



20<sup>th</sup> April 2020

ROBERT & WILLIAM CARR-HARTLEY SAFARIS

## CARR-HARTLEY NEWS UPDATE

To all of our Safari Friends,

As I am sure most of you have a bit of spare time on your hands right now, Tanya and I thought we would write to update you on what we have been doing to fill our days here at our home in the Maasai Mara.

We decided to come down from Nairobi to spend time at our home here over the Easter holidays some three weeks ago, and after a week of being here, the Kenya government shut down Nairobi and two other key cities that had higher levels of COVID cases, so we were unable to return home. Not that we were complaining, since as most of you know the Mara is a pretty awesome place to be stuck in – and we have it all to ourselves! There is not one tourist to be seen!

Having got here we found that the recent El Nino rains that have brought twice the annual rainfall in four months have not only damaged the roads in a major way, but nature has really taken over...literally, our thatched roof cottages had plants growing out of them like some sort of trendy living roof.



# NARETOI ...OUR PARADISE

We have had some special experiences over the **Easter holiday**, which has lasted four weeks, and feel incredibly lucky to be where we are when you think of what people all over the world less fortunate than us are having to endure. We have all the space in the world to go out on game drives into the Conservancy, take long runs and walks inside our 1000-acre estate where we have the good fortune of having only 'friendly' wildlife within our fence such as wildebeest, zebra, gazelles and giraffe, so we and the kids are safe to move around.

Outside our fence is the Maasai Mara that you all know. We are on the Northern-most part of the Mara, on the Mara River, with our estate bordering our own 5,000-acre conservancy that we lease off the local Maasai community, plus we have access rights to two more adjoining conservancies that total about 40,000 acres.

There is a lot of wildlife here at the moment as our conservation model allows the community to graze their cattle alongside the wildlife, so keeping the grass short and as a result there is a lot of game – which also brings the carnivores! Two nights ago just outside our fence there was a pitched battle between lions and hyenas over the zebra the lions had killed. We are seeing lions almost daily when we go out, and leopards occasionally. There was a mother cheetah with her six half-grown cubs here for four weeks up until a couple of weeks ago too, so we are very fortunate and grateful every day.



Fortunately, the rains have also allowed massive amounts of grass to grow nearby so we can re-do the thatch and create a little employment for Jeremiah the local thatcher and his team.



Having a lot of time on our hands we have built, with the help of our son **Jamie** and two young, out of work Maasai friends, a Mountain Bike track for Jamie who is crazy about downhill mountain biking.

*Amelie at the helm with warthogs scattering in all directions!*



*Jamie's concentration face!*



With a lot of space, we thought it would be a good opportunity to teach the kids to drive properly too, so **Jamie (10)** and **Amelie (8)** are both now pretty good at driving by themselves in a 1969 Toyota FJ 43, with its 3-speed manual gearbox there is not a better way to learn! Though one does have to be careful at the zebra crossings...literally...there is a herd of zebras who love sleeping under an acacia tree right next to the road we like to practice on.

Clearly, having time and space allows one to get out on drives to explore the conservancies and just enjoy the outdoors, so the four of us love going out in the mornings to stop somewhere beautiful and enjoy the stunning wildlife and scenery that the Mara is famous for.





Wildlife scattered about our conservancy – note the Maasai homestead in the background.

## THE TWIGA TALE

A week ago we went out for a game drive one morning and Amelie spotted an adult male giraffe lying on its side near a waterhole that was surrounded by deep mud – clearly something was not right. He tried a few times to get up but he appeared to be very weak and unable to get up partly due to the fact that he was lying slightly downhill, and just couldn't cantilever himself up. His legs were covered in mud up to almost his belly and looking nearby there was some very deep mud that he must have got stuck in and after a major struggle eventually got out, possibly by actually falling over to free his legs.



*You can see the down-slope that made it impossible to get up at that angle.*

So we got on the phone to call in some help from some fellow homeowners on our estate, and very quickly we had seven chaps – and a number of young excited spectators! – to figure out a way to get him back onto his feet.

Eventually we agreed that we would need to get a tow-rope around his lower neck or horns to help firstly pull him away from the very deep mud with a car and then onto some hard and level ground. Having done this, we removed the rope and retreated to watch from a safe distance where he would not be stressed by our presence.



*Rope attached.*



*Gently dragging him out by the horns.*

After a few goes he eventually got onto his feet, walked about 50 yards and turned around and looked at us as if to say

**“Maybe you humans aren’t so bad after all – thank you!”**, then walked off to join his buddies who were watching the whole spectacle from a cautious distance.



*Off he goes!*

**Robert & Angela** and their two sons Taru and Roan have moved down to the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust Headquarters in Tsavo National Park since the arrival of the COVID-19 in Kenya and the subsequent closure of large cities such as Nairobi.

From there they are able to focus on the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust's critical conservation projects without restriction of movement. Taru and Roan are both pilots now and are flying anti-poaching patrols throughout Tsavo and the Chyulu Hills National Parks on a daily basis. Taru has also qualified as pilot in command of a helicopter and is currently gaining experience on the Sheldrick Trust helis to assist their only very-overworked heli pilot with the major daily flying workload.

Robert decided to take the opportunity of the lockdown to build some new game drive tracks around the Ithumba area that a lot of you are familiar with. Due to the heavy rains in the Ithumba area since October the bush has grown so thick that it's almost impossible to find a way through...resulting in Robert getting **HOPELESSLY** lost!



*Lost in the Wilderness!*



Robert with Orwa - an ex-orphan who has not been seen for 5 months, came back to Ithumba to pay a visit to her old friends!

Robert multitasking...!





**Angela** is busy running the daily affairs of the Sheldrick Trust, and is also taking advantage of the lockdowns to tweak all the Sheldrick Trust tourist properties (which have been built to generate funds that are used in the conservation of the areas they are located in) in the Tsavo and Chyulu Hills areas to make them even better than they were (not that they needed it!) and to ensure they are keeping ahead of maintenance and ongoing upgrades.

**We cannot wait to go back and see her handiwork!**

# COVID-19

In **Company news**, clearly this is going to be an extremely difficult period for us, and we are having to take extreme measures to try and get through a very lean time. Tourism as you can imagine is non-existent, but we have had our share of tough times in the industry here in Kenya and I have no doubt we will get through this one too. I don't want to harp on about this as we know everyone out there is going through some kind of challenge as a result of COVID-19.

Over the last few years we decided to dedicate a percentage of our turnover towards  
**community and conservation projects**  
that we feel most deserve or are in dire need of financial assistance.

A project close to our hearts is to support a local primary school on the Northern edge of the Maasai Mara called **Olmeoshi Primary School**, which is extremely poor and cannot afford to give the children school lunches.

Last year one of our very generous guests donated lunches for the whole school of 450 children for a whole year, which was incredibly generous and was hugely appreciated by the families of the children.

So for this year, we have decided to carry this project forward, and have paid for the first six months of school meals for the children, translating to around 75,000 much-needed school lunches to children who are on the very edge of poverty and in many cases their only meal of the day.



## **ADDENDUM:**

*Since the writing of this newsletter, the country has had unprecedented flooding, mainly in the West of the country, with 237 lives lost to date. The Mara has been terribly badly hit, with the Mara River flooding at its highest level in living memory (at least since the early 60's), and has flooded the homes of many poor farmers around our home, as well as our own home seen in the pics above, which has been tragically partially destroyed by the flooding.*

*So now we are using the food dedicated for the schoolchildren, since schools are closed indefinitely, to feed the homeless, and more than one hundred people are sleeping in the school itself.*

As you can imagine it is close to impossible for many of the local communities to afford any basic medical supplies to enable them help to try and fight against COVID-19, so over the course of the last month we have contributed a significant number of hygiene masks to our local Masaai communities. On top of this we are now supporting two different giving back initiatives in Nairobi, which are helping to provide vital food and supplies to extremely vulnerable families living in two different slum areas in Nairobi.

One of our biggest giving back projects is the continuation of support to the 30 safari crew members that work for us despite us not having any revenue for the foreseeable future. This directly helps over 250 people as each crew member will be responsible for feeding their immediate family and many extended family members as the Coronavirus economic fallout deepens in Africa.

**Our hope is to continue this support for as long as financially possible.**

On the conservation front, we continue to support a broad range of wildlife and habitat conservation efforts through our tented home in Naretoi, The Enonkishu Conservancy we set up as part of Naretoi in the Masaai Mara and the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust.

If any of you would like to find out how to help on any of these projects in a personal/financial capacity, do please get in touch with me at [william@carrhartley.com](mailto:william@carrhartley.com)

# *The Carr-Hartley Menu of Giving*

US \$ 50 will support one member of the Carr-Hartley safari team for a month

US \$ 1500 will support the whole Carr-Hartley safari camp crew team for a month  
(management excluded)

US \$ 15 will feed one school child for 6 months

US \$ 4500 will feed 300 school children for 6 months

US \$ 1 will provide one person with a hygiene mask

US \$ 250 will provide hygiene masks for an entire local village

US \$ 40 will feed one family in a Nairobi slum for 2 weeks

US \$ 100 pays a Conservancy Ranger for a month



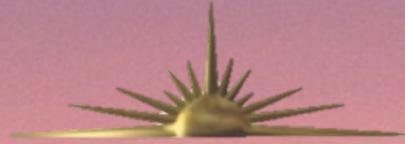
**We are busy updating our brand new website  
and very excited to be sharing with you all  
in the near future.**

**Watch this space!**

**[www.carrhartley.com](http://www.carrhartley.com)**



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