

# The tale of the Penniless Priest. June 2010.

Or how being Your Excellency has its advantages.

## The story so far.

A Swiss, a Ugandan, a man from the Isle of Man and their Tanzanian guide have been arrested for 'looking at things without a permit' in Minziro Forest, Tanzania and held in Park HQ for questioning. After a palava the Police came to think they were dealing with a VIP when Emmy addressed me as "Your Excellency" as was his habit.

See "How being Your Excellency saved the day" above.

We were immediately released with much friendly handshaking and made our way back to our Self-contained rooms at the highly regarded 'Katekere Comfort Motel' in Kyaki, Bukoba province where we rejoined the First Lady.

Being close to the border with Uganda, Kyaki is a sensitive town and was the scene of one of Idi Amin's futile attempts to invade Tanzania following his spat with Julius Nyerere.



This may look like a ruined monastery but it was actually a modern church that Amin's Air Force attacked as a strategic target.

## The story is now up to date:-

Next morning, having got our permits, we were due back in the Minziro Forest to seek rare birds and look at things legally with the blessing of the Chief of Police and half the Tanzanian Army.

And so it came to pass. We birded and got rained on. We found a very wet **Wood Owlet** looking down on us with a sympathetic expression. Sadly we did not find much else other than a very dead Rhinoceros Viper which was unusual in the fact that they are not recorded here.



We therefore returned to the delectable Katakere Comfort Motel for our final night in Kyaki, where after an equally delectable dinner we retired to bed ready for an prompt start the following morning. Little did we know that fate had other plans in store for us.



So the innocents that we were rose early and partook of an interesting breakfast. We packed our luggage and settled our accounts whilst Emmy went to bring the car to the door for us to enter. On exiting the building we noticed a white Toyota backie in the rear yard being loaded with chairs from the hall. Then as we were putting our luggage into our car this white vehicle suddenly started up and hit the open doors of Emmy's car as it tried to drive passed. This of course damaged the door hinges and paint work etc., as shown.



Naturally a discussion took place with the driver as to payment for the damage but he attempted to deny responsibility despite the many witnesses. He apologised but stoutly refused compensation or to give details of his insurers saying he had no money for such matters.

He then drove off and we followed in our car in an attempt to obtain his address.

Imagine our surprise when he signalled and turned into what transpired to be the local Police and Army Headquarters. He smartly exited the car and ran into the building. Marcell and Emmy followed leaving Elizabeth and I with the car.

After a while Emmy came out and told us that the Desk Official wished to speak to me as the hirer of the car so I also entered the building. I explained what had happened and how we felt that we needed to exchange details for Insurance purposes as this was a Ugandan registered vehicle and we were in Tanzania. The official was writing all this down in his exercise book but not looking at all hopeful as of course the incident had taken place off the highway. Cue sad faces. He went into a back room to check with his senior officer with whom he returned and to our surprise it was the same Officer who had been present at our 'arrest' in Minziro two

days earlier. He recognised me and came over to shake hands and ask after “His Excellency and First Lady”. As Elizabeth was in the car outside he insisted in going out to meet her too.

On his return he explained that the driver was the local priest who had little money to spare. But in the Senior Officer’s opinion the Priest was a representative of God and was bringing shame on both the Church and Tanzania by his inability and refusal to pay for damage he had caused by his carelessness. He asked me how much I thought the damage would cost to repair and Emmy said maybe US\$150 would cover it.

An order was barked to the Desk Sergeant that I could not follow and to my surprise the Sergeant opened the office safe and removed some money. Having counted out US\$150 he then handed it to the Priest and made him sign a receipt. I think it was a receipt it could well have been a confession for all I knew.

The Priest was then ordered to hand this to me which he did with good grace. Everyone was all smiles once more and after more discussions about our trip we parted with a request that we remember that the Tanzanian Police are good friends of Uganda and Isle of Man and to call again if ever we are passing for a cup of Chai.

And so our “Royal” tour progressed to Bukoba.  
See “East Africa continued” above.