

The Holy Grail Of Steam

In Search Of The Last Atlantics



John Gaydon

Table of Contents

Introduction..... 7

 My First Steam Train Ride.....7

 I Travel On The Footplate.....8

Chapter 1 Our Motivation For The Trip..... 11

 The Mighty Atlantics11

 The Queen Of Scots.....11

 The Mozambique Atlantics12

 A Little History12

 The War Of Independence13

 The Revolution Begins13

 We Get Itchy Feet14

 Adventure Calls15

 Our Journey Started In Swaziland.....16

 The World’s Longest Reign17

 Valley Of A Thousand Horseshoes18

 We Enter Mozambique.....20

 My Background To Communist Steam.....20

 Lucky Escape In Poland24

 Rail Fans Really Did Supply Military Intelligence.....26

Chapter 2 Learning The Lay Of The Land 28

 We Enter Mozambique28

Background to The Situation	29
The Timing Of Our Visit	30
Avoiding Checkpoints	30
We Get Down To Business	31
There Were People Everywhere	32
Our First Arrest.....	34
We Experience Freedom (Sort Of)	35
The Mutiny.....	38
We Quit	38
Finally We Get An Answer.....	39

Chapter 3 Laurencio Marques To Beira..... 40

Joao Belo (Xia Xia).....	40
Inhambane	46

Chapter 4 - The World Famous African Transcontinental Railway..... 49

Beira To Machupanda	49
The Rhodesian Situation	51
The World's Worst Camping Spot!	52
The Commandant Looked Like Sad Sack	53
We Are Moved On.....	53
A Life Changing Experience	54
Something Happened.....	54
A Good Night's Rest.....	55
The Big Boss.....	55
Lunch FRELIMO Style.....	56
We Finally Get Official Permission To Take Photos	57

The Weather Sets In Again	60
We Meet One Of Africa's Poor	60
Four Soldiers Appear	60
No One Knew What To Do!	61
A FRELIMO Doctor Speaks Out	63
A Prophetic Vision	64
A New Day Dawns	65
The Police Station	66

Chapter 4 - The Journey To Nampula..... 74

Quelimane	77
The Final Stretch To Nampula.....	80
We Visit A Missionary.....	80

Chapter 5 - Nampula – The Final Frontier 82

The Real Trouble Starts	82
Spotted Again.....	84
We Head North Again	85
We Explore Mozambique Island.....	89
I Turn To God	90

Chapter 6 – The Incarceration..... 93

Life Deteriorated (As If It Could Get Worse)	93
Who Was In The Barracks?.....	93
It Was A Hopeless Situation	94
The Point Of Despair	94
The Food Came From A Bucket.....	94
We Fly To The Capital In Handcuffs.....	95

Our New Home.....	95
The First Three Days Were The Hardest.....	96
We Keep Ourselves Occupied	97
My Dislocated Toe.....	98
We Help Preparing Meals.....	98
We Fight With The Officers For Meals.....	99
The President Comes To Visit.....	99
Independence Day	100
A Frightening Night.....	100
False Hope	100
Tomorrow I Go To See Batista – I Will Tell Him About You..	101
The Situation Was Hopeless	102

Chapter 6 - The Final Stage Of Our Incarceration 103

Finally, Some Action.....	103
The Facts	105
The Prostitutes Are Rounded Up.....	108
We Finally Move On	109
The State Of Our Vehicle	110
We Run Out Of Fuel.....	110
We Eat Pork And Suffer The Consequences	111
Free At Last.....	111
We Meet An Old Friend.....	112

Chapter 7 - A Rail Fan Never Gives Up..... 112

Victoria Falls From Zambia.....	114
Why We Couldn't Cross The Bridge	115
We Visit Hwange National Park.....	117

There Are Terrorists Around Here120

Aftermath.....120

Steam Train Stories.....120

Future Plans121

Introduction

The information used in this story comes from my original diary notes penned at the time. These are still in my possession. I have, unless stated, used original photographs taken by me to illustrate the locomotive power we encountered during our adventures. All historical data has been checked for accuracy. In short, it is a 100 percent true story. Nothing is made up!

When we were young, how many of us read adventure novels, or watched movies like “Indiana Jones”, where heroes braved the remotest and most dangerous places on earth battling evil, and overcoming unbeatable odds.

Everybody is a hero in some way, whether it is in sport, entertainment, art, business, or raising a great family. Some of us are prepared to take greater risks than most, in pursuit of a dream, or something very special.

My First Steam Train Ride



**Figure 1 3642 Leaving
Hornsby Station Bound
For Sydney**

My first memory is of a green steam engine pulling in to Hornsby station when I was 3. The family was off on vacation to Ettalong on the Central Coast of NSW in Australia, now close to where we live! I believe it was a 38 class, although it may be a 36 class.

From the time I was 5 years old, I had an addiction to steam locomotives. We lived in Punchbowl in Sydney, Australia, just a short distance from Enfield, the largest Locomotive Depot in Australia at the time. There were continuous steam whistles and sounds of locomotives chuffing along the lines.



Figure 2 Enfield In The 1960s. These Engines Are Awaiting The Blowtorch. The Many Tenders Are All That Is Left Of Once Mighty Steam Locomotives

At that time, I had two recurring nightmares. One was a red outline of a native American Indian who stood over my bed and attacked me with a Tomahawk, at which time I would awake screaming! The other was of a Steam Train coming through the house. I would wake up when it was about to run over me. I will never know whether this caused my addiction to steam, or whether it was my grandfather who worked for the NSWGR, purchasing coal to fuel those thirsty beasts!

I was given my first Hornby clockwork train set at age 5, and at the ripe old age of 8, purchased my first electric train. This eventually grew into a fleet of 13 high quality NSW replicas, some 25 years later.

I Travel On The Footplate

When I started High School, there was a Railway Club, so I joined up! At the end of first year, there was a field trip to Enfield.

It was an official school excursion, so I turned up in uniform – whoops! There I was in the cab of a gritty, dirty 60 class Garratt waving at people as we traversed the Botany line from near Sydney airport. It was another 36 years before they finally built a passenger line to service Sydney Airport.



Figure 3 AD 60 No 6002 Climbs Over Hawkemount NSW Central Coast Australia

The 60 class Garratts were so huge that they had an automatic stoker for the coal. On this trip we went back to Enfield and saw the lines of 57 class and many other steam locos awaiting execution! The 57s and 58s were the only other engines with an automatic stoker. Of these 3 cylinder monsters only 5711 survives. At the time of writing, it is housed in Valley Heights in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney, where it used to haul heavy freight up the mountains. These great engines were retired before I hit the scene due to their heavy axel load and consequential wear and tear on the rail lines. The trip on the footplate of the Garratt got me even more excited about steam as we waived at the crowds along the line.

I had many adventures in Australia while at high school, started a promising career, but the lure of steam, and the fact they were disappearing fast, led me to quit my job and head overseas, as had many of my mates. Eventually, I wound up in Mozambique. Here is my story.

Chapter 1 Our Motivation For The Trip

The Mighty Atlantics



Figure 4 Hiawatha Atlantic 1930s

Around the end of the 19th Century Steam Locomotives of 4-4-2 wheel arrangement, commonly referred to as “Atlantics” due to their original use around Atlantic City in the USA, were the mainstay of high speed passenger trains. In fact the “Hiawatha Atlantics”, of which none

survive, are credited as being the first locomotives to regularly travel at 100 mph and maintain better than a mile a minute schedules.

The Queen Of Scots

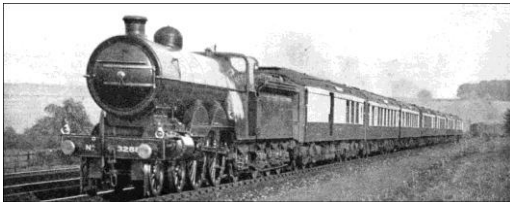


Figure 5 Atlantic on the "Queen Of Scots Pullman Express"

These Atlantics hauled express Pullman trains between London and Leeds. They had a near

mile a minute schedule covering 185.7 miles in 193 minutes. They

regularly travelled at speeds up to 90 mph. Not bad for 1928.

The Mozambique Atlantics



By the 1970s, things had changed and at this time there were reported to be 4 remaining “Atlantics” in active service, all housed in the northern Mozambique city of Nampula. The map shows the location of Nampula by the red pointer. As I was living in South

Africa at the time, this was too good a thing to pass up, so I gathered an English compatriot, Mike Grainger and set about getting some pictures of these rare specimens. It was to be the adventure of a lifetime!

A Little History

If you have been on the planet long enough, you may be aware that Portugal used to be a major sea power. Ferdinand Magellan is credited with the first round the world journey, proving the earth isn't flat once and for all! Cristobal Columbus, who discovered America, was Portuguese. Vasco Da Gama was the first European to visit Mozambique Island on the east coast of Mozambique. Portuguese explorers are legendary for their pioneering on the high seas.

Like all European countries, Portugal sought to build colonies around the world, including Angola and Mozambique, and by the 1960s as African Colonies sought independence, guerrilla movements started in both countries. Angola had 3 competing movements, the US backed UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola), Cuban and Russian backed MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola), and the FNLA (Frente Nacional para a Libertação de Angola), partly backed by the US and later China, while in Mozambique, the

FRELIMO were a united front against the Portuguese colonists back by Russia and East Germany.

The War Of Independence

Like other African countries, the natives of Mozambique became restless. A popular movement (FRELIMO) was formed in 1962, headed by Eduardo Mondlane. FRELIMO stands for Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Mozambique Liberation Front). The formation was done by some exiles in Tanzania.



Figure 6 Room At The Victoria Falls Hotel

At this time there was a popular movement against colonial rule throughout the continent. As it stood, most businesses were operated either by Europeans or Indians. It

generated considerable hatred amongst the locals and made it a fertile ground for revolutionaries. The colonials often lived in grand mansions and Europeans stayed at majestic hotels like the Victoria Falls Hotel, while the locals lived in extreme poverty.

The Revolution Begins

The war started in 1964, and for 10 years as trains and highways were blown up by terrorist operations, it was rather difficult to visit the country, let alone take pictures of steam trains. As the war evolved, communist countries eyed off Mozambique as an ally and in 1969, Mondlane was assassinated in Dar Es Salaam and replaced by the more Russian friendly Samora Michel.

The officers were trained either in Russia or East Germany and returned with trophies, a ghetto blaster from Russia, or a watch

from East Germany. They were worn as status symbols amongst the military. The FRELIMO were particularly active on the railway line from Beira to the Rhodesian border and the line from Chimio to Tete. This area had very rich coal fields, so sabotage caused maximum inconvenience for the colonialists.

In September, 1974 there was a truce as Portugal agreed to hand back the colony to the locals. This was largely caused by women in Portugal who were upset that their male population were going off to Africa to die in Colonial wars. This ended in a **coup d'état** in Lisbon, the Capital.

We Get Itchy Feet

I was living in South Africa at this time and saw an opportunity to photograph the remaining steam trains in Mozambique while the country was in an uneasy calm. South Africa was a hub for rail fans the world over seeking the last of mainline steam in a country where English was spoken and it was relatively easy to travel.

There were a group of Aussies living in the Johannesburg suburb of Hillbrow, these days off limits to white people due to the high crime rate. Over a beer or two, we swapped intelligence and stories with each other. It was a great life at the time. I owned a 3 year old Peugeot 404 wagon I purchased for \$800 from another Aussie, Geoff Hoffman.

My first brief visit to South Africa was in August 1974. We visited Southern Natal in the last days of steam out of Pietermaritzburg. We then sped on to famous Glenn Dam where we met Charlie Lewis for the first time and took reflections of 25 class just before that section of line was electrified.

From there I spent 4 months in Europe, returning just after Christmas. I worked for 3 months, then spent a few weeks

photographing the Western Cape fruit season, the last time it had steam, and visiting other parts of the country.

Adventure Calls

Stories abounded of the prolific steam in Angola and Mozambique, which could now be seen due to a truce to end the armed conflict. It was too good an opportunity to pass up!

We went to the Portuguese embassy in Johannesburg and had our passports stamped with a 7 day VISA for Mozambique. They refused to let us visit Angola. It was the best you could do at the time. The plan was to get it extended for 30 days when we arrived.

We missed out on Angola because at that time bullets were flying around the country as the various freedom fighter groups were shooting each other! A friend went there and reported frequent gunfire during the visit! In Angola, there were three groups. The war was raging between them and with the Portuguese as well. One guy I worked with in South Africa, Ian had been a mercenary fighter in the Congo. He was a large Islander type man with huge arms and a necklace with a Shark's tooth around his neck. His buddy, Tex, was a proficient marshal artist. Ian and his friends used to drop out of trees in the middle of the night, cut through tents with their knives, slit the occupants throats, and silently disappear into the night! He told me he would not get involved with any of the groups in Mozambique or Angola, because they were unstable and couldn't be trusted.

Angola was quite a mess and after independence the war raged until 2002. By the end of the war, the mighty Benguela Railway and its famous Garratts were all but wrecked.



Figure 7 Swaziland Was A Special Place Offering Fabulous Photo Opportunities

Our Journey Started In Swaziland



Swaziland is a small country sandwiched between South Africa and Mozambique. The railway line we were photographing took Haematite from the oldest mine in the world, the Lion Cavern mine in the Ngwenya mountains. Archeologists have traced mining here back to 40,000 BC, long before man was known to be able to forge iron. Apparently they used the red ochre for pigmentation and funerary ceremonies.

From 1964, when the railway was built to carry iron ore to Mozambique, until 1977, it utilized engines from the CFM (Mozambique Railways). These were Henschel 2-10-2's, one of which we photographed on a suburban at Machava, a suburb of Laurencio Marques, in Mozambique.

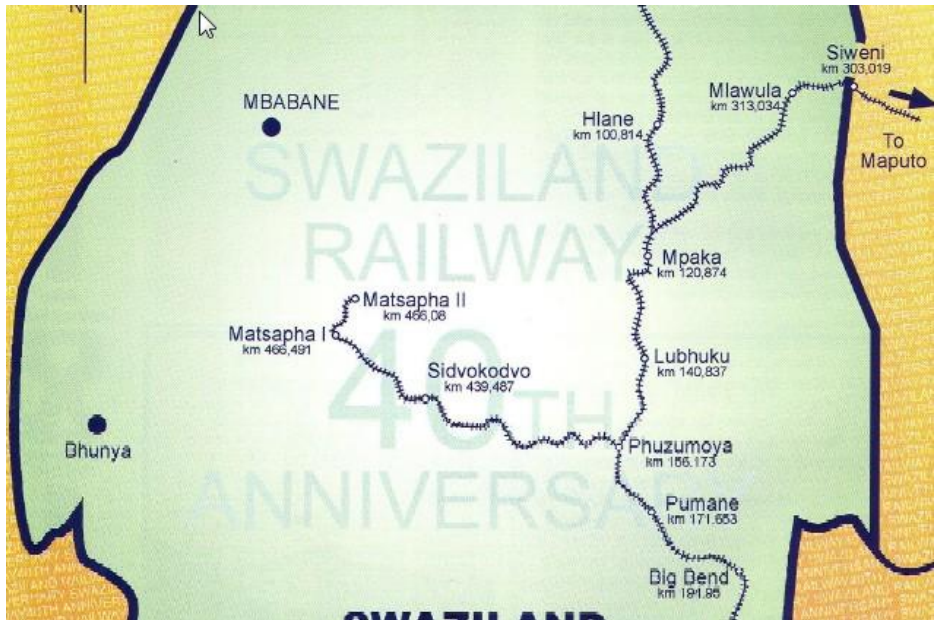
I visited the line twice, once on a weekend excursion from Johannesburg, and once on my way to Mozambique.

The World's Longest Reign

Swaziland is a landlocked monarchy, and the King has absolute power. King Sobhuza II had ruled since he was a baby in 1899, and is credited with having the longest reign of any Monarch of 82 years and nine months. Under British colonial rule Swaziland was a constitutional Monarchy.

In 1973, he repealed the constitution and dissolved parliament, making himself absolute ruler. King Sobhuza II married 70 wives, who gave him 210 children between 1920 and 1970. He died in 1982.

Valley Of A Thousand Horseshoes



The railway line passed through an amazing formation we called the “Valley Of A Thousand Horseshoes”, which climbed out of the valley. This section is located near Sdivokodvo, shown here on a Swaziland railway map. At the time, the railway ran from the mine at Matsapha to Maputo in Mozambique. The south branch from Phuzumoya to South Africa was added later. There were frequent sightings of Black Mamba snakes in the grass in the area. This is the deadliest snake in Africa, and one you don’t have its fangs sunk into you!

Part of the journey to Mozambique passes through Hlane Royal National Park which housed a rare population of White Rhinos. Some of my friends saw these while photographing the railway.

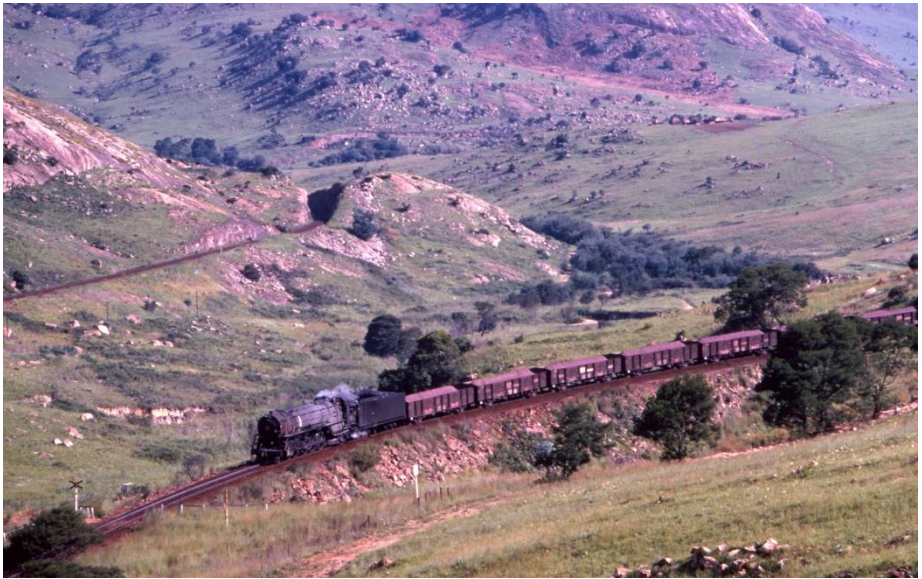


Figure 8 Valley Of A Thousand Horseshoes

After the railway was taken over by the Swazis in 1980, motive power changed to ex South African Railways engines.



Figure 9 Our Peugeot 404 After The Mozambique Trip. Note The Crumpled Bodywork On The Right Hand Guard Where

We Pulled It Back Into Shape With A Block And Tackle Tied Around A Tree!

We Enter Mozambique

So it was on the 26th May, 1975 we arrived in Mozambique after a few days photographing steam in Swaziland. We were a long way from Nampula, but at least we had managed to get in before the change of government. In we ventured with my SA registered Peugeot 404 wagon.

My Background To Communist Steam

Just to be fair, I knew what we were in for. In 1974 I visited East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Poland with 4 other Aussies, and there were several close shaves during this trip. There was one particular incident I am constantly reminded about to this day where we were on the Berlin – Dresden main line.

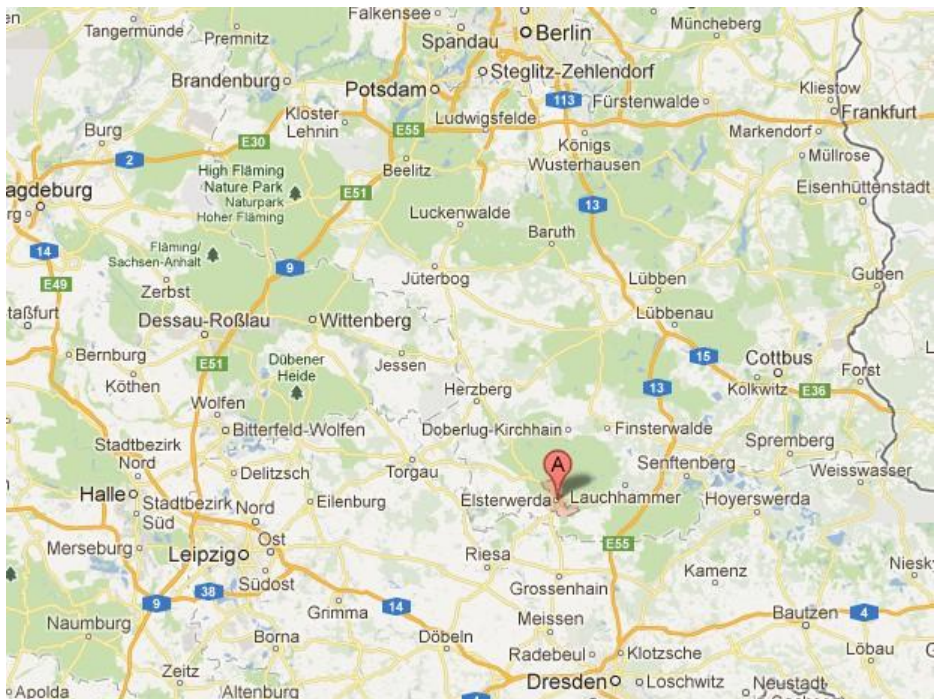


Figure 10 Map Of East Germany Showing Elsterwerda

At this stage the 01 Pacifics were still making non-stop express runs on this route at speeds up to 90 mph. They were the fastest scheduled trains in the world. We had prepaid accommodation as it was a requirement for entry into the country. Having a campervan, and wanting the early morning photos with the good light we decided to chance our luck by camping out.

Just after dawn we noticed a ganger walking past who eyed us suspiciously. Soon after we photographed our first express a politzei rode in on his 40cc motor scooter. "Was tun sie?" (What are you doing here?) He asked. We explained to him that we were merely watching trains. Then he wanted our film. A rail fan will die to keep exposed film in his possession. We played dumb about the films. Unfortunately I was the one who spoke the best German, so I stalled him while everyone else hid their films. We kept insisting that we didn't know what was wrong or what was going on, and after a very frustrating time he left.



Figure 11 My Only Photo OF An 01 On An East German Express Train Berlin – Dresden Travelling around 90 Mph (140 Kph)

He didn't get very far. His scooter stalled and the gates came down. I tried desperately to push him across the tracks before the

train came but failed. As it turned out, by negotiating with the Politzei I managed to be the only one of our group who didn't get a sunny shot in East Germany.



Figure 12 While I Was Talking To The Policeman, Robert Kingsford Smith Took This Shot Of An 015 In Full Sun!

While I was talking to the Policeman, an 015 Pacific on the Express rushed by, the sun came out, and everyone else got their best shot in the country! No wonder I was nicknamed Gloom. My mates never let me forget this incident. No sooner had the Politzei left than another rode in. He took down some particulars and left.



Figure 13 Elsterwerda Loco Depot, East Germany. We were allowed to Photograph In depots in East Germany My Friends' Colour Shots Were Taken By The Polish Police!

Our frustrations continued. We moved 50 kms south and found another train. Soon after this a lawman appeared. It seemed you couldn't move without being noticed. This man was most accommodating and he took us to a station and told us we could photograph all day from the station, but not in the countryside. For us, we had suffered enough in this country.

Lucky Escape In Poland

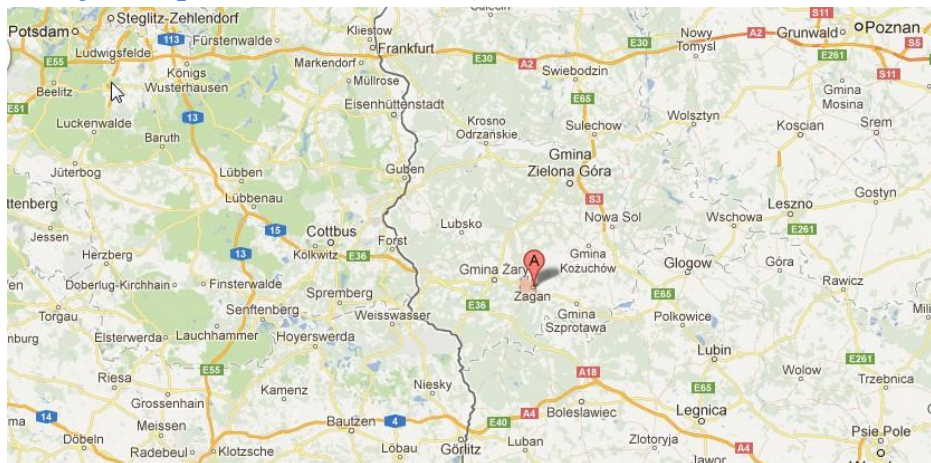


Figure 14 Map Showing Zagan In Poland

Poland was the next stop. Here there was a rampant black market so we were forced to exchange money before we were let in. The amount we had to exchange was more than we could possibly spend so we left the black market alone. We drove through Poland until we reached Zagan. Here we saw our first Polish steam train.



Figure 15 VRP1 Our First Polish Steam Take Just Before Our Friends Disappeared Features Two TKT 48s!

My comrades decided to get some photographs around the station. Two of us ran out of film and headed back to the campervan to reload the cameras.

When we returned we found the other three had vanished. We searched all around for over an hour and were getting quite desperate. Then the local Politzei turned up and we understood what had happened. Our friends had been arrested, their cameras confiscated and they were being held because no one could communicate with them. Our friends appeared in the company of armed guards who escorted them back to the station to be locked in a small room pending interrogation. The duty officer did not look amused.

Bazza and I spent the next three hours in the waiting room chewing our fingernails down to the elbows and speculating on what had happened. Would we ever see them again? All the old films of communist torture came to mind. We had no idea what Polish police were like. They certainly weren't friendly. As a matter of fact just about everyone in Poland seemed unhappy, something to do with their being eternally occupied by foreign powers. Then an important looking man with a suitcase arrived and went inside.

Half an hour later the desk sergeant emerged smiling. This was a good sign. We had gathered a copy of a book we had produced with pictures of trains to show them that we were not spies. I was able to converse with the investigative detective in schoolboy German and he went through the book pointing out what we could and couldn't take photos of. The prohibited spots were tunnels, bridges, stations, switching yards and other places which could be blown up.



Figure 16 One Of Poland's Double Decker Trains The carriages resemble those used on the Sydney Electric suburban system!

Finally the message sunk in. No, Communist governments don't like foreigners running all over the countryside taking pictures of railways, the backbone of the country's transportation system. Let's face it, if you want to cut communication lines a working knowledge of train schedules and cargoes would help a great deal. We spent the rest of our journey through Poland being very careful. These days, the Wolsztyn to Poznan line still has steam power and you can pay to drive the trains! The current cost is around 900 British pounds for a week. Funds are used to keep the remaining steam trains in service.

Rail Fans Really Did Supply Military Intelligence

I found out much later that Australian railway enthusiasts supplied information to the allies to assist in the war against Japan in South East Asia. The rail fans had very good local knowledge having travelled all over the place to take photographs.

You get the picture. Communist countries are suspicious of everyone who isn't one of them. At the time the CIA was very

active in Africa and other places and any suspicious behaviour led people to think they had found a spy. In fact, one of my friends was arrested and tried as a spy by a Military Tribunal in Mozambique.

Chapter 2 Learning The Lay Of The Land



We Enter Mozambique

At the border the Swazi's tried to convince us to buy Mozambique Escudos at 40 per South African Rand from their black market mates. There was a huge sign at the border

warning of gaol for black market dealers and their patrons!
Another African contradiction.

Background to The Situation

At that time history was being made in Mozambique. After many years of civil war between the FRELIMO freedom fighters and the Portuguese army it had finally been decided to hand the country over to native rule. This was due to elections in Portugal which resulted in a change in policy on colonial outposts. Angola, Mozambique and Timor were amongst those let go. History has shown that in Angola and Mozambique the result was a destructive civil war.

As far as Mozambique was concerned, South Africa and Rhodesia didn't like a communist run country so close to them, and financed RENAMO (Resistencia Nacional Mocambicana) to put the country back in Western hands. South Africa and Rhodesia were, like the US, totally paranoid about the communist disease spreading to their countries. South Africa had a policy to keep its neighbours away from communist control at all cost. The plan was to keep a buffer zone of countries between them and possible enemies. This included South West Africa (Namibia), Botswana, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Swaziland, and Mozambique. These countries were all sympathetic and to some extent dependent on South Africa. Given the activities of China, Cuba and Russia at the time, they probably had some justification for this position.

In Mozambique a few months before this time the FRELIMO were blowing up railways, roads, cars and anything else which would frustrate the Portuguese. They were highly organised and funded by the Soviet Union and East Germany. Just being in the country was a great risk. Luckily for us, the precise time when we were there was when a truce had been made and agreement to hand over the country to the FRELIMO. They had occupied many previously Portuguese army barracks and were in the process of establishing a transitional government.

We had visas from the Portuguese authorities although the FRELIMO had effective control over the country. We were also driving a South African registered Peugeot 404 and of course we

were white unlike just about everybody else in the country, except the hated Portuguese colonialists.

The Timing Of Our Visit

What makes this story so significant is that it is set in a small window of opportunity in the calm before the storm. At the time we were there the FRELIMO were in the process of taking over government of the country and there was hope everywhere of a better future for all. Unfortunately, this didn't happen and within a year, RENAMO, a right winged terrorist group backed by powerful South Africa and Rhodesia started mounting a counter insurgency which plunged the country into civil war.

It was not until 1992 that this ended and the country again became safe to travel in. We faced massive challenges to document steam in this country, and looking back I would have to say I was totally mad, but now it is worth it. I would venture to say that few penetrated the country to the extent we did. Of course by 1992, most of the steam locomotives were either destroyed or in a sad state, and as happens everywhere diesels are moved in as the lines are rebuilt.

We completed formalities and entered the country. First we drove to Laurengo Marques (now Maputo). On the way we passed 4 FRELIMO checkpoints. We managed to avoid stopping at two of them by giving a soldier a lift! This is a really good way to get past the rules in some countries!

Avoiding Checkpoints

I live in Australia, where you can travel freely throughout the country. The only restriction is transportation of fruit from some areas to stop the spread of disease. There used to be gates at state borders for this purpose, but other than that no restrictions within the country.

It is not so in many other countries, especially in South America and Southern Africa. At the time I lived in South Africa, the infamous "pass" laws were still in effect. All Africans had to carry

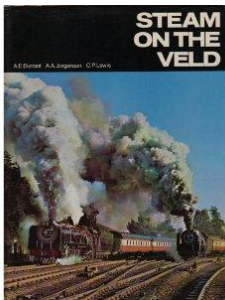
papers with them and get permission to move around the country. It was a way of controlling any popular movement that might overthrow the government. Elsewhere, we encountered numerous checkpoints, trying to catch would be insurgents or rebels.

Most checkpoints were on the roads and highways. Most of the time I found that travelling by train bypassed them. Buses in South America had to stop and everyone inspected before they moved on. It could be just passports, but sometimes a luggage search as well. One fateful night in Arequipa in Peru, I missed my train due to the extensive time getting through police roadblocks. It changed the course of my life. But that's another story!

We Get Down To Business

On arrival in Lorenzo Marques we approached the CFM (**Portos e Caminhos de Ferro de Moçambique**) or **Mozambique Ports and Railways**, to get a permit to take photos and were moved from one place to another. Eventually while walking across the main city square we met Dusty Durrant, of all people, who was passing by on a bus & told us it takes a week. It has always been an astounding thing to me how you can meet someone in some far corner of the globe, when you have no idea you are in the area.

This incidence reminded me of the time I passed my next door neighbor from Australia on the escalators leading from the London tube to the street. I haven't seen her since!



I had spent many a night drinking with Dusty, one of the most revered of the railway fraternity worldwide, in the County Clare pub in Sydney. He is publisher of a number of steam books, including "Steam

On The Veld", a wonderful pictorial of South African steam trains.

Later we found permits were of no use anyway. We were told cafes might be good black market territory. So we walked around town and approached various shop & bar owners. At our 1st attempt we were offered 50\$00 per rand, but we had inside information and resolved to try for more. Eventually we exchanged currency at 80\$00 per rand in a small shop run by Indian's! One thing I had learned is that Indians, while they are good negotiators, are good businessmen too. It was generally safe to do business with them. We drove a hard bargain.

We visited the Portuguese Immigration department and obtained a one month extension of our visas. We had been advised to do this by Greg Triplet who visited just before us. Greg actually visited Angola and came back with reports of bullets flying during the visit. Perhaps he was even crazier than me! Then next morning off to photograph the steam. Many of the suburban trains in the capital were powered by ancient steam engines and there was great variety. Unfortunately the land was as flat as a pancake and the scenery extremely dull and boring.

Added to that there was a constant stream of people walking up and down the tracks. "Bon Dia Camarade" or "Goodaye Mate" in Australian was the universal greeting. The exercise was to greet everyone. Any person you didn't greet was likely to tell the authorities that there was someone suspicious around. In fact in their communist inspired system there were party members everywhere. Each of these was instructed to report suspicious happenings. Two Europeans walking along the railway tracks was at the very least suspicious.

There Were People Everywhere

If you haven't been to the "third world", and perhaps live in a cosy place like Australia, where you can go all day without encountering a single soul, you are in for a shock if you get to a place like Mozambique. People are everywhere. A constant stream of them walk by the railway line, by the roads, on dirt tracks between the houses. They carry everything from washing to food to water.

Simply getting a picture with no people in the foreground takes a lot of work!



Figure 17 Henschel 2-10-2 Heading From Machava To Laurencio Marques

My companion Mike and I had a discussion. How long should we stay in the one location? I wanted to move on, he insisted on staying. I reluctantly agreed, expecting a visit from someone in authority any moment.



Figure 18 Baldwin 2-8-2 at Machava Bridge

Machava Bridge was known as the best spot for photos in the capital. The area is largely flat with little scenery. So that's where we headed first.

Our First Arrest

I kept prodding my mate, Mike, to keep moving after each shot. This was due to my Eastern European experiences. He wanted to stay put in a good location and by 8am a couple of trucks of soldiers arrived. They took us to Machava station, arrested us and emptied our car piece by piece – I mean everything. Fortunately we didn't have even a single bullet or it would have ended badly! It was the end of the day's photography!

100 or so women watched us and shouted at us. One or 2 looked like they wanted us shot immediately and kept yelling at the soldiers for action. This was our first taste of the hostility towards westerners by the locals. Sanity prevailed and at 10 am we were moved with 3 soldiers to town to the head barracks where we were interrogated further.

About 1 hour later, the soldiers moved us to the Quarter General to see the chief, supposedly to get a travel paper. I met an African there who had been in Holland 7 years studying English, French and German. He explained we were safe and took us for our 1st FRELIMO meal. Meat and Macaroni with bread roll, water, soup and mandarin.

Soon we were moved on and in yet another interview we were asked more questions including, "What do you think of FRELIMO"? They explained our arrest was a big mistake caused by the current situation. Then we were taken to yet another prison. This time we were detained in a small cell which contained about 8-10 inmates, all of whom were intellectuals who had been exiled by the Portuguese and come back to lend a hand in the formation of the new republic. On arrival they were arrested and put out of site. Remember Pol Pot. Revolutionaries don't like smart people! These people were perplexed as to why after coming home with good intentions to help the new republic they were now under arrest.

The FRELIMO received most of their training in Russia or East Germany and those officers who graduated sported trophies in the form of Watches or Ghetto Blasters! Yes, their communist masters gave them trinkets in exchange for loyalty

We Experience Freedom (Sort Of)

Later that afternoon we were released and told to meet with Batista, who I believe was head of the Amy or Internal Security boss. Despite much research, I have been unable to verify this. In any case he held a position of importance. We headed off to the beach to camp in our tent and at 2.30 am were awoken by police who had surrounded us. They explained that there were many bandits in the area and we could have been killed! Pity – the beach was such a nice spot. They escorted us to a caravan

park for the duration of our stay at a cost of 50\$00 (Escuedos) for three nights. This was a lot of money for us.

The next morning we were interviewed about 10 am by the Security boss for the Laurencio Marques area who again explained the situation and asked us, "What Do You Think Of Frelimo?" again. After another lunch of meat and macaroni – we met Batista – head of army and told him the purpose of our visit, to see the remaining steam locomotives in Mozambique, and showed a South African steam book as evidence of photographing trains. He said not to take any more photos but placed no restrictions for touring. We asked for permission to take photos of the steam trains, and were told to come back later for a decision. Our passports were returned and some other stuff taken to ensure we came back and we were released

Africa being Africa, we were to wait two days for our next meeting, and Mike didn't want to hang around. So early next morning, we headed out for some more photos! This was very dangerous indeed.



Figure 19 Baldwin 2-8-2 on Laurencio Marques Suburban

After an hour or so getting some more great photos, another group of soldiers caught up with us. This time they took us to the Machava Military Camp, a place that later on would be very familiar and our home for several weeks!



Figure 20 Another Shot Of The Baldwin – The Scenery Was Very Flat!

Machava prison was the high security prison for the capital, Laurencio Marques (Maputo). Many dangerous political prisoners were held there, and included in the staff were well trained Tanzanian Interrogators. In my research I read one account from Ludovick S Mwijage of his internment and torture in Machava prison. The FRELIMO went to a lot of trouble to point out to us that they didn't torture people, unlike the Portuguese! I guess we weren't told the whole truth.

Next door was an army barracks. It was to the entrance to Machava barracks that we were taken. When we arrived, there was great commotion. Soldiers streamed out the gate with their weapons, and eventually the commandant emerged. You could tell the officers from their watches.

The Mutiny

In December 1975, just a few months after our visit a mutiny was staged by 400 soldiers from Machava Barracks. These may well have been the officers we shared our meals and accommodation with. They marched on the capital, because they were unhappy with the direction of the new government, and their rate of pay. It is testimony to the adage, “An army marches on its stomach”.

Using sign language and quick thinking, I managed to get the message across that we were already talking to Batista and that it was all OK. At the mention of that name, they backed off and let us go!

This was a lucky escape as imagine what might have transpired if we were caught deliberately disobeying instructions while waiting for an interview. Something else you may know about this type of country is that you don't mess with the bosses! Causing unnecessary disruption can look very bad on your record! There is a tendency to back off at the mention of a high ranking official.

Some years earlier, friends of mine were travelling in Malaysia. They accidentally hit a motorbike and were grabbed by the locals, and interrogated. Fortunately, one of them had a work colleague back in Australia who was related to the police chief.

After calling the police chief, they were advised to get back in the car quietly, and drive off, which they did. They were told that if they had stayed, either they would have been killed, or had all their money taken and possible been used for extortion! It does pay to have friends in high places.

We Quit

Once bitten – twice shy! We headed back to camp, deciding it was too risky to go out in the capital photographing steam. One more arrest might see us expelled, or worse.

We had a picnic meal that evening with a difference. There were thousands of monkeys in the trees within the caravan park and as we prepared our meal they would make a dash for the dinner, grab food if they could get it and take off. It was quite amusing as we fought these little creatures for an hour or so. I have never witnessed this before or since.

Finally We Get An Answer

In the morning our escort arrived to take us back to Batista. He was a fine looking man, well dressed, and obviously someone with stature. He spoke great English. "I have made my decision", he said. "You can go anywhere you like, but don't take photographs of trains". Well that was a good news, bad news situation for us. The good news was that we weren't being kicked out, the bad news was no photographs. We thanked him for his kindness and left. I noted in my journal that we "left in anger". There was a heated discussion between Mike and myself as to what to do.

One thing was now clear. With all the military activity around the capital, and having been told outright no photos, it was no longer safe to photograph the suburban trains. In any case the scenery was lousy.

What were we to do? At least we could continue our journey. We just had to be extra careful. There were five railway systems we wanted to see and photograph. The narrow gauge at Joao Belo, a 2' 6" system was first on the list. The second was Inhambane, which had a mixture of oil and wood burning locomotives. The Beira line stretching from the coast to the Rhodesian border was a 100% steam major rail link with some wonderful Garrat engines. Quelimane was a wood burning line, totally isolated and finally there was the rail network stretching north from Nampula.

Chapter 3 Laurencio Marques To Beira

It was time to leave Laurencio Marques (Maputo) and head north! I don't know whether you are aware of what goes on when a country receives its independence? We were told that the first thing a revolution captures is the local radio station to control propaganda! When a new government is formed they tend to change the names of all the towns and most of the streets! In extreme cases they even change the name of the country. While doing some research for this story I discovered that many of the towns I visited have had name changes.

Joao Belo (Xia Xia)

Xai Xai is located at the mouth of the great green greasy Limpopo river of Rudyard Kipling fame! This is a 2' 6" line, isolated from the rest of the system and totally wood burning. The line ran from Joao Belo to Chibuto, a distance of 140 kms. The line was pretty inaccessible by road, so we spent our days walking along the tracks taking care to say "Bon Dia Camarada" to everyone we passed!



Figure 21 Locals Look On As The Passenger Prepares To Depart Joao Belo

There were hundreds of people walking along that line and our voices were getting hoarse by the time we left! We were very edgy, given we were told not to take photos, but feeling a little better as we left without incident.



Figure 22 No 82 Shunting At Joao Belo Yard

The main station at Joao Belo has been preserved and is an historic monument for Mozambique. This type of railway was popular amongst the Portuguese colonies and there is a similar system in Brazil from Sao Jao Del Rei stretching over 775 kms at its peak. This is no small railway! I travelled on the system during my visit to Brazil in 1976.



Figure 23 No 60 on a train from Soao Jao Del Rei in Brazil

Unfortunately the train left after dark, so we had to move on north to Manjicaze where we photographed no 5 on a passenger from Chibuto.



Figure 24 Loco Number 05 Headed Towards Joao Belo On Mixed

We then chased no 6 on a train back to Joao Belo. On the way we were stopped by workers cutting the vegetation off the side of the road with machetes. It was pretty scary at the time.

Remember the FRELIMO had just finished a bloody war and no one knew who could be trusted. I grabbed a machete and started cutting. They laughed and let us move on. Another lucky escape.



Figure 25 Number 06 On A Passenger Heading For Joao Belo

Recent reports indicate that Joao Belo is no more, apart from the main railway station and loco workshops. It was a great little line in its day. I have seen reports of tourist trains running as recently as 2002.

After 2 days it was time to move on. Remember we had a month and a lot of territory to cover. We drove to the next railway in the system, a 3' 6" system at Inhambane.

Inhambane



Figure 26 No 572 2-6-2 Porter On The Inharrime Mixed Take From A Tree

The next section of railway stretched from Inhambane to Inharrime. This is a 3' 6" gauge railway, the standard gauge for Africa. Motive power here was a magnificent Porter 2-6-2. It is believed that these locos are still there, although the line has fallen out of use. I took the above photo from a tree, something I was known for!

Inhambane is a seaside town that used to be a major port. It contains a number of old Portuguese buildings including an old cathedral. When the Europeans arrived here most of the local population were captured and used as slaves.

Inhambane is known as the birthplace of FRELIMO, the insurgent group who had just taken over the country. We were heading further into the country, far away from the world we had left, with no knowledge of the language, and no way to receive news from outside. Eventually it was to be our undoing!



Figure 27 We Chased The Train From Inhambane To Inharrime

At this stage we were still gun shy and not wanting to draw attention to ourselves. Our tactic was to stop and move to a photo advantage point just before the train arrived and then move on. The weather was great and we were fortunate enough to get some wonderful photos on this line. Trains no longer operate, although there are some still static around the railway yards.



Figure 28 No 8 Wood Burning 2-8-0 In Steam At Inhambane

We had no further problems here, even taking pictures around the railway yard, and were feeling a little cocky. A special treat was the wood burning 2-8-0 made by St Leonard in 1922. It was time to visit the great Beira Railway, one of the great stamping grounds of the Garrat. We drove to Inchope, half some distance from Beira and headed west towards the Rhodesian border. Unfortunately, the other line to Tête was impassable due to it being blown up during the revolution!

Chapter 4 - The World Famous African Transcontinental Railway

Beira To Machupanda

The Beira line was something special. Not only was this a main line with steam power, stretching from the sea to the then Rhodesian (now Zimbabwe) border, carrying amongst other things Oil to the embargoed country!

This line was built in 1899 and along with the Benguela railway in Angola formed Africa's transcontinental railway. War permitting, it was possible to travel from Beira through Zimbabwe, across the Victoria Falls bridge into Zambia and on to the Congo before finally reaching Angola.



Figure 29 20th Class Garratt On Victoria Falls Bridge

This made it a major rail connection for landlocked Rhodesia at the time we were there.

Mozambique was not the only country doing trade with Rhodesia. The above photo shows a train crossing the border from Zambia to embargoed Rhodesia via the famous Victoria Falls bridge. The two countries were scared of each other stealing their remaining locomotives, so trains would be backed onto the bridge until the locomotive reached the half way point. When a train arrived from Livingstone in Zambia, soldiers would walk out on the lower walkway near the top of the arch. Once stationed, the train would slowly back onto the bridge until the brake van reached the half way point. Then the loco was detached and returned to the Zambian side. Next a Rhodesian loco would attach and haul the cargo across to Victoria Falls!



Figure 30 Our First Train Was Double Headed Ex Rhodesian Garratts

In this photo note the guard tower near the bridge, plus the second engine half way down the train. During the armed conflict, the guard towers were manned by armed men, looking for saboteurs. Double headers always had a few wagons in

between. Our first afternoon on the Beira line was spent driving west in gloomy weather.

One of the main stops on the line was Chimoi, near Vila Pery, and Mike caught up with the locals who were very curious about us. Few tourists ventured into this part of the country.



Figure 31 Mike Interacts With A Few Of The Locals At Chimioi

The Rhodesian Situation

At this time in history, Rhodesia was run by Ian Smith who refused to hand it over to the native population and succeeded from the British Commonwealth. When you see the state of Zimbabwe now, You might have some sympathy for his point of view. Trains taking goods to land locked Rhodesia were definitely a sensitive issue. Anyway, after a long drive we decided to pitch our tent and get ready for the next day's photography.

It was very difficult to find an isolated spot in this part of the country. People were wandering about everywhere – as they do

in Africa! I live in Australia, where you can travel for hours without seeing anyone!

The World's Worst Camping Spot!



Figure 32 Our Campsite Near Machipanda Was Closer To Rhodesia Than We Realised!

We finally found a spot which looked suitable, and set up camp. We used a lamp that plugged into the cigarette lighter, lit the fire and started cooking. Well, just after dusk, two trucks arrived. We watched the cloud of dust slowly head up the track, wondering what was going to happen. There was no way out. The trucks were full of around 20 armed soldiers – not good! There was much excitement as they alighted, surrounded us and started trying to find out why we were there. I can't really recall how we communicated, probably with signs and drawing on paper.

Anyway one of them was particularly aggressive and jabbed me in the head with the barrel of his semi automatic machine gun. I think they were *Kalashnikov AK47s, supplied by the Russian Army*.

In any case this was looking bad, and I was in fear of my life. My instant reaction was to push the gun away with some force. Fortunately for me, the commander told my assailant to pull back and we were ordered to bundle everything back into the car. Just to make sure we wouldn't escape, two armed soldiers hopped in the back seat. The next day we discovered we had been camped only 2 kms from the Rhodesian border and they thought our light was a signal lamp and my tape recorder a radio. Yes folks, they thought they had caught a couple of CIA spies!

The Commandant Looked Like Sad Sack

Our next stop was Machipanda, the border post where there was a great celebration going on. We were led into the stadium to see the local commandant. I remember him well. He looked a little like Sad Sack from the cartoon. He had oversized pants that folded over his laced up boots. He was jet black and dressed in camouflage military uniform. He had one of those air squadron bomber type hats and was quite a sight. In his hands was a short barrel shotgun.

To top it off, he was enthralled with the African dancing girls on display and had a couple attached to his arms as well. The whole scene was very colourful. Clearly he enjoyed his position of power and was most upset that his underlings had disturbed him.

We Are Moved On

He told us to go away. He had no intention of dealing with this interruption to his night out. Back in the car with our military escort we journeyed slowly back to Manica where the nearest military base was. We were very nervous with no idea what was to become of us. No one knew exactly where we were, and we had no way of communicating.

In case you are wondering why I don't have photos to illustrate all this, I thought it unwise to produce my camera, in case I lost it and the valuable footage.

A Life Changing Experience

The next part of the story is something I will never forget.

Our arrival had obviously been anticipated. Soldiers streamed out of the barracks and were very excited to have captured a couple of Spies. At that time, this was a very real threat as the CIA were actively infiltrating communist organisations and FRELIMO was backed by Russia and East Germany, hence a prime target. The FRELIMO were totally paranoid about the CIA. Even at this time, US forces were funding UNITA in Angola to fight against the MPLA, obvious allies of the FRELIMO. As well as that we had a South African registered car, and there was more than a little friction between the two countries. As it turned out less than 2 weeks later a friend of ours was tried as a CIA spy by a military tribunal in this very area! More on that later in the story.

Anyway, the soldiers lined us up against the outside wall of the camp and indicated to us to take our shirts off. This was not a good sign. To me, it really looked like a firing squad had been sent to take care of us! I was terrified.

As they had the guns, we obliged. Then they picked up their guns and all pointed them at us. Firing squad? At least that is what I thought. I was going to die.

Something Happened

This was the most spiritual experience I can recall in my entire life. For that split second when I thought I was about to leave the planet, I fell into a deep serenity, the like I have never experienced before or since. Time stood still. Nothing mattered, not past or future. After all at this point, there was none. It gave me that sense of totally being in the moment.

For those of you spiritually inclined, I can say without a doubt that the extent to which we worry about past experience or fear what might happen in the future, we limit our lives and possibilities.

Now I am certainly not in the state of Nirvana all the time, but it is always there in the back of my mind. If you want to succeed in life it involves letting go of your experiences, other people's opinions, and fear of what might go wrong. Then just do what you feel is right and somehow life works out. Whenever I feel the world isn't treating me right, recalling that experience allows me to see the bigger picture. After all I have lived another 37 years on borrowed time!

A Good Night's Rest

That night we were given a single bed between us and told not to move. I remember sleeping fully clothed and not moving an inch! That's how scared I was.

The next morning wasn't much better. After a less than appetizing breakfast, the tension was high. Then I saw an opportunity. Some of the men were sawing logs with a two man sword. I jumped on one end and started participating. Suddenly the mood changed and they were much friendlier. It was technique I used near Joao Belo and it worked again.

The Big Boss

Well, we weren't out of the woods yet. This was the centre of operations for activities against Rhodesia, probably the hottest military spot in the country. Next stop was a visit to the area commander, one of the most senior military men in Mozambique.



We hopped in the car with the top brass from the camp and drove around 50 kms to the large base at Vila Pery (Chimoio). Vila Pery is Mozambique's fifth largest city, and was the first (and only) heavy populated area to be hit by the FRELIMO during the entire Colonial War. As late as 2011, there was talk of rebuilding the road from Beira to machipanda due to the poor state of the road. Chimoio was a very sensitive area and heavily armed troops guarded the town. On arrival we were met by the chief of operations for the Vila Pery area, a well dressed man who shook our hands and took us to lunch in the canteen.

Now at that time, I would remind you that the FRELIMO had just come out of hiding in the jungle, where they staged a bloody insurgency for many years. Bridges on the Beira line had battlements on them so soldiers could patrol and shoot those who wished to blow up the bridges. The war went on for 10 years until it ended in September 1974. Since that time there had been an uneasy truce and a wary neighbour in Zimbabwe who had its own insurgency led by Robert Mugabe.

Lunch FRELIMO Style

So it was that we were escorted to a laminex table with a nice tablecloth and knives and forks. There were wine glasses and the full European trimmings. Unfortunately the food was the normal. Fried Mackerel with thousands of bones in it plus some

overcooked macaroni, and water in the wine decanter. At least it was better than the fish soup in macaroni we normally received.

We had a discussion in English with the Commander and he told us we were free to go! “Can we take photos”, I requested? I was nothing but bold by this time. I knew if we went on our way we would be arrested soon enough. Not only that, this was a risk as Batista explicitly told us no photos. Apart from that, we, of course, used Batista’s name in the conversation and hoped they wouldn’t check up on us!

We Finally Get Official Permission To Take Photos

Yes, he said. Then I pointed out that if we did, we may be shot! I asked for a document giving us authority to get our pictures.

To my amazement they complied and we left with a sealed document called an “Aguia” from the Vila Perry area command, the second highest Military authority in the country, allowing us to move freely wherever we wanted and photograph steam trains! The final part was an offer of an armed escort to accompany us on our mission. We hit the jackpot.

We were so close to abandoning our mission at this point. To me it was a miracle that we were given permission to keep going and take photos. Having an officially sealed document gave us the courage to move forward. It was a really big deal for us.

We took the soldiers back to Manica and left them there. Now, after losing an entire day, we were anxious to get some photos before nightfall. We headed along the rail line and found a small gangers trolley with shelter to sleep under at Chaisa. It poured all night but we kept dry thanks to our trolley.



Figure 33 Wonderful Scenery And Garrats Galore At Chaisa Where We Slept On A Gangers Trolley

The next morning we awoke with the sun shining and managed to get some shots of a banker and a double header before the clouds set in again at around 9 am.



Figure 34 Double Header Near Chiasa



Figure 35 Bankers Were Quite Common

“Banking with a locomotive at the rear was quite common on this section of track with steep grades. The closer we got to Rhodesia, the better the terrain for photography”.

The Weather Sets In Again

The weather was generally atrocious in this part of the world! By 10 am the locals caught up with us.

We showed them our Aguiá and they said we needed it stamped at the local police station, so back to Manica to complete the paperwork. More time wasted! It poured the rest of the day, so we spent it getting the car repaired.

The next morning we headed back to Chaisa, but the weather was cloudy, so not good for photography. We were sitting on a hill waiting for the next train when one of the locals turned up, very excited.

We Meet One Of Africa's Poor

Now this guy spoke English as we were very close to Rhodesia where it was the national language. He was very worried for our welfare. He explained that even though we had a permit, the soldiers would shoot first, and ask questions later! He invited us in for tea.

The hospitality we received here was humbling. Here was a family who were obviously starving willing to share what little they possessed with complete strangers. It really changes your perspective on life.

Four Soldiers Appear

Not long after we noticed 4 soldiers walking along the railway line looking for us. By the time they reached us we had about 50 curious locals around us with much handshaking. There was more than a passing interest in a chess game which had been in progress for over 2 hours.

The soldiers were not happy at being dragged all this way. They indeed told our host they would have shot us as spies if we had not been with him, and marched us back to the car. Yet another lucky escape!

No One Knew What To Do!

So back to the army barracks where no one knew what to do! We headed back to Vila Pery with two captains on board to get a decision! This was achieved in very fast time and we then waited for the commandant who appeared ½ hour later and said there was no problem as per usual.

At this stage we were getting pretty angry with so much time wasted on trivial matters. We had to return to Manica to drop off the soldiers before we could go on our way. Just then the sun came out, so we headed back to the station.



Figure 36 Double Headed Garrats Travel East

As can be seen from the above photo, some trains included a helper loco in the middle of the train and the scenery is simply

stunning. In fact the best part is less than 20km from the Rhodesian border, and that caused a problem!

10 minutes later a double on Boner turned up. Just the thing for a chase back to Manica. Our passengers were about to see what it was all about as we pounded down the sand tracks at breakneck speed sliding around corners and occasionally halting in a cloud of dust and getting a photo.

If you have had nothing to do with rail fans, you would be unaware that we are totally devoted and focused on getting our photos. There is no thought of dying or getting seriously injured as we race down country roads like Rally drivers. I remember sliding around sand dunes, and fishtailing through knee deep snow! I have driven on many roads that were “impassable” by normal vehicles. We were frequently bogged in mud or marooned in sand, and learnt many tricks to get out of these situations.



Figure 37 Our Escort Waves As The Train Passes

After much effort I bagged a shot with boys and train. If you look carefully on the left of this shot, you will see our escort. Two soldiers with semi automatics over their shoulders. It was a great afternoon. Eventually time beat us – sunset and back again to Manica.



Figure 38 Henschel Garrat near sunset at Chaisa

Accommodation was offered and some rather poorly barbequed chicken for tea.

We spent the night at Manica Military base as their guests with the idea of leaving early in the morning with an escort. Slowly we were getting a few photos.

A FRELIMO Doctor Speaks Out

One of the FRELIMO living in Manica barracks was a Doctor. Unusually, he was well educated and spoke perfect English. We had a long conversation about the state of affairs in the country. He was one of the very few FRELIMO who spoke openly about the situation.

He told me that the leaders of the FRELIMO had no idea about running a government. The Portuguese would be leaving the country with all the business expertise, and it would be likely that as Nationalisation was imposed, most of them would leave. He further said that the hopes of the people were very high and that it was unlikely the new regime would live up to them. This would leave the door open for counter insurgency groups and a civil war.

Malaria was rampant as was malnutrition. Generally the population were in a very bad way.

Literacy rates were low in the country and many people faced starvation. How the government was going to feed everyone was a mystery to him.

In his words, the FRELIMO “wouldn’t know how to run a playpen, let alone an army”!

He also said it was treason to even talk about these things at the time. If I reported him, he would be in big trouble (as in probably executed for treason). It was a wonderful insight into the real situation in the country. As I said, very few people were prepared to talk about the reality of life in Mozambique at that time. The European population was terrified, and for the most part, the locals ignorant.

A Prophetic Vision

As it turned out, his prophecies came true. Most of the Portuguese business people left the country in the next two years. The RENAMO counter insurgency group plunged the country into a 16 year civil war. The army at Machava Barracks mutinied and tried to overthrow the government.

The government singled out FRELIMO dissidents, tried them and executed them. Hopefully the Doctor wasn’t one of them! Over 1,000,000 people either starved or were killed during the civil

war, and many were lost limbs in land mines. In some areas this happened to up to 40% of the population.

A New Day Dawns

Next morning came with perfect sunny weather, so we conspired for a 5am departure. At 5.30 am we left the base with 3 soldiers on board and after much argument were sent to Machipanda with the idea of moving on to Chaisa along the cade (short for motorcade or in our case train chasing) road. After 2 more hours of frustrating perfect sun at Machipanda we saw our escort leaving on a truck and headed off on our own after heated arguments with the border guards. Back at Manica we blasted everyone and left again at 9.15 with a gratis 20 liters of fuel and 2 more soldiers, one of whom spoke English.

We headed back to Chiasa at top speed and then up the track along the railway line. We almost reached the location we were heading before the last West bound train came by.

We moved to our Eastbound photo location and got a great shot of the East Bound Passenger with yet another class of Garrat.



Figure 39 The East Bound Passenger Near Chiasa Just Before Sunset

After this shot there was one more double header and then no more trains. The boys had gone for a cigarette, (a popular item at 5\$50 a pack, around 12c Australian) and didn't return. We found often that escorts would just walk off somewhere and then reappear hours later! We checked out some more spots and then headed back past the other side of Manica to try and get some more photos of one of the passenger trains. Unfortunately, it was over 1 hour late, so we missed out.

We thought we had better go back and pick up the soldiers, and found them limping down the track on our return to Chiasa. They had discovered, as we did that one of the vines growing near the railway, was like poison ivy and left you scratching for hours – most unpleasant!

The Police Station

That night we slept in the Manica Police Station on those African roll up beds. These are made of rattan stitched together. Not

particularly comfortable, but better than the cold Concrete floor. Unfortunately, there were a number of others in the room. One of them had Asthma and coughed all night, so not much rest.

We were keen to get going in the morning, however it took most of the day to find our escorts. We were fortunate to get a shot of one of the Henschel Garrats on the passenger train. These are extremely rare having a 4-8-2 plus 2-8-4 wheel arrangement. At the time there were only 2 in service.



Figure 40 Henschel Garrat ready for departure from Chimoi

I remember one spot where we headed into the bush to get a photo and were itching for hours due to a vine there. It was most unpleasant.



Figure 41 We Itched All Over Getting This Shot Of The Henschel Garrat

A better shot of the Belgium built Henschel Garrat. These passenger Garrats were a real treat. Apparently one is being preserved in the new railway museum in Maputo.



Figure 42 East Bound Passenger At Edmundo

All in all, we did get some great photos, and it was worth it to obtain rare footage that few possess, simply because it is a very difficult place to get to. The piece de resistance of the trip was a late afternoon shot of the passenger train

After two days of cloak and dagger photography, it was time to move on. We didn't get a lot of shots, but they were quality!



Figure 43 Many Of The Garratts Were Ex Rhodesian Railways

Heading back down the hill to Inchope, we met a west bound passenger with a Henschel at the front and followed it up the line in rather gloomy weather.



Figure 44 Henschel Near Inchope

This was our final attempt at photographing the magnificent Mozambique Garrats.



Figure 45 Baldwin on Dondo Suburban

We were very satisfied with our effort thus far and armed with our permit, we decided it was time to head north on the long trek to Nampula. After all, this was our main objective. We were still yearning to see those last remaining Atlantics.

After driving to the port of Beira, and exchanging money, we slept in our tent and it poured so hard, the tent caved in around 1 am. This was exasperated by lost tent parts due to the rather abrupt arrest at Machipanda.



Figure 46 Passengers Getting On And Off Near Dondo

Heading back towards the coast we had seen a new road being built heading north. It was paved, unlike the current roads which were barely passable. This was very attractive to us, given what we had heard about the road north!

Chapter 4 - The Journey To Nampula

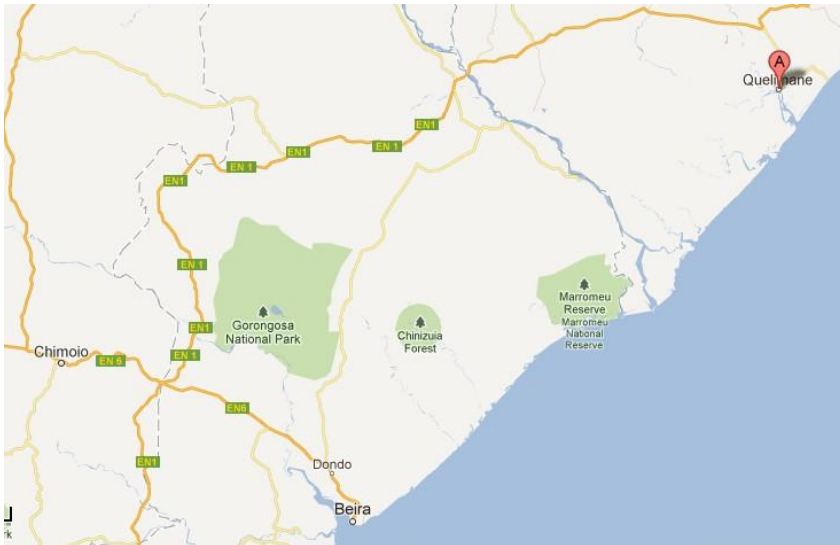


Figure 47 The Road From Beira To Quelimane The Coast Road We Took Is No Longer On The Map!

The above map shows the current main road from Beira to Quelimane and Nampula. This was under construction at the time of our visit, and if you look at the main route EN1 it was about 50 kms down this road that we collided with the back of the Landrover and effectively wrecked the car!

The river the road ends at is the mighty Zambezi. In those days there was a ferry crossing, the river being very wide at that point. The coast road from the other side of the river is not on the current map. It was one of the worst I have ever seen.

To give you an idea of what the road was like, there were trestle bridges with railway sleepers laid across them. You had to keep your wheels on the sleepers which were laid in the direction of

travel. If you slipped off the side, you would fall into the river or worse.

We refuelled and started north on this new road. After about 60 kms of smooth driving disaster struck. We came up behind a Land Rover who hit the brakes with no lights and ran into it. It made a mess of the Peugeot. What happened was that our car's brakes chose that moment to fail. I had no way of stopping! They towed us into their camp with the radiator pouring water.

For the next two days I attempted to repair the car. We were not going to be stopped this close! Only 900 kms to our destination. Considering I come from Australia, it is not that far in world terms.

I spent hours with a soldering iron, heated over an open fire, and then we winched the radiator away from the engine with a chain tied around a tree using a block and tackle. Remember, the front shock absorbers had already failed near Laurencio Marques. The car was literally falling apart. Eventually we got the car operational again (it was not pretty and the brakes weren't working properly) and headed back towards Beira. The radiator was almost silver, it had so much solder in it! Unfortunately the new road ended at the camp.

Instead of turning off at Dondo, we trekked the last 35 kms to Beira where we purchased a number of cans of Bars Stop Leaks, then started the long journey north. It was either that or quit at this stage. A careful inspection at Beira revealed that we were not losing water. This was what encouraged us to keep going.

We drove all night fishtailing to stay in the sand tracks dug out by the many trucks on the road. The whole area was a sand dune and if we had to pass a vehicle it required skill to not get bogged. When you met a vehicle coming the other way, someone would have to dive off the road and risk getting bogged. You simply couldn't pass on most of it. This would have to be one of the

worst routes on earth. We had been told the truth! We continued on with the car shaking itself to bits in the constant corrugations, remembering that the shock absorbers weren't working very well!

Anyway after hours of intense driving we came over a hill and there were a few vehicles parked on the side of the track. This seemed a little unusual so we slowed down. It looked like the road was smoothing out up ahead! On closer inspection the road led straight into the Zambezi river, the fourth largest in the world! Fortunately we stopped. There were no signs or indication of a river crossing.



Figure 48 Zambezi River Crossing

Look at the above picture. That is the river crossing. You should be able to get an idea of how dreadful this road was! On the latest road maps, the road leading from the other side of the river to Quelimane is not to be found!

The next ferry appeared around 9 am. After crossing the river, we managed to get fuelled from 44 gallon drums in the village on the other side and continued on.

Our next stop was Quelimane, another isolated railway which was 100 percent wood burning.

Quelimane



Figure 49 A Wood Burning 2-8-0 On The Passenger Quelimane Line

This is another line that is no longer working and the locos are lying derelict.

Quelimane is a fair way north and surrounded by Coca Palms. I recall they were everywhere. It is completely isolated and the locomotives were all wood burning. At this time in history there were very few railways powered by wood.

The port is another historic one for Mozambique, and in the early 1980s, the government intended to use the line to transport cotton to a new mill at Mocuba. There is some dispute whether the line stopped because of constant attacks by RENAMO, or the government selling off the rails for scrap metal! In any case it ceased operating around 1980, only a few years after our visit.



Figure 50 An Ancient Wood Burner In Steam At The Loco Depot

Quelimane boasts an old cathedral and it is said that a British cargo boat capsized there a century ago while coming to pick up the infamous David Livingstone.

The weather here was atrocious, and it was hard to get enough light for our photos. At this stage we were very keen to complete the trip to Nampula before our car completely packed it in, so we left after a few shots around the station area. It was already late afternoon, so we couldn't photograph the passenger on its journey through the night.



Figure 51 All These Engines Are Finished



The Final Stretch To Nampula

The trip from Quelimane to Nampula was another 550kms of the worst roads in Africa. Perhaps not as bad as the previous section but by now our car was overheating, the radiator was leaking like a sieve, we were constantly filling it with water, and the bars leaks had lost its punch. We were past the point of no return. Turning back was not an option. Just imagine a car with little braking, a leaking radiator, not to mention the front shock absorber wasn't working and there were worrying cracks on the left hand fender.

I want to give you an idea of what this journey was like. First, at night there were huge owls sitting on the road. You had to drive around them. Sort of a Driving Testing ground with the witches hats! When you add the owls to the many pot holes, it was a real challenge.

Bridges were all but washed away. They were often trestles with railway sleepers mounted across them. You had to keep your car on the sleeper tracks or fall into the crocodile infested rivers!

We Visit A Missionary

At one stage we visited a Jesuit missionary to get petrol. I can't locate it now unfortunately. What I remember was that they were in fear of what would happen to them following independence. Apparently, not long after our visit, the FRELIMO kicked the missionaries out of the country because of their long association with Portuguese rule.

While there I spoke to a European priest and asked him how the locals were faring, given that most of them looked malnourished. He agreed and explained this situation.

Basically the eldest male was the bread winner. They received priority for nutrition. After that, the children came next and finally the women. As everyone had been malnourished as children it

was a vicious cycle resulting in reduced life span and horrendous conditions for all. This explained why everyone appeared malnourished. It affected me to see this.



Figure 52 Locals Line The Road North Of Quelimane And Cheer Us As We Pass!

The next day there were thousands of people lining the road (see above photo). As we passed they all shouted Viva! Apparently we were just in front of Samora Michel, the soon to be president of the new republic. It did make us feel good and we were on a high as we finally approached Nampula. It was June 16, 1975.

What we didn't know is that this was a very significant date in the history of Mozambique. We were to find out later that an interim parliament was formed shortly after we entered the country and one of the first proclamations was that all foreign tourists must be out of the country by June 17. Our visas, issued by the Portuguese for one month became invalid on that day. We had no idea of this as we approached the final checkpoint at Nampula.

Chapter 5 - Nampula – The Final Frontier

The Real Trouble Starts

Now I know this adventure has had its share of dramas and dangerous situations, but it was about to get worse. You can probably understand that not being reporters, we were not inclined to film everything, because we didn't want to lose our film or cameras, or worse. It is an absolute miracle we got out of there with all our film intact.

Imagine for a moment you have traversed a thousands kilometres of the worst roads you have ever seen, crossed over one of the world's largest rivers, endured sand bogs, and a car that has just about expired. You are coming into the city that you entered the country to see. You are hot and dusty from the trip and very on edge considering you are stopping every 50 kms to top up the radiator and hoping the engine doesn't overheat too much. We found out later that the head gasket was leaking badly by the end of this journey.

What a relief to get to the edge of town and the final checkpoint before a well earned rest!

Anyway we approached this final checkpoint. There was a lot of commotion and discussion amongst the soldiers. We were not expecting this. They looked at our passports and signalled us out of the car. We were ushered into a tent and told we were not supposed to be there – no explanation. We showed them our "aguia" thinking this would fix it all up, and they took it off us! A real blow. That is why I can't show you a picture unfortunately. I wasn't expecting it to be taken or I would have got one earlier.

Then they took our car with just about everything in it, except one bag with the cameras as it happens. Mine was a small canvas bag. I had the clothes I was wearing and my cameras and film. That means a pair of sandals, shorts and tee shirt. That was it!

We were moved to a motel type room which had been “borrowed” by the Frelimo. In this part of the world, you did what you were told or your business might be shut down. It was very precarious for the Portuguese who had lived there for many years running local businesses. The room was nice enough with two single beds. They left an armed guard of two soldiers with AK47s outside.



Figure 53 The Nampula Car Rally Was In Full Swing

We looked outside and there was a big rally happening. Cars sped around the city and the guards had disappeared. Now, we were less than 1 km from the Atlantics, the holy grail of steam. The soldiers disappeared to watch the race!

Mike, my English friend, decided he was going to “get the shots” of at least one of these engines and we headed off into town. We managed to get into the railway yards and found two of the

engines lying on the scrap yard. In tact, but looking the worse for wear.



Figure 54 Our First Atlantic - 814 With Smoke Deflectors At Nampula Depot

We got the cameras out and took the above photo of one of the engines which has smoke deflectors. There were still two more missing! Where were they?

Spotted Again

Of course, as soon as this happened a diligent station staffer approached us to find out what we were doing there. I used the old trick of explaining that we were in detention, told them who had our papers, and they let us go! Dropping names really works as no one wants to confront one of the chiefs!

We headed straight back home undetected. The soldiers hadn't returned. The whole episode took less than an hour.

We Head North Again

CADERNETA Nº 9347 3ª classe C.A.M. 82 SIMPLES serié B BIL. Nº NACALA NAMPULA NACALA	NACALA	K.7.200	Mochilipo	S. Mesa	Namige	Namarr.	K. 51.6	R. Monapo	Mozambique
	Lumbo	V. F. B.	Entete	Naguema	Navarra	Ampivine	Monapo	Evate	Metocheria
	Namialo	S. Filom.	Meconta	Reg. Apu.	Nacavala	Muezia	Anchilo	Netia	NAMPULA
	1º800	20300							
	30300	4.700	1\$00	2\$00	3\$00	4\$00	5\$00	6\$00	7\$00
								8\$00	9\$00
	NAMPULA	Netia	Anchilo	Muezia	Nacavala	Reg. Apu.	Meconta	S. Filom.	Namialo
	Metocheria	Evate	Monapo	Ampivine	Navarra	Naguema	Entete	V. F. B.	Lumbo
	Mozambique	R. Monapo	K. 51.6	Namarr.	Namige	S. Mesa	Mochilipo	K.7.200	NACALA

While at the station we discovered a train left for Nacala at 4.15 am next morning. Nacala was where we were told you could see an Atlantic in steam.

Figure 55 My Ticket To Nacala

It was a risky business, but at 4am we crept past the sleeping guards, down to the railway station and purchased two tickets to Nacala.



Figure 56 Our 2-8-2 No 458 Ready To Depart With The Atlantic In The background

Some four uneventful hours later we arrived at Rio Monapo, the junction of the branch to lumbo near Mozambique Island, one of the most historic places in Eastern Africa. This picture was taken

at the junction. On the left is the branch train, headed by an Atlantic! We were so excited. We had made it, despite the roads, weather, FRELIMO, and all the other setbacks. Better yet, we still had our cameras!

Now, understand we had travelled 4 hours by train north of Nampula. We were a different skin colour to just about everyone else, and we didn't speak the language. We somehow had to convince the railway staff we had changed our mind on where we wanted to go without raising suspicion. Somehow we managed to do this and switched trains. It was to be our last steam ride in the country.



Figure 57 812, One Of The Last Two Atlantics In Regular Service In The World!

At each station I would get off the train, run ahead and take a photo. I wasn't going to miss this opportunity for anything. Unfortunately, the driver wouldn't let me in the cab, but I did clock us at 48 mph at one stage! That's nearly 80 kph. Not bad for a 3'6" branch line.



Figure 58 Taking On Water

Eventually we arrived at Lumbo, just a short walk across the causeway to Mozambique Island. This railway still operates. The line comes south from Nacala and then on to Lumbo.



Figure 59 812 Arrives At Lumbo



Figure 60 A Magnificent Baobab Tree Was Part Of The Scenery

On the train we met a man who spoke English. He told us he was from Malawi and had come there looking for work. He told us about Mozambique Island and offered to show us around. As it was several hours before the return trip, we joined him.



Figure 61 Our Friend From Malawi - We Didn't Know He Was An Illegal Immigrant

After a brisk walk across the causeway, we were relieved to find there was no check point at the entrance to the Island. After all, we had no papers, just our cameras in a small bag. It seemed the

Island was oblivious to all the chaos in the surrounding districts. Our intention was to return on the afternoon train and then face the consequences back at Nampula!

We Explore Mozambique Island

Mozambique Island is an ancient port. Inhabited originally by the Bantu tribe, it was used by Arab traders for many years. Vasco Da Gama “discovered” it for Portugal on a visit in 1498. He returned a few years later and claimed Mozambique for the Portuguese.

This is a beautiful coral island which served for many years as perhaps the most important trading port on the East African coastline. It is stunningly beautiful and at the time of our visit, there were many old buildings and cafes. We had lunch at a relaxed venue and then our guide said he would show us the two main attractions.

First is the chapel of Nossa Senhora de Baluarte built in 1522 and listed as the oldest European building in the Southern Hemisphere.

Then there was the magnificent Fort of São Sebastião completed in the early 1600s. The fort dominates the landscape on the island and due to its historical significance, was worth a visit.

As soon as we passed through the gates, we knew we were in trouble! As it turned out, the fortress was active, with a FRELIMO base inside. We made our retreat as discretely as we could, but our friend wasn't so lucky. They grabbed him and discovered he was in the country illegally. That led them back to us, and, of course, we had no papers either!

If you can imagine the days of pirates on the high seas, this was exactly what this place looked like. Numerous battlements, cannon, a large yard, and then the cells. I will never forget them.

By this stage the barracks had emptied out and we were surrounded by dozens of well armed soldiers. Again, they had caught a couple of CIA spies, a prize catch in this part of the world. My understanding of this sort of situation was not to be separated. If they were going to interrogate you or execute you, they would separate you first.

When we were placed in two separate cells unable to see each other, my heart sank. If you have seen a pirate movie or recall the dungeons of medieval Europe, this was where we were housed. My cell was concrete, with a high domed roof and a massive wooden door to which they attached a large chain and padlock. There was clearly no escape.

To make matters worse, furnishings consisted of a mattress and pillow, human excrement in the corner, and a couple of porn magazines to boot. The cell was cold and damp. It was very uncomfortable and foreboding. What would I do now?

I Turn To God

When I was young I used to go to church. I figured if there was a God out there, I could use some help right then, so I prayed and sang songs from the church fellowship days. This tactic has worked on other occasions too.

It really annoyed the soldiers who kept yelling at me, but I kept going. It was instinct that led me to this. Anyway, I really didn't have any better ideas! My mates had told me my singing sucked, and obviously the FRELIMO thought so too!

What seemed like an eternity later, the chains creaked and the door opened. There were a bunch of soldiers there, one of whom spoke French. Part of the challenge for us was that neither of us spoke any African language or Portuguese. It made communication almost impossible, apart from drawing diagrams.

Anyway I studied French for 3 years at high school and suddenly remembered every word! I was amazed at my ability to recall at this time. I told the French speaking translator that our papers were in Nampula and the commandant there could verify who we were. I really had no other choice. They locked me up again and disappeared.

An hour later (seemed like forever to me) they delivered a plate of cold chips. At least it was some food and I devoured them. I had no idea how long it would be before my next meal. It was still very tense.

Around midnight, we were taken out of the cells and given a room upstairs. Let's face it, how many people have slept in a 17th century fortress still operating! We spent the night a little more relaxed. What would become of us. We had been very naughty skipping custody and travelling without documents. The one good thing was we still had our camera bags. Mind you I didn't take any photos for fear of losing everything!

In the morning we were given breakfast of Ricoffee and Rolls and shuffled back to Rio Monapo by truck. We ate lunch and tea there. Tea came from a Portuguese Ration Pack. I kept it and bought it home with me! The typical meal was a piece of fruit, bread roll, tuna or meat, and jam. Interestingly most of the provisions were made in Rhodesia! That's Africa for you – full of contradictions.



Figure 62 Portuguese Ration Pack

After tea we travelled in the back of an open Landrover at breakneck speeds to Nampula. It was a ride from hell. Here we were, holding on to the rail behind the cabin with the vehicle bouncing over potholes and sliding around corners. Then the rain started. It was so strong you couldn't see ahead and pelting at us full force. It stung. The one good thing about this was that it was so damn hot, that as soon as the rain stopped, we dried out in minutes.

Chapter 6 – The Incarceration

Life Deteriorated (As If It Could Get Worse)

On arrival in Nampula we were greeted by the Commandant in his nice new car, who told us he was very angry about what we had done and needed a couple of days to figure out what to do with us!

I would remind readers that Nampula was the center for the northern activities of FRELIMO. For the 16 years after we left, there were constant bombings, terrorist attacks and mines being laid. One description of a visit to Mozambique Island during that time mentions, “I would say about 40% of the local people had injuries or were maimed from mines”. George Warrington UK Yes, everyone was on edge in this part of the world.

Nampula had a large military base, where we were to spend some time. After entering the gates, we were taken to an inner compound surrounded by a triple barbed wire fence, not unlike that I had witnessed at Auschwitz!

Inside the fence were three barracks. Again Mike and I were split up into separate accommodation. It was to be our home for the next two days.

Who Was In The Barracks?

There were a number of people living in this place. Many of them spoke some English and gave us a run down on the war that had taken place. For the most part, these people had fought for the wrong side in the war. They worked for the Portuguese colonialists against their own people. In particular, Peter and Gideon swapped language lessons with me. I started writing common English words and their Portuguese equivalent. Had I been there more than a few days, I would have lefts speaking the

another section of the barracks. How long would this last? We had no idea.

Two days later the commandant returned to pick us up. He explained that we were very naughty boys, and they were not happy with us. I guess they wanted us out of the way while they celebrated their independence.

We Fly To The Capital In Handcuffs

In his near new car, they drove us immediately to the airport. Then we were handcuffed and each accompanied by an armed guard to board one of Mozambique's two Boeing 737s. I think the idea of soldiers with AK47s on a flight these days is not something airlines would be very happy with! Clearly they didn't want us to get away again! For some reason, they returned the canvas bag with the cameras in it! The young flight attendant was very friendly. She was cute too! We must have looked a site, chained to soldiers for the duration of the flight. A bit over the top in my opinion. Were we really that dangerous? After a stop in Beira, later that afternoon we landed back in the Capital.

On arrival in Lorenzo Marques we were met by Sam, a senior military official and the handcuffs removed. He drove us in his plush car to what was to be our new home for the next month, Machava Barracks, the place we had been taken after an earlier arrest! Again, he explained that Batista was not happy with us. We had no idea what our future might bring!

Our New Home

Our hearts sank as we approached this place we had previously talked our way out of. When we arrived there was much excitement. The commandant of the camp was surprised to see us again and greeted us warmly with the triple African handshake. Given that these soldiers mounted a mutiny against the government a few months later, I can now understand why they were so friendly towards us! We were put in a room

amongst the officers' quarters. Just to put this in context, this was not some plush motel that you might expect Australian Army officers to inhabit. There were no decorations, just whitewashed adobe walls with a bed, foam mattress and foam cushion, and if you were lucky, a light blanket. Fortunately it was tropical.

Machava was the main military barracks for the capital. It was a large compound well secured with a massive gate at the entrance. Next door was a prison where they put their long term criminals. In the center of the barracks was a room with the worst of the worst. These guys were in there for rape or murder. They were only let out occasionally for exercise.

The room was about 8' x 6' with two single beds, each with a foam mattress and piece of foam for a pillow. The door was unlockable and the beds very old. The ailing springs squeaked. The walls were painted white. We had only the clothes on our backs – those we had been arrested with, T shirt, sandals and shorts. I was too scared to take any photos because of the situation. These guys didn't want bad publicity, and if they thought we were filming it wouldn't be good.

We were given a ration pack for the evening meal and left. This pack had FRELIMO stamped on it. It still contained canned Rhodesian manufactured jam! We expected to hear from Batista shortly to know our fate!

The First Three Days Were The Hardest

Three days passed with me glued to the front gate looking for any indication of a visit. Nothing happened. The soldiers in the barracks didn't talk to us. For the most part they didn't speak English anyway, but they were wary of fraternising with the "spies". Those first few days were the worst as our expectations were high.

As time moved on with no word from anyone, I started to think of what I could do to get out. The second in command spoke some English. He was friendly enough. I asked to be put in contact with the Australian Official or British Consulate. They laughed and said, “We’re Guerrillas, we don’t deal with Consulates”.

It was obvious by now we had to be patient. Every morning the soldiers and prisoners would play soccer. The field had goals and consisted of a giant sandpit! It was hard going. As we were arrested with just sandals on, I played in bare feet. At least it kept us busy for an hour or two. After a week or so I was starting to improve! Some of the prisoners who joined us were a guy called “Tres metros” (3 meters because he was so tall), Mario, Alberto, Armando, Len, knife man (so called because he used to help with the cooking, cutting meat). He was in there for stabbing someone to death! Most of the others had either raped or murdered someone. The soccer was great exercise as well and kept us in good shape.

We Keep Ourselves Occupied

We played games to keep occupied and stop us going crazy. I have some idea what it is like to be in prison!



Figure 63 I Drew A Map Of My Travels To date!

Between us we wrote the name of over 500 singers or music groups. We would select a lot of the alphabet and see who could

remember the most names. We played “hangman” with country names. SOS was another hit. Of course I spent time writing the notes I used for this story. It was important to keep occupied at all costs and not think about our situation.

My Dislocated Toe

One morning I got kicked in the toe by an Army boot and dislocated it. I thought it was broken and stopped playing. A few days later I found someone who spoke English to chat to. Turns out he was a paramedic and told me it was just dislocated. He yanked it back into place and very soon it was back to normal. That was a lucky break.

We Help Preparing Meals

The other daily activity was breakfast. Each morning they lit a fire under a 44 gallon drum of water. Into that they put a six large cans of coffee and chicory (not the best coffee in the world), plus 6 cans of Nestles condensed milk for sweetening. Then everyone bought their mugs for the daily coffee, served with a bread roll and usually an orange. Following my principles for survival, I helped make the breakfast. One of the soldiers showed me how to pour half the can of condensed milk into the drum, then scoop it out half full, getting a $\frac{1}{4}$ can of condensed milk. From then on I had some each morning.

The FRELIMO had large quantities of small tins of jam of various flavours. I remember the brand was Fray Bentos, manufactured in Rhodesia. We would try to get an extra tin now and then and squirrel it away in our room. At one stage I had 15 cans of jam in my room!

I learnt a new way of peeling oranges I have used ever since. You get a knife and score two circles around the orange and then peel off each section. This easily removes the peel and you are left with the orange to eat.

We Fight With The Officers For Meals

For lunch and dinner, it was a different story. We were fortunate enough to eat with the officers. I really can't imagine what the food was like for the foot soldiers and prisoners! Probably much like those barracks in Nampula! No wonder they mounted a mutiny.

The menu varied between gristly meat, cans of tuna, or very bony small fried fish, plus rice or Macaroni (Mozambique's favourite dish). The meat was cut by the knife man (in there for killing someone with a knife) and I soon figured out that I could get better cuts of meat by doing it myself! From then on I helped and cut the meat to remove at least some of the gristle!

Meal time came and we all entered the dining room, about 30 – 40 officers plus Mike and myself. At first we let them take their fill and we got what was left. That didn't work with hoards of hungry soldiers! There was nothing left but – you guessed it – Macaroni!

So pretty soon we dived right in with the rest of the mob, scavenging amongst the few cans of Tuna or strands of meat to get our share. I did pretty well, and from then on the food was better.

The President Comes To Visit

One day Samora Michel, the soon to be president of the republic and leader of FRELIMO, came to visit the camp. Before he arrived we, and the prisoners on the base were all locked safely away where we wouldn't be noticed. The same thing happened a couple of days later when two French journalists from Amnesty International turned up. Again, we had no chance of communicating with them. We really had disappeared from the world. Everyone back home was talking about us by now. The word had spread to the point that a few weeks ago when I caught up with a bunch of Aussie rail fans, people I barely know told me about it!

Independence Day

It is something special to be in a country on the day of its Independence from Colonial rule. The date was June 25, 1975. As it turned out, the ceremonies were happening only a short distance away at Machava Stadium. It was a night of great excitement in the camp. The soldiers all got drunk. One of them came to dinner, grabbed his meal, sat down and collapsed straight into this plate of food. It was quite a sight.

A Frightening Night

All night we heard the words, “Viva, Viva, Viva”, or long live Mozambique, FRELIMO and Samora Michel roaring from the stadium. The event rose to a crescendo, after which there was a fireworks display.

Later it really got out of control at the camp. Those who had been at the stadium returned drunk and mayhem ensued. A couple of them started firing their rifles in the air, everyone joined in and we got very scared. There were bullets flying everywhere. Imagine you are the only two Europeans in a camp full of drunk natives going berserk firing weapons at random!

We hid in our room, barricaded the door, and lay on the floor for about two hours just in case. About 1 am the shooting stopped and we were able to go to bed. It is another night I won't ever forget!

False Hope

After Independence day, our spirits soared and we looked forward to being released, now there was no reason to detain us. We were wrong! Another two weeks passed with absolutely no news. I spent my time driving everyone nuts asking when we would be released. I am afraid Mike would tell me day after day. “It's hopeless” in his Yorkshire accent. Those words I never want to hear again!

The next event on the calendar was a Soccer match. It was being staged next door at the prison. This was the place where Tanzanian Security Gestapo were torturing political prisoners. We were all escorted over there to join the crowd. They took great care introducing me to someone special. This man had been arrested drunk one night, thrown in a cell in the local Police Station and been in detention ever since. As there were no records of his case, he was lost in the cracks for the last 36 years! I asked him what it felt like. He shrugged his shoulders! This was very emotional.

This man had a broken spirit. He had given up hope. The reason he was introduced to us, was the possibility that after independence, there would be a general amnesty for prisoners as there often is in a new country. I have no way of knowing if this ever happened.

Tomorrow I Go To See Batista – I Will Tell Him About You

One day, the second in command, who was friendly to us, and spoke some English, said to me, “I am going to see Batista tomorrow, I will tell him about you”. This man always gave me the special triple African handshake, a sign of friendship. Finally some action.

It was Thursday July 10, when Sam finally turned up for us. This was the day after our friend went to see Batista. I am fairly certain that Batista had our file in his “in-box”, and didn’t even know we were there yet.

I had just finished washing my shirt which was becoming full of holes, when a car arrived with the man who took us to the camp from the airport. We were driven into town for lunch. They asked us about our car, still in Nampula. We told them the extent of the damage. We were then returned to the camp and told we would be picked up the next afternoon.

The car was in a terrible state. Both front shocks were broken. The front frame of the car was starting to break up around the left front shock absorber. The radiator was pretty well destroyed with many holes from the crash. We didn't know what else was wrong, but it had frequently overheated.

Mañana is a work in Portuguese that means "tomorrow". In Spanish, and Portuguese, the true meaning of tomorrow is never, as there is always a tomorrow! Expecting things to happen in a day is totally unrealistic in their culture. We should have known. No one turned up. Once again, our hearts sank.

We busied ourselves with soccer and collecting more food. Daily takings 5 tins of meatballs. Stocked up to 15 tins of jam, 5 meatballs, 1 fish, 3 fruit, butter and 2 hamburger steaks and as many bread rolls and oranges as we could eat. We had collected quite a stash of food!

Monday, we were told we would leave in the morning and played Soccer all day to keep our minds off it. All we needed was to raise expectations again and then experience more disappointment.

The Situation Was Hopeless

It is hard to imagine this situation. We were detained without much explanation and flown to the other side of the country where hardly anyone would talk to us, or could for that matter. All attempts to communicate with the outside world failed or were ignored. Then we met someone who had been in custody for 36 years. Let's see, I would be 59 by then!

Absolutely no friends or family know where we were. In fact I heard recently that our fate was legend amongst our colleagues and the mystery was the topic of conversation in many quarters. After 3 ½ weeks it seemed we might never get out. It was an eternity for us.

Chapter 6 - The Final Stage Of Our Incarceration

Finally, Some Action

So it was very exciting when a car turned up at 5.30 am on Tuesday morning to take us to the airport. Now, we were in Africa in one of the poorest countries on earth. We should have expected the plane would break down! With no possibility of leaving, we were taken to another gaol where 5 of the 10 inmates spoke English. Then we went to Batista's office and back to Machava for Dinner. All of that expectation and hope found us back where we started. We were bitterly disappointed and once again demoralised.

Went to work reducing stores stocks and ate much bread and jam. In the afternoon we again beat the soldiers to dinner and gleefully ate meat while they watched and whined. We returned to our room to find only beds and pillows. No mattresses. It was a very uncomfortable night sleeping on the springs. The officers had their revenge!

On Wednesday morning 15th July, 1975, the car came to collect us at 6.30 am. Action 2 days in a row was a bit much! Quite unlike this mob. We were given our tickets and dispatched on the plane to Beira with two guards accompanying us. I kept this precious ticket as proof.



leave as good an impression as possible with us of their country. Mind you, by now the damage had been done!

We were given yet another meal, our 14th straight day of rice and the second worst meal in the country.

We were given the run of the station, although there was plenty of suspicion amongst the police there. On July 17, we had another interview with the second in command. They gave us more excuses for the long detention and told us that running away from custody was the main reason we spent 5 weeks in gaol. They simply wanted us out of the road while important events unfolded! We were offered freedom to roam the city of Nampula until our car was finally repaired. Now we could get out of the compound for a while. That afternoon our passports were returned.

That evening we decided to test our new found freedom so after the second straight meal of beans and rice, we approached the front gate to go to town and were stopped. After a phone call, we headed into the city accompanied by two soldiers.

First stop was a café owned by Portuguese people where we were given free drinks and food. The owner was very friendly, surprised to see us, and took the time to explain the full story. Up until this time we had absolutely no idea why we had been detained and our Aguia with the official seal of the Vila Perry area commander taken from us. We just thought it was totally unfair.

The Facts

After we entered the country and obtained our visa extensions, a joint parliament with Portuguese and FRELIMO members was formed to chart the transition to Independence. The first thing they did on June 10 was pass a law closing all borders to foreigners and requiring them to exit the country via the border they came in by June 20. We were stopped on June 17, giving us

3 days to return to the Swazi border, an impossible journey given the state of the roads and condition of our car. The road from Beira to Nampula was one of the worst in Africa and almost impassable for a normal vehicle. It was a total miracle we ever made it there at all. Basically, there was not enough time to get to Nacala, and get out of the country by the deadline.

The owner told us that the police Commandant is good man & to keep negotiating for a visit to Nacala. Sam in Laurencio Marques had told us about these people. We thanked him for his hospitality and left. There was no question of paying for the drinks or food as the Portuguese owners were totally at the mercy of the FRELIMO and wanted to keep on good terms in the hope of keeping their businesses. After Independence and the start of the civil war, many of these people fled the country with the clothes on their backs.

Next stop was another café where we met a very drunk Portuguese guy who bought us coffee. He took us home and gave us whisky and food and introduced us to his two daughters. He worked for the railways, fixing locomotives. We approached him and he said he would arrange a shed visit and explain our position on photography. Of course, we never heard from him again! Everyone was scared to cross or approach the FELILMO.

It was very boring at the Police station. Apart from Mike's moans that we were stuck there, not much to do. Station The only attempt at communicating with us was by a Sao Thomas Manuel and his Angolan friend Clay. They were rather stupid and Manuel took 3 days to remember a few numbers.



Figure 65 The Author, Flanked by Thomas And Manuel Who Escorted Us Into Town, At The Nampula Police Station

At this stage I felt safe enough to take a couple of photos, although they were still sparse as I didn't want to lose my camera.

Others who spoke were an old guy with glasses and a cross who nosed around personal effects including letters and kept asking if we wanted to go drinking. He was a real pest just like the tall dopey guy who for the last couple of days stopped us every time we moved. Suspicious bastard like the rest. Even though we were guests of the commandant, many of the other Police clearly didn't like us or want us there.

One day the commandant took us for a tour of the city. He pointed out all the sites and made a special point of talking about one large square office with no windows. "That is a place where the Portuguese did unspeakable things". He told us how FRELIMO were often tortured there and that it was a shame on the colonialists. He insisted that they would never do a thing like

that. Our fate really did rest on the FRELIMO wanting to make a good impression on the rest of the world.

The Prostitutes Are Rounded Up.

A truck arrived one day full of hessian bags of peanuts which required shelling. Clearly they needed labor to do this, so a dozen prostitutes were rounded up and incarcerated for the task. They had a room about 12' x 12' and all had to live and sleep there. It was very cramped. One of the inmates showed me how to roast the peanuts with salt over an open fire in an empty food tin to make a delicious snack. We managed to obtain our share of peanuts from the enormous pile and started cooking.

This caused even more of a stir as our nosy friend was looking everywhere for our well hidden back of roasted peanuts. He could smell the amazing aroma, and wanted his share!



Figure 66 A Dozen Prostitutes Were Arrested To Shell A Mountain Of Peanuts In the Police Station

No one ever found our peanuts! We ended up with 2 full bags of them.

July 28, Peter, a young student who spoke English arrived with news of the car. Despite our hosts agreeing to everything we asked and giving us almost nothing, another ploy to be nice to people, we had heard nothing about the fate of the car since the first day. Peter told us it would be ready Tuesday and again our mood was elevated and we started to get excited at the prospect of a final release.

Peter, a loyal FRELIMO, asked us what we had been doing all that time. We told him, and he couldn't believe FRELIMO were like that. Like everyone else, he did nothing about it. You simply don't question your superiors if you know what is good for you!

Tuesday was agonizing. There were no bread rolls until 8.30 am and by mid afternoon, I was screaming mad after yet another broken promise. We had been up most of the night before in anticipation of our departure, so by now we were more than a little irritated. . We started telling the FRELIMO what we thought of them and to make matters worse they pounced on me every time I moved. It was getting unbearable. We had to take extra care to hide our peanuts!

We Finally Move On

At 7 am the next morning a soldier arrived in a Nissan Patrol and drove us to the motor pool, where we set eyes on our car for the first time since it had been taken off us. On inspection we noticed the radiator hadn't been touched. We pointed out that we couldn't drive the car with the old radiator as it was destroyed and leaked profusely. It was pretty obvious they hadn't even started working on the car until the previous Thursday when I hit the roof and let fly. I know it sounds strange. We were in the hands of a terrorist organisation and giving them a hard time because they weren't up to our standards. We were completely at their mercy. Unfortunately, that was the only way to get some action at the

time. If we waited for “Manana” we might still be there like the guy we met at Machava!

We drove into town for some yummy peanut slices in a cafe, the last of the trip, and headed back to camp. An hour later. Mike saw the car parked outside. I stirred up the Commandant and checked the car over.

The State Of Our Vehicle

We still had big gaps in the rubbers, two broken shock absorbers and a flat spare tyre. The radiator had been fixed and they had replaced the head gasket. The brakes were still faulty. The commandant suggested we have a night's rest and go in the morning. We refused and left around 4 pm for the Malawi border.

This was yet another realization for me. By all logic, I should have fallen asleep at the wheel. Not much sleep the night before and now we headed out on some more of those dreadful roads where full attention was required. We went west.

We Run Out Of Fuel

I drove non-stop until 7 am when we ran out of fuel in the middle of nowhere, after 15 hours at the wheel. The fact we could drive that long on a tank of petrol indicates the state of the roads! I was so focused on getting out of the country I really didn't think about sleeping or getting tired. This shows what can happen if you are really focused on achieving a goal. Nothing stops you.

The place we stopped was a long way from civilization. There were a few people mulling around, that's all.

One of the soldiers wandered off and returned with our two 5l Gerry cans full after an hour or so, and we put that in the tank and continued on to a base at Cuamba where we refuelled. I think we had to pay for the final fill! We headed on towards the border and by this time it was 3pm. Our escort decided it was too

late to reach the Malawi border at Mandimba, so we headed north for another 1 ½ hours to Vila Cabral (now Lichinga). Once again another night in Mozambique and hopes dashed.

Vila Cabral was in a valley and we stayed in a hotel there. At night we heard a 2-8-2 climbing out of town for over an hour. The railway circled the town all the way to the top of the hill. It was magnificent! Unfortunately no photos of this one.

In third world countries, it is customary to kill a pig when important visitors arrive. I guess this small outpost probably doesn't see many people more unusual than myself and Mike, with our escort.

We Eat Pork And Suffer The Consequences

The cook led us to a table where he had a medium sized pig tied up. He showed us his rather large knife and in sign language explained that this was to be our dinner! We declined the opportunity to watch the execution and heard it squeal from another room. Well, pork is not the best meat to eat in these parts. It is often diseased. This night was no exception. I was very ill and turned a whiter shade of pale after dinner.

Free At Last

Even that didn't deter me. In the morning we headed back down the road, turned right and dropped off our escort at the Malawi border. By the time we reached Chiponde we were free again!

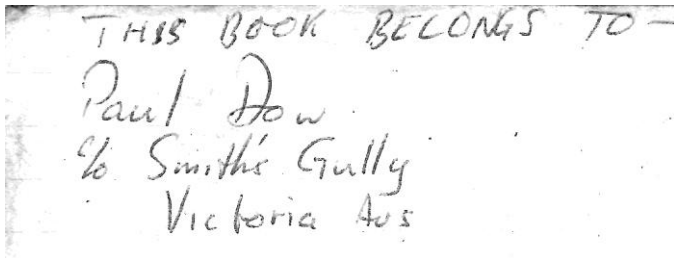
The next stop was Zomba where we left the car for brake repairs and spent the night resting in the local Golf Course! From there it was up to LLongwe, the new capital, then Lusaka in Zambia and on to Livingston and Victoria Falls. The Rhodesian trip is the subject of another story. We obtained some wonderful photos on my two visits there.

The final kick in the tail was our eventual arrival in Salisbury (Harare). Mike knew the address of another rail fan who lived there and we went to pay him a visit.

We Meet An Old Friend

We knocked on the door, and a stranger answered. We told him who we were looking for and were about to leave when he asked, “Do either of you know Paul Dow”? Paul was our flatmate in Johannesburg, and we hadn’t seen him since. So we were more than surprised to hear the name of the last person we knew that we saw before we set off on our adventure!

We said, “yes”, and were told he was in the next room sleeping! Turns out he had followed us into Mozambique, got as far as Manica and been thrown out after being tried as a CIA spy by a military tribunal. This happened on June 16, the day before our arrest.



He even wrote his Australian address (at the time) in my journal and I looked him up after I returned to Australia and spent many a night reminiscing!

Chapter 7 - A Rail Fan Never Gives Up

You would have thought after the relief of finally being free, we would have quit and gone home with our tails between our legs.

After all, by this stage our car was held together by chewing gum, with the front end slowly disintegrating due to the accident and failed shock absorbers.

But we were young, foolhardy, and on a mission! We knew that steam was on the slide and maybe next year just wouldn't be there. We had made it all the way to Rhodesia, so what the heck.

The journey from Mozambique to Rhodesia took us through Malawi, Zambia and a small piece of Botswana. Malawi at that time could only be described as basic. Zomba had a small market, and not much else. Work had commenced on the new capital at LLongwe, but that city was little more than a shopping strip. In any case, for us it was relatively safe, and we had no problems.

Zambia was a different kettle of fish. After separation from Rhodesia and independence, there was intense friction between the two countries. In 1979, not long after our visit, Tony Joyce, a reporter from the ABC in Australia, and his cameraman, were arrested and executed for filming near the Chongwe Bridge on the road from Malawi to Lusaka, Capital of Zambia.

I remember well our approach to this structure. Zambian intelligence was very sensitive about this bridge. We had been warned by other travellers. Rhodesian insurgents were doing everything they could to destabilise the Kuanda government. The easiest way to do this it to blow up major infrastructure.

We approached the bridge and were stopped by gun waving soldiers. They examined our passports and instructed us to slowly cross the bridge at 15 kph. We complied. At the other end, we were checked again and then allowed to move on. We had no idea what was to happen a few years later.

All the bridges in Zambia had signs saying no photography. You seriously risked your life taking photos of bridges at that time.

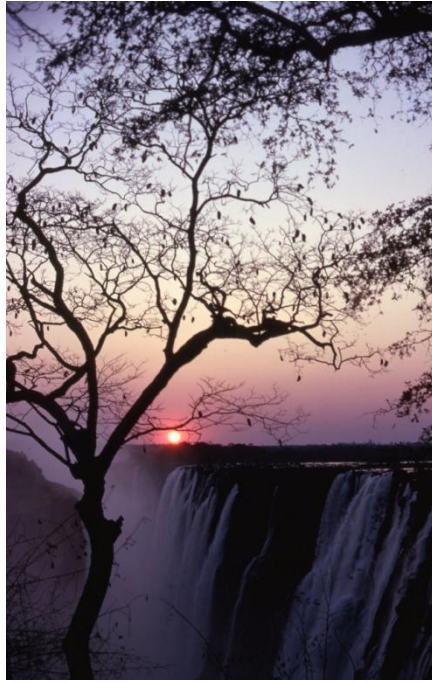
Zambia, a landlocked country was having terrible problems at this time. We would enter a supermarket and there were rows and rows of laundry detergent and nothing else. Most of the food items came from China, who were busy building the Tanzam Railway, connecting the copper belt of Zambia to Daar Es Salaam in Tanzania. These were grim days.

After passing through the capital, we were stopped by a Police Blitz. This was a real worry. If you took a close look at our car you would see the crumpled right hand guard. They booked us for a faulty light. We managed to fix it, pay the fine and they let us go. Another very close call. You will understand by now that you simply don't mess with the Zambian police!

Zambia was Tsetse Fly country. We had to pass through a corridor where there was an infection on the way to Livingston, the main town before Victoria Falls. Our car was fumigated underneath and we had to dip our shoes in a dip. Again, it stresses what a dangerous place this part of the world is. I can only imagine what places like Nigeria, and other countries in West Africa must be like.

Victoria Falls From Zambia

We were very fortunate to spend a few days camping on the Zambian side of Victoria Falls. Nowadays the border is open and you can walk across the bridge. Looking out across the Zambezi River, just over a mile wide at the top of the falls, you see a calm waterway that is moving with the current. There is no hint at what is to come, a drop of 108 meters. It is a fearsome amount of water and in volume exceeds that of Niagara or Iguacu in Brazil.



The railway line was steam all the way from Victoria Falls to Bulawayo, and the premier train was the Victoria Falls Express, carrying tourists to the Falls since the days of Rudyard Kipling. Unfortunately, this was an overnight run, and rarely photographed.

Why We Couldn't Cross The Bridge

At the time we were there, it was impossible to cross the bridge without being shot at. As mentioned previously, goods did pass between Zambia and Rhodesia, although no one was game enough to let a loco cross to the other side, and, of course, the Zambians are very sensitive about their bridges!

When Northern Rhodesia became Zambia, the two countries had shared a railway. When Southern Rhodesia declared independence under Ian Smith in 1965, the two countries by this time Zambia and Rhodesia kept the locomotives that were in their territory. The Victoria Falls bridge became a no go zone and

so both sides considered that if a loco crossed the bridge, the other country would snatch and keep it! This is the sort of stuff that happens in Africa.

As a result of this situation, when a train crossed the border, a garrat would be attached to the rear of the train and then it was shunted until the first wagon reached the centre of the bridge. Then it was detached and returned to the depot, while a Garrat from the other country crossed halfway over the bridge, attached to the train, and pulled the cargo the rest of the way across the border.



Figure 67 Rhodesian 20 Class Pushes A Train Onto The Vic Falls Bridge

Something even crazier we witnessed was before a train was due to cross, soldiers would fan out across the underside of the bridge on the Zambian side. They would reach as far as the middle and go no further. Rhodesian special forces had been busy blowing up Zambian infrastructure, so they were very wary

about bridges. In fact, you could easily be shot photographing steam crossing a bridge in Zambia!

Having taken wonderful Victoria Falls photos, and the classic photos of steam on the bridge, we headed west to Botswana, turned the corner and from there entered Rhodesia. It was the only way through.



Figure 68 Mixed On The Victoria Falls Line

We Visit Hwange National Park

The Victoria Falls railway line passed Hwange National Park, with a controlled hunting area on one side of the line, and the National park on the other. It was not a good idea to enter the hunting area for obvious reasons! Hwange at the time had 100,000 elephants, the largest population of any National park.

On our way through the park, we saw a couple of elephants grazing and went to have a look at them. They kept munching their way through the long grass towards the road. They kept coming until they were very close!



Figure 69 Elephant Very Close Up Blocking The Way out

As you can see from the picture, this elephant crossed the road in front of us. It was the only way back to the main trail. He started trumpeting and shaking his ears, and we knew we were in trouble. Our only option was to move back and wait until the coast was clear. This photo was taken with a standard lens!

Incidentally, while living in South Africa we read about someone who drove a Mini Minor into Rhodesia and had an elephant tread on it and squash it. One night when we were camped on the edge of Hwange, we awoke in the morning to find Elephant footprints around the camp.

Late one afternoon, while chasing a train, we came across a herd of Giraffes, which crossed in front of us. It was an amazing site.



Figure 70 Giraffes Bound Past Our car

Our car looked rather small in comparison to these giants bounding like pendulums across the plains.



Figure 71 20th Class Passes Hwange Game Reserve

We took many wonderful train pictures in Rhodesia. This trip will be the subject of another tale.

There Are Terrorists Around Here

Well, one last mention from Rhodesia before closing. One night we camped near the line and got bogged. We had to jack up the car, and put sticks under the tyres to make a road out of the mess. A farmer came by and was most disturbed that we had spent the night in this place. This was the time that Robert Mugabe and his freedom fighters were terrorising the white population on their mission for an Independent country.

We were told that it was foolish to camp out around there. If the Elephants don't get you, the insurgents might shoot you, as he put it! In truth, we never really felt threatened in Rhodesia, especially after all we had gone through earlier in the journey.

Aftermath

My visit to Mozambique had a profound effect on my life. It was the adventure of Indiana Jones proportions! We crossed the mighty Limpopo and Zambezi rivers, two of the great waterways of Africa I read about in my childhood. We traversed hundreds of kilometres of some of the worst roads in the world. It showed what determination and focus can achieve. Against all odds, a car literally falling apart, and intense Military scrutiny, including being incarcerated, we still managed to achieve our goal of photographing the remaining steam trains in Mozambique.

It taught me to never give up, and that there is always a solution for every challenge, no matter how impossible it may seem. It taught me to question everything, and eventually helped from the philosophy I have used throughout my life.

Steam Train Stories

My motivation for finally putting my story in print (I have had many false starts) is part of a project where tall tales and true of those who travel the world photographing steam trains, or once

did, can finally be revealed and shared with the world. This book is not to be freely shared, as it can be obtained for free simply by paying a measly \$3 a month.

For this token amount, you will get to see some of the world's best steam train photos, and read the stories and the drama involved in getting them. Personally, I have scuffled with the law in Darling Harbour in Sydney, Datong in China, and Escuel in Argentina, amongst other destinations. My many colleagues have similar stories from their adventures to places as remote as Somalia, Paraguay and Burma. The photos are part of history, as for the most part the only way you can see an engine in steam these days is on an enthusiast trip.

If your passion is for railways, I have some great news. Now members can contribute their stories to the site. Each month, members will have the chance to vote on the very best stories and give them a rating. The story each month with the highest rating, gets a prize and is entered as part of the next year's calendar. Imagine your photo spread around the world!

I do not want to see all those millions of slides and photos disappear. I prefer we share them with the world, and <http://steamtrainstories.com> is a place where you can do that.

Future Plans

As we grow, we will be using some of the generated funds to donate to preserved steam lines, to keep them alive. As member 21 of the Zig Zag railway near Lithgow, in NSW Australia I have spent thousands of hours of my time renovating vintage carriages, moving tracks, supervising parking and many other preservation activities. I am proud to have been part of the formation of this railway.

I used to sell prints of my photos at meetings of the various Railway Societies, financed a book, "Focus On Steam" which had

pictures from many who will be contributing to this project, and was very excited to see it all come to fruition, even though the first trains on the new Zig Zag Railway started a month after I was released by the FRELIMO! An amazing coincidence.

As a member, you are welcome to let us know of steam operations, your own preservation societies, or any other relevant information. We may be able to offer special deals on books, train rides, or who knows what! The aim is to build community and there will be a way to share with each other.

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