

*“For years I had been looking for a house where George and I could live. Eventually I found a place that seemed to combine all we wished for. It would be impossible to imagine a more attractive sight for a home. We decided to call our home, Elsamere .” Joy Adamson*



Welcome to the first edition of our new newsletter which aims to bring those who have stayed at the Lodge (Joy's former home) or are interested in the work of our Education Centre up to date with recent news and developments. This sets the scene for future news letters and covers quite a lot of news as well as reminding you of our past.

### **How it all started**

First a brief reminder, for our origins span more than a century. It all started when a 27 year old Austrian woman set sail to look for a new home in Kenya. Joy Adamson immediately fell in love with the country, and with Peter Bally the Swiss-born botanist at the Kenya Coryndon Museum and began painting flowers for which she eventually was awarded the British Grenfell Golden Medal in 1947. High quality prints of many of these colourful flowers can be purchased from the Elsamere shop or our UK office.

Her artist talent then turned to painting the colourful tribes of Kenya for her own enjoyment. Soon she was commissioned by the then British Colonial Government and eventually painted more than 700 portraits, some of which still hang in State House today.

But the real story began when she met her third husband, George Adamson, a game control officer in the Northern Frontier. George had shot a lioness who charged him and to his dismay, found out that she had been protecting her cubs. He brought home the three orphan lion cubs, one of whom was reared by Joy, returned successfully to the wild and eventually brought her cubs back to show her foster mother. She named the lioness Elsa, and the books documenting this amazing story became best sellers across the world and she and George became international celebrities. In 1962 Joy channelled the income from her books into a charitable trust - the Elsa Wild Animal Appeal. In 1966 Columbia Pictures released their internationally acclaimed film 'Born Free' in which Virginia McKenna and Bill Travers took the part of Joy and George.

With her passion for wildlife and increasing royalties, Joy set up Elsa charities in the USA, Canada and Japan. For more than fifty years her charity now the 'Elsa Conservation Trust' has supported conservation projects worldwide not least in Kenya where it helped Samburu, Meru, and Hell's Gate all to become reserves or National Parks.

### **Conservation in the classroom**

Joy's passionately believed young Kenyans should have the chance to learn about their unique wildlife heritage and achieving this became the prime objective of the Trust. Many readers will be aware of the Field Study Centre at Elsamere on the shores of Lake Naivasha. Some may well have visited or attended an environmental education session there. Last September the Centre celebrated 25 years of teaching Kenyan youngsters and training East African teachers about the importance of conserving the environment.



Though originally focusing on conserving biodiversity and protecting habitats, the scope of the Centre's work has broadened over the years. The increasing rate of environmental degradation resulting from global warming, ozone layer depletion, waste disposal, health problems, food insecurity, water crises, are all contributing to yet more environmental degradation and, for some, reduced life expectancy. Kenya's rapidly growing population is putting ever more pressure on limited natural resources. In response, the Centre extended its programme to promote action for sustainable development and all that this implies.

### The 'Centre for Education in Sustainability' - the Adamson legacy lives on

In March 2015 the Field Study Centre changed its name to Elsamere 'Centre for Education in Sustainability' - CES. Why change a name we have had for 25 years? It's because CES is working to address these environmental problems - not just saving wildlife and protecting forests, but planting trees, preventing pollution, encouraging recycling and providing renewable energy. CES aims to become recognised as a centre of environmental excellence for Eastern Africa. Our new slogan is 'Caring for the Earth' and a powerpoint presentation has been produced to promote this theme.

### 25th Anniversary Celebrations



CES's vision is to extend its programme to respond to the emerging environmental challenges in Kenya. Last year about 15,000 students and teachers passed through the Centre and CES is developing an expanding network involving schools, communities and other conservation organisations.

In September we celebrated 25 years of educating Kenyan youngsters and were joined by with two former Centre Directors - Henry Ndede and Margaret Otieno The fact that

Henry is now Kenya Country Advisor at UNEP and Margaret is the Director of the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya is testament to the impact that Elsamere has on individuals .This September, Susan Jepkemoi, our present Senior Education Officer, will be leading the annual training course for 40 East African Teachers and that will followed by our Annual Open Day on Saturday September 19.

### Light up a child's future!

For some time Anthony Karinge - CES Education Officer has been promoting more sustainable forms of energy. The Centre makes fuel blocks for small stoves using old paper and cardboard. Anthony has also made a DIY solar hot water system to demonstrate the potential of solar heating which we are also installing on the Lodge cottages as funding allows. We are also making solar lighting available to individuals, schools and communities



and our new sponsorship scheme enables visitors to Elsamere, well-wishers and commercial companies to cover the cost of buying and distributing solar lights to deserving individuals.

Sponsorship starts at £UK10 (\$US15) for a single basic lighting unit. Use of solar energy in this way offers so many benefits - enabling children to study in the evening, reducing demand on kerosene and saving money, and above all helping to combat climate change which is already impacting on many rural communities. Lights are on display at Elsamere and if you'd like to sponsor a child, email us for more details. Donations can be gift aided.

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### **Improving the environment and livelihoods of local communities**

CES currently has volunteers working to create a permaculture demonstration plot at Elsamere. We are also addressing local issues.



Working with Kwa-Muhia and Kamere Environmental Groups in collaboration with Imarisha Naivasha Trust we are helping to deal with waste and encouraging the 5 Rs' - Refuse, Reuse, Reduce, Recover, Recycle. Litter is being collected, biodegradable material composted and trees planted - all creating a cleaner and healthier environment for those living there.

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### **Changes at Elsamere Lodge**

Those of you who have stayed there know that Joy's former home offers a unique opportunity to experience the tranquility of the Elsamere site, visit the museum, watch the more than 300 species of birds, take a boat trip on the lake with our experienced boatman and expert birder, and enjoy the home cooked and locally sourced food. Prices have been significantly reduced recently and we now starting to cater for business groups from Nairobi. So if your company wants a quiet retreat to review its business strategy and develop leadership skills, why not contact our Lodge Manager Sam Mwashimba for more information.

*Sam writes: Today (12 August) was busy with luncheon for 26 guests from the ministry of defence after their tour of Olkaria geothermal power station. They told us to expect some senior officials of the armed forces from East Africa. So we had two buffets- one for them and one for our resident guests. When they came, there were army GENERALS from Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and top military officials from Kenya, together with their body guards, camera crew and drivers. After lunch, we gave them a tour of the house, museum and brief history of Joy's paintings - People of Kenya, the legacy of Born free, and CES Programmes. They enjoyed their lunch and promised to come back to stay in their private capacities with their families. Full house tonight- all Chinese!*

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### **Our new website - [www.elsamere.com](http://www.elsamere.com)**

A lot of work has taken place recently to revamp our website and to develop our partnership with Trip Advisor to enable those visiting Elsamere to see what others think of their stay at the Lodge. If you have information you think should be on our website then contact Johnson Kianda ([elsa@africaonline.co.ke](mailto:elsa@africaonline.co.ke)). A new brochure has just been produced and plans are underway to create a new website for CES - our Education Centre.

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## **New fund raising programme for CES**

Work is continuing to identify new sources of funding to support out educational programme. We have draft proposal out for three new projects. **Forests for the Future** aims to plant a million trees over five years in the Lake Naivasha Basin.



**Lighting a Child's Future** will develop the work Anthony has been doing and promote the use of low cost solar lighting as well as working to make Elsamere a demonstration Centre for renewable energy technologies; **Sustainable Solid Waste Management** will work with local communities to clean up litter, encourage recycling, and develop composting. A number of companies in UK are showing an interest in this work and we are currently discussing partnership possibilities with ACT who represent DFID - the UK Government's Department of International Development.

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## **New Patron and Special Advisor**

We are delighted to announce that **Jess French**, a UK zoologist, , entomologist, and TV presenter of 'Minibeast Adventure with Jess' on the BBC Cbeebies channel has kindly agreed to become a Patron of the Elsa Conservation Trust. Jess has a First Class Zoology degree and is just completing her veterinary course. Whilst at University, Jess founded a programme in which university students ran workshops for primary school children on local and global environmental issues. For this work she was awarded the Jane Goodall Global Youth Leadership award in 2010 and she is currently writing a series of children's books about 'minibeasts'. Above all Jess is on a mission to 'make all kids love their planet and fight to save it' - an ambition we all share.

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## **For further information (include email addresses)**

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