

# 'Policing, Colonial Life and Decolonisation in Uganda, 1957-1960'

Stewart West

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## **The Author**

Stewart West served in the British Army from 1951-57, first as a private and then a commissioned officer in the Essex Regiment, and seconded to the Royal West Africa Frontier Force (RWAFF) from 1953-57. On leaving he joined the Colonial Police, which immediately posted him to Uganda. After resigning from the Uganda Police in 1961, he went on to work for several commercial companies, and completed both a B.A (Hons) in Humanities with Classical Studies and a B.Sc (Hons) in Social Sciences. He is currently retired and living in Malaysia. The main body of the paper below is an account of his time in the Uganda Police.

## **Preface**

**(Karl Hack)**

This is the third of the Ferguson Centre's Working Papers, and the first to provide *a first-hand account of the workings of empire*. The Centre is eager to help preserve, and make publicly available, more such accounts. We are also happy to consider posting replies or additions to a paper online, where these might add substantively to a paper, or provide an alternative or even competing view or voice.

This particular paper bears on the history of East Africa, and thematically on the history of colonialism, of the living conditions and attitudes of Europeans in colonies, decolonisation, and of colonial 'policing' and justice in the widest sense. There is everything here from housing, clothing and cooking, through trials and riots, to racist attitudes and European-African friendship.

It may help some readers if I preface and contextualize the local story that follows.

The events that Stewart West has kindly recalled and described for us cover a wide range of colonial and police experiences from recruitment, through training and early routines and the rich diversity of backgrounds (colonial and military) of his fellow officers, to his resignation after several years of service. His account of the culture and feel of colonial policing (and a police force which had an immense range of transnational experience) culminates with a description of his part in dealing with a linked series of riots in the Bukedi district of the Protectorate of Uganda. These occurred in January 1960, by when Uganda was home to at least 6.5 million people.

## 1959 Census

### *Population by ethnicity*

African	6.45 million (2.3% urban)
Asian	71,933
European	10,866 (63% urban)
Other non-African	4,259
TOTAL	6.5 million

### *Major Towns*

Kampala	46,735
Jinja	29,741
Mbale	13,569

Source: V.I. Junod, ed., *The Handbook of Africa* (New York: New York University Press, 1961), p. 423.

Raymond Leslie Buell's 1928 book, *The Native Problem in Africa* (Vol. 1, p. 559), provides a colourful and slightly patronizing example of early Western views of the land this population inhabited, as:

A country of elephant grass and banana trees, Uganda leads a happy and secluded life, five hundred miles inland from the Indian Ocean. Its eastern frontier marches with that of Kenya and also touches the water edge of Lake Victoria Nyanza. On the West, it adjoins the Belgian Congo, and on the north, the Sudan. The country, which has an area of one hundred and ten thousand square miles, is located on the equator. Despite this fact it has a fairly high elevation – the lowest point being 1,560 feet, at Lake Rudolf, and the highest point being 16,794 feet ... Uganda is broken by a chain of historic lakes ... It was in Uganda that the long-sought-for source of the Nile was found. The river begins life at Lake Victoria near Jinja, in a region shaded by papyrus grass and watched over by long-legged cranes. ... Uganda ... is separated by the sea by the Colony of Kenya. It was only the construction of the Uganda Railway In 1896 [at first stopping just short of Uganda, on the other side of Lake Victoria] which made the occupation and retention of the protectorate by the British possible.

Buell might also have added that the railway also brought significant numbers of Asians, as labourers and then as traders, and facilitated the export of profitable cash crops such as cotton.

Britain's presence in Uganda had had its origins in exploration, missionary work, and latterly in the trading activities of the Imperial British East Africa Company. The latter was finally wound up in 1893, with the British Government taking over and making the area a British Protectorate from 1894. Agreements in and after 1900 consolidated the Protectorate, while leaving a degree of autonomy to several sub-kingdoms and territories, especially Buganda.

At the all-Uganda level, the British Commissioner reigned supreme, advised after 1921 by a Legislative Council which did not include African representatives. The first Asian was appointed in May 1926, and the first three Africans in October 1945. By the 1950's Uganda came under a Colonial Governor. During Stewart West's time this was Sir Frederick Crawford, whose predecessor was Sir Andrew Cohen. The Uganda Protectorate, in short, was initially characterized by firm British control in the centre, and a degree of 'indirect rule' at regional levels and lower reaches. By the point the paper describes, however, politics was shifting. Locally elected Africans were introduced into a reorganized national Legislative Council in the early 1950s, ministers were introduced in 1953, and the first direct elections in 1958. In 1953 the Buganda kingdom or province's assembly – worried that nationalism might swamp regional identities or that Uganda might be forced into a federation with settler-dominated colonies – had responded by asking for separate independence. As a result its king (Kabaka), was temporarily exiled, until a compromise could be agreed. Soon multiple parties flourished, albeit often rooted in narrow religious, ethnic, regional and religious allegiances. Then, in 1960, the impetus for decolonisation intensified, following the French grant of independence to most of its African colonies, and the beginnings of serious disturbances in the Belgian Congo. Britain accelerated the pace of constitutional advance. In response, a coalition of convenience was formed between Milton Obote's Uganda People's Congress (UPC – itself a fissiparous entity) and the Bugandan royalist party. This papering over of fundamental differences (and distinct regions) facilitated the granting of independence on 9 October 1962, with Obote as Prime Minister and Kabaka Mutesa II as President.

The disturbances that Stewart West faced in and around 1960 took place against this backdrop of political ferment and uncertainty. In addition to the rising political activism and crime of the time, readers also need to take note of the nature of Bukedi, and of British 'indirect rule' there. Britain had found it convenient and cheap to rely on local power brokers in Uganda – which it recognized and strengthened with new powers – to keep order and carry out some basic government functions. This also fitted the rhetoric of 'protectorate' status and indirect rule. What this meant for Bukedi was that much rural tax collection was in the hands of local 'chiefs', rather than more directly supervised government employees. In effect these chiefs, despite a certain level of autonomy and status, were integrated as a lower rung of the colonial administration, under European direction.

This partial reliance on ‘indirect rule’ informed the Bukedi disturbances of 1960. While nationalist leader Milton Obote was abroad, Kenneth Ingram (*Obote: a Political Biography*, p. 57), describes how:

In his absence disturbances had broken out in Bukedi District [in the east of the country]. Taxation was the ostensible reason for the rioting, but more fundamental was the feeling that chiefs should not act simultaneously as tax collectors, controllers of the police called upon to arrest defaulters and as judges at their subsequent trial. Obote had no doubt that his party had helped to instigate the protest, but while he had considerable sympathy with the people’s complaint, he was critical of the violence they had employed to make their point. He was glad to have been out of the country when blame was apportioned’.

Obote appears in Stewart West’s account when he is denied access to all the defendants he wishes to represent. One politician, Kirya, was briefly held in prison. Army units had been deployed to Bugisu and Bukedi districts to help the Uganda Police (including our author) quell the violence. In the process, 12 people were killed and many injured, some by the security forces and some by the rioters themselves, whilst more than one thousand were arrested and charged with riotous assembly. The author, as you will see below, felt sufficiently uncomfortable about the security force role at the time (and looming independence) to eventually resign his post. Some other accounts, meanwhile, emphasize the difficulty the police had in differentiating between crime and genuine protest when – for instance – boycotts might be partly enforced by intimidation (<http://oryema.blogspot.com/2006/10/uganda-police-history.html>, accessed January 2012).<sup>1</sup>

Similar clashes occurred between troops and demonstrators over the coming months. This is an example of the way in which nationalists both benefitted from simmering violence and discontent, and yet sometimes tried to position themselves as relatively ‘moderate’ individuals who could only help direct nationalism away from violence if colonialism accelerated concessions. The government subsequently issued a 14-page report, the *Sessional paper on the report of the Commission of Inquiry into the disturbances in certain areas of the Bukedi and Bugisu Districts of the Eastern Province during the month of January, 1960* (Uganda Government Printer, 1960). Though, with independence less than two years away, it turned out that there was little time left for the colonial regime to adapt, and many colonial officers began to look for their personal route out of the colony.

The paper that follows outlines one colonial policeman’s experiences and views with rich texture and immediacy. In doing so, it gives the view from the ‘man-on-the-spot’, the officer charged with making colonialism work on the ground, on contact with empire’s subjects. While other studies may analyze policy

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<sup>1</sup> Note by Stewart West: the website author, Oryema, was an Assistant Superintendent of Police during the time I was in Uganda. He eventually became the first African Commissioner of Police. I don’t remember him being actively involved in the Bukedi Disturbances however.

and motive, at the end of the day we can only truly understand what such policies meant, if we also look at how they were mediated by, and impacted upon, individuals such as the author of this piece. What the rules and codes say on paper, and what they mean in the hands of individuals with their own unique inheritance of experiences, attitudes, and impressions of Africans and Asians, may be quite different things. How well a police force operated could also depend on things as varied as salary and conditions, weaponry, and training drills and standing orders, for all of which we need evidence of the reception of these policies by policemen, and in conditions of stress. Furthermore, quite apart from this helping to understand why things turned out as they did, there is independent value in learning what things really looked, smelt, tasted, and felt like emotionally to the individuals faced with them. This paper provides some of the vital texture, without which accounts of empire would end up increasingly abstracted and distanced from the reality of lived experience.

What follows, then, is the account of just one of the 10,866 Europeans in Uganda in 1959.

The Ferguson Centre would like to extend its thanks to Stewart West for putting his thoughts, memories and reflections into digital form, and hopes this will provoke (or perhaps that should be encourage) others to do likewise.

#### ***Additional Sources:***

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## The Bukedi Disturbances

August 1957 was not a good time to be leaving the army. The 1956 Suez debacle had caused Britain to rethink its role and the army was faced with major cuts under what became known as 'The Sandys' Axe', (after Duncan Sandys – the minister responsible). So I decided to apply to the Colonial Police. A lengthy recruitment procedure included completing a long application form with suitable referees and a 'one on one' interview with a recruiting official at the Colonial Office. I asked the official how decolonization might affect me and I was told not to worry, I could look forward to a full career of at least 25 years and a full pension at the end. Words that came to mind frequently as the future unfolded.

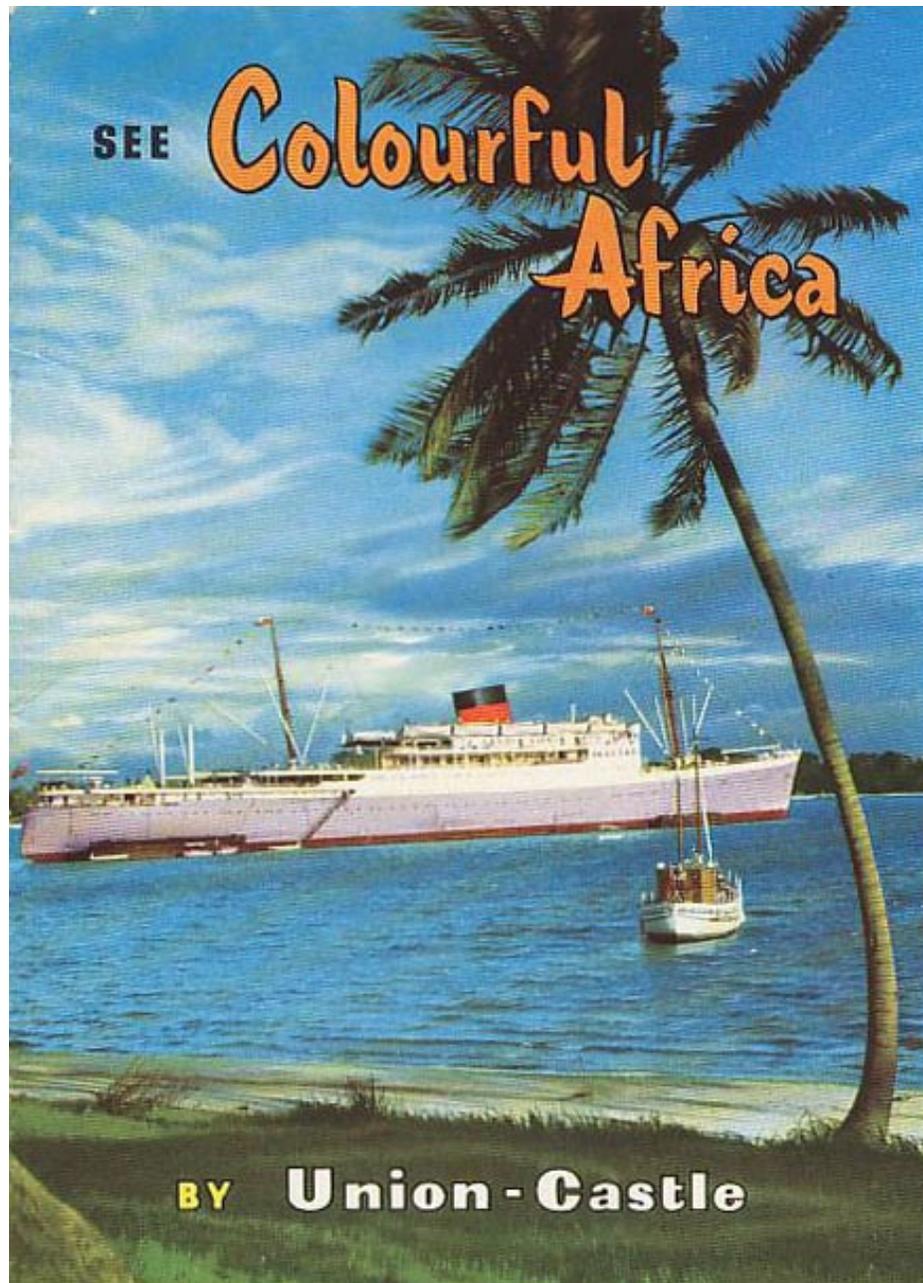
A 'board interview' was quite daunting and friends told me that there would be five members, one of whom would be a serving Commissioner from one of the colonies. I was also told to 'watch out for the one sitting at the right hand end because he is usually a bastard'. At my board interview, the one at the end was quite sunburnt and wore a tropical suit, so I guessed he was the 'serving Commissioner on leave.' He did ask me some quite awkward questions, particularly about my experiences during the 1955 Freetown Riots and whether I thought the officer who had opened fire on a crowd with a Bren Gun, killing 11 people, had been justified. I pointed out that I had been at the opposite end of town, whereas the officer concerned was in the area where the O.C. Police Riot Squad, Mike Everitt (an ex Malaya Police officer who had been wounded there and sent to Sierra Leone for a rest.) had been killed by the rioters, and thus I was not in a position to judge. He kept pressing me to do so but I refused, saying that only the people on the spot could do that. All I could say was that during the Freetown Riots although confronted by rioters on several occasions myself I had not found it necessary to open fire.

Eventually I received a letter telling me that I was accepted as a Cadet Assistant Superintendent for the Uganda Police and would be required to undergo a 13 week basic constables' course at No 4 District Police Training Centre at Mill Meece, near Stafford, where I would be fed and clothed but not paid. I would be entitled to pay when I reached East Africa. The course was a device to show that we were properly qualified to be engaged as police officers. All my fellow colonials at Mill Meece were newly released commissioned officers from the armed forces. I recall four from the infantry (two of whom had been in Sierra Leone with me), two artillerymen, one submariner, one Royal Marine and one Royal Air Force navigator. One ex-NCO was also on the course but he was a specialist radio operator destined for Nyasaland whereas the rest of us were all destined for Uganda.

Mill Meece was the training centre for the Midlands but also took policewomen from England and Wales and all Colonial forces, so our intake had the 'colonials' listed above plus about 10 female and 20 male probationary constables. The training was intensive and interesting but the food was the worst I had been offered since serving as a private soldier in the Suez Canal Zone. The cooks employed were all displaced persons from the 1956 Hungarian uprising. After a revolt the directing staff held a mass meeting with us and

food improved marginally for a while. We colonials were also cold because the clothing issue consisted of a thin blue battle dress and a peaked cap. (I think it was Prison Service issue) no shoes, socks, shirts etc. Our 13 weeks covered the winter period November, December, January, and I had to borrow an overcoat from one of the Staffordshire constables who was about my size.

The guy destined for Nyasaland had in the meantime been thrown off the course. Fraternalization between the sexes was strictly forbidden but at weekends the school laid on coaches to various cities so that people could go home. There was one very pretty constable from Cardiff with whom Nyasaland Jack had teamed up for a week-end in one of the cities nearby. Noting two 'mavericks' on the coach, the directing staff had the hotels in the city checked out. They tracked down Jack and the constable sharing a room. On the Monday they were called to the Commandant's office and sacked. We later heard that the Colonial Office had merely put Jack on the next ship for East Africa whereas the poor girl was kicked out of the Cardiff Constabulary.



**1954 Brochure showing the MV Kenya Castle**

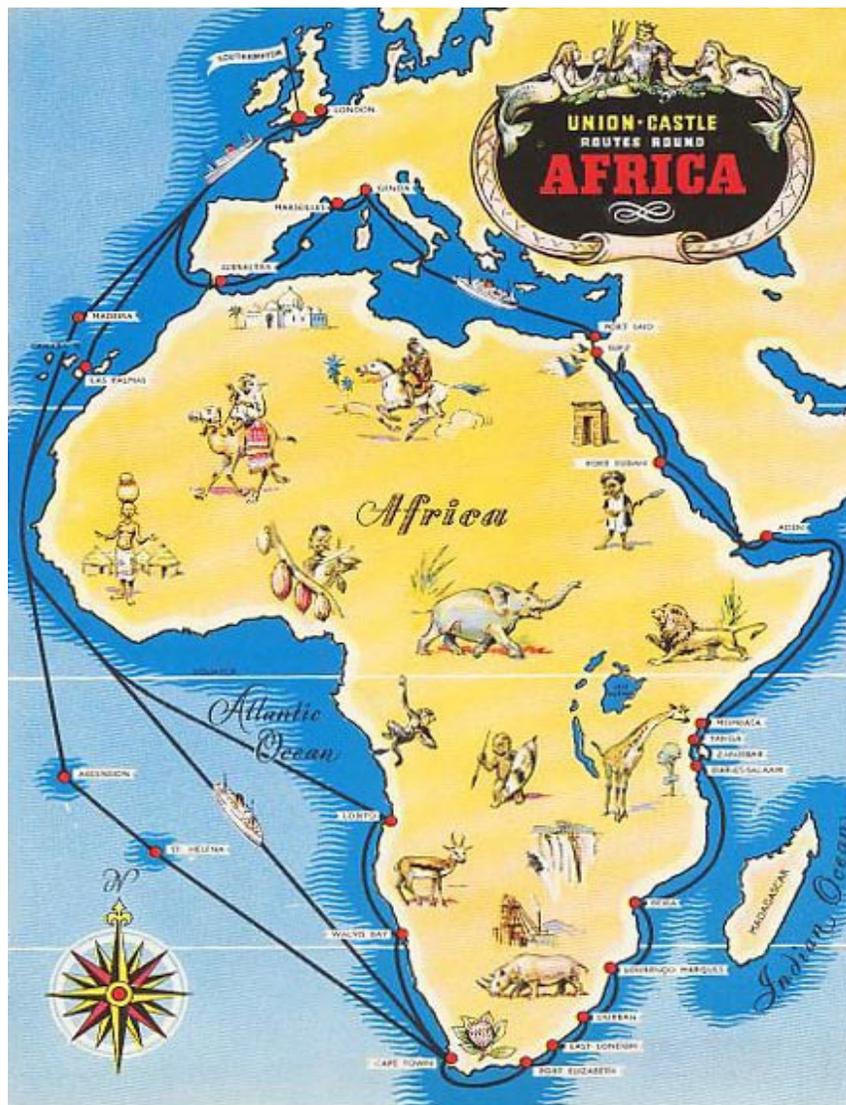
Source: <http://www.timetableimages.com/maritime/images/uclkenya.htm>

**From the Online Collection of Björn Larsson.**

We also received a visit from the Inspector General of Colonial Police. During a general talk he told us that ex-commissioned officers had been recruited for Uganda in an effort to try to raise the overall quality of its

Gazetted ranks, because they had a surfeit of ex-Palestine Police who had originally been recruited as constables and reached gazette rank by default. This comment later came back to haunt us.

At the end of our training we were given tickets for the MS Kenya Castle sailing from Tilbury in February and told that we would be met at Mombasa by a member of the Crown Agents who would give us our onward tickets for the train to Uganda and an advance of pay if it was needed. Being flat broke I couldn't get to Mombasa quickly enough. However, our journey was lengthened by a few days after the cargo shifted in a storm and had to be re-stowed. I remember our ports of call were Gibraltar, Marseilles, Genoa, Port Said and Aden.



A Union Castle shipping line advert in the 1950's

Source: <http://www.timetableimages.com/maritime/images/uclkenya.htm>

From the online collection of Björn Larsson.

At Mombasa we were indeed met on board by the agent and given a few pounds advance and our tickets for the train to Kampala that was due to leave that evening. This has to be one of the great railway journeys of the world, linking the Indian Ocean with Lake Victoria in the African interior. I shared a two-berth sleeping compartment with Jim Fordham and upon entering found an array of buttons on the wall, one of which was marked 'Steward', so I pressed it and shortly an African dressed in a white 'kanzu' and red fez came to the door and asked what I required. Tongue in cheek I said 'two ice cold beers please' and to my pleasant surprise they were delivered within moments. Clearly it was to be an enjoyable trip.

Our sleeping compartment was air conditioned but the dining car turned out to be straight from the turn of the century with plenty of red plush upholstery and little shaded lights. The menu too seemed to have been unchanged since the 1900s because the meal started with 'brown Windsor soup'. Night fell just after leaving Mombasa but we woke at dawn to a view of the Tsaavo Reserve with Mount Kilimanjaro in the distance. We reached Nairobi around mid day, then crossed the Rift Valley and over the mountains into Uganda during the night, arriving the following afternoon. Here we learned that we would have a further six months training at the Police College in Nakuru near Kampala, before being posted.

Adjacent to the College was a staff housing compound where we were allocated bungalows with basic furnishings and told to organize ourselves. Deciding to 'mess' together we engaged a cook and houseboy and took it in turns to organize shopping and menus. Our cook's, specialty was iced cakes topped with a message such as 'Happy Easter from Harun Cook' – his name was Harun.

Our first visit was to the Force Quartermaster who issued lengths of Khaki Drill for uniforms, shoes, stockings, blue hosetops (to be folded over the tops of stockings), peaked cap with force badge, raincoat, black 'Sam Browne' belt and a sword in a black scabbard (apart from the black scabbard it had the same pattern as my old infantry sword). We were also given the choice of a solar topee or a slouch hat, with a blue pugaree, for wear in the Provinces. Having become accustomed to wearing slouch hats with the RWAFF, and knowing how useful they were on the rifle range, that was my choice. Then on to the Force tailors to be measured for our uniforms – three pairs of shorts, three bush shirts, long trousers and a long sleeved jacket. The last item to be issued to us was a set of about 30 volumes of the Laws of Uganda, bound in the familiar light brown covers with black bands on the spine for the titles (every film depicting a lawyer's office has shelves full of them) – and it came as bit of a surprise to find that these were to be a vital part of my kit. An ongoing pain too because we had to keep them up to date with amendments issued by the Government Stationer from time to time.

We also visited the accounts people to arrange a car loan because we were required to buy a personal car to be used for work. A couple of guys went ahead straight away but most of us held off to study the options. I later purchased a new Opel Rekord - Registration No. URF 305, for the princely sum of 540 pounds.

Back at college, the Commandant, Senior Superintendent Arthur Wilson and his deputy a Superintendent Caunce (both ex-Palestine Police), introduced us to the set-up and our instructors. Arthur himself was to be our Swahili teacher, ASP Dave Charnley (ex- Malaya) would be our Law teacher and ASP Len Taylor would cover Police Procedure. ASP Parker ex Military Police would be our firearms instructor whilst to our amazement ASP Sprague ex RSM of one of the Guards Regiments would teach us foot drill. Having just completed service in the Regular Army we did not expect to spend time doing foot drill and some of my colleagues adopted a campaign of non-cooperation.

Our pay was 60 pounds a month, from which was deducted our “interest free” car loan and rent for our government housing. These two items took up a large chunk of the 60 pounds and left us little for general living expenses. Jim Fordham, an ex Royal Air Force navigator, decided that what was left over from our pay was not sufficient to live on, so he resigned. Initially, the Commandant refused to accept his resignation on the grounds that he had signed a contract which permitted resignation only after two and half years.

If we failed to serve our time we became liable for the cost of our training in the UK and our fares to Uganda. Jim calculated he would be better off doing that, than trying to live in Uganda. Jim was a bit better off than the rest of us, he had collected a healthy gratuity after finishing 8 years with the RAF and said that he would pay his own fare home and challenged the Colonial office to send a bill for the rest, pointing out that he would sue the Colonial Office for misrepresentation when he got back to UK. He left soon afterwards and we all lost touch but some years later I saw an announcement in the paper that Mr. J E Fordham had been appointed as one of HM Judges.

All these issues left our squad in quite bad odour and not surprisingly we were given a rough ride through the College. It was not without its lighter moments. During one Swahili lesson when Arthur, who not only had a strong London accent but also liked to address us by name, looked towards Derek Hunt and said ‘Bwana Winda’. Derek leaped up and opened a window. ‘Why did you do that?’ asked Arthur. ‘I thought that’s what you wanted’ Derek replied. ‘K class verb: Kuwinda – to hunt’, said Arthur, and I must say that it is one of the verbs I still remember 50 plus years later.

On the whole it was an interesting and extremely varied course and included sessions with the Police Traffic Dept, Police Special Branch, Civil Administration, the Game Department and a week of ‘pounding the beat’ on nightshift at one of the hairier Kampala locations. I was sent to a station in the Indian quarter of the town notorious for high crime levels. The OCP, who lived above the station, was ASP Andrew Brochocki (pronounced Brohoffski). He had served with the Polish Cavalry during World War Two and later joined the Malayan Police from where he had been transferred. Adjacent to the front entrance to Andrew’s flat were hung the various uniform hats he had worn over the years and in the event he was called out in a hurry he grabbed the nearest to hand as he left, and thus was quite likely to appear in a beret or jungle hat from Malaya, or his square crowned Polish Cavalry Cap and even on occasion, his Uganda Police cap. Andrew

was an exceptionally charming man and soon afterwards was transferred to Special Branch before eventually leaving Uganda in 1961 to join the Sarawak Police.

During training we were also taken to meet the Chief Justice in our best lounge suits and were sworn in as Magistrates 3<sup>rd</sup> Class and Justices of the Peace (Powers of imprisonment up to 30 days, signing of search and arrest warrants and authority to read the Riot Act if we found ourselves without a magistrate when confronted by rioters.) We were also inducted as Honorary Game Wardens, Immigration Officers and Fire Officers. A heady mix for a 24 year old.

We were also taught police riot control methods which differed from the army in as much as police squads were equipped with rattan shields and a riot baton about three feet long, unlike standard truncheons about one foot in length. The only guns *for the whole squad* were two Greener Guns. These were 'Martini action' shotguns and could fire only one round at a time. The police drill called for a magistrate to 'Read the Riot Act' after which if the crowd failed to disperse a baton charge would take place. If this failed you ordered your greener gunner to fire buckshot at specific members of the crowd. There was no drill to follow if this failed, but we were advised that the army could then be called to aid the civil power. In other words the drill was only effective in confrontation with crowds confined to a street

We eventually finished training and were given our postings. I was assigned to Gulu, the capital of the Northern Province, up near the Sudan border, and found that my CO would be Deputy Supt. Denys Drayton, ex- Malayan Police.

Just prior to the posting, I had acquired a dog when the EASPC telephoned me in the mistaken belief that I wanted a pet. I visited the dog pound and the African keeper handed me the keys and said that my prospective friend was in the last cage on the left, but refused to take me in, on the grounds that the animal was too fierce. I went to the cage and sitting there was a large black Labrador/Alsatian cross with one ear up, Alsatian style, and one ear down, Labrador style. I greeted him and he wagged his tail enthusiastically so I said 'You don't look all that fierce to me' and he wagged his tail in agreement. I took him along to my car, opened the door, and with no hesitation he jumped in and sat on the back seat. I named him Satan for his black appearance. A few days later I was approached by the wife of Assistant Commissioner Fort who talked me into taking a Siamese Kitten she had named 'Toby'. So setting off for Gulu with a car full of kit, I stopped at Mrs Fort's house to collect Toby. She had kindly packed his 'toys', a cloth mouse and a feather, and a packet of miniature sardine sandwiches for the journey (I kid you not). Toby was soon renamed Nanki Poo because the Kampala Operatic Society had recently performed The Mikado and CASP Brian Field had played that part.

Gulu had been the base of Sir Sam Baker in the 1870's when he was exploring in the area and suppressing the slave trade. The remains of his fort were still in existence and a local landmark.

Tarmac roads were not common and ran out after about 60 miles North of Kampala so most of the journey was on dusty red laterite roads. Although Gulu was Provincial HQ other conditions were also somewhat primitive. We had no telephones and Police communications were solely by radio between Gulu and Kampala. I was allocated a pleasant modern bungalow on Eden Drive adjacent to the golf course, but it had no electricity supply, so whilst I already had a battery powered short wave radio, my first priority was to purchase a second hand kerosene fridge, a charcoal iron, and some oil lamps, two of which were the 'pressure' variety. These had silk mantles which became incandescent when lit and gave a good light. However the lighting process was a bit complicated and involved heating up the jet above the oil reservoir so that a fine spray was blown into the mantle which was then lit. Whilst doing this you had to take care not to damage the mantle otherwise it would disintegrate and the process had to be started all over again using a new one. The oil lasted for about four hours after which you either went to bed or had to relight your lamp. The kerosene fridge worked on the basis of a coolant that evaporated when heated by a flame located in a pipe at the base. The flame was provided by a circular wick dipped in a reservoir of kerosene. Unless this was trimmed precisely so that it burned without smoking, your fridge would not work so this was another almost daily task. The 'charcoal iron' was a basic iron with a space below the handle that held glowing charcoal. I was already familiar with this implement because we used it in West Africa particularly when away from barracks in places without electricity. All cooking in Gulu was done on a wood burning 'Dover' stove, for which the Public Works Department delivered a monthly supply of fire wood.



**A Dover Stove.**

From: <http://www.dassies.co.za/stoves.php>

Another important purchase was *The Kenya Settlers' Cookbook and Household Guide* Sheila E N Steel(Editor), Jean Herbert (Editor), David Steel (Foreword) First published 1928 by St Andrew's Church Womens' Guild of Nairobi, and by 1951 in its 11<sup>th</sup> edition.

This not only contained useful recipes using local products, but instructions for making things you might not be able to purchase. I recall one recipe for soap using reduced animal fat and wood ash, although I never needed it, thank goodness.

There were two ASPs in Northern Province – one at a place called Kitgum where Rex Hunt was DC. Later in his career he was the Governor of the Falkland Islands when Argentina invaded. The other ASP was plain clothes Special Branch and we didn't see much of him. Neither did we see the OCP Northern Province who shared offices with the Provincial Commissioner, Powell- Cotton. Our huge District bordered Karamoja in

the East, Sudan in the North and the River Nile in the West, thus it included the Murchison Falls Game Park where a police post was located at Paraa Lodge and which I was required to visit with the constables pay every month. This was usually a pleasant chore when I stayed overnight and met up with the Chief Warden for the Park – Frank Poppleton,- who had served with the Gurkhas before joining the Game Department.

I was also warned about a rogue elephant, known as ‘The Mayor of Paraa’ who had a habit of breaking into vehicles searching for bananas. I met him on the road once and when he displayed some interest I cleared off quickly.



**Murchison Falls where the River Nile cascades through a gap in the rocks.**

**From: <http://www.murchisonfallsnationalpark.com/>**

Every day was totally different, such as the time there was a fire in town about a mile away. Immediately the alarm sounded, constables appeared from all quarters, jumping on their bicycles, and carrying stand pipes and reels of hose. On one occasion, I was running towards my car but stopped by a call from Denys Drayton who asked where I was going. I told him ‘to the fire.’ ‘Wait a few minutes’, he said, ‘if you rush off in your car you will get there first and stand around looking silly, waiting for the constables. Let them get there first, then go down.’ Another time I had to go out into the Game Reserve and find the Ranger, Captain Robbie Robson, to pass a message that his father in Scotland was seriously ill. I took a tent and camp kit with me and eventually located his camp and set up my own stuff alongside, and waited for him to come back. He arrived back towards the end of the day and since our camp was on a grassy slope about 200 metres from the Nile, we spent what was for me a wonderful evening watching the game going down to the water to drink since it had been too late to return to Gulu . I think it was on this occasion that I saw, at the same time, two herds of elephant each at least 100 strong.

I had my first experience of 'prosecuting' in the District Court, presided over by the District Magistrate, Ernest Baber. As bad luck would have it, my very first case was bestiality with a goat. I later discovered that these cases were brought because a goat so assaulted was deemed unclean and had to be destroyed. The defence of the accused was that he had been standing at the side of a path when the goat had backed into him.

The first elections for Legislative Council members took place in 1958, during my time in Gulu, and the registration of those qualified to vote had been chaotic. The elections were marked by the highly illegal practice of whole classes of underage schoolboys being lined up to vote by their teachers at some of the polling stations. This descended into inter-church chaos at one place and I was sent to sort it out. An Irish priest asked to come with me because it was at one of his schools and when we drew near he asked me for a loan my revolver. It wasn't loaded so I passed it over. Out he leapt waving my gun about, shouting 'pack it up the lot of yez or I'll shoot yez.' My intervention was not needed but I'm sure my OC would not have approved of the method.

One day, a neighbour, Sid Wright, asked if I was interested in going crocodile hunting. I enthusiastically agreed. I was told to bring a rifle and a torch. Reflection from the torch would make the crocodile's eyes glow red in the dark and provide a point of aim. On the appointed evening, off we went and eventually pulled up near the river, whereupon my host unloaded an inflatable rubber boat. I asked why we needed a boat and was told that we would go out in it and look for crocodiles by shining our torches at the shallows along the river bank. Thoroughly dismayed, I chickened out saying; 'there is no way I am going out in a rubber boat in the pitch dark looking for man eating crocodiles!' I fretted on the bank whilst my host disappeared. Fortunately he did reappear although he hadn't managed to find any crocodiles.

Early in 1959 it was announced that Ernest Baber, was to be posted elsewhere and replaced by an African named Michael Kagwa. I knew Michael from my time in Kampala when we both played rugby at Kampala Rugby Club. He was an Oxford graduate with a half blue for tennis as well as being an exceptionally pleasant man with a beautiful wife, Olive. Like most stations Gulu boasted a European Club, membership of which was restricted to Government and Commercial European staff. Michael's imminent arrival sent a flutter through the club and an extraordinary meeting called to decide what to do about the arrival of a senior African with a sporting pedigree. The motion before the meeting called for consideration of various courses of action when he applied for membership. Should he be refused or offered limited membership with use of the tennis courts but not the club, or should the constitution be changed to give him unrestricted membership? The whole atmosphere of the meeting was quite awful as the various opinions were pushed around. Eventually I stood up and said something along the lines that I was probably one of the few people present who knew Michael and would be very happy to sponsor him for membership. I continued saying that anyway I doubted whether he would embarrass the club by applying. There was uproar and the Water Dept engineer stood up and challenged me, saying 'It comes down to this, after a hard day's work, who would you rather come in and have a beer with me or Michael Kagwa?' I prevaricated but he demanded a response, so I replied; 'well if you insist on a reply I would rather drink with Michael Kagwa any day of the week.' In

retrospect I guess I could have phrased it more tactfully. Anyway I was thrown out and banned from the club and a week or two later was posted to the far end of Uganda, Kabale, in the South Western District of Kigezi.

The move involved packing up all my household goods on a hired lorry along with my houseboy, Festo Obel and his family, and several chickens I had acquired. I went by car, stopping for a night in Fort Portal where I stayed with Paddy Clancy one of my pals from the college. (Paddy later transferred to the Hong Kong Police and I believe eventually became Assistant Commissioner). He had reduced his style of living to a minimum. His only furniture was government issue –, beds and mattresses had no bedding; in his kitchen, a ‘Dover’ wood burning stove had a large cooking pot containing stew and two spoons. At meal times he and his servant would take a spoon each and eat from the pot. From time to time various vegetables and pieces of meat were thrown into the pot to keep it topped up. His servant did his laundry, cleaned his car and kept the grass cut. Paddy had recently declined the offer of becoming ADC to the Governor, Sir Frederick Crawford (who previously had been deputy Governor of Kenya). Paddy’s version of the offer and his refusal was hilarious and unprintable, but the job was eventually taken by Lionel Botcherby another ex Sierra Leone infantry officer.

The following day we arrived in Kabale, a beautiful little town 6,000 feet above sea level in the Ruwenzori Range, surrounded by luxurious jungle – a complete change from Gulu. It was several days before my lorry arrived, and Festo had a long unlikely story of breakdowns and other hardships which included my missing chickens. In the meantime, I found accommodation at The White Horse Inn.

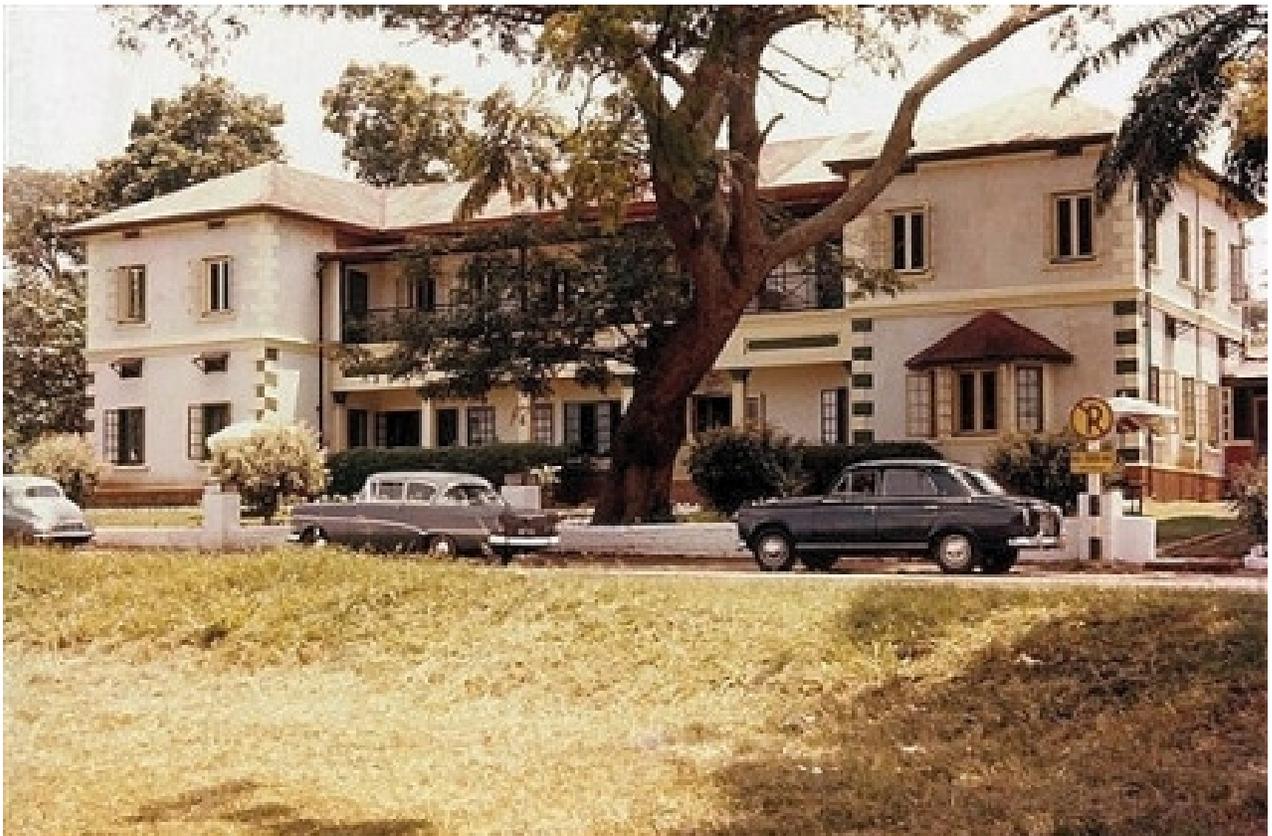
I was eventually allocated a large, old style wooden bungalow but finding that it had 27 windows and I had only four pairs of curtains, I asked if there was anything smaller. The only other empty house was a small brand new bungalow that I hadn’t been offered because the garden had not been laid. However I took this and to my surprise, after I moved in, 20 prisoners under a warder were marched to my bungalow every morning to lay out the garden.

By this time I had also discovered that my dog had a split personality. He behaved beautifully on a lead or in the house but tended to run amok when left to his own devices. My next door neighbor had a small child for which they had spent 14 years trying and after Satan had frightened the child rushing around the two gardens frantically barking to greet me when I came home, I was ordered to have him put down. A very sad business.

There was virtually no crime in Kigezi but one day I was sent out on a murder investigation and had to take camp kit and rations because it was some distance away in the Ruwenzori foot hills. On arrival, I was shown the body (a bit ripe by this time) which was in a wattle lean-to. It had a number of slash marks around the torso. So I set up my camp table and chair and started to take evidence. The problem was that I did not speak the local dialect and they did not speak Swahili so I had to work through a constable who spoke both – but no English. It was a painstaking process but gradually a picture emerged of a long standing feud between

the deceased and another local who had fortuitously been taken into custody by the village chief. I had just about reached the point of deciding that I had enough evidence to charge him when I asked if the deceased had been ill recently. I was told that he had suffered from a cold. This seemed a bit odd because it didn't really fit in with anything I had already been told, so I repeated the question, and eventually asked for someone to demonstrate the symptoms of a cold. To my amazement the witness threw himself on the ground and thrashed about, rolling his eyes in agony. Yes I was told, these were the deceased's symptoms when he suffered from a cold. I then realized that he had been an epileptic and the slashes on his body were caused by the exposed sharp sticks in the walls of the lean to. The prisoner was released, no doubt to his relief, and I made my way back home.

I would have stayed in peaceful, crime free, Kabale for ever, but a couple of months later I was posted to Jinja in the Eastern Province, a place known by its crime levels as the 'Chicago of Uganda'. A long day's journey by road ended when we arrived at The Ripon Falls Hotel in Jinja.



**Ripon Falls Hotel, Jinja (with an Opel Rekord almost identical with the one I owned in the forecourt)**

From: <http://www.sikh-heritage.co.uk/heritage/sikhher%20EAfrica/nostalgic-other%20cities%20&%20towns.html>

Website of Harjinder Singh.

Located on the banks of the Nile near the still new, Owen Falls Dam, Jinja was also a growing industrial area, with the Nyanza Textiles factory, Sikh Sawmills Ltd., the Mahdvani Sugar Estates, a copper smelter and the Nile Brewery amongst the larger companies, and the Barracks for the 4th Kings African Rifles on the edge of town near the Police Barracks. I was allocated a disgusting apartment near the dam, but it was so thoroughly infested with vermin that I refused it, and was eventually allocated part of a semi detached bungalow on Nile Crescent. With nothing between us and the river, hippopotamuses were frequent visitors to the garden and surrounding area. One night, awakened by noises from the back of my house I rushed out with a torch and truncheon to be confronted by a hippo scratching himself against the corner of my house. I went back inside faster than I had come out.

I was assigned to plain clothes duties in CID sharing these duties with a couple of others police officers, but had a variety of other special assignments from John Docherty, the Senior Superintendent of the District. John was the only man I ever met who had medals on both sides of his chest. He wore the scarlet ribbon of the Royal Life Saving Society for saving life in fire on the right, with the usual 'fruit salad' on the left. He was fluent in Luganda and famous throughout the force for quelling a riot in the main prison at Luzira by asking for a chair and then being let in through the main gate and simply sitting down in the middle of the mayhem. Eventually the prisoners became curious and asked him what he was doing, so he said 'sit down and I will tell you.' They did, and he in turn sat patiently and listened to all their problems. I mention this because it confirms my own view that protestors should be given an opportunity to air their grievances instead of being made to shut up by force.

Every so often, John would call up my boss (Superintendent 'Snaky' Smith) and ask for me to undertake some task or another. The first time it was to take a patrol out on Lake Victoria where there had been some problems with illegal incursion into the tsetse exclusion area. It was a breeding ground for the tsetse fly and kept free from humans to prevent it spreading to cattle. I was out for a week with a crew that did not speak English and on return literally stepped off the police launch and went straight for my Swahili Oral Exam.(I had already passed the written test). At the end, my examiner said, 'Well Mr West, I am going to pass you, but you have picked up a terrible Muganda accent from somewhere'. I knew where I had picked it up from, Sergeant Chamai and my six constables during the Lake patrol.

Another of my special 'one off' chores was to escort a bank official who went on a circular tour of Uganda picking up used bank notes. For this we travelled in my car followed by a police lorry with a sergeant and six constables. At the far point, Arua in West Nile District, we were met by one of my friends who said we were invited to a party at a mine over the border in the Belgian Congo. After securing the money, off we went and had an amazing evening. All our communication with our Belgian hosts was in Swahili until we had enough alcohol to lose our inhibitions and speak some almost forgotten schoolboy French. The first part of the entertainment was a mimed performance of Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf ('Pierre et le Loup') delivered by the local cubs and brownies. The second half was a lady in full evening dress sitting at a concert harp. She said 'Gavotte – Bocherini' and proceeded to play. All this European culture at a makeshift stage in the middle of the African jungle seemed a little bizarre, but after the entertainment we got down to the party. At one point I was told by one of the Belgians that the British had no idea how to run a

colony. The Belgians, he told me, were only offering education in slow stages – once everyone had been given primary education, they would bring in secondary and so on. The British method of educating suitable people up to tertiary education straight away could only lead to trouble. A few weeks later the Congo erupted and the same people ran for their lives.

On arrival in Jinja I had discovered a thriving civilian Rifle Club which I joined and was able to spend many Sunday's on the Kings African Rifles ranges. This in turn led me to another of John Docherty's 'chores' for me. Whenever the KAR needed an independent referee for any competitions, I was the obvious choice because I was a keen rifle shot and understood competition rules and conditions. The CO of the KAR was Lt Col Chandos Blair MC of the Seaforth Highlanders, a charming man who eventually became Lieut. General Sir Chandos Blair, GOC in C Scottish Command. His predecessor had loathed the police and was known to tell Gazetted police officers that they were not welcome in his mess and to go where they belonged – the Sergeants' Mess, 'Chan' was just the opposite and made us honorary members.

On one occasion I had been queueing in the bank to cash a cheque and noticed a rather scruffy African in front of me cashing a cheque for 120 pounds. I asked him where he had got the cheque and he said it was 'back pay' from his master in Kenya. In my experience servants were usually at least a month's pay in debt on wages of around 10 pounds a month, so I took him back to the Police Station and searched his belongings. I found a number of suspect items including a cheque book issued to M. N. Powell of Sultan Hamud in Kenya. I charged the guy with possession of property 'reasonably believed to be stolen' and sent a message to the Kenya Police on Sultan Hamud asking if they knew M. N. Powell. Not only did they know him but they confirmed that his servant had absconded with a number of his possessions as well as owing money which he had been advanced against future pay. I changed the charges to possession, forgery with intent to obtain money by false pretenses etc. and asked if Mr Powell would be prepared to come and give evidence. Since he was a farmer I was surprised when he agreed because it would mean being absent from his farm for several days. When I met up with him he explained that the servant had killed his cook by giving him strychnine from the farm cupboard, mistaking it for Epsom salts when giving him medication for a stomach ache, because he couldn't read. Eventually he was given three years imprisonment for the thefts, and I let the Kenya Police know that the guy was sufficiently literate to forge a cheque, if they wanted to reopen the murder enquiry. Norman Powell invited me to visit him at his farm if ever I came to Kenya, and in 1959 when I was selected for the Uganda Team to visit Kenya for a match against Tanganyika and the Oxford and Cambridge Rifle team I was also able to accept his invitation.

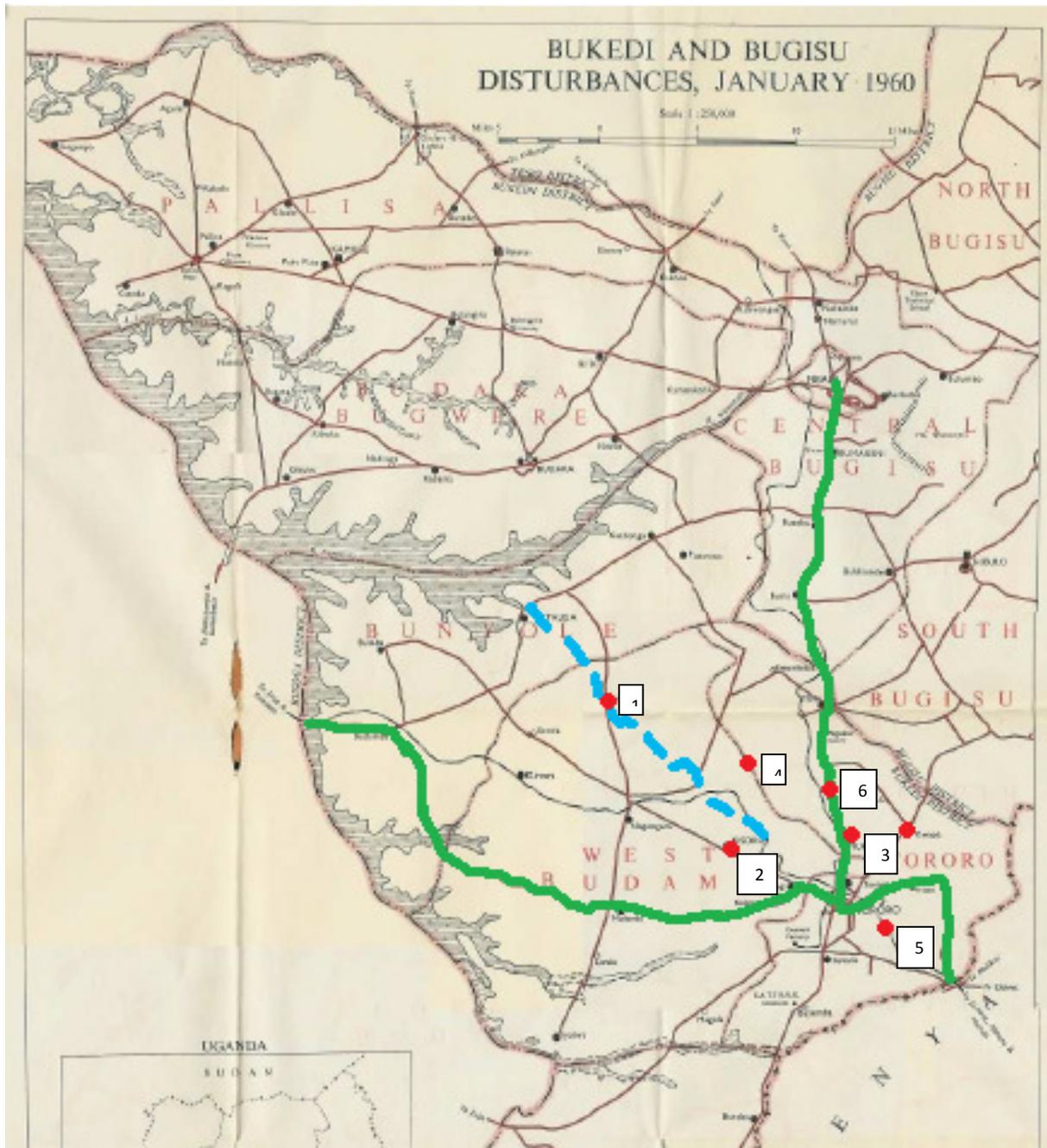
I had another spell as 'Court Prosecutor' during the time when John Hopkinson, a dour individual was the magistrate. One day the accused was so short that only the top of his head appeared above the 'dock'. "Mr West, tell the accused to stand up" said Hopkinson. "He is standing your Honour." I replied. "Stop messing about and tell him to stand" was the response. This was repeated until the court interpreter decided to help and said "Sah, I t'ink the accused is a dwaarf." (pronouncing 'dwarf' to rhyme with laugh, which we did – heartily.) "Well, get him a box to stand on" said Hopkinson without even cracking a smile.

A feature of life was locals shouting 'Uhuru' ('Freedom') every time they spotted a white face. I had to spend one month sealing off the roads of one of the nearby counties. It was alleged that certain politicians were fomenting unrest in the area and my job was to Keep them out of the area. There was quite a lot of political activity and the main parties were the Uganda Peoples' Party and Uganda Peoples' Congress, so whenever they did anything, everyone twitched because it was thought to be Moscow inspired. I had to set up three road blocks which had to be visited every two hours – a round trip of 60 miles. At the end of a month my car was long overdue a servicing. I didn't see any politicians but I had not expected to because they could quite easily have slipped in and out using jungle paths. For these chores I worked with a platoon of policemen under Sergeant Chamai, (My friend from Lake Patrols and other tasks) with whom I had built a good rapport. This rapport was later to be very important because in between times we practiced the Riot Drills together.

Throughout late 1959 there had been considerable disquiet about proposed changes in taxation. It was certainly a major subject of discussion amongst my constables because Poll Tax was scheduled to be increased from around 30 shillings per annum up to as much as 300. To put these increases in some context, my monthly salary was about 60 pounds (1200 shillings). I can't remember what a constable's wage was, neither do I know what a subsistence farmer might have acquired by selling his produce at market, but I do remember the general disquiet prevalent at the time. I later learned in Brian Wernham's excellent MA Thesis that in Bukedi the chiefs who collected the taxes were mostly from the Baganda Tribe, having been installed in these positions in the early part of the twentieth century because they were literate.

It was a system almost certain to cause ill feeling. Africans are probably more suspicious of other tribes than most people and to have another tribe not only overseeing them but also collecting taxes was asking for trouble.

On Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> January 1960 (the occasion is engraved on my memory) I was just about to sit down to lunch when my telephone rang. It was John Docherty – 'There's trouble in the Eastern Province, go straight to the barracks and collect a riot squad and go to Mbale.' I kept a trunk of spare clothing for such an eventuality so stuck it into my car and, without bothering with lunch, went straight to the Barracks. On arrival I found Sgt Chamai and my squad, about to leave for Tororo where the situation was apparently most critical, with another officer. I pointed out to John that this was my squad, trained by me and I had worked with them on a number of other tasks. He told me 'Never mind that, take the other squad and go to Mbale'. At this point the other officer came over and asked John how long we would be away. He replied, somewhat tetchily, that he had no idea, and enquired why was he asking. It turned out that my colleague had not brought any spare kit with him, so John told him to go and get some and to get a bloody move on. This was my chance, 'I'm kitted out and ready so shall I take the Tororo squad?' 'Yes, off you go, and report to Tim Forbes when you get there.' John replied.



**Bukedi disturbances as mapped by Stewart West.**

The blue line indicates the general route towards Tororo, taken by rioters on day one.

Roads overscored in green denotes tarmac, the rest are dirt roads.

- 1 – Chiefs’ Huts fired by rioters on Day 1
- 2 - Chiefs’ Huts at the area where I met up with Tim Forbes on Day 1
- 3 - Two Chiefs’ compounds where rioters were encountered on Day 2 setting fire.
- 4 - Place where crowd was encountered (Day 3 or 4)
- 5 – Area outside Tororo where I dispersed rioters with tear gas on Day 3.
- 6 – Main road from Mbale where I was spotted from the police plane.

We arrived at Tororo Police Station about 70 miles away, mid afternoon, and the place was nearly deserted. The station desk sergeant told me that the OC, Deputy Supt. Tim Forbes, had taken his riot squad out to where the District Commissioner had earlier been attacked and killed at a protest meeting. I later discovered that Gibson the DC had been beaten up but not killed. This was several miles west of Tororo, so I set out in that direction to find him.

On the way I saw pillars of smoke at intervals in the distance (1 and 2 on the map) The blue line on the map indicates the general direction that a huge mob of several hundred rioters was moving, across country in the direction of Tororo which was the District Headquarters. The fires furthest away seemed to be longer established but the ones nearer Tororo coming towards me seemed more recent, so it looked as though myself and the mob would soon meet up. Later I was to find that this was consistent with the protest meeting breaking up and a mob setting off cross country setting fire to chiefs’ houses as they went. I headed for the newest smoke and soon met Tim and his squad in hot pursuit of the mob, so my party joined in. In the pursuit our two groups became parted and we lost contact with each other, but my group finished up on a path in a fairly open piece of farmland with forest on two sides. By this time we had taken around 200 to 300 prisoners, so I put my two Greener gunners to guard them and set about shipping them back to Tororo by the lorry load, about 20 at a time. The first group had been gone for quite some time and the lorry was about due to arrive back when a small group of Africans came walking along the path and stopped to ask what was happening. We explained that we had arrested these people for rioting and attacking the chiefs, and would be taking them back to Tororo. They told us that could not be the case because they knew the people and they were not bad men, suggesting that we let them go. The discussion went around and around and in the meantime the lorry returned. At this point we were again asked to release the prisoners and when we refused, the Africans immediately began shouting for assistance. The forest on both sides came to life and a huge party of Africans armed with spears, bows and arrows, and pangas emerged. I learned what the expression ‘being frozen to the spot’ meant. My mind and body ceased to function for a moment. I remember turning to Sgt. Chamai and saying something along the lines of ‘It doesn’t look too good.’ He replied, ‘I think if we had a machine gun we would have a chance.’ That unfroze me and I shouted to my constables and the Greener gunners to leave the prisoners and get on the truck. As soon as everyone was on board I shouted to the driver to ‘go, go, go.’

Why did I do that instead of attempting a baton charge? I assessed at the time that to do so would result in a blood bath since: first, we were outnumbered because we were only about 20 strong; and secondly, we were outweaponed. In these circumstance a baton charge could only result in my unit sustaining massive injuries, and thus being put out of action straight away. Retrospectively I became angry that we had been exposed to a situation like this, being trained and equipped only for urban unrest.

We got back to Tororo and I told my constables to hand in their batons and shields, which were obviously useless, and to draw .303 rifles. We then went out again and spent the remainder of the daylight looking for marauding groups and breaking them up. We did not have occasion to open fire. I heard later that my colleague who had gone to Mbale had encountered a similar situation and his vehicle had been attacked as they drove away – at which point a constable had fired into the crowd. I was astonished to hear that he had charged the man “with opening fire without orders”. I would have given the guy a pat on the back.

The following morning, it was agreed that our top priority was to deny rioters access to Tororo because if they got into town the consequences would be disastrous. For that day I had a magistrate with a loud hailer assigned to me. His name was Keith Arrowsmith, (brother of Angela Arrowsmith of CND fame) and I knew him from my time in Gulu. Very soon we ran into a bunch of rioters heading for a chief’s compound about five miles from town (place 3 on the map). Keith leapt from the truck and started to read the Riot Act. The crowd then turned about and headed across country to another chief’s area. We went around by road to head them off but they immediately turned round again and went back to the first place. This happened several times without Keith finishing the warning announcement, and it was clear that serious damage was going to take place because several men carried blazing torches. I told Keith that the next time we bumped into the crowd I would order a constable to fire at one of the people carrying torches. Keith said ‘you can’t do that until I read the Riot Act’. I replied ‘Sorry, I see no alternative.’ So that is what happened.

Two shots were fired by myself and a constable. I had seen a man setting fire to a chief’s hut. When he realized he was being watched he broke away and ran in a left to right direction away from the hut. Aiming at his chest, I fired one round at him and he appeared to be hit. However when we searched the area immediately afterwards there was no sign of him. Later C/ASP Paddy Clancy claimed to have found him and taken him to hospital with a wound in his upper leg.

Although the tempo of the disturbances seemed to slow down, we continued with our policy of keeping the rioters on the move, breaking up groups where possible , and keeping them away from town. We met crowds on several occasions and broke them up without opening fire, although on one occasion I had to use my revolver in self-defence when a chap with an axe had a go at me (4 on the map). I don’t think I hit him, but he cleared off anyway.

By this time the Kenya African Rifles (KAR) had been called in, and they had deployed a company to Tororo under Captain Paul Woodford. It must have been on the following day (probably 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> Jan) because Keith Arrowsmith was no longer with me when I met some fellows on the main road between Mbale and Tororo (6 on the map). I stopped the truck and leaving my constables on board went and explained to them that there was a 24 hour curfew and they should take themselves home. Whilst this was going on the Police Cessna piloted by Chris Treen kept passing overhead wagging its wings – and eventually dropping a message which fell too far away for me to recover and read, so I got back in the truck and continued into Tororo. On the way I met Paul Woodford and his Company heading in my direction. We stopped and Paul said ‘Thank God you are OK.’ I asked what was going on and he said that Chris Treen had spotted a large armed gang in the forest to one side, preparing to attack my group, whilst I was talking to the fellows on the road. My own guess was that they were waiting to see whether I tried to arrest their friends. We kept on patrolling for a few more days, but this more or less ended my involvement in the serious troubles .

Once the riots were over, we started the long business, which ran into months, of processing several hundred arrested rioters through the court. To help speed up the process, we were allocated a temporary magistrate from Kampala for the period.

We tried as far as possible to place the accused into groups and gathered witness statements in support, linking people and the acts of violence they had carried out. Overall I was very uncomfortable with the case files constructed, and felt that a lot of old scores were being settled with false evidence. I was told that it would be up to the magistrate to decide whether the evidence was good or not. One incident that added to my discomfort was a visit to the police station one day by Milton Obote, at that time a practicing lawyer and leading politician. He told me that he wished to visit the prisoners because he would be representing them when they went to court. I was instructed to ask for the names of those he would represent and unless he gave specific names that he should be denied access. Since they had no other representation this struck me as being grossly unfair. I was even more upset when the magistrate started handing down sentences of two to three years imprisonment for offences that probably deserved a ‘binding over to keep the peace’, at the very most.

In the period before the disturbances we had known that there was huge dissatisfaction with the tax structure and the method of collection. The chiefs were responsible for collection and it was alleged that they were inflating the tax bills and pocketing the difference. I discovered nothing to disprove that. The whole situation had been allowed get out of hand, even though sensible action by the administration could have defused it and it is fair to say that the rioters had been pushed too far, whilst the administration had ‘sat on their hands’ doing nothing.

In his MA thesis, Brian Wernham expresses curiosity that the Bukedi Disturbances did not ‘degenerate into a blood bath’, and wonders why not. The answer to this is fairly straightforward. In the army and afterwards the mantra for riot duties was ‘use minimum force to re-establish order’. Add to this the primary duty of the Police – ‘to protect life and property’, and we had two quite positive but flexible guidelines. In the army certainly we were frequently reminded of the abuse of force by Brigadier Dyer at Amritsar and were warned

that excesses of that sort would bring severest retribution. Tim Forbes and myself had decided that we would deny rioters access to Tororo by keeping them constantly on the move in the countryside and breaking up gatherings where possible. This was exhausting work, but quite often as soon as rioters saw a squad of Police they hot footed in the opposite direction to avoid confrontation. In any case their main gripe was with their chiefs – not the police. I am absolutely certain that our policy was right because the riots ended with the absolute minimum of bloodshed.

In the aftermath nobody turned to Tim Forbes or myself and said “well done, you guys did a good job”. In fact our seniors seemed more concerned with covering their backs for the forthcoming Judicial Enquiry. I was thoroughly disenchanted and decided that I no longer wished to be part of an organization expected to implement ill thought out policies, without sufficient men or equipment or proper training to carry out tasks which could have fatal consequences. So after the dust had settled, I requested an interview with the Assistant Commissioner Eastern Province, a fellow named Creasey, another ex- Palestine Policeman. He refused to see me, so I got in my car and drove to Mbale and walked into his office. He erupted and said that he had refused my request for an interview. I replied that he was seeing me and put my previously prepared resignation on his desk. He stated that he would not accept it. I replied that he had little choice in the matter, and that, basically, was that. In due course I returned to UK and faced the long hard task of establishing myself in a new career in Human Resource Management.

The group that trained together at Mill Meece and were sent to Uganda.

- L Llewellyn Botcherby ex Lt Royal Sussex Regt. ADC to Governor.
- J M M Cox ex Lt Royal Berkshire Regt.
- P J R Clancy ex Lt Royal Ulster Rifles \*
- B Field ex Lt Royal Artillery\*
- J E Fordham ex Flight Lt Royal Air Force Resigned on arrival in Uganda.
- D Hunt ex Lt Royal Artillery\*
- I McClean – Williams ex Sub Lt. Royal Navy
- D Pearson ex Lt Royal Marines.\*
- D Vickers ex Lt Royal Military Police (went on local leave to Rhodesia and didn't return)
- S J West ex Lt The Essex Regt.\* Resigned after the Bukedi disturbances.

\*denotes participation in disturbances.

## Addendum.

The 'make up' of the British Empire was very different from the straightforward 'all areas shown in pink' on the maps of our schooldays. I had previously served in Sierra Leone, where the hilly peninsular around Freetown was 'Colony' whilst the hinterland was 'Protectorate'. Uganda turned out to be a 'Protectorate' awarded to Britain in the infamous 'Scramble for Africa', whilst of its next door neighbours – Kenya was a 'Colony' and Tanganyika a Mandated Territory reallocated to Britain from Germany after World War One. For this reason Tanganyika produced the best beer in East Africa at the 'Tusker Brewery' built by Germans in Dar es Salaam. The three countries were lumped together in the East African Federation. To the north of Uganda the Sudan was also 'pink' on the map but appeared to be self governing. Occasionally the Chief administrator for the Southern Sudan used to come to Gulu for chats about border security which were always very amicable. In practice, the designation colony, protectorate, etc. didn't seem to make a lot of difference in how the Brits lorded it over the indigenous people. Since retiring, I have lived in Malaysia and find that Britain ruled here on the basis of treaties with some of the Sultans, who seemed to have retained their possessions throughout but not the right to do as they liked with them, whilst others remained non-aligned, but even so, had 'Advisors' foisted upon them. It puzzles me why the charade of 'granting freedom' was needed instead of gracefully just getting out. India was also a mish mash of conquered territory, agreements with local rulers and pockets of non-aligned states, nevertheless uniformly pink in our school atlas.

Another odd arrangement that often impinged on life in the empire was the 'straight line' borders drawn by map-makers and treaty organizers with little regard to the people on the ground. All too frequently these carved through tribal areas leaving members of the same tribe and even the same family on different sides. In Uganda I came across tribes to the North and East who were affected, and no doubt there were others. One has to mention that quite often the people behaved pragmatically and just ignored these artificial barriers. From a Police point of view one needed to be aware when involved in pursuit of criminals.

## Personnae.

Of the people mentioned in my narrative, after serving as ADC to the Governor for a long time, Botcherby eventually went to Dar es Salaam in Tanganyika to work for a commercial company. I met Cox in Paddington in the 60's, he worked for The Metal Box Company and was on his way to a sales meeting. I met Hunt in Bristol once, waiting at a bus stop, he had joined the Inland Revenue where he eventually had a good career finishing as Chief Inspector for the West of England. Fordham became a Judge. Derek Hunt told me that he had met Field on a station one day and found that he had joined the RAF and was a Squadron Leader, probably RAF Regt or RAF Police. Denys Drayton became Personnel Manager for Spillers the flour millers.

Some years later I was working in the personnel department of Electrolux and was asked by my manager to see what two callers from the Home Office wanted. To my delight one was John Docherty who was doing 'positive vetting' and was checking one of our employees who had applied for a sensitive job elsewhere.

In the 1980's I met a Doctor in Saudi Arabia who knew the Brochocki's and he told me that Andrew and his wife Sheila had left Sarawak on retirement and were bee-keeping in Australia.

Paul Woodford resigned his commission in the Devon and Dorset Regiment, went to university but got sidetracked and joined the organizing staff of CND and the Committee of 100.

I made a career in Human Resources, completing a course part time at what is now Luton University, and retired as Human Resources Manager for a subsidiary of British Airways.

Stewart West September 2011.

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**The Ferguson Centre for  
African and Asian Studies  
The Open University  
Walton Hall  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6AA**