



Greetings from northern Kenya. This year we installed (at great expense) a 200m borehole which supplies us with sweet, clean water and has removed the need for negotiations with the community water scheme and constant anxiety about excessive loo flushing. We are occasionally reminded that life can get exciting, such as the occasion when I went for a walk with the dogs, to find our cows making the most extraordinary noises, huddled together on the dam wall. I had just walked past a pride of lions which had killed two of our steers just behind the house and I had inadvertently chased them away without seeing them. Luckily they had not started their meal, so beef was on the menu for us for a while.

Clare would like it put on the record that this year she did not get arrested for smoking dope, she did not miss any exams or in fact do anything very much to give her parents more grey hairs. Robbie on the other hand, while doing well in his A-levels, did manage to get arrested for espionage. Admittedly, it was not entirely his fault. He was trying to see a friend on Ol Pejeta, a nearby ranch, and his mother had told him to turn left at the Equator. He did as he was told, talked his way through a couple of gates, was waved on to the 'research centre' that he was looking for, saw a few fighter jets, and encouraged by the resources now apparently available for anti-poaching, took some photographs. Eventually he came to a halt when men with rifles ordered him out of the car. They blindfolded him, took him to a cell and interrogated him. To be fair, the Kenyan Air Force were right to a bit concerned by a total scruff with no shoes and a bow and arrow in the back of his Land Rover, who had managed to penetrate to the centre of their top secret base. Luckily he had managed to call Caroline before getting arrested, and she roared over with his passport to negotiate his release.

Robbie survived his last two terms at Oundle, although his espousal of pacifism put paid to his hitherto successful career in the Cadet Force, as well as his Army ambitions, thanks to a dishonorable discharge. Rather to my disappointment this was rather low key, and his corporal's stripes were not ceremoniously torn off. He turned his attention to lawn bowls and left the school in a cloud of glory having won the inter-house competition, despite an attempt to knobble him through an anonymous tip-off, leading to a full drug test which gave us a few anxious moments before he was exonerated. Having done better in his A-levels than Clare, he is now faced with an embarrassment of choices for his university – with offers for Anthropology from Exeter, Birmingham, Manchester and Bristol. He is still recovering from the shock, but plans to head off on his 'gap yah' to India and Vietnam once he has decided where to study.



Clare has been making good use of her time at Falmouth. Her recent requests for presents have included a wet-suit and surf board, so she has fully committed to student life. She is now in her second year of a zoology degree. She passed her UK driving test first time – after several years of driving on a Kenyan license that was acquired through less conventional means. She has been exposed to the world of work, having run

Elephant Watch Camp for two weeks, and helped me with some data analysis for a World Bank report (so of course her CV now says that she worked for the World Bank).

Caro has spent a good chunk of the year away from home, with two trips to southern Africa, and most of the summer in England for Robbie's A-levels. She did an amazing job organizing a joint 18<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> birthday party for the rest of the family, despite some quite serious rains, and cars endlessly getting stuck between our house and the party venue.





I have been working full time for Save the Elephants all this year. Most of my work has been on the Elephant Crisis Fund, which has Leonardo Dicaprio as the most significant donor (no, I haven't met him). I have been travelling round Africa identifying new opportunities for supporting anti-trafficking and anti-poaching and monitoring existing projects. This means that I have had to re-invent myself (again) as an expert on law enforcement, investigations, intelligence and so on. I have been to Zimbabwe (twice), Zambia (twice), Malawi, South Africa, Uganda, Ethiopia and Congo, and have met some amazing people who are doing great elephant conservation work under challenging conditions. In the Congo I saw forest elephants and lowland gorillas for the first time. I had a couple of days with a vet trying to dart forest elephants, which is rather different from doing it in the savannah - with no air support, no back up gun, and visibility sometimes down to a couple of metres. Ironically after having no success deep in the damp forest, we managed to get a couple on the side of a road, which elephants are supposed to avoid. It has been a pretty mixed year for elephants – good news with the reduction in ivory prices, but many elephant populations that we are supporting (especially in Gourma in Mali and Garamba in DRC) are still in real trouble from poaching. We are all hoping that we will start to see the end of the crisis next year.

With best wishes for a happy New Year and as always hope that you can come to visit this year.

Chris, Caro, Clare and Robbie