

Elspeth Huxley in Kigezi, 1947

When Elspeth Huxley visited Uganda¹ in 1947 to research her book, *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, she was entertained by the Uganda Protectorate Government who provided a car and driver for a tour round the country starting from Bukoba (Tanganyika) to Mbarara, Kabale, Fort Portal and then the northern circuit back to Kampala over a period of two weeks.

It is obvious that the Government thought highly enough of her to facilitate her research trip with considerable sponsorship, i.e. finance, planning and coordination, "Arrangements have been made for you to make the following tour of Uganda in the staff car which has been sent to meet you at Bukoba" on the 29th April. She was in Kabale from the 1st to the 3rd April.

The Government wrote, 24th April 1947, giving her a brief of her itinerary with suggestions and contacts; the section relating to her three days in Kigezi is given here from page 3, 2nd paragraph, section 4:

Letter Extract

Other matters of interest which you can see on your way to Kabale will be the tin mine at Mwirasandu and the Merama Hill Transit Labour Camp which has been built to accommodate and provide medical facilities for immigrant Banyaruanda and Barundi, some 40,000 of whom come into Uganda across the Kakitumba Bridge every year. If you are lucky you may be able to observe the contrast between the weedy specimens entering Uganda and the comparatively well set-up and prosperous emigrants returning to their homes in the Ruanda Urundi mandated territory after having done a spell of work in the mines in Ankole, on the Lugazi and Kakira Sugar Estates, or in the cotton shambas in Buganda.

One more subject of interest in Ankole is the Tanganyika Tsetse Research Department's anti-morsitans discriminative clearing experiment near Mbarara.

5. On your way to Kabale you will notice that the boundary between Ankole and Kigezi is sharply defined at the top of the Lutobe Escarpment where you leave behind the open rolling plains of Ankole and enter the thickly populated and closely cultivated valleys of Kigezi. It was the pressure of population on the land in this type of country in Kigezi that led to the resettlement project about which Mr Mathias, the District Commissioner, Kigezi, has already spoken to you. Unfortunately, Mr Mathias will be on the point of going home on leave just when you arrive in Kabale and he will not be able to show you over the Resettlement area but his successor Mr Burner and Mr Purseglove, the Agricultural Officer², will be able to explain things to you. It is suggested that you might visit part of the Resettlement area on Thursday morning going out past the Flax Factory or via the Mafuga soft wood afforestation area. On Friday you will have an opportunity to see the local Training School for ex-askari and the Nicotine Tobacco Factory near Kabale before going out to admire the view of Lake Bunyonyi from Kachwekano (5 miles). The Kabale ex-askari Training Centre differs from others in the country since it is run by the District Commissioner as a Native Administration enterprise, whereas others are controlled by the Civil Reabsorbition Officer. (Some of the Training Centres, e.g. Medical Training Centres, have recently been taken over by the Departments concerned).

¹ Weston Library, Oxford, Elspeth Huxley Papers, MSs afr 2 782 2/7 A transcript of the chapter can be found in *Kigezi Mountain Mosaic*, 2013; She stayed in the White Horse Inn

² He gave her a two page summary of the Resettlement Scheme, an extract from his 1946 Report

If you have time you may like to visit the Bunyonyi Leper Settlement and weather permitting you may care to go out the 38 miles to the Kanabe Gap (8,000 feet) from where you can get a spectacular view of the Bufumbiro Volcanoes. Mr Burner will be able to advise you as to the best time to go out there.

On Saturday you will go to the Kichwamba Hotel on the Escarpment overlooking Lakes Edward/George flats and facing the massif of Ruwenzori. I hope that you will be lucky enough to see that magnificent view of the snow peaks that can sometimes be obtained from this vantage point in early morning. I have asked Captain Salmon, M.V.O., the Acting Game Warden, to meet you at Kichwamba if he is in the vicinity, and if not at his Headquarters at Fort Portal where he will be able to tell you all that is known about game in Africa.