

Malawi

[Thursday 30 march](#)

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[Date: 30-mar-2006](#)

[Stage: Uyole to Bush camp](#)

[Distance: 119km](#)

[Time: 8h 20m](#)

[GPS at destination: E 33°50'47" S 9°41'19"](#)

[Country: Malawi](#)

We entered Malawi without any difficulty (no Visa needed), changed money into the local Kwatcha, with which we paid our first Coke and learned how to greet each other, first fist to fist, then fist to your chest and finally fist in the air. Jenny also got language lessons, we might not need it as the people here are pretty fluent in English.

The children on the road are greeting us with the same enthusiasm as elsewhere, but a little more aggressive, asking for money in a unpleasant way.

The campsite was at a church, with a nice view on the paddies surrounding lake Ma!awi.

A thunderstorm developed and we got quickly in our tent to ride out the



storm. The sounds of animals during the night woke us up several times, but it was a pleasant sound, putting us back to sleep easily.

We are back to Paris time, with the clock going 1 hour back and the summertime in Europe. It feels a bit closer to home, and after tomorrow, we are going back to our family the month after! Yes we enjoy our trip, but miss our children and are looking forward to see them in May.

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Date: 31-mar-2006

Stage: Bush camp to Chitimba beach

Distance: 122 km

Time: 9h 53m

GPS at destination: E 34°10'35" S10°35'04"

Country: Malawi

Due to the time difference everybody was up early and we left last, going towards a huge rainstorm that made us soaked wet, but gave nice views and a double rainbow in the distance.

The sky cleared quickly, and we crossed a couple of rivers and where often riding alongside the lake. We also had a fierce headwind, so progress was slow, with many Coke stops.

Arriving at camp we had to put up our tent, as all the rooms where taken by the early arrivers. After dinner we had the election of Mister Moustace, with a clear winner, Duncan. sitting on the beach



under the stars, taking a "glass" of wine, with thunderstorms developing around us, finished this last day in March.

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[Date: 1-apr-2006](#)

[Stage: Rest day](#)

[Country: Malawi](#)

On rest days we have to take care of our own food, so breakfast, lunch and dinner. In the morning that is sometimes a challenge, as restaurants that offer breakfast are limited to those that are in a hotel. Especially on locations like the Chitima Beach, this creates a major problem, but Big Mike organized a wonderful breakfast at \$2 each, with pancakes, French toast and omelet's. We hope that we can continue this habit, as



we really need good food to be ready for the next couple of days. The facilities at the beach were limited, we only could get nachos with tomatoes for lunch (with a close to 2 hour wait!) and in the evening two pigs were roasted (numerous people felt ill the next day, including Kees).



Jenny's bike got her first puncture on the rest day! When Kees deflated her back tire to clean the cassette and rim, the tube got a puncture after inflating, a small thorn, most likely already present before, was the reason. Her spare tube from the saddlebag was no longer good as well, the rubbing inside the bag had created a 3mm hole! We used our last unpatched tube from our stock, from now on we need to fix punctures on the road with the spare patched tubes. The score for +6000km is 3 on Kees' bike and 1 on Jenny's. Lets hope we can keep that score!

The rest of the day we were playing games with blocks of wood and also saw a crab that was hiding between the inner and outer tent, luckily the tent was closed!

Our tent gave up today, both zippers broke and we needed to use a tent from the truck from African Routes, unfortunately that tent was not waterproof, so water came in during thunderstorms, that went on all night. So our solid sleep hours were limited. We can assure you, this belated April fools day joke, did not amuse us at all.

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Date: 2-apr-2006

Stage: Chitimba Beach to Mzuzu

Distance: 135km

Time: 10h 35m

GPS at destination: Not recorded

Country: Malawi

As mentioned lot of rain came down that night, but the sky cleared a bit in the morning.

Kees got out of bed with a bad stomach, but he wanted to try to get on the road. It was a nice road alongside the lake and up to pass with a beautiful view over that same lake. It reminded us of our trip on the bike alongside the shores of Corsica.



On the way up a truck blocked the road, as it was stuck in the mud with the front. With our bikes we get through, but 2 of our trucks had to wait for hours before the road was cleared.

We could have taken a nice picture of Jenny knitting, but our 2nd Sony camera, bought 3 weeks ago in Arusa gave up, do we ever buy a Sony again?

Today was a very long trip, with many stops, as Kees feels not to strong due to his stomach, but he does not like to leave Jenny alone on the road and knows she likes to finish on the bike and not in the truck, so we managed to reach camp just before the sun went down. This was our 3rd experience of cycling from sunrise (almost) to sunset.

Because of our late arrival there were no more rooms available and we used a spare tent that was left behind by Midhad, the Sudanese rider that left us in North Kenya. The inner-and outer tent where not

of the same brand, and it was also wet and smelly, but fine we have one. Until we got the first raindrop! The tent was absolutely a disaster, rain came through it like a shower. We quickly packed our stuff and went to the room in the hotel where everybody took a shower.

Fortunately nobody was in there, so we slept together in a one persons bed, we still can handle that after 37 years of marriage!

The evening many offered to use their tent, some are taking different road, leaving their tent in the truck. so till Lilongwe we will use Kevin's tent and try to find a solution after that.

Kees is not sure of biking tomorrow, although he doesn't feel sick, his stomach is still behaving funny!

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Date: 3-apr-2006

Stage: Mzuzu

Distance: ±130km (Jenny only, Kees did not ride)

Time: ±10h 00m

GPS at destination: E33°40'00" S 12°12 '12"

Country: Malawi

We got up early to try to beat the queue of people that might want to use the shower as we were using the room that had been made available to all riders to use the bathroom and to shower.

Jenny left with Judy for the hilly day, as Kees had to take the truck, his stomach did not allow him to cycle



unfortunately.

Weather was misty, with several short rain showers. On top of that there was a strong headwind. Kees is glad he did not cycle, Jenny finished the difficult day, a lot of meters to clime (>1800m).

The campsite is on a soccer field near a school, amazing how easy people allow you to use that. That's Africa, in Europe we cannot see the local school allowing the pull in with 3 trucks, 70 people and a bunch of tents. On top of that we put a "fence" around our camp, to avoid hundreds of children to get too close to the tents. Here the principal comes with his guestbook and want you to sign your name as he is grateful we are using his soccer field!

Along the road, in villages or bus stops, young people are making chips on a wood fire and a metal plate on which the fry the potatoes. When Jenny and Judy arrived, Kees had bought some and together with a Fanta, they celebrated their safe arrival. Many did not do the whole stage, so they were proud and they can be!

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Date: 04-apr-2006

Stage: Bush camp to bush camp

Distance: 120km

Time: 9h 25m

GPS at destination: E 33°29'15" S 13°08'37"

Country: Malawi

Well the night was dry in- and outside the tent we borrowed from Kevin. Obvious, but worth mentioning after two wet nights. The morning started again with rain, the locals tell us that the season is late, aren't we lucky! At least the temperature is pleasant to cycle in.

The ride was pleasant after the rain, the landscape less stunning then the 2 days before, we took it easy, stopped a lot and arrived around 1600 in camp.

At the riders meeting we got an unpleasant surprise; the cooking by ourselves on rest days is no longer allowed. It upset quite a few of us, especially the way this is communicated. The TdA organization and the guys from African Routes who drive the trucks, have a strange idea about customer relationship, decisions are falling out of the not always so blue sky and are more accommodating the organization then the riders, in particular the leisure riders. Perhaps that the slogan of one of the drivers describes it best "**This is Africa, fit in or fuck off!**"

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Date: 05-apr-2006

Stage: Bush camp to Lilongwe

Distance: ±110km (Jenny only, Kees did not ride)

Time: ±9h 0m

Country: Malawi

Kees got fever during the night and all his muscles were painful, it was not possible to ride, so Jenny again was riding with Judy.

As he was driving on the truck, Kees got early in the capital, took a taxi to the DHL office only to find out that the Visa cards are still in Dar-es-Salam! Wonderful service these replacement cards. The DHL office will get them send to Lusaka now, will we ever get the cards before this trip is over?

Jenny and Judy had difficulties finding the Kiboko camp, the directions were not good and the support at the finish flag was gone to help them, again an example that the leisure riders are only an

afterthought.

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Date: 06-apr-2006

Stage: Rest day Lilongwe

Country: Malawi

We did not want to work too much on the "rest" day, so as we managed to finish internetting yesterday evening, we gave the wash to a lady and took time to have a English breakfast and went to town to see if we can find a tent and some real food. We managed to get a tent, some nice things like muesli, mars bars and wine. On top of that the DHL office found our Visa cards, so in short this was a very successful day, we felt we deserved it after the last couple of difficult days with wet-tent-problems, illness etc. We also slept in a A-frame cabin, with lots of space and a real bed, what a luxury.

We decided to "test" the new Visa cards and went to a recommended Italian restaurant Don Brioni's Bistro, together with our Dutch friend Geert-Jan and Judy. We had a very pleasant "European" evening with excellent food and South-African wine.

Before and after the dinner, we were able to talk with our daughters, who called a public phone on the terrace. So this day was a successful day, also because on Internet we had 8 new photos from our grandson Christopher, who is already 6 months. We cannot wait to see him end of May!



Some people are really hungry after all the cycling, 2 portions is often not enough as you can see!

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