

## **Tanzania Expedition - Summer 2018**

### **See what a student who attended the Tanzania expedition had to say...**

Five intrepid Misbourne explorers plus Miss Perry, who was the expedition leader, went to Tanzania in the continent of Africa to take up many different challenges, some of which were potentially deadly. For all five students it was a part of the world that they hadn't explored before and it clearly took everyone by surprise seeing the extreme poverty, how remote the country was, how diverse the country was and how breathtakingly beautiful the terrain was from every viewpoint.

On the first two days we stayed at Ashura lodge, close to the airport to allow us to; get used to the area, purchase a phone and a SIM card, meet our in country agent and go food shopping. The food shop was one of the most amazing things as it was a huge market. The colours were incredible. On the way back from the markets we managed to get our first glimpse of Mt Kilimanjaro too.

The first phase of the expedition was the acclimatisation. This phase was trekking through the Southern Pares which are located in the northern part of the Eastern Arc Mountain forests, north west of the Usambara Mountains and Dar es Salaam and, off the road to Moshi in the north. The Pare Mountains are densely populated, but the rich traditions and folklore of the Pare people who inhabit the mountains remain largely untouched. Whilst we were here, we stayed at TONA Lodge with a man called Elly. Elly has been key in ensuring that tourism to Tanzania is sustainable and, he was a very interesting man to share stories with from around the camp fire.

Whilst staying at Tona Lodge we trekked to Tona Moorland and up the Mountain of Lake Ranzi. We managed to get a view of the birds of Mkomazi and the Southern Pare Mountains which has the second highest bird diversity in the whole of Africa. We were lucky enough to see several bald eagles, which none of the team had ever seen before. We climbed several more mountainous peaks and stood at a famous peak where we could see four different countries of Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda). We contributed to the efforts to save the wild rhino and visited historical relics (churches, residences and schools) from when the German missionaries introduced Christianity into Tanzania. Not only was all this put on and made available for us through TONA lodge, we managed to help out at two local schools and get involved with the community with singing and dancing.

The Second phase of the expedition was the project phase. For this, we were based in a small school at the base of Mt Kilimanjaro. Whilst here, we were tasked with building toilet and washing facilities for the students as they had never had a toilet in the school before. We went out and bought the materials to do this and then spent four days working with the school and some of its children to put up the toilet and shower blocks. It was hard work but incredibly rewarding when the students saw running water in their school for the first time. We usually worked on the building project for the mornings and then played games and taught English with the pupils in the afternoons. One of us had brought a pot of bubbles from home to which we showed the students in this school. They had never seen bubbles before and were so excited. This is one of the best memories I will take from the expedition.

Our next phase was a trekking phase. For this we travelled to Monduli Juu, situated 50km north west of Arusha, on the road to the Ngorongoro Crater and the Serengeti. Monduli is a cluster of four small villages – each one run by a small clan of Maasai people. We were lucky enough to spend the entire four days living with the Maasai people – a truly unique and special experience, one of which not many people can say they have done. Our trek was four days long, each day being about five hours walking. This was again incredible as we were able to learn some of the Maasai local knowledge, language and see some truly unique wildlife. In the evenings, we were able to light a camp fire and spend the night sharing stories and learning about the star constellations.

Little did we know, as the team had made such a good impression on the Maasai elders, they were secretly planning a change of itinerary for our last day... Instead of doing the trek that was planned, we were given the opportunity to attend a Maasai coming of age ceremony where Maasai tribesmen from all over Africa were attending. We would be (and were) the first Westerners allowed into such an important ceremony for over 20 years. Of course, we chose this option. We hopped onto an open air Jeep and made the hour's journey there with the wind in our hair. When we got there we were amazed at the hospitality that they were giving us. We were all dressed in traditional Maasai clothing, given traditional Maasai food and were involved in the traditional Maasai jumping dance to help celebrate this boy coming of age. There were over 300 people there. This again was such a truly amazing and unique experience to see the variety of vibrant colours, smells, sound, learn about the history of the tribe and dance... – I am still not 100% over it.

We then left the Maasai for our R&R section of the expedition. For this we went on Safari in the Ngorongoro Crater – one of the most famous places for Safari on the planet. The Ngorongoro Crater is the largest, un-flooded and unbroken volcanic crater in the world. Driving down the crater at dawn was again, something I will never forget. Looking at the sun rise over Africa was truly breath taking. Whilst on Safari, we saw some incredible animals including lions, several elephants, hippos, warthogs, giraffe (albeit in the distance), hyenas, monkeys, zebra, wildebeest and many, many more. From here, we moved to the second part of our R&R – relaxing on a beach next to the Caribbean coastline. We spent two days relaxing on the beach and, in this time took a snorkelling trip – something which some of us had never done before. We snorkelled for several hours looking at the variety of fish and then, on the way back were taken to a private Island for swimming and lunch. I have never seen the sea look so blue and clear or the sand so white.

Sadly, it was now time to come home. The whole three and a bit weeks went so fast and I would love to do it all over again. I learnt and experienced so much – more than I ever thought I would. I would recommend World Challenge to anybody.

### **Madagascar 2020**

Charis Richardson is due to embark on the World Challenge trip to Madagascar in 2020. Charis chose to do World Challenge to learn new life skills and to do something out of the ordinary. She also wanted to make a difference to people's lives across the globe, push herself out of her comfort zone, make new friends and see what the rest of the world has to offer. She is looking forward most to the community project and working with other people to help

improve their lives. She is least looking forward to the bugs and spiders...! Charis is working hard to fundraise her expedition and has got a small weekend job to contribute to the funds of the trip.