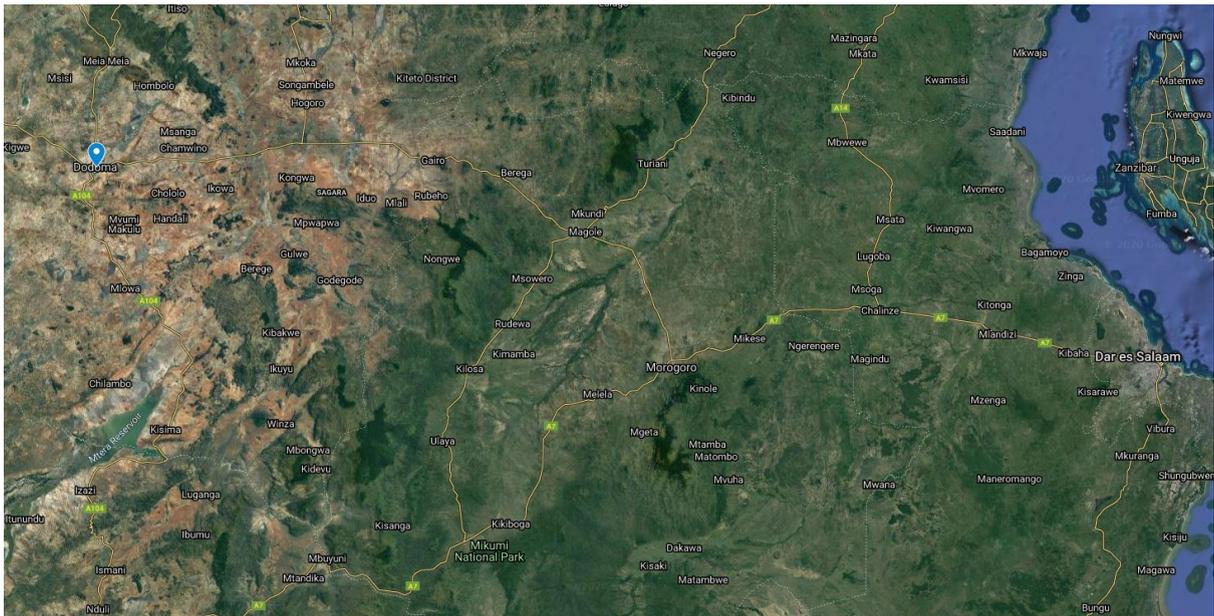


# Dodoma

I loved Africa and want to stay there so I applied for a job as a geologist with the Ministry of Water Development in Dodoma the capital of Tanzania.



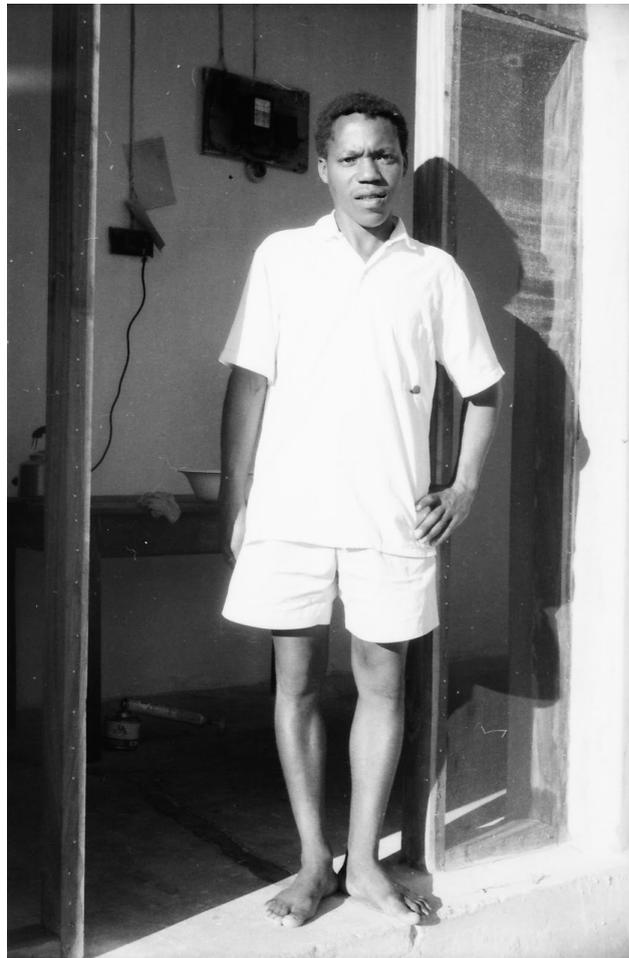
Dodoma was chosen as the capital as it is in the centre of Tanzania and 443 km from Dar es Salaam.



The railway line at Dodoma



**My house**

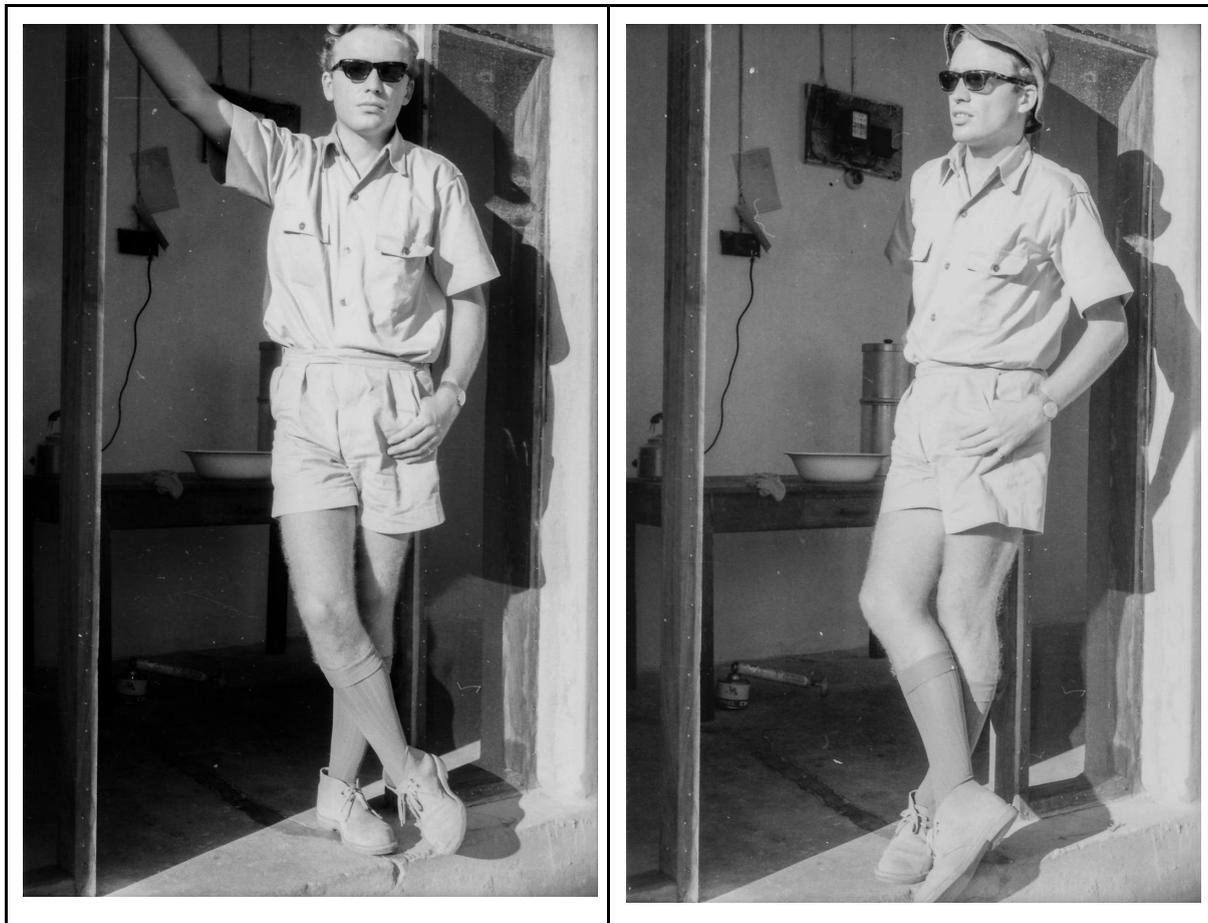


**My house servant Leslie**

I settled into a government house and began work at the water development compound. It was a good life, Leslie would wake me in the morning with a glass of cold orange juice, he had crushed the previous evening, and my shorts and shirt all neatly laundered and pressed.



Then breakfast, Leslie made delicious pancakes with dried full cream milk.



At 6.30 am, I drove to the compound and to my office. There were two other white geologists working, Kay Klimake (a Polish man and my boss) and another Englishman ..... There were about 30 Africans hanging around but most of them seemed to have nothing to do.

Initially, I had nothing to do, so I read the Regional Water Engineering reports. It was depressing, prior to independence they had lots of projects on the go building dams, pipelines etc but in the following months' things gradually slowed down. The reason was that they could no longer get parts for their equipment as supply lines failed.

We didn't have a break for lunch and worked right through to 2 pm when we went home. Leslie would have my lunch ready for me and after that, I would have a siesta until about 4 pm when I would go out to the Club.

This was an exclusive establishment restricted to ex-patriots and high-level government officials. It was interesting to mix with politicians, judges, police chiefs, bank managers as well as the Europeans still running the country.

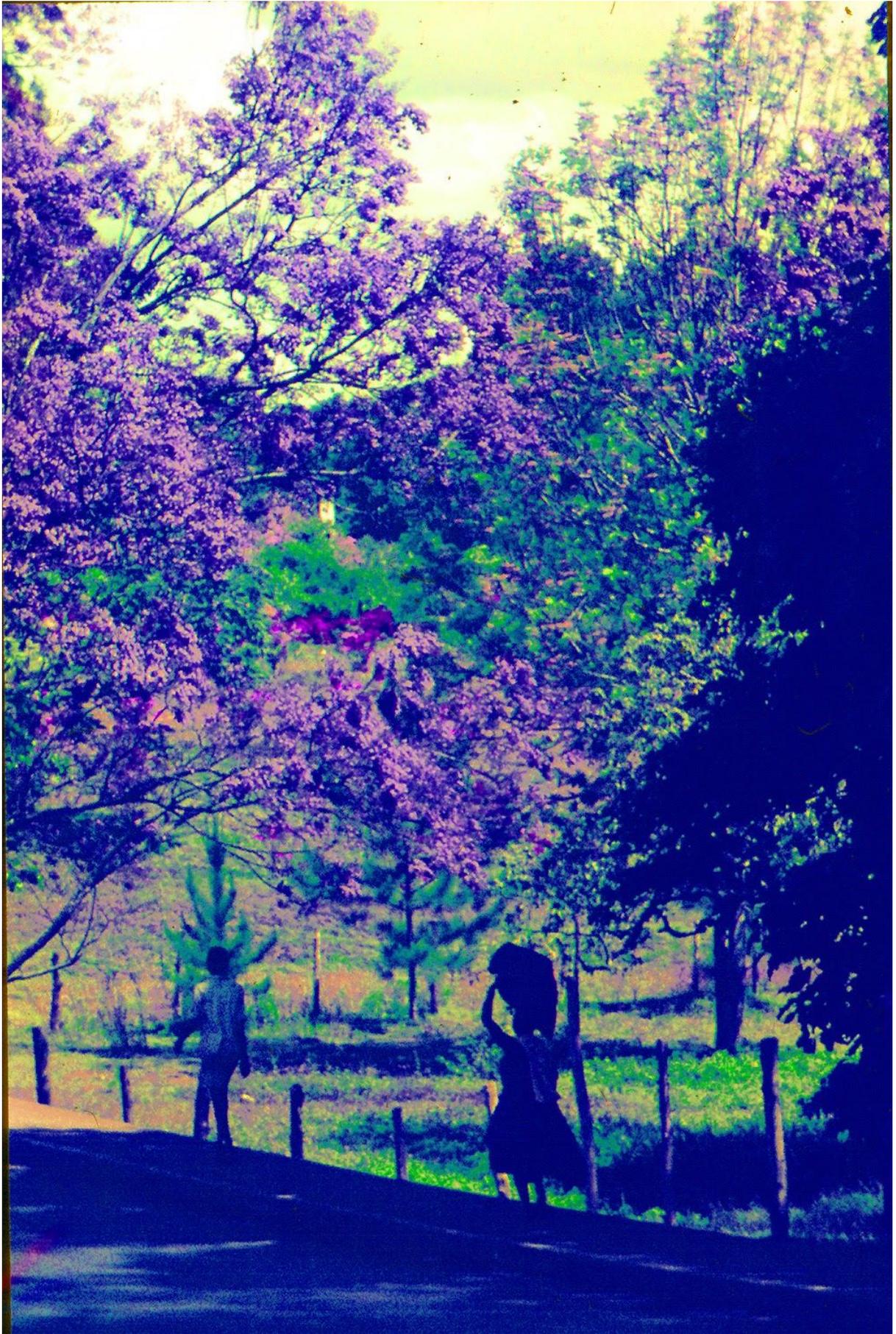
The club had sporting facilities, a comfortable lounge a great bar. I was fascinated to learn that I could borrow money from the club by just asking. So I spent my evenings chatting, playing games and drinking. It was here that I learned to play Liars Dice a great bar game.

The department supplied me with a small house which you can see in this photo. The building behind is the quarters for two servants families consisting of just a single room each. My house servant Leslie occupied one.

One day an African came asking if he could do gardening work and live in the other servant's room. So he moved in with his wife and child. I just tipped him for work he carried out and let him have the accommodation.

I had a couple of experiences with snakes in that drive. Right where I parked the mini moke that you can see in the photo I came across a [puff adder](#), a slow-moving snake similar to the death adders I encountered in Australia. My servants killed it and I asked them if they would eat it, but they seemed to know very little about nyoka (snake) and had never considered eating one. In a country where there is insufficient protein in the diet it always seemed strange to me that they didn't eat all available protein.

One evening I was driving my moke from the house and down my drive when a very long snake crossed in front of me. I jammed on the brakes and stopped. To my alarm, the snake came alongside me, with no side curtains on the car it raised itself high enough to look me in the eye and spread its hood. I had heard many stories of people being blinded by [spitting cobras](#) so I jammed the gear into reverse and backed away. Having considered it's prey the snake went on its way. It was at least 6 feet long and a scary encounter.



I remember the jacaranda trees and the African ladies carrying baskets on their heads. Some men had several wives and they would walk in front with their wives following in single-file. I thought that this would have been a way of walking along narrow bush paths, with risks of wild animals.

One day I went to the post office in Dodoma one day and at the counter, they told me to go to see Mr Singh. There was a crowd of people at desks in the room and I had no idea who Mr Singh was until somebody pointed out the man in the turban. That was when I learnt that all Sikhs have the surname Singh which means lion.

I explored the area around Dodoma in my mini moke. There are huge granite boulders clustered in the landscape. I also came across local Massai with their earlobes extended.









At last, I started going on safari to work.