

VISIT TO SAMBURU WATER PROJECT

My wife, Anne, was born and raised in Kenya, whilst I had worked there for some 24 years. Having retired to Devon in 1994, we have revisited the country we both loved at intervals, and another Kenya safari was overdue. We had got to know, and admire, Richard & Heather Gibson and their formidable fund raising achievement to supply water to the Samburu, so we needed little encouragement to include a visit to the Mpagas water project in our personal week-long camel trek, superbly organised by Helen Douglas-Dufresne and Pete Ilsley of “Wild Frontiers” and the Milgis Trust.

When we flew in to the Milgis area in January 2017 it was still, like most of the rest of Kenya, in the grip of a serious drought, and it was apparent that the borehole near Mpagas village, and ancillary distribution and storage systems, had been completed just in time to meet an increasingly severe water shortage. What impressed us was the size of the entire site, and the considerable distances required for the buried pipes to convey the water from the borehole to grateful villagers, via hilltop water storage tanks. Thanks to the dedication and long experience of Helen & Pete, the water scheme was operating very effectively, despite a determined attack on the water storage tanks by local baboons! There was even a surplus of water for local wild animals!

The most essential feature of a remote water scheme in Africa is long term reliability over the years ahead, and, by using a solar powered pump, supported by ongoing site supervision and engineering back-up from the Milgis Trust, there is little doubt of this scheme’s future success. The local people remain enormously grateful to all the UK donors – who they will never meet – and send their heart-felt thanks and greetings to all the project contributors – especially the livestock farmers of Mid Devon and Richard & Heather, with whom they feel a special bond.

Gordon Davies
Tiverton, Devon