

travel africa

The world's only
magazine dedicated to
exploring Africa

HOME

MAGAZINE ▾

GALLERIES ▾

BLOGS ▾

SAFARI PLANNER

YOU ARE AT: [Home](#) » [Highlights](#) » [People](#) » [Characters](#) » [On the road again](#)

On the road again

BY TRAVEL AFRICA ON JUNE 30, 2017

CHARACTERS, JUNE 2017, PEOPLE, TRAVEL AF



Jack Andrew Cribb spoke to adventurer Charley Boorman, of Long Way Down fame, about his rehabilitation after a motorbike accident in 2016, his love of Africa and his recent trip to Kenya

What inspires you to travel?

It started with my father John Boorman. He directed films such as *Deliverance*, *Excalibur* and *Emerald Forest*. His films were shot in quite exciting locations in diverse parts of the world. As children, we all went with him – so that love of adventure and working in unique places, with different people, has rubbed off on us.

Your recent trip to Kenya was your first trip abroad since breaking your legs in a motorbike accident last year. How did it feel to be on the road again?

It was wonderful. It's been a long recovery, taking well over a year after the crash. When we went to Kenya, I'd finally started walking properly again, so it was challenging but the best thing for it. I really had to push myself to do it. My rehabilitation jumped forward while I was away. I'm so used to travelling, so to be in one place for a long time is a bit of a challenge.

You tracked black rhino on foot. What was that like?

You are always told to stay in your vehicle on safari because the animals just see the car. Outside it, they view you as an individual. So, there we were walking with rhino in the Sera Wildlife Conservancy – and my immediate thought was "Christ, we're not supposed to be doing this!" At one point, we were surrounded, and one of them got very close. The only thing we could do was stay completely still. It was an incredible experience.

Tell us about saddling up with the Mount Kenya Trust's horse patrol team

The Mount Kenya Trust is part of Tusk and has been operating for about 10 years. The organisation patrols the area around Mount Kenya on horseback, looking for signs of illegal poaching, snaring, logging and grazing. Originally trained local people, some of them previously poachers themselves, to do the job and arrest people caught committing these crimes. Since this began, it's had an 80-something per cent success rate.

Of all the countries you have visited, which have been your favourite?

Sudan and Ethiopia were incredible, especially Ethiopia – the diversity was so extraordinary and the people are so friendly. But I also have a real love affair with Kenya, and with South Africa, Namibia and Botswana too. It's so difficult to choose one, but I think Ethiopia stands out!

What is your favourite national park, and why?

It's a real privilege to go on safari, and Kenya's Masai Mara is, in my opinion, one of the best places to go. If you're lucky you may see the wildebeest migration between Kenya and Tanzania. Plus, the animals seem truly wild here. Where else in the world can you be driving and then have to stop because 40 elephants are walking across the road, so you have to sit there and wait?

You famously journeyed through Africa in your 2007 Long Way Down series. What was that like?

Culturally, Africa is astonishingly diverse. Riding your motorbike from north to south, it changes unbelievably. I don't realise that this is a giant continent with over fifty nations, not just one big country. It is so different from the top to the bottom.

Can you tell us any funny or particularly memorable anecdotes from the trip?

On one occasion, we arrived somewhere after dark and it was too late to put up our tents. So we pulled into what looked like an okay hotel, which turned out to be a brothel. I remember the bed and carpet being so dirty and I said "Oh my god, I can't sleep here!" and I pitched my tent on top of the bed and slept in it. It was so awful.

As well as Samburu you also visited Laikipia. How did that differ from your other safari experiences?

I stayed at El Karama Eco Lodge in Laikipia, it's a private ranch so it felt very remote. We loved all the rustic style accommodation – it really felt you were staying right in the middle of the bush, it was completely peaceful. They were working really hard there to preserve the land and wildlife and I got to join the rangers on a patrol as part of the wildlife monitoring activity so I saw a lot of the behind the scenes work. I also did a talk to some of the guests that showed some videos of my failed lasso attempts on a past trip to Canada! I love being able to share my travel stories.

As well as safari you also visited the coast of Kenya. Was there enough there to keep you busy?

Yes definitely! I love the Kenya coast and we were staying down on Diani beach at Almanara. The sea there is just amazing turquoise blue, it was probably the only time I've been happy to have a bit of resting time. We got to ride with local fishermen on the traditional dhow boats learning about how and when they fish. While staying there, we got to spend time with their head chef, Luke Doig. He's a great and so passionate about his food and the local seafood ended up on a bit of a night out with him – soaking up the best of Diani nightlife!

What are your plans for the future? Any upcoming projects?

I've just written an autobiography, *Long Way Back*, which came out in May. And I'm off to Africa to do a motorcycle trip at the end of August. It's lovely to be busy again!

On his recent trip to Kenya, Charley Boorman visited Saruni Samburu, El Karama Lodge and Almanara and his trip was arranged by The Ultimate Travel Company. His latest book Long Way Back is just out. Visit Charley's website for further information.

SHARE.



RELATED POSTS



OCTOBER 2, 2017



Zambia's first live streaming webcam



OCTOBER 2, 2017



Birding hotspots in Namibia: Etosha



OCTOBER 2, 2017



How things have changed!