

The Africa House

*The True Story of an English Gentleman
and his African Dream*

Christina Lamb



PENGUIN BOOKS

2004

XXIX, 353

PENGUIN BOOKS

Published by the Penguin Group

Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, USA

Penguin Books Australia Ltd, 250 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, Victoria 3124, Australia

Penguin Books Canada Ltd, 10 Alcorn Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4V 3B2

Penguin Books India (P) Ltd, 11 Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi - 110 017, India

Penguin Group (NZ), Cnr Airborne and Rosedale Roads, Albany, Auckland 1310, New Zealand

Penguin Books (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd, 24 Sturdee Avenue, Rosebank 2196, South Africa

Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

www.penguin.com

First published by Viking 1999

Published in Penguin Books 2000

Reissued with new material 2004

24

Copyright © Christina Lamb, 1999, 2004

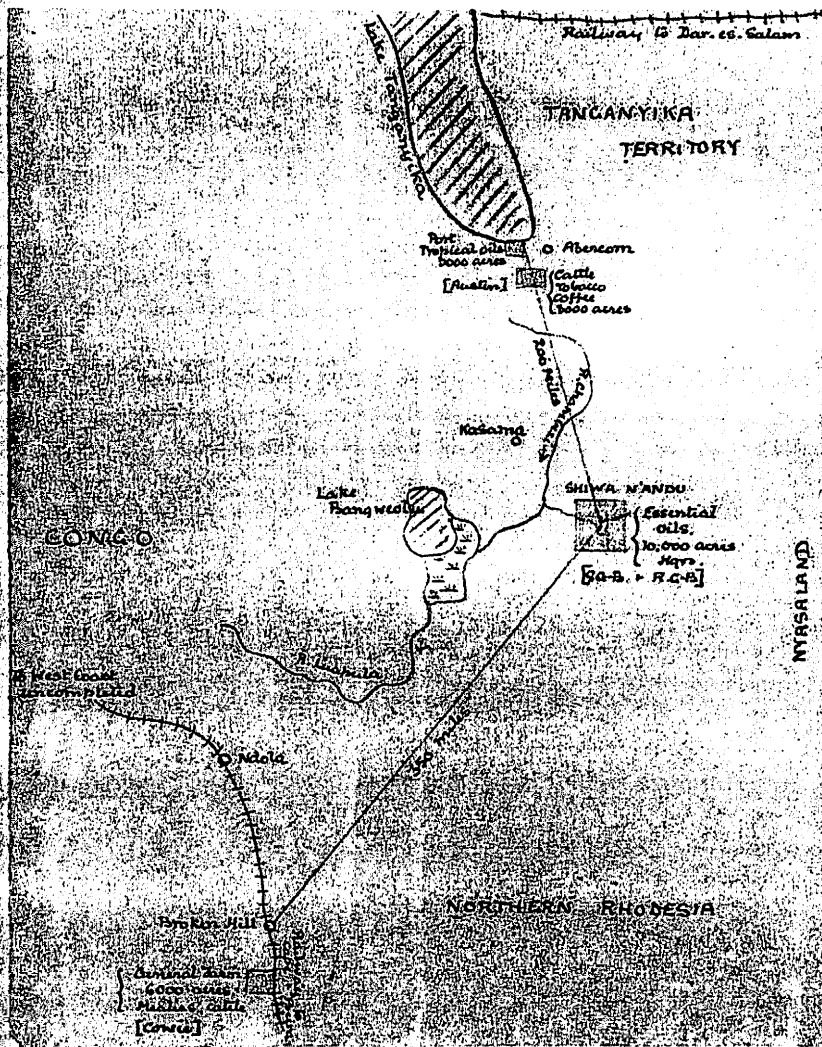
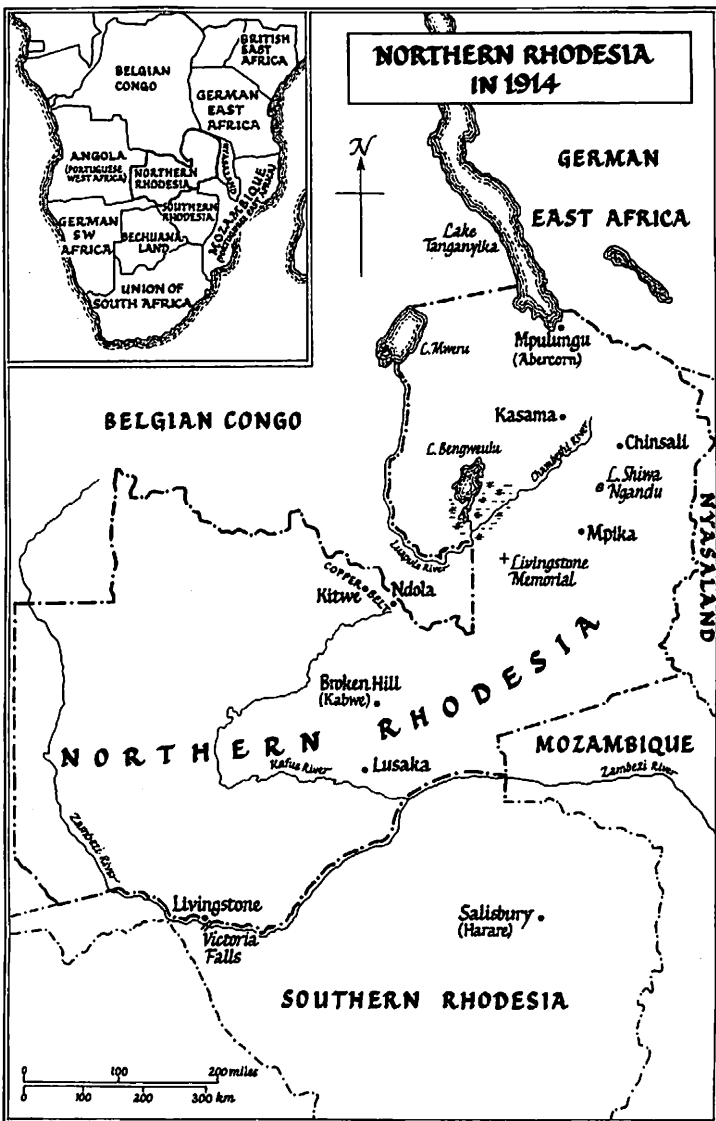
All rights reserved.

The moral right of the author has been asserted

Printed in England by Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

Except in the United States of America, this book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

To Paulo
'Até ao fim do mundo'



Sketch map of Shiwa Ngandu and surrounding area, drawn by Stewart Gore-Browne.

I

Shiwa Ngandu, Northern Rhodesia, Good Friday 1914

It began as it would end, in the place he had always known he would find one day. In front of him, under an endless sky, stretched the lake, shining like a Queen's sapphire in the morning sunlight. Shiwa Ngandu, the local Bemba people called it, the Lake of the Royal Crocodiles. 'Shiwa Ngandu.' The young British Army lieutenant tested the name on his tongue, emphasizing the penultimate syllable as he had heard the Bemba do, and enjoyed its sound.

The lake was quite small, about five miles long and one and a half broad, and lay cupped in a circle of hills, garbed with lush grass and trees. Here and there a sensual burst of colour broke up the green – the scarlet of a bubu tree, bursting with African tulips, a pair of tiny flame-breasted sunbirds singing, and a patch of yellow diamonds on the ground which rose up and became a cloud of butterflies. There was a flat meadow-like area between the hills and the far shore, and through his field-glasses the officer could make out a herd of zebra, skittishly parading their finely painted stripes and black manes. Everything seemed to be revelling in life. Removing his pith-helmet, Stewart Gore-Browne lay back against his pack and sighed up at the clear sky with satisfaction. *It was all so magical that I felt I had entered a fairy kingdom*, he later wrote. The rainy season over, the air tasted so crisp and pure that he fancied himself the first to breathe it. It had been a long, hazardous journey. But at last he had arrived at the place

where he could build his manor and be lord of all he surveyed.

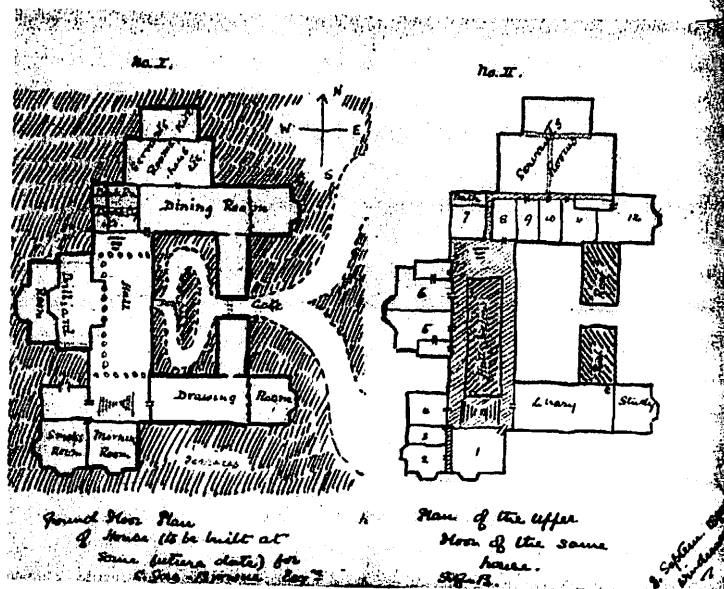
His thoughts were interrupted by Bulaya, the young orphan he had been trying to train as his cook, proffering a Spode china cup and saucer. Like all his servants, Bulaya was clad in white calico shirt and shorts and black and yellow waistcoat which Gore-Browne had had sent out from the Army & Navy store in London. *I fancy the colours will set off their coppery skins*, he had written in one of his thrice-weekly letters to his beloved aunt Ethel, adding, *Just because one is in Africa, is no reason not to do things properly*. He took the teacup and smiled at Bulaya's big white-toothed grin. The forty porters he had brought with him were all Bemba people who had worked for him over the last three years on the Border Commission marking out the frontier between Northern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo, and they were overjoyed to be back in their homeland.

He was about to ask Bulaya to knock up some celebratory breakfast from their dwindling supplies, when a rustling down by the shore caught his attention. Instinctively, he reached for his rifle, the .318 Richards given to him by his uncle Goff, the naval commander who had taught him to shoot, and edged forward. Three small reedbuck were cavorting at the edge of the water, their pelts *quivering with alertness*, their arched bodies and legs reminding him of young ballerinas.

He held the sight against the monocle he wore on his right eye and selected his prey. It was a clear shot and he squeezed the trigger quickly. 'Pow.' The single retort echoed round the silent hills and sent a flock of dark geese shrieking into the distance, low over the shining water. Two of the bucks fled and the other fell, right on target. There would be meat for lunch. He made a thumbs-up sign to his headman, Chikwanda, who set off with Kakumbi, the hunter, to collect and skin the body. Watching them go, Gore-Browne sat on the canvas chair

he pulled up his tent and took his pen from his pack along with a black leather-bound book. Opening the page at 10 April, he was surprised with surprise that it was Good Friday, he recounted the event in his diary, followed by the single word *Happy*.

Summoning a small boy who came running with a fan woven from banana leaves to keep him cool, he looked around the place contentedly, thinking about where he would build his grand manor and imagining himself on the terrace, commanding his servants, or striding about the grounds, a rifle under his arm and a Great Dane by his side. For as long as he could remember, he had dreamed of owning an imposing house, something like the Wokingham Parklands, the Surrey estate of his father's favourite sister and her husband Hugh Locke King, which always seemed to be full of interesting people, the table replete with fine food and wine. The couple had no children of their own, and he remembered how his younger brother Robert and sister Sapphire had often spent school holidays there, preferring it to their parents' place, Wokingham Park, near Abingdon, where their mother, the beautiful Eleanor Shaw-Stewart, who claimed descendancy from King Robert III of Scotland, was always occupied in socializing and organizing London balls and their father, Francis Gore-Browne, a brilliant barrister, was either off at his chambers or buried in his books. *Father, I think of as always away or busy*, he once wrote. *Mother, I never managed to get on with*. Young Stewart had become unusually close to his aunt, and he would cry when his mother came to collect him at the end of the holidays. From an early age it was Ethel he had gone to when he was unhappy, when he was sent away to Wixenford Prep school at the age of nine, then to Harrow where he was bullied as a 'worm', being painfully shy, and neither clever like his father, nor athletic like his father's three brothers, Harold, Wilfred and Godfrey, all of whom had studied there.



Stewart Gore-Browne was a sixteen-year-old schoolboy when he drew these plans of his dream house in 1899.

It was Ethel to whom he admitted *crossing the road to avoid being kicked by a crowd of boys*, and who kept him going as he counted the quarter hours on the school clock. Brooklands was the one place where he could forget about Roman history, Greek declensions, and being 'ragged', and he had fond memories of summers of croquet, bicycle polo, feasting on cherries, and rowing on the Wey with his cousins, the two Muriels.

Gore-Browne confessed his dreams of becoming a country squire in his first diary, begun in the summer of 1899 when he was still a schoolboy, just sixteen and enjoying the cricket at Lord's and his first cigar (describing it as *a glorious taste . . . though I did not feel quite happy afterwards*). Towards the end of that vacation, he travelled by train with William

son, a fellow Harrovian, to stay at Newton Manor, a large country estate near Gosforth in Cumbria, which Falcon was to inherit when he came of age. Seeing the tenants coming to greet his classmate, Gore-Browne was intensely envious, and he wrote: *Why didn't anybody ever leave me a place - I'm sure I could manage it well and it would be ripping to own a little house and to take an interest in.*

During his stay, he penned in the back of the diary a detailed sketch in black and red ink of a *House (to be built at some future date)* for S. Gore-Browne Esquire. Facing east, it was to be a two-storey building with a sweeping entrance, twelve bedrooms, a long hall cum ballroom, a library, billiard-room, morning-room, smoking-room and servants' quarters to the west. Over the following years as Gore-Browne travelled about, staying with his Campbell-Craigie cousins in castles in Scotland, going to house-parties at various English estates, and taking motor tours of the Loire valley, Switzerland and Tuscany, often accompanied by Ethel, he drew detailed architectural sketches of châteaux, villas and mansions that caught his eye. Now, at the age of thirty-one, he had a clear picture in his mind of his ideal house, though as a lowly officer with little prospect of promotion and only a few hundred pounds a year income, hardly the means to achieve it.

That was where Africa came in. With his income from his father and trust fund of around £500 a year and £1,000 savings, Gore-Browne thought he could *make little impact* in England, but in Northern Rhodesia it would enable him to *live like an Emperor*. Yet, ironically, he had landed up in Africa by accident. Not academic enough to follow his father's footsteps to Oxford and the Bar, or spiritually inspired to enter the Church, following his great-uncle Edward, Bishop of Winchester, and uncle Wilfred who had recently become first bishop of Kimberley in South Africa, Gore-Browne had hoped

to enter either the Navy like his late uncle Godfrey, a Vice-Admiral, or the Indian Civil Service. He had been bitterly disappointed at his rejection. Then the Boer War had broken out, inspiring him to apply to the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, or the Shop as it was known, using Ethel's influence as a friend of several generals to get his poor eyesight overlooked. He did quite well in his two years there, and in 1901 was commissioned into the Royal Field Artillery. Initially revelling in the life of a gentleman cadet, he had eventually tired of balls (at one of which he noted in his diary, *a man dropped dead while dancing*), hunting, dining and drinking champagne at the Criterion and Trocadero, opera parties and gambling. Having watched the girl he loved marry another, he became depressed. One fine spring morning, he was teeing up on Byfleet golf links when he bumped into the officer from the Royal Engineers who had run the Ordnance Survey course he had taken in Southampton, and asked if he would like to go to Northern Rhodesia to work on the Border Commission. 'Yes indeed,' he had replied, 'but where is it?' Recounting the story, many years on, Gore-Browne told the *New Yorker*, 'The chap at the War Office who offered me the post didn't know where it was either.'

Such geographical uncertainties merely added to the job's attraction, and a few months later, in August 1911, the twenty-eight-year-old gunner subaltern was stepping off the boat at Cape Town, remembering the adventure stories of Rider Haggard he had read as a schoolboy and feeling that his own King Solomon's Mines awaited. The previous half century had seen many of the big blanks on the map of Africa filled in by the likes of Burton, Speke, Livingstone and Stanley, but to Gore-Browne, like most of the British public, interior Africa was still a vast thrilling unknown, a place of wild beasts, cannibals, and untold riches. His first glimpse of the Victoria Falls

had given him the pioneer feeling of treading where few had trod before. Though, as he confessed in a letter to Ethel, *I felt rather ashamed to be simply stepping down from the platform of a restaurant car instead of stumbling across the thundering waters as Livingstone had done half a century before me after a perilous journey, hundreds of miles from any white man.*

But Africa was not as he had expected, and it did not take him long to develop misgivings about the same British Rule that back in London had given him such pride. Northern Rhodesia had been acquired by the British – or rather by Cecil Rhodes's British South Africa Company – at the tail-end of the European powers' nineteenth-century scramble for Africa. Starting with King Lewanika's concession of Barotseland in 1890, a series of dubious treaties had been negotiated between chiefs and Rhodes's agents, ostensibly acting as representatives of Queen Victoria, eventually giving the company control of the whole of the territory, naming it Northern Rhodesia. Having never been conquered through force of arms, the people had always received white men warmly, and were surprised and hurt when British officials treated them with contempt.

Shortly after arriving at the Commission's base-camp in Ndola, a small settlement marking the furthest point of Rhodes's Cape to Cairo railway, which consisted of a *boma* office, a post office, houses for a magistrate, an Assistant Native Commissioner, doctor and railway manager, Gore-Browne wrote to Ethel:

I wish I could describe the country to you so you could picture it, but it is very difficult. I personally had not the slightest idea of it. The little round huts and black men and occasional palm tree are all here, but that is the only part that fits in with one's ideas. For the rest there are miles and miles of red and green leaved trees which look when you climb a tree and see them from above, for all the

world like a great mass of gorgeously painted waves. The most remarkable thing of all is the sensation of British Rule and frankly it stirs you. When the magistrate sits up in the courthouse, trying men for murders, rapes, witchcraft and such like primitive things, absolute governor of 20,000 wild black men who he never set eyes on and then turns round to you and says 'You see it is all bluff, I have only one white native commissioner and 10 native policemen and there is not the slightest reason anyone should do what I tell him.' And yet the same magistrate is merely a very ordinary Scotchman, not by any means a gentleman but an enthusiast and real ruler of men. It's very odd. And how miserably ashamed one is of the doings of white men out here and what a ghastly example of all the beastly vices we set.

The Anglo-Belgian Boundary Commission had been something of a disappointment too, though he had revelled in the outdoor life and the hunting. It was just all *far too bureaucratic and tied up with the petty egos of other officers*. Within three months Captain Everett, the second-in-command, was eaten by a lion, *a most ill-omened start*. Major Gillam, who headed the Commission, spent most of his time in a haze of whisky and kept issuing and rescinding orders, the loneliness of the African bush finally driving him to a complete breakdown. At the end, his senior officer Major Steel had pocketed the finishing bonus for the natives, prompting Gore-Browne to send an angry letter of complaint to Lord Herbert Gladstone, the British High Commissioner in South Africa, though his opinion of colonial officials was such that he doubted anything would be done.

The work marking out the border had been *damnably slow*. The 1894 agreement between Britain and Belgium's King Leopold was vague, simply stating that the border was to run southwards from Lake Bangweulu to its junction with the watershed separating the Congo and Zambezi rivers, follow-

this line for the 550 miles till it reached the Portuguese frontier. 'The King of Italy had drawn the boundaries some years before - he'd been chosen as an impartial arbiter,' Gore-Browne told the *New Yorker* years later, 'and I suspect he simply ran his thumb across a map.' He was dismayed by the lack of regard to tribal borders, writing in an unpublished memoir of his experiences, *It was, and still is, by no means unknown for half a tribe including the paramount chief to be on one side of an international border, with the rest of the tribe on the other side.**

They had no decent instruments and there was too much sitting around waiting for the clearance of rains and mists, or the smoke from Africans burning their fields for planting, so that they could take sightings to establish high points between the two great rivers and erect wooden beacons on the hills to mark the border. The beacons, which were thirty feet high, had to be visible from three other sites to give triangulations for mapmakers. The terrain was tough and mostly untrodden, so isolated that most of their supplies had to be carried with them by large numbers of porters or hunted, and he was eternally grateful for his late uncle Godfrey's lessons in shooting rabbits and woodpigeons at Brooklands that summer when he was sixteen. During the long periods of waiting they would organize races between the Africans, taking bets on who would win.

Eventually, on New Year's Day 1914, they had reached the end, meeting up with the Anglo-Portuguese Commission which had been marking out the border between Angola and Northern Rhodesia. They had toasted in champagne, standing triumphantly with one foot on Britain, and one on Portugal or Belgium, cigars in hand. *Another few parcels of Africa squared off on the map*, Gore-Browne wrote in his diary.

*'As I Look Back', unpublished article by Stewart Gore-Browne.

When he was born in 1883, less than a tenth of the continent had been colonized by Europe, but by 1914 more than ninety per cent of it was under European rule. Despite the frustrations with the work, doubts over the ways of colonial rule, and his dislike of the Belgians, the wide skies and intensity of Africa had got to him. *I never imagined that the sense of being surrounded by sun, behind, around and reflected in everything until one almost felt one could drink it, could feel so good*, he wrote to Ethel. He loved going off into the bush where perhaps no white man had ever trod, the feeling of being surrounded by unsuppressed nature, and travelling *like a king with 15 or 20 bearers just to carry my personal belongings [and another 100 for supplies and equipment], and villagers prostrating themselves at my feet*. He liked Africans, particularly the Bemba who were *so masculine, proud and loyal*, and enjoyed hunting, pleased to be good at something after his lack of prowess on the playing fields of Harrow. One day he realized with some surprise that he wanted to make his home in this place.

When he heard that the British South Africa Company was making land in Northern Rhodesia available cheaply to white settlers, he decided to apply. Once the work on the border was finished, he said a final, not altogether sorry, goodbye to the Commission's base-camp at Ndola. Accompanied by some of the best porters, he headed north-east, planning to cross Rhodesia and Tanganyika, looking for land, before finally getting the steamer back to England from Dar es Salaam. They travelled by foot and canoe, retracing Livingstone's last footsteps in the opposite direction, all the time searching for the ideal place to make his home.

Now at Shiwa Ngandu he thought he had found it, *the loveliest thing in all of Africa, my own personal paradise*. He listened to the competing birdsongs and the tinselly whisper of leaves,

and took another deep breath of the delicious air, feeling that at last his real life was beginning. Rereading his diary entry, he decided it did not do justice to the momentous day. From the side pocket of his pack he pulled out a red pencil and sharpened it with his penknife. At the bottom of the page, he added in capitals: *FIRST SIGHT OF SHIWA NGANDU*.

Gore-Browne had heard about Shiwa Ngandu before. The local British District Commissioner, Robert 'Bobo' Young, had been there and written about it, and some people called it Lake Young, rather than its Bemba name. But he had never expected it to be so enchanted. It was after all the place which Livingstone had cursed on his last journey in 1867, when his faithful little yellow dog Chitane had been devoured by the lake's crocodiles, and in the ensuing fuss two of his porters had run off with his medicine chest. 'I felt as if I had now received the sentence of death,'* wrote the great explorer, whose supplies by that point were so short that they were reduced to roasting grain to make believe it was coffee. Already very weak and haemorrhaging, Livingstone had later suffered another malaria attack and had no quinine to treat it. He died not far off to the south in Chitambo's village.

The few settlements around Lake Shiwa Ngandu were Bemba, Northern Rhodesia's largest tribe, and many of the men had worked as porters on the Border Commission, carrying loads of 50 or 60lb on their head to earn five shillings a month, to pay their yearly tax of five shillings per hut (many Bemba were polygamous and had huts for each wife) to the British South Africa Company. Unlike his fellow British officers who denigrated the Bemba as 'lazy' and 'liars', Gore-Browne greatly admired the tribe, their noble warrior stock

* Livingstone's *Last Journals*, 15 and 20 January 1867.

appealing to him. He had done his best to learn their language and his porters had told him their story many times. Their ancestors had come from the Congo at the end of the seventeenth century, led by Chitimukulu, the Crocodile King, intent on conquering all Africa. But as they marched towards the fabled country of the great lakes, they clashed with one tribe after another, sustaining heavy losses, and were cheated by Arab traders who took their women for slaves in exchange for glass beads. Finally the bedraggled remainder, still clutching the mighty crocodile totem, arrived on the great north-eastern plateau and came across a dead crocodile near a lake, which they took as a good omen. Being told that the local name for crocodile was *Ngandu*, they settled in various villages around the shores of the lake (*Shiba*) which consequently became known as Shiwa Ngandu. The community flourished, spreading out and coming into contact with the first European traders and explorers, but those on the shores were continually harassed by crocodiles. One day near the beginning of this century, 200 men decided to go out on the lake in canoes to slaughter them. By dusk only two men remained, and one lake-shore village, Kacilikila, whose men had not joined the hunting party, and it was there that Gore-Browne had arrived.

The current Bemba king, or Paramount Chief as they called him, Chitimukulu the 32nd, ruled over his people from a village to the north-west, near the town of Kasama. Gore-Browne knew Africa well enough to realize that it was no good trying to set up home without the chief's blessing, and planned to visit him with some suitable gift – a fine jacket, penknife or field-glasses, and his last bottle of whisky. Thinking about this, he set off to explore the area more thoroughly, and was pleased with what he found. The soil was sandy, but the spoor around indicated that there was plenty of game. There were fish in the lake and no shortage of water from

the river running into it. He thought that the small hill, overlooking the lake, sheltered by the other higher ones which Livingstone had described as 'beautiful white and pink dolomite, scantily covered by upland trees', would be a perfect site for his manor. Down below in the vale, he would build a village for his estate workers. He pictured something *English style* – *redbricked and tiled roofs – with workshops, farm buildings, schools, a village shop and a post office, where blacks and whites would live in harmony*. Of course it was remote – there was no road, and it was 400 miles of harsh terrain and crocodile-infested swamps from the nearest railway station at Ndola, which would make it hard bringing things in, but the isolation rather appealed to him.

The sun was already low in the sky, tinting the lake a kingly purple, when he returned to camp. Excited shouting greeted him, and he heard Kakumbi exclaim '*Ni Chipembele!*' – '*It's a rhinoceros!*' Hurrying towards Kakumbi's cry, Gore-Browne looked through the field-glasses and to his astonishment saw a black sullen beast coming slowly along, the first he had ever seen in the wilds. It looked, he thought, like *something out of Wagner, a survivor of another age of giants and dwarves and valkyrie and dragons, not a twentieth century animal at all*. Following the hunters Kakumbi and Chakusami, he rushed down into the reeds and long grass towards it.

I had been in Africa long enough to know that the rhinoceros will charge as soon as they get wind of one, and that I had to take a decent shot as soon as I could, he wrote afterwards.

But I needed to hit a vital spot, if not the rhino would charge furiously toward me. Chakusami handed me the heavy double barreled .470 and I fired at the flank where I thought the heart might be. It was the first time I'd used this rifle since Father sent it out from England, and it knocked the glass out of my eye as it went

off with a deep moan. The rhino, which seemed of battleship proportions now we were nearer, spun round and went slowly off into the high reeds. I fired again, heart thudding. Everything seemed to go completely silent. There were no signs of the rhino. Was it wounded, waiting in the reeds? It was impossible to see, the greenery was so high. A hunter should never follow wounded dangerous game into thick cover, but I could see no option. The only alternative would have been to run away and I couldn't do that, as many of my men had shinned up the trees to watch. I edged forward gingerly through the long, sharp-edged grass, my heart hammering wildly against my chest. To my relief, there in front of me was a black lump, completely inert. The rhino had been killed stone dead with my first bullet which had gone straight through the heart.

Seeing the dead rhino, Kakumbi and Chakusami burst into song and began dancing, lifting Gore-Browne on to their shoulders to celebrate. The other carriers slithered down from the trees and flocked round to join in the jubilation. There would be meat for weeks. 'From now on we will call you Chipembele,'* Kakumbi said solemnly. 'Your *mupashi* [ancestral spirit] is a good one, it will watch over you and give you a long life.'

It took six men to drag the beast into camp, where they began hacking and chopping. Gore-Browne had no idea there was so much hide on a rhino. They would be at work long into the night. Some of the others began erecting wooden frames on which the meat would be grilled. He lay on the ground, watching the activity and feeling absurdly pleased with himself. He had killed his first rhino, it was Easter Day and he was *in paradise*.

*The Bemba word for rhinoceros is actually *chipembere* but as the 'r' sound is unknown in their language it is pronounced *chipembele*.

Solemnly, Chakusami presented him with the large white horn which they had removed and cleaned. It was, he wrote to Ethel, *an awful looking weapon and I shuddered to think of it ripping anyone*. Calling Bulaya for whisky, he placed the horn by his side and, with the fiery liquid warming his throat agreeably, turned his attention back to the sun going down over the lake.

Gore-Browne had always liked being near water, and he found something particularly soothing about that late afternoon light which cast a milky pink glow across the lake. The end of the rains had left the air fresh and sparkling like champagne, and it was *as exhilarating as being by the sea*. He closed his eyes and pictured himself standing on the terrace of his great house. A white-jacketed waiter would bring him a cocktail on a silver tray, and he would sit, enjoying the solitude and a thousand sunsets like this one. But he would have visitors too, organize grand hunts and swank parties full of interesting people. His house would become famous all over Africa.

There was only one very important thing missing. As so often on his travels, an image formed in his mind of a woman with lively grey-blue eyes, her strawberry-coloured hair pulled back into a soft knot behind her strong expressive face. He took out a pencil, tore some sheets from his exercise book and began to write to Ethel.

Oh my dear if only you were doing this trip with me it would be so perfect. Take my hand and step out of the tent with me now and look at the lake, a strip of blue silver with clumps of dark, deep-green, trees and behind purple hills coming down to the waterside. I'd like to stop here and set up our house it's so jolly . . . oh my dearest, why don't you come?



Above Stewart Gore-Browne's servant Kakumbi up a tree.

Below Bulaya, Gore-Browne's cook, sitting on the first rhino ever shot by Gore-Browne on the shore of Shiwa Ngandu lake on Good Friday 1914. Bulaya and Kakumbi both accompanied Gore-Browne to England in 1914 to be 'trained in English manners'.



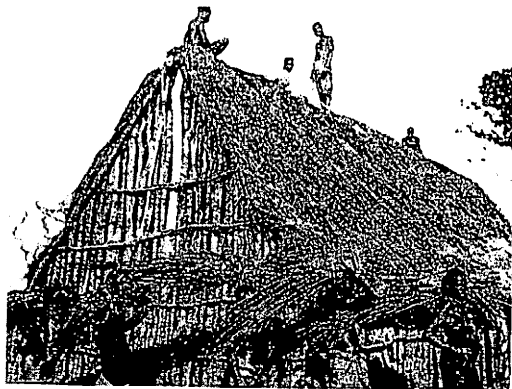
Chikwanda, a messenger for the Commission and Gore-Browne's first foreman at Shiwa Ngandu.



Gore-Browne's first house at Shiwa Ngandu, 1914.



Getting to Shiwa from the nearest railway station was a three-week journey involving marching across crocodile-infested swamps and canoeing along the Luapula and Chambeshi rivers.



Left Building a cattle shed at Shiwa.

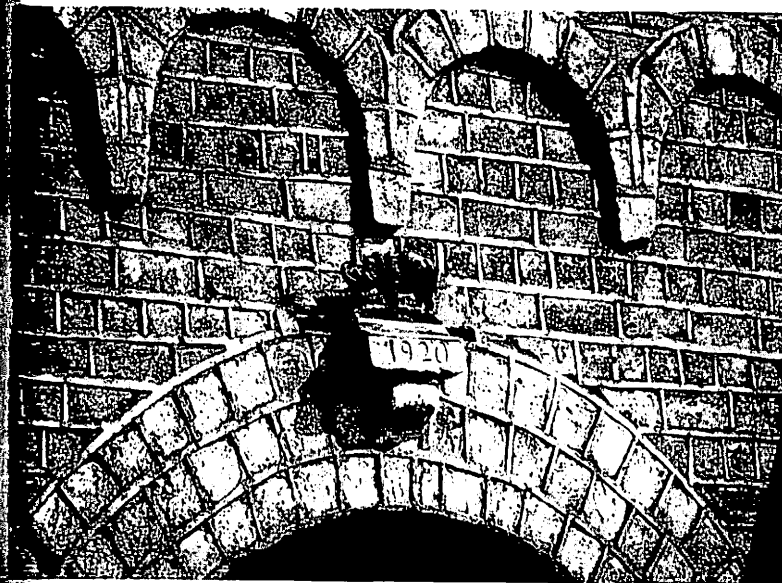
Below left Stewart Gore-Browne made his own bricks, using clay from the river bed and following instructions from an Army building manual. For many years he was the biggest employer in north-eastern Rhodesia, employing hundreds of people.



Below In the early years the shores of the lake were full of game such as these reedbuck, providing the main source of food.



An aerial view of Shiwa House in 1931. The tower and chapel were added later.



Detail of the arch over the gatehouse. The rhino was Gore-Browne's own personal symbol, for his fierce temper, and the date 1920 marks when he started building after returning from fighting in the First World War.