



Participants of the 1969 trip included: (back row, left to right) Al Chandler '69; Treadwell "Ted" Ruml '70; John "Fred" Martin '71; Colin Quigley '69; Tim Lydgate '70; Jim Dar-row; Chris Kimball '69; Peter Greer '58, instructor in English; Steven Hudacek; Tim White '69; Bob Taplin '69; and Steve Dunning. (Front row, left to right) George Lane '69; John Williamson '69; Dan Hudacek '69; David Vicario '69; and B. Rodney Marriott, instructor in English.



Gathered this summer for the trip's 40th reunion were: (front row, left to right) Tim White '69; Dan Hudacek '69; Steven Hudacek; Al Chandler '69; Bob Taplin '69; and Steve Dunning. (Second row, left to right) David Vicario '69; John Williamson '69; Treadwell "Ted" Ruml '70; and Peter Greer '58, emeritus chair of the English Department. (Back row) Chris Kimball '69.

AFRICA REMEMBERED

In the summer of 1969, 16 boys and three young men, most connected to Phillips Exeter, undertook to travel from London to Nairobi in three Land Rovers. The challenging trip was tied to *African Studies*, an academic course conceived and taught by English Instructor B. Rodney Marriott. Rod had served in the Peace Corps in Nigeria, and he wanted to introduce students to a world that he deeply loved, not as tourists but as educated observers of cultures much different from their own. The trip lasted three months and, not surprisingly, left a considerable imprint on the minds of the participants, an imprint measured in memories.

There was the sun setting over the Victory Arch of the Roman ruins at Volubilis, Morocco; the lunar landscape of the Sahara Desert from which we listened to the BBC broadcast of the Eagle moon landing; a frightening two hours held at gunpoint in the north-eastern section of the Congo while the local authorities checked our papers; a conversation at a large mission church deep in the Congolese rain forest with a priest who had survived the 1962 massacre in which 18 of his fellow missionaries had perished; a campsite in a Pygmy village where we shared coffee and watched the children demonstrate their dexterity with our soccer ball; an afternoon in Olduvai Gorge where we learned from a member of the Leakey family the details of the dig that had unearthed *Zinjanthropus*; a guided tour on the floor of the Ngorongoro Crater where we spied a black rhinoceros mother and her baby; and the moment when each of us reached the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro.

Over the weekend of July 25, 40 years later, 12 of the original 19 gathered in Maine for three days of reminiscence and reflection, renewal of suspended relationships, and superb dining, thanks to Chris Kimball '69, founder and editor of *Cook's Illustrated*. Each man had a chance to re-introduce himself to the others, sketching out his adult life and suggesting what the trip had come to mean to him. Conversation wound around these individual presentations, producing moments of high philosophy, low humor and poignant reflection. And then there were countless photographs.

Rod died prematurely in Calcutta in 1990, and he left to PEA the part of his estate connected to Africa, which included photographs he had taken on this trip. Viewing them was like reliving the trip through his eyes; the slides added to his large presence in the reunion conversations. So satisfying was the experience that those in attendance agreed to set up another reunion for the summer of 2011.

—Peter Greer '58; '71, '81, '83, '97, '00 (Hon.);
P'81, P'83, P'94

View an online slideshow highlighting the Africa trip at www.exeter.edu/africa.