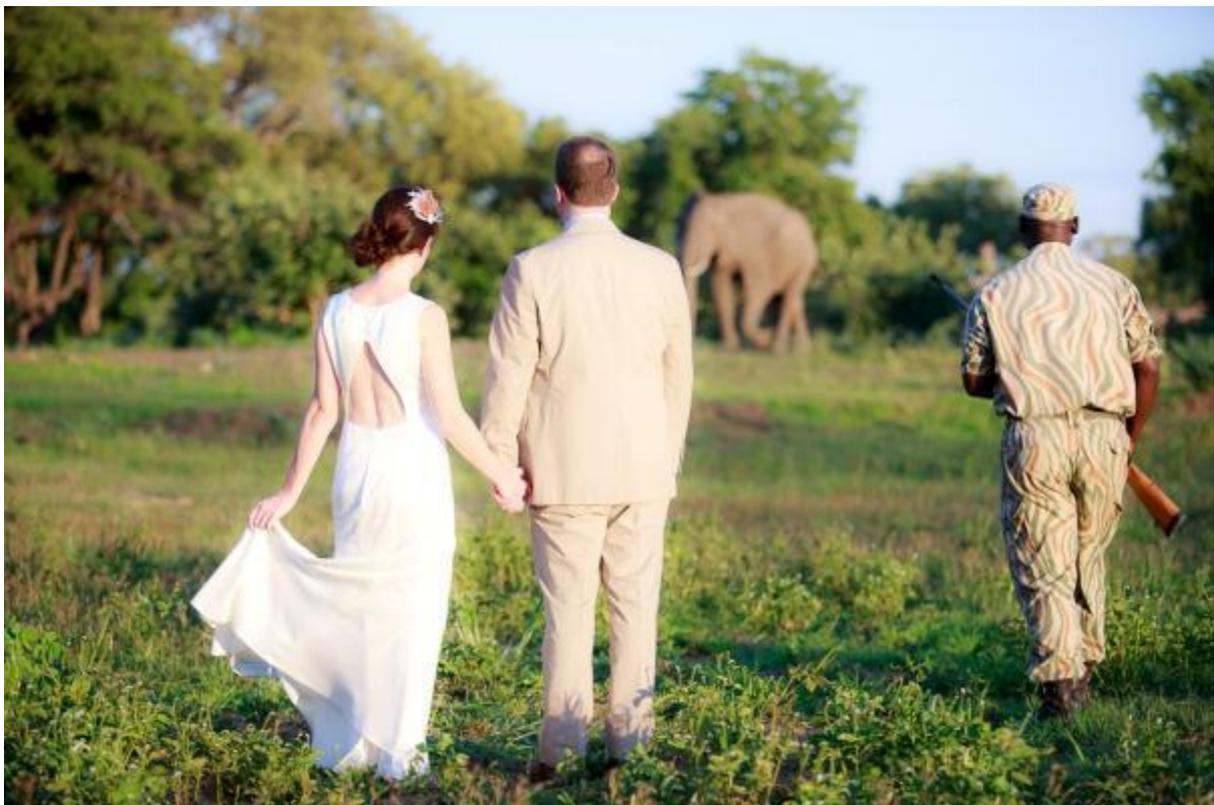




So another wonderful year draws to a close, full of happy memories, new friends and fabulous wildlife sightings! We started off the year with a bang with Richard & Catherine's wedding on the 4th January, a lovely affair with just a small crowd of witnesses on Mwamilombe with the river behind and the animals in front – what a heavenly way to start your married life together.



In July, Carl and Ulla-Stina Hughey came out to celebrate Carl's birthday and while Carl was being pampered in the Treehouse one morning, a hungry mouth passed by... ! Not many have had quite that view and all credit to the masseuse for holding her nerve!



Then in September came Leslie Nevison's big birthday bash! This happy group of friends and family from all over the world (Canada, the US, Tanzania, Senegal, the UK & Zambia to name but a few) took over the whole camp for 4 wonderful days of game viewing and catching up together, culminating in a special birthday dinner for all out in the garden.

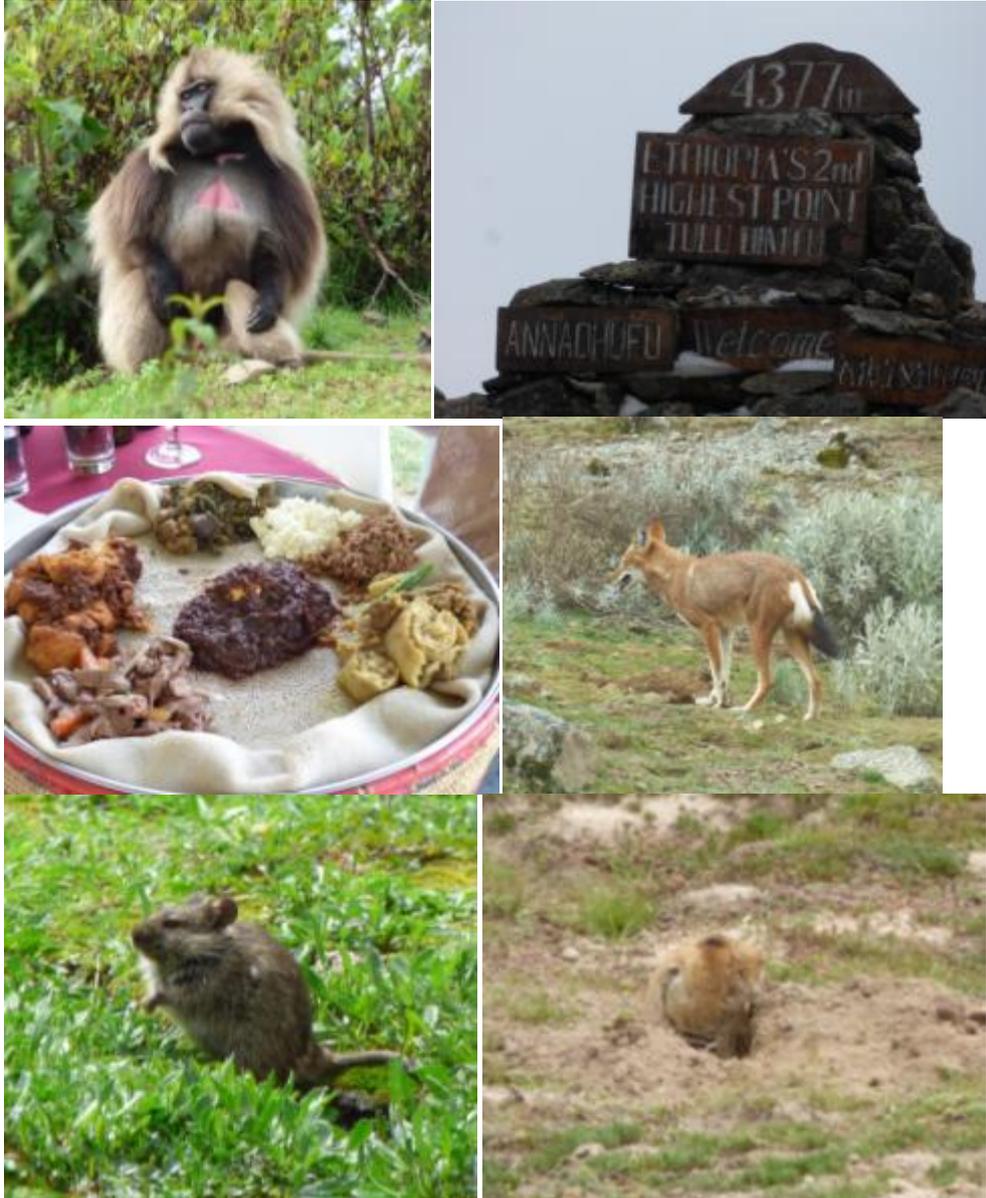


Undoubtedly one of the main reasons we have enjoyed 2016 as much as we have is because our new Camp Managers, Wendy and Jamie Buckley joined us from Australia. They took to hospitality like ducks to water and have been wonderful assets to our happy team. Their arrival has allowed us more time to explore both the Park and the rest of Africa and in July Ade & Jess took advantage of a great friend's 40th birthday to



head off to Ethiopia. Aside from the magnificent scenery, outstanding coffee, the awe-inspiring rock-hewn churches and the beautiful people, we also managed to find the elusive Ethiopian wolf and plenty of new bird species – the count ended at

Here were some of our favourite things;



From top left, the magnificent Gelada monkey (*Theropithecus gelada* and no longer a baboon), the highest point on the Bale Mountains (2 degrees C), the most delicious food including Injera made from fermented teff flour (gluten free!), the endangered Ethiopian wolf (*Canis simensis*) of which there are only 500 remaining on the planet, the endemic Blick's grass rat (*Arvicanthis blicki*) and my personal favourite, the giant or big-headed mole rat (*Tachyoryctes macrocephalus*), both of which are important food sources for the wolves.

In exciting Conservation news, our very good friend Rachel McRobb was recently nominated for a very prestigious Tusk Conservation Award. This was in recognition of her outstanding work here in the South Luangwa on anti-poaching and conservation education. She unfortunately didn't win (the winners can be found in the Tusk website www.tusk.org) but this has no doubt raised global awareness of the issues facing wildlife here in Zambia and will raise a lot more money to help with her vital conservation work. Her reward was to literally rub shoulders with Prince William and to meet the inimitable Sir David Attenborough. Wow.



Flatdogs was also proud to sponsor the Carnivore team at this year's Elephant Charge – this 4 wheel drive “racing” adventure draws teams from all over Zambia to compete for glory while also raising money for Conservation. This year, the charge raised a whopping US\$63,000 which is just brilliant. To find out more, have a look at their site, www.elephantcharge.org.

On a different kind of conservation story, Olaf Strelow from ASDIA Ecoventures based in Cape Town headed up to Mfuwe with two American guests in November. Ollie has been to Mfuwe a few times and on this visit, he was dismayed to see how much rubbish and litter was collecting in the village as there is no council rubbish



collection here. He and his guests decided to make a difference by employing 20 villagers for a day and another 14 for a second day and some of our other Flatdogs guests joined in too and the results were very heartening. At least 60 sacks were filled with litter by the sterling ladies and we hope to repeat this initiative every few months and get more of the businessmen in Mfuwe town involved as well so we can really try and keep this pristine environment as pristine as it should be.



In camp news, there has been the usual year round maintenance jobs, but this year we have also splashed out a little on the inside bar – brightened it up with lovely new standing lamps, sofas and rugs as well as some new desks and lamps for guests wanting to write home or work on their photos in better light than before. A much nicer place to escape from rainy days should we have any!



During January and February, Ade will be working with the building team on renovating and re-furbishing the chalet rooms. It's been a few years since we have done much to the chalet rooms, so we feel a wee nip/tuck is in order - we are planning to add some headboards to the beds like we have in the luxury tents with better reading lights and plug sockets, we're also adding nice ceiling fans, a built in wardrobe area and full doors to the bathrooms as well as a soft furnishing touch up with new brighter curtains and bed covers. We can't wait to see how they turn out! We will also be adding new electrical cabling throughout camp which will distribute the power more evenly and can take advantage of our new ENERGY EFFICIENT?! Fridges and freezers – ADE!!!

Who's for some statistics? Since March 15th 2016, we sent into the park 1,918 safari activities (both game drives and walking safaris) and a total of 8,650 people into the Park, although many of these went in at least once and some as many as 30 times! In our continuing determination to use local produce this year we have sold more than 150kgs or 750 of expertly cooked portions of fillet steak from our beef farmer in Chipata, Mayana Farms, more than 100kgs of fresh Zambian coffee beans were turned into several thousand cups of coffee, more than 13,000 locally produced free range eggs were enjoyed too in various delicious forms!



We had at least 145 guests come back for a second (and in some cases, third, fourth, fifth or even thirteenth visit. What heaven, thank you! Some of these good people actually repeated on us twice in the one year - stand up Jacques & Paulette and Adrian & Claire Masters - you guys are just brilliant and we definitely consider you part of our Flatdogs family.

We learnt in November that we had been awarded our second Good Safari Guide Award, a happy repeat of our 2015 Award and we have been voted “Best Value Safari Property in Africa” for a second time! We have always tried to provide great value for our guests here at Flatdogs and this is a wonderful validation of our efforts! Thank you to all the judges and people who have supported us over the years as we’ve grown our business from humble campsite to the outstanding safari camp we are today. We are hugely grateful to you all!



And on that very happy note, it just remains for us to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful yet productive New Year!

Love from Jess, Ade, Paolo, Harold, Wendy, Jamie, Lydia and the other 78 valiant souls who make up our fantastic Flatdogs team!