From Mtoto to Mzee

Story of my Life’s Safari

Mervyn Maciel
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to
Mzee

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Mel D’Souza of Canada who was introduced to me in a London pub in May 2008 by Tony Fernandes of London who, himself had met Mel for the first time a day earlier. This casual meeting over a pint of beer led to a lasting friendship and the publishing of this book.

This pictorial record of my life’s journey from Mtoto (young boy) to Mzee (old man) is the result of Mel’s suggestion and his selfless interest, persistent ‘prodding’, friendly advice and encouragement at every stage. Mel designed the cover, laid out the entire book on his computer, and had it ready for publication in just over two months.

Mel needs no introduction to Goans – he hails from Saligão, Goa, had a colourful career in Tanzania and later in Canada. His book, Feasts, Feni and Firecrackers - stories about his schooling in Saligão and full of his own inimitable illustrations - is a ‘must read’ for any Goan who wants to know what village life was like in Portuguese Goa.

Mel painstakingly edited my work and selected the appropriate photographs to embellish the stories. Had it not been for his dedication, this book would not have seen the light of day.

To Mel, all I can say, in my native Konkani is, Deo borem korum, or to put it in Ki-Swahili, Asante sana. Thank you very much Mel!
INTRODUCTION

Thirty long years have elapsed since my East African memoirs, *BWANA KARANI* were first published. Ever since then, Elsie and our children and grandchildren have been after me to write more about my early years in Goa, our life in Kenya and the transition to a new life in England.

Mindful of the tricks one’s memory can play as one grows old, I finally made a start on this story of my life's journey – one that was enriched by the loving companionship of Elsie and our children and grandchildren, and the warm friendship of people ranging from the pastoral nomads of Northern Kenya to my friends and former colleagues in Kenya and Britain.

I have had my share of tragedies, but I have also been blessed with good fortune. My mother died in Nairobi when I was six years old, and my father and step-mother were lost at sea about seven years later when the ship on which they were returning to Africa was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine in WWII. But my maternal grandfather came to the rescue and looked after my two brothers and me until we had completed our schooling.

Back in Kenya after graduating from high school, the yearning for adventure – and the need to earn an extra shilling – made me apply for a clerical posting in the Turkana region of the Northern Frontier District of Kenya. Among my meagre belongings was a Kodak Brownie box camera with which, as good fortune would have it, I was able to record some unique aspects of life in Kenya’s hinterland that I have documented in this book.

I also took many photographs of my close friends and colleagues with whom I shared good times, and I hope the pictures will perpetuate the memory of those who are no longer with us. Of the dearly departed members of my immediate family, we cannot forget Conrad, our second son who died as an infant, and my two brothers, Joseph and Wilfred.

I hope this ‘playback’ from my memory’s storehouse will be my legacy not only to my immediate family - to whom I owe so much, but also to anyone in future generations who would like to know
something about a bygone era and a way of life that will eventually be just a memory with the onslaught of globalisation..

Mervyn Maciel

Manyatta,
Sutton, Surrey (U.K.)
PART ONE

THE EARLY YEARS
Early Childhood

I was born in Nairobi on 19th May 1929 when Kenya was a British colony. My parents, Mathias Assis Maciel and Josephine nee D’Sa, were no doubt delighted with the arrival of their second son, although I was to hear much later that my Mum wanted a girl. I can now understand why she always dressed us in those bright-looking girlish rompers which she made herself. My brother, Joseph, was two years older than me.

We lived in a brand new spacious house which my Dad had built along Fort Hall Road not far from Ngara, a predominantly Indian quarter, and only a couple of miles from Nairobi town centre.

Our immediate neighbours were the Lourencino Da Cruz family (Lena, Lydia, Manu & Lillian) with whom we got on very well and often played at each others’ houses. There were also the Carlito Sequeira (Maria, Thelma & Neva) and Joanes families in the neighbourhood.

Dad worked for the Secretariat in Nairobi and travelled to work by bus, while Mum stayed at home looking after us and enjoying her favourite crafts – sewing and embroidery.
My Dad employed two Kikuyu servants, Mwangi and Thuo. Mwangi was the cook while Thuo helped out as shamba boy. I have fond memories of both these men as we used to spend a lot of time with them and often enjoyed their tasty ugali - a native maize meal dish. Another person with whom we also spent a lot of our time was a Goan girl named Prudencia (we called her Puru) who came from our village, Salvador do Mundo (Saloi) in Goa. Her parents had asked my Dad to take her to Africa so that she could learn some English from living with us. Puru was quite a smart girl and in no time was able to communicate with us in fluent English.

I loved mealtimes as that’s when Mum and Dad joined us at table. I can still remember Joseph and I “fighting“ over the roasted gram which we often ate after dinner.

Three years after I was born, our younger brother Wilfred (Wilfy) arrived on 7th April 1932, and I can still recall the occasions when Mum would get us all dressed up ready for that family group photo. How Mum loved those family photos!
Cars were a luxury few Goans could afford in those days, and I can remember our parents taking us to the town and other social occasions by bus or on foot. We sometimes got a lift from friends. One thing I can never forget is the never-ending visits to various friends when we kids looked forward to a serving of sweets and cold drinks while the hostess kept saying “take more, don’t be shy”! I cannot recall alcohol (Tusker beer, wine, Gin or Scotch) being consumed even by adults at the rate it is consumed today by young and old alike. People socialised and drank in moderation.

Dad was a member of the Goan Gymkhana and often took us there whenever he went to play badminton or tennis, and also to some of the frequent sundowners and evening socials.

How we kids enjoyed skating on those waxed dance floors.

Two years after Wilfy’s arrival, my Mum was expecting her fourth child, but sadly on New Years’ Eve in 1935, she and the baby boy she was carrying died at childbirth. Dad was shattered, but while we were too young to understand the full implications of this event, I remember us all crying bitterly as Dad embraced us as we were taken to see him by the Da Cruz family. They, and many others, were a great comfort to us all at the time.
Dad was due overseas leave and in 1937, two years after Mum’s death we all sailed for Goa staying at our ancestral home in the village of Salvador-do-Mundo, where our grandmother “Saloi Mãe” and Marie, the Mozambican adopted lady, welcomed us warmly.

Before he was due to return to Kenya, Dad married Efigenia, a lady from the village of Siolim, and a few months after the wedding – which was celebrated at our Saloi home – he and our step-mother left for Africa taking Wilfy with them. Joseph and I were left behind for schooling in India.
Josef and I were initially left as boarders in St. Xavier’s High School in Moira, my mother’s village. While there, we spent most weekends with our maternal grandfather, Sebastian D’Sa and split our holidays between him and Saloi Māe. We preferred Saloi where we could go fishing each morning in the nearby river behind our property. We would wake up early each morning and wait for the fisherfolk to pass our house when we would buy a few prawns for bait. We returned home around midday sweating from the heat of the bright sun, but laden with fresh fish - mostly catfish and a local fish called ‘korsandyo’. Saloi Māe and Marie would soon turn these into tasty meals for our lunch and dinner – some in curried form, some fried.
We were thoroughly spoilt during our holidays in Moira, as both grandfather and Moira Mãe, Idalin, would lavish so much on us. Moira Mãe, who was a spinster, often entertained us with *kanio* (stories) of her early life which we loved listening to while sitting with her on her bed. She insisted on us eating more than our stomachs could take – especially chicoos from our own garden and those famous Moira bananas. Grandfather used to get the maidservant, Consu Marie to take us to Mapuça market every Friday. We first had to stop at the Mapuça church for a short prayer, then wind our way through the many stalls where Consu Marie would buy various provisions. Grandfather never stinted over money and always wanted us to have the best of everything. We had our shoes made by Mr. Goes, a shoemaker in Mapuça, while a tailor (whose name I forget) in the same town made our brand new suits which we wore on feast days.

While we always walked from Moira to Mapuça, grandfather always insisted that we took a taxi home. He never questioned the amount we spent, and always gave us pocket money. He had a heart of gold.

From Moira, we were moved to Belgaum in 1938 and were
enrolled at the Jesuit-run St. Paul’s High School. We lived with the family of my Dad’s friend, Mr. Alexander Ramos at No. 12 Goje Building. The school was within walking distance and there was a huge maidan (playing field) facing our house where we often played cricket or hockey. However excited we were about the game, we had to make sure we were indoors in time for the reciting of the Angelus at around 6 p.m. I think. Later, we would join in the family rosary, and much later, dinner.

Ours was a very cramped household as the Ramos family comprised of four adults and four children making a total of ten occupants including the two of us.

Several other families, mostly Goans, lived in this long-terraced Goje Building of some fifteen apartments.

We settled well into our new school and made lots of friends. Because we both had good singing voices, both Joseph and I were enrolled into the school choir and we often took part in school concerts.

The Jesuits are great disciplinarians and we are grateful for the good grounding we received at the hands of our teachers.

I often served Mass at the neighbouring St. Joseph’s Girls’ convent and knew some of the girls who were boarders there, especially Lena, Lydia and Lillian Da Cruz, and a few others.
I must confess that I was the more playful of the two, while Joseph who was more studious spent a lot of time on his homework and other school commitments. I took things too easy!

We all got on very well at home; there were no refrigerators or washing machines in those days, or electric lights. Our food was stored in ‘meat safes’ (screened cabinets), a dhobi (laundryman) collected our washing once a week and returned it all washed and neatly pressed. We studied and did all our homework by the light of a hurricane lantern, while mosquitoes kept buzzing around us! No bath tubs or shower facilities; our water was heated by firewood and carried in a bucket to a small area which served as a bathroom.

We often went to the South Indian restaurant not far from our house where we and a few friends would indulge in a plate of batata bhaji and a hot cup of tea.

Life was tough during the war years as many of the items we had taken for granted were now rationed. We had to make do with millet for chapattis instead of wheat flour, and margarine instead of butter which we had been so used to. Mrs. Ramos, who we affectionately called ‘Aunty’, was an excellent cook who could improvise with whatever was available. She was also a very religious person who heard Mass daily. On feast days, we choirboys used to be treated to currant buns and tea – quite a treat for us in those days!

We always looked forward to the postman who brought letters from Dad and also from our Grandfather in Moira. The only time we dreaded the postman was when our school reports were due out.

The years had flown by and soon it would be time for Dad, my step-mother and Wilfy to return from Kenya with Dad’s new family - 3 very young children - and we very much looked forward to this.
Sometime in late 1941/early 1942, Dad was back in Goa with my step-mother and Wilfy together with three additions to the family (one-year old step-brother, Francis, and step-sisters Josephine, 3 years, and Yvonne, 3 months).

For reasons best known to him, Dad had decided to retire and had sold our Nairobi home. Could it be that he was not enjoying good health?

We were happy to spend our summer holidays in April and May with Dad and our new family. For a short while, Joseph and I were like strangers to Wilfy who had been away from us for many years, but it wasn’t long before we bonded together.

As usual, whenever we were in Goa on holidays, the first thing we loved doing was going fishing. We also went up the hills some mornings to collect cashews from our property as we were told they were at their best in the mornings. While on the hills we also enjoyed the kantam (berries) which grew profusely in the wilds. When we returned home, we would roast the cashew nuts we had collected earlier that morning. In the evenings, Dad would come with us
for a long walk up to the church and beyond, sometimes dropping in to visit friends on the way.

It is amazing how fast news travels in Goa. No sooner had the villagers heard of Dad’s arrival than there were constant streams of visitors – some relatives, others just friends and neighbours. For Dad, the whole atmosphere must have appeared very relaxing. Our local Hindu barber, Vonnnon would come to the house to give Dad and us a haircut, and he would entertain us with all the local gossip. Every time Dad came home, he always brought a new baby brush for Vonnnon which the latter loved.

The three youngest additions to our family must have found the Saloi house so different from the spacious Nairobi mansion. I wonder what they made of our cow dung floor or of the manner in which bath water was heated with dried leaves that were collected and stored during the summer months.

Time was approaching for Joseph and me to return to Belgaum and we very much wanted Dad to leave Wilfy with us this time. He reluctantly agreed and Wilfy then joined the already-crowded Goje Building household. I seem to remember that Dad accompanied us to Belgaum. We saw him again when the family were passing through Belgaum on their way to Bombay to board the ship that would take them back to Africa.

As usual, we wrote to our Dad some weeks after they’d left Bombay for Mombasa but were surprised not to receive any reply – so unlike Dad to keep us waiting. We waited patiently for a reply until one day in early December 1942, we received news that the ship in
which they had sailed – the S.S.TILAWA, had been torpedoed by a Japanese submarine a few days after it had left Bombay. Joseph, Wilfy and I all broke down and wept uncontrollably. We were shattered at the news but the full ramifications of this tragic event had not dawned on us. Being fairly young at the time, we didn’t realize that we were now orphans with no one to support us. I am sure Mr. Ramos must also have been concerned as to who would now be paying for our boarding and lodging, school fees etc. Such thoughts never crossed my mind at the time.

My uncle in Bombay, Ignatius Sequeira (Uncle Jock’s dad), made a great effort to ascertain if my parents had survived. Rumours were abounding that some passengers had been taken prisoners of war while other survivors were in some Bombay hospitals. Visits to various hospitals drew a complete blank until Uncle Ignatius met my Dad’s cabin boy in hospital and was told that Dad could not get all his family in lifeboats and that they all must have drowned. This news was heartbreaking.

However, there must have been someone “up there” looking after us, as within a few weeks of receiving the sad news, Mr. Ramos had received a written undertaking from my maternal grandfather accepting full responsibility for us and asking him not to send us back to Goa. What a relief this was to us all, and we couldn’t thank God and our Grandfather enough. We wrote to him regularly and he kept in touch with us too. Joseph was now in his last year at school and felt Wilfy and I should return to Goa to continue our schooling while he moved to Bombay to seek employment. This is what we did.
Having matriculated from St. Paul’s in Belgaum, Joseph left for Bombay and secured a job with the Government Shipping office at a salary of Rs.80/- per month. Wilfy and I were moved to Goa, and after spending our holidays partly in Saloi and Moira, we were enrolled at St. Thomas’ High School in the village of Aldona. St. Thomas’s was a co-educational establishment whose Principal and Founder was Mr. Edward Soares, a grand old man.

We lived at the home of my maternal grandfather’s relative, Anna Clara Mendonça e Trindade, who we affectionately called “Aldona Mãe”. She was a wonderful lady who worked tirelessly in the fields planting and attending to her paddy, chilli and onion crops. Despite her hard work, she still found time to prepare some mouth-watering meals for us. I can never forget her fish curries laced with raw mango.
The Early Years

slices and those local berries *teflam* (more like allspice). Her *amade* (gooseberry) and mango pickles were a real treat which still make my mouth water! She had her younger grown-up daughter, Alice living with her as also 3 grandchildren - Joe, Sira and Edith - from her elder daughter, Angela.

We all walked to school which was within a stone’s throw and enjoyed the monsoon season when we would kick our way through the puddles splashing water on friends as they walked by!

The whole school met for Assembly and this is when the Principal would address us and conclude with a short hymn or prayer.

We had Goan and Hindu teachers who were truly dedicated to their jobs. They were keen on bringing out the best in each of us.

Mr. Soares was a strict disciplinarian and we all held him in awe; however, he was very generous and often helped poorer parents who couldn’t afford the school fees, sometimes granting them total exemption.

There were ample opportunities for sport, and I enjoyed playing hockey and volleyball in the school grounds.

Because Goa was then Portuguese territory, it was mandatory that we pass a basic language proficiency test in Portuguese before continuing with our schooling in the English medium. First I had to read a story - “O Lobo e o Cão” (A wolf and a Dog) and answer a few questions in Portuguese. This was followed by a dictation test. I did well in both tests, thanks to the coaching of Professor Torcato.

At home, we studied by the light of a kerosene lamp. Water for our household needs was drawn from a well through a window at the far end of the kitchen.

Because there was no Examination Centre in Goa, I had to sit my matriculation examination in Belgaum – a place I knew so well. Here I stayed with the Ramos family and though I was keen to enrol in a Commercial College to learn some shorthand and typing, I had to abandon this idea since the application I had made for a job in my late
father’s office in Nairobi, was successful, and soon I would have to make arrangements for my move back to Kenya.

Meanwhile, Joseph and my Uncle in Bombay had already arranged for Wilfy to move to a school in Bombay and stay with my Uncle and his family at Gregory House, Dadar.

I stayed in Belgaum to have some new suits made and then returned to Goa to prepare for my move to Nairobi.

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This is to certify that Mr. Mervyn Maceil was a student of this school and that he passed the Matriculation Examination of the Bombay University this year. Throughout the time he was here, he maintained an excellent position in his classes, proving himself a student of ability and diligence. He is a respectable young man and never took part in anything that might displease his teachers.

He has got habits worthy of a good boy. Nor is he lacking in tact in the field of sports. I wish him every success in his life.

Homes,
Principal.

Principal Edward Soares’ letter of recommendation.
Above is the wedding picture of Dad and Mum taken in Mombasa.

The picture on the left is of Wilfy and step-brother Francis and step-sister Josephine (Phina) in Nairobi.

Dad with Wilfy, Joseph and me at Mum’s grave in Nairobi.
PHOTO ALBUM
GOA and BELGAUM

Me as a 10 year old.

Wilfy and me in our Saloi ‘bhat’ during our school holidays (above, left).

Wilfy, Joseph and me in our Saloi ‘bhat’ (left).

Joseph and me with friends in Belgaum.
PART TWO

LIFE IN KENYA
I could hardly believe that Capt. Wood, my Dad’s boss had offered me a job in the Secretariat so soon. I had no working experience having just left school and wondered how I would fare.

Joseph had by now left his job to pursue his lifelong ambition of becoming a priest. He joined the Jesuit seminary at Andheri in Bombay, and underwent many years of intensive training as a seminarian before his ordination to the priesthood. Wilfy meanwhile, was enrolled at St. Xavier’s School in Bombay.

I sailed for Mombasa from Ballard Pier in Bombay in late September 1947 on the B.I. liner, the S.S. ARONDA and enjoyed the voyage immensely. Often at nights, while tucked away in my camp bed on the deck, my thoughts would flash to Dad and I wondered how difficult and painful it must have been for him on that fateful November 1942 night.

The S.S. ARONDA anchored briefly at Seychelles and in a few
From Mtoto to Mzee

days we had docked at Kilindini harbour in Mombasa. Here, I was warmly welcomed by my favourite cousin, Jock Sequeira who had only been in Kenya for a year. I stayed with Jock, Beryl and their young family for a few days while my onward train journey to Nairobi was being sorted out by the Government Coast Agent.

Having been used to paying for everything, I was pleasantly surprised when told that the government would be paying for my rail fare from Mombasa to Nairobi. I had never travelled in such luxury before – spotless railway carriages, catering and railway staff immaculately dressed and the service itself, simply excellent.

At Nairobi station to meet me was our dear old friend, Louis Borges who I knew well. His elder brother, Joseph, was my godfather and we knew the family well. Besides, Louis had stayed with my Mum and Dad when we were kids.

Louis and his wife, Eugenia (I had attended their wedding in Aldona while he was down on leave) accommodated me at their home which was situated on Slaters Road, Nairobi. Through Louis, I also met our old friends, the Da Cruz family, and was beginning to feel so much at home now. I felt sad though to find that our old spacious house adjoining the Da Cruz villa no longer belonged to me.

When I reported to the Secretariat a few days later, I was warmly welcomed by Capt. Wood and other Goan staff. The senior staff must have wondered what work they could find for this “new boy” just out of school.

I was moved to the District Commissioner’s office not far from the Secretariat building to enable me to gain more experience of work in a busy district office. Here too, I felt quite at home as not only the Goan staff but also the African Office boys remembered my Dad with great affection.

I used to practice typing on those bulky and heavy Remington government typewriters. Little by little, I was beginning to get to
grips with some of the office routine, but my moment of joy was when I received my very first pay packet. What a thrill - hadn’t seen so much money before!

By now, I had moved from the Borges house to a wood and iron government quarter which was shared by three other Goans who also worked at the Secretariat. (T.X. D’Cruz, Francis Ramos and Silvester Fernandes were friends I’d met previously in Belgaum). The bicycle I’d bought with my first salary came in very handy for my daily trips to the office and back. It kept me fit too.

Although I was fairly comfortable in Nairobi, I was somehow missing my own family and longed to be back in Mombasa with my cousin Jock and his family.

Good fortune seems to have been on my side because the Secretariat gave me a posting to Mombasa where I was once again united with Jock, Beryl and their young family at Ganjoni, not far from the docks.

From here, I took the bus daily to the D.C’s office in Mombasa where I’d been posted. Here again, I was warmly welcomed by the Goan staff who knew my Dad well. I had never seen so many European officers around before – all looking so smart in their snow white uniforms which no doubt kept them cool in the heat of Mombasa.

I managed to pick up quite a bit of the office routine fairly quickly under the watchful eye of a senior Goan (a Mr. Cordeiro), and before long, found that I was posted on short relief duty to the Kilifi District. Kilifi formed part of the Coast Province and is noted for its cashew nuts.

Sensing that I had now acquired some experience, I was posted from Mombasa to Voi in the Teita District. Voi was the junction for Tanganyika bound trains and was quite a busy place.
I had no difficulty getting on well with the Goan and African staff, and the D.C. too was quite impressed with my work during the short time I’d been in his district. I shared a government bungalow with an elderly Goan, Germano Gomes who was awaiting transfer to the still-to-be-built sub-station of Mackinnon Road. We two got on well despite the difference in our ages, and he also knew my family well.

I enjoyed the varied work at Voi, and some months after Germano Gomes had left, I was delighted to welcome my old friend Ignatius Carvalho from our Mombasa days. We hit it off well both in the office and in the government bungalow we shared.

Being young and active, we spent our evenings on sport and recreation – mainly on the tennis court or out in the *bundu* on a game hunt with borrowed rifle and ammo!

Being bachelors, we were never short of visitors, but this was a huge drain on our salaries. Having heard of additional allowances paid to staff in the frontier district, we decided to apply for a move.

I was keen to experience a more adventurous life. Not many a Goan would offer himself for a posting to the frontier and it didn’t take long for our transfers to come through. Ignatius was posted to Wajir on the Somaliland border, while I was going to Lodwar in the Turkana district on the Ethiopia/Sudan borders.

I was truly excited over this move since I would, at last, be meeting some of Kenya’s nomadic and warlike tribes of whom I had heard so much, and also experiencing at first hand, the thrills and adventures of a frontier existence.
Capt. Wood’s letter offering me a job in the Secretariat.

Me outside my Government bungalow in Voi.
AIR LETTER
Office of the Immigration Officer,
P.O. Bag, Mv, Nairobi.

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter No. 45 dated 10th July, 1947, and to inform you that there will be no objection under the Defence (Aduestic or Male Persons) Regulations, 1944, to your re-entry into Kenya Colony provided that you comply with the provisions of the Immigration Restriction Ordinance and its amendments.

This letter constitutes the necessary authority.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,
[Signature]
[Name]
[Title]

Copy to: The Immigration Officer, Mombasa, Commissioner.

Kenya Immigration letter mailed to my address in Belgaum.

Jock Sequeira (second from left) with Senior Education officials in Mombasa.
I left Voi by train, stopping briefly in Nairobi, and headed for the Rift Valley town of Kitale where I stayed with the Collaco family. Mrs. Collaco was the daughter of the Ramos family of Belgaum, so I was in familiar company. I was very grateful for their hospitality, and a few days later I boarded a trader’s army-type truck for the long and arduous journey to barren Turkana.

I was a bit apprehensive of this posting at first as I’d heard how my Uncle John narrowly escaped death from black water fever when he was stationed at Lodwar many years ago. I tried to put this thought behind me and looked forward to a new and exciting challenge.

The journey from Kitale to Lodwar was quite uncomfortable and cumbersome. As we drove through this arid and barren land, I must admit that I felt somewhat embarrassed to see the menfolk and children walking about completely naked; the women were no better and were scantily clad, their bare and shiny breasts openly displayed.
Like other districts in the frontier, Turkana had been designated a Special District and no one was allowed to enter it without a Special Permit. Women were certainly not allowed in.

The heat, from early in the morning till late afternoon, was very punishing, and there was hardly any vegetation around - just hot black lava rocks and sand storms!

The Turkana are tough nomadic pastoralists who are among the poorest in Africa. They keep a few goats and survive on very little of what is available. They are a hardy and tough lot though and eager to engage in battle with their neighbours. The men always carry a spear or wrist knife.

My boss Leslie Whethouse, the D.C. was a legendary frontier administrator who had been in the district a long time, and never wanted to leave the area or its people. I got on well with him, his two District Officers and with my Goan colleague, John Vaz. John and I temporarily shared an open-plan government quarter which had a mosquito-proof cabin on the flat roof where we slept at night.

There was hardly any social life in Lodwar, but we were fortunate in having a squash court and swimming pool where the Goan staff
Life in Kenya

and European officers often met. We also met at each others’ houses for drinks. For the rest of recreation, we went on long walks.

Because of the intolerable heat and unhealthy conditions in and around the district, we were given extra local leave and additional time off to get down to Kitale or Lake Rudolf (now renamed Lake Turkana). We enjoyed the trips to the lake which abounded in fish, notably fairly large tilapia. I often used to have this frozen and sent down to my friends in Kitale. Many of the Turkana who live around the lakeshore live on fish and some on the handouts from the government.

I can never forget an incident at the lake when the D.C. from a neighbouring district of Moroto in Uganda was badly mauled by a crocodile. I wasn’t at the lake myself at the time, but played a small
part in arranging for an aircraft with doctor to be sent out to pick him up and take him to hospital.

The D.C., Mr. Whitehouse had administered some preliminary first aid at the lake, but it was felt the Ugandan D.C., Mr. Watney needed better hospital attention. It is a pity that this incident ruined the family holiday of the visiting D.C. and his family.

Another concession I won while at Lodwar was to bring the entire Collaco family to the district and even take them to the lake. This at a time when no women were allowed, but thanks to Mr. Whitehouse, their entry into the district was sanctioned by him personally.

On my not too infrequent trips to Kitale, I always stayed with the Collaco family and it was here that my love affair with Elsie first began. You see, Elsie worked for the Government Transport contractor, A.M.Kaka at Kitale and supervised all the provisions and other foodstuffs that were sent to officials in Turkana. She took special interest in the food packages I’d ordered as no fresh provisions were obtainable in Lodwar. I felt grateful for her caring attitude. The two Indian dukas catered more for the local Turkana and stocked up with *Posho* (maize meal), sugar and chewing tobacco which the Turkana love. For the benefit of the European and Goan government staff, they also stocked a variety of tinned (canned) food, some items having probably passed
their ‘sell by’ date – but when one lives in such a harsh environment, one is not over-concerned over such issues.

Elsie and I communicated with each other by letter as there were no telephones at Lodwar. Letters were sent through one of the transport contractor’s drivers. Through frequent correspondence, we seem to have got closer together and I never wanted to leave the area.

However, government policy was against keeping staff too long in this inferno, but I was in no hurry to leave. Despite the oppressive heat and solitary lifestyle, I got to like the Turkana people and got on very well with them both in and out of the office. At Christmas time, the women would come out in all their finery and sing and dance for us. Despite their harsh environment, they seemed so content. The men performed their traditional ngoma (dance) regularly each evening in the town, and we often walked down to watch them.

I had now been in Lodwar for nearly two years (18 months was the stipulated period of stay), and the powers that be felt that it was time to move me to cooler climes.

While Elsie, now my ‘serious’ girl friend, and her family had been away on holiday at the coastal resort of Malindi, I received my marching orders. I was to leave Lodwar as soon as possible and head for Marsabit on the Ethiopian border. What awaited me there I did not know but looked forward, albeit reluctantly, to the move away from Turkana.

In a way I was sad to be leaving this area with no prospect of seeing Elsie but braced myself for the new life and challenges that awaited me at Marsabit.
PHOTO ALBUM - LODWAR

The *baraza* hall (left) in Lodwar *boma* where people with *shauri* (issues) would meet and talk to the interpreter who would then bring them either to me or the D.O.

A Turkana belle and me (above).

Goan missionary priest, Fr. Vasco Dias, with Turkana paupers - “maskini” (above left and below).
Life in Kenya

PHOTO ALBUM - LODWAR

Boating on Lake Turkana (above).

Ex Sgt. Major Farah Issa outside his duka at Lodwar (above), and two off-duty Tribal Policemen (below).
7

Move to Marsabit

To get to Marsabit I had to go from Kitale via Nairobi to Nanyuki, at the foot of Mount Kenya, and then a further 50 miles from Nanyuki to Isiolo, the entrance to the Northern Frontier District (N.F.D) and the wilderness that lay ahead. An American author, Negley Farson had this to say about the N.F.D. – “there is one half of Kenya about which the other half knows nothing, and seems to care even less.” And this about a region that is more than twice the size of England and more than half of all Kenya!

I travelled the 300 odd miles in an old lorry that belonged to a Goan trader named J.B. Fernandes. We left late in the evening as frontier travel is best undertaken around then or at night because of the excessive daytime heat.
First we checked in at the Police barrier where a large signboard warns travellers that this is a CLOSED DISTRICT. Travellers within the Northern Province, with the exception of government officials, must be in possession of a Pass signed by the Provincial or District Commissioner. After getting our clearance, we continued on the seemingly endless miles that lay ahead.

It was fortunate that we were travelling during the dry season since some of these roads become quite impassable during the rains when flash floods can cause no amount of misery.

Bush and scrubland was all around but we did see quite a few guinea fowl and also the odd dik dik, gerenuk, and occasionally elephant.

After camping for the night at nearby Laisamis, we headed for Marsabit, crossing the Kaisut desert and arriving in the boma feeling tired and cold.
Marsabit district comprises some 28,000 square miles and is home to the Boran, Gabbra and Rendille tribes with a sprinkling of Turkana and Burji.

The tiny office housed the D.C. and his administrative staff (there was no D.O. when I first went there). Until adequate accommodation could be found for me, I stayed with a Goan named Tom Lobo and his young family. There were also three Goan Police clerks at Marsabit.

Work in the office was quite varied in that I found myself attending to people’s shauris (problems/complaints) in addition to handling my normal work as District Clerk. I had an African Assistant, David Dabasso Wabera who many years later became the first Gabbra D.C. of Isiolo. Sadly, shortly before Kenya’s independence, David was assassinated.

Like Lodwar, there were no social amenities as such in Marsabit. We, the Goan staff, normally met at each other’s houses for drinks/eats and often went on long walks through the township. Here too, entertainment between the Europeans and Goans continued as in Lodwar.

I enjoyed the work and meeting the various Chiefs and headmen whenever they came in to the boma to report any problems or collect wages. Tax was normally collected when the D.C. went out on safari, but those living in the township area paid their tax at our offices.

The Tribal Police force here and throughout the frontier were known as DUBAS. These were men chosen from families of proven courage and they looked so smart in their snow white bafta uniforms with a brilliant red turban to match. They made a wonderful spectacle while on parade on ceremonial occasions.
I was missing Elsie a lot and spent a lot of my out of office hours returning to the office to type long letters to her. The postal service was very infrequent and during the rainy season, all our mail was brought by air. Because of such infrequency of mails, I often had to resort to sending Elsie telegrams whenever her replies were delayed. This was a costly hobby!

Unlike Lodwar, Marsabit boma was very cold and always covered in thick mists.

I got to like the various tribes – Boran, Gabbra, Rendille, Burji and even Turkana. Some of the Gabbra elders, in their traditional robes and staffs looked so much like characters from the days of Moses.

I was very interested in their lifestyles and would frequently meet with members of a tribe in order to learn more about their customs and culture generally. I got on well with the various Tribal Chiefs and Headmen and also the Dubas who were keen that I should accompa-

ny them on some of their more dangerous errands – tackling the *Shiﬁa* bandits from Ethiopia.
Life in Kenya

Very much on the same pattern as Lodwar, and because our lives lacked the variety of a safari, the Goan staff were encouraged to go out into the interior of the district to relax. We sometimes spent times picnicking at Lake Paradise, home to herds of elephant and buffalo, and also further afield to Loiyangalani on the lakeshore where we had to cross the Chalbi desert. I enjoyed these trips immensely as it gave me an opportunity to explore the outdoors, meet local Chiefs and tribesmen and also engage in some sand grouse shooting at the oasis of North Horr. The El Molo tribe live along the shores of the lake at Loiyangalani and are reputed to be very poor, living on the lake’s Nile perch and tilapia, and government handouts.

There was no resident doctor at Marsabit but a small Native Civil hospital run by an African hospital assistant. I can never forget an incident when the hospital was on fire. How the fire started is not known but one of the casualties was the African assistant, a Coastal man, who was severely burnt and in great pain. I spent some time trying to comfort him and since there were no adequate facilities locally, he was flown out to Nairobi for treatment. I admire the courage of this man who risked his life trying to save some of the hospitals’ medicines and other stores.

Life was full of adventure in Marsabit. On another occasion, I had a close encounter with a snake. I was working alone late one evening, and as I was leaving the office, I noticed a snake, a puff adder in fact, wriggling its way into the office. I rushed back and sought safety on top of a filing cabinet not far from the entrance. The faithful office boy, Shalle Hirbo, a Burji who had an artificial leg, was locking up the DC’s side of the office when he heard the commotion and returned to find out why I had gone back to the office. I pointed nervously to the snake and shouted “nyoka!” (snake). Shalle told me to stay where I was while he went to the DC’s office and brought back
a spear that he passed on to me from a safe distance. With careful aim, I thrust the spear at the snake’s head, and pinned it to the floor while Shalle finished it off with a few sharp strokes of his walking stick. The spear, by the way, was an exhibit in a murder case.

Marsabit abounded in wild game, notably elephant and buffalo and it was quite dangerous to step outside at nights as these animals were always around our houses. On one occasion, during a culling exercise, a bull elephant was shot not far from my garden. I managed to obtain two of its feet which I cured myself by leaving them in the hot sands of the Chalbi desert. (these stuffed feet were later brought to England but then donated to the Born Free Wild Life Trust via John Rendell of “A lion called Christian” fame).

One of the elephants with the longest (and perhaps heaviest) tusks in Africa lived on Marsabit Mountain and I saw him at close quarters quite often. After Kenya’s independence, a Special Decree was signed by President Jomo Kenyatta proclaiming Ahmed a living legend, and he was protected from poachers by armed guards day and night. He died some years later, and is preserved in the Nairobi National museum.

One other incident that comes to mind during my Marsabit days was a Swedish light aircraft which had force landed in the district and later had to be towed in to the boma. The pilot and his companion must have lost their way but certainly had a miraculous escape.

There was no Catholic Church at Marsabit while I was there (there are several now!), but there was a B.C.M.S. (Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society) mission whose rural Dean was a very likeable individual, the Rev. Canon Eric Webster who I got to know quite well. A European Nursing sister, Miss Gibbins who was of great help to us in later years, was attached to the mission. Many from the mission school became influential politicians in independent Kenya.

As I said, I got on very well with Canon Webster, and when, years later, he heard I would be leaving Marsabit, he sent me a lovely let-
ter to wish us farewell. He and his wife, Ruby were an exemplary missionary couple.

Because there was no District Officer at Marsabit when I first arrived, I was often called upon to undertake duties which were, strictly speaking, those of an Administrative officer. There were good and bad sides to this additional responsibility... for which I received no extra remuneration. An unfortunate incident involving me needs mentioning. In the absence of the D.C. on safari, I had committed a known Somali crook to prison for stealing a bottle of gin from Victor Fernandes’s house. The culprit was later charged and released on bail pending further investigations into his past. While temporarily free, he had planned to assassinate me and approached me while I was on my usual walk through the township one evening. He was fortunately restrained by the Somali Chief Yusuf Sugulle, a good friend of mine, and later charged and sentenced to a term of imprisonment and transferred to a prison in Nairobi.

I was lucky to be out of Marsabit by the time he was released as he had made up his mind to do me harm. His father, who I knew well, brought us a zawadi (gift) of eggs many months later.

Fortunately, I had other things on my mind, and would soon be leaving for Kitale to make arrangements for our wedding which Elsie and I had been planning for months through the regular correspondence we exchanged.

My bachelor days were soon coming to an end.
PHOTO ALBUM - MARSABIT

Me on a camel safari (above).

At Archers Post. I listen to the shauri (tribal issues) of a Rendile woman and a warrior (left and below)
Among camels and sheep in No rth Horr.

Me with .303 rifle (above, left) at target practice, and on safari in Maikona in Marsabit District (above, right).

With friends at Marsabit.
PHOTO ALBUM - MARSABIT

With Isiolo friends at the Uaso Nyiro camp (above and left).

A picnic at Archers Post near Isiolo (below)
In the N.F.D., we were entitled to local leave every 6 months which, needless to say, I always spent in Kitale. It was on Boxing Day during my leave in 1951 that Elsie and I got engaged. We did not want a long engagement and had planned to get married the following year. I would normally have consulted my parents before taking such an important step in life, and out of respect, I felt it was only right that I should consult my elder brother, Joseph. Although he felt I was rather young to take on such a heavy responsibility as a 23-year-old, he willingly gave me his blessing.

Elsie and I continued to make all the wedding plans through correspondence while she supervised most of the arrangements locally.

All my friends at Marsabit, especially the locals, were pleased with the prospect that I would soon be returning home with a bibi (wife), and wished me well.

Tom Lobo and his family had by now left the district and bachelor boy, Victor Fernandes was now back in the N.F.D. I had not met Victor before but we hit it off very well both in and outside the office.
It was not long before Victor himself had got married to a young lady named Lucy from the Indian city of Jhansi, and they were both delighted I would soon be joining the married fold.

Frantic preparations continued over our wedding arrangements and I was back in Kitale a few days before our actual wedding date. This would be the first wedding to be celebrated in the Collaco’s recently built and spacious bungalow.

Elsie was very well known in the district among local farmers and other residents, and some had been invited to the wedding as was the friendly D.C. John Carson and his wife Dorian. My cousin Jock had travelled all the way from Mombasa to be my best man. Elsie’s two older sisters, Elvira & Edna were bridesmaids.

We were married by Fr. John Hawes on 16th August, 1952, and the reception that followed was a grand affair. However, Elsie and I had to leave our guests that same evening as we had planned to head for our ‘honeymoon in the wilds’.

A friend, John Fernandes from Isiolo surprised us by turning up at Nyeri station and driving us all the way to his family’s *duka* (shop) in Isiolo. John’s parents were the pioneer Goan traders in Isiolo and
were very familiar with officials within the Province. The family had gone to a lot of trouble and expense to convert one of the rooms in their corrugated iron house into a honeymoon suite. We were deeply touched, and later that evening we met many of the local Goans who worked in Isiolo.

The following day, we left for our new home in Marsabit, Elsie no doubt finding the whole area so different from the lush farming areas of the Kitale she’d known. I wondered how she would fit into this rustic environment.

While we camped at Laisamis, a worried Rendille mother with an ailing child approached Elsie and asked if she could help the child who was running a high temperature. Elsie promptly gave her an aspirin and thought no more of it.

We were warmly welcomed at Marsabit and entertained by Lucy and Victor. We later moved to our own brand new government quarter which Elsie took to like a duck to water. In next to no time, she had endeared herself to the locals and township folk who entertained us lavishly, some even bringing us gifts of sheep!. In a very short time, Elsie had spruced up our home, much to my delight and even that of our cook, Sheunda.

Although Marsabit was a small town, Elsie was never bored because she had the company of other wives like Lucy Fernandes, Mrs. Furtado (wife of Valent, the Police clerk), the D.C.’s wife, Kay Wild and the newly arrived Pat Baxter. Pat was the wife of Paul Baxter, the anthropologist, and they had only just arrived from England with their young son, Timmy.

Kenya was in the grip of the Mau Mau rebellion at the time, and many of those arrested under the Emergency were being detained in Marsabit. I played a small part in helping the D.C. make arrangements for the reception of the first batch of political detainees. In later months, I also visited them and attended to their grievances. Years later, many of those detained went on to become important political figures in independent Kenya.

Elsie was now beginning to enjoy the solitary life of Marsabit, but unfortunately, owing to severe bouts of morning sickness during early stages of her pregnancy, she had to return to her parents in Kitale.
It felt awful being back to my old bachelor days, but our Goan friends and locals looked after me well.

As I was also due overseas leave about this time, and since it was inadvisable for Elsie to travel in her present state, I was successful in obtaining a posting to Kitale. This was wonderful news and I was thus able to see our first child, Clyde, who was born on 17th July 1953 in what I can only describe as a storeroom of the Native Civil hospital. Maternity services for Asians were almost non-existent. Elsie and I were over the moon with the arrival of this healthy-looking bundle of love, so too were my in-laws as this was their first grandson.

When Clyde was a few months old, we sailed to Goa on “overseas leave” which was a four-months paid holiday earned after every five years of service. My grandmother, Saloi Mãe was delighted to see her first great-grandson, and she and Marie fussed over him a lot. So did Elsie’s grandma when we spent some time with her in Belgaum.

My elder brother, Joseph, and his fellow Jesuits also spoilt Clyde when we went down to visit him at the seminary at Shembaganur, South India.

Unfortunately, I fell quite ill during this holiday and had to be rushed to a hospital in Mapuça to be operat-
ed on for acute appendicitis. The operation was successful but it meant I had to seek a further extension of my leave which was readily granted by the Secretariat in Nairobi.

When we finally returned to Kenya, I was pleased to learn that I’d been re-posted to Kitale. Clyde was now being well and truly pampered by Elsie’s parents and the rest of the family, and he seemed to enjoy all the attention.

Having succeeded in my request to be sent back to Marsabit, I was sorry not to be able to take Elsie and Clyde as she was now expecting our second child. She stayed with her parents and it was back to bachelor days for me at Marsabit.

I was able to return to Kitale well before the birth of our second son, Conrad, born on October 10th 1956, and we all returned to Marsabit with the new addition a few months later. Months passed by and Conrad wasn’t putting on weight; quite often, he would fall ill and had to be flown out to Nairobi with Elsie on several occasions. The devastating news of his condition was broken to us in Nairobi by a Specialist who told us that Conrad suffered from a congenital heart condition for which there was no cure. We had therefore to seriously think of leaving the Marsabit we loved and move to an area where there was a fully-equipped hospital.
Goodbye Marsabit & the N.F.D.

Because of Conrad’s health problem I had very much hoped I’d be posted to Mombasa or even Kisumu, since I felt the warmer climate there would suit him. This was not to be and I found I had been transferred to Kisii in the South Nyanza district of Nyanza Province. Kisii was noted for its rainfall and damp climate and I often wondered how Conrad would fare here. The posting itself was a slight promotion but not in monetary terms.

It was very sad leaving the N.F.D. and the many friends we’d made. I would be missing all my friends at the office and also so many of the local Africans I was so familiar with in the district. I’d got to know so many of the Chiefs and Headmen, Dubas, Station hands, the dependable office boy, Shalle Hirbo, Nyapara Jaldessa, and even the Kikuyu detainee, Mwangi Macharia who was a good friend of ours. Many of the local traders and ordinary folk said how much they wished I would never leave Marsabit, but fate had decided otherwise.

But I knew they appreciated my reasons for seeking a move and would wish us all well, especially little Conrad. Others who would miss Conrad a lot would be the young Boran lad, Dima Boru we had initially taken on, and Maria, a young Burji ayah, who joined our household later when Dima decided to return to Dirre, Ethiopia. They
both were a great help to Elsie during those difficult days.

A surprise visitor to our house some months before we left Marsabit, was that Rendille woman who we’d first encountered when on our honeymoon. She had brought along her little boy who Elsie had helped with that ‘miraculous’ aspirin. In a gesture obviously meant to convey her deep gratitude for saving her boy’s life, she bowed low several times to thank Elsie for her kindness. We were left dumbfounded and humbled, but happy to see her son looking well and healthy.

Rather than take the whole family to my new station, I felt it best to travel alone to Kisii and make sure suitable family accommodation was available. It was fortunate that Elsie and the boys were with her parents at Kitale, and this is where I joined them after leaving Marsabit for Kisii.

I spent a few days with the family at Kitale and then left for Kisii, stopping en route for a day at Kisumu, the headquarters of the Nyanza Province.

From Kisumu I travelled to Kisii and stayed with another Goan, a Mr. Remedios who worked for the Local Native Council, while the government quarter allocated to me was being redecorated.

My first impressions of Kisii were very good – a pleasant climate, greenery all around and friendly people.

Because the local African buses are fairly crowded, I did not want Elsie and the boys - especially Conrad - to travel by bus. Fortunately for us, an old friend, Sammy Weller (who once worked as a Revenue Officer in Kitale and was now farming), drove the three of them to Kisii and spent a day or two with us. I was most grateful for his kind gesture.

Kisii was a very busy district work-wise, but I didn’t mind this in the least. I preferred to be busy at work rather than being bored. There were also many departmental offices - Police, Agriculture, Education, Resident Magistrate , Maize Marketing, etc in addition to a D.C. and several District Officers.

Most of Elsie’s time was taken up looking after Conrad, and to relieve her, we had taken on a local Mkisii lad, John Kebasso, to look after Conrad. We had a Mkisii cook named Simeon, but he didn't stay long with us as he wanted to return to his reserve. His replacement
was an elderly Mkisii cook by the name of Magama Nyangechi who had worked for various Goan bachelors and happened to be an expert in Goan cooking. He was also most helpful and understanding during our difficult days with Conrad.

Magama turned out to be the old faithful and remained with us for many years, and became part of the family. He was quite tall and took great pride in dressing smartly at all times.

Conrad needed constant care and had to be carried most of the day. John Kebasso coped well with this and tried to amuse frail-looking Conrad who often responded with his shy smile. Clyde somehow managed to amuse himself but must have wondered why Conrad could not keep up with all his energetic pursuits.

There were quite a few Goans in Kisii, both in the office and also outside the Administration. The local traders were mainly Ismailis and Patels, the exception being a retired elderly Goan lady, Mrs. Mascarenhas who had herself been a pioneer businesswoman in the interior region of this vast district. Then there was Dr. Chaudri whose private practice was very popular among the Africans.

Being a fairly fertile district, there was a ready availability of plenty vegetables and fresh fruit like bananas, pawpaw, and pineapples. An elderly man would bring baskets of fruit to our doorstep each week, and was always pleased when we relieved him of his entire load! Elsie made sure he never left our home without first being given a hot cup of tea by Magama.

Because of the damp Kisii climate, Conrad suffered from regular bouts of chest infections and had to be given those painful crystalline
Life in Kenya

penicillin injections quite often. I could not bear the thought of his very frail body being treated in this way - but there was no alternative.

Despite his condition, we still managed to get out and about, mostly on foot. In spite of her heavy commitments, Elsie still found time to create another attractive garden where none before existed. It added so much colour to our surrounds and was so pleasing to everyone’s eyes.

Kisii had a European hotel which was out of bounds to non-Whites owing to the discrimination that prevailed at the time. Then there was the South Nyanza Sports Club whose membership was mainly Asian. But no sports activities went on here apart from card games and table tennis. Fortunately, I was sometimes able to get to Kisumu to play cricket which I also played here at Kisii at the Government African school.

Kisii was also the place where we finally bought our first car, a Morris Minor in which I also took my driving test and passed at the first attempt. (Incidentally, I still have my Driving licence renewal and Personal Tax receipts signed by Robert Ouko, then Revenue Clerk in the D.C.’s office, who later became Kenya’s Foreign Minister and later met a brutal death which many still believe was a political assassination). The car was a great boon as we were able to get out more often and this delighted poor Conrad. We trav-
elled to many parts of the district ranging from the Kisii Highlands right down to the shores of Lake Victoria at Kendu Bay and beyond, and were also able to make regular trips to Elsie’s parents at Kitale.

Unlike the N.F.D., there was a Catholic Mission not far from the boma at Nyabururu some three miles from town. Once a month, a priest from the mission came and said Mass in the boma for the few Catholics - mostly Goans and Africans - who lived in the township. Needless to say, it always fell to the Goans to entertain the visiting priest.

There were some prominent personalities in the district, notably, Richard Gethin (Snr) who ran a very successful transport business where Justin D’Souza worked. There was also the African Highlands Tea company whose boss was Reg. Fielder, and who employed Goans. Another prominent Member of the Asian community was the very friendly and energetic Ismaili businessman, Esmail Kassam and, of course, the retired businesswoman, Mrs. Mascarenhas mentioned earlier. She was quite a wealthy lady but very modest. Widowed at a young age, she had worked tirelessly to build up her business and bring up her young son.

Kisii also had an Asian School and also an African school - both fairly well run. The missionaries also ran their own schools and hospitals. The Asian School had not been well run previously until a new European Principal, Mrs Hewson was brought in. This is where we sent Clyde for a while.

As I’ve said, the damp climate of Kisii didn’t really agree with Conrad and we often had to rush him to the Native Civil hospital for emergency treatment. There was no government hospital for Asians in Kisii and this put a great strain on Elsie and myself. The nearest hospital was in Kisumu, some 75 miles away, but even this hospital did not have the facilities to treat patients with chronic heart problems.

Conrad's condition began to deteriorate, and in the absence of any medical solution, Elsie and I had to resign ourselves to the inevitable. Marsabit was a paradise which I never wanted to leave, but fate struck a blow that compelled us to turn to the next chapter in our lives.
Life in Kenya

PHOTO ALBUM - MARSABIT/ KISII


Paul Baxter (above) and his wife, Pat with Timmy (above, right). Timmy with a Boran mtoto (below)

D.C. ‘Windy’ Wild (right) with interpreter Sangarta.
PHOTO ALBUM - MARSABIT/ KISII

Our faithful cook, Magama Nyangechi with his “old faithfuls”, Margaret, the ‘educated’ wife (above, left), and Prisca, the shamba wife (above).

Our friends with Magama sitting on our Morris Minor (left)

Clyde and Conrad with Maria (below)
The Sports Club, Kisii (above), and our first home in Marsabit (left) with Sgt. Major Ibrahim standing at the front door.

The Fernandes family of Isiolo (below).
PHOTO ALBUM - MARSABIT

Sir Gerald Reece (above), the grand old man of the N.E.D. and later Governor of British Somaliland from 1948 to 1954. D.C. ‘Windy’ Wild with Terence Adamson (below, left) at the Marsabit District Office and with the Governor of Kenya Sir Evelyn Baring at Marsabit.
Kisii was a lovely district but the damp weather just didn’t suit our poor Conrad.

He was now nearly two years old but had hardly put on any weight and looked more like a babe of a few months. He would fall victim to those chest infections which Elsie and I so dreaded. Besides, he always needed to be held in the upright position for hours on end, else he would break into one of those tiring coughing fits which distressed us so much as he would often pass out and turn all cold.

Elsie had to bear the brunt of all this in addition to looking after Clyde, but I would always take over as soon as I got home from work. Magama and young John Kebasso would also try and amuse Conrad.
and try and relieve the pressure on us as much as possible. Many of our friends just couldn’t understand how we were able to cope, but I feel that our youth and above all our faith helped us to go through this very painful period in our married life.

Facilities for a child with Conrad’s condition were not adequate at the government-run Native Civil hospital, nor had advances been made in heart surgery then - else, we would almost certainly have considered taking Conrad to England or any other country where he could receive the right treatment.

Towards the end of 1957 he became seriously ill and had to be moved to the Native Civil Hospital. My own feeling is that, apart from the usual penicillin injections he was given, he did not really receive the constant care and attention that a child in his condition needed.

Elsie had spent the whole day with him and I relieved her for the night as I realized the strain had been too much for her. Sadly, while she was away, and before she could get back to the hospital, our dear Conrad passed away early the next morning, not peacefully, but painfully in my arms on January 3rd 1958. I was heartbroken, so too Elsie when she arrived a few minutes later to see she was not there to witness his last moments. We comforted each other with a tender embrace and later returned home with the cold body of our darling Conrad.

Friends and neighbours were quick to rally round and help us with the funeral which took place on the following day at the Catholic mission in Nyabururu. Conrad was buried in a grave reserved for missionaries, and we all returned home with heavy hearts but at the same time relieved that his earthly suffering had finally ended.

Life was not quite the same after Conrad left us – he had left a distinct vacuum in our home.

Clyde began to miss him a lot and later developed a serious condition which required surgery to his thigh. Our troubles had not really ended and here again, our faith was being tested.

The only good news during this period was that Elsie was pregnant again and expecting our third child. Since I had lost all faith in the Native Civil hospital after the disgraceful treatment Conrad received, I decided to consult the private doctor (Chaudhri) who,
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incidentally, was instrumental in diagnosing Clyde’s problems and getting us to see the surgeon in Kisumu. Although Elsie has always had problems during her pregnancies, Dr. Chaudhri was able to make her days comfortable with some of the new drugs that were now available. In no way was I going to have her admitted to the Native Civil hospital for the delivery, and Kisumu was quite a way off. The extra costs in consulting a private doctor didn’t really matter. The Catholic-run missionary hospital at Sotik, who originally said they would welcome Elsie never wrote back to confirm this as they said they would. Fortunately for us, a Seventh Day Adventist Mission hospital at Kendu Bay on the lakeshore was where Elsie was finally admitted (after a bumpy 40-mile drive), and where, our third child, another boy, John Andrew, was born on 4th February 1959. What a joy it was to welcome this healthy looking baby!

As I’ve said earlier, I’d lost all faith in the government-run Native Civil hospital and felt that we, as a family, could hardly be expected to receive proper treatment especially after the Conrad episode.

This being so, I felt that we should move out of the district.

All my previous applications for promotion within the Provincial Administration had been unsuccessful; this, despite my holding down a post vacated by a European officer, and also the fact that I had been strongly recommended for promotion by my District Commissioner.

As good luck would have it, however, I applied for, and succeeded in achieving a senior executive post advertised in the Ministry of Agriculture. The odds were stacked heavily against me but after yet another gruelling interview in Nairobi, I was selected for the post. This promotion would be a turning point in my career as the increase in salary and privileges was enormous. My only regret was that I would have to leave the Provincial Administration - a department in which I’d hoped to serve until my retirement.

I was now appointed as Provincial Office Superintendent at the Provincial Agricultural headquarters at Machakos and told that I would be relieving a European officer who was proceeding to England on retirement.

I was naturally excited over this development and looked forward to facing the challenges that awaited me in this new post, a new department and, a new district I had not previously served in.
I had never really expected to be leaving the Provincial Administration, a department I had now been in and loved for quite a few years, more because of the opportunity of being posted to outlying districts and also meeting the different tribes in every new district.

However, this promotion to the Ministry of Agriculture would be a turning point in my career and was an opportunity too great to ignore.

Machakos was the agricultural headquarters of the Southern Province, a very prosperous region in the agricultural sense, and one with a steady population of African farmers. But the office building was rather small considering the size and importance of the agricultural sector.

There to welcome me was Archie Allen, the man I would be replacing. I met the out-going Provincial Agricultural Officer, Reg. Spooner, and then my boss, Dick Henderson who insisted from the outset that we should get along on first name terms. This was something quite unexpected - a departure from the norm in colonial days when one was always addressed as “Mr”. This initial informality went a long way towards harmonising my relations with my immediate boss. We always got along very well.

One aspect of my posting I was not happy about was the Asian quarter that had been allocated to me. I had come here on promotion to an executive grade and as such was entitled to housing commensurate with this grading. After strong pressure from my boss and the Ministry in Nairobi, I was eventually allocated a spacious European-
type house at Kithayoni, some 4 miles from the town. I used to drive
to work daily and on occasions had the use of the government land
rover.

Unlike work in a district office, where I would be dealing with
people and their problems, I found that I was stuck in my office, deal-
ing with correspondence and financial matters from the Ministry in
Nairobi and also from the other districts that were within the
Southern Province. It was quite a change for me, but I was fortunate
in that I had two Africans on staff to help on the clerical side. For a
short while I was even able to get Elsie to help out at the office.

Despite the change in the nature of my work, I soon settled down
in the office. A few months later, it was time for my overseas leave.
We were booked to go to India, but because of my recent promotion,
the whole family would be travelling First Class. Quite a privilege!

My younger brother, Wilfy had rented a large bungalow for us in
the fishing village of Versova, a few miles out of Bombay. Here, we
spent a few months in the company of Wilfy and two of my cousins,
Tony & Nabor Sequeira, both textile engineers.

A few weeks later, we left for Elsie’s grandmother’s place at
Belgaum where we stayed for a few days before moving on to Poona
in time for the ordination to the priesthood of my elder brother,
Joseph.

*Family group after Joseph’s First Mass and Clyde’s First Holy Communion*
The ordination ceremony was an impressive occasion attended by several relatives and friends too, and it was a privilege for Wilfy and me to be able to serve at our brother’s first Mass the following day. It was also at this Mass that Clyde made his First Holy Communion. Certainly a day to remember. Andrew was a chubby and happy baby who attracted quite a few willing baby sitters – among them, the wife and daughters of my late Aldona school Principal, Edward Soares. Another maternal aunt, Aunty Horty, was most helpful too. She lived at Kirkee but visited us often while we stayed in Poona.

It is amazing how quickly time flies when one is on holiday and the days for our return to Kenya were fast approaching. From Poona, we moved initially back to Belgaum and latterly Bombay where we boarded the S.S. Kampala for the voyage back to Mombasa.

After a very pleasant voyage and a short stay with my cousins, Jock & Beryl, in Mombasa, we headed back to Machakos - this time, not for a further tour, but to pack up in readiness for my move to yet another area. On arrival at Mombasa, I was informed by the Government Coast Agents that I had been posted to the Plant Breeding Station at Njoro in the heart of the White Highlands.

Magama, our faithful cook had already arrived at Machakos but was unaware that we would have to move yet again. He gladly agreed to come with us and was a great help with the packing etc.

This was to be my second move within the Ministry of Agriculture, and I was not sure what I would find at the Plant Breeding station which, unlike other agricultural establishments, was a research station. Like all previous stations I had worked at, I was looking forward to this new posting with great interest.
I was no stranger to Njoro, as it was here that my Dad had brought us three brothers to a few weeks after my Mum’s death. We were invited to spend a few days with my Dad’s Goan co-villager and friend, Hector de Moraes.

The agricultural set up at Njoro during those days was very limited with just one European officer, a Goan clerk (Hector) and a Goan dogsbody named Pedro who I’d met when we stayed with Hector as young kids. Since then, however, the station had expanded considerably with some 500 acres of land, nine senior research officers with...
supporting African field staff and also a labour force of some 20 men. I was posted as Executive Officer relieving Jim Crawford who was due to retire shortly. The research staff consisted mostly of the Senior Plant Breeder, Plant Breeders, a Seeds Officer and a Farm Manager. The station was an internationally renowned centre where all sorts of trials to combat cereal diseases were conducted. Many trials were conducted out in the field while others, in the well equipped greenhouse and laboratory. Stem rust in wheat and leaf rust in maize were common problems against which the scientists were battling. The idea was to work to produce a grain that would be resistant to such diseases. Because of its international reputation, visitors from various countries visited the station and these included some from the Food & Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations.

The cereal growing farmers in the Rift Valley and beyond looked to the station for new releases and to this end the Station would organise an annual Field Day for farmers which was always very well attended. Some of the organisation of this event fell to my lot.

In addition to Pedro, we had another Goan named Felix Pinto, a young bachelor who was an Asst. Plant Breeder. Felix was sent to the Plant Breeding Institute in Cambridge for further training, and upon his return was promoted to the post of Plant Breeder. He was a very efficient worker and great company to Elsie and me. We used to spend many an evening playing scrabble and, if we were not so engaged, we would drive down to Nakuru to attend some of the social functions organised by the popular Goan Institute where we were both members. Felix was a keen hockey player too.

We had been allocated a spacious and brand new European-type bungalow which soon took on a new look when Elsie had organised the garden and also the vegetable patch. We grew cabbages, green peas and chillies, and the manure from our 20 laying hens provided manure for the chilli patch. We were never short of vegetables or eggs and were even able to sell some to others on the station.
Clyde’s schooling had been badly interrupted due to my frequent transfers. He was initially at the Mangu Convent near Thika, then at the Goan School, Nakuru and eventually at St. Teresa’s High School in Nairobi where he stayed with our friends, the Price family. I don’t think Clyde liked the idea of being away from home especially since Andrew was with us. We didn’t like this arrangement either but there was no alternative.

Whenever Clyde came home on holidays, he and Andrew used to delight in feeding the chickens and the pig (‘Porko’) we had bought from a neighbouring farmer and who was being fattened on the produce from our little shamba. Magama, our faithful cook, kept a fatherly eye over our boys and never once sulked even though he was often kept waiting late in the evenings while we entertained the regular stream of guests.

Elsie had a lot to keep her busy - tending to the garden, sewing, knitting and above all, indulging in her favourite pastime - trout fishing. We had a stream that ran below our house, and Elsie and the boys used to enjoy fishing. Felix was also keen on fishing as the stream flowed not far from his house too.

I rarely went fishing as I just don’t have the patience for fly fishing; it was a different story in Goa!

Talking of Elsie’s fishing interests, I must mention the one present she always asked me for her birthday - a year’s fishing licence!

We made frequent trips to Nakuru, some 12 miles away – mostly for shopping, Sunday church service or when visiting our good friends Fancush & Elizen Gama Rose, Cosie and Irene D’Souza and also Francis & Cybele Noronha and Tinny and Cissy Toscano. We entertained a lot, and I can remember the bread making sessions Elsie used to have at our home.

Magama, as I said earlier, was a very friendly and cheerful character who never complained of his workload. In addition to helping Elsie with the cooking, he always coped with piles of washing and
ironing. I would sometimes go up to him and jokingly offer to help with the ironing, picking out the easy bits like handkerchiefs or face towels. Whenever he saw me do this, he would smile and say, in Ki-Swahili “Kunja tu, kunja tu (“you are just folding them!”). I remember another occasion when he had a severe pain in his upper back. I offered to give him a rub down, but he found it hard to accept that I, a brown man, would ever touch a black man. I quickly gave him a rubdown with some camphorated oil and from that day on he swore he’d never experienced a backache again! We always sent him a bottle of that oil in later years.

On 31st January, 1963, we welcomed our first baby daughter, Josey who was born in the Asian Wing of the Nakuru Native Civil Hospital. Clyde and Andrew were thrilled over the arrival of their new sister, so were we. They fussed over her a lot. Josey was a very chubby and contented baby who gave us much pleasure.

She loved to travel, and here I am reminded of our trip to Lake Baringo in the company of our friend, Shashi Shah, the newly-appointed Seeds Officer at the Station.

Some Njemps tribesmen were busy gutting the fish they’d just caught and I asked if I could borrow one of their rustic fishing rods and try my luck too. They readily agreed, warning me to be careful of crocodiles as the bank area was very slippery from all the slime left after the gutting. In the excitement of feeling a tug on my line, I accidentally slipped and was slid-
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...ing towards the water. Fortunately for me, a tribesman who was canoeing on the lake rushed to the scene and with the help of others who were on the bank, managed to drag me to safety – a disappointment for the crocs I thought. It was a hair-raising moment and I wondered what would have happened if these folks had not been about. The crocs would have had their fill. As though to calm my nerves, I was offered a free ride in the canoe!

While all this drama was unfolding, Elsie and the kids were busy chatting to a group of Njemps. They later agreed to pose for a photograph, one of them even posed with baby Josey in his arms – something I don’t think he would do with his own child as these warriors consider carrying a baby to be a woman’s job!

Elsie was quite lost for female company in the early days, but Felix had now married and he and his wife, Doreen (a medical doctor) were good friends. Much later, our American friends Hannah and Marty Reid and...
their family arrived; Marty taught at the Government African School but due to lack of accommodation was housed at the station. We remained good friends for many years.

Working at this research station was so different from my previous jobs; I was not tied down to my desk. I made frequent official trips in to Nakuru and even to the Ministry in Nairobi; was able at times to see some of the field work going on in and around the station and also partake in the weekly staff meetings we used to have. As at all of my previous jobs, I had excellent relations with the staff at all levels and with the local farming community as well.

Egerton College (now Egerton Agricultural University) was fairly close to the station and I remember being invited to take part in one of the College’s Revue when I was introduced to the guests as “Sammy Davis Jr.”!! My cousin, Natalie D’Sa accompanied me on the guitar while I sang.

Time for my next overseas leave was fast approaching and rather than make a third trip to India, we decided to take advantage of an invitation from my maternal uncle (Uncle Joseph) and spend a few months in that exotic clove-island of Zanzibar.

The very thought of seeing Zanzibar was exciting but there was more excitement to follow when we were actually there. It was a significant moment in the history of Zanzibar.
13

Rude Awakening in Zanzibar

Zanzibar was a place that had always appealed to me. After all, it was here that my mother was born and spent part of her early childhood. Both my maternal grandfather and great-grandfather had lived and worked there. Besides, my grand uncle, Fr. Lucien D’Sa was the first non-white Holy Ghost missionary who ministered to the Africans in rural Zanzibar for many years.

With all these family connections, I just couldn’t refuse the invitation of my Uncle Joseph (Mum’s brother) and Aunty Benny (Bernadette), to spend our holiday with them.

We had always spent my previous overseas leaves in Goa and Bombay and beyond, and had hardly seen the rest of East Africa. My Dad’s eldest brother, Uncle Bernard, lived and worked in Lourenco Marques, formerly Portuguese East Africa, but I’d never visited him or his family either.

The decision to spend our vacation leave in Zanzibar was prompted by the fact that the Kenya government was encouraging officials...
to spend their vacations within East Africa, and were even offering generous financial inducements in the bargain. How could I refuse all this?

Rather than fly out, we decided to travel by road on the O.T.C. (Overseas Touring Company) coach from Nairobi to Dar-es-salaam in Tanganyika. We had a good friend, Bismark Noronha, who had previously stayed with us in Njoro before his posting to Tanganyika where he worked as an engineer for the Shell Petroleum company.

We left Nairobi on the night of 11th December 1963, the eve of Kenya’s independence, and celebrated this landmark event in Kenya’s history by toasting the newly-independent nation at the stroke of midnight, by the roadside shortly after leaving the border post at Namanga.

There was joy in the air and most passengers joined in wishing the newly independent Kenya nation and its people well.

We drove well into the night arriving in Dar-es-salaam early the next morning to be met by Bismark who then drove us to his large home by the seaside at Oyster Bay.

Like us, he was equally surprised that Josey, a babe of a few months, had withstood the road journey so well. We spent Christmas with Bismark and flew out to Zanzibar on Boxing Day. At this flare-lit airport to meet us were Uncle Joseph, Aunty Benny and their daughter, Natalie. Natalie (‘Naty’ to us) was a teacher in Nairobi and was here on holiday.

As we drove from the airport to Uncle Joseph’s Arab-style residence at Shangani, we could sense the subtle aroma of cloves in the refreshing island air. Zanzibar is one of the spice islands in the Indian Ocean, and is famous for its cloves, cinnamon, and exotic tropical fruit.

We used to make daily trips to the seafront and enjoy the freshly
roasted chilli-sprinkled *mohogo* (cassava) which the locals roasted on open fires.

Filled with the fresh sea air, we would return home and relax over a few drinks before enjoying the tasty dinners that Aunty Benny had laid on for us.

We fell in love with the island within a few days of our arrival. Clyde and Andrew, and even little Josey seemed to thrive on the heat and sea breezes. I had made up my mind then that this was the place I would retire to. It reminded me so much of Goa - a leisurely lifestyle, sun, sand and a clear blue ocean. This was a little Paradise!

There were quite a few Goans in Zanzibar who, like their countrymen elsewhere had established their own social club. Unfortunately, I never got a chance of visiting the Goan Institute during our stay in Zanzibar.

During our daily walks through this Arabian Nights-type town, we had good view of the Sultan’s Palace and even saw him on several occasions as he drove through the narrow streets.

Zanzibar had recently attained its independence from Britain and there was now an African government.

Life on the island seemed so peaceful and trouble-free, and we hardly noticed anything unusual even during our regular trips to the local fish and fruit market.

To our ill luck, however, the tranquillity of this idyllic island was shattered on the morning of January 12th 1964 when armed revolutionaries headed by self-styled Field Marshall John Okello, ran riot through the town and began shooting indiscriminately. There were many casualties and we were grateful that our lives had been spared even though Elsie and Aunty Benny could well have been victims as they were returning from Church around the time when sporadic firing broke out. Fortunately, Naty and Clyde had returned to schools in Nairobi a few days before this unexpected coup broke out.
Meanwhile, the main airport was taken over by soldiers and nobody was allowed to either enter or leave the island. I could hardly conceal my sadness and utter disappointment at this abrupt turn of events. Would we be able to shield Andrew, baby Josey and ourselves from the bullets that whizzed past our house? Was it safe to venture out of the house to buy basic food items? What of Uncle Joseph and Aunty Benny? All these thoughts refused to leave my now crowded mind. We just prayed and lived in hope.

I took a risk and ventured out on the streets to buy milk for baby Josey while trigger-happy untrained ‘soldiers’ were to be seen all around. Being a keen stamp collector at the time, I foolishly walked to the post office to see if I could get a set of Zanzibar’s independence stamps. The clerk sold me a set but made sure that the head of the former Sultan was crossed off. No more would his face ever feature on a Zanzibar stamp.

I still had quite a few weeks of my leave left, but all I kept thinking about was how to get out of this once peaceful island and return to Kenya at the first opportunity. But at the same time, I feared for the safety of my young family and the future of Uncle and Aunty.

Law and Order had completely broken down, but somehow, the Sultan and his party managed to escape to the Kenya coastal town of Mombasa. My Uncle and Aunt were not prepared to leave the place; they were more anxious that we leave as soon as possible.

When a semblance of order was restored, we managed to fly out to Dar-es-salaam and spend a few days with Bismark. Later, a cousin of mine, Nico Pinto drove us all the way to Mombasa and dropped us off at Jock and Beryl’s home.

When news of the disturbances reached the outside world, I was told that both the Kenya Foreign Ministry (where my friend Robert Ouko now worked) and the Ministry of Agriculture began making extensive enquiries regarding our whereabouts and safety. Many of our friends were also concerned about us, and were glad to know we had come to no harm.

After spending a few days in Mombasa, we returned to Njoro relieved, and thankful to God that we were all still alive.
During our stay in Njoro, my younger brother, Wilfy had come out to Kenya and was doing a lot of freelance work in journalism. He had visited Uganda, the Congo and Tanganyika, and was among the few journalist invited to interview Jomo Kenyatta at the historic Maralal Press Conference in 1961 when Jomo Kenyatta was released from detention.

Wilfy used to stay with us at Njoro off and on and much later took on a full-time job in Nairobi in his chosen profession as an Advertising Executive combining this with his hobby of writing articles for various newspapers/magazines and carrying on as a freelance journalist.

With a new African government now in Kenya, Africanisation within the senior ranks of the Civil Service had started in real earnest. Many White settlers were leaving the country, so too many European civil servants for whom a generous compensation package had been agreed by the colonial office. We, Asian Civil Servants were offered no guarantees – but thanks to the selfless efforts of the then President of the Kenya Asian Civil Service Association, Robert Fernandes, the colonial government finally agreed on a not-so-generous package for us, but we were not left in the lurch.
It was during this stressful period that we had another addition to the family. Our second daughter, Pollyanna was born on 20th June 1965. She was the lucky one in that, unlike the rest of our children, she was born in the Nakuru War Memorial hospital which, many years previously, was for Europeans only. Pollyanna was a very happy and contented baby who was great company for Josey and Clyde and Andrew when they came on their holidays. A welcome addition to our family which was now complete.

Elsie’s health began to suffer not long after Pollyanna was born and we were fortunate in securing the services of a German doctor, Dr. Kuhn, who was attached to the Native Civil Hospital in Nakuru. He had no transport of his own and each time we wanted him to visit Elsie, he would have to be collected and, after some refreshments, returned to Nakuru. His refreshment consisted in a neat double tot of Scotch in a cup of black tea. This was his preferred recipe for stress and overwork. We are grateful to Dr. Kuhn for all he did to help Elsie regain her strength. Because of her earlier health problem, we had also taken on a young ayah, Mary who adored Pollyanna and spent a lot of time amusing her and Josey too. Mary was quite young but always so smart and well dressed. I often thought that she had the makings of a good model.

I was aware my post would one day be Africanised and it was in early 1966 when I became one of the early casualties of the Africanisation programme and had to decide, fairly quickly, what we were going to do – remain in Kenya and revert to local terms of service with no guarantee of our pensions, or accept the government’s
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compensation offer and decide on our next move. It was not an easy decision over which we pondered for days and spent many a sleepless night. We loved Kenya, the people and the wonderful climate, but I had to think of the future of my young family. Uprooting oneself from the place of one’s birth is not an easy proposition.

After witnessing the troubles in Zanzibar, Elsie and I had felt that we needed to seriously consider moving out of the country, possibly to Britain, if only to ensure the future of our young family, more particularly their education.

The compensation package as I’ve mentioned earlier, although not as generous as that afforded to the European officers, still meant that I would be given six months’ notice on full pay and that my family and I would be provided with free passages by air or sea either to Goa or the U.K. I was also given a generous allowance for all our personal effects to be shipped at government cost to the destination of our choice. More importantly, however, my pension rights were guaranteed by the British government.

It is not easy, when confronted with so many considerations, to decide on the best option. We prayed for guidance and even though we’d never been to England, we learnt from our friends and relatives living there that it was the best place to work and settle. So we made a decision that it was to the United Kingdom that we would finally go. My cousins, Jock and Beryl who had moved to England a year earlier assured me that I would have no difficulty in finding a suitable job. To be on the safe side though, I thought it would be wise to carry testimonials from some of the people who I’d worked with and knew me well. Sir Richard Turnbull was the one I approached when he was British High Commissioner in Aden, and he gladly provided a testimonial. Many others provided letters of recommendation too.

Air passages for the whole family were booked for us, and the big job of emptying a spacious government bungalow began in earnest. We could not take everything with us, and we gave away quite a lot of our linen, furniture, crockery, cutlery etc. A lot of our surplus wardrobe was given away to Magama and our African friends on the station. A missionary friend from Kisii, Fr. Van der Weyden was grateful for the linen we were able to let him have. But the one thing I was determined to take along to England were the two elephant feet
which I had cured myself. The station carpenter, Isaac quickly made two crates for these. I had also obtained an official Export Permit from the Game Department for these and two of the colobus monkey skins from Ethiopia which I’d bought in Marsabit. These trophies would be a constant reminder of our days in the Northern Frontier District. The rest of our belongings were packed in steel trunks which we had brought from India and all these were later handed to the transport agent in Nakuru who would arrange for their shipment to England.

It was not easy to part with the many friends we’d made both in Njoro and Nakuru and beyond. We also had to think of Elsie’s family; her mother had died a few years earlier, but she would be leaving behind her Dad, sisters and brothers. I too would be missing my brother, Wilfy. And then, how could we forget our old faithful, Magama who had been more of a family member to us? What would be his future we wondered? We promised that we would keep in touch and also help him in any way we could. We also hoped that young Mary would soon find a job with those who remained on the station. She was a lovely girl and very dependable, and she deserved to be well looked after.

A Plant Breeder, Dick Little, who had been recently recruited from England, couldn’t understand why we were leaving this beautiful country and moving to cold and grey England. As we knew no one in England apart from my cousins, he was keen that we should meet his parents who lived in Surrey and gave us their address.

Days before our departure, we held a farewell party for our family and friends at our house. We decided to call it the Funga Safari (see page 90) farewell party, and most of our friends from Nakuru also came along, so too our close American friends, Marty & Hannah Reid. We all had a great time with some of our guests leaving late at night.

A few days later, having sold our Morris Minor, we arrived at the home of our friends, the Price family at Nairobi. They had been our dear friends who had looked after Clyde and Andrew when the boys were left in Nairobi for schooling. I would miss Henry Price a lot as he was always there when we needed him.

At Nairobi airport to see us off were my brother, Wilfy, Elsie’s
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brothers and sisters, many of our friends including dear old Magama. He had never been to an airport before.

With hugs and tear-filled eyes, we boarded the East African Airways jet that was to fly us to London via Entebbe, and waved a final KWHERI (Goodbye) to Kenya, wishing this new nation and its people well. We would always carry a little bit of Kenya in our hearts.

A new life was awaiting us in England.
The *Funga Safari* invitation card designed by Elsie and signed by our friends who attended the farewell party held at our house. *Funga Safari* was a Swahili song chanted by *Askaris* - soldiers of the King’s African Rifles - in WWI as they prepared for battle. They sang about following their Captain’s orders, defeating the enemy, and returning home to look after their family, their shamba, and their cattle forever.
PART THREE

LIFE IN ENGLAND
Apart from flights in small aircraft like the Auster or Rapide during my service in the N.F.D., and the other flight to Zanzibar in a Douglas DC-3, I had never before flown in anything as large as a jetliner - nor had any of my family. This was a rare experience of being welcomed by the aircrew of an East African Airways Comet and flown out to London. The in-flight service could not have been better.

We had a brief stop at Entebbe where we were allowed to disembark and where we were met by my cousin, Maria Lobo and her husband Tony. They were very kind and took us to the airport lounge for refreshments.
We touched down at Heathrow airport in London early on the morning of 11th June 1966 and were very warmly welcomed by the immigration staff. After being efficiently processed through Customs and Immigration, we were welcomed by my cousin Jock and his young son, Derrick (my godchild). As we left the airport building, I just couldn’t believe this was the England I’d been told about. Where was this cold that everyone spoke about? To me, it felt just like being back in Kenya. Mind you, this was the summer of 1966, a glorious summer indeed.

Jock had kindly arranged for a taxi to take Derrick, Elsie and the children to their home at Latimer Road in Wimbledon while we both travelled on one of those now familiar double-decker London Red buses.

Coming from a land where racial discrimination still existed, I was pleasantly surprised to see the different races mixing freely together. Every passenger sat quite comfortably together on the bus, and what amazed me even more was to hear the ticket collector address some of the passengers as “darling” or “my love” in the case of female passengers, and “Sir” or “Guv” where male passengers were concerned. Everyone seemed so well-mannered and courteous.

As the bus sped by, I noticed several advertising hoardings. One that caught my eye was outside a building (which Jock later told me was a pub) which had these two words prominently displayed, “TAKE COURAGE”. I was wondering what this could mean - only to be told later by Jock that ‘Courage’ was the brand name of a popular local beer!

Number 14 Latimer Road in Wimbledon was quite a spacious house, but with six of us arriving, it seemed quite crowded especially since Jocks’s and Beryl’s was a fairly large family.

We were made very welcome, and that same evening, Jock took me to his “local” (pub). I had never before seen such a well-furnished and carpeted pub which bore the name “The Prince of Wales”.

Whereas lager was the beer of choice in Kenya, most of the patrons in the London pub drank draught beer - the most common being ‘bitter’ drawn by the pint or half pint. Seeing that I was unaccustomed to bitter, Jock suggested I try a ‘mild’ draught brown beer for a start.
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People were gulping down pints at a pretty fast rate, and there was a festive atmosphere in the pub with everyone having a great time. I noticed that in a noisy adjacent section of the pub, most of those drinking seemed like factory workers, and I asked Jock if this was some form of segregation. Jock laughed and remarked that it was the section where a pint of beer was a penny cheaper - a price that also attracted the so-called middle class clientele to join in.

The next item on Jock’s agenda was to show me how to use the underground transit system - more commonly known as ‘the tube’. That evening he decided to take me from South Wimbledon tube station to the next station south, which was Morden. This was quite a novelty for me, seeing tubes come in and go almost to the minute. I soon realised that people always seemed to be in a hurry. Very few walked at a normal pace, and many literally ran to catch the tube, and ran equally fast when leaving it. This was a far cry from the leisurely pace I was accustomed to in Kenya.

Jock and Beryl were both teachers and would leave for their respective schools in London fairly early, travelling mostly by tube. Some of their children were at school or college.

Elsie and I sometimes walked down Wimbledon Broadway and marvelled at the abundance of everything at supermarkets and department stores - something we had not seen in Kenya. Nairobi had only one large store that came close to being a supermarket, but nothing on the scale of the London supermarkets. There was food and drink enough to feed the five thousand!

I couldn’t believe how friendly people were. When waiting for a bus, people would stand in an orderly line, and there was no queue jumping whatsoever. People were well mannered on the whole, but one of the things I found strange initially was how some people would eat or drink in the open. Even on trains/tubes or buses, it was not uncommon to see a passenger beside you eating a sandwich or even drinking a beer or soft drink. All this appeared alien to me, having been accustomed to very proper and staid colonial British behaviour. Equally alien to me was seeing young couples kissing and cuddling in public oblivious of lookers-on!

As I’ve mentioned earlier, Jock’s and Beryl’s was a fairly large family and I felt we had overstayed our welcome. The time had now
come to find alternative accommodation.

I had heard that the English landlords/landladies were not keen on taking on tenants with children and the reality of all this soon dawned on me when I tried to secure accommodation. It would be a different matter if we had a dog as the English are great animal lovers and would sooner welcome a couple with a dog than one with four young children.

When I was on the point of giving up all hope, I finally made a call in response to an advert. The guest house was in Wimbledon so that would suit us very well I thought. When I telephoned the landlady and told her that I had a wife and four young children, she said that would be no problem as they had ample room for us. To make doubly sure, I thought I had better warn her that we were not ‘White’. to which she responded with a hearty, “I don’t care whether you are black, brown or pink, you and your family will be most welcome”. These soothing words calmed me down and I felt so happy. In a few days we were at this family-run Elm Guest House along Worple Road Wimbledon. We were made to feel at home by Mr. & Mrs. Orme and their young boys, and they looked after us well. The arrangement was for bed and breakfast only, and we managed to get our meals from outside.

I still had six months paid leave as part of my retirement package and was in no hurry to look for a job. However, Jock’s sister, Rita D’Souza (ex Uganda) felt that I was taking life a bit too easy and told me, in no uncertain terms, that I should be looking for a job and our own home - in that order. She offered to help me with the formalities that were involved, and as a starting point, invited us all to spend a few days with them at their fairly large detached house in the town of Sutton in Surrey.

We spent a few days with Rita who took us to several Estate Agents in a bid to find us a suitable house. I was also introduced to a Building Society Manager as I would soon be needing a mortgage. All this was new to me as I had never before had to look for a house; government officials were always provided housing in Kenya and never had to see a Bank Manager for a mortgage or a loan.

Something I found quite irritating when going to an Agency for a job was the question we were often asked, “Have you any London
experience?” I had to politely explain that we had recently arrived in the country from East Africa and could hardly be expected to have such experience.

Much later, I applied and was offered a job at the Crown Agents in London. Many Goans from East Africa had easily found jobs at this organisation. However, a friend of mine, Tilak Castellino from my Aldona school days, who had worked in the private sector in London, suggested I should not take this job as he would arrange for a slightly higher paid job for me. In a couple of days, he had arranged for me to be interviewed by the Personnel Officer at Gestetner (UK) London. I went for the interview and got through with ease and was asked to start the following week. Starting salary £16 per week.

With a job in the offing and a young family to look after, it was not easy to combine all this with house-hunting which had to be done over weekends. Clyde, as the eldest, was left to look after his young brother and sisters while we accompanied the Estate Agent in our search for suitable accommodation. We viewed several desirable properties but were not fortunate in buying the first one we liked as a higher bidder had beaten us to it. This house-hunting exercise which we were not used to was quite a discouragement at times. We eventually settled for a small terraced house in Collingwood Road, Sutton. It was a compact structure, unlike the spacious bungalow in Njoro, but it was our new home and we decided to call it ‘Manyatta’.
After making several trips to solicitors and Estate Agents, we completed all the formalities of obtaining a mortgage and finally moved into our own ‘manyatta’ in September 1966. I had never before had occasion to deal with Bank Managers and Estate Agents, so this was quite a new experience.

Ours was a modest terraced, albeit older-type house with a narrow hallway, kitchen/dining room with 3 average-size bedrooms upstairs and a small bathroom-cum-toilet. This latter arrangement was quite inconvenient for a family of our size and the guests we often had to accommodate. It had no central heating or downstairs toilet either. The only pleasing aspect of this house was that it backed on to an open park and gave us a good view of the surrounding area rather than looking into other people’s properties as is the case with most of the houses here in England.
The family quickly settled into this snug place and from day one we felt a sense of relief that we were at last in a place we could call our own. It was our home. Clyde and Andrew had been admitted to local Catholic schools; Josey and Pollyanna were still very young.

Whereas in Kenya, we had a cook, an ayah and a shamba boy, Elsie found that she now had to wear three hats, not to mention the near full time job she had of looking after our four children and me.

The whole street on Collingwood Road was occupied by people of English, Irish and Welsh descent. Our neighbours on either side were elderly English couples (the Edwards and the Shaws) with whom we got on very well. They were pleased to hear the sound of children in the area once again. We encountered no discrimination of any sort; on the contrary, we were made most welcome even at the local corner store run by an English couple (the Bells, who had returned to England from the West Indies), and even at our pub - The Sydney Arms.

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, Dick Little had given us his parent’s address and we decided to contact them during our last few days in Wimbledon. They were the first English family that we met in England, and from that initial meeting, they became good friends who invited us to their home in Chessington, Surrey every Christmas. As we didn’t have our own transport, it fell to Jennifer Little to collect and drop us back home each time after a most enjoyable evening at their home. Mrs. Little was the perfect hostess and always organised games and other entertainment especially for our children. Mr. Little loved coming over to our manyatta on his scooter and taking photos of our two girls whom he loved. He was quite a good photographer and it was also he who first introduced me to home wine making.

My brother, Wilfred, who was Advertising Manager with East African Airways, visited us often from Kenya as many of his managerial meetings were held in London and some in New York. On his trips to New York, he’d book his flight via London and break journey to spend some time with us. On each occasion, he always brought along a basketful of fresh Kenya fruit like paw paw, juicy pineapples and passion fruit which we missed in England.

In addition to Wilfred, two of our friends from Kenya – my old
friend, Ignatius Carvalho and another family friend, Gajendra Gohill (who worked for Total Oil in Nakuru) both came and stayed with us for a while. (Sadly, Ignatius died very suddenly a year or so after he’d bought his own house and brought the family here from Goa. It was so sad as we two had had a drink at his local pub, The Cricketers in Mitcham the night before).

I shudder to think how we all managed in this tiny manyatta, and how Elsie coped with all the cooking and laundry. It must have been quite tough for her especially with two young children to look after. Can you imagine the problem with just one loo serving so many?

Many weekends were also taken up entertaining family and friends from East Africa.

Clyde and Andrew went to the Holy Family Catholic school in Morden, a short distance from Sutton, and travelled daily by bus. I too travelled to work by bus and tube.

As there was no Catholic church in the vicinity, and as the younger children couldn’t be left on their own, we took it in turns to attend Mass at Our Lady of the Rosary parish which was nearer to Carshalton, the next town. It would be many years before we could think of a church in our area.

On my way to work each morning, my fellow traveller on the bus was a Mr. Lander, a well mannered and well spoken gentleman who was always impeccably dressed. Both he and his wife, both now deceased, remained good friends for many years.

Travelling on the underground in the rush hour was quite an experience. We were packed like sardines. I was fortunate in that the tube of the Northern Line - one of five or six other lines - started and terminated at Morden thus allowing me to always get a seat. Passengers who boarded the tube further north at stations from Tooting Broadway onwards were not so fortunate. Because of the crush of
passengers standing near the exits, I would take a seat nearest to the exit in order to enable me to exit easily and avoid the risk of being carried over to the next station. I normally got off at Tottenham Court Road station or sometimes Warren Street and walked the short distance to my offices in Euston.

It was quite a busy open-plan office that I came to and joined some 20 other men and women in the Credit Control department of Gestetners.

What surprised me on my first day was the casual attitude at work. I was never used to a tea break as such, but here, at around 10 o’clock each morning, a Tea Lady would appear with her trolley full of assorted beverages and bread rolls. Many of my colleagues would rush to her when she appeared, and be back at their desks munching away. I had never seen people eat at their desks in Kenya, so this again was something foreign to me. We also read the newspaper during this 10-minute break. I always bought the Daily Telegraph from a newspaper vendor just outside the tube station.

While most of my colleagues spent all of their working hours at their desk, I found that I could finish my work within 2-3 hours. I used to be bored for the rest of the day!

I’d also like to mention the subsidised staff canteen where we all went for our lunch. I enjoyed the lunches but couldn’t bear the sight of some of my colleagues filling their plates to the brim and then leaving half of the food to go waste. I thought of all the many hungry mouths that could be fed with all that wastage. They were all surprised that I always left behind a clean plate having consumed every bit of my lunch. We were taught as children never to waste food.

I had never seen snow before (apart from seeing it on Mt. Kenya from a distance), and longed to see something of this white fluff. My colleagues at work couldn’t understand why I was so keen on snow when they just couldn’t bear the thought of winter - a season I had yet to experience.

With no central heating at home, I wondered how we would cope but, within a few months of our moving into our new home, we had installed electric central heating, the heat coming from bulky off-peak radiators. They were not very efficient and we later had to supplement the heat by investing in additional heating appliances.
While working in London, I had occasion to see the Bank Manager in connection with an overdraft I needed to purchase furniture and other necessities for our new home. The Manager was a bit apprehensive at first and asked what guarantee I could offer. All I could offer was the paper showing the retirement package I’d been offered by the Kenya government. “What if Mr. Kenyatta were to renege on his promise”, he asked, to which I replied that the package was guaranteed by the British government. The overdraft was promptly approved.

Commuting from Surrey to London, especially in the rush hours, can be quite stressful and some had suggested that I apply for a job nearer home. This I eventually did and managed to secure a job with the South Eastern Gas Board in Croydon, a much bigger town but not too far from Sutton.

I hoped that I would experience the same cordial and friendly relations I’d enjoyed at Gestners at my new job in Croydon. In fairness, I must say that I came across no hint of discrimination either at the workplace or when shopping, travelling or when enjoying a pint at the pub. Everyone seemed so friendly and ready to help.
Life in England

17
Work & Life in Surrey

Whereas in the olden days, we were reminded of the saying, ‘a rolling stone gathers no moss’ and encouraged to remain in the same job, possibly for life, things were quite different here. One changed jobs often for better prospects, and this is how I ended up with the Gas Board in Croydon. This was a nationalised industry and, like any government job, a safe bet with some privileges and a pension at the end of it all.

I started out in the Distributing Engineer’s department, but finding the work a bit too technical transferred to the Personnel department – a fairly large department. The work was pretty routine, but the salary slightly higher than what I was receiving in London. Besides, by moving closer to home, I had saved a lot on transport costs and travelling time too.

One pleasing aspect of working at the Gas Board was its proximity to the Fairfields Hall Theatre which was next door to our offices. I often went there during my lunch break to hear some musical recitals, and Elsie and I regularly went to Mantovani’s live concerts each year. I was also present for Miriam Makeba’s live concert, and much later Elsie and I saw Bert Kaempfert and Acker Bilk (of Stranger on the Shore fame) in concert. I was also able to meet Acker Bilk off stage and obtain his autograph for a French friend who was visiting us at the time. Another aspect was the Gas Board’s Sports Club, and this is where I often played tennis with work colleagues after office hours. One thing that took getting used to was how we’d
all rush to shower in the nude after a game, and later sit down to a cool beer at the subsidised bar.

There are some instances one can never forget, and I can still remember how, in mid to late October of every year, we would come across young lads, standing on street corners with an effigy of Guy Fawkes and calling out, “Penny for the guy, penny for the guy.” They were out to collect enough money to buy fireworks and maybe some treats for Guy Fawkes Day on November 5th.

On our first Bon Fire night that year, Clyde had made a very smart looking Guy and we had a huge bonfire and party in our garden to which we had invited the Ormes (of the Wimbledon guesthouse). It rained all night but no one seemed to mind.

With our first Christmas approaching, Elsie was busy making an assortment of Christmas fare - cakes, Goan sweets and even our traditional Goan dishes like sorpotel (a spicy pork dish) and Sannas (steamed rice bread), not to mention Christmas decorations like the crib, star and other ornaments for the Christmas tree. The kids were all excited. My brother, Wilfy had flown out from Kenya to be with us and we were also joined by another cousin of mine, Lucien D’Sa, brother of cousin Naty mentioned in an earlier chapter.

Although this was the winter season, it never felt like it – there was hardly any snow around on that first Christmas; we were even able to walk to midnight Mass and back without any winter overcoats. I wondered if it would always be like this in winter. Maybe we still had a reserve of the Kenya heat?

As we had a bus stop outside our house, the children didn’t have far to walk except when they got to Morden when they had to change to another bus. The long day at school and travelling was initially taking its toll on the boys and they would often get home tired and grumpy. They soon overcame this and often came home with several of their friends who always enjoyed the homemade tasty treats Elsie would prepare for them - doughnuts, buns, cakes etc.
As they grew older, Elsie used to get the children involved in a lot of indoor creative activities, Josey being very keen on Origami. Clyde enjoyed, and produced some interesting drawings. Andrew was kept busy with the Scout Group he had recently joined, and he enjoyed the scout camps in the countryside. I even accompanied the scouts to one of their camps which was dubbed ‘Dad’s and Lad’s Camp’. The Scout Master was an ex-Metropolitan Police officer, John (Paddy) Russell who had been seconded to Kenya during the Mau Mau emergency. Because of our Kenya connection, Paddy became a close friend of ours and would spend many an evening playing scrabble at our manyatta and talking of his experiences in Kenya, especially on Manda Island where he was stationed. He often said he could never understand the discriminatory attitude of the Kenya settlers. Paddy was a walking encyclopaedia and could discuss any subject under the sun - history, London, but more importantly the great composers of classical music.

In a few months, Easter would follow Christmas, and there to attract the children were hundreds of Easter eggs prominently displayed in every supermarket. Elsie had bought a home-making Easter egg kit which our two girls found quite interesting and amusing. Nothing like a home-made Easter egg!

Normally after the Christmas holidays, the next thing on people’s minds’ is preparing for their summer holidays. Our very first English holiday was spent in the seaside resort of Littlehampton in Sussex where we stayed at a friendly guesthouse run by a charming lady, Mrs. Bayliss. This was supposed to be a summer holiday but it rained most of the time - nothing unusual for England I was told as one can sometimes experience four seasons in a day. How encouraging! When the sun did come...
out, we would make for the seaside where Josey and Pollyanna enjoyed playing in the sand, building sand castles. Whereas some guesthouses expect their guests to be out all day – rain or shine, Mrs. Bayliss was kind enough to allow us to return from the beach to the guesthouse whenever it rained. We usually kept warm with hot cups of tea while the children enjoyed their chocolate drinks.

Whereas in Kenya, we always saw the sun, even in the rainy season, here in England the picture was quite different. Once the summer was over, and with the onset of autumn, the skies would get greyer, the air much colder and the winds quite blustery. Summer gear had to be put away and warm clothes brought out. In a way, there is some charm in the changing seasons - spring bursting with new life especially in the gardens when daffodils and tulips adorn the gardens and some of the public parks. Summer, if we are lucky to get a decent one, is one season everyone looks forward to; the smell of barbeques, long summer evenings, bright summer clothes and so many attractions in and around London and in the country as a whole. Autumn, with those cold winds but the spectacular sight of colourful autumn leaves, and finally winter - with snow scenes and the arrival of the friendly robin at our doorstep when it would be the time to look forward to Christmas all over again.

Seasons came and seasons went, and I soon got tired of the winters. I couldn’t stand the biting cold winds of late autumn and winter, nor the blizzards and heavy snowfalls we sometimes experienced. But the kids used to have a great time playing snowballs and making a snowman in our back garden.

I had been quite a few years with the Gas Board and fancied a change. I applied for and was successful in securing a job with an international construction company based at Mitcham in Surrey. The firm, Scaffolding (Great Britain) or SGB for short had branches all
Life in England

over the country and even abroad. They were a very reputable company with an excellent business record.

The slightly higher salary I would now be drawing would go a long way towards helping with our growing family.

My colleagues at the Gas Board gave me a very good send off and presented me with a picnic case and a book on English pubs, both of which would come very handy especially at summer time.

Josey and Pollyanna were both at school now and it fell to Andrew to escort his little sisters to and from school - a task I don’t think he relished. When years later, the older children moved to Secondary and High schools, I used to take Pollyanna to school, and I often recall the times we nearly slipped on the frozen pavements during winter months.

Andrew and Josey were soon to move to High Schools – Wimbledon College for Andrew and the Ursuline Convent in Wimbledon for Josey. Fortunately, a family friend used to take Pollyanna to school for a few years before she finally joined Josey in Wimbledon too.

Through his frequent scout camps, Andrew had made quite a few friends – one of them being a French lad named Paul Cusin who happened to join the camp during their trip to Cornwall. Paul, who was keen to learn English, became quite friendly with Andrew and later asked whether we could have his sister (Marie-Christine) and a friend (Daniele Guerineau) stay with us for a month to learn English. We were delighted to accommodate both girls who settled in very well and could converse quite well in English! We became close friends of the Cusins and Guerineaus, and enjoyed many a holiday at their lovely homes in the rural village of Neydens in the Savoy region bordering on Geneva with clear views of Mont Blanc. Both families have also visited and stayed with us, and we keep in touch to this day.
Sadly, Marie-Christine, who was married with two young children, passed away at a very young age. Many years later, we were able to have Daniele’s sister, Claudine, and Daniele’s children stay with us. They all speak excellent English now and put us to shame when we visit them! Paul too speaks good English and has a good job in Geneva.

Despite the size of our manyatta, we were never short of visitors. My brother Joseph often sent his Jesuit friends from India to spend a few days with us. Wilfred was a regular visitor from Kenya too; not to mention the many relatives and friends from India and Kenya and an Italian missionary priest, Virgilio Pante, who is now Bishop of Maralal in the Samburu country of Northern Kenya. We also had a visit from our Dutch curate, Fr. Luke Verhees, and his sisters and niece from Holland. We have remained very close friends over the years.

Margaret Finch of Fife, Scotland, a one-time secretary of the D.C., Kitale, and a colleague during my time in Kitale, spent a night with us as did Caroline Pennington (nee Reece), the daughter of Sir Gerald Reece, the grand old man of the N.F.D. and later Governor of British Somaliland. Other visitors have included the late well-known Kenya historian and author, Cynthia Salvadori, the late Monty Brown (author of “Where Giants Trod” and other books) and his wife Barbara, John Rendall (of “A lion called Christian” fame) and the late Juanita Carberry (author and Kenya pioneer), not forgetting our good friends, Nicole and her husband, the late Terence (Terry) Gavaghan - former D.C. in Northern Kenya,

Many of our local friends would wonder how we coped with all this entertainment, but this was an extension of what we did in Kenya – only that now, the burden fell wholly on Elsie’s shoulders. Despite having her hands full at most times, she coped very well.
18
“Goan Cookery Book”
and “Bwana Karani”

With the children virtually off her hands now, Elsie could devote more time to some of her own interests. She had given up working part-time, and was now able to concentrate on things she loved doing. She is a many-talented woman, so where does one begin?

Apart from her sewing and knitting interests, Elsie had learnt a lot from watching her mother in the kitchen. She had become quite a good cook herself and I feel that we, her family, had taken her talents very much for granted.

Friends who had enjoyed our hospitality would often ask Elsie for her recipes and, to save her writing these each time, I often typed them on my portable typewriter, keeping a copy for us.

Over the years, we had produced quite a few recipes and I wondered whether we should not put these into book form. Mind you, neither of us nor the children had any experience of printing or publishing, but after much thought we decided to take the plunge and publish.

I approached a publisher in Devon whose advertisement I’d seen in the Daily Telegraph. Although they had never published a cookery book, they were prepared to undertake the work.

After negotiating a price, we finally settled on an initial print run of 500 copies. The book was launched at Wimbledon Town Hall by our dear friend, the late Dr. ’Johnny’ Johnson, Director of the British
Pharmacopeia Association. For the title, we decided on “Goan Cookery Book”, and all the photographs of the various dishes were taken by my cousin, Desmond Sequeira.

Although there was a fairly large crowd of mostly Goans, sales that evening were quite disappointing; perhaps some Goans felt that introducing a cookbook to Goans was like carrying coals to Newcastle. But we didn’t lose heart.

Through publicity and marketing (which I did myself), interest began to grow. My two brothers, Joseph and Wilfy helped promote sales in Bombay and Kenya too while, much later, we began to receive a few orders from Goans in London and abroad. We donated a generous percentage of the sales to worthy charitable causes both locally and in Kenya.

Elsie’s recipes featured mainly Goa’s popular dishes that centred around pork, beef, chicken and fish. However, as interest in the book began to grow, we decided to bring out a second edition - with an added vegetarian section. This latest book proved a runaway success that led to a third printing which also sold out within a few years. Elsie’s was certainly a success story.

In addition to her cooking interests, Elsie had enrolled in pottery classes at the Sutton College of Liberal Arts. Some of her colleagues, hearing of the success of her cook book, felt that she should exhibit some of her home-made fayre at exhibitions of their “Nonsuch Craft Group”. Starting with cakes, cookies, and her very popular pickles, she later added rag dolls, hobby horses and some of her pottery to the list and began exhibiting at fairs held by other groups. With her fame spreading far and wide, she was invited to exhibit not only at Bourne Hall in Ewell, Surrey, but also at Glyn School and later at Westminster Cathedral where the late Cardinal Hume was one of the visitors to her stall.

Some of Elsie’s unique pottery creations also found pride of place
at exhibitions organised by the Arts Group of Sutton Council. When Elsie heard that the first priests from the Rendille and Gabbra tribes were being ordained in Marsabit, she made two pottery chalices which were received by the London Superior of the Consolata Missionaries and later sent to Marsabit. She also presented a similar chalice to the first West Indian priest, Fr. Howard James who was ordained in Westminster Cathedral by Cardinal Hume. We were invited to his First Mass and a large reception thereafter.

With all this success on our sides, many wondered why we had not gone into business or opened a Goan restaurant. We may well have considered such a venture, but it would involve hard work and long hours - prerequisites that we would find hard to fulfil with the onset of old age.

While all this excitement over Elsie’s book was going on, I had myself started on ‘scribbling’ notes about my working experience in Kenya. As the notes started piling up, I felt they should appear in book form as my East African memoirs, and started work on it in earnest. This was not an easy task as I had a fairly stressful full-time job at the time, and all the typing had to be done on an old typewriter, much of it in triplicate, and with the use of lots of correcting fluid in the process. But I received tremendous encouragement from family members and invaluable advice from Sir Richard Turnbull, my one time boss in the N.F.D. and later Governor of

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*Elsie presenting pottery chalices to Consolata Superiors*

*Group at the book launch of “Bwana Karani” (inset) in 1985*
Tanganyika, and High Commissioner in Aden. In due course, I was able to see my work in print; “Bwana Karani” was the title ...and the Foreward was contributed by Sir Richard Turnbull himself!

It was a proud day for me when the book was finally launched at Wandsworth Town Hall by the Cultural Attaché at the Kenya High Commission in London, Mr. Koo Ombati on 2nd November 1985. Many of my former Administration Goan colleagues from Kenya were at the launch and I was kept busy that evening autographing copies of the book. I shared my joy with my family who turned out in force to show their support as they did when I slogged at the typewriter many a late night.

I received several letters of congratulations from former colonial officials, some of whom I had served with and some total strangers too. Thanks to the marketing and publicity efforts of my brother Wilfred, I received favourable reviews in the Kenya Press and in the local Press too. Interest from former colonial officers kept growing, and many wrote to say how much they enjoyed reminiscing about their own days in Kenya.

Among the well known individuals who reviewed my book were my late friend - historian and author Cynthia Salvadori, and that renowned authority on Africana, Elspeth Huxley. Many years later, Elsie and I were to be guests of this grand old lady at her Oaksey cottage in rural Wiltshire.

Within a few years at S.G.B, I was promoted to Credit Control Supervisor of a department staffed by about ten employees. Being in a very busy credit control department of an international company, there was a lot of pressure at work; debt collection - a not so easy undertaking within the construction industry, involving court action against individuals or companies, often placing the latter in receiverships or liquidation. I found this aspect of the job very heartbreaking, and I can still recall the pleadings from customers who were sometimes on the verge of a breakdown when they found that we were unable to afford them any extended credit, which would mean the collapse of their business.

My boss, Andrew Stanway was Polish who had served in the R.A.F. during the war and was a recepient of the M.B.E. He was very strict but fair. When years later he was forced to retire due to ill health, the morale within the whole department plummeted. As a result, discipline was affected, and the orderly atmosphere that prevailed during the Stanway regime gave way to a lot of disruptive complaining. Stanway's replacement took little interest in staff relations and this made things even worse. After working with this company for near on eighteen years, I was to fall victim of their redundancy policy which came as a real shock to me and many of the senior management at the firm.

I was unemployed for many months until I got a job helping the
son of one of the Managers at my old place of work who was setting up his own firm. Tom McHugh was a young but ambitious businessman, and I spent many happy years with him even working at Vauxhall in central London under railway arches which he’d converted into an office. Tom was very grateful for all I’d done to help him in the early days. I left the firm after five years as the business was not doing well when the economy went into recession.

Meanwhile, our second son, Andrew, had left school and started a job with a man’s boutique initially in Kingston-upon-Thames and later in central London. Andrew got along well with people, and was a good salesman. Much later, and after his marriage to Pam, he changed careers and pursued a different goal (no pun intended) - soccer coaching. He seems to enjoy this activity even though it entails a lot of discipline, hard work and much travelling. He has his own website at Go4goal.com. He has also attended F.A.-sponsored courses which will help his career prospects in future.

Clyde has always been mad about cars, having literally built one from scratch; but rather than study mechanical engineering, he chose automobile engineering instead, and for the past few years has been working for a family firm in Sutton. He commutes each day from his home in rural Salfords (near Redhill, Surrey) to Sutton, but he likes his job and is well liked by his employer and customers alike.

When Josey finally finished her schooling, she enrolled at Sussex University, gaining a B. Eng in Computer Engineering Systems. It was a proud day for her and for the whole family and we all enjoyed the celebrations in Brighton that day.

Pollyanna qualified in Human Communication Science from Curtin University in Perth, and now works as a Speech Pathologist there.

Elsie and I were now empty nesters with a lot of time on our hands.
TRAVELLING ABROAD

With Pollyanna in far off Australia, we were fortunate in making three trips to Western Australia – all very enjoyable and during which we were even able to meet a couple of former colonials from Kenya – Henry Wright, an ex-Kenya District Officer who then owned a vineyard in Margaret River, and Percy Wild (ex Kenya Police and author of “Bwana Polisi”) whose hospitality we were to enjoy both at their home in Bunbury and later at their hideaway in Molloy Island – a secluded island in Western Australia which many locals haven’t visited or even heard about. Percy had come to Marsabit much after I had left the Provincial Administration. He had used my publishers to publish his own book and that’s how I was able to obtain his address and finally meet up in Australia. Small world!

Elsie and I also travelled widely within Europe and beyond. Apart from very enjoyable holidays with our French friends on the French/Swiss border, we have spent wonderful holidays in Portugal’s Algarve, many of the Greek Islands, Rome, Assisi, and the Holy Land. We treasure many happy memories from all these trips.

In addition to holidays, I was also able to take part in pilgrimages to the Marian shrine of Lourdes in France with a group of handicapped pilgrims and, more locally, to the Shrine of Our Lady of England at Walsingham in Norfolk.
THE KITCHEN

The children married, and we were blessed with a growing family of eight grandchildren (four boys and four girls). Clyde and Marguerite (from Belfast) have Matthew & Elize, Andrew and Pam have Jordan and April, Josey has Aliya and Yakira while Pollyanna and Geoff have Thomas and Henry. With the exception of Pollyanna who moved to Western Australia after marriage, all our other children and grandchildren live in England, some in Surrey while Josey and her daughters live in Sussex.

It was not long before the kitchen became a hive of activity with our children and grandchildren enjoying the bread-making sessions Elsie used to organise especially for them. The grandchildren loved these sessions during which we also made cakes and cookies of various sorts.

While Elsie was busy making her pickles, samosas and other savoury fare, I thought I would start some jam and relish making. My marmalades were a great success and were always included in the homemade items we took to the Nonsuch Craft Fayre. Many of these homemade goodies made ideal presents at Christmas and other times.
VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Being deeply involved in the Church, I should mention that I’ve always volunteered my services to the church wherever I’ve been. Here in Sutton, we had no proper church in our vicinity and for some years, we used to hire the Anglican Hall for Sunday Mass. Thereafter, seeing our neighbouring parish had already bought a plot near Sutton Green where our future church would be built, we organised several fund-raising drives. To start with, we managed to build a fairly large Hall where we used to have Mass on Sundays; we would also let out the hall to private individuals for weddings and other social occasions. I was appointed Secretary of the Holy Family Hall Committee and served on it for several years. The Ismailis were our biggest customers in that they hired the hall every Friday for their prayer meetings and paid us a handsome rent for many years. As our funds grew, we were able to obtain a large overdraft from the Bank and finally built our own Church which we named “Holy Family Parish”. In the early 1980’s I was commissioned as Special Minister of the Eucharist at a ceremony at the Carmelite monastery at Aylesford in Kent. I have now been a Special Minister for over 30 years and a Reader for as many years.

I have also been a member of the Knights of St. Columba for nearly 30 years. I worked the “night watch” every Saturday night in winter when we would provide sandwiches and warm tea/soup to the homeless in Central London around the Strand/Charing Cross areas, and later in Croydon.

Apart from my duties in the Church, much after my retirement, I decided to do some voluntary work and joined the international Catholic Charity, Aid to the Church in Need at their Headquarters in Sutton. Our U.K. National Director is Neville Kyrke-Smith, a former Anglican clergyman who converted to Catholicism. 

Aid to the Church in Need staff and volunteers.
have enjoyed working with them for over 20 years now and learnt a lot about their work at home and abroad and how the charity helps many persecuted Christians the world over. We are continuing the good work started by our Founder, Fr. Werenfried van Straaten, a Dutch Norbertine priest who helped many displaced people during World War II. I was also privileged to meet him and many foreign Prelates during their visits to our offices.

As the people of Northern Kenya are very dear to my heart, I have, on two occasions made appeals in our local parish. These collective appeals brought in some £4000 which I was able to send to the Bishop of Marsabit to help many of the drought-stricken people of the North.

I made a similar appeal to help an Ethiopian priest friend, Fr. Melaku Tafesse who, while studying in London, was a great help to us following the sudden death of our former Parish Priest, Fr. Peter Arnold. This appeal raised well over £2000 to help Fr. Melaku when he returned to his native Ethiopia.

I am still actively involved with the Church and I find my volunteer work spiritually rewarding.
WINEMAKING

If volunteer work has been a spiritual experience, I decided to pursue another hobby that involved spirit of a different kind - winemaking.

It all started while I was still in full time employment. Our friend, Mr. Little, had demonstrated to me his hobby of home winemaking, and I decided to have a go at it. Several years after we’d moved to Sutton, I had ordered some grape vines which had been developed especially for the English climate and for growing outdoors. The vines we’d planted were now yielding fruit; these were not desert grapes but rather sour, and ideal for wine making. We had quite a good harvest each year and made quite a lot of wine, even wine vinegar. It gave us great joy when, at our Silver Wedding celebrations, the wine used at the Mass came from our own homemade stock.

Encouraged by the success of the wine, Elsie and I continued to experiment with elderflower and elderberry wines - the latter often referred to as an Englishman’s port. Many of our friends could not believe that it was elderberry wine as it had all the richness and flavour of port. Elderflower wine, a white wine, tasted more like a sauterne. There was no limit to our wine making, and among the other wines we made were, clove and orange, rhubarb (which turned out like a Rose), parsnip, plum and even a sake rice wine.
OUR VOICES ON CASSETTE

Whenever we met at our local pubs, my cousin Jock and I always talked about recording on tape, some of the Konkani songs he himself had composed, and which were later produced as HMV records in India in the late 40’s.

Jock’s health had suffered in recent years and his sons, Denzyl and Derrick, were keen that the recording should not be unduly delayed. We put together a group of musicians comprising Alfred Figueiredo and Denzyl on guitar, with Derrick on keyboard. On vocals were Sibilia Pinto, Jock himself, and me. And to provide the quintessential sound of Goan music was the popular Adolf Saldanha on violin.

After a few rehearsals held at Jock’s Wimbledon home, we were able to compile some of his songs on a cassette with the Konkani title *Suk ani Duk* (Joy and Sorrow) shortly before Jock passed away.

The songs have varied themes, ranging from a touch of satire to the poignant ones like the one about the death of my parents at sea which left me and my brothers orphans during World War II, or Jock’s fond farewell to Goa. Other songs include the evils of the caste system, a tribute to our granny and also one where he praises the services rendered by our brave Goan *tarvoti* (seamen).

Jock concludes the introductory leaflet to this cassette in these words:

“I dedicate this small garland of my songs to the *Teatrists* (actors and actresses) who regaled the common people with their songs in Konkani, to our priests, who delivered eloquent sermons in the cathedrals, churches and chapels of Goa and elsewhere – and last but not least, to our common village folks who kept the sweet sounding mother tongue alive and vibrant down the centuries.”
THE ENGLISH SHAMBA

Not content with our assorted hobbies and my voluntary work, Elsie and I decided to venture into growing vegetables. We took on an allotment some ten years ago when we rented a small plot from our local Council (Allotments are pieces of Council land that were leased to Londoners during WWII to encourage them to grow their own vegetables). As pensioners, we pay a nominal annual rent, which includes free water.

We grow a variety of vegetables – runner beans, French beans, butternut squash, onions, garlic, curly kale, Swiss chard, spinach, sweet corn, marrows etc, and also soft fruit like strawberries, raspberries and gooseberries too. We also have a cherry tree. I must admit that we are not as ‘professional’ as some of the other allotment holders, but there is a great camaraderie among all plot holders and a readiness to help. We also

Veggies from our allotment.

Allotment Open Day ... on my 84th Birthday.
organise Open Days when we sell some of our produce and also convert some into jams and chutneys. Proceeds from such sales go to our allotment funds to help towards the upkeep and maintenance of the small shop we have on the premises. Many of the able-bodied allotment holders are always there to offer help when needed.

Many years later, hearing of my success at marmalade and jam-making, I was invited to join the Nonsuch Craft Group and was happy to find that some of my marmalades found their way to Japan! Elsie and I continued to exhibit at various venues in Surrey and Wimbledon, Bourne Hall, Glyn School at Ewell, our parish fairs, and at Goan Association Festivals.

I often feel that our grandchildren have kept us feeling young and active. They have enjoyed helping out in our allotment during their holidays and never tire of the baking sessions that Elsie often has at home, more in an effort to get them interested. It is heartening to have to record that through Elsie’s influence the children and grandchildren have developed their own skills at cooking and can comfortably cope on their own wherever they are.

The great thing about allotments is that it gets us out in all seasons; it is also an occasion to meet fellow plot holders, learn from each other and enjoy the outdoors.
THE KENYA ADMINISTRATION CLUB
IN THE U.K.

The Kenya Administration Club was founded in the year of Kenya’s independence in 1963. Although the Club was originally launched in Kenya, it was later transferred to England. Its purpose was “to enable officers to keep in touch with one another, and to have an annual get-together of some sort.

Although the initial announcement clearly stated, “All past members of the Kenya Administration Service are eligible”, members of this elite club were all former European members of the Kenya Administration, former Governors, Ambassadors and the like. It appears that no one had ever thought of inviting the loyal and trustworthy former Goan members of the Administration to join.

Even after mention of my memoirs was made in their annual newsletter, and I’d asked for copies of such letters to be sent to me, I was to receive this reply from the then Secretary:

“I am sure you will realise that it would not be possible to create a precedent by opening membership of the club to people who are not so entitled under the constitution.”

It was not until late 2001, when my good friend and former Kenya D.C., the late Terence Gavaghan raised this matter with the Secretary, Peter Fullerton. To cut a long story short, I was invited to the annual luncheon at Henley-on-Thames in Oxford in August 2002 and Elsie and I attended as guests of Terry & Nicole Gavaghan. In his letter inviting me, Peter Fullerton wrote:

“Formal speeches have never been in the style of our annual Club reunions, but on this occasion, I am sure Frank Lloyd will find appro-
appropriate words to express what we all feel about the contribution which you and your colleagues made to the service in Kenya. There is no one more suitable than yourself to respond on this occasion, and we all very much hope that you will feel able to do that on behalf of your colleagues in the service.”

In the absence of Sir Frank Lloyd, the President, who was unable to attend due to ill health, Sir John Johnson, former British High Commissioner in Kenya (who had been a D.O. there himself), welcomed me, and another Goan colleague, the late Abe Almeida, and spoke highly of the contribution the Goan community had made in Kenya, more particularly the Provincial Administration.

My reply to his welcoming speech follows. I should add that I received many favourable comments from those present, one former Administrative officer even remarking, “You said what needed to be said.”

I have enjoyed being a member of the club for many years now and Elsie and I have attended the annual lunches in Henley, and later, as our numbers dwindled, at a pub at Sandford-upon-Thames, also in Oxford.

**Text of my speech in response to a speech by Sir John Johnson, former British High Commissioner in Kenya.**

Sir John, Ma Bibi na Ma Bwana (Ladies & Gentlemen in Swahili)

Just in case Swahili scholars among you are expecting me to continue in this fashion, I’m afraid the answer is “Siwezi kuendelea Bwana” (I’m unable to continue, Sir!)

Many months ago, Terence Gavaghan insisted that I keep this date free, and attend as his and Nicole’s guests unless of course, we had received a prior invitation from Buckingham Palace. Since the latter hasn’t materialised, Elsie and I are delighted to join you all at this lovely setting today – thanks to Terry.

My thanks also to Peter Fullerton who first invited me to join this elitist club. As my cheque hasn’t been returned with those words every District Cashier dreaded, "refer to drawer”, I assume I am a member now. Why we, former members of the Administration were
excluded from membership for nearly 30 years is something I find difficult to understand. You obviously have your reasons, but with so few of us in the U.K., I can assure you, you wouldn’t have been swamped, nor would there have been any danger of a takeover bid.

I must thank Sir John for his generous remarks regarding the Goan contribution in the Provincial Administration. Unfortunately, our contribution in the Civil Service, more particularly the Provincial Administration, although verbally acknowledged in speeches by former Governors, senior officials and even politicians, has only recently, save with a few exceptions, merited a mention in some of the published works. I make no apology for highlighting the Goan contribution, especially since the majority of posts in the Provincial Administration (particularly those of Cashier), were filled almost exclusively by Goans. Even job advertisements in those days asked for Goan staff, much to the annoyance of the other Asian communities as can be seen from the comments made by that distinguished Queens Counsel, J.S. Mangat. In telling how Goans in particular, dominated the Provincial Administration, he cites Sir Charles Eliot, who, in an official report in 1901, had this to say:

“The District Officers were usually assisted by a Goan or more rarely, European clerk.

“In the Coast towns, there is also a Customs official, usually a Goan. Even the German officials envied the British Administration for their Goan staff who, they observed, have enough experience to avoid incurring the distrust which so many of our members inspire”.

Mangat further states that during the period 1920-21, the role of the subordinate Asian employees in the Administration increased because of their competitiveness and lack of local candidates. In 1904 for example, almost all clerical posts in the Provincial Administration were filled by Goans. To further emphasise this point, he quotes from the D.C. Malindi’s report thus:

“As one of the two Administrative Officers is more frequently on safari, the remaining one finds himself so busy that he must rely, to a very large extent on his clerks. It speaks well therefore for the reputation and standing of our staff, that after 14 years experience of district work in five Provinces, I have never known one’s confidence in its members to be misplaced or have had any reason to regret the
extent to which one trusted them.”

“Needless to say”, Mangat adds, “all the names mentioned by the D.C. are Goan (Fernandes, Ferreira, Braganca and Menezes)” ...must have forgotten the D’Souzas!

I wonder what Mangat’s reaction was, when Jomo Kenyatta felt the need to inject some Goan blood into his first cabinet, by appointing as his right hand man, none other than Joseph Zuzarte, son of a Goan District Clerk, Peter Zuzarte and a Masai mother. I understand Peter Zuzarte worked under Sir Geoffrey Archer when the latter was a D.O. at Baringo around 1897. Conforming to the political correctness of the day, Joseph Zuzarte chose to go as Joseph Murumbi – serving in Kenyatta’s first cabinet as Minister of State in the Prime Minister’s office, latterly Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and even, for a while, Vice-President of Kenya. Murumbi never forgot his Goan roots.

Mind you, not everyone was happy with the Goan involvement in Government service. I understand that when Winston Churchill visited Kenya in his capacity as Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, a delegation of White settlers protested against the employment of Goans in the Administration. Not much notice appears to have been taken of their protests, but in 1934, the Mayor/Wade Commission was instructed to look into the possibility of employing European clerks, and this, briefly, is what they had to say: “We have given consideration as to whether increased economy and efficiency could be attained by the more general employment of European clerks, and our opinion is in the negative. We have been favourably impressed by the dedication with which the majority of Goan clerks do the work required of them, and also of the conspicuous loyalty and willingness to work overtime, and their fixed determination to finish, at all costs, the work that has to be done.

“It would be out of the question to employ, in District offices, European clerks, other than those of the highest integrity and proven ability, and in any case, the salaries that they would demand, would be much higher than those paid to the Goans.”

So, you got us on the cheap!

And talking of the long hours we often worked, (without overtime of course), Francis da Lima, who many of you may remember, and
Life in England

who was more than a P.A. to Sir Gerald Reece and his successors at Isiolo, had this to say in a recent letter to me from his home in Goa: “When there was real pressure of work, he (Sir Gerald) would come to the office just as I was about to leave, carrying a hurricane lamp and sandwiches. I was expected to work late into the evening until all the work was completed, and then sent home under an armed Dubas (Tribal Police) escort as Isiolo abounded in wild game in those days”.

So much for our loyalty and dedication, and while some of us may still harbour memories of the injustices within the service, today is not a day for “If only’s”. I am sure we could all look back and wish things were done differently. We may have a few regrets, but speaking personally, may I say how proud I feel to have been a member of the Provincial Administration. We were privileged to work under men of quality and distinction, from some of whom we learnt much, and to whom, I hope we were also able to leave behind memories of the valuable Goan contribution towards the development of the Kenya Nation.”
PHOTO ALBUM - OUR ALLOTMENT

Our allotment produce, including a giant pumpkin being admired by Caroline Reece. Yakira (bottom) helps dig up some spuds.
PHOTO ALBUM - OUR FRIENDS

Elsie with Mons. Cusin, Marie-Christine and Paul.

Elsie and me with the Guerineau family at their Neydens home in France.

Margaret Sutherland (left), former secretary of D.C. Kitale.
PHOTO ALBUM - OUR FRIENDS

John Rendall and Juanita Carberry (above left & right),

With Luka Galgallo (left), first Boran Provincial Commissioner, Coastal Province, Kenya.

Below, me with Terence Gavaghan, Fr. Guyo Malley, and author historian Fr. Paul Tablino of Marsabit.
PHOTO ALBUM - OUR FRIENDS

Me with author Cynthia Salvadori (above), American Prof. Dr. Pascal Imperato and Terry Gavaghan (below).

Tony Fernandes (left) introduces me to Mel D’Souza (right) at the Shakespeare Pub near Victoria Station, London.
PHOTO ALBUM - OUR FRIENDS

Dr. David Webster, son of Canon Eric Webster at our home in Surrey, and a letter (below) written by Canon Webster on our departure from Marsabit.

BIBLE CHURCHMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Maraabit, N.P. KENYA

17/12/85,

Dear Mr. MacNeil,

Mrs. Tilkin thinks you are leaving today, though I had thought you had sold the 19th.

I had hoped to see you before you go, but I make no promise before you return. If I don’t manage to see you before you go, please accept my good wishes for the future and my very sincere thanks for all your help and helpfulness.

I have much appreciated your continued courtesy at all times & in all weathers! You’ve never had your “off” days, so I can honestly say that I have never met anyone holding the same office with whom it has been a greater pleasure to deal with. Many thanks.

In regards to your wife - a very happy Christmas.

Your very sincerely,

Eric Webster.
Life in England

PHOTO ALBUM - FAMILY

Lord Tope of Sutton, the Mayor of Sutton and their wives at the reception that we were invited to when we celebrated our Diamond wedding anniversary.

The Maciel clan
Whereas in Kenya we were lucky to be given free sea passages to Goa or Bombay, things were quite different here in the U.K. There were none of those generous concessions of long and local leave. One got an annual holiday in summer which was normally of two or three week’s duration.

After experiencing some of the English winters, and coming from a tropical country, I had often thought of visiting my motherland, Goa. Unfortunately, following my grandmother’s death, the only person living in our ancestral home in Saloi (Salvador-do-Mundo) was an African lady, Marie who my Uncle Bernard from Lourenco Marques had adopted and brought to Goa many years earlier. Marie
was now getting on in years and was living on her own. I undertook to support her as she had no other means of livelihood after Saloi Mãe’s death. Relatives who visited Goa occasionally would no doubt give her some pocket money but I felt I had a duty to look after her especially after all the love and care she had given us during our younger days.

She was very good at cooking some of our traditional dishes having learnt most of her craft from my grandmother. Because of her expertise at cooking, she was in great demand especially during village feasts and other social occasions. She was famous for her Goa sausages. I was happy that she could earn some extra money in this way to supplement the monthly stipend she received from me.

The urge to holiday in Goa was always there, but I never gave it a serious thought until one day when a co-villager, Gaspar Viegas, a retired Bank Manager from Kenya who now lives in Kent, suggested that I accompany him on his holiday. Because our own ancestral home had fallen into disrepair, he suggested that I stay with him. He used to make annual trips to Goa and had modernised and maintained his house extensively and even appointed a local caretaker to supervise the annual maintenance.

It was in March 2006 that we left Gatwick airport on a charter flight to Goa. The plane was fully booked with sun seekers, mainly English and Goans. The scene on arrival the next morning at Dambolim airport was chaotic to say the least. Because of some discomfort from an earlier operation, I was offered a wheelchair and whisked through Customs and Immigration, thus avoided the long queuing in the hot tropical sun. Others were not so lucky. Our village taxi driver, Ramdas drove us home along tarmac roads which seemed crowded with a sea of humanity of all ages. Far too many advertising hoardings along the route had ruined some of the former beauty of this area. We made a brief stop at Britona, a few miles out of Panjim, the capital. Here our driver bought some fresh fish which we would soon be enjoying at the lunch table. Seeing the countryside
Goa Re-visited

and the old familiar sites took me back to my childhood days.

As our taxi stopped at Gaspar’s residence, neighbours from the village came out to greet us warmly, Marie among them.

How refreshing it was to be on home ground again. I could smell the red earth and feel the summer heat of Goa. All I needed now was a cool shower with water drawn from a well in the back yard. A cold beer and fish curry and rice were next on the agenda. How I enjoyed that Goa thick-grain rice which we ate regularly during our school days!

My village had not changed, at least not the ward Gangoz in which we lived. Things were still very much the same. The fisher woman called each morning with fresh fish, and the baker would call twice daily, this time on a bicycle and sounding his horn regularly to remind folks to collect their daily bread. I enjoyed tasting the old toddy-flavoured bread, and everything tasted so different here. No frozen food for a change.

As Elsie had asked that I try and visit a potter, I made this my next priority. Fortunately, a relative obliged and we both set off on his motorbike in search of a Goan potter. We were lucky to find John Paul Vales who was only too happy to show me around his workshop and humble abode.
John Paul, the potter and his family.

John Paul lives in a modest house with his family, and had set aside a small area around the house which he used for making and firing his pots the traditional way. No electric or gas kilns but simple wood and straw-fired homemade kilns which are very efficient indeed. I was very impressed with what I saw and pleased that this humble individual had given me so much of his time. I was pleased to hear that he does have visitors from overseas coming to see his pottery. I could just imagine how well his talents would have been recognised in the West and how well he would have done. But, with hindsight, I think that he had chosen the better and simpler path. He seemed very happy and content with the little he was able to earn from the sale of his pots.

On the return trip home, I was lucky to find a wayside Taverna which sold cold beer – a drink I’d been longing for after the tropical heat and sweat. While I sat there sipping my beer, in walked an elderly Goan who ordered his usual
Goa Re-visited

- a tot of *feni*. I soon struck up a conversation with him in Konkani and discovered that this man (whose name I can’t recall), was quite an artist. Whether his work was not appreciated locally or whatever the reason, he seemed very downcast and lost. I felt sorry for him and bought him a drink and asked whether he could sing something in Konkani. He readily agreed when I suggested ”Adeus korso velu paulo” (Time to say goodbye), and we both sang that melancholy song with a feeling better experienced than expressed. I was sorry to leave this kind soul, but we parted with a hug and I wished him well.

Next on my programme was a visit to my dear friend, the well known author and founder of GOA TODAY, Lambert Mascarenhas and his wife Jolly, at their lovely home in Dona Paula. It was nice seeing Lambert mentally active and anxious to know about friends in the U.K. We returned home having spent some time with Lambert and Jolly and enjoyed their hospitality.

No visit to Goa is complete without visiting Old Goa, Pilar and some other landmarks like the healing Springs at Pomburpa, not far from our home in Saloi. I remember the days when as a young boy, I used to walk to this Spring with my brothers. The government have done a lot to improve the site and amenities here. We managed to cram all this in the short space of two weeks, including a pleasant meeting with Archbishop Filipe Neri Ferrão at his hilltop residence at Altinho in Panjim. He was kind enough to spend quite some time with my friend and myself, even though this was one of the busiest time for him and the clergy - Holy Week.
Our eldest son Clyde and his family were also holidaying in Goa about the same time, but were staying in a hotel in Calangute in North Goa. Calangute is crowded these days and not the peaceful seaside resort my grandmother and others would come to each summer for their salt baths. I was able to tell Clyde and our grandchildren, Matthew & Elize how we, as kids, used to pass our time in Saloi where everything seemed so quiet and peaceful... fishing, fruit picking and the like. Hardly any cars in those days, and no radios or telephones. What a change it is today; a regular bus service between Aldona, Panjim or Mapuca, and scores of private cars and motor scooters which break the silence of what was once a quiet area of our village.

Whenever in Goa, I always like visiting Mapuça market and talking to the various vendors in Konkani. Because of my fair complexion, some would mistake me for a foreigner and try to address me in English (with the influx of Western tourists, most of the market vendors and even fish mongers are able to speak some English). There was always a look of surprise when I responded in Konkani. I was overwhelmed with the amount of fresh produce on display - fresh vegetables and fruit, all at prices that seemed reasonable to visitors.

With Matthew and Elize in our Saloi ‘bhat’.
from abroad. Even prices at the Panjim fish market seemed quite reasonable to me, but not so to most locals with a limited income and whose staple diet is fish curry and rice. I used to enjoy bargaining with the fisher women in Konkani.

In no time, our two weeks were up and it was time to return from one hot summer in Goa to another summer in England.

I had enjoyed my long overdue trip to Goa so much that I was determined to go back again, and this I was able to do in 2010.

This second visit was meant to be a real relaxing holiday – no visiting people and if possible, not visiting too many places too. This is easier said than done.

On both our trips, my friend Gaspar had employed a local woman (Annie) as a cook. She used to turn out the most mouth-watering dishes within a very short time. There were no gadgets like mixers and the like to facilitate her work, but she had the assistance of Agnes, Gaspar’s poskem (adopted lady) who helped in the kitchen with grinding the masala, peeling, washing up, drawing water from the nearby well etc. They seemed to get on very well together.
On this trip, I found Marie had aged quite a lot since my last trip and was certainly not looking well. On one or two occasions, I had to call the village doctor to check her and attend to her ailment. His standard treatment was to give her an injection and prescribe some medication which we had to obtain from Panjim. Even doctors in rural Saloi know how to increase their fees/charges when they know one has come from abroad! The locals were surprised at what he had charged me (not a lot by my reckoning though).

While we had planned not to go visiting, I felt I had to pay my respects to Lambert and Jolly. This I promptly did and am sure Lambert was pleased that I had taken the trouble to visit.

While in England, I had heard some tourists talk about Spice Farms in Goa. I’d never visited one and was keen to do so. Our driver, Ramdas knew of this farm and on an arranged date drove us to the Sahakari Spice Farm in Ponda. This is a well-managed 130 acre Farm of which 60 acres is used purely for growing some of the spices used in everyday Goan/Indian cooking like, cinnamon, nutmeg, pepper, cardamom, and many medicinal plants too. I was very impressed with all that we saw, and the tour guide was most helpful. This is a farm very popular with tourists who have time on their hands. It is well worth the modest entrance fee as one is rewarded with a
delicious Goan-style lunch at the end of the tour.

I was also keen to sample a Goan restaurant, and one that was recommended was “The Upper House” in Panjim. We had a 3-man group entertain us while we dined and seeing they were all Goans I asked them to play one of my favourite Swahili songs, Malaika, which they obliged and invited me to sing. I thoroughly enjoyed the evening and the courteous service.

Once again, time had caught up with us and it was time to head for home; we left Saloi early that December morning and before we could have our luggage checked, we were informed that our flight would be delayed because of a heavy snow storm in England which had closed Gatwick and other major airports. I was not disappointed when they told us that we would be put up in a 4-star hotel – the Dona Sylvia Beach Resort at Cavelossim in South Goa. It was a luxurious hotel and we were warmly welcomed by the Goan receptionists and shown to our room.

While enjoying dinner at the open air restaurant which caters for a variety of tastes, I noticed that the hotel had laid on some entertainment for the tourists and guests who, like us, had arrived that day. I couldn’t resist walking up to the group leader who turned out to be none other than the famous Goan musician, Emiliano da Cruz. This man is a legend and plays the violin and mandolin with such ease. At his invitation, I was also able to entertain the assembled tourists to
many of my old favourites like Marie Elena, Malaika, Sugar Bush and many others. Emiliano said they would be playing at the different areas of the resort until midnight and wanted me to join in, but seeing we were due to be driven to the airport early the following morning, I politely declined but thanked him and his group for keeping us entertained that night.

We were up early the following morning and taken to the airport ready for our flight home. The airport at Gatwick was still snowbound but there was a chance that we would be allowed to land, and land we did in the cold of an English December night.

I was pleased to be back but was missing the glorious sunshine and the many happy faces I’d left behind in my native, GOA.

This will probably be my last trip to Goa - a Goa that has changed so much from my childhood days. While my own village remains relatively unspoilt, many areas have been converted into virtual concrete jungles. Hotels are springing up along the coastal belt like mushrooms. I am not sure that all this uncontrolled tourism is good for the country, the environment or even for the ordinary citizens of Goa. There has also been a great influx of people from the other Indian states and this is certainly putting a strain on the resources and infrastructure.

While there have no doubt been many improvements since Goa was absorbed into the Indian Union, for those of my vintage, the leisurely days of our childhood which are etched in our minds are no more.

By coming back as a *Mzee* to the land where I grew up as a *Mtoto*, it felt like I had come full circle. Today I can honestly say that, despite a few ups and downs in our lives, I’ve enjoyed every minute of my 80-plus years.

The years have been good to me, and for this, I thank the Good Lord, my dear wife, Elsie, our children, grandchildren and the many friends I’ve made through life’s long journey. They have all, in their own ways, contributed to making my safari through life, from *Mtoto* to *Mzee*, a wonderful and happy experience.

The End
Goa Re-visited

PHOTO ALBUM - GOA REVISITED

Pomburpa Springs (left).

Mark (below) takes me on his scooter to the potter’s place, and our village driver, Ramdas (bottom) alongside his Maruti ‘tourist taxi’
This book about the Maciels would not be complete without mention of those beloved members of our family who are no longer with us. I have perpetuated their memory in the following poems and story:

**FAREWELL TO OUR DARLING CONRAD**

October 10th (1956) was a day of joy  
For to us was born our second boy:  
Of angelic beauty, but frail physique  
Yet destined to live in the world so bleak.

For months past birth we ne'er knew  
That his days with us would be so few  
Until one day our hearts were torn  
When his troubles to us a specialist made known

A congenital heart is what he had  
The thought of which could drive one mad  
But bravely and patiently he struggled through  
Hoping that someday he'd be fit anew.

Despite his health he travelled afar  
By plane and truck and motor car:  
Oft a spell in hospital he spent  
Striving hard for life under an oxygen tent.

From the N.F.D. to Kisii with us he came  
Not knowing that here he'd always remain  
The weather didn't suit, but he still ensured  
That Mum and Dad and Clyde kept cheered.

A sad day 'twas when on January 3rd (1958)  
For the last time his sweet voice we heard  
He breathed his last – oh, so suddenly!  
For you darling Conrad, we'll mourn unceasingly.
TRIBUTE TO MY DAD

My mother was snatched at too early an age
My father soon followed that same old stage,
And left us three brothers quite helpless alone
To bear the yoke that they had borne.

My mother’s death took place at home
Where all of us did weep and mourn;
But my father’s was a death at sea,
It tore our hearts and orphaned three!

My Dad with step-mum and children three,
Was sailing to Africa full of glee:
He smingly said, “I’ll come back soon”,
But we knew not death would call so soon.

So sudden God’s summons, so quick the deep sea
Did swallow them all - O Destiny!
No time to say farewell, no time to say “wait”,
Death’s cold gatekeeper had opened the gate.

And now that he’s gone we can murmur not
But trust in God for that’s our lot,
And trusting in Him who reigns on high
We’ll patiently wait till the end draws nigh.

Then Daddy and Mummy soon shall we meet
When death has silenced our last heart beat,
Together then we’ll live forever and ever,
In He’ven so beautiful, we shall part - NO NEVER
My two brothers

Joseph & Wilfred

Being orphaned at a young age, my brothers and I developed a very close attachment that resulted in our having a great admiration and mutual respect for each others' achievements in our adult years. It is therefore fitting that in this story of my own life’s safari, I should tell you about my two brothers.

My elder brother, Joseph was born in Kenya on 30th March 1927, and completed his secondary education from the Jesuit-run St. Paul’s High School in Belgaum. At school, Joseph was very studious and took part in many of the debates and plays that the school organised. He had a powerful singing voice and was a great debater.

Our attachment to each other became even stronger after the tragic death of my Dad and our step-family during World War II when their ship was sunk by a Japanese submarine in the Indian Ocean. This is when Joseph had to shoulder a lot of added responsibility being the eldest of the three brothers.

After matriculation, he took up a job in Bombay in order to sup-
In Memoriam

port Wilfy and me who were still in school. When I graduated from high school and found employment in Kenya, Joseph was able to pursue his cherished dream of becoming a priest. He quit his job and joined the Society of Jesus Seminary in Bombay. He was ordained priest in Poona in 1960.

His superiors, seeing that he was cut out for pastoral ministry, sent him to the U.K. for pastoral training. On his return, he was appointed Parish Priest at St. Anne’s Church in Mazagon, then Rector and Parish Priest of St. Peter’s in Bandra. He was known for his preaching both in English and Konkani and much sought after to preach in many churches and at retreats.

Even when in England, he left his mark as a preacher, and our late Parish Priest, Fr. Michael Byrne never failed to remind me of “those down-to-earth sermons of your brother we all loved”.

Joseph was a widely read man who kept in touch with the latest trends in the Church and in the Society of Jesus to which he belonged. In the words of his Superiors, he “had his ear to the ground” and was able to size people up pretty well. There was a no-nonsense and matter-of-fact approach about him. He was very loyal to the church, and yet he combined this with a measure of criticism in some of his writings in the Bombay priests’ informal publication, “Sharing” on whose editorial board he served for several years.

Sadly, ill health took its toll and, after much suffering, the end finally came on June 5th 2005. It was a sad blow for me and my family more so since I could not be at his requiem. I had, however, visited him in the Jesuit Nursing Home in Bombay, the previous year.

Many tributes were paid to him at the funeral Mass in St. Peter’s Bandra, and I’d like to quote a short extract from a poem composed on his death by our 9-year old granddaughter, Yakira:

“Please help me not to cry, most of all his brother, Mervyn (my grandpa), as Mervyn is the only one left of his family. Make him smile and know that Joseph is at rest and with his nephew, Conrad, Mum, Dad and brother Wilfy.”
WILFRED (Wilfy)

Wilfy was the youngest of us three and was born in Nairobi on 7th April, 1932.

Our Mum’s death, when he was only three years old, and later, our Dad’s death at sea, must have scarred Wilfy for life. Besides, the fact that Joseph and I were left in India initially while he accompanied my Dad and step-mother to Kenya must have also had an adverse effect on him.

It is only when he joined us in Belgaum and later when he and I were together at school in Goa that we really bonded together. Wilfy was a kind and loving individual who always put others before himself.

Wilfred saw early schooling at Dr. Ribeiro's Goan School in Nairobi and continued his education at St. Paul's High School in Begaum, St. Thomas High School in Aldona, and finally at St. Xavier's High School in Bombay.

After completing his secondary education from St. Xavier’s High School, Wilfred worked for a short while in Bombay before proceeding to England where he completed his education, initially pursuing a Bsc (Econ) degree and latterly at the London School of Printing and Graphic Arts, doing graphic design, marketing and advertising. There were also brief educational interludes at Lincoln College, Oxford and Kings College, London.

When in London, Wilfred found the time to serve daily Mass of Fr. Walter Meyjes who also happened to be an actor, and whose influence was to later result in Wilfred being given a part in plays at Westminster Cathedral, the Scala Theatre, the Royal Albert Hall and Wembley Stadium.

Upon returning to India, his qualifications were soon to land him a senior executive post with the local Benson Advertising company (BOMASS). Wilfred was a gifted writer, and while at BOMASS, he wrote articles for Indian magazines and newspapers, and sometimes for overseas publications in Hong Kong, Kenya and even England.
His interest in journalism and African Affairs saw him organise the successful lecture tour of India by the late Trade Unionist, Tom Mboya who went on to become Minister of Economic Planning and Development in the Kenyatta government. Wilfred was also one of the first group of journalists to interview Jomo Kenyatta at the historic Maralal Press Conference held upon the release of Jomo Kenyatta from detention.

On returning to Kenya in 1962, Wilfy worked initially for Ogilvy & Mather, later joining East African Airways as Marketing & Advertising Manager where he was very popular.

Wilfy was a man of great faith and it was his faith that characterised his whole life. He was well known among the church hierarchy in Nairobi and played an important role when Pope John Paul II visited Kenya for the Eucharistic Congress. He was privileged to meet this great Pontiff and also Mother Teresa during her Kenya tour.

The lure of marketing found Wilfy appointed as Marketing Executive of the Serena Hotels and Lodges, an appointment that saw him rub shoulders with the rich and famous from many walks of life. But Wilfy was not a man out for pomp and glory; he loved the ordinary man in the street.

Sadly, in later years, when ill-health forced him out of gainful employment, he had to take refuge in the Home of the Little Sisters of the Poor. Wilfred never married, and when his health took a turn for the worse, there were no members of his immediate family in
Kenya to care for him.

His untimely death, from a road accident in July 1994 was a huge blow to me. My only comfort was being able to fly out to Nairobi for his funeral - a sentimental and painful journey which ended with his well-attended requiem at the Holy Family Basilica in Nairobi. There to pay their last respects were many members of the clergy, the Press Association and friends from every walk of life and every race including a large contingent from the Nyumba ya Wazee (Home of the Aged) run by the Little Sisters of the Poor.

There were no earthly possessions Wilfred could boast of as is evident from these few extracts from his 'After I fade away hand-written WILL':

“Disbursements: Clothes and shoes - to the Little Sisters of the Poor; Books, magazines etc. - to Library Hekuma College; Bank Balance - Kshs. 1128/- to Mother Teresa's Sisters, Huruma; Typewriter & Briefcase - to Little Sisters of the Poor; Personal papers/photo albums - to my brother, Mervyn”

The veteran Nairobi journalist, Hilary Ng’weno, in a written tribute to Wilfred, had these concluding remarks:

“To remember Wilfred Maciel is to remember a survivor, for Wilfred does indeed survive, not only in the deeper sense given to that word by his Christian faith, but to the more immediate sense of providing a model for others to emulate - one of simplicity in the presence of pomp and glory; fortitude in the face of adversity, and perpetual faith in humanity despite seemingly overwhelming evidence that such faith is largely undeserved.”
PHOTO ALBUM
Wilfred (Wilfy)

Wilfred at the Maralal Press Conference (above) when Jomo Kenyatta was released from detention.

Wilfred with Nairobi Mayor Reggie Alexander (left), and Grand Duchess Charlotte of Luxemburg (below).
Bwana Karani, the book about my service in the Provincial Administration of Kenya during the colonial era is not only a documentary of a bygone way of life in the wild remoter regions of the country, but a valuable resume of the Goan worker and our ethic that was so eloquently encapsulated by Sir Richard Turnbull in his Foreword, and endorsed in the following letters and comments from readers:

**Excerpt from the Foreword by Sir Richard Turnbull:**

This is a book that is going to appeal to a wide range of readers. First, there will be those other 'Mabwana Karani' Mervyn Maciel's fellow-District Clerks and Cashiers, who saw service in the Turkana and Northern Frontier Districts, or in any of the smaller stations of up-country Kenya. With them will be the many relatives and collaterals broadly scattered from Bombay to Birmingham; for the Goan people are a closely-knit community and with their long tradition of clerical service are to be found not only in the courts, offices and counting-houses of Goa and India, and a score of places in East Africa, but in this country as well; and, indeed, in any place where loyalty, industry and scrupulous dependability are properly valued.

*Sir Richard Turnbull, GCMG,*

*British Colonial Governor of Tanganyika (1958 – 1961)*

Sir Richard Turnbull also wrote: “Congratulations on the finished product. I had the pleasure of seeing in fair print, the pages over which you have been working with such patience and determination. It is a volume which you can be justifiably proud of. I too am proud to have been associated with the work and cemented such a valuable friendship.”
• I am so glad my two Cultural Attaches represented me well at the book launch which sadly I could not attend. I have had the opportunity of browsing through your book and find it most fascinating.

*Benjamin Kipkulei, Kenya High Commissioner in London.*

• I enjoyed your book immensely. It certainly fills an important gap in the bibliography of Kenya, and I hope it will be regarded as a major achievement it deserves to be.

*Christopher Denton, Private Secretary to the Governor of Kenya.*

• Your book, I am sure, has given a wider pleasure than even you imagined, and I hope that will give you deep satisfaction. I enjoyed it so much and am now ordering copies for my grandchildren.

*Sir Geoffrey Ellerton, Clerk to Kenya Legislative Council.*

• I am enjoying your book immensely. One thing in it struck me forcibly – how fortunate the Goans in Kenya were to have such a close-knit, hospitable and supportive community.

*Colin Campbell, former District Commissioner, Kenya, and latterly Administrator of the Falkland Islands.*

• I was a member of the Provincial Administration during your time, but unfortunately we never met. My happy memories include many of that devoted band of “Bwana Karanis” who served the then Government so faithfully and so well. My delay in writing doesn't conceal my admiration for your book and the effort that went into its making.

*Denis Lakin, former D.C. Kenya.*

• I might have missed a gem had I not heard of your book. Printed nostalgia at that price sounds a real bargain to me.

*Sir John Cumber, former D.C. Kenya, latterly, Director 'Save the Children Fund'.*

• I was first introduced to your book by Chris Minter, whom I think you know. I am so glad you wrote the book for posterity, as without
the Goan community (the salt of the earth), the Provincial Administration would never have achieved the standards it did.

**Hugh Walker, former D.C. Kenya.**

- As an Africanist myself, I wanted to tell you how significant your book has been in the history of British Colonial Africa and a wonderful record for posterity.

**Roland Hill, last D.C. Of Lusaka, Zambia.**

- 'Bwana Karani' has arrived and how I loved the book. The way you have written is, to my mind, excellent, as a complete stranger to the N.F.D. and life in Kenya, can't help but get the feel of the country.

**Mrs. Kay Wild, wife of former D.C. "Windy" Wild.**

- I ordered a copy of ‘Bwana Karani’ for our library, and have just finished reading it. My enjoyment nudged me out of my sloth to respond and tell you how much I liked it.

**Prof. Paul Baxter, Dept. of Social Anthropology, University of Manchester, and former Anthropologist in Kenya.**

- Your story is a truly fascinating one that will be of great historical interest to future generations. I think you are far too modest though.

**Dr. Pascal Imperato, Distinguished Service Professor, Brooklyn, NY (and himself author of several books on Africa).**

- Your book truly opened my eyes to the inner workings of the D.C.'s offices. I had always known of the great respect in which you, Goans, were held by the Administration, but was ignorant of the racial discrimination that operated in such issues as travel, housing and hospital privileges.

**Dr. Bill Barton, former Medical officer of Health, Kenya, later Director of Medical Services, Zanzibar.**

- This memoir of life in Kenya in the fifties is based on what must be carefully kept diaries. It records daily boma life as appeared through the eyes of a sensitive, enterprising and active Goan who was eager to expose himself to all that life could offer, rough or smooth. The
author's open nature is apparent in the style and narrative itself. The book hardly contains a harsh word, though a few people he mentions probably deserved them.

**Dr. David Killingray**, Goldsmith College, University of London, writing in the journal of the Royal African Society.

• Informally and pleasingly written, Mervyn Maciel's book chronicles a slice of Kenya's history from an unfamiliar angle, and puts on record the part played by the Goan community whose integrity and industry underpinned so much of the development of their adopted land. He loved his job, got on famously with almost everyone, from Boran cattle herdsmen to British Provincial Commissioners, had a happy marriage and was a happy man – a nice change in this so often troubled and acrimonious world.

**Elspeth Huxley**, author of “The Flame Trees of Thika”.

• We each see the world through our eyes, but one of the greatest value of published memoirs is that it enables us to get a glimpse through other people's eyes. Mervyn Maciel's ‘Bwana Karani’ is a real eye-opener.... We have innumerable records of life in the early days by Europeans in Kenya... from the European's viewpoint....I am deeply and personally grateful to Mervyn Maciel, for his is the only work of its kind to be published by a member of any Asian community in Kenya. His style is totally unpretentious, and appreciation of the wilderness sincere. His Goan colleagues should be delighted that their existence has been so well recorded for posterity, and what shines through the ordinary prose and mundane preoccupations is Maciel's profound liking and appreciation of other people. Through his book, we non-Goans are made aware of the amazing Goan network that spread all over Kenya, a net work through which flowed the very blood of colonial administration.

**Cynthia Salvadori**, author, writing in the journal of Kenya Institute of Management.

• Mervyn Maciel's 'Bwana Karani' is a winner. Not only will students of history find it a useful manuscript, but those working in the so-called hardship areas will get some consolation in reading this first
hand account of a dedicated worker who served in those areas with an ailing child.

*The Sunday Nation, Nairobi.*

- This is another self-expression by a Goan settled abroad, a memorabilia laced with nostalgia and *saudade* of the life and times lived by the author in Kenya, not Nairobi or Mombasa which offered many amenities and *divertimento* and where, after a day's work, the Goan, his wife and children converged on the Institutes or clubs to spend a pleasant evening, but the Kenya of the wild Northern Frontier District.

*Lambert Mascarenhas, Goa Today.*

- Your book proved such compulsive reading that I have only just put it down after reading it from cover to cover. Congratulations.

*Alvaro Collaco, former Senior Civil Servant.*

- 'Bwana Karani' is an excellent personal memoir of Mervyn Maciel's life and times in Kenya. His style is captivating, exciting in some situations and full of detail. Even diaries could not be as detailed in specifics as this book is. It is a 'Roots' of sorts, and what a journey it is! His love and warmth of the people – African people, cannot be mistaken.

*Nairobi Weekly Review*

- Mr. Maciel should be congratulated on his fluent and digestible style. His book reads almost like a newsletter home.

*Sutton & District Guardian.*

- Snakes invading the office, a narrow escape from an angry buffalo, a murder plot, are all in a day's work for a government official in darkest Kenya. It is a tale of life very different from that in Britain in the 40's, 50's and 60's, and chronicles in great detail a career in a now-past colonial era and paints an absorbing picture of life in the remotest parts of Kenya where wild animals roamed.

*The North Devon Journal.*
Bwana Karani

- This is one man's story of life in the African bush. He writes in a quiet somewhat slow relaxed and honest style, recalling with great detail the many aspects and events of his stay in Africa.

*The Examiner, Bombay.*
AFRICAN SOUVENIRS

Wilfy with python skin at a Nairobi bar (above). Matthew and Elize with the same skin in our Sutton garden.

Josey with colobus monkey skins (above), and me with elephant feet footstools and a beaded gourd given to Elsie as a farewell gift by the wife of my African driver.
Mervyn Maciel’s journey through life has been an extraordinary and chequered one starting with early childhood in Kenya and ending with his retirement, not in his native Goa as he had always hoped but, with that unpredictable stroke of destiny, in that green and pleasant land of England.

In this little book, he recounts in some detail the challenges he faced, the interesting people he met along the way, more particularly, those from the N.F.D. (Northern Frontier District) of Kenya who remain so close to his heart, and above all, his close-knit family who have always been there for him.

*Mzee* Mervyn is now in his 85th year, but he still has the spirit of a little *mtoto*.