtain a complete, though indistinct view of the Victoria Falls. We then made our way through dense tropical rain forest (infested with black widow spiders) down to the water's edge to see the so-called 'boiling pot'. This was where the fast-moving waters of the gorge rebound from obstructing cliffs to create a violent system of whirlpools and eddy currents. From here we obtained a more detailed view of the Rhodesian railway bridge, and heard the train begin to move away, supposedly bound for Zaire, from where freight can legally be re-shuttled back into the Republic of Zambia! As the train passed near the hotel, on its

way to Livingstone, Maurice saw that many of the trucks were full of copper mining equipment, sure to be discharged before crossing the Zairean border.

We enjoyed a refreshing midday swim in the hotel pool, while Maurice mended the generator of the Mercedes. Then we drove through the township of Livingstone, now a ghost town, as the Europeans had left and there was little tourist trade. We went on to the game-park, close to the Zambezi riverside. Animals such as crocodiles, snakes, lions, cheetahs and leopards were sadly confined to cages and fenced areas, which destroyed the effect of seeing animals 'in the wild'. However, the main park, small as it was, proved to be well stocked with buck, wildebeest, zebra, marabou storks and baboons, which we fed with bananas and oranges. We returned at dusk, and took the car to the Fourth Gorge, some way downstream of the Falls. From there we could look across to the ill-famed power station, on the side of the Third Gorge, from which two Canadian tourists on the Rhodesian side were maliciously shot. In reply to worldwide indignation, President Kaunda had replied that these girls (along with an American couple who were shot at, but got away) were dressed in diving suits, and intended to cross the turbulent Zambesi river in a 'silent pool', to sabotage the all-Zambian power station! What our unbiased papers (in the free world) failed to tell us was that this power station also supplied power to the Rhodesian side – we could see clearly two sets of power lines crossing over the gorge. We looked long and hard for the 'silent pool', through which it was allegedly possible to cross the raging river waters. As we returned, the mists rising in a line above the plains turned purple as the sun sank.

The following morning we had an early breakfast, and reached Lusaka at half past two, calling in once again at the V's. I remember sitting in the back of the car, looking out of the back window, and having a long season of silent prayer for many ex-Haileybury friends. We ran into heavy rain and darkness on the N'dola road, reaching Luanshya by half past seven.

Copperbelt and return to Kenya

The diary notes continue:

Friday 10 May 1974 – this turned out to be a very 'technical' day, in which Maurice took us down the Baluba mine shaft. We kitted up at Irwin – the weather outside was cold, rainy and misty, typical May weather for Britain, but quite unheard-of in Zambia during winter! We walked down to the 80 m level, and saw the top of a raise-borer, a hydraulic machine for boring holes in rock, 6 ft in diameter, and over 100 ft deep. From the base, a pilot hole 12 inches in diameter is bored downwards to the 120 m ore-pass. A circular cutting ring (6 ft in diameter) is fitted on to the rods, and the machine both raises and rotates the cutter, until the 80 m level is reached and the hole is complete. We proceeded to the 120 m level, to see that the miners had detached the pilot drill, and were preparing to affix the cutting reamer. It was all extremely interesting from an engineering point of view. We also saw a rail-shoveler at work, operated entirely by compressed air – which helps to lower the mine temperature, and reduces air pollution by exhaust fumes. We came back up 'into the land of the living', by Benford truck, with other miners, very many of whom were European.

In the afternoon we made a trip to N'dola to confirm air ticket bookings. We saw Mr Z at Eagle Travel – a very helpful travel agent, who had arranged my outward flight. In the evening I got involved in a conversation that gravitated around mysticism, clairvoyance, theosophy and Christianity! Elaine also supplied me with various medicines, and gave me due warning that I was physically run-down, and advice that I should try to recover my normal state of health before returning to Britain...

Saturday 11 May 1974 – Early start and drive to N'dola airport. The flight to Lusaka was late, due to fog. There were scores of schoolchildren all on their way to Rhodesia, having to go through Blantyre (Malawi) because of the border closure. Sad farewells to Maurice,

Elaine and Graeme, thanking them for an enjoyable and extremely interesting stay in Zambia.

We boarded the plane which was propeller-powered, and took an unsteady hour to get to Lusaka, never effectively rising above the clouds. We saw some of the school students off on to the Blantyre flight, on arrival. We then waited 4 or 5 hours in Lusaka until take-off at 15:30 for Dar-es-Salaam and Nairobi in an East African Airways VC10 jet. Just before descending into Dar-es-Salaam we witnessed the most beautiful spectacle imaginable. The earth beneath was almost completely dark, as the local time was 18:30; the sun however was still visible from the air, sinking fast below the level of the clouds – which were arrayed in complex formations, so that towering grey masses of storm clouds were raised above the main cloud layer; and as the sun drew level, they were like islands in a lake of fire. Just before 9 pm, a mass of lights below and to our left revealed the City of Nairobi, and a few minutes later the wheels touched the tarmac and we re-entered Kenya. Out through immigration formalities in 15 minutes, and bus into town, where I was met by Harry C.

Sunday 12 May 1974 – I awoke at a quarter to seven, the alarm having failed to go off! I had a ‘panic breakfast’ – that is, Harry very kindly fixed me a ‘banana sandwich’, after which he managed to get me on to the OTC bus to Wundanyi, which left at 5 minutes past seven! So I returned to the green coolness of the Taita Hills, and reached Wundanyi around 5 pm where I met the S’s, who had just returned from Mombasa with the baby. They took my rucksack with them in the car, while I walked back to Mbale and received a warm welcome from Peter, and then later the W’s.

Though Zambia was a fascinating experience, and I very much enjoyed staying with the H cousins, I nevertheless felt it really good to be back in the Taita Hills. While I never had the chance really to meet the Zambian people, I got the impression that their culture was less ‘Christian’, more true to the original tribal culture of Africa, than is the case here in Kenya; and that native traits of character lie closer to the surface there. It is possible that infiltration by Europeans, including some inevitable exploitation and unsuccessful missionary activity, had caused some of the bitterness amongst themselves, and a clear lack of friendliness (if not hostility) towards strangers. Here in the Taita Hills of Kenya, very little of this was apparent, and I felt a real warmth and sense of welcome on my return...

Letter from Elaine H to my mother, 13 May 1974

Letter from Mrs Elaine H, written from 90 Funyama Avenue, Luanshya, Zambia, to my mother dated 13 May 1974:

My dear Mary, As I sit down to write this to you, your very charming son should be back at his bush school deep in the turmoil that usually accompanies the beginning of a new term, as I believe school started for the Kenya children today, as it has done for ours here. I hope he is not too tired after his whirlwind visit to us – achieved after a series of crossed messages, postal delays that can hardly be credible, and undelivered telexes and telegrams – added to all these obstacles was the fact that the school secretary played it ultra-safe with Adrian's post, and he did not receive his air ticket till a fortnight after it had arrived at the school and so did not know what arrangements had been made for his travelling to Zambia. When Adrian had finally caught up with affairs it was impossible for him to leave Nairobi as arranged, so he had the trouble of contacting the Zambian airline office in Nairobi to re-arrange the times and dates of his journey, and sent us a telegram to say he would be arriving on the 8th instead of the 2nd as expected. As he was due to return on the 11th to be back in time for the first day of term, it did not give him much time to be with us, or to see much of Zambia as the distances here are calculated in hundreds of miles quite literally.

On the night of the 4th we had arranged a small dinner party with friends in the expectation of Adrian being with us, to look at some of the slides our friends had taken on their many travels overseas and in Africa, as we thought this was a way of giving Adrian an impression of the country – albeit second-hand – and a basis for comparison

between the totally different ways of life. We carried on with the arrangement in spite of the fact that Adrian was not to be with us after all, although we had met the plane he should have been on in N'Dola the night of the 2nd; and again the first plane in from Lusaka the following morning in case he had been left behind there, hung up by Customs and Immigration formalities which is a frequent occurrence here – so we had resigned ourselves to seeing him on the 8th as stated in his telegram which arrived much later on the 3rd, but not before Zambia Airways had sent off signals to Nairobi enquiring about Adrian and his whereabouts. So, as I said, we went off to our dinner party on the 4th and returned about midnight with the temperature falling rapidly as a prelude to a spell of rain and cold – most unusual for this part of the world as our rainy season ended long ago.

To our surprise (which is putting it mildly), a long shadow untangled itself from the pillar near the front door, and seemed to be rising out of a haversack on the ground. It was Adrian who had been waiting on the doorstep for about four hours for our return, having arrived earlier than his telegram indicated, and been fortunate enough to find a kind stranger at the airport who was travelling to Kitwe (some 32 miles west of Luanshya), who was willing to take a 16 mile detour into Luanshya and find the house before dropping Adrian off and going on his way! There are no buses at that time of night and taxis are not easily found either, nor are they very safe for a variety of reasons – so I am very grateful to Adrian's unknown benefactor who knew local conditions better than Adrian could have imagined, as he is still very idealistic and trusting of humanity. I fear he will think us beyond redemption with our views on local politics and practical living in the circumstances of Africa in rapid change and transition. However, he will have much to think about this last term in the Hills, which he says he is looking forward to as a grand finale to his African experience prior to his going up to Cambridge in September.

Maurice and Graeme took him to Livingstone to see the Falls and at least have a look at the border between us and Rhodesia, and to see the spot where two Canadian girls were shot and killed by trigger happy Zambian troops, and their American companions kept under probing fire for four hours till night fell and they could be rescued. The day before Maurice left the Zambians shot and killed a Rhodesian policeman in a police launch patrolling the Rhodesian waters of the Zambesi river and well within his territorial waters. This is not the first time this has happened – in fact this is the fourth incident that we know of, but Rhodesians are expendable, so not much is said in the press, and the local paper says the authorities have no official report, so it did not happen!

You will be glad to know that Adrian is well and seems happy – longing to get back to the family in due time, but seems to have made the most of his time in these parts lest he should not return for a long time. We were so glad he could spare us the time to cram in this hurried visit to us, and to have had the opportunity of meeting him – the only member of your family I have met so far! Space once again defeats, but I hope all is well with you and yours, and the coming of spring will put a new and more cheerful complexion on things. Love and best wishes, Elaine.

New term and new teachers

The new term began with three members of staff present, including a new teacher Evelyn, and about 30 to 40 students. I supervised the sweeping of classrooms and obtaining benches from the church for the Form I's. I drew up a temporary time-table for the next day's teaching, and noted that there had been yet another complete staff turn-over, barring Peter and myself.

The following day teaching started, with an emphasis on Mathematics. In the afternoon a new teacher arrived, Rastor N, from Kanamai, Kilifi District. He was an mGiriama (from a coast tribe). As Aggrey was not allowed to return, due to his irresponsible behaviour last term, Rastor shared the Diocesan House with me, sleeping in Aggrey's old room. I spent the evening cleaning the place and helping Rastor get settled in. Last term he was at Rabai Harambee School, near Mombasa. After leaving school, he spent three years at

the Pentecostal Bible College in Nairobi, and had been teaching since then. We both went up to the Fellowship meeting at the W's – at which there were many folk present.

On Wednesday I drew up a full time-table with the four of us, assuming the other teachers would soon be arriving. Archdeacon Jeremiah K and Don S came round, and the Archdeacon addressed the staff and students in words of welcome, encouragement and advice. However, I began to feel pretty sick with exhaustion around 3 pm, so I went home to recover – the result, I suspected, of last term's endeavours followed immediately by a month of almost non-stop travelling and activities!

The next day I was feeling only a little better, so I spent a quiet day of recovery, and was up and about during the evening. This letter arrived:

CHALA KLAB, PO BOX 3, TAVETA, 8 MAY 1974

Dear Sir, I am very glad to have this opportunity of writing this letter of greetings to you. With me I am physically and mentally fit. No wonder I am on the way coming.

What only I want to put forward to you is to ask an excuse and to say sorry about, because I came with cupboard keys. But so far I have posted them and I think you will receive them soon.

By FREDERICK M.

On Friday I was able to teach once again. The new subject allocation arrangements left me teaching Maths IA, Maths III, Chemistry IA, and RE IV – much the same as last term. A new teacher, who arrived on Thursday, was able to teach Form IV English, so that I was also teaching Maths II. I would have been able to teach Physics Forms IA and IB; but this would have meant teaching 36 periods a week. Following previous advice, and realising that it's better to do a manageable amount of work well, rather than too much badly, I was able to pass on the Physics to another new teacher (who only had 12 periods), leaving me with around 30 periods per week. It was interesting to note that including Samson O, who had not yet arrived, we were now only two scientists – compared with the last term of 1973 when all five of us were Science teachers!

At first I found it difficult to settle down to proper work, as I was still experiencing the impact of the past holidays, and already becoming restless about returning home in August – a little over three months distant. I was temporarily laid low once again in the middle of the day, but felt fully recovered by the end of the afternoon, and greatly refreshed by a not-well-attended but very enthusiastic Christian Union meeting.

I was reminded, in a new way, of the Great Lesson of Africa: that people come first; and that they are more important than efficiency and punctuality. People matter more than things – whether duties, plans, time-schedules, studies, or work of any kind – even teaching preparation!

CU leaders' Training Day

Based on my diary notes:

Saturday 18 May 1974 – Christian Union Leaders' Training Day at Wundanyi, at which the guest speakers were Michael O (the Travelling Secretary for Scripture Union) and Joshua, the Travelling Secretary for KSCF. The theory that people are more important than time was well demonstrated this morning in true African style: the Conference was due to start at 10 am. It was necessary therefore for the Mgalu delegation to leave Mbale at 9 am. Rastor and I set out forthwith to find Peter M. He was still washing, and was ready by 9:15 am. Together we spent the next half hour rounding up the five students of the CU committee, and we did not get away till nearly 10 am. We arrived at Aggrey High School just before 11 am, but the meeting did not begin till about half an hour later, as everybody else was over an hour late! For the first time I did not get particularly worried

about punctuality myself, because I now realised that it is impossible to hurry Africans – it is much better to let them do things in their own time. In the end we enjoyed a successful day's teaching and discussion, meeting representatives from most of the other secondary schools in the Taita District. We walked home in the cool of the evening, entertained by Peter's reading selected passages from Pilgrim's Progress.

Sunday 19 May 1974 – Church at 10:30. Michael O preached – fortunately in English, as he is an mLuyia and knows little Swahili, and no ki-Dabida. He was very successfully interpreted by Julias R; his words explained the great importance of the work of Scripture Union in Kenya today. I spent the afternoon writing letters.

Monday 20 May 1974 – I was asked to be Teacher on Duty for the week. I had a full day's teaching, and refereed the football match between Mgalu High School and Iriwa Village Polytechnic. We welcomed a new member of staff, Mr N - who, thankfully, teaches Science.

Tuesday 21 May 1974 – Richard M [the Bishop of Mombasa's assistant] and the Diocesan Secretary, Miss Grace C, came to collect the students' school fees. My April salary was handed to me forthwith – I am literally paid by the students I teach! I spent a tiring afternoon drafting a completely new time-table. I am now teaching Forms IA and IB for Mathematics. I spent the evening with the W's, hearing about Andrew's and Joshua's ventures at Murray, Kenyatta, Aggrey and Voi Christian Unions.

Wednesday 22 May 1974 – I conducted some interesting Chemistry experiments with Form IA – to determine the proportion of air used up by burning, by placing a gas jar over a candle immersed in water, so that the water level in the jar was able to rise above that of the bowl according to the air consumed. I found that with methylated spirit burning on cotton, the water level rose by nearly half, but with other materials the level rose by the customary 1/5th. Yet another teacher arrived – a specialist in English, Swahili and History. I had to punish latecomers to yesterday's Assembly by getting them to *panga* [slash] the bushes on the football field.

Thursday 23 May 1974 – ASCENSION DAY, short service at Mbale Church led by Mr W, the Padre, the Rev John N and Peter M. We sang [in kiDabida]:

HAIL the days that sees him rise, HALLELUJAH!

To His throne above the skies...

Christ, awhile to mortals given...

Enters now the highest heaven, HALLELUJAH... (words by Charles Wesley)

Friday 24 May 1974 – I met Mr and Mrs John and Brenda F, missionary settlers from Nakuru, who had arrived the day before. Their first news was that Catharine was very ill, and Andrew, who was going to Mombasa for a meeting, took her to hospital first thing this morning. The F's, along with their youngest son Paul, took Christian Union in the evening.

Coast Province Science Teachers Seminar

The diary continued:

Saturday 25 May 1974 – Christian Union Rally at Aggrey High School, Wundanyi. I walked early up to town in order to bank some money, leaving Rastor responsible for getting the students up in time (they were again nearly an hour late!) It was a successful rally in many ways with very sound teaching from the F's, and a real atmosphere of friendliness and freedom. Again the spontaneity of singing, testimony and worship was impressive. I left around 4:30 pm, managing to be back at Mbale in time before the rains. I discussed the challenges of being a Christian in Africa, with various students during the walk home. They said that traditional tribal culture was still one of the most difficult factors.

Sunday 26 May 1974 – Church at 10:30 am, and afternoon writing letters. I went up to the W's house to return a torch, and had a long conversation with the American missionary from India who was staying. She had come over to Kenya to get away from the heat – which is a necessity during the six weeks leading up to the Indian monsoon. She was working at a hospital situated in a village of about 100 huts in Central India. India, as a mission field, sounded very different from Africa – much tougher in many respects. Andrew and the F's returned just as I was leaving, and they invited me to stay on for dinner.

Monday 27 May 1974 – I left at 06:30 for Kenyatta High School, Mwatate, to attend the Coast Province Science Teachers Seminar. I took the OTC bus, and when I arrived I met Ginny, the English teacher from the UK, who invited me in for a 'second breakfast' – as there was as yet no sign of the Mombasa folk. Finally, some minutes after 9 am, I went in to the Physics Laboratory to find Mr N making some general announcements before the assembled class. "I'm sorry I'm a bit late," I began, somewhat embarrassed. "*It's alright, Mr Hall, you're not late*", came the reply in a high-pitched, annoyingly squeaky voice! The seminar was led by Mr M, from the British Council at Nairobi, helped by an American couple who had video-tapes and close-circuit television. During the morning, we were asked to compare two Science lessons taught by Kenyans, which we watched on TV – one of which followed a traditional teaching pattern, with the other conducted along more modern lines. Some very interesting discussion ensued. At lunch time I met the other teachers: Asians at Kenyatta High School, English nuns at Bura Roman Catholic School, a Sudanese teacher at Aggrey High School, a graduate Science teacher at Murray High School. In the afternoon we plunged into the Practical, again using 'modern' methods: how to determine the calorific value of a cashew nut, given the minimum of instructions, and even less apparatus.

Mr N (British Council Mombasa) was present for some of the time. He had just delivered 150 second-hand books from the British Council library, for Mgalu – hooray! I also hoped to be able to borrow a Kenya-Science-Teachers-College Physics Demonstration Kit for the month of July. We adjourned around 4 pm, managing to get transport to Wundanyi in the form of the Aggrey High School Land Rover. Busy evening of lesson preparation – I went up to see the W's, as Catharine had just returned from hospital.

Tuesday 28 May 1974 – the Fellowship meeting took place down at our house for the first time.

Wednesday 29 May 1974 – my experiments with carbon dioxide and lime water worked beautifully – the clear liquid I had made from a precipitate of calcium hydroxide turned distinctly white when shaken with a gas jar in which a candle had burned itself out. I sorted out the new library books, which seemed to include everything from Introductory Civics and Tropical Agriculture, to Agatha Christie and Sherlock Holmes!

Thursday 30 May 1974 – I gave Jackson his salary, *kwa sababu ya mwisho mwenzi* [because of its being the end of the month], and he had to be away on Friday. Two Christian 'brothers' from Shigaro, Davis and Nathan, came to speak at Christian Union. Their message was well received.

Friday 31 May 1974 – I closed the door on the third week of the term, which seemed to have gone like a flash. Less than three months remaining: plans and preparations for my return to England were already in progress – an event which was now always at the back of my mind. A fair amount of work in the evening. Rastor N left for Mombasa to carry out personal *shauri* [business], and to take some O-level exams. I changed the calendars over to June...

CHAPTER 10: A CHRISTENING IN THE TAITA HILLS

June 1974

The first few days in June

The diary continued:

Saturday 1 June 1974 – MADARAKA DAY – Celebrations for Madaraka Day, the 11th anniversary of the day Kenya was given self-government by the British.

Sunday 2 June 1974 – WHITSUNDAY. Church at 10:30 – Holy Communion. I was invited up to tea with the S's, as it was Iain's fourth birthday. Miss Kate C had come over for the occasion, and Peter M was also there.

Tuesday 4 June 1974 – a card arrived:

To Adrian and Peter – Mbale, 4th June 1974:

You are invited to the Baptism of Robert Mark at Murray High School, Wusi at 10:30 am on June 23rd and afterwards to lunch at Kate's house.

But the first few days of June are best described in the following letter:

Letter to my parents, 5 June 1974

Letter to my parents from Mbale, Wednesday 5 June 1974:

Thank you very much for both of your letters which arrived together on May 31st. Lovely to hear all news. First, about the date for my return. I've just received news from the Marangu Hotel [in Tanzania] to say that my intended dates for starting the Kilimanjaro climb are already booked, and they can only offer me either August 10th or 17th for *starting* the climb – with a possibility of August 15th. They asked me to cable a reply. So I went up to Wundanyi first thing this morning (having received the letter yesterday), and sent a telegram asking them to book for 15 climbers to start, if possible, on August 15th, or otherwise definitely on August 17th. The 10th is no good, as we break up on August 9th. I have yet to get a reply, but assuming we start on 17th, that means 17th to 21st climbing, 22nd Marangu to Taita Hills, 23rd (if I'm packed in time), Taita to Nairobi, which means my earliest date back will be 24th. I see in my diary that that's a bank holiday weekend. CMS haven't asked me for flight dates yet, but I will probably choose August 25th or 26th (or thereabouts). Will this be OK? I'm sorry it's difficult to make an earlier return, but I expect a lot of things that need to be done can wait till after Inverpolly [holiday in North-West Scotland].

Fairly eventful weekend. Saturday June 1st was MADARAKA DAY – the third of Kenya's national days, celebrating the time when Kenya first got self-government (in 1963). I went up to Wundanyi, arriving there late (in true African style) to find that the Presidential Speech had already been read! However I managed to find a printed English copy – a good speech all about the coming elections, and using local production to combat inflation. There were then the usual church choirs singing, in turn – both national and Christian songs. There was then a short demonstration of traditional tribal dancing – about 25 old ladies shuffling round in a circle to the hypnotic rhythm of drums, uttering strange wailings, and waving their arms in the air – far removed, I'm afraid, from the colourful glamour of the popular idea of national dancing. This, I was told, had tribal religious overtones, and it was all rather sinister. One woman appeared almost 'possessed' – she wouldn't stop shaking, even when friends helped her away from the shuffling circle of aged dancers. No one under about 60 was taking part – a reminder, I was told, of Africa's past. After that we were able to laugh as we watched the world-famous Taita Hills sugar-cane eating competition – to see who could chew his way through an 18 inch stick of cane fastest! One of our students came

second. Finally football: men versus women. The men had their hands tied behind their backs as a handicap. Many of the Chiefs and Government Officials were playing!

I went up to see the S's in the evening – not having really seen them since Mark's arrival. They invited me to stay for dinner, as Julius and Vivian R were coming (Julius owns the Wundanyi bookshop and is a lay reader at Mbale Church). We had a wonderful evening, with king fish steak and chips, listening to music and having long conversations while we did the washing up. The next day I came up again for tea – as it was Iain's 4th birthday. Miss Kate C and Peter M were there as well. Mark's Christening is on June 23rd at Wusi (near Murray High School). Peter and I have been invited, and to stay on to lunch with Miss C afterwards.

The weather here is bitterly cold (or am I just not used to it?) Yesterday I wore a jumper while teaching, the whole day! Even at 12 noon it was too cold to take it off. Today it has been warmer, but I am wearing a jumper now! Quite a lot of rain, plenty of mist and clouds. You'll be glad to hear that – at last – my folding piece of wood, which I took out from Britain, is doing a useful job. I have drawn squares (2½ inch x 2½ inch) with felt tip pens, and stuck drawing pins at the corners, and am using it with Maths Form I to demonstrate the principles of co-ordinate geometry, using coloured elastic bands. Great fun, and the students seemed thrilled with it! Rastor has just returned from Mombasa, with cheese, mangoes-as-big-as-melons, and flash-cubes for my camera: I hope to take some photographs of actual teaching...

Prayer Mount and beyond

On Thursday the Zambian slides arrived – some very impressive! The W's returned from Nakuru, having taken the children out for half-term. Fellowship evening at Aggrey High School – Mrs S kindly drove a group of us up to Wundanyi, including Joseph (from Maynard Primary School), Rastor and Peter and myself. Some teachers from Murray High School, and Harold and Gladness M, were there.

On Friday Mr W spoke at the Mgalu Christian Union, which was poorly attended because it was raining hard, and students were anxious to get home. The first load of desks arrived for the Form I's – about 20 in all. The building was beginning to move forward at last – a day of cementing the walls. Busy evening marking books.

On Saturday morning it rained, but I nevertheless walked to Wundanyi to bank my May salary and buy stamps. I caught the bus down, returning at about half past nine, and then took a long walk up into the hills. I started by reaching the top of the ridge (Prayer Mount), by a rather unusual route which involved plunging through thick bush set on a very steep slope, after making several wrong turns. This was the first time I had reached the Prayer Mount Summit in six months. The full extent of Mbale was spread out beneath me once again, and it was sad to think that in a couple of months I would be seeing the Hills for the last time. I then proceeded 'beyond', and round to the right, passing through a settlement with round thatched huts. The sky overhead deepened, threatening heavy rain.

I managed to traverse the 'steep valley', which hitherto I had thought to be impassable. The river could be crossed by means of a long, unsteady chain of stepping stones. I found myself on a road which passed round the back of 'Mount Kulal', and realized that I was about a thousand feet above where I wanted to be, if I was to use the Figinyi road back to Iriwa. However, the owner of a nearby house very kindly offered to show me a way down through the forest. The first part of the descent took us through deep woods, silent save for the gentle rushing of wind in the branches far above, footfalls deadened by the quiet, deep carpet of pine needles. We emerged considerably lower down, after an exhilarating descent, more akin to skiing than walking! I then bade my guide 'farewell', as I was now on familiar ground. A further 500 feet down the open slopes brought me back on to the road again, but the rain had well and truly set in as darkness fell.

I had dinner with the W's, listening to Mozart and Schubert, chatting about their trip to Nakuru, and showing my slides of Mgalu and Zambia. As I was leaving, just after 10 pm, the moon had risen so that the clouds were dappled with her pale beams. All around the air was still and clear, freshened and scented by the receding rain, and the wet grass glistened.

Sunday was a bright, hot day, in marked contrast to the day before. I introduced Rastor to the Kilili church, as he is Pentecostal by denomination. The service had plenty of life! I spent a quiet afternoon writing letters.

Peter M at the classroom door

Based on my diary notes:

Monday 10 June 1974 – I persuaded Rastor to take a flash-photograph of me as I taught Mathematics to Form IB. I managed to incorporate the co-ordinate display board, illustrating the solution to a problem in co-ordinate geometry.

Tuesday 11 June 1974 – I was not feeling my best, until after school when, on lying down, I recovered rapidly and completely.

Wednesday 12 June 1974 – I received a letter from the Marangu Hotel, confirming bookings for our ascent of Kilimanjaro to begin on August 17th – so this now seems to be settled. I spent time in the evening writing letters to inform other members of the latest plans. Full staff meeting, with our final complement: Miss Evelyn M, Mr Rastor N, Mr Jerome K, Mr K, Mr N, and Mrs W. Mr K and Mrs W are both 'Baluyia'. Peter (very gently) ticked us off for lack of punctuality, and extending our lessons in such a way as to deprive a fellow teacher of the honour and privilege of conducting a full lesson! The agenda was mainly concerned with school discipline (or concern about the lack of it), Clubs, Games Master and Mistress, and houses. Mr N and I have agreed to start a Science Club. This could be quite productive if we manage to get the KSTC Physics kit on loan to us. As it now stands, Mr N is to be President, and I am to be invited as a Guest Lecturer, from time to time! A second load of books arrived for the school library – from the 'Canadian Overseas Book Center'. As most of them are in French, I can see that their value will be limited.

Thursday 13 June 1974 – I marked between 60 and 80 Maths books. Then I went up to see the W's, as they leave for Nairobi at 03:00 tomorrow morning. Andrew has a meeting at 09:00; they hope to return with a new car. Heavy rain. Rastor left for Mombasa.

Friday 14 June 1974 – I woke up at 06:00: the alarm had just gone off. Total silence next door: I remembered Rastor had left for Mombasa the day before. Quite suddenly, I heard movements... the bed creaking... the sound of slippers on the stone floor... shuffling across the floor... Had Rastor come back? Who was it? Had Aggrey unexpectedly returned? Unmistakable now, furniture moving, hands at the door, footsteps... perhaps I should investigate... I resolved I would stir myself out of bed, and go and see who it was... it was still dark... I would just turn over, reach hold of my torch... in a minute... NOW! I came to – imperceptibly. The noises faded. Though barely asleep, I must have been dreaming... I had strained to catch the slightest sound of movement next door, but there was total silence. And on getting up, I tried the door of Rastor's room: it was locked!

Busy morning teaching Maths. Form III – after the morning break: I began the lesson, and for the first five minutes, students casually strolled in. I decided to continue regardless, and began to write high up on the board, with my back to the door: t-h-e c-o-e-f-f-i-c-i-e-n-t o-f $x = t-h-e s-u-m o-f t-h-e r-o-o-t-s w-i-t-h t-h-e s-i-g-n c-h-a-n-g-e-d$. T-h-e a-b-s-o-l-u-t-e t-e-r-m... I was aware of someone at the door: = t-h-e p-r-o-d-u-c-t "Come in!" o-f t-h-e r-o-o-t-s. The student had made no response. I was vaguely aware of the class rippling with suppressed laughter. "I said COME IN!" – and then turned round to find it was Peter M!

Christian Union at 3.30 pm, compulsory for all students, because Nelson M and Aloo, with David and Nathan, from the Trinity Fellowship, had come to address the school, and

share with us some of their very talented singing. Their theme was: 'Jesus is the Answer', conveyed in music and very direct and down-to-earth preaching, which the students enjoyed and (I hope) appreciated. One point which they tried to bring home by their testimonies was that the maxim that 'Christianity-is-just-for-the-poor-and-simple-minded' is totally wrong: it is also for the well-to-do, the academics and the intellectuals. David, Nathan and Aloo were all from Nairobi University, and it was interesting to notice that, for the rural Africans, this was a symbol of Modern Civilisation and the Great Outside World. I invited Jerome and Mr N for Milo afterwards; they had not agreed to hear them through, on the grounds that one of them had said (apparently) that neither Science nor Philosophy were able to supply an answer to the Meaning of Life...

Winter Solstice

Saturday morning was fairly sedentary, preparing lessons for the coming week. This included cutting up pieces of card for use in a demonstration to teach Form 1's the meaning of decimals (in bases other than ten), and constructing a 10 cm cube in order to give the Form 1's some idea of what a litre is. I walked up to Wundanyi with Mr K, to watch the Mgalu vs St Johns football match. On the way I had a long conversation with Mr K, who was studying at Makerere University, Kampala and hoped to go to Cambridge for a post-graduate course in 1976. It was a stimulating game to watch: the Mgalu forwards were really on fire; and their defence was good too. The St Johns defence was really weak, not least of all the goalie, and the final score was a triumphant 4-1.

On Sunday I attended Holy Communion at 10:30 at the Mbale church. Mr W preached, and I found that I could follow a fair amount of what he was saying – lessons from the *Hadithi* (story) was *Mtu Tajin* (Dives) *na Lazaro*. The W's had just returned from Nairobi – without the new car. In the afternoon I helped Christian Union members draft a drama production in conjunction with Aggrey High School CU for presentation at Kenyatta High School on Sunday June 23rd. I tried not to put too many ideas forward, as I wanted the students to feel that it was *their* work. I spent a busy evening informing other YSAs of the changed dates of the Kilimanjaro Ascent, and arrangements for travel, cash etc.

Monday was a full day's teaching. I went up to the S's after lessons, mainly to check on arrangements for Mark's Christening on Sunday. I stayed to tea, which we had in the guest room (now re-floored), where I had spent my first nights in the Taita Hills – with freshly made scones made (partly) by the children. I also called in on the W's, and picked up porridge oats and (at vast expense) a small tin of golden syrup.

On Tuesday we had the opening meeting of the Mgalu Scientific Society, sponsored by Mr N and myself. The election of office-bearers and an outline of activities was discussed. I received a long and very welcome letter from R-J (my Housemaster at Haileybury) which, once deciphered (as his handwriting was notoriously obscure), was mainly about the success of David Watson's Lent Mission to Haileybury. David Watson was a Charismatic Church of England Minister at York, and author of several well-known Christian books, including 'My God is Real'.

Evening fellowship at the S's; Joseph M brought along several of his colleagues – teachers of Maynard Primary School. I walked home down the hill in the darkness, alleviated only by the clear, cold stars. Then I slept under two blankets, curled up, shivering, hardly able to emerge from under the bed clothes because of the extreme cold – as it was (almost) the Winter Solstice. Getting up in the morning was not without difficulty; and I was painfully reminded of winter mornings in Britain, and of the fact that soon I would be leaving the Warmth of Africa!

On Wednesday there was much wailing over the Hills as the sub-chief of the Mbale location had died during the night.

An unfortunate staff meeting

At 12:25 pm on Thursday, immediately after morning school, we were summoned to a rather unfortunate staff meeting in which a certain member of staff led an accusation against another, certain member of staff (Jerome K). Some of it was justified, as the latter's conduct had in certain matters been questionable, and had left other staff members exasperated in one way or another. Unanimous agreement with the former's proposals led to a decision for Peter to take a Memorandum (which as staff members we had drafted and which, in the afternoon, I was asked to type) down to the Bishop at Mombasa, requesting that the accused be transferred to a different school, and that Miss Evelyn M, unfortunately due for transfer, be retained, as she had the interests of the students and the community at heart.

For some reason, I did not – in contrast to previous occasions – feel terribly involved. It happened that this term I was not really affected by staff inter-relationships: for one reason, I was hardly ever in the staff-room, as I was teaching almost exclusively Form I's and Form III, whose classrooms were located up the hill and away from the main school compound. On the one hand this meant a shallower contact with the other staff members, but it also meant that I avoided much of the tension which, from time to time, charged the (usually friendly) staff room atmosphere.

After my (not very successful) typing efforts, I performed an exciting experiment with Form I: the action of calcium with water, to produce calcium hydroxide (i.e. 'limewater', which turned milky when I breathed through it) and hydrogen gas – which ignited with a rather half-hearted 'plop', thus: $\text{Ca} + 2\text{H}_2\text{O} = \text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2 + \text{H}_2$.

On Friday (21 June 1974, mid-winter's day) I began teaching functional graphs to Form III. Jackson, after being sent to Iriwa in the morning, did not show up for the rest of the day. In the evening a student informed me he was down at Mdongo-dongo with a swollen leg, unable to move. After Mrs W had seen him, Andrew took him up to Wesu Hospital, as it was really quite serious and causing him excruciating pain. It was later diagnosed as a carbuncle or multiple boil. I spent a busy evening marking, up to the 150th book (at least) this week!

Catharine's Birthday

Saturday was Catharine's birthday. After a busy morning's shopping in Wundanyi and lesson preparation, I joined the W's at their invitation for a picnic expedition. As the weather was cold, and the cloud level low, Catharine decided we should go 'down' instead of 'up', following the Mbale road to beyond Wanganga, into the valley which could be seen from the front door and verandah of our house – a steep arid looking valley, with a stream flowing at the bottom, slopes of bare shale-rock, sparse bush and cactus plants rising up on either side. The soil looked poor, and the valley slopes were deserted except for the odd grass hut carved into the hillside. Across the valley, and slightly below us, was a cleft of vivid green, a sudden patch of grass in which a small herd of cows was grazing. A herdsman, sitting cross-legged on a rock, looking after the cows, had a one-stringed instrument in his hand. As the wind stilled, the air was haunted by a strange, three-noted melody; it filled the valley, sometimes distant, at other times distinct – a unique sound, conveying a deep impression of the true, rural Africa and possessing an almost timeless quality.

We had our picnic on a rock overlooking the valley below, and went for a walk in the afternoon. After climbing for a few minutes, we descended into a green glade of lush vegetation, with different kinds of tree and bush, and maize *shambas*. We passed houses made of grass and mud, and were greeted by fascinated onlookers – for many of the young children this might well have been the first time they had seen a 'white man' close up. A self-appointed guide brought us under trees, festooned with orchids – very indigenous and seeming to be almost as old as the hills themselves. We saw

innumerable butterflies, all brightly coloured, and some curious succulents including green geraniums, and turquoise flowers, some of which we collected on our way. We reached a high vantage point giving a fine view of the valley – its fauna and settlements – Msau village in the middle distance, the Sagalla Hills very clear in the background. Back home for tea with the S's: balloons, birthday cake, and the festive atmosphere of candle-light.

Miss Ailsa P, a retired missionary from Mombasa, arrived. She had come to stay with the S's, after (as she put it) an unintentional 'guided tour' of the Taita Hills, as she had got on the wrong bus at Voi!

Robert Mark's Christening

Sunday 23 June 1974 – This was a very special day: Robert Mark's Christening took place at Murray High School, Wusi. Catharine W, Peter and I were picked up by the S's, and we all travelled to Wusi in the one car, very tightly packed – each of holding a child, a soufflé or, in my case, the Christening cake! We arrived at Murray High School, where we met Andrew W, accompanied by the Revd Edward M and Archdeacon Jeremiah K, who was to christen Robert Mark. The O's and David J had arrived from Kaloleni. Aunty Kate was there to welcome us. In every way, it was a beautiful service, conducted in the Chapel of Murray High School, with compulsory attendance by the students. The Baptism Service was led by the Archdeacon in Swahili – but I was able to follow it in the 1662 version of 'Publick Baptism of Infants'. Aunty Kate, Ken O and David J, Mark's godparents, stood in front of the altar, together with the S family. Aunty Kate held the baby, who kept peering over her shoulder, wide-eyed, at the congregation, in a rather engaging manner! At the moment of baptism, the Archdeacon spoke the words in Ki-Taita – a wonderful detail – as he touched Mark's forehead with water three times, and made (with a flourish) the sign of the cross. The Baptism Service was followed by Holy Communion, conducted in English by Andrew.

The service was followed by lunch, fellowship and photographs for us all at Kate's house. It was a pleasant and cool afternoon, during which Peter set off with the Murray girls for Kenyatta High School, where a Christian Union Rally was in progress. We had afternoon tea, with the delicious Christening cake, by candlelight, in front of a roaring fire! I spoke a little to the Archdeacon in Swahili, and he said some kind words. I remember saying how sorry I was to be leaving the Taita Hills, and explained that a year in a place was really not long enough to make much of a contribution to the community there. I then accompanied the O's down to Voi – so that they could take David to a bus for his journey back to Taru. I was acting as navigator, to direct them to the S's house, where they were staying. We picked up Peter and one student from Kenyatta High School, to ease transport problems for the returning Mgalu and Aggrey High School students. We ascended into a thick bank of cloud, which began to clear again as we descended from Wundanyi – the hills, at dusk, with trees silhouetted against the skyline and curtains of mist had rarely looked so beautiful.

I was invited to join the O's and the S's for the evening meal, at the end of such a special day. Later we were joined by the W's, and we had a wonderful time of fellowship together. As Andrew had brought his guitar, we were able to sing. I was given a lift back with the W's, and we reached Maynard corner – only to find Peter, standing there, looking rather forlorn. The Mgalu students had *still* not returned from the CU rally at Kenyatta High School. Presently however, after deliberation and probing the gathering mist with torches, we heard voices carrying over the valley, the fog making them seem much nearer than in fact they were, and it was a good 10 minutes before the Kenyatta party arrived – some of them having walked all the way (a distance of around 12 miles), because there had been a hitch in the transport arrangements!

Science Club

Tuesday 25 June 1974 – Science Club, the first meeting: two demonstrations. I performed the collection of hydrogen from the reaction of calcium with water. It was successful in nearly every way including a much more satisfactory 'plop' when the hydrogen exploded; and the lime-water really did turn milky when I blew through it using an empty ballpoint pen tube.

Excerpt from YSA newsletter:

Kilimanjaro. Adrian Hall writes as follows: "Dates for ascent are now Aug 17 – 21 (when do you come down? - Ed). Porters, guides etc. are necessary: prices are soaring: please allow at least 400/- in EA Travellers' Cheques. Final rendezvous: Marangu Swedish Mission Bible College, Aug 16th. Following are on the list: Jon A, Jo and Jacqui, Howard M, Andrew S, Francis W, Sally W, Keith B, Chris and Mark R, Jackie W, John S – and Adrian. Vacancies for two more. Please apply in writing."

Wednesday 26 June 1974 – I had to get *kali* [cross] with three students (from Form II) who rushed past the library (where I was correcting books), shouting "*Kwa sinda, Aba!*" [Good evening, Sir!], aimed for the nearest guava tree, and began to strip it bare of ripe fruit! Functional graphs with Form III. No Jackson: feeling the pressure of having to do all the domestic work. Meat, eggs and bread are hard to come by – fried bananas taste very nice.

Half-term at Mombasa

The half-term trip to Mombasa from 27 June to 1 July 1974 is best described in a letter to my parents from Mbale, dated Wednesday 3 July 1974:

Well! Talk about a rush – it's well and truly back into non-stop activity as the term launches into the second half. Half-term was fun – I stayed with Ken and Betty O down at Mombasa. On Thursday afternoon I came out of the last lesson and leaped aboard the Kireti bus, reaching Voi at 5:30 pm. I met Peter coming back from Mombasa, a bit dejected – *without* our June salaries! They are now due on July 9th – something I've learned to live with. I've written personally to the Bishop asking him to send my July *and* August salaries before the end of the month, so that I'll have enough money for a trip to Western Kenya, and for the Kilimanjaro expedition. I boarded the Mombasa bus, and reached Taru at 6:30 pm, before dark. I spent a very pleasant evening with Dave J and Granville (a Scotsman 'freelancer'). I saw a bit of the school the next morning. Though in the bush, in all respects the school is streaks ahead of Mgalu. Pre-fab buildings left by the Yugoslavs from a rail-maintenance station, Headmistress a nun, Sister Margarita. Discipline superb, resulting efficiency very apparent.

Friday to Monday in Mombasa. Not, on the whole, very active days: a lot of sleeping, conversation, reading – the emphasis was really on rest, which I felt I really needed – after seven weeks teaching without a let-up, and six more facing me now. On Friday evening, I was hauled along (very willingly) into the Cathedral Choir by Ray, the Choirmaster, and we practised the hymns for Sunday in four parts (I was bass). Just like old times!

Also, on Friday evening, Ken J, a teacher at Shimo-la-Tewa, 10 miles up the coast, and a close friend of those at CITC, had a heart-attack. A phone call came through, and we were all asked to pray for him. As a result he quite suddenly recovered, and even by the time the doctor reached Shimo-la-Tewa, he was perfectly OK. He was kept in hospital over the weekend, as a precaution though. The Saturday night Christian fellowship meeting took place at the Jones's house at Shimo-la-Tewa.

On Saturday morning I took a long walk 'round the island' or part thereof – following the coastline past the golf course and the Oceanic Hotel, and as far as the Likoni ferry, on the south side of the island. It was beautiful to watch the sea breaking on the rocks –

knowing that in two months I shall be watching the (very much colder) sea breaking on rocks in North-West Scotland!

On Sunday evening, we sang at Evensong and Holy Communion in the Cathedral. Afterwards, we spent the evening at the O's with Paul (VSO at Rabai), Di (VSO at Kaloleni) and Ki (VSO nurse at Tana River) – it was very interesting to meet others who are having similar experiences, though most VSOs are on 2 to 3 year contracts.

On Monday I picked up the KSTC Physics kit, on loan from the British Council, intending to take it with me on the Mbale bus. I reached the bus station to find that it had broken down and wasn't running. So, I spent the morning in Mombasa, and caught the OTC bus at 2 o'clock. It was a *very* slow journey, and when we reached Voi, I had missed the Kireti bus (going to Wundanyi via the Mbale way). So I stayed on board, and we got to Wundanyi at 8:30 pm (1½ hours late) – faced with a 3 mile journey, in the dark, carrying a rucksack *and* a case full of science kit! Fortunately a couple of Mgalu students were also on the bus, and they brought the kit down the next morning, and escorted me almost back to Mbale – it was a beautiful moonlit night. I went straight to the W's (by previous arrangement). I had been expected home much earlier, but they had a good meal ready for me (and very welcome it was, too!)

Yesterday Mr N and I experimented with the science kit with the Mgalu Scientific Society. Today, as Duty Master, I was involved in punishing latecomers by getting them to bring stones for the new school building...

CHAPTER 11: PRAYER WALKS IN THE TAITA HILLS

July 1974

Prayer walk towards Mgamboni

Based on my diary notes:

Tuesday 2 July 1974 – Busy day's work. I tried some practical work with the science kit during the Scientific Society club time. I investigated the behaviour of the helical spring, and the calibration of its extension when various weights were loaded on to it.

Thursday 4 July 1974 – Yet another very full day. Christian Union had 'singing' – including some new songs which Rastor taught us.

Friday 5 July 1974 – Compass work with Form IA Maths. The students were astounded as I turned the compass base around and they observed that the red North needle perpetually pointed towards the blackboard (“*Aiee!*”). I also drew compass directions on the floor of the classroom; and together we estimated the approximate directions of places familiar to them (e.g. Mgambonyi, Choke, Iriwa, Mdongo-dongo, Mbololo, Rong'e, Mwanganga, Voi, Kasigau, Shigaro, Wundanyi, Kungu, Mganga, Wesu and Werugha). Interesting scientific demonstration with Form II – the expansion bar: a lever arrangement showed clearly the linear expansion of a brass bar as I heated it with a Bunsen burner (Rastor N was kind enough to take a photograph at this juncture). I also demonstrated the expansion of a liquid and a gas using a U-tube manometer filled with water coloured with blue ink. The students all crowded round – clearly fascinated.

Saturday 6 July 1974 – I had a lift up to Wundanyi with Lyn S. Peter came too. I reached the bank after 11 am, when it was officially closed. However, after some persuasion they let Peter and myself in; I managed to draw 50/- to tide me through till July 9th when the June salaries are due. I spent the afternoon experimenting with the KSTC science kit, trying to rig up some electrical experiments in preparation for the Scientific Society on Tuesday next week. Dinner and relaxed evening with the W's. Sammy, their cat, had just given birth to four kittens (as small as mice).

Sunday 7 July 1974 – Holy Communion at Mbale, 10:30. There were Mgalu students in abundance, which makes a change, though not too surprising as Peter had promised that the Mgalu English student service would be resumed if attendance at the local church improved! Hymn and anthem singing by the church choir was ever beautiful. After much letter writing I managed to get away for an evening's walk – up on to the ridge, and westwards, round a fresh, fertile valley, tucked in a fold between hills, following the path which leads to the village of Mgambonyi. Some moments before setting, the sun broke through the curtains of cloud, bringing the immediate surroundings of high hedges and tall Eucalyptus trees into sudden relief, against the background of dark plains swept by storm clouds. A few moments – enough however to uplift and refresh me, before entering another week of hard school work. The W's met me at the Mdongo-dongo Bridge. They too had been for a walk in the hills, and at one point had seen me standing meditatively on the summit – my bright red shirt rising clear above the bush!

[I remember having a wonderful time of prayer during this walk – probably inspired by the news of the David Watson Mission contained in my friend Richard's letter. I remember particularly praying for certain members of my family. I also think that given my state of physical fitness at the time, it is unlikely that I contracted TB at this stage – it seems more likely this happened later, perhaps during the gruelling Kilimanjaro expedition in August.]

The diary continued:

Monday 8 July 1974 – Much rain. I managed to 'brave it' and make it to the Iriwa shops for more kerosene. Jackson had his incision. [Later, I realised that I should have taken the time to visit him in hospital.]

Tuesday 9 July 1974 – Salaries, at last. Staff meeting with Richard M and the Diocesan Accountant, to get 'a few matters straight' (such as the delay in our salaries). I managed to persuade them to let us buy the KSTC Physics kit. The Provincial Inspector had said that this is a necessity – if the school is ever to aspire to the unheard-of heights of 'Grade C'. Scientific Society – electricity: the students were thrilled.

Wednesday 10 July 1974 – Jackson was back again – which was a wonderful surprise, as we had not been expecting him till the following week.

Perilous motor-bike ride

Thursday was a hard morning: Maths Chem Maths. The Clare College Students' Guide booklet arrived in the post, which was kind of exciting – as its relevance increased with every passing day. In the late evening, as I was writing home, there was a 'boom' like thunder, the furniture creaked, and I felt slight vibrations from the floor – clearly an earth tremor, the second this year. Staff meeting with prefects.

On Friday I was able to rest after lunch, for the first time in three weeks. So I settled down to The Silver Chair, the sixth of the Narnia stories, which I was trying to finish before leaving Africa. The RE lesson lasted 70 minutes. After Evening Assembly the defaulters were punished, for the first time, by a student, the Head Boy. About 50 students were involved – partly in argument, and (to a smaller degree) in ferrying stone blocks from inside to outside one of the new classrooms. The result was controlled chaos! I returned home, pretty well exhausted. I had sent Jackson to Iriwa with a 20/- note, and (written) instructions to get 2 litres of kerosene, bread, rice, meat, salt etc. He had returned with almost nothing in the way of food, and a written note to inform me, pathetically, "*Pesa na kwisha*" [the money has all been spent!] Why? He had gone and bought – not two litres, but two gallons (=10 litres) of kerosene (at the scandalous price of 8/- per gallon, compared to 5/- a gallon at Wundanyi)! Dinner with the S's. Ray had arrived from Mombasa.

On Saturday I went up to the S's in the morning. It was already nine o'clock and they were just about to have breakfast, and Ray was still in his dressing gown! I walked up to Wundanyi, arranged to draw 400/- in Tanzanian travellers' cheques, and then walked down, preceded by Don and Ray, who were following a different route. By the time we got back to Mbale, Paul G had arrived from Mombasa, on his Yamaha 150 motor-bike. The Taru people were unable to come, because Dave J was very ill with flu; and Granville and Delores were there to look after him. I showed Paul and Ray around the school and our house, and visited Catharine (Andrew together with Peter were holding a CU Rally at Voi Secondary School).

Then we had a 'soup and picnic' lunch on the S's verandah well after 2 o'clock, intending to climb up Yale or Wesu thereafter. However we did not leave until half past three. Paul and I went up on the Yamaha to fill up with petrol. By the time we had all reached Wundanyi, Yale was in cloud, Wesu was shawled with mist, and it was beginning to rain. So we turned round and came all the way back again! We sang songs to the children, while Don and Lyn (who had been up since 4 am) rested. But around 4:30 pm Paul suddenly decided he'd like to visit a friend of his from Rabai, George M, who was now teaching at Lushangoni. It took us about ½ hour to reach St Mary's Secondary School safely, after a fairly perilous journey, during which I gained *some* confidence on the back of the Yamaha. Yale was very dramatic, as the sheer 1,500 ft cliff face loomed suddenly out of the mists. We continued almost as far as Mgange to look for George, as he wasn't in. As we turned a corner, the Vuria massif suddenly came into view, with the plains stretching out beyond, towards the distant Pare Mountains beyond – it was breathtaking in beauty! We finally met George on the road, and he ran back with us to his house, and insisted on our taking tea, eggs and bread, while we discussed the latest news of Rabai and Lushangoni. George is an mKikuyu.

Finally, we left for home around 6 pm, just as it was getting dark, and, in the middle of smooth running and animated conversation, the cloud suddenly rolled up to meet us; by the time we were through Wundanyi it was raining hard. I happen to know that friction decreases rapidly with wetness on these mud-marram roads, and I began to ask (slightly) anxious questions about the amount of tread on the tyres. Paul seemed completely unperturbed, assuring me that it could be “much worse than this” on the road to Rabai. Sure enough, passing through Mwasungia, Paul slowed down for a rough patch, the back wheel began to slew round, we slipped to the right, and (very gently) keeled right over! Not a scratch between us – only my coat was trapped underneath the back wheel. We were both covered with mud, however, and had some difficulty in getting the machine restarted, while travellers on the road began to gather round, asking if we were alright! From there it was a perilously slow crawl back through the cold, rain and darkness, but this was followed by a warm bath and recovery. Then we went over to the W’s for a ‘barbecue’ (indoors) with Harry and Liz (from FTC), who were leaving for Holland the following week, and with Peter, and all the children: Susanna, John and Margaret – just home once again from Turi. It was a very pleasant evening of conversation and music.

On Sunday morning I said goodbye to Ray and Paul, explaining that I was rather committed to going to the local church: we could hardly succeed in the current ‘get-the-students-all-to-go-to-church’ campaign, if the teachers themselves were not there! It was a service of Mattins, at which Andrew preached. I had lunch after the service with the W’s, and a happy ‘rest’ time trying to persuade John’s Lego ‘duck’ to flap its wings. We managed with the aid of cogs and tracks to get it to ‘waddle’ and its head to nod as it went along. The W’s then went, very sensibly, to persuade Aunty Kate to come away on an outing – because she seemed to have been a bit tied up (and stressed out) by the school. Fairly solid afternoon and evening’s work.

On Monday morning, a telegram addressed to the S’s, PO Box 1078, Wundanyi read: “ADRIAN COME TOGETHER NOW 27TH JULY NOT 20TH RAY”. Ray’s impeccable efficiency at work!

Tuesday – Sickness strikes again. Rastor, Mr N and Mrs W were all out of action today; and Peter and I were both feeling distinctly ‘off colour’. The Science Club meeting was spent measuring the electrical conductivities of metals, pencil lead etc. Then I went up to the ‘Helicopter’ to see Mr N and Mr K, and stayed for a meal, being joined later by Peter. No knives and forks – we just used our hands to squeeze pieces of maize and scoop up cabbage and meat. Political conversation. Late (and short) fellowship meeting at the W’s afterwards.

On Wednesday morning I had a strange dream. I was suddenly back in the middle of London: the Taita Hills, Voi and Nairobi were left far behind. I was back in England, without having said goodbye to anyone in Africa, without having ‘drunk the last deep draughts’ of the African year, and feeling sad and upset about this. It was with some relief that I woke up to discover that I still had about six weeks left in Africa! Much time in the evening was spent setting the Form I’s Maths Paper.

On Thursday there was a discussion in the Christian Union on the topic: ‘Should a Christian serve God and man, or God alone?’ This was a success because, unlike last time, the students were taking an active part. In fact, the discussion was really led and directed by the students. Rastor and I, as staff sponsors, were only there to give some assistance. I was asked to sum up the arguments at the end, bringing the Bible-based discussion to a conclusion. There was also a fellowship meeting at Wundanyi. Ambrose M was there, and Phoebe and Kate C came over from Murray. Though initially tired, we were all greatly refreshed by the end of the meeting.

Witness to students from Mwangeka

On Friday evening, Swahili Assembly was taken by the Padre, and we sang: “*Lango ndiye Yesu Bwana...*” [The door is the Lord Jesus]. I went up to the Helicopter again after assembly, and had a long talk with Mr N, and, until he left for Iriwa, Mr K. We were joined later by Cynthia, a new Maynard teacher, and also a couple of students from Mwangeka (so-called 'cousins' of M). One of them, Claude, was particularly interested in my copy of the Bible which was lying on the table. And as he started thumbing through Ezekiel and Obadiah, I asked him whether he believed the Bible. He immediately replied “Of course not”, and I asked him why. So he started at Genesis 1 verse 1, and after a bit of discussion, while Mr N prepared food, I referred him to John 3 verse 3 (“you must be born again”), stressing the need for the New Birth, before he would truly be able to understand spiritual things; a moment later and he was asking me to explain the meaning of Salvation and how it could be his – an example which shows that, as is true in very many cases, though people may attack religion fiercely on the outside, their need and wish to identify with the Christian Faith nevertheless lies not very far beneath the surface. It turned out that Claude was the Secretary of the Mwangeka Christian Union – a society which through coldness and backsliding had not met for 6 months.

Food was prepared and taken in true African style; *ugali* cooked on a charcoal *jiko* [stove] with fried eggs beaten with onion; food taken in our hands and washed down with water afterwards. I spent the rest of the evening with the W's, as it was their 10th Wedding Anniversary. I wasn't quite sure what metal was appropriate, but I gave them a 'paper-weight' lump of Zambian copper ore from the mines of Luanshya!

Visit to Jackson's house

On Saturday morning I got a lift up to Wundanyi, and collected 400/- in East African Travellers' Cheques for the coming trip to Tanzania. I walked down and managed to do some work, setting examinations, which were due to begin on Friday: 60 questions for Form III Mathematics. At 4:30 pm I made my way up to Jackson's house, as I had been bidden for 4:00 pm, but my promised 'guide' (a boy) did not turn up on time. I lost the way at first “*Nilipoteta njia*”, but eventually managed to find the right path, which ended in a steep climb of 200 feet or so. Jackson welcomed me to the family compound, which consisted of about three or four houses separated by a patch of short, green grass – a distinctive feature of the higher parts of the Iriwa ridge. I presented my *zawadi* [gifts]: tea, sugar, sugar-cane and some sweets for the children.

As we crossed the 'compound' we met Jackson's *mama mkubwa* [grandmother], who was wizened and inarticulate – close to 100 years old I would think, and we then entered the house of Jackson's mother who was seriously ill. It was a small house of mud-wattle with a tin roof. Several people, mostly old women, were gathered around a wood fire, sitting on pieces of wood raised only a few inches from the ground, with smoke rising up towards a cross-work of wooden boards supported by the roof rafters, on which firewood and maize were left to dry. There was a straw bed along one of the walls with another old woman curled up in a blanket, barely able to move. I was introduced to everyone, and managed somehow to figure out the relationships: Jackson's aunts, cousins, sisters-in-law, pairs of sisters '*tumbo moja*' [literally 'from one tummy']. Milk, and then water, were allowed to boil in preparation for the great event of the afternoon: *Chai!* I left the house just before dark, and returned home, managing to do some more work setting exams.

Long walk to Mgamboni

Sunday 21 July 1974 – I got up luxuriously late, and was just about to set to with breakfast of fresh paw-paw in the sunshine, when John W came past with the post. Sunday breakfast with letters! All I needed was the Sunday papers! Mattins was at

10:30, and Julius R preached, with some of his sermon in KiDabida, and other parts in Swahili.

In the afternoon I went for a long walk in the Hills, making the village of Mgambonyi my objective. I went haring up the Iriwa ridge in record time, going literally straight up, and following a water pipeline which had an almost vertical path running alongside it. I felt the need for a cable car!

I reached the top of the ridge very hot and sweaty, and spent several minutes talking to a lady, who was a member of Kilili Pentecostal church, and who was sitting near the edge of the cliff weaving baskets. I persuaded her to make me one for about 3/-. All the time a fierce east wind and grey clouds were blowing. I walked on, into the heart of the hills, wrapping a coat about me because of the cold. I descended into Mgambonyi, a small settlement on a long hill set in the middle of a valley, with the ridge behind, Ngangao rising up to the left, and the last line of hills beyond a broad and fertile plain, directly ahead of me.

Mgambonyi is set on a kind of spur, thrust out from the ridge 'massif', and covered with trees which made walking more beautiful, but bereft of good views for much of the time. Distinctive were the round huts made of pinkish-brown mud and thatch. The village 'pub' appeared to play a prominent part in community life, particularly, it would seem, on a Sunday afternoon. I walked back, surprised that there was so much 'civilisation' beyond the Iriwa ridge, where I had thought the countryside was, for the most part, virtually uninhabited.

[A sketch-map in my diary, with north up the page, shows Iriwa and the ridge at the bottom, the 'Prayer Mount' summit and 'Kulal' to the right, the Yale/Wesu mountain, the town of Werugha and Ngangao forest to the left. The village of Mgambonyi is near the centre of the sketch, slightly over to the left, on the northern side of the ridge; further to the north is the 'broad valley', with views towards Tsavo East and the Yatta Plateau to the north-east, Choke and the Mbololo hills due east; at the top of the sketch (i.e. north) is the 'last line of hills'.]

I spent a busy evening doing some work, and writing at length to a close school friend. Rastor returned from Kilifi after an all-night Pentecostal rally. He had fallen asleep on the Kireti bus, and they had to wake him up by shouting: "Iriwa, Iriwa!"

On Monday I pushed my way through the morning's teaching, even though in the last lessons before lunch I was feeling pretty low. I went to bed after lunch, remaining there till evening.

On Tuesday morning I was woken up at 05:30 by something obviously stirring in my room. On investigation I eventually found a mouse inside a plastic carrier bag! I spent part of the day setting exams. Otherwise it was a quiet day, with a much needed afternoon sleep – as I was still feeling unwell.

Poised between two worlds

Based on my diary notes:

Wednesday 24 July 1974 – The W's had returned from Mombasa last night, so Catharine came down to see me, having heard from the S's that I was ill. Jackson made me some delicious fresh orange juice. We are now in the middle of the orange season, and almost every day Jezreel, a three-year old boy, comes by with a basket: "*Nimeleta machungwa*" [I have brought oranges]. Plenty of fluids; I slept for almost the whole morning. In the evening Catharine brought down a cassette tape recorder with tapes of Scripture-in-Song, swinging Bible verses set to music, which made for very pleasant listening.

Thursday 25 July 1974 – Up, but not teaching. I went along to the school, and scratched out some difficult mathematical diagrams on stencil for the Maths III exams. Christian Union at 4:30 pm, in which Francis taught members some choruses in English, ki-Dabida

and ki-Swahili, and Joseph M, the Kikuyu teacher from Maynard, preached. Dinner with the W's, who had guests: two graduates from Cambridge (Jesus College) out in Kenya for a holiday. One of them was going on to teach for a year in Ethiopia. I made arrangements for leaving for Mombasa the next day with the S's at 11:30 am, with Peter as well. Exams were to begin the next day, so there was very little for me to do at the school until the papers began flooding in, for marking.

As recorded in my diary:

I have felt, recently, almost 'poised between two worlds': a future of England and Cambridge drawing ever nearer; a year of Mgalu and the Taita Hills and Africa beginning to draw to a close. With a last trip to Mombasa, incorporating the wonderful experience of the 'Come Together' musical, the last two weeks of school work, examinations, final teaching, reports, an African-style birthday, a hopeful trip to see some of Western Kenya and the Rift Valley (Nakuru, Kericho, and Maseno) and then the climax of the year, the five-day ordeal on Africa's highest mountain – it will be nice to feel the year not only well spent, but well rounded off.

'Come Together' weekend

Based on my diary notes:

Friday 26 July 1974 – Feeling much better. I had to change the gas cylinder in order to get breakfast cooked. Exams started, and I found myself invigilating Form IVs, until 11 am. I went up to the S's, and after a delayed start (during which I had to run back to the W's to fetch Peter), we were off by 5 minutes to 12, hoping to reach Wundanyi Bank before it closed at 12! We re-packed at Wundanyi as it was quite a tight fit with Werugha vegetables, plenty of luggage, Don, Lyn, Peter, myself, and the children Anne and Iain, and baby Mark with his carry cot! Lunch at 2:30 pm with Dave at Taru Secondary School; then on into Mombasa, stopping again at Port Reitz, near the airport, to see Miss Ailsa P, the retired CMS missionary.

We reached CITC by mid-afternoon, and after seeing everyone briefly, the S's left to stay with the Provost. I chatted with the F's, observing that in comparison with Mbale, the Mombasa CITC campus (especially on this 'Come Together' weekend) was an incredibly busy place – a car would arrive, or leave, every few minutes! During the course of an hour or so I felt I had shaken hands with most of the Mombasa people I knew – including Ken J, who was looking much better, having recovered from a heart-attack followed by several relapses. With preparations for 'Come Together' mostly completed, I spent a quiet evening with Chris, and with Mary F's parents who had arrived for a holiday from the UK. The O's arrived back from Nairobi, by bus, later that evening. Ken O had been renewing their passports and obtaining a single visa in order to get up into the Sudan to assess the situation there.

Saturday 27 July 1974 – Early start and into Town. I took a long, last look at the sea, near State House, watching fierce wind-torn rollers breaking on the coral cliffs. Only as I left was the grey severity brightened into rich blue and shining white, as the sun emerged for a moment from behind the storm clouds. *Shauri* [business] at the Diocesan office, where I was assured that I would be given both my July and August salaries when the Management came to the school on August 2nd. Lunch with the O's.

The notice (copied by duplicator, with purple ink and smelling of methylated spirits) read:

Come Together in Jesus Name

Come and join us in this time of Christian love and worship

Mombasa Anglican Cathedral, Saturday 27th July 8 pm

St Margaret's Presbyterian Church, Sunday 28th July 9 am

Elim Evangelistic Church, Sunday 28th July 2 pm

To be performed by members of Nairobi Baptist Church

We awaited the arrival of the Nairobi party, who eventually came (by private coach) at 4:30 pm. We ushered them into tea with the F's – catering for 60 meant quite a bit of preparation! Jonathan A (YSA, Nairobi), Ann P (who had been on the Mount Kenya expedition), and Mr and Mrs T (Trinity Fellowship Conference, Lenana) were among those I knew. Afterwards members of Nairobi Baptist Church were taken by their hosts to places of accommodation, while Tom F and ourselves (at CITC) spent the early evening commuting between the Centre and the Cathedral setting up speakers, amplifiers, drums etc. We all assembled at 7 pm. It was a 'mixed choir', predominantly *wazungu* [white people] – Americans, Canadians, British – but some Africans and Asians too. There was a tremendous 'one-ness', for we were really to 'Come Together in Jesus' name'. I asked if I could join in the singing with the choir, as I had heard the tape several times, and many of the songs had been used in our fellowship meetings – and I was made most welcome!

At the beginning of the performance I felt worried, and regretted having asked to join the choir, as my knowledge of the music was way below that of the rest of the choir (whose fourteenth performance it was), and the congregation that had assembled, and was beginning to fill the Cathedral to overflowing, looked as grim as at an English Public School Speech Day, or a funeral! However, within 10 minutes of lively, rhythmical singing "Da-de-de-deh COME T'GETHER!" I realised that what mattered was not so much musical exactness, as the 'spirit' – in other words, if in doubt, sing anything, only loudly! It really was an act of worship, bringing the message of the Gospel in an idiom geared perhaps mostly to young people (though we were all ages) – but full of life and freedom. Twice during the performance the choir 'descended' upon the congregation – from the front to the very back – first to shake hands with everybody, greeting them in the name of Jesus, and secondly to share in small groups, in conversation and prayer. I found myself, during the time of ministry, talking with Timothy D, who planned to come on the Kilimanjaro expedition, and Michael M-T, an ex-YSA from Mwaghogho in the Taita Hills!

The difference in the congregation as the service proceeded was exciting. At times everyone was clapping, as in 'Clap your hands, all you people!' (Psalm 47 v 1), raising their arms in worship, or holding hands in fellowship – all with expressions of gladness and openness, from a release brought about, surely, by a wonderful movement of the Holy Spirit in the service. At the end I asked Desmond G, the Provost, what he thought of it all: he replied, "Well, I didn't awfully care for the music... er, when you get a bit long in the tooth like me, you tend to like the things you know..." But he agreed that 'Come Together' had been used in a remarkable way to make the Gospel truths more alive and meaningful to those who had truly come – together!

It was 10:30 pm by the time we had all finished saying goodbyes. After a very welcome late dinner of scrambled eggs at the F's, some of the Nairobi folk suggested going for a midnight swim! Many declined because of tiredness or other reasons, but I was keen to accept the invitation, as I wanted a last swim before leaving the coast. We took the CITC car to Nyali Beach, and had a lovely time swimming in the cool, dark waters, away from crabs scuttling across the pale sands, and under palm trees swaying against the moon. We not get to bed till 2:30 am, and then found that in Chris' house there were only four beds for five people, so I spent a rather painful 'night' on the cold, hard floor – waking at 5 am in time to see the sun rising up over Mombasa Creek!

Sunday 28 July 1974 – I was feeling, I confess, pretty washed out for most of the day. After an early breakfast we took all the equipment over to St Margaret's Presbyterian Church – which is predominantly Kikuyu, and thus personally favoured by the President of Kenya. The congregation was a little more inhibited than the previous night, as most of the people were not used to this kind of thing. But once again, it was encouraging to see the change during the course of the service, and the Padre at the end expressed his hope that the fellowship of this church would continue, in the days to come, in the true spirit of 'Come Together'.

Lunch with Chris, Nate (the conductor), Jonathan and others. Sad farewells to all, particularly to Chris, the O's and the F's. I was taken into Town to catch the 1:30 pm

Malindi bus back to Voi – a very *safi* [smart, high-class] Asian bus, which brought me comfortably to Voi in under 2 hours. Then I took the Kireti bus at 6:30 pm (1 hour late), and sat next to the Padre of Kishamba Church, who was on his way back from Nairobi. I had an amusing conversation with the bus driver, mainly in Swahili, but with some ki-Dabida, as we wound up into the moonlit hills...

Exams

The diary notes continued:

Monday 29 July 1974 – Exams. A day full of marking, invigilation, duplicating – and type-writing during 'off' hours in order to help Rhoda with her tasks, and also to get some practice in preparation for Cambridge. I said goodbye to the W's, as they were to leave for Dodoma, Tanzania tomorrow. As they were not returning until August 10th, I would not see them again until I returned from Kilimanjaro.

Tuesday 30 July 1974 – The examination program was jeopardised, because one of the springs in the duplicator got overstretched and destroyed! Eventually, after deliberations, we managed to secure it with a piece of string. More typing practice. Evening with Rastor and Joseph M, though I felt feverish during the evening.

Wednesday 31 July 1974 – Full day of examinations and marking. Busy evening helping with some typing, and trying to get the last exam papers off the press. I turned the pages of my calendar for the last time in Africa...

CHAPTER 12: THE LAST MOUNTAIN

August 1974

Exams and marking

On Thursday 1 August 1974 we had the last examinations. I pushed Form III through Biology (1½ hours) and Maths Paper 2 (2½ hours), bringing them up to 1 o' clock. The room seemed flooded with multiple choice questionnaires and bits of graph paper!

One of the teachers had organised a kind of staff get-together at our house, for Mgalu staff, plus Mr N's cousins and some students. The food prepared included tea, bread, butter and jam. Once we had assembled and the meal began, I noticed that Peter was absent, and I wondered why. I was sent to his house to bid him come, but his expression indicated that something was wrong. His final words were, "Tell them I'll think about it." When I returned, the first beer bottle was on the table. After a few more minutes (and a couple of sandwiches) other bottles mysteriously appeared, and a curious mixture of commercial beer and vodka began to take the place of tea – among the more wayward members of staff. I myself had begun – with a now almost totally Africanised attitude to alcohol – to feel uneasy as soon as the first bottle had appeared. The fact that students were present did not improve the situation. As the 'tea-party' gradually degenerated into an alcoholic carouse, I withdrew – first from the room, and then from the house itself, spending the rest of the evening with Peter.

On Friday the Diocese came at length, and gave us our salaries. I received pay for both July and August, a total of 1,140/- (approximately £70), which made me feel very rich, and I wondered how, or whether, I could reasonably get through it all by the date of my departure! Mr N then 'upped and went', having obtained a scholarship to study for a BSc overseas. He had given – in true African style – no warning to the Diocese of his pending departure, so that he could receive pay for July and August. Other staff members explained to me that the pay they were currently receiving from the Diocese was not enough to keep anyone at the Harambee schools for long, and that as soon as they were offered a better paid job, they too would (in the normal way) leave. 600/- per month or thereabouts, they said, was inadequate to cover rent, travel, and the needs of their families (e.g. younger siblings still studying, as is the African custom), and that teachers with other organisations (such as the Government) were paid substantially more. This explained why Mgalu and other Diocesan Harambee schools had such high staff turnover rates, and it also served as a warning that gradually the schools would lose all their good teachers, and the standard of their education would decline. Dinner with the S's and Jesse H, CMS Secretary for the whole of Africa, on tour. He planned to speak with President Idi Amin [of Uganda] the following week!

Last walk in the Taita Hills

Saturday was a busy day's marking, by and large. But during the afternoon I managed to get out for what I reckoned would be my last walk here in the Taita Hills – I felt very, very sad. It was a case of 'once round the block', as I started out after 5 pm, and evening rain clouds were already gathering.

[A sketch-map in my diary shows the route: from the Mdongo-dongo River bridge, straight up to the top of the nearest ridge, then round to the north and east, around the 'upper valley' and back on to the 'summit' (Prayer Mount), then down along the eastern ridge, and down westwards into Iriwa village.]

From 'The Real Africa', written a few years later:

I end my treatise entitled 'The Real Africa' (Cambridge, May 1978) by recalling one of the saddest experiences of my life. I had enjoyed a final weekend at

Mombasa singing in 'Come Together', and going for a last swim at Nyali Beach – in cool, dark waters, under the palm trees swaying in the moonlight.

Then, after a busy week of exams, I set out, late on a Saturday afternoon, for what I knew would be my last walk in the hills above Mbale. About half way round the 'upper valley', at its highest point, I just stopped, and felt the cool wind sighing in the bracken and the trees. It was so quiet and peaceful, as it always was – an invincible stillness, out of reach of the clamour of the world outside. Why must I go back? Why not stay here for a while? I turned and looked out over the valley – over the world I had come to know so well and love so much. I knew I was looking at it for the last time.

Now, in idle moments, back in England, I dream of how I would return to the Taita Hills. It would be – oh so simple! Step into a car and drive to London Airport – catch the next plane to Nairobi – take the OTC bus to Wundanyi – and then just walk down the hill to Mbale... But it could never be the same. I was looking at a world I was going to leave behind forever. With a sigh of resignation and acceptance, I turned round and started back down the path...

Mbale Church Choir

On Sunday I went to church for the last time in the Taita Hills – Holy Communion at Mbale. The service ended with a presentation of singing by the Mbale Church Choir led by Miss Rhoda N [the Mgalu School Secretary, and the daughter of the Padre, the Revd John N]. This was a recital of the songs they had sung at the Voi singing competition the day before. They had come second, beaten (by one mark) by Shigaro! While the first two songs were very 'English', and not very inspiring for them, the last songs were truly African, and were accompanied by drums, and bells on their feet; and as they sang they twisted and swayed in time – it was evident from their radiant expressions that this was really their music-style. My, they let themselves go!

Last Christian Union meeting in the afternoon, where, after singing and some preaching by others, I was asked to be the main speaker. After teaching those present a chorus from Psalm 63, "Thy loving kindness is better than life", which they seemed to enjoy very much, I preached for about ¾ hour: the substance of my address was advice to the Christians as leaders of the Christian Union, relating Bible teaching to the part they had to play in the school and the community.

Monday was a busy day's marking exam papers and writing reports. I felt distinctly unwell after lunch.

Tuesday was a day of furious marking, and writing school reports. I had to go to Wundanyi to close my bank account. It was a hot, overcast, sultry day; but I was considerably refreshed by taking part in a long game of football of staff versus students. One or two spectacular and cheer-stirring 'heads' made up for my definite inadequacy in the face of determined opposition! Rastor and Peter experienced the same difficulties. The other staff members turned out to be rather good.

Nineteenth birthday

Wednesday 7 August 1974 – the day I turned 19 years old. After a birthday breakfast which included a boiled egg, I was faced with a hard, last day of teaching. I managed to give back many of the exam papers and discuss various difficulties. My very last lesson was Maths with a depleted Form IB. The lesson was interrupted, and eventually broken up half way through, by a relayed order from Jerome K, who wanted the entire school on the football pitch to help prepare for the afternoon match. Then much time was spent furiously marking Mr N's Form IV Maths papers – which was difficult, as I had not set them.

There was an African-style birthday party at our house at 6 pm, attended by Peter M, Jerome K, Elvis N, Joseph M (from Maynard), Mrs W, Miss Rhoda N and a friend, and Jackson (who helped prepare the food), and hosted by Rastor N and myself. Tea made with hot milk, buttered rolls, biscuits and scones from Lyn S – to the opening of various presents: an embroidered handkerchief from Rhoda, two eggs from Jerome, a red garnet (semi-precious stone from the Taita Hills) from Joseph, the record of ‘Come Together’ from the W’s, a wooden bowl from the Wundanyi market from the S’s, and some presents from England that had arrived by air mail! Altogether it was a very enjoyable and successful evening, taken in a different spirit from the drinking binge of the previous Thursday night.

Mgalu farewells

On Thursday morning I walked into Assembly to find only half of the school present. Peter refused to conduct it until, after half an hour chasing up by the prefects, everyone was there. Reports, results, and clerical work until – though none of this was finished – we called the Final Assembly at 4 pm. After the hymn, I was asked to take a short reading (I chose Romans 12, last part), and to say a few words of farewell, and comments on my experience of my year at the school. I tried to sum up in the words of Paul’s exhortation given in Romans 12 v 12: “Rejoice in your hope; be patient in tribulation; be constant in prayer.” After the Assembly, I had the novel and unusual experience of shaking hands with 180 students as they tumbled out of the Form IV classroom! Some I was to see again in the evening, when we went up to the hostel for a ‘last dinner’. This was preceded by a kind of ‘military’ operation, attempting to track down some local youths who had been seen ominously ‘hanging around’ the girls’ hostel. Manoeuvres were effected in almost total darkness, my torch having completely failed. Eventually, after a fruitless expedition to the school, our party overtook them on the Maynard corner, and after a not very conclusive ‘interrogation’ we let them go. Dinner for all at the hostel: rice, meat and cabbage, with orange squash. Speeches afterwards by all staff members.

Friday 9 August 1974 – I finished the Form IV reports, and set to work clearing, sorting and packing, preparing for a rapid departure on return from Kilimanjaro. There was heavy rain for the entire day. I walked over to the S’s for dinner, in the pouring rain; the path seemed to follow the roar of water cascading down channels carved into the embankment. Some of the evening was spent listening to the overseas news, as President Nixon had resigned, and Vice-President Gerald Ford had been sworn in to take his place. Farewells, as I would not see Don again – when I returned he would be at Nyeri.

The ‘Real Africa’ – Part 3

(from ‘The Real Africa’, written a few years later)

What I contributed during my year was probably very little. But what I learned was of immense importance. For this was the year in which I was able to learn the fundamental lessons of faith – the year in which real foundations were laid. And for me Africa was the foundation for the future...

Once again, I had to ask, ‘Where did the Real Africa lie? What were the most important lessons I learned, and in a sense have to learn time after time again?’ A few of the deepest truths emerged from events that happened later in the year. Particular experiences are the means by which spiritual truths are discovered and applied; and the three principles that follow are no exception. They were all discovered and illustrated by events that took place during the last few months – after I had let go of my past, and my problems, and had learned to be more receptive to the qualities of indigenous African culture.

(a) Firstly, *submission* – learning to accept the situation as it is, not as you would like it to be. There are two possible ways of responding to any given situation:

- the way of the world – criticism and rebellion, which leads to bitterness; and
- the way of the Lord – humble submission, which leads to praise.

This was a principle I did not appreciate in my early days at Mgalu, where the prevailing attitude towards the school was one of cynicism and despair. But when Peter M took over as Headmaster everything changed. And so, when Peter called me out of class one morning to tell me that a new teacher had arrived from Kituri, I made a definite resolution not to complain or be critical, even though the transfer (by order of the Bishop) was against all our wishes, and really against all common sense. It was a situation that affected me personally because the new teacher, Venant M, was physically handicapped – he had a wooden leg and had to move about on crutches. And as ours was the nearest house to the school, that meant he would have to move in with us. And that would have meant sharing my room with him, or one of us (probably me) moving up into Crispin's old house – African-style and miles up the hill. But I was prepared to accept anything that came my way, determined to do my best in the circumstances. And as nothing more was said that day I saw no point in answering unasked questions, and resolved not to speculate on what the future might hold. For I learned that speculation was useless. Life in Africa was so full of uncertainty – situations could change so suddenly, for better or for worse. I found that acceptance was the key – not allowing myself to fall into the trap of wishing things – situations over which I had no control – to be otherwise. As it turned out, Venant stayed with Peter, whose house was a little further away from the school than ours, and a week later he left us again – transferred to Mwangeka High School by order of the Bishop!

This principle of submission does not conflict with the principle of tenacity – the determination not to let go and give up. The one is an attitude of humble submission before the Lord and joyful acceptance of the situation He gives you; the other is a determination to do your very best in the given circumstances. In other words, when confronted with a difficult situation: (i) if you can do something about it (e.g. flight to Zambia), do it and then don't worry about it; and (ii) if you can't do anything about it (e.g. the arrival of Venant M), then don't worry about it. Accept what you cannot change; change what you can.

(b) Secondly, *it's people that matter*. People come first. People are more important than things. People matter more than plans. They are more important than time-tables and schedules and duties and quotas. This is such a basic principle of life – and yet so easily forgotten in the rush of the West with our obsession with punctuality and efficiency. We can forget this in our Christian lives as well, and adopt a fundamentally 'western' approach: in our efforts to serve the Lord efficiently people can become dehumanised – we think of them as numbers at a meeting, or names on a prayer list, rather than real people to love and care about.

There are so many people. We are forever meeting new people, and their numbers can overwhelm us. But Jesus had compassion on the multitudes who came to Him. And we are to love as He loves us. We cannot always commit time and resources to everyone we meet – but we can love and

welcome each person who comes to us, and that is the most important thing.

People come first. The principle was illustrated very neatly by a situation I often found myself in, and which to begin with was always a dilemma. You come home after school and have dinner. Then you sit down at your desk with the evening before you. On your left is a time-table showing tomorrow's lessons which you have to prepare; and on your right is a pile of books waiting to be marked. And then there's a knock at the door...

What do you do? Turn the visitors away and get the work done? Or welcome them in, and blow the work? The western attitude is often, "Go away, I'm busy." But this is Africa, and people must come first. So you invite them in and entertain them – for they have done you the great honour of calling at your house. And when they choose to get up and go – only then may you resume your tasks. (And the next day you go to school overtired, or inadequately prepared...)

(c) Thirdly, in Africa I learned something of *the power of praise*, or positively thanking God in and for all circumstances, knowing that "in everything God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8 v 28). In the final analysis there are just two languages in this world:

- the language of criticism and resentment, spoken by the majority of people you meet; and
- the language of thankfulness and praise, which should be spoken by all of God's children.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: "Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5 v 16 to 18). In practice this meant thanking God not only for breath-taking mountain scenery or a beautiful sunrise – but when there was no chalk in the classroom, or the board duster was broken, or half the class was missing.

This lesson was brought home to me in an unforgettable way, over half term at the end of June. I was on my way back from Mombasa after a quiet weekend with the O's – trying to relax and recover from the rigours of the term. I was still pretty tired as the decrepit old bus, which had left Mombasa late, crawled painfully towards Voi. But I had been reading Merlin Carother's book *Power in Praise*. So when I reached Voi at six pm and the Mbale bus had already left, I decided that God had allowed this to happen on purpose, and I started to thank him for it. "Thank you Lord that I missed the Mbale bus. Thank you that I have a three mile walk from Wundanyi – in the dark, with a heavy rucksack and a bulky KSTC Science Kit." And in view of the black clouds hovering around the Taita Hills, "Thank you Lord that it's probably raining at Wundanyi."

And then the Lord did a remarkable thing. When I stepped out of the bus at Wundanyi, it was a brilliant, clear moonlit night. Then a couple of students (who had travelled with me on the bus) offered not only to keep the Science Kit at Wundanyi until the next morning, but to walk with me all the way back to Mbale! And I was able to witness to them on the way...

Then followed the most amazing week of the year. I was Duty Master for that week; I had a full quota of periods to teach; and Jackson was in hospital, so we had no domestic help. There was no time to do anything – not even to read a long-awaited letter that had just arrived (from a school

friend, about the David Watson Mission at Haileybury). I was under tremendous pressure, but I just thanked Jesus hour by hour for everything – even the little, trivial things like walks between the classrooms, preparing food, washing up. And so I discovered the power of praise, and a week that had promised to be so difficult was transformed by the language of praise, and became the best and happiest week of the year!

For to praise God is to forget self; to praise God is to take delight in Him...

Delight yourself in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37 v 4)

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thessalonians 5 v 16 to 18)

Trip to Western Kenya

Based on my diary notes:

Saturday 10 August 1974 – Rise at 05:00, for a walk up to the tarmac. I said goodbye to Peter – who called by just as I was leaving, and to Rastor. It was a hard, uphill climb through the mist; and I was surprised to find that the mist did not clear until we reached Voi, after a 1,000 ft descent from Mwatate. I hitch-hiked unsuccessfully for over an hour – dismayed to see car after car going the other way – obviously game-park tourists from Tsavo on their way to the coast! Eventually I flagged down a taxi, which got me into the city in 4 hours for 30/-. I spent that night with the R's – Church Commissioners for Kenya, who lived in State House Avenue, next door to the Archbishop of Kenya, and half a mile from State House. I discussed Kilimanjaro plans with Mark and Chris, and also with the D's who lived next door, who were also on the Kilimanjaro expedition.

Sunday 11 August 1974 – 09:00 Youth Service at Nairobi Baptist Church, which was very much 'alive' in many ways. At the end of the service, someone was baptised by total immersion. I met many people that I knew – mainly from the choir of 'Come Together' at Mombasa. Then I set out, from the R's house, for Nakuru, and met the C's (John and Crystal), just driving out from their flat. They drove me out to the Kikuyu turn-off to Nakuru, while we arranged to see each other again during the few days before my departure. We were stopped by police who booked John for not having a horn that worked! After ten minutes of waiting, I was picked up by a Japanese person on his way to Kericho via Nakuru. The journey was spent in amusing conversation, as we descended the escarpment into the Rift Valley. We headed north through hot arid country, and were rewarded by wonderful views of the lakes – Lake Naivasha, Lake Elmentaita, and after a stop at Gilgil, Lake Nakuru. Time, after arrival, to walk up the slopes of Menengai Crater, a climb that I was unable to complete, as my rucksack was extremely heavy. However I obtained a fine view of the town spread below me, and the azure lake, lined with forest green and a suggestion of flamingo pink. Sunflowers and brightly coloured sunbirds. The evening and night were spent with friends of the O's, who worked at the Bethany Bookshop in Nakuru.

Monday 12 August 1974 – I visited the Bethany Bookshop, and bought farewell gifts for the W's and the S's. The Assistant Manager invited me to accompany him to the Lakeside National Park. Employees at the bookshop were granted passes for the Park, as part of their recognised profession was to collect moulted flamingo feathers, from which they made their world-famous 'flamingo-feather-flowers' – which overseas visitors would buy and send as gifts. We drove through the Rift Valley forests filled with brightly coloured birds – bee-eaters, rollers, hoopoes – until we reached a point where we approached the lakeside by foot to see greater and lesser flamingos, looking particularly beautiful in flight – as well as pelicans, ibises, waterbuck and hippopotami, which kind of 'flopped' into the water. We returned around 12 noon, as it was getting pretty hot.

I then hitch-hiked on to Kericho, being picked up by an Asian in an extremely dirty Renault. We passed Jomo Kenyatta's private farm – wheat fields, complete with combine harvesters and straw bales! About 10 minutes later the driver pointed to the right and said, "Is still President's farm." Another 10 minutes, and he pointed to the left: "Is President's daughter's farm." The fact that the President has found it necessary to take so much land for his own family's use had caused much scandal, and was termed by some as 'the Watergate of Kenya!' We climbed out of the Rift Valley and into the Mau Hills, which were very high, forested and fertile, looking a bit like Wales or Scotland, except that the trees (pine, gum and eucalyptus) were characteristic of East Africa (though imported from Australia). We drove through Molo, passing near St Andrew's School Turi, where the W children went to school, and then on to Kericho, alighting at the turn off to the Kenya Highlands Bible College, set amid rolling green hills and tea plantations.

I reached the B's, an American family (again friends of the O's) just as the thunder clouds were gathering and rain was beginning to fall. I had a fascinating conversation with Earle about tribal differences between the Kipsigis (of Mau) and the waTaita; and about climatic differences between the two districts. We also discussed differences between English and American educational systems and principles, of which there appeared to be many.

Tuesday 13 August 1974 – I left Kericho after lunch (and before the rain), getting a quick lift to Kisumu; as we descended from the Mau hills we caught an exciting glimpse of the Great Lake. We reached Kisumu in pouring rain, after several miles of flat sisal and sugar-cane estates. On arrival I met Bidy, a VSO, who took me out to see the lake on her motorbike. I then took a taxi westwards to Maseno. Not knowing where the D's (Trinity Fellowship) lived, I overshot and, for the first time this year, crossed the EQUATOR.

When I had arrived, Godfrey D took me round Maseno before sundown – a strange place, for it had the makings of a sizeable town: it had a Mission School and Hospital; a Government Training Centre; a famous Government Secondary School, one of the oldest in the country; a Teachers' Training College; a Cathedral; Diocesan Headquarters; several missionary families; and Trinity Fellowship Headquarters. And yet, the business centre consisted of about three shops (and six 'pubs'), and there seemed to have been very little development towards creating some kind of Township. I remember Godfrey showing me an old and large tree, which was famous among the missionaries as the Gospel was first preached under that tree – Godfrey described it as 'a sacred place'. I also had a much clearer and more extensive view of Lake Victoria. I spent the evening with Godfrey and Elizabeth D, and other expatriates and African members of the Trinity Fellowship.

Wednesday 14 August 1974 – I spent the morning in Maseno, and then travelled as far as Nakuru in the Trinity Fellowship van, as members of the fellowship were driving to Njoro (near Nakuru) to prepare for a secondary school camp. I had lunch at the famous Tea Hotel in Kericho, and arrived in Nakuru around 4 pm. I then had a long wait for a Rift-Valley-Peugeot taxi into Nairobi, leaving at 5:30 pm. It was very beautiful seeing the Rift Valley at sunset, and dramatic as the stark shape of the volcanic Mount Longonot reared up black against the blazing red sky. Into Nairobi at 8:00 pm and – saving me a walk through the city in the dark – the driver kindly dropped me literally at the R's front door in State House Avenue! We spent a busy evening sorting out mountains of corned beef, coffee, biscuits, bread, margarine, tinned fish, porridge oats, matches, oranges, primus stoves and kerosene for the Kilimanjaro expedition, and loading them into cardboard boxes for transportation to 'base camp'...

Kilimanjaro

Thursday 15 August 1974 – It was an early start to board the OTC bus bound for Dar-es-Salaam, scheduled to arrive at Moshi at 4 pm. I travelled with the R's, the D's and John S, together responsible for handling all food and necessary supplies – and ready with detailed invoices in case we had to pay duty at the Kenya-Tanzania border. It was a long

haul down through Maasai territory and the Amboselli Game Park to Namanga – and we saw several giraffes standing in the middle of the road! Kenyan customs passed off our boxes of food with limited interest. The Tanzanian authorities took no interest at all: they didn't order everything to be taken off the bus, and didn't even bother to look inside – so, no complaints there!

Hours passed, and as we approached Mount Meru, we enjoyed our first view of the crater of Kilimanjaro rising in a blue haze above cloud level. Soon we reached the Towns of Arusha and Moshi. After some delay, we eventually found a local bus to take us from Moshi to Marangu. The bus held 18 officially, but on this particular journey, as it was the last bus of the day, it carried 45! We arrived at the plantations of Marangu at dusk; we alighted at the Marangu Hotel, and after a slight panic (as someone told us it was five miles off the beaten track), we found the Pentecostal Swedish Mission, the K's and the Bible School, about ¼ mile away. We were welcomed, once again, to 'civilisation': mattressed bunks in the dormitory, showers, running water, and a place for us to cook!

Friday 16 August 1974 – This turned out to be a fairly sedentary day at Marangu, as we thought it would take two days to make the journey from Nairobi, and it only took one. The other member of our party arrived from Mombasa in the evening: Jackie W, John M (VSO, Kisumu), John P (the famous 7-year YSA headmaster), Richard W, David L and Jon A. They had actually landed up at the other 'Bible School' we had been told about – the one that actually was five miles away!

[I have a very clear memory of this day, as I had a special time of prayer for members of my family. I prayed as I walked around a nearby Lutheran school oval, the grass vivid green and shaded by tall trees. In the distance two chapel bells tolled in harmony – a beautiful sound, distinctive and memorable because the chord struck by the two bells was a perfect sixth – a very unusual sound, which is why I remember it so clearly.]

DAY 1: Saturday 17 August 1974 – Early in the morning we sorted out baggage into loads for the porters, and after a rather austere briefing from the Manageress of the Marangu Hotel, who told us the sobering story of a climber who had pulmonary oedema: (“and he paid for it with his life, I am sorry to say”), we set out on the long climb to the summit – 15 young volunteers, 10 porters and one guide. Ever since our arrival the upper slopes of Kilimanjaro were lost in a dense blanket of cloud – which added to the sense of mystery and expectation – as we marched through the banana plantations and rich coffee *shambas* of the lower slopes. The journey through the Lower Forest to Mandara Hut passed in a long and fascinating conversation with John P, who was the Headmaster of the Butonge Harambee School. Mandara Hut gave us the opportunity to refresh ourselves with much-needed cans of ice-cold Coca-Cola, and afforded fine views over the Lower Forest towards the North Pare Mountains, and lakes; and round to the left, beyond the plains, we could see the familiar, unmistakable outlines of the Taita Hills – now looking strangely small and insignificant compared to the vast upward slopes ahead of us.

[A sketch-map in my diary shows the 5-day route up and down the mountain. There are now many routes to the summit, some starting from Tanzania, and some from Kenya (west and north of the mountain). I understand that the route we took is now called 'the Coca-Cola route', deriving its name from the refreshments to be found at Mandara Hut. But in August 1974, this was the only tourist route possible.]

DAY 2: Sunday 18 August 1974 – The next morning we climbed through the Upper Forest, enjoying the first, fresh rays of morning sunlight filtering through curtains of foliage and lichens. A high and silent forest of a thousand different greens, with a magical quality as if it had come out of Lord of the Rings. But the

beauty of the forest passed all too quickly, and in a while we emerged on to open moorland that stretched away gently upwards. We had time to appreciate the extremely varied flora – different kinds of heather and everlasting flowers, and as we began to notice the first effects of high altitude, our pace became steadier and we talked less.

It was during lunch by the side of a stream that we enjoyed our first view of the rocky summit of Mawenzi, the eastern peak of Kilimanjaro, as it began to free itself at last from cloud and mist. Horombo 'Hut' – a veritable encampment – and the end of the second day. Early bed, sleeping two to a bunk (because of the crowds), and enjoying the spectacle (from the topmost bunk level) of a party of very large Eastern European tourists who had just come down from the Summit, and were being served with soup, roast chicken, peaches and cream, and coffee – course after course, it seemed, and a poor contrast to our frugal corned-beef-and-spaghetti! A cold night, tossing and turning...

DAY 3: Monday 19 August 1974 – First light came with a sense of relief. We awoke to find that the cloud level had dropped below us during the night, so that it seemed we were on the shore of some Great White Sea – which later turned to pink, and then to orange and gold, as the sun came up behind a slope on our left. We were rewarded too with our first view of the snow-capped Kibo crater, rising up over the horizon, brilliant white in the early morning sunshine. With a wonderful sense of elation stemming from the fresh mountain air, clear blue sky above, and spectacular scenery, we started on the gradual climb towards the saddle. The jagged peaks of Mawenzi, rising clear above the slopes of groundsel on our right, began to swirl in gathering cloud as the day wore on. Presently we reached a spring, which was sign-posted, ominously, LAST WATER – where we rested and filled up our water bottles for the last time.

As we continued, the vegetation became smaller and more sparse, and the hillsides more arid, until on reaching the top of a ridge, we were faced with the most amazing and awe-inspiring sight imaginable. For an agonizing distance, desolate land, bare and featured only by volcanic outcrops, stretched away until it fell precipitously into cloud on either side of us. Directly ahead, some five miles distant, the desert began to rise sharply to meet the massive snow-capped ridge of Kibo crater. We had an uneasy lunch – our last full meal, and we became aware, for the first time, of the sheer vastness of the mountain we had undertaken to climb. Just a short rest, before we dressed up warmly, and then committed ourselves to the cold, glaring, barren, windswept desert expanse ahead.

One hour, two hours... The crater rose higher: the sun came down to meet it. A reckless wind from our right blew clouds on to the saddle, to be carried up and away by convection currents – the same wind that for thousands of years had carved intricate patterns of waves and furrows in the sand. After three hours we reached some rocks – our first landmark – and from there on, the ground began to rise steeply, making our progress more difficult, until at last we reached the lonely encampment of Kibo Hut. The sun fell below the crater wall, the temperature dropped further still, and soon it was dark. After a mug of soup (which was all our stomachs would allow), we lay down on mattresses and listened to the wind – which tore relentlessly at the iron huts, piling up sand against the windward walls.

DAY 4: Tuesday 20 August 1974 – We were called up by our Guide at 1.00 am – having, surprisingly, managed a few hours of untroubled sleep. The wind had dropped, and the night was clear and still. A mug of tea, and then we launched out into the night for the cold, steep climb to the Summit. Back across the valley, behind us like a sentinel, stood the dark shape of Mawenzi, like a giant version of

Stac Pollaidh. Above its black silhouette, Orion, on its side, began to rise – to a considerable height, it seemed, before the stars began to pale with first light. The climb wore on, each step more breathless than the last – sinking into loose scree, buffeted by the wind, which now seemed to be coming from several directions at once. We reached some caves, sat down exhausted, and then noticed the first brightening in the east. We were exactly half way, our Guide told us – only the final crater slope to the Summit remained. Then the Guide began to sing: “*Jua imekuja! Baridi imekwisha!*” [The sun has come! The cold has finished!] And as we sat and watched, a streak of orange, then yellow, lined the horizon behind Mawenzi, and suddenly the dawn exploded out of the East.

For the next two hours we zig-zagged up the scree, slowly gaining height. Presently we were able to see the rock called Gillman’s Point, with a red flag flying from the top. After countless traverses, each more breathless and exhausting than the last, I looked up – the rock was still there, above the scree, this time a little nearer. It was then that I began to feel perhaps the most dangerous effects of high altitude. For by the time we reached the rocks at the top of the scree slope, I had got beyond breathlessness and exhaustion – to a strange feeling of intoxication and light-headedness. It was as if I was watching myself in a film. Somebody shouted something as I neared the top. In a daze, I could hear myself replying... Over a rise, and then quite suddenly I could see over the crater rim and there was ice below me. With a last frantic effort I struggled to the top of Gillman’s Point. Others were there ahead of me. People, voices... “Well done! You’ve made it!” I struggled again – to keep my head upright and my eyes open. The Summit – great steps of rock and ice – the clear blue sky above...

Looking at photographs afterwards, I realize that what I saw must have been fantastic. We were on top of the highest crater in Africa, looking down across a great, shallow bowl of ice which covered the crater floor. In places the rock had deformed and the ice had weathered into incredible formations. But, as I say, the visual beauty and splendour were surmised later, from photographs. At the time it was all I could do to lie down and try to overcome my headache and feelings of dizziness. Vaguely, I could hear talk of proceeding to Uhuru Peak, the highest point in Africa, and about another two hours journey around the crater rim to the left. Then I heard myself deciding definitely NOT to go on – which was probably just as well, as in my mental state I could quite happily have disappeared over the edge of a cliff! Presently we began the descent – and the long homeward journey. One step down, and about three more feet of sliding down with the loose scree...

A couple of hours much needed rest at Kibo Hut, and then back down to Horombo Hut, taking it very slowly, as I had a splitting headache and my stomach felt unusually weak. The Guide, William, had to escort me for the last part of the journey, as I had to rest every few minutes, drinking cold water in sips to clear my head. I managed to get to Horombo before dark, and was able to have a good evening meal.

DAY 5: Wednesday 21 August 1974 – I was feeling well once again. We made rapid progress down through the moorland, picking everlasting flowers, and then marched back down through the Great Forest. At about 3 pm we reached Marangu once again – hot, tired, and dirty. The Swedish Mission had no water, as the plumbing had gone wrong. However Mrs K advised us to wash in the nearby river, whose waters came straight from the snows of Kilimanjaro. The water was cool, clean and fast flowing. Throwing inhibition to the winds, we stripped everything off apart from our underclothes, chose a fairly deep part of the river, and just plunged in, wallowing blissfully in the cool, cleansing, soothing

waters – while three astonished African ladies watched the strange antics of the *wazungu* from a nearby bridge!

Then we proceeded with a long *shauri* at the Marangu Hotel, settling finances. [The Marangu Hotel itemised account came to total of 2,041.50 Tsh (Tanzanian shillings; 16 Tsh = £1), and included items such as hut fees and park entry fees; the most expensive item was 1 Guide @ 150/- and 8 porters @ 120/- = 960/-!] We also received our Certificates of the Ascent of Mount Kilimanjaro. Dinner, by invitation, at the K's – the first good meal since our departure five days previously.

Return to Mbale, Nairobi and England

Based on my diary notes:

Thursday 22 August 1974 – Up and away. Bus to Himo, to find that the bus from Moshi to Voi had just passed, and (said our potential taxi-driver) there would not be another one till the afternoon. In fact the OTC bus passed about ½ hour later. But we accepted a lift at 5/- a head to take us out to the border at Taveta, in an attempt to catch up with the bus. This we did – the Tanzanian and Kenyan authorities hurried us through formalities for this reason. Mwatate, and an eventual lift to Wundanyi with Harold M – the Manager of the Kenya Commercial Bank. As he saw I was exhausted, he very kindly ran me down to Mbale. The afternoon was spent packing, and then I said goodbye to Lyn S. Evening with the W's – unfortunately the children were for down with tonsillitis, but they had all thoroughly enjoyed their *safari* to Dodoma in central Tanzania. A very happy last meal of chicken and pulao rice and home-made ice-cream; conversations and discussion on the highlights of this past year, and my probable reactions on returning to the UK.

Friday 23 August 1974 – Andrew W drove me and baggage to the OTC bus at Wundanyi. Very sad farewells, seeing the last of the Taita Hills and Voi. Slow, meditative journey up to Nairobi, arriving at the EARS [East African Road Service] bus station where I was met by Harry C – as at the first time, in October 1973. Evening: Keswick Convention (which happened every year, like a Lent Mission, only in August) at Lenana High School on the Ngong Road. The Keswick Speaker was the Revd Philip H from Sheffield. It was a powerful address, and a chance to catch up with many of those who had been on the Kilimanjaro expedition (and survived!)

Saturday 24 August 1974 – I confirmed my flight at the Ndege Brokers in Kaunda Street, had lunch with John and Crystal C, and spent the afternoon going round Nairobi Game Park with them, along with some Asian friends. Thunderstorm and very wet: Thompson's gazelle, gerenuk, wildebeest, secretary birds, reticulated giraffe and zebras; two lionesses, rather inactive. We proceeded to Hippo Point, and on our way spotted a solitary lioness, sitting upright like a giant cat, and then prowling forward, evidently 'up to something'. About a mile further on there were large herds of zebra and gazelle. On our return from Hippo Point, where we saw only one pair of hippopotamus nostrils, we noticed that the lioness was beginning to stalk her prey. Other cars converged – which might have put her off, as after crossing the line of vehicles she seemed to become disinterested, and began walking down the road. We followed her for about half an hour, until she gave a great yawn, lay down, and went to sleep on the side of the road, while we all filed past taking photographs! A still, dramatic sunset in the silence that followed the storm. Keswick in the evening.

Sunday 25 August 1974 – Nairobi Baptist Church Youth Service at 9 am. The preacher was a Minister from Ghana. Mattins at the Cathedral with the C's. Sunday lunch and reasonably quiet afternoon. Visited the R's and the D's in State House Avenue, and said goodbyes.

Monday 26 August 1974 – My last day in Kenya. The morning and part of the afternoon were spent shopping in Nairobi for presents. Most purchases were made after hard bargaining in Biashara Street. I managed to change 301/50 to £18 in cash at Barclays Bank. Last evening with the C's – film at the Drive-in on Thika Road: 'The Three Musketeers'.

Tuesday 27 August 1974 – John C collected me from the C's at 07:30. A sad goodbye: the C's leave for Australia in November. We had a short but meaningful time of prayer together on their front doorstep. Arrival at Nairobi Airport for checking-in baggage. Even when another YSA held one of my pieces of hand luggage, I was still 7 kg overweight and had to pay 70/-, conveniently using up all my remaining Kenya currency!

Take-off at 10:00 am. Athi plains, hills, and suddenly we were over the Rift Valley Escarpment, looking back towards Mount Longonot and the satellite tracking station. Lake Naivasha, Elmentaita and Nakuru, shaped like a map. The Town of Nakuru and the interior of Menengai crater were clearly visible. Others were able to observe the peaks of Mount Kenya on the right hand side, but soon, it seemed, we left civilisation far behind; gradually the vegetation turned into scrub, and as we passed from the NFD [Northern Frontier District] into the Sudan, the scrub dwindled to semi-desert. After the swamps of the Sudd came landscape which remained with us for four hours – the vast, empty expanse of the Sahara Desert. Glaring sands, scarred and pitted with gullies or rocks, blurring into a blue haze in the distance. At times the glare was so intense we had to pull the blinds down over the windows. At length the burning land gave way to sea, and we crossed the North African coast near Benghazi, Libya. Then we were over the Mediterranean, and we could make out the uncertain shape of Sicily. Keeping the Italian coast on our right, we reached southern Europe and flew over France.

Suddenly, it seemed, the tropical heat subsided, and the land became much clearer once the glare was gone. At last we crossed the north coast of France, and for the first time I realised that Britain was not far away. The sun was reflected like bronze in the smooth waters of the English Channel, contrasting with the dark shape of French coast. Then the Captain announced that we were beginning our descent into London Heathrow. Sussex and Brighton Pier; quiet, green English fields, villages, towns, factories, a circle over central London, until our turn came to land at Heathrow Airport. As I disembarked I felt once again the cool, clear English evening sunshine.

I was met by my sister Virginia, and my brother and sister-in-law Nick and Ewa at Heathrow, and later by my father at our Bayswater flat; then I caught a train at dusk from Kings Cross. Twilit meadows, villages with orange neon lights, and the moon beginning to set, reassuringly turned the right way up at last. Lincoln Cathedral rose above the Steep, fantastically floodlit. My mother met me off the train at Lincoln – home and bed! But for hours I lay awake, finding it impossible to reconcile the fact that in a single day I had seen Nairobi Conference Tower and Lincoln Cathedral; Uhuru Highway and Bayswater; Nairobi Airport and Kings Cross Railway Station; the Rift Valley and Brighton Pier; Lake Naivasha and the Thames; the Sahara Desert and the quiet Sussex harvest fields. I realised my head was spinning with incredulity and excitement – and it was not until the next morning's light that I could fully convince myself that I was truly back in England...

Last words...

Faith in God can move a mighty mountain; faith in God can calm a troubled sea.

Faith in God makes sweet the bitter fountain; faith can give the victory.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me, all the days, all the days of my life.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me, all the days, all the days of my life.

And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever; and I shall feast at the table spread for me.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me, all the days, all the days of my life...

(from a chorus we often sang in the Taita Hills)

For thy steadfast love is great to the heavens,
thy faithfulness to the clouds.

(Psalm 57 v 10)

But thou, O Lord, art a God merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

(Psalm 86 v 15)

I will sing of thy steadfast love, O LORD, for ever;
with my mouth I will proclaim thy faithfulness to all generations.

(Psalm 89 v 1)

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is thy faithfulness.

(Lamentations 3 v 22, 23)

*Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee.
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be.*

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above.
Join with all nature in manifold witness,
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

*Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness,
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.*

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth;
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide.
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside...

*Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.*

Illustrations to follow Chapter 9

Kilimanjaro from the air, looking south, during the flight from Nairobi to Dar-es-Salaam (4 May 1974)



Zambia stamps, Luanshya postmark



Lusaka-scape...



Lusaka-scape...

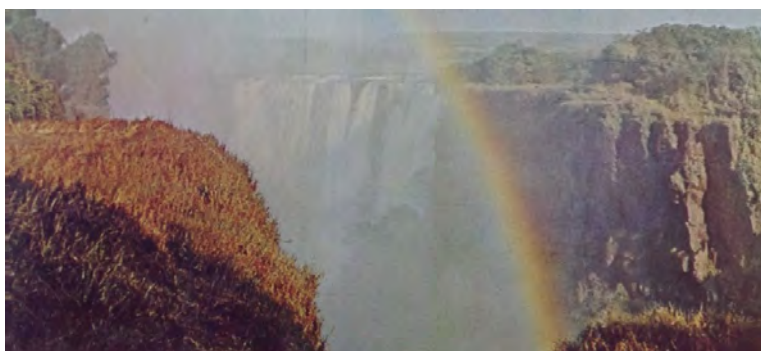


Cathedral, Lusaka



Left: Victoria Falls looking over the top

Right: Rhodes Railway Bridge, linking Zambia (left) to Rhodesia (right) – notice the train on top



Above and left: Victoria Falls, Zambia

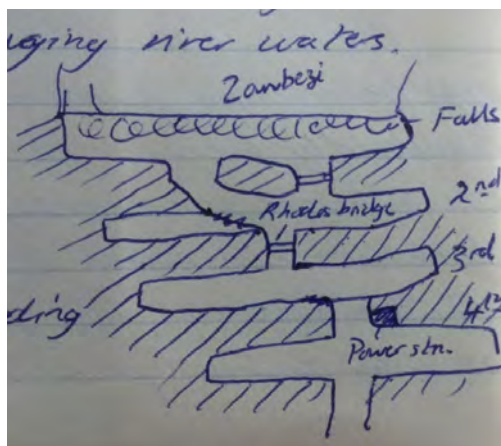


Victoria Falls
(Source: Google images)



Left: Rhodes Railway Bridge, with 'boiling pot' in foreground

Below: Diagram showing succession of parallel gorges downstream of Victoria Falls (excerpt from diary)



Left: Musi-oa-Tunya hotel

Right: Lions at Livingstone zoo





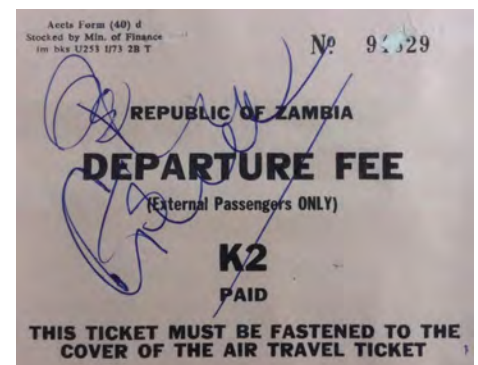
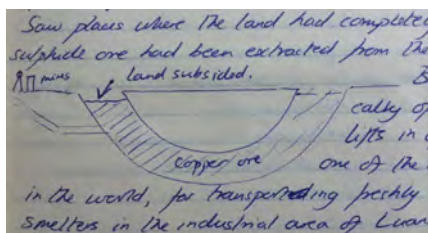
“... the sun however was still visible from the air, sinking fast below the level of the clouds – which were arrayed in complex formations, so that towering grey masses of storm clouds were raised above the main cloud layer; and as the sun drew level, they were like islands in a lake of fire...” (11 May 1974)



Above: Diagram of cutting reamer

Aerial view of Luanshya (Source: Google images)

Below, centre: Diagram of copper ore body (excerpts from diary)



Illustrations to follow Chapters 10 and 11



Left: View from the front verandah of my house on a misty day



Right: View from my bedroom window to the house across the valley



Left: View down the Mgalu valley with Rong'e in the distance

Below: Mbale bus (Voi to Wundanyi via Iriwa)



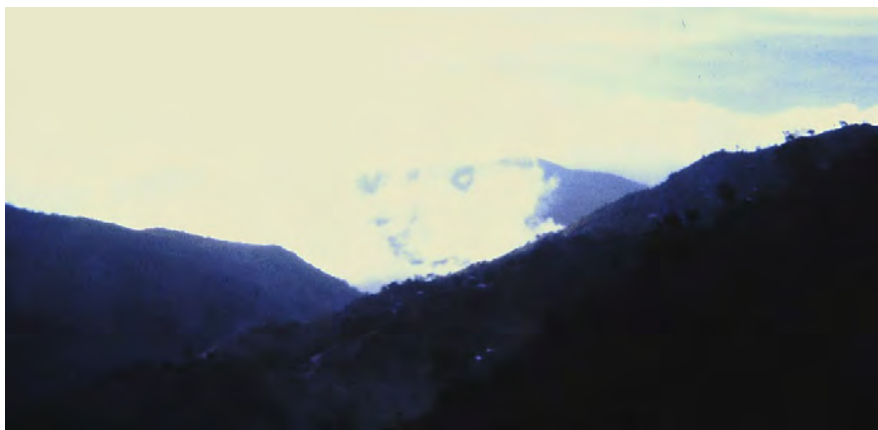
Left: Mgalu staff for Term 3, (left to right) Jerome, Rastor, Mr N, Revd John N, Evelyn

Right: New classroom with wooden roof trusses in place





Figinyi Primary School, evening walk



Rain clouds and mist in the valley below my house



Where is Kenya? Form IV students



Where are the Taita Hills? Form IV students



Iain's fourth birthday party, left to right: Anne, Aunty Kate, Robert Mark, self, Don, Peter, Iain (2 June 1974)



Above: On the path to Wundanyi



Iriwa village, with Prayer Mount above



Left: The village of Mwanguvi, on the way to Wundanyi

Right: Wundanyi town centre, with Wesu above



Robert Mark's Christening:

Standing, left to right: Ailsa, Dave, Ken and Betty, Andrew and Catharine

Seated, left to right: Iain, Archdeacon Jeremiah K, Margaret, Anne, Lyn and Mark, Julius R

(23 June 1974)





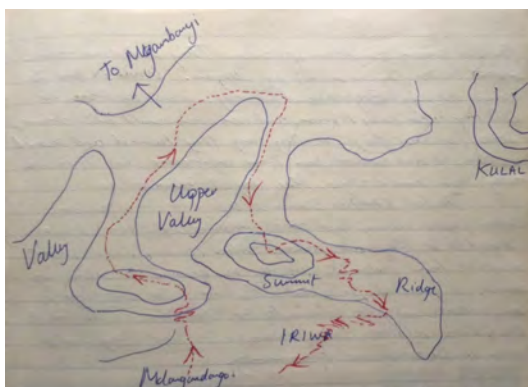
View from summit of Wesu



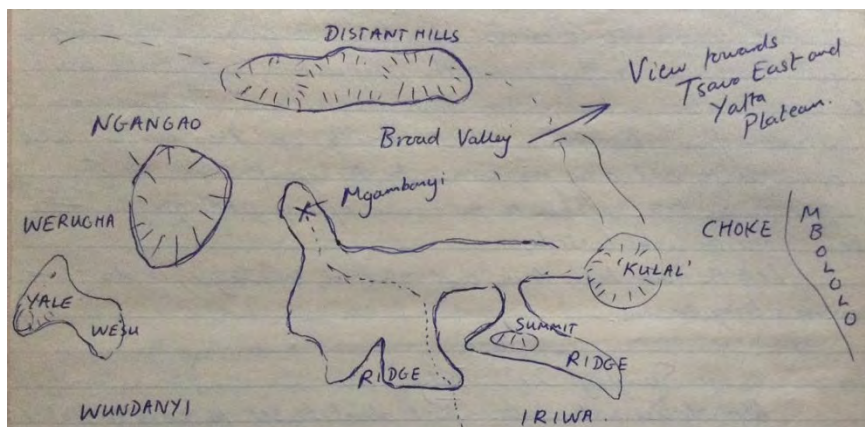
Sketch of hut at Mgambonyi



Kenya Commercial Bank, Wundanyi



Map showing route to Prayer Mount ('Summit')



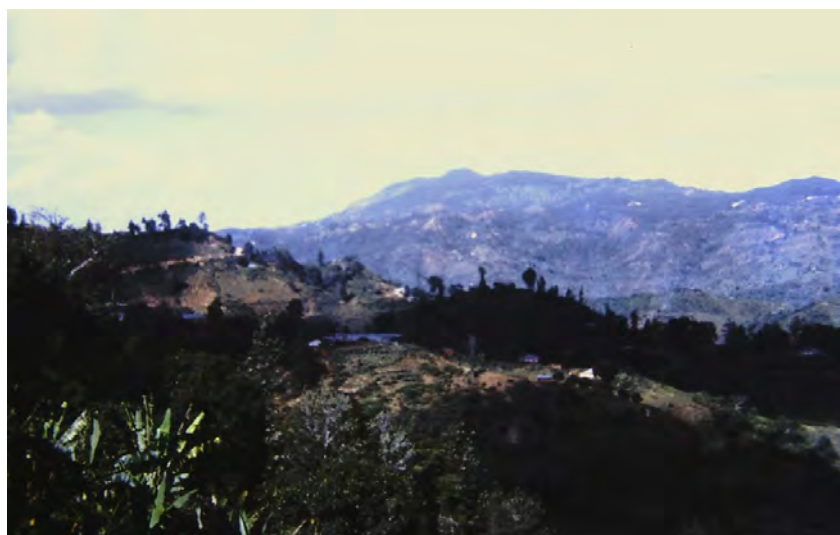
Map showing main Taita Hills around Mgambonyi



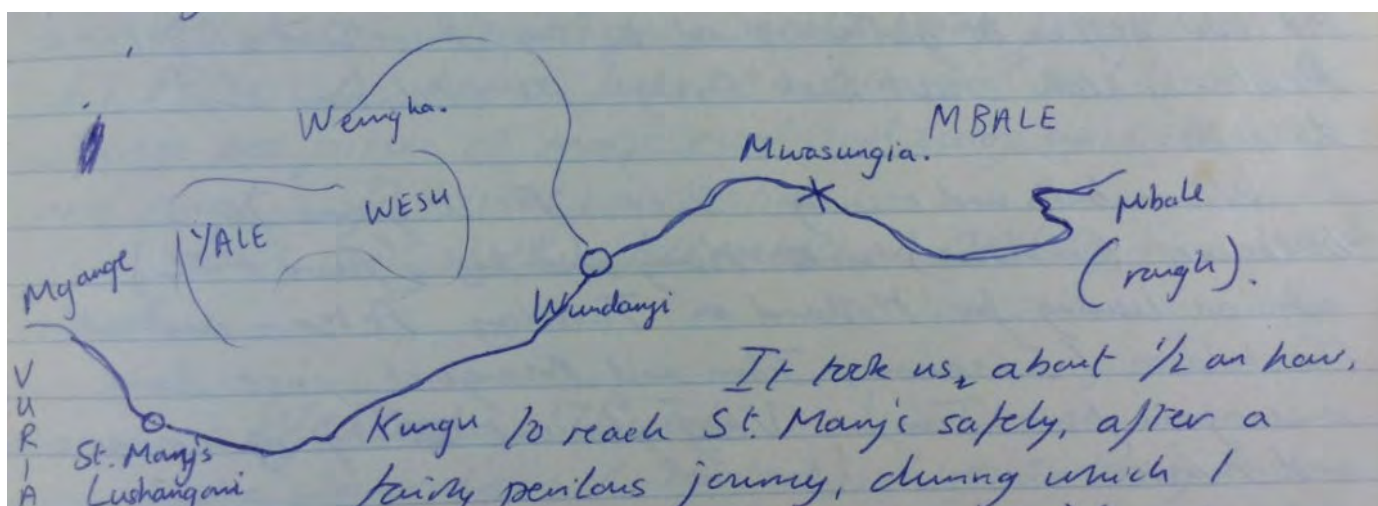
Jackson (seated near left) and his extended family at his house



Christian Union meeting



Christian Union meeting



Motorbike route from Mbale to Mgange and back (13 July 1974)



Favourite bird pictures on the wall...



Flamboyant tree, near S's house



Christian Union meeting



Views over North (Mombasa) Creek



Above: Typical East African sunset

200		MALINDI TAXIS	
Ticket No. 4958		Seat No. 23	
Tel. 25441 Box 83857		Tel. 24315 Box 7960	
MOMBASA.		NAIROBI.	
NOT REFUNDABLE		NOT TRANSFERABLE	
Malindi TAXIS SAFE JOURNEY			
Name	Mr. M. M. M. M. M.		
From	Mombasa To Voi		
Date of Issue	28-7-74		
Date of Journey	28-7-74		
Reporting Time	1-15 P.M.		
Departure Time	1-30 P.M.		
Luggage	For and on behalf of [Signature]		
ISSUING OFFICE	[Signature] MALINDI TAXIS		
<small>The Company will not accept responsibility for any loss, damage or delay. Ticket money will not be refunded or ticket transferred to any other date. No refund will be made to passenger left behind. Passengers are to take care of their own luggage. Luggage is carried at owner's risk. 30 Kilo of luggage is allowed free, any additional weight will be accepted on charge if space permit. Board the Malindi Taxis 15 min. before departure time. Please produce ticket on demand.</small>			

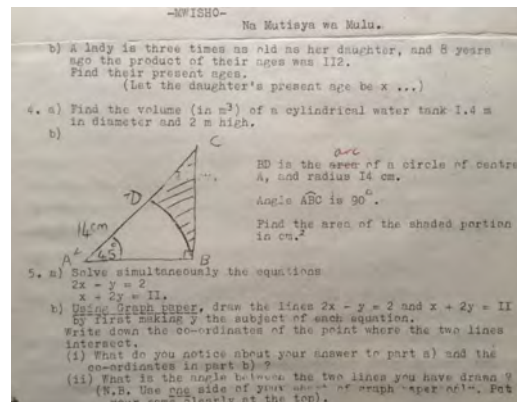
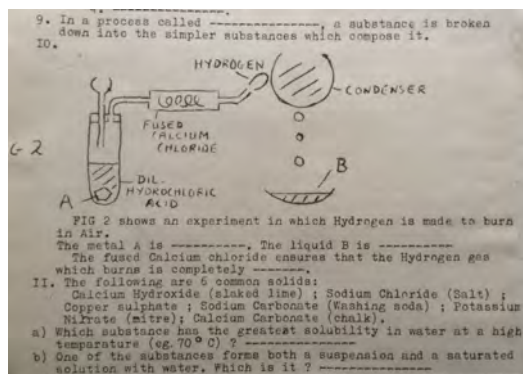
Bus ticket



Map showing CITC



Mombasa Cathedral, venue for 'Come Together'



Above: Self in W's garden, with poinsettias behind

Above: Typical exam papers

Below: The view over Mbale from Prayer Mount (Mgalu valley is toward the bottom right)



Illustrations to follow Chapter 12



Flamingoes at Lake Nakuru



Above: Lake Victoria, Kisumu

Right: Fellow teacher at a school near Maseno



Far right: Standing on the Equator (13 August 1974)



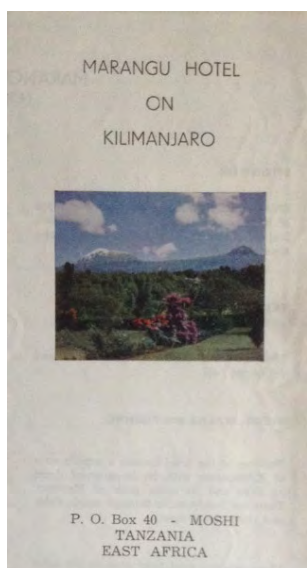
Kenya Highlands Bible College, Kericho; and typical birds of East Africa



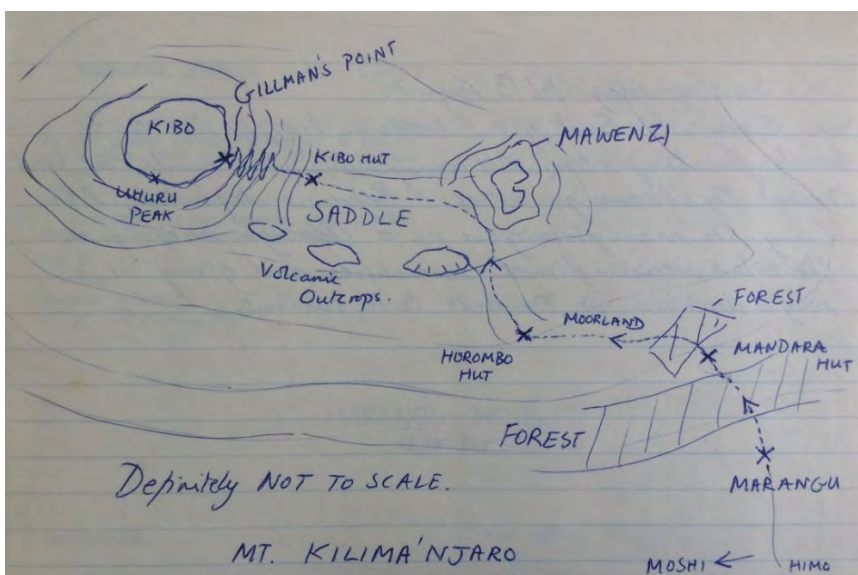
Crayon picture I drew as a child...



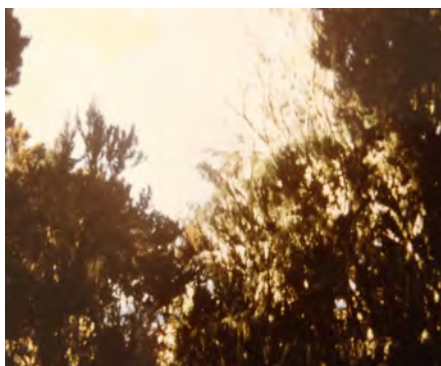
Kibo, Mount Kilimanjaro (Source: Google Images)



Prospectus for Marangu Hotel



Map showing the route of our ascent, from Marangu to Gillman's Point



The Great Forest...



The Great Forest between Marangu and Mandara Hut (Source: Google Images)



Mount Kilimanjaro (Source: Google Images)



View from moorland



Dawn from Horombo Hut



Kibo from Horombo Hut at dawn



Mawenzi from moorland



Last water...



Mawenzi from the saddle



Kibo from saddle...

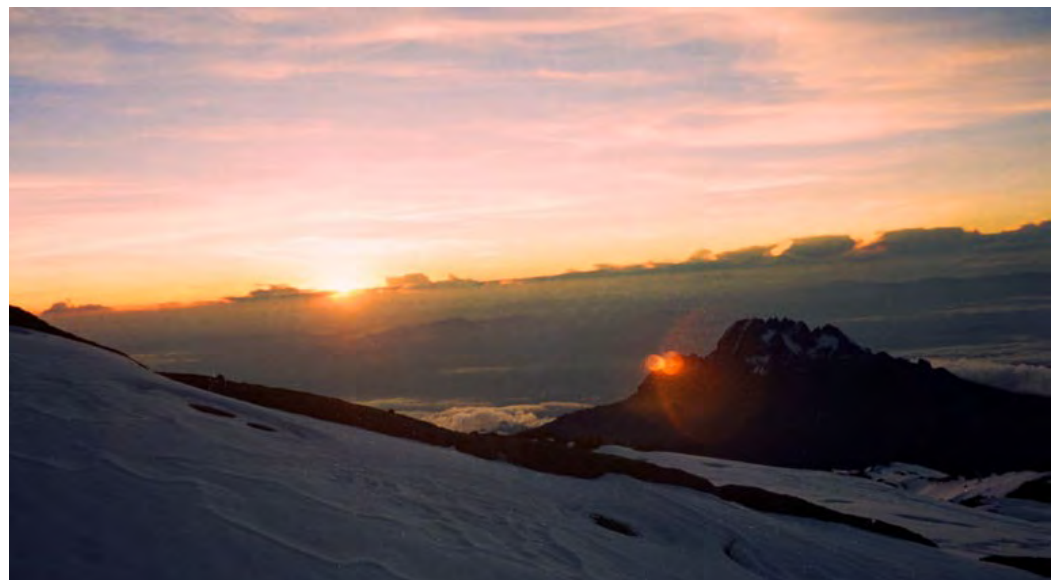


Mawenzi from Kibo



Above: Mawenzi from Kibo (Source: Google Images)

Below: Dawn from Kibo (Source: Google Images)





The summit, Gillmans' Point
(20 August 1974)



Above: Kibo glacier at dawn (Source: Google Images)

Right: The bill from Marangu Hotel

Far right: Bathing in the fresh mountain river at Marangu

INVOICE No 5648

Marangu Hotel, P.O. Box 40, Moshi, Tanzania

Mr A. Hall & party 12 p.

Marangu 21/8/74

arrangement fee @ 20/-	240 -
Hotel fees @ 20/-	240 -
Break eating 5 p. @ 10/-	50 -
" " 4 p. @ 20/-	80 -
Cost of 1 guide	150 -
" " 5 porters @ 120/-	960 -
" " 2 of the " to the top @ 30/-	60 -
Hire of 1 kit bag	5 -
" " 1 water container	10 -
" " 2 boxes @ 5/-	10 -
	1830 -
Hire of personal items	206 50
	2041 50

Received with thanks
E. Hall
MARANGU HOTEL

E.&O.F.

