

3/O Cathy Harris WRNS

My parents and I went out to Tanganyika in 1947: we went by flying boat and the trip took 5 days as the plane had no radar and so had to see the road signs for directions ! We spent the nights at various - and varied - places and I was only 4 1/2 years old so terrified when one of the 'fuzzy-wuzzy' men carried me ashore at one spot.

I was sent to boarding primary school in Tanganyika at the age of 7 and then went to Kenya High School in Nairobi in the time of the Mau Mau. Quite scary as there were police posts, barbed wire round the compound, flood lights, some of the Kenyan cooks etc. were removed as thought to be associated with Mau Mau, and a few of the pupils were captured and killed.

I took School Cert and Higher whilst there, getting Higher in Pure Maths, Applied Maths, Latin, French and English.

I then came back to England and joined the W.R.N.S., starting at H.M S Dauntless at Burghfield. Our first afternoon I can remember we put on our navy working kit and scrubbed endless floors. I feel this was very good for us as whether you were Lady Muck, an everyday person or a Domestic, we were all put together with no differentiation.

On leaving Dauntless, I was sent to H.M.S. Dryad to train in radar and sonar. What may be of interest is that whilst at Dryad we lived in the Duchess of Kent Barracks, which is now a museum. One certainly felt as if one had gone back to olden times whilst there due to the antiquities !!

I also passed a Navigation exam whilst there. Next was commissioning time at Greenwich; a time I very much enjoyed because of the beauty of some of the areas and I also became very friendly with the P.T I . On being commissioned I was sent to Collingwood. I played tennis and badminton for the Combined Services and really appreciated all the opportunities for sport whilst in the W.R.N.S. but I was only there about 6 weeks before being admitted to R.N.H.Haslar. I was passenger in a car accident when only 21. I had 60 % burns and later I required a brain operation. I don't remember anything from the accident in 1961 until 1968, when it was a very scary world as I thought it was just the day after the accident. My sisters are 6 and 8 years younger than me and so I never really knew them in their teens. It all affected me mentally. Needless to say I had left the W.R.N.S. for medical reasons by this time.

I was told that I'd never be fit to work again so I trained as a Radiographer and then became a missionary with Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society, which is now called Crosslinks.

Quite by fluke I was sent to work in an International hospital on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro - a great idea as I am bilingual and so had no difficulty speaking to the locals in Swahili.

I came back to England in 1980 and worked for a short while in London before having to give up work in 1981 due to back problems. I then bought my first home in Devon where I still am.



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The Magara escarpment road on our way up the Rift Wall to our home when we lived at Mbulu, near the Ngorongoro Crater. It had 89 hair pin bends! Mbulu is further along at the top of the escarpment and quite high, so that we had Scotch mists and grew 'English' flowers.



The Llandovery Castle was our ship for our trip back to U.K. in 1950.



This Cruise was a great one to Spitzbergen Islands with many happy memories.