



Queensland Newsletter November Part Three

News of Members

Mike King contacted me today to report that 7445 Mike and Kathy Bennett have returned to the sunshine state. Welcome home! The good news for them is that we no longer collect annual subs. Please contact me if you want to catch up on the Last Parade etc.

Final Report on the Lunch

The amount paid to the Club for the wine amounted to \$114.60, which means that we will continue to do this from our funds for the foreseeable future.

John Gold reports that feed back has been positive and the club is happy to have us back again next year; this time we would go for the function room that overlooks the sports field and has natural light. This was arranged for this year but somehow we ended up back at the Sunset Room.

However I have suggested that we look at a different venue for next year with a view to keeping the cost down. This would mean two things:

1. We would no longer have pre-lunch hot snacks. Whilst they were excellent they actually reduced the amount I could eat for the main course, which perhaps wasn't a bad thing, but I know that elsewhere in Loganholme I can get an entrée and main course for \$6.99 which, while the quality and choice is not the same, the cost is a heck of a lot better than \$40.
2. We would lose the privacy but then again I have just attended a lunch in Toowoomba on Friday 26th, where the organisers had the meeting in the restaurant, where there were other diners but, once I started my speech, they stopped their private chats and listened intently. Since the subject was Rhodesia a few more Australians learned of our great country!
3. I would like some feedback from those who attended the annual lunch please to give us an idea for next year.

Njuzi and the River People

Jack Taylor told me on Friday that he had enjoyed reading this epic saga so I am taking the opportunity to send you the next two chapters written by Njuzi.

CHAPTER FOUR

I was under the impression that the stop at Zumbo was only for the purpose of clearing immigration and customs, and throughout the afternoon I lay deserted at my moorings wondering what had happened to my crew. Together we had watched Makonikoni vanish into the noonday haze before the three had wandered off. As evening approached, I became a little alarmed. We should have been miles downstream according to our schedule but still there was no sign of

the men. Throughout the night I listened for some indication of their return but all I heard was an occasional peal of laughter from the town.

Morning came and only then did my crew put in an appearance. No word was offered in explanation for the delay. They were accompanied by the Administrator, Senhor Jose Barbos Homen, and he at least had the decency to pay me some attention. He even went so far as to say that he thought I was greatly overloaded, an opinion I fully supported.

After photographs and farewells, we slipped out into the current. Instinctively I looked and listened for the familiar sight and sound of our escort before realising forcibly that now we were on our own. Tony, adept by now at steering with his feet, guided me towards the south bank, where we could enjoy the warmth of the morning sun and where we were also shielded from the rising headwind. It was incredibly peaceful and slowly I overheard the explanation for our belated departure.

The trio had wandered around Zumbo for some time, taking photographs of the Fort, which had been built in 1728, and three years after the settlement itself had been established. The still remaining walls of the fortification were three feet thick, nine feet high and measured some two miles in length.

Zumbo had acquired the title of "city" in 1763 when the population had exceeded two hundred, and I wondered what dignity by this standard my hometown of Gwelo would qualify for.

The paddlers' conversation drifted to their host in Zumbo, Senhor Homen, who had been located in his garden during office hours. He had taken them to his office where the formalities of immigration had been completed and then he had escorted them back to his house to ply them with local ale.

The hospitality had drowned the conscience which should have brought them back to the river. Senhor Homen had demanded my crew's company for the evening and served them a meal of piri-piri sardines fried in batter. The unexpected guests and their uncivilised appetites had necessitated the addition to the meal of "fish that come from the garden"- runner beans also fried in batter and mixed with the sardines. Wine had followed the meal, after which a glass of port introduced the vicious and powerful Bagaceira or Aguadente, a liqueur to which the host added a new flavour with a spoonful of sugar and a dash of coffee powder.

It was no wonder that the three canoeists had accepted the offer of beds at the end of the evening. Mike could not get over the bathroom of Senhor Homen, modern in the extreme, when compared with the rest of the house, and which shone with new chinaware and tiles. One of the basic pieces of furniture in the room was fitted with a moulded plastic seat, delicately hinged at the rear. Mike had retired upon this throne which the designer had not constructed for a weight of 200 pounds. The result was a prompt explosion and the collapse of the seat!

Morning Glory creepers in full bloom hung in a thick web from the high bank of the river; leguaans scuttled back and forth between the twisted vines and occasionally a brilliant flash of colour brought the pigmy kingfishers - no more than three inches long and a blaze of blue, red and gold-into view as they hovered beside us and then were gone as suddenly as they had appeared. Hippo grunted a greeting as we passed - schools of them numbering as many as forty - launching themselves into the water in clouds of spray as soon as they detected our presence.

The river widened and narrowed again at each bend, varying between a width of one and two miles. Islands, or rather small sandbanks, with waving reeds and grass were dotted everywhere making navigation difficult as the map showed only two islands between Zumbo and Panhame. As we passed close to the southern bank there was a resounding splash followed by a tidal wave which nearly lifted me from the water. The bank was some fifteen feet high and the commotion had been caused by the diving antics of a young hippo. Just as I was being steered back to our intended course, Mike shouted and there was a second hippo taking the plunge from the high bank. It was a ridiculous sight. The huge beast ran straight over the edge with his massive head held high and continued the motions of running until he landed in the water about ten feet from my stern. What would have happened had we been those ten feet further back up the river I shudder to imagine.

We paused beside some rapids at midday and my crew brewed coffee, washed some clothing and rested. An old African in a dugout appeared from nowhere, showing not the slightest surprise at finding us. He wore a white disc tied below his knee and when asked its significance, replied that it was to "keep him from the river".

After he had gone, we set out again for Panhame. We passed the dried-up mouth of the Hunyani River but saw no sign of Panhame which must have been set well back from the river. Midges were a constant irritation to my crew, at one stage Mike counted some 70 plus bites on David's back, but by the time they decided to call a halt for the night, we had travelled some twenty-five miles from Zumbo. I was securely tied to some trees, Mike unpacked the ration compartment, Dave sorted out his films and Tony started the fire.

During the night an unidentifiable "something" prowled close to the camp to disturb the sleeping trio and served to make them aware of the swarming mosquitoes which were becoming more and more prevalent despite the somewhat chill nights. Sunrise next morning was almost unbelievable. One minute the river was a slightly misty grey and then, as the sun came over the horizon, the whole world turned to gold. Dave, who was usually the first to get up, busied himself with his cameras, muttering about speeds and reflections and finally relying on guesswork. His results certainly justified his early mornings. Repacking my compartments, loading the bedding and brewing the morning's reviver of coffee took an hour but despite this we were back on the water just after 7 a.m.

The morning's journey was uneventful and was only interrupted when a halt was called at a riverside kraal where fresh mealies were obtained to bolster the lean store cupboard. Lunch was spent on a spit of sand with deep water running swiftly about us. The mealie cobs were roasted and my crew remarked that the leaves close to the stalk tasted like uncooked cabbage. They had reached the stage when they appreciated anything which could loosely be termed edible. Mike was also enjoying life in the raw with a quick dip in the river, Dave and Tony, more susceptible to the chill of the water, were more hesitant.

In the afternoon we made good time in a lessening wind. Many Hippos were seen as well as the spoor of plenty of Crocodile. Tony spotted a Lioness bounding away from the water's edge and the sight was a sobering reminder that care must be taken during the night despite the number of kraals in the vicinity. The banks of the Zambezi were becoming much more rock-strewn and craggy ridges ran beneath the surface of the water. Tony had to keep his wits about him and I

fares badly several times when we struck the submerged obstacles quite forcibly. Fortunately, my outer skin stood up to the pounding.

Little happened on that second day out from Zumbo except that Tony frightened much of the goose population while attempting to shoot for the pot; his misses at almost point-blank range made him the butt of some good-humoured criticism, all the more so as the craving for fresh meat was becoming noticeable among the paddlers. During a pause in paddling in the afternoon, Dave was busy trying to photograph an uncooperative bird and the other two took advantage of the rest.

When Dave had finished I was turned into the current again and we were suddenly confronted by a line of foam across our path. Three paddles pulled furiously and then Tony spotted a gap of unbroken water. Before I could reach it, I was snatched by the current and the next minute we were airborne. Seconds later my bow went under as we dropped some three feet over the cataract. I felt like a surfacing submarine as we raced away from the rapids in the grip of the fast current. I was proud of the fact that I had not capsized and took on a new respect for my crew in the way they had handled the passage. This respect was short-lived when Dave suggested to the others that they backtrack to give him an opportunity for some photography to illustrate the shooting of the rapids. Thank goodness the others vetoed the idea.

The third day from Zumbo brought a strong headwind with the dawn. By 9am the waves were rolling up the river and everyone was drenched. The Zambezi narrowed and the hills rose steeply from the banks. We passed under half-a-mile of unsupported telephone wire, an indication that we were nearing the town of Carinde and minutes later we spotted the welcome traces of civilisation on the top of a hill. We headed for the landing-place and pulled in beside a launch. A line of black uniformed men carrying an assortment of arms from submachine guns to shotguns stood on the bank. My crew was worried - it looked almost as though Carinde had been taken over by terrorists, but there was no going back. As we beached, the silence and stern faces of the reception committee were broken. Their concern had been for our approach through the numerous rocks to the landing stage. They were a section of the People's Militia and in charge of them was a young policeman from Tete, Jose Antonio Diaz.

The crew walked up the hill towards the town amid a chattering escort. I sighed. I knew the routine which followed my crew's departure with that glazed look in their eyes. I was not mistaken. First port of call was the house-cum-office of the Chef de Poste. While their host was busy on the telephone for nearly an hour, the trio did justice to a table piled with bottles of Cerveja (beer) from a well-stocked refrigerator. When Tete had been advised of the arrival of the expedition, everyone got down to serious business. An African by the name of Juawo acted as interpreter and it was established that he had been an early member of the BSA Police Reserve and was an acquaintance of Detective Station Sergeants Magama and Gwese and many other policemen known to my crew. "Doctor", otherwise Manuel Andrade Silva, joined in the welcoming party before a vast plate of rice and chicken was placed before the trio. After lunch, they were escorted around the village leaving 16 empty "bazooka" beer bottles to mark their passage.

The village, as far as I could see from the river-bank, was mainly a pole-and-dagga construction but of a very high standard. Poultry, goats and the odd pig wandered about at will. It seemed an undisturbed sleepy hollow with a very friendly atmosphere. It was nearly 3pm. when my crew returned with their jovial

escort. As they prepared to launch me once again into the current, I had more than a suspicion that the afternoon's progress would be slow. Once again I was right. After little more than five miles had been covered, we entered a tiny side stream and camp was made for the night on a ledge from which the grass had to be cut before anyone could move.

The three men settled down early and peace descended for a brief hour before a native drum began to pound not far upstream. All through the night the party continued and dawn came with the revelry still going strong.

Progress during the next two days was uneventful. The river was well-populated and picturesque. Naked women bathed in the waters and ran screaming for towels or clothes whenever we rounded a corner suddenly. Even when approached in order to purchase vegetables, these women in their full-length blue dresses were extremely shy but always willing to share the fruits of their small plots beside the kraals.

Once I was chased by a Hippo and escape for my crew resulted in my desertion on the bank, much to the amusement of some African children from the nearby village of Mague. The evenings of these two days brought the first casualties of the trip. Mike and Tony both suffered from heat exhaustion which was soon remedied by an increase in their ration of salt tablets. The trouble did not arise again.

We arrived at Cachomba on Sunday, July 21, 1968. Had it not been for a motorboat tied up among the thick reeds, we might have missed the place completely. The Mission de Zambezi operated from the historic fort which had been built in 1892. In the centre of the older building was a modern school for the local children. Even an airfield had been torn out of the surrounding bush and many baobab trees had fallen to the axe to carve out this essential means of communication.

Senhor Manuel Mira Santos Nazareth of the Mission de Zambezi arrived later in the day. A young man, he had the unenviable and tremendous task of surveying the area of the lake which will be formed on the completion of the Cabora Bassa Dam and establishing which of the local inhabitants must move in the face of the flood. He had prepared lunch for my crew and unwisely placed the whole of his week's beer ration on the table. The quartet sat talking at the rough table of an upturned box until dusk and even then remained seated when dinner followed hard on the heels of the earlier meal. With his conscience troubled at the disposal of his host's beer, Mike came down to the river's edge and rummaged for the bottle of "medicinal brandy", which I never saw again. Later on in the evening, Mike casually brushed something off his leg and then discovered that it was a three inch long centipede.

We were under way again the following morning after a substantial breakfast and best wishes from Senhor Nazareth. The river was becoming even more rock-strewn with treacherous rapids every few hundred yards. Dave achieved his wish for some cataract photography and I paid the price when I bumped into a submerged rock. Luckily, the obstacle did no more damage than remove some of my paint. To add insult to injury less than a mile further on Tony failed to spot a submerged cone of rock and I gained another scar.

The afternoon saw us passing through a gorge of black rocks interspersed with white sand. Although the size of the ravine was nothing like Mpata, the same ominous silence could be felt. The current was mild and fortunately there were few eddies or whirlpools. Once out of the gorge, we stopped and made camp for

the night rather unexpectedly as it was only 3 pm. Mike had already settled into his sleeping bag when the water parted beside me and the immense head of a hippo emerged, looked around and grunted. Whether he wished to beach himself or whether he was just curious I shall never know, but when Tony and Dave came to see what the splashing was about, the Hippo moved off into the night.

An early start the next morning was partially defeated by the usual strong headwind and the numerous cataracts, which forced Tony to steer from side to side of the river for the easiest passage. Chicoa was sighted when we were still seven miles away, although it looked deceptively nearer. On the last bend before this town a small cataract stretched right across the southern portion of the river. Dave was needed on the paddles to get up enough speed to shoot my length over the obstruction so once again his photography was denied. In the mad flight, only my outrigger suffered a jarring impact, but no real damage was done. Grassy plains spread away from the river on both banks with the settlement overlooking the terrain from a small hill. I was tied up before a crowd of admiring school children, an appreciative audience which I enjoyed after my battering passage down the river.

Chicoa was of more significance than just another step on the road south. Here I was to be taken out of my natural element to be transported by road to the Zambezi above Tete. I was rather thankful that I had been excused the ordeal of trying to negotiate the Cabora Bassa section of the river. The crew, I later discovered, made the acquaintance of Eduardo Sabino, the son of an Inspector in PIDE (Portuguese Intelligence) at Tete, and his companion, a senior policeman from the same town. A very good friend of Tony's, Tony Canhao, Commandante of the Tete Police, had been following our progress down the river since Zumbo and had timed the arrival of the two members of the Chicoa reception committee to within four hours of our own arrival. Senhor Sabino showed my trio the Land rover and the five-ton truck filled with tyres, which was to transport me to the other end of the Cabora Bassa Gorge.

Lunch was provided by the Administrator, Senhor Joaquim Moutinho, who, in spite of only having arrived at Chicoa on transfer three days earlier with his ailing wife, produced a wonderful meal in the typical Portuguese tradition and with the incomparable national hospitality

After the meal I was rejoined by my crew and paddled downstream to the ferry point. I whispered au-revoir to the river as I was lifted out of the water, still fully laden with the supplies, and placed on the back of the lorry. I was lashed down securely-for which I was later very thankful, Mike climbed in beside me and Dave and Tony boarded the Landrover. We set off on a nightmare journey at breakneck speed over roads of twisting narrow dirt. It took us three hours to reach our destination, the Mission de Baroma, and it was night when we got there. In the darkness I was lifted off the truck which then departed on its rattling way with parting words from the drivers about seeing us the next day. Dave got the fire going and the three men sat wearily around a huge blazing log, bodies aching from the battering road journey, before they crawled thankfully into their sleeping bags.

Morning found us in front of the old brick kilns of the Mission and everything seemed to be covered in a fine coating of ash. First priority was that I should receive some attention and be checked for damage - most reasonable after our last few miles on the river and the equally uncomfortable trip on the "road". It was discovered that my stern buoyancy tank was full of water when it should

have contained only foam. It was drained and out came the fibreglass to make sure I stayed dry. My rudder also needed some attention.

With the major repairs completed, Tony and Dave set off for the Mission while Mike engaged and supervised some children in cleaning me up a little; not before time I might say. Dave and Tony's discoveries were later revealed to me through the log and, this historic outpost of civilisation high on a hill overlooking the river, made interesting reading. From a distance, the Mission seemed to be a building of unearthly magnificence with its spires and battlements amid the jungle.

Closer inspection was disappointing as it revealed walls which were losing their paint almost to the extent of drabness. The interior of the chapel was the same mixture of old splendour and poor maintenance. Each of the chapel's walls was hand painted, even the uniform "wall-paper" effect on the side walls. The magnificent ceiling was spoiled by great patches of missing paint. The explanation for the seemingly rundown appearance of the Mission was humanly logical. The work of the Mission extends a great deal further than the preservation of the past. Six hundred children attend the Mission's school; eighty patients per day are dealt with in the hospital; sawmills and market gardens provide employment for the locals. And this huge concern is supervised by two Italian and three Portuguese priests and six French nuns. The Mission was founded in 1890 on the flat banks of the Zambezi. Five years later, because of the number of deaths from fever, the hill-top site was chosen. A relic of days long ago was the old 1910 Marshall Steam Engine which, for many years, pumped water from the river for the needs of the Mission.

Dave and Tony arrived back at the kilns in very good humour. The oranges they carried were responsible for the smiling faces. They had climbed through a thorn hedge which protected an orange grove from wild animals (with four legs) and had helped themselves to fruit. Leaving the scene of crime, they had crossed paths with one of the priests and a group of children. Tony promptly dropped one of the oranges from inside his shirt, retrieved it in a most embarrassed fashion, and the pair walked quickly away from the group expecting to be called upon to explain their actions with every step when the priest followed them. He had been about his own business however and had not challenged them.

After a quick lunch, the children were engaged to transport the supplies and equipment down to the river, some forty feet down a steep slope covered with ash and clinker. This done, I was lifted carefully by my crew who turned slowly to find that the intervening space between us and the water was covered by upwards of four hundred goats. Undismayed, we descended. Goats scrambled, butted and bounded from our path and it was with a great sigh of relief that I kissed the Zambezi finally.

My compartments were repacked and by 1pm we were heading for Tete. There was not a trace of a breeze and the water was like a mill pond. The numerous bends between the hills each had to be negotiated and my course was even more twisted as we steered around the myriad sandbanks. A dhow, used as a ferry between banks of the river, was trying desperately to get across in the still air with the assistance of every passenger at the paddles. In the four miles during which we kept the dhow in sight, it progressed no more than a few hundred yards.

Our first view of Tete was the radio station, shortly followed by the lines of white houses climbing the hill from the river. An island lies in the middle of the

Zambezi right opposite the town and it was only at the last minute that Tony put the rudder over to take us to the Tete side of the junction. It was as well that he did so. The island which appeared so small from our upstream approach was actually quite long and would have involved us in a long detour and backtrack up the river had we steered to the other side. There was a group of people on the bank waving frantically at us. I was steered to the point at which a road struck the bank and slowly we cut across the current and slipped on to a shelf which was to be my mooring for the next four days. The group resolved themselves into Eduardo Sabino (of the previous day); his father, Inspector Sabino; and Tony Canhao, whose influence had guided us on our way since Zumbo. My trio stepped on to the bank and shook hands with the Commandante. He stepped back, inspected the trio and myself in the water below and said, with the straightest face possible: "I have made arrangements for you at the hotel. You, er.. do have suits, don't you?"

CHAPTER FIVE

The Provincial capital of Tete was the half-way mark on the voyage. That first evening in Tete produced the activity to be expected from anyone reaching civilisation after weeks on the river. Hot baths removed the accumulated grime, clean clothes and "Dress Order Number One" - fawn suede jungle boots, long stockings, shorts and creased but clean shirts-were an obvious deference to the society in which the three canoeists now found themselves. Hair slicked down and beards combed, the trio, outwardly as respectable as their scanty wardrobes permitted, trooped from their bedrooms in search of the where-with-all to satisfy the inner man.

The first notable absence in the hotel was a bar in the Rhodesian sense, but the opportunity to sit in comfortable chairs was not to be missed. They sank into the first available accommodation and chorused an order for ice-cold beer. The typically generous Portuguese snacks followed and soon the privation of previous weeks was drowned in contented stomachs. Shortly afterwards, Inspector Sabino brought the news that Dave's wife Anne was on her way from Rhodesia and would be arriving within the next day or so.

Tony Canhao introduced the Mobil Oil representative from Beira, Manuel Santana, who spoke excellent English and the pair then proceeded to supply the evening's entertainment. First stop was the oldest bar in Tete which seemed to have the status of the local City Club. The visitors' reaction was that it was probably the oldest bar in the whole of Africa, although the decor left much to be desired and the selection of alcohol on offer was strictly limited. Rhodesian tastes for brandy and ginger ale were ignored in favour of local concoctions which were, in any event, thirst-quenching and potent. The beer came in three sizes: the "normal" bottle holding about a pint; the "Grande" offering about a quart, and the "Bazooka" approximating to the best part of half-a-gallon-and very much to everyone's taste. The customary snacks followed and soon the whole gamut of spiced meats and savouries were being wolfed down with delicious crisp white Portuguese bread.

Tony Canhao then decided that the time had arrived for dinner, although the three sailors were more than satisfied, having consumed the equivalent of several days' provisions on the river. Regardless, the hilarious party made its way to the Aero Clube which was extremely well patronised. The building had a long way to

go to completion but the proprietors had decided that the finishing touches could wait and their business was operating inside a mere shell. Commandante Canhao selected the meal which was to the visitors' complete satisfaction and, with a continual supply of liquor on hand, the party progressed merrily.

Before the evening was anywhere near over, Manuel had been talked into donating a pint tin of oil to be transported to Beira at the top of Njuzi's mast. This might have presented an interesting situation had the canoe encountered the British frigate guarding Beira's approaches, as part of the United Nations sanctions to prevent supplies of oil from reaching Rhodesia but, in the next few days, wiser counsels prevailed and Manuel was advised that Head Office clearance was necessary before baiting the lion. Manuel didn't agree, but the idea was eventually dropped.

From the Aero Clube, the last visit of the evening brought the party to the Administrator's Residence and nightcaps of Cognac, Napoleon 90, Agudante, and like beverages were administered to the occupants of comfortable chairs to the accompaniment of recorded fados. It was at least an hour past midnight when three mellowed travellers staggered back to their hotel, where their host presented them with an official Landrover for their use during the remainder of the stay. The Hotel was luxurious by any standards, but to Tony, Dave and Mike, the suite they occupied was a paradise. Air conditioning, comfortable beds and bathroom en-suite had all been figments of the Zambezi mirage.

There was one snag. The development of the Cahora Bassa project had injected an enormous promise of prosperity in Tete and to meet the expected demand, local firms were building as fast as they were able. The owners of the hotel were among the optimists and a further storey was being added to the building. The result was that at 7am sharp the next morning, the trio were shaken from their beds by the combined assault of drills, hammers, saws and vocal machinery which is never absent from Portuguese building operations. Even so, it was only a rude awakening to a day which promised no demands on stiff muscles and the three were determined that nothing should spoil their rest.

Breakfast was something of an ordeal since the language difficulty seemed to be almost insurmountable, or perhaps the previous evening's entertainment was responsible for some impatience. The three sailors went their separate ways after the meal: Tony set off to look for the old Governor's house where David Livingstone had stayed in 1858; Dave spent the time cleaning and reloading his cameras and packing the exposed film; while Mike went down to the river for a spot of maintenance on Njuzi before settling down to bring his notes up to date. The lunch was a considerable improvement on the previous meal and it was a pleasant change to be served fish other than haddock, hake, fish slices or bream, so often the stand-by of the Rhodesian hotelier.

A siesta in the afternoon cleared away the remaining effects of the previous evening and prepared the three Rhodesians for a similar session to come. Anne Hallward arrived later in the evening with the children. Hot, sticky and slightly bewildered after having broken down between Nyamapanda and Changara. She had been subjected to some overwhelming hospitality from Inspector Sabino's men at the border who had loaned her a Volkswagen for the duration of her stay, Anne was as pleased to arrive at Tete as her husband and his two companions had been the previous day. She brought with her some of the slides and photographs which had been taken on the first section of the journey.

Even though Dave carried on a lengthy dissertation on what was wrong with his photography, Tony and Mike were more than satisfied. The first sight of the Sunday Mail article on the voyage caused some acrimony. In typical Press fashion, they had over-emphasised the importance of the trip and over-dramatised several very ordinary sequences of the journey.

The following day was as easygoing as the previous one and gave the others a chance to join Tony on his "historical hunt". Tete - at least, the fort there - was built in the 1530's and later became the second major Portuguese settlement in Central Africa (Sena being of greater importance but built about the same time.) As far as the visitors could ascertain, Tete had seen none of the serious African uprisings although its expansion over the years seemed to have been extremely slow.

The Dam Project had brought a bounding increase in population, partly the result of the large military units based at the Fort for mounting regular forays into Northern Mozambique, as well as guarding the Cabora Dam site itself. Tete has been an African crossroads for many years but, with the expected increase in traffic, the ferry across the Zambezi is being replaced by a modern bridge capable of carrying not only heavy traffic but also the transportation of the massive machinery to be installed at the Power Station as work progresses.

Much to Tony's irritation, there seemed to be no local sense of the historical. Nobody could tell the visitors where the old Governor's house was and this ignorance was explained by the fact that most of the inhabitants were from metropolitan Portugal and the local administration had other things to worry about besides history. David Livingstone had been a most unpopular gentleman in Africa because of his interference with the nineteenth century slave trading.

A walk along the river's edge revealed a small enclosure containing a small herd of buck - and the ever-present courting "triples". Even modern Africa has retained the European tradition of courting pairs never being seen without a chaperone. It was noticeable that the soldiers didn't seem to have the same trouble with the only two eligible spinsters in Tete. Tony Canhao's version of the cause of the shortage of the fair sex was that having heard of the approach of Njuzi, all the women in the place had been packed off to Beira! The truth was that colonisation in Mozambique is still thought of as a hazardous operation, what with ill-health, disease, and earlier attacks from the indigenous, and as often as not, the men folk leave their families in Europe or send growing children to Portugal for their education. This state of affairs made a mockery of Tony's earlier promises that they could expect to be welcomed at Tete by curvaceous masseuses of the James Bond type just waiting to apply olive oil with mink gloves to the aching muscles of Njuzi's crew

The day was rounded off with dinner at Tony Canhao's, where the visitors were introduced to Tony's lovely wife Guida and their two charming children. Two or three pounds of king-size prawns in a delicious sauce were the highlight of the meal in Mike's opinion. Despite the physical problems of balancing glasses of red and white wine plus a plate of food during the magnificent buffet, the trio more than made up for lean times which lay behind and ahead of them.

Dave retired to bed soon afterwards, but Tony and Mike joined their host in visiting the home of Doctor Paz. Most of the dignitaries of Tete were present with their wives and Doctor Paz entertained the gathering to an evening of fado on his guitar, accompanied by an Army medical officer, Captain Santana (no relation to Manuel), whose singing was famous throughout Portugal. A curious feature

was the lack of applause at the conclusion of each number, until it was learned that this is customary for the Coimbra Fado. Fado Lisboa is paid the usual tribute

The next morning, Tony and Mike were up at 5.30am and soon after were in Tony Canhao's loaned frontier Land-Rover for the three - hour trip to the Cabora Bassa Dam site. Dave would be following later with Anne by air. It was perishing cold in the open vehicle stripped of all but its essentials. Both men were frozen on the 75 mile journey, even though Mike had the foresight to wear a track suit top. The small village of Estima marked the turn-off for the destination and the road wound through magnificent mountain scenery. The only thing which spoils the view was the gay abandon of the driver, who seemed to be practising for the Monte Carlo Rally.

Songo, nestling in the mountains, was the site of a permanent camp built by the Mission de Zambezi for road construction workers. A feature of the camp was a massive rondavel which housed the canteen. The local Chef de Poste, Domingos Pereira Guellio, a good-humoured giant, offered a very welcome breakfast plus bottles of wine and whisky with which to wash the meal down. Mike deviated towards the local clinic in search of Milk of Magnesia to settle a digestive system hammered during the last two days and not improved by the bumpy journey, while Tony had a long chat to Domingos. One of the latter's policemen was an African named Tennis, who spoke good English and it transpired that he had been educated at the Howard Institute near Salisbury.

The military complement consisted of a score of African members of the People's Militia who were responsible for patrolling the immediate area. Shortly before 11am, Dave and Anne arrived by light plane after a low-level inspection of the basin. This had affected Dave to such an extent that he flung his cameras into the dust in his excitement and then complained to all and sundry for mistreating his valuable equipment in such a manner. He babbled away about his flight and it was only after black coffee had been administered that he calmed down enough to tell the tale of his trip. In a 25-minute flight he had taken 160 exposures which, including the film changes meant that he had worked overtime. Unfortunately he had forgotten one film change and a reel of black and white negatives was lost.

After more coffee, everyone piled into the Landrover and Domingo chauffeured the party at hair-raising speed down the twisting road to the dam site, with pauses at intervals for more shutter-clicking from Dave. The destination was worth every minute of the frightening descent. Mountains seemed to rise sheer from the gorge, dwarfing even the scale of activity at the point from which the dam wall would eventually rise. The scarred rock rose a thousand feet above the river, eroded and heavily pitted by the debris which had crashed through the gorge during the centuries. This erosion had created a beautiful and fascinating canvas in the black rock, a sight to inspire any artist. The fact that these features would soon be lost beneath the rising waters behind the dam produced a sense of sorrow among the spectators. Man seemed determined to submerge the dominating magnificence of the place. The conclusion reached, particularly after an inspection of one cataract which dropped 15 feet and might have been termed a waterfall, was that such a venture would have been completely suicidal. It was rumoured that 18 men had lost their lives attempting the passage in the past seven years. Dave, Tony and Mike needed little convincing that they would almost certainly have provided corpses 19 to 21.

The gorge tears its way some 35 miles through the mountains, gradually narrowing until it reaches the Cabora Bassa bottle-neck. It was small wonder that Livingstone had come unstuck in the gorge in the 1850s. Only one man is supposed to have managed the trip, a Frenchman, who was "walked down" the gorge in a steel boat by teams of Africans holding ropes on either bank. No one would confirm the rumour that other Rhodesians had succeeded in the passage but if this was true, the trio offered them their sincere admiration.

For the technically minded, Chief Geologist Gordini provided the visitors with some statistics. The dam wall will measure 300 metres across the top and 70 metres at the bottom. It will be 175 metres high (200 feet higher than Kariba), 20 metres thick at the base and 5 metres at the top. A team of three geologists, four civil engineers, a draughtsman and an agronomist were already engaged on preparatory work. Access roads had been completed and it was intended to tar the road between Estima and the site early in 1969. The next phase of development was scheduled for December, 1968, when diversion tunnels some 400 metres long would be driven through the north bank, after which construction of the coffer dams would begin. When the final tender was accepted, work began on a housing estate three miles from the site and a luxury hotel was built overlooking the operations. It was estimated that some 20,000 Africans would have to be re-settled but no difficulties were expected once the locals have been persuaded to move and convinced that they will be living on the shores of a great lake.

The target date for completion was 1974, seemingly at the time too optimistic, but when the scheme was completed the result will be a dam surpassing Kariba for sheer grandeur, especially as the first five miles of headwater will be contained within the remainder of the gorge. Even now the water was 35 metres in depth and, with the added 175 metres after the dam's construction the havoc created downstream should the wall ever collapse is a very frightening nightmare. At the peak of construction operations some 3,000 Europeans and 7,000 Africans were employed on what may be termed as the second phase of David Livingstone's dream. He pictured a series of dams and locks on the mighty waterway, making it navigable from sea to source. With Cabora Bassa as the initial phase of Portuguese expansion, and with other projects planned downstream, the day may not be too far away when it will be possible for barges to operate a service between Zumbo and Cuama on the coast where port facilities are at the drawing-board stage of planning.

A trip on a raft made from 44-gallon drums and powered by two 40 hp engines (which only just managed to provide headway against the current) gave the visitors the opportunity of completing their sight-seeing and photography of the mammoth project. Then it was back to Songo for lunch, preceded by the usual drinks and snacks which left little room for the main course of octopus and squid.

Geologist Gordini continued to be a mine of information during the meal chatting on endlessly about the fantastic mineral wealth of the area at which prospectors were already chipping away.

After the meal, Tony and Dave were persuaded to have a final look at the gorge from the air. They duly took off after the pilot had screamed down the runway without bothering to warm the engine. From the air it was easy to again visualise Livingstone's dream-irrigated farming stretching into the haze both up and down stream. The injection of some £12 million by the Portuguese for this

development shows their faith in the potential of the region, providing other problems can be overcome.

The busy day ended in a more sedate drive back to Tete, hot baths all round, a quiet dinner at the hotel followed by a not-so-quiet session at the Aero Clube. As the next day was Sunday, the policemen staggered into bed revelling in the prospect of a late morning in bed. The promised lie-in did not materialise. Although the hotel builders had taken a day of rest, the Army barracks obliged with a raucous bugle reveille which was answered by a hundred barking dogs.

The new day passed pleasantly enough after the abrupt disruption of the trio's slumbers. Tony and Dave spent the morning manufacturing a new lens hood for one of the cameras to replace one which had been lost the day before. After a quiet lunch, Tony renewed his efforts to track down the old Governor's house and located it right next door to the hotel. He rushed back and grabbed Dave and his cameras and, with Anne and the children, they set off to photograph the relic. The occupant of the house, Senhor Teixeira, had planned an afternoon excursion with friends but, seeing the interest of his visitors, he changed his mind and plied them with whisky and history. Built in the 16th century, much of the original house was intact and in daily service. Doors, hinges and shutters were as they had been, the ceiling constructed of gum poles plastered with mud still served its original purpose and the Moroccan tiles continued to preserve the ancient interior. It was a rewarding find after so much trouble.

In the evening, Mike and Dave visited the exhibition of captured terrorist arms and Dave had considerable difficulty in getting the locals to pose naturally in front of the cameras. In the end Mike installed himself behind a particularly vicious looking heavy machine gun (used as an anti-air-craft weapon) and this had the desired effect of distracting their attention.

Then it was back to the hotel for a farewell party with Tony and Guida Canhao and Manuel Santana. The Canhaos were presented with an Njuzi plaque in memory of the visit, a small return for the Commandante's tremendous hospitality, which had included a visit earlier in the day to the Force's Canteen, where presents of wine and other goods, including Portuguese police soft hats, had been bestowed on the Rhodesian trio. The headgear, soft and washable with a flap to protect the neck, was eminently suitable for travel on the river. The celebration extended into the early hours and, when everyone finally retired, it was with memories of a most enjoyable four-day visit and an unforgettable debt owed to Portuguese hospitality.

The next morning the travellers were roused by the alarm clock builders, ably supported by the army's bugler and every stray dog for miles around. Tony and Dave participated in a final frantic photographic spree, while Mike prepared Njuzi for the resumption of the voyage. The canoe had stood up well to the 114-degree temperature (45.5C) and paint work and fittings showed no sign of them baking.

Best wishes Mike Edden
ADMINISTRATOR