

Bev & PC – 2012 Africa Safari 4

Wonderful water rich Zambia

We headed to Chisimba Falls near Kasama – about 500km away. The first 60 k's were slow going, then onto the road through the Lavushi Manda National Park. The first 30k's were in very good condition. The next 40k's deteriorated - there are road works in progress, so hopefully the road will soon be very good all the way through to the Great North Road. The road through to Kasama is good tar with the occasional pothole.

Being a Sunday there was a fair crowd at the Chisimba Falls, but by dusk most had headed back to Kasama. This is a minor river in Zambia. The water gets tapped to feed a small hydro-electric power station. Some of it channeled through a canal and then there is a substantial pipeline some 2m in diameter. The falls are quite



spectacular.



Boiling pot – Chisimba - Main Falls
Mutumuna Falls

After stocking up at the Kasama Shoprite we headed for Isanga Bay on the Lake Tanganyika south coast. The first 160k's was on good tar. The next 40km's took 2.5hours along a track. There was only one tricky section when we had to go through a very deep dry river. It certainly was worth the effort to get to Isanga. The Lodge is managed by Dirk and Nicolene Otto. Dirk has put a lot of work into upgrading the campsite – grassing a number of areas and building a very nice boma. The ablutions are good – plenty hot water, but it is warm all year round, so not

really essential and the new solar lighting makes life so much easier. It turned out that they have strong Kleinmond connections – both their parents live there and they worked in Kleinmond for a while after coming back from 7 years of managing pubs in the UK. Their hospitality was outstanding, we joined them for a braai – home grown pork ribs and homemade sausage. There are no modern conveniences at Isanga. All the cooking is done on charcoal, paraffin fridges, solar lighting and most supplies have to come in by boat – as do most guests. The snorkeling in the crystal clear lake water is outstanding and there is a very nice sandy beach for swims in the lake. We spent four days at Isanga and could have stayed longer. Well worth visiting.



Sunset Isanga Bay - Lake Tanganyika

Pied Kingfisher - Isanga Bay

Kapishiya Hot Springs – about 400 kms south was our next stop. It is climb of about 400m over the first 10kms from Isanga , but the trip to Mbala took as long as the trip to Isanga. We refueled in Mbala as there was no fuel in Kasama. A brief stop to replenish a few items at Shoprite and we set off. From the turnoff Kasama-Mpika road it is approx 40kms to Kapishiya. The best gravel road we'd traveled on so far in Zambia. We spent two very pleasant days in the campsite, which was busy. The hotsprings are the

most natural I'd ever seen. You sit in the source of the water – around 30-40°C and very pleasant. High tea is an absolute must. – served in the View Lounge at the lodge. The owners of the lodge – Harvey – also farm cattle, sheep, chickens and game. They have recently started a camp in North Luangwa – all very enterprising. Again water aplenty with a strong flowing river running through the property. The Chinese are building a mini hydro electric generator on the river. The transmission lines are in and the lodge will soon have grid supplied electricity. Only taken 20 years and much hassling by the Harveys to get this done. Marvelous what you can do if you have water though!



Kapishiya - Hot Spring

High tea

Next stop was to be Mbeya just across the Zambia/Tanzania border. About 100kms after joining the Great North road – the 30kms of dirt from KHS was not as good, but still better than most dirt roads we'd been on in Zambia – the Pajero engine warning light came on. The manual says – no need to tow, but get the vehicle to your nearest Mitsubishi dealer. This was a choice – either 850kms back to Lusaka or 1100kms to Dar es Salaam which is on our planned route. We hobbled in to Isoka – there was only vendor supplied fuel available – and I did not like the look of the people advising me where to find a

mechanic. So we decided to push on to Kulungu and the Kings Highway Lodge and campsite. I suspected the problem was the fuel and it was likely that the fuel filter was now blocked. At Kings Highway – a South African missionary run site with bungalows and camp sites we spoke with Martie Streicher (originally from Swellendam) as to where we can get help. It was not long and two young men pitched up – they are at the missionary college. Regert Roos is from Hermanus and knew his way around a vehicle. He removed the fuel filter – there was a lot of dirt in the diesel just above the filter – tried cleaning it, reset the electronics, checked the transmission fluid and a few other items. Unfortunately none of this helped. It was a Saturday, so no one at any of the Mitsubishi numbers in SA. We spent the night at Kings Highway – a good stopping point as it is close to the border.

Next morning we set off hoping to get through the border and to Mbeya where I knew there was a Toyota dealership and they might be able to help. The border process took 2 hours – absolute chaos and no change in the two years since we were there in 2010. I used a runner for the Tanzanian side – cost me \$60 – but think we might still be there trying to find the right places to go to. Eventually we got to Utengule lodge – stalling as we tackled the last hill up to the lodge. The assistant manager recommended I take the vehicle to the Moravian mission run workshop in Mbailizi about 7kms away, so next morning I handed the Pajero over to Christopher Mpalala the workshop supervisor. He started testing everything. I got onto the phone to Mitsubishi SA – might as well have been talking to the man on the moon for all the help they were. Eventually got hold of Mitsubishi Paarden Island. They were very helpful – could not tell me where I'd most likely get a replacement filter – but the workshop manager suggested we start by looking at the filter and the mechanism that controls the pressure of the diesel. Christopher had systematically worked through a few other potential problems, but none proved to be the source of the motor not performing. He did not have a filter, so we hobbled up the hill into Mbeya, found a spares shop – got a filter that matched the Mitsubishi one (made in Israel the shop owner told me), fitted it and the problem was just about solved as the engine was back to normal performance. But the engine warning light was still on. So off we now go to find somebody who has a diagnostic machine, run the diagnostics, make a few more calls to Paarden Island, and can find nothing else wrong, but think it is probably this clever Japanese machine that recognizes a pirate part and thus the warning light stays on. All this – 5 hours labour, the diagnostics and spare filter, plus an offer to wash the vehicle came to R1500. The Pajero performance was back to normal – a day later the engine warning light went off – so maybe not such a clever Japanese machine? Lessons learnt – carry a spare fuel filter and watch where I buy diesel in Zambia.

Finally for anybody headed to Tanzania from Lusaka – the 300kms from Mpika to Tunduma is deteriorating rapidly. There are many potholed sections and as you get closer to the border the road gets worse. It carries a lot of heavy traffic – mainly fuel for Zambia and DRC – Katanga. Once in across the border in Tanzania the road is fine.