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University of Southampton

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

History

Cultivating the Colonial Mind: British Agricultural Officers
in East Africa at the End of Empire, 1945-1966

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2019

Abstract

This thesis looks at the experiences and attitudes of British Agricultural Officials in the post-war era who worked in East Africa and ‘stayed on’ after independence. It draws upon newly undertaken oral testimony, memoirs and archival sources to understand how these officials remember their experiences and to assess why they choose to recall particular events as they do.

By inspecting their backgrounds, the thesis highlights how different subgroups of colonial officials in late empire had distinct identities that impacted upon their understanding of empire and Africans. It further claims that these officials’ identities were only partly constructed through their experiences in the colonies, with their education in Britain under the supervision of the Colonial Office often shaping their beliefs about Africans and African agriculture more than their interactions with either.

The networks these officials established in training were maintained, despite postings to different East African countries. Agricultural Officers believed themselves to inhabit a scientific frontier and were bound together by this belief, using the structure of the department they worked for and scientific conferences to keep in contact. After independence, as their numbers dwindled, this thesis argues that these officials used their networks as outlets for their frustration. By using methodological frameworks from the history of emotions, the thesis asserts that these officials had an unspoken yet well understood manner of expression through which they could communicate their frustrations with independent Africa to one another.

Lastly, the thesis inspects Agricultural Officials’ responses to an increase in aid agency and foreign government involvement after independence. Despite recent suggestions that the Cold War played greatly on the ‘official mind’, the rural nature of these officials’ work and their obsession with results meant that Cold War concerns were relegated from their minds in favour of almost purely practical issues.

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Declaration of Authorship

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Maps



Map of Kenya [Public Domain]



Map of United Republic of Tanzania [Public Domain]



Map of Uganda [Public Domain]

List of Abbreviations

AO	Agricultural Officer
AAO	Assistant Agricultural Officer
AI	Agricultural Instructor
ALDEV	African Land Development Organisation
CAS	Colonial Administrative Service
CDC	Colonial (later Commonwealth) Development Corporation
CDEV	Course on Development
CDW	Colonial Development and Welfare Act (1940)
CO	Colonial Office
CRO	Commonwealth Relations Office
CS	Colonial Service
DAO	District Agricultural Officer
DC	District Commissioner
DO	Dominions Office
EAAFRO	East African Agriculture and Forestry Research Organisation
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FO	Foreign Office
HMOCS	Her/His Majesty's Overseas Civil Service
ICTA	Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture
ICS	Indian Civil Service
KANU	Kenya African National Union
OSPA	Overseas Service Pensioners' Association
PAO	Provincial Agricultural Officer
RAO	Regional Agricultural Officer
SPS	Sudan Political Service
UPC	Uganda People's Congress

Introduction

This thesis explores how a small group of British officials dealt with, remembered and retold their experiences of decolonisation in East Africa, specifically Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Looking at members of the British Colonial Agricultural Service who ‘stayed on’ in East Africa after independence, the thesis takes a prosopographical approach to examine identity, memories and depictions of empire, the networks that created such beliefs and the agency of individuals or groups of individuals in the decolonising process and subsequent postcolonial African development. Using a multitude of sources to complement and interrogate the memories of Agricultural Officers (AOs), the thesis looks at the origins and reasons for formation of their group identity, its purpose and its legacy.

Temporally, the thesis spans from the end of the Second World War, by which time the training for recruits to empire had undergone review and reform, until 1966, when the Colonial Office (CO) was merged with the Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO) and by which time most AOs had departed. It concludes that AOs’ networks were vital to their navigation of decolonisation; that their dedication to their own understanding of science underpinned their identities and allowed them to regain control over African agriculture through their second careers; and that, despite concern in Whitehall for any growing Russian or Chinese influence in independent Africa, AOs’ apparent dedication to increasing crop yields was significantly more important to them than any ideological battle.

When AOs left their postings either at or after independence, they frequently transitioned into development agencies and were often concerned with the same countries or crops that had occupied them throughout their prior careers. The groundwork laid during AOs’ imperial experiences underpinned their futures and the attitudes and opinions they took forward into their ‘second careers’, continuing to directly impact on agricultural projects in the ‘developing world’ into the 1960s and 1970s. Inspecting AOs’ experiences and the problems they perceived as existing in East Africa throughout decolonisation reveals how they arrived at their conclusions and, in both personal and professional senses, dealt with the loss of power that decolonisation bought with it. The networks they

forged lasted into retirement and helped AOs to define their legacies and forge a view of empire for public consumption.

This thesis demonstrates that within the Colonial Service – or, as it was known after 1954, Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service (HMOCS) – AOs saw themselves as a distinct group of officials with different backgrounds, experiences and knowledge to other British officials working in Africa. As a group, AOs believed they were bringing the latest advances in science and modernity to Africans; simultaneously, AOs were also a collection of individuals with different specialist areas of expertise that gave them each a sense of importance within the overarching group identity. The thesis shows how AOs' training and experiences on the ground remained with them: under the colonial period this helped reinforce their ideas about African farmers; in the post-colonial period, it created tensions between new African agricultural policy (seen often by AOs as ideologically driven) and these AOs' understanding of what was 'right' for agriculture in East Africa. To this end, the thesis adds to the body of work on Colonial Officials and demonstrates that far from being a homogenous group of like-minded people, different officials' roles, background, training and interactions during their service helped to shape how they understood their own identity and that of African and settler farmers.

While members of the Colonial Administrative Service (CAS) also remained after independence, the pre-independence economies of Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda were reliant on agricultural exports, reinforcing AOs' sense of self-importance. After the Second World War, late-colonial development in British Africa intensified to raise agricultural outputs of the region; though policy under the independent governments changed, the broad objective of increasing yields remained. AOs served an important role in enacting these policies on the ground and believed themselves key to the improvement of agriculture in the British Empire which many sought to continue through their subsequent work for development agencies.

Finally, the thesis helps to illuminate how, as a group, AOs' ideas were sustained through networks that evolved beyond their professional lives and into their retirement. The memories of AOs' experiences in independent Africa were influenced heavily by their upbringing, education and the understanding they developed of Africans and African governance based on the experience of themselves and their peers. The way these

memories were articulated fed into a wider network of ex-officials and attempted to uphold a view of empire crafted from a narrative of post-war Western scientific prowess. For AOs, African independence was used as a point of contrast through which to see their imperial careers as apolitical, rational and imposing higher agricultural standards than Africans, left to their own devices, were capable of.

Chapter One demonstrates the differences present between those who would become Agricultural Officers and those who would become Administrative Officers, before their colonial service in the post-war era. AOs claimed they were a distinct group, and this is borne out by looking at their family and class backgrounds, their early education and their time being educated by representatives of the CO at the University of Cambridge and Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture (ICTA) in Trinidad. AOs' motivations for joining the CS differed from those of administrators. The chapter suggests that because of the 'second colonial occupation' the door was opened to a larger recruitment base. This continued a trend from the interwar years but increased the class and educational diversity of new officers in the technical services at a faster and more significant rate than in the CAS. The chapter concludes that while AOs were often from a different section of the middle class than CAS recruits, these differences did not make for such a formation of a group identity as the time spent at Cambridge, despite the CO's efforts to teach agriculturalists and administrators together to increase cohesion in the service. AOs' group identity was solidified more strongly at Trinidad, where AOs were the sole focus of their tutors. At Trinidad, AOs did strengthen this identity, but a still more coherent identity was formed once they were in East Africa, initially based around their recognition of the utility of the information taught to them in Trinidad.

Chapter Two looks at AOs' perceptions of African farmers, settler farmers and subordinate staff in the department; the people they had power over. In doing so, the chapter looks most obviously at racial attitudes held by AOs. It touches on attitudes towards different non-farming groups that AOs considered themselves distinct from which are explored more thoroughly in chapter four. Using these perceptions, we can understand how AOs constructed their own identity through their education, even when they encountered evidence that went against what they understood as the 'lazy' or 'conservative' nature of African farmers. AOs' preconceptions about African farmers in

particular were a convenient stereotype upon which they could fall back, despite contrary evidence, but which was maintained so AOs could continue to justify their own presence. Furthermore, the chapter highlights how the concepts of science and modernity were used by AOs to frame their colonial experiences. AOs viewed these experiences in a different light to earlier phases of empire which, in contrast to their own work, they saw as exploitative. The chapter also looks briefly at how, as well as being on the racial frontier in East Africa, AOs believed themselves distinct from white farmers and other non-agricultural Colonial Officials and formed their own scientific frontier both as holders and gatekeepers of knowledge.

Chapter Three inspects the relationships that AOs had with ‘insiders’. It looks at AOs’ professional networks with their equals and superiors across the countries they were posted to, examining how scientific knowledge was disseminated and how conferences and meetings were used to further professional relationships within the agricultural departments. Personal relationships were also enhanced thanks to the nature of the work, with interdistrict meetings and job swaps, and the chapter furthers the argument of chapter one: while most AOs became familiar with one another at Cambridge and formed a more cohesive group at Trinidad, it was their shared experiences on the ground that allowed their personal relationships to flourish. Throughout their time before independence, these relationships were fairly positive and created a familiarity and comfort for AOs. At and after independence, AOs experienced difficulties with the changing administration that were not immediately apparent in the official documentation from the time. Their networks were instead used to vent frustrations with the increasingly turbulent nature of independent Africa, a situation they found difficult to successfully adapt to. Their outpouring of frustrations to one another demonstrate the unhappiness they felt at the loss of power and control over the direction of agricultural progress.

Finally, the fourth chapter looks at AOs’ responses to ‘outsiders’, those who worked for foreign governments, aid agencies and the British Government or Opposition. It shows that AOs negotiated their way around situations where ‘outsiders’ sought to change or disrupt the professional situation of AOs. Interruption from ‘outsiders’ – experienced on an individual level but ascribed by AOs as the characteristics of entire groups of ‘outsiders’ – was often seen as a hindrance. When aid and development agency

presence increased after independence, AOs concerned themselves with the potential impact on agriculture and the differences from colonial methods. The chapter concludes that because AOs understood themselves as masters of tropical agriculture and desired to maintain their power over the subject, they felt their authority challenged by ‘outsiders’. The reassertion of this authority became a decisive factor in AOs’ move to work for the very agencies they had previously criticised. Despite the Cold War’s impact on the increase of aid to Africa, after independence, AOs continued to see their role as politically neutral and as a benevolent force for good, mirroring how they had understood themselves throughout their earlier imperial careers.

Historiography

In March 1957, Ghana became an independent country. The former colony of the British Empire was the first sub-Saharan African country to gain its independence, and over the following fifteen years most African colonies followed suit. The break with Britain may have appeared a clean one, but many British officials ‘stayed on’ to work for the new African governments. These officials were often incentivised by salary and pension increases provided by Britain and while many left at independence, some went on to become prominent figures in post-colonial administration.¹ This wave of decolonisation has been widely studied, from both British and African viewpoints.² However, the

¹ For one example see Jack Mavrogordato, *Behind the Scenes: An Autobiography* (Tisbury: Element Books, 1982). Mavrogordato, while not an AO, was asked back to Sudan as Legal Counsel to the Ministry of Justice and became Senior Counsel in the Ministry after independence.

² A few examples include: John Darwin, *The End of the British Empire: The Historical Debate* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991); John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-War World* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988); John Darwin, ‘Diplomacy and Decolonization’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 28.3 (2000), 5–24 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/03086530008583096>>; John Lonsdale, ‘Some Origins of Nationalism in East Africa’, *Journal of African History*, 9.1 (1968), 119–46 <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853700008380>>; John Lonsdale, ‘The Emergence of African Nations: A Historiographical Analysis’, *African Affairs*, 67.266 (1968), 11–28 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/101.404.427>>; Ronald Hyam, *Britain’s Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonisation, 1918–1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Richard Reid inspected Africa’s interactions with the West along a longer timeline, in addition to his work on post-independence Uganda, with Paul Nugent focussing on the continent’s post-independence history: Richard Reid, *A History of Modern Africa 1800 to the Present*, 2nd edn (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012); Richard Reid, *A Modern History of Uganda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Richard Reid, ‘States of Anxiety: History and Nation in Modern Africa’, *Past and Present*, 229.1 (2015), 239–69 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtv033>>; Paul Nugent, *African Since Independence*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

literature has tended to ignore the agency of individuals in the process, with notable exceptions usually focussed on politicians and senior figures.³

The role of those officials who ‘stayed on’ is under-examined. On their pre-African days, Sir Charles Jeffries’ two volumes on the CO and empire’s civil service address the beginnings of the service and how it operated.⁴ Robert Heussler started a more scholarly approach to those working in empire, taken up by Anthony Kirk-Greene (himself a former District Officer (DO) in Nigeria) who has explored the role of the administrator in empire, looking at the Sudan Political Service (SPS) and the Indian Civil Service (ICS).⁵ However, the bulk of Kirk-Greene’s work looks at the Colonial Service (CS), in particular the CAS, and often at the workings and structure of the service itself rather than the interactions its members had with Africans or how they dealt with policy imposed from London or the Colonial Governments. Kirk-Greene helpfully points out that only around an eighth of those working for the CS were administrative staff, and focusses on them, but can treat CS employees *en bloc*, looking at the aims, objectives and structure of the service, but not at what its personnel were doing on the ground.⁶

Kirk-Greene has made good statistical use of Nile Gardiner’s thorough examination of the makeup of the CAS which encompasses the backgrounds, motivations and education of administrative recruits, though not those from other departments, nor those who ‘stayed on’ after independence.⁷ Gardiner’s thesis is heavy on detail but light on analysis, and while it looks into the background of the men who joined up, Gardiner

³ Frank Heinlein, *British Government Policy and Decolonisation, 1945-1963: Scrutinising the Official Mind* (Bodmin: Frank Cass, 2002); Peter Docking, “‘The Wind Has Been Gathering Force’: Iain Macleod and His Policy Change on Tanganyika”, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 0.0 (2017), 1–29 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2017.1390890>>.

⁴ Sir Charles Jeffries, *The Colonial Empire and Its Civil Service* (Cambridge University Press, 1938); Sir Charles Jeffries, *The Colonial Office* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1956).

⁵ Robert Heussler, *Yesterday’s Rulers: The Making of the British Colonial Service* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963); Anthony Kirk-Greene, *Britain’s Imperial Administrators, 1858–1966* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000); Anthony Kirk-Greene, ‘Public Administration and the Colonial Administrator’, *Public Administration and Development*, 19.5 (1999), 507–19; Anthony Kirk-Greene, ‘The Sudan Political Service: A Profile in the Sociology of Imperialism’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 15.1 (1982), 21–48; Anthony Kirk-Greene, *Symbol of Authority: The British District Officer in Africa* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

⁶ Anthony Kirk-Greene, *On Crown Service: A History of HM Colonial Overseas Civil Services, 1837-1997* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), p. 51.

⁷ Anthony Kirk-Greene, *Britain’s Imperial Administrators, 1858–1966*; Nile Gardiner, ‘Sentinels of Empire: The British Colonial Administrative Services, 1919 - 1954’ (unpublished doctoral thesis: Yale, 1998).

does not have space to explore the experiences or memories of these men when they were ‘on the spot’. Likewise, Robert Collins has written on the SPS and the ‘type’ of man who was admitted into the service, but again focusses on these men up until the disbanding of the SPS in 1956, and not in great detail on the nature of their service and the nature of their understanding of imperial policy or what impact this had on their work in Africa.⁸

Since Collins’ efforts, Christopher Prior has written a study of Colonial Officials posted to Africa in the twentieth century, up until the Second World War.⁹ Prior looks not only at the education of these officials, but also at their experiences and attitudes, uncovering in greater depth how these officials understood themselves and how assumptions that Collins and others have made about the solidity of officials as a single, unified group, should be questioned. Prior also argues that a shift in the type of official recruited to the service occurred. An increasing number of ‘civil’ recruits were taken on, in contrast to those from a more ‘military’ education or background. This shift in the recruiting base for the SPS introduced a change in how the service approached the collection of knowledge.¹⁰ This is a pertinent theme herein, as AOs firstly displayed a shift in the type of person recruited within the CS – presented by Gardiner and noted too by Chris Jeppesen – and secondly because AOs amassed enormous amounts of statistical data and collected knowledge under a set of ideas about the purpose of development that was a new face of empire after the Second World War.¹¹ This collection of knowledge in the name of research also allowed AOs to maintain relatively prominent roles after independence and heavily influenced how AOs understood post-colonial successes or failures in African agriculture.

For the period after independence, Kirk-Greene has looked at what he calls ‘the ultimate diaspora in the story of twentieth-century decolonization’, that of Colonial

⁸ Robert Collins, ‘The Sudan Political Service: A Portrait of the “Imperialists”’, *African Affairs*, 71.284 (1972), 293–303.

⁹ Christopher Prior, *Exporting Empire: Africa, Colonial Officials and the Construction of the British Imperial State, c.1900–39* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

¹⁰ Prior, p. 97.

¹¹ Gardiner; Chris Jeppesen, “‘A Worthwhile Career for a Man Who Is Not Entirely Self-Seeking’: Service, Duty and the Colonial Service during Decolonization”, in *Britain, France and the Decolonization of Africa: Future Imperfect?*, ed. by Andrew W.M. Smith and Chris Jeppesen (London: UCL Press, 2017), pp. 133–55; Chris Jeppesen, “‘Sanders of the River, Still the Best Job for a British Boy’: Recruitment To the Colonial Administrative Service At the End of Empire”, *The Historical Journal*, 2016, 1–40
<<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X15000114>>.

Officials moving on to second careers or retirement.¹² Kirk-Greene's study is again limited to the ICS, SPS and CAS; where he diverges from these core groups he does not seek to understand the experiences of officials, only their destinations. As such, the specialist services (SPS, ICS) and the CAS have been well-explored by scholars, but there is less available material on some of empire's technical services and their employees.

On the agricultural front, Kirk-Greene has written a very brief outline of the history of the Agricultural Service, and G.B. Masefield, a former AO, has written a broad history of the service that is a starting point from which to more deeply look at its officers and their role across independence.¹³ Masefield's account reflects his own time as a member of the Agricultural Service and seeks to chart the 'professional achievement' of the department but is again approached from the angle of explaining the workings of the service, not the experiences or thoughts of its personnel. Masefield's work is well-researched, using data and opinions from contemporary reports and in-house publications, but is of use as a primary source, too. He provides some excellent context and material that can be used to assess how the department as a whole understood its role in empire, but unsurprisingly also holds many of the same beliefs that AOs held. Masefield highlights AOs' mission against 'archaic social organisation', 'political opposition' and 'massive ignorance' on the part of those whose agriculture AOs were assigned to develop, themes that other AOs would echo in interview.¹⁴

A mastery over nature and attempts to increase agricultural yields in empire were not developments exclusive to the inter- and post-war years of the British Empire. AOs – as those enacting agricultural policy on the ground – had a significant impact in shaping East Africa's agricultural outputs and were instrumental in convincing farmers to move towards certain crops for export. They oversaw changes in the agricultural practice of some Africans that could drastically alter the landscape of an area, notably, introducing

¹² Anthony Kirk-Greene, 'Decolonization: The Ultimate Diaspora', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 36.1 (2001), 133–51 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/002200940103600106>>.

¹³ Anthony Kirk-Greene, 'So Few in the Field: The Staffing of the Colonial Agricultural, Forest and Veterinary Services', in *How Green Was Our Empire? Environment, Development and the Colonial Service*, ed. by Terry Barringer (London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 2005), pp. 23–30; G.B. Masefield, *A History of the Colonial Agricultural Service* (Aylesbury: Oxford University Press, 1972).

¹⁴ Masefield, p. 5.

terracing methods in hilly areas such as Machakos, Kenya.¹⁵ AOs fit into a longer history of environmental change as caused by empire. Often this has been studied through the lens of a single crop in a region.¹⁶ More recently, Corey Ross's analysis of the relationship between the control of nature and imperial power draws on much of this work to look at how global empires of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries used the environment for their gain.¹⁷ Ross notes the trends in imperial environmental management as well as cases of indigenous knowledge trumping imported methods, something AOs would come up against in East Africa. Ross also identifies an aspect to twentieth century colonial agricultural policy that constantly underpinned policy-making and, he argues, was carried forward into independence and beyond, significantly influencing African and development agency policy. '[D]emographic crisis, environmental decline, and technological diffusion' beset agriculturalists in this era, echoing John MacKenzie's assertion that colonial administrators were gripped by what they perceived as a series of apocalypses, constantly threatening to precipitate agriculture's decline in the tropical colonies.¹⁸

AOs were the men enacting imperial responses to these perceived crises on the ground and looking at their work adds further to this body of literature, inspecting how and how far these policies came to fruition. Ross details a host of legislation bought in by imperial governments to reshape Africans' relationship to the land and wildlife; similarly, MacKenzie takes the example of Game Law in Asia and Africa, comparing legislation to court records, and finds that 'very few' incidents ever made it to court.¹⁹ For this reason, understanding the role played by AOs is important. Studying colonial policy can tell us the potential aims of policy-makers, but it came down to 'men on the spot' to enact policy,

¹⁵ Mary Tiffen, Michael Mortimore, and Francis Gichuki, *More People, Less Erosion: Environmental Recovery in Kenya* (Chichester: Wiley, 1994).

¹⁶ For example, Brad Weiss, *Sacred Trees, Bitter Harvests: Globalizing Coffee in Northwest Tanzania* (Portsmouth, NH, NH: Heinemann, 2003); Shane Doyle, *Crisis & Decline in Bunyoro* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006).

¹⁷ Corey Ross, *Ecology and Power in the Age of Empire: Europe and the Transformation of the Tropical World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

¹⁸ Ross, p. 383; John M. MacKenzie, "'This Year's Forest Is Next Year's Fire' - The Colonial Office and the Environment', in *How Green Was Our Empire? Environment, Development and the Colonial Service*, ed. by Terry Barringer (London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 2005), pp. 7–21 (pp. 10–12).

¹⁹ Ross, p. 247; MacKenzie, p. 14.

and the impact of policy could largely rest on their discretion and was contingent upon how they viewed and interacted with Africans.

AOs also sit squarely within the development agenda of late imperial Britain and believed that this stage of empire was a break from its earlier role as coloniser and exploiter. The first Colonial Development Act was introduced in 1929, heavily influenced by a report from the East African Commission of 1925. The Commission reported that it was the duty of Britain to develop not only the people of Africa, but also their ‘vast economic resources’. The Act attempted to ensure that Britain would gain a return on its investment, with a focus on agriculture and industry in the colonies that would aid commerce and industry in Britain.²⁰ Ultimately, the act failed, focussing too intently on responding to Britain’s problems of unemployment by investing in the colonies in the hope of increasing domestic productivity.²¹ The Act did leave in place some of the administrative infrastructure that led to the implementation of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act (CDW) of 1940. The latter act’s inception, and expansion in 1945, saw a more distinct turn in British policy towards its remaining empire. Anthony Low and John Lonsdale label the acts the start of a ‘second colonial occupation’, as policy increasingly turned to pursue economic activity in the colonies. Low and Lonsdale note the ‘colonial government’s increasing penetration of the myriad localities at the parochial and district levels’.²² The influx of AOs after the Second World War reflect this growing control.

As a part of this wave of development, AOs found their inspiration in science. They believed themselves a part of a frontier of knowledge, sweeping across empire after the Second World War, and the occasional mention of earlier explorers of Africa in their memoirs places them in the wider context of those seeking to spread knowledge in empire, but in this instance, tutoring Africans to have faith in science rather than God. Sabine Clarke’s work on the rise of technocrats in empire argues that this era was originally seen as an ideological continuation of the ‘essentially conservative’ view of empire’s peoples. However, she continues, in fact the post-war phase was ‘innovative, interventionist and

²⁰ George C. Abbott, ‘A Re-Examination of the 1929 Colonial Development Act’, *The Economic History Review*, 24.1 (1971), 68–81, p. 69.

²¹ Abbott, pp. 80–81.

²² D.A. Low and John Lonsdale, ‘East Africa: Towards a New Order 1945–1963’, in *Eclipse of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 164–214, p. 198.

modernist', something AOs, in their desire to manipulate Africans through soft power and propaganda, conform to.²³ Clarke goes on to argue that the specialist nature of this second wave changed the face and direction of empire and emphasised research, partly to justify empire itself and how its officers could contribute to scientific advance. The focus on research and knowledge collection allowed for individualism within groups of researchers; this is again reflected in the roles of AOs, all with their own specialisms but still part of a coherent whole.

Clarke contests that until recently research in empire has been seen in one way:

The fault is said to be arrogant assumptions of the superiority of European science, and a tendency to impose disruptive and ill-conceived measures upon African peoples without good understanding of the conditions present.²⁴

From 1940, Clarke argues, this was not the case, and a large body of information was amassed to attempt to address the problem and understand tropical environments better. The issue arising from this approach was that it was understood that knowledge about these countries could be 'produced by the practice of western science only'.²⁵ Indeed, AOs adhered fairly strictly to an understanding of the western scientific method instilled in them throughout their education and never more so than in their preparation for the Agricultural Service, though indigenous methods were also allowed to continue in certain circumstances. Looking at some of the actions of individuals on the ground in this era nuances the existing literature on science and empire in the final stages of the British Empire and inspects how whatever imperial policy ordained, its enaction on the ground called for more than just technical knowledge.

Joseph Hodge has looked specifically at agriculture and the expert at the end of empire, uncovering some of the tensions between the idea of the development scheme and the realisation that, certainly by 1954 as Hodge argues, local factors had to be considered in far greater detail in order to achieve policy objectives. The push for greater data collection by the colonial administration stemmed from the failure of some of these

²³ Sabine Clarke, 'A Technocratic Imperial State? The Colonial Office and Scientific Research, 1940-1960', *Twentieth Century British History*, 18.4 (2007), 453–80, p. 454.

²⁴ Clarke, pp. 457-458.

²⁵ Clarke, p. 458.

projects, and care had to be taken in implementing projects of any size. Local African farmers would become increasingly suspicious of government if they experienced too much interference.²⁶ The final generation of AOs operated within this environment and by their arrival in East Africa an understanding of previous failures had been integrated into their agricultural diplomas. Hodge brings up three further themes of relevance: under the Colonial Governments, people used their status as experts to significantly enhance their careers; there could be tension between the dominant administrative side of government and the more subordinate agricultural departments when it came to getting good research and extension work achieved; and that one way to overcome agricultural problems and the perception by Africans of government interference became an increasing deference to ideas of private property rights and land ownership.²⁷ Understanding the role of AOs as a group within the larger workings of the colonial administration in East Africa elaborates on Hodge's work. AOs were constantly attempting to find ways to mediate the reactions from farmers and to encourage them to adopt new techniques; careers in agriculture did indeed motivate most AOs, and development in late-imperial Africa was conveniently timed to allow these careers to be undertaken; as a group, AOs did not feel much pressure from the administration, those arguments usually occurring higher up the chain-of-command; and, finally, AOs' ideas of land ownership and property rights deferred to western political ideologies that were being imposed on Africans in this era. Hodge also points out how famine was recast as a technical problem, not as a political one.²⁸ These elements all fed into AOs' perceptions of themselves and let us see how they justified their role as one of a saviour, continuing the idea of 'white man's burden' beyond the civilising mission into the era of local knowledge, a theme that Hodge hints at when discussing officials' views towards the Groundnut Scheme.²⁹

AOs had to form a rapport with African farmers and local chiefs to encourage more farmers to adopt new methods. As independence approached, these relationships

²⁶ Joseph M. Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2007), pp. 207-213. Hodge also gives an example in the French Empire, where African farmers in French Soudan were not amenable to French methods and had to approach any agricultural development pragmatically in order to overcome this resistance to their methods, pp. 3-4.

²⁷ Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert*, pp. 15, 228, 239-240.

²⁸ Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert*, p. 19.

²⁹ Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert*, p. 213.

became increasingly important, but after independence significant change was harder to encourage. Frederick Cooper touches on one of the differences between West and East Africa. The role of cocoa in West Africa's economy, coupled with Africans' kinship networks, encouraged cocoa's spread. As more West Africans saw their peers successfully sell their crop, they looked for ways they could involve themselves with the process. Development also increased production, but at independence the new African leaders sought to control these resources themselves, resulting in the curtailing of planting and thus a decrease in output.³⁰ In East Africa, after independence, a different approach to social organisation emerged that impacted on how AOs had to work in their post-colonial employment. East African governments placed emphasis on what was seen as the 'traditional' – policies that reinvented traditional ways of African life or social organisation – though with similar results when it came to the states' attempted control over agriculture. Cooper claims that as empires fell, 'African leaders also faced the temptation to strengthen their control of narrow channels, rather than widen and deepen forms of connection across space'.³¹ This contributes to Cooper's idea of the 'gatekeeper state', where local society meets external economy, and actors on both sides understand the relationship as mutually beneficial and thus ensure it continues.³² AOs' experiences after independence provides us with an idea of the reactions of some British officials who remained, and how they viewed the policies of African leaders, often believing them to succumb to ideology in favour of the practical, which they firmly believed empire had advocated for. This internal conflict that AOs faced resulted in a loss of power and control over the direction of rural Africans' ability to produce; a control which was only found again later after returning to work for western agencies where AOs' ideas and experience was looked upon more favourably.

Some contemporary development literature can also assist the understanding of how development was perceived at the time and provides an insight into some of the beliefs that AOs held. Some of these works have greater merit than others. The *History of Kenya Agriculture* (1972), co-authored by a former Chairman of Kenya's Board of

³⁰ Frederick Cooper, *Africa in the World: Capitalism, Empire, Nation-State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2014), p. 24.

³¹ Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 14.

³² Cooper, *Africa in the World: Capitalism, Empire, Nation-State*, p. 30.

Agriculture J.F. Lipscomb, reads like a retrospective justification of most colonial agricultural activity in Kenya, without any serious examination of the repercussions of policy.³³ It does contain some helpful context for the period under examination, detailing the various countrywide or regional bodies such as the African Land Development Organisation (ALDEV) and their relationships with the department, but sticks to dates and data in favour of analysis. On the other hand, R.W. James' *Land Tenure and Policy in Tanzania* (1971) is a thorough examination of the twentieth-century history of its subject up to that point, and brings into focus a greater legal understanding of the processes behind changes in land tenure since the country's status as a German colony.³⁴ A handful of reports on development in the region taking into account the new African governments are also of great use. Some are written by arms of the British Government, others by institutions with no links to the British Empire. Their findings often contradict AOs' own beliefs and help demonstrate how a mode of thinking associated with development and empire remained steadfast in AOs, beyond independence and often up to the present day.³⁵

Historians of East Africa have often looked more at the political and social changes that empire and independence brought about. Low and Lonsdale have argued that in the region, despite a political revolution taking place that resulted in eventual independence, a 'tripartite caste structure' remained in place. The British controlled large-scale production, Asians had a stake in industry and the service sector, and Africans were largely still peasant farmers.³⁶ AOs encountered all three groups. Low and Lonsdale go on to look at East Africa more from an administrative point of view and at the role of nationalism and the British Colonial Government's efforts to mediate the impact of nationalist leaders. Daniel Branch does briefly discuss Kenya's Swynnerton Plan, an agricultural scheme designed to intensify smallholder agriculture by consolidating areas of land and moving away from the increasingly fragmented land inheritance system preferred by the Kikuyu. The Plan was used not only to attempt to encourage African agriculture

³³ L. Winston Cone and J.F. Lipscomb, *The History of Kenya Agriculture* (Tavistock: University of Africa Press, 1972).

³⁴ R. W. James, *Land Tenure and Policy in Tanzania* (Dar-es-Salaam: East African Literature Bureau, 1971).

³⁵ Hans Ruthenberg, *Agricultural Development in Tanganyika* (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1964); Hans Ruthenberg, *African Agricultural Production Development Policy in Kenya 1952 -1965* (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1966); Hal Mettrick, *Aid in Uganda – Agriculture* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 1967).

³⁶ Low and Lonsdale, p. 164.

after years of restriction due to white settlers, but also functioned as a political tool to define Kikuyu loyalists during the Mau Mau emergency.³⁷ Branch's study of Kenya after independence lightly covers some of the agricultural policies of the time, but in general focuses on their impact on the figures in Kenyatta's government and opposition.³⁸

There is some work on inter-war agricultural policy, specifically the obsession with soil erosion that gripped the Agricultural Service in the wake of America's dust bowl, which serves as a good starting point for looking in more detail at policy and how it was enacted on the ground.³⁹ A more in-depth treatment of the Swynnerton Plan is provided by Ann Thurston who looks at the context and genesis of the plan aside from its uses in the Mau Mau emergency, and inspects the 'official mind' and how the plan came to fruition through AOs in the administration and on the ground working with Kenyan Farmers. However, Thurston's work serves to inspect the plan itself and its success or shortcomings, rather than the experiences of the AOs who helped enact it. Despite shedding a little light on their mindset, she does not seek to understand its formation.⁴⁰ Shane Doyle's work on Bunyoro, Uganda, shows some of the ways that the British viewed Uganda and different groups of Ugandans as well as how Ugandans from different areas of the country viewed each other. Doyle focusses on the demographic and environmental history of Bunyoro, but frequently explains how British or Bagandan policy impacted the Nyoro. Some of this policy was agricultural, with wage labourers being needed in nearby areas controlled by rival tribes, and Doyle also notes development schemes from the British, based on particular assumptions about what would work in the area – another aspect that the role of AOs on the ground can illuminate.⁴¹ On the other side of the coin, Low has looked at the politics of Buganda, but not in any great detail at agriculture.⁴² John Iliffe has looked extensively at Tanganyika under colonial rule and into independence, including a brief history of its agriculture, which analyses the changes in policy over time,

³⁷ Daniel Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau, Creating Kenya: Counterinsurgency, Civil War, and Decolonization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 121.

³⁸ Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963-2011* (Padstow: Yale University Press, 2011).

³⁹ David Anderson, 'Depression, Dust Bowl, Demography, and Drought: The Colonial State and Soil Conservation in East Africa during the 1930s', *African Affairs*, 83.332 (1984), 321–43.

⁴⁰ Anne F. Thurston, *Smallholder Agriculture in Colonial Kenya: The Official Mind and the Swynnerton Plan* (Cambridge: Cambridge African Monographs, 1987).

⁴¹ Shane Doyle, *Crisis & Decline in Bunyoro* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006), p. 185.

⁴² D.A. Low, *Buganda in Modern History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971); D.A. Low, 'The Advent of Populism in Buganda', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 6.4 (1964), 424–44.

but only touches on their enactment and those who were tasked with presenting the policies to African farmers.⁴³ Earlier colonial histories may help explain how AOs came to hold some of their views about Africans, but the implications of such a colonial legacy need to be considered in greater depth.

Sources

This thesis uses newly-undertaken interviews with former AOs who responded to an advert placed in the *Overseas Pensioner*, the magazine of the Overseas Service Pensioners' Association (OSPA) in 2016. Some AOs not in receipt of the *Overseas Pensioner* were made aware of the research and volunteered themselves due to the informal networks that still exist between former members of the CS.

In all, there were 162 AOs recruited for the period 1955-1964. These men were spread across the British Empire, with West, Central and East Africa being only three of the regions they were posted to. Additionally, AOs went to various territories in the Caribbean, Fiji, Malaysia and a handful of other outposts. Out of the thirty-six AOs who attended Trinidad for the September 1954 to July 1955 year, nine (25 per cent of the year group) were stationed in East Africa, the most popular region after West Africa (with twelve from the year group going exclusively to Nigeria). Assuming this figure to be representative, that would suggest that from 1955 to 1964 there were around forty postings to East Africa, though there was always some to-ing and fro-ing with some AOs' postings. For example, Andrew MacDonald was posted to Sierra Leone in West Africa before being stationed in Uganda.⁴⁴

Table 1: September 1954 – July 1955 intake for ICTA, Trinidad.

⁴³ John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); John Iliffe, *Agricultural Change In Modern Tanganyika: An Outline History* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1971).

⁴⁴ Andrew S. MacDonald, *Love Is a Grapefruit: The Life and Times of Olive Alexanderina MacDonald - An Exercise in Social Commentary by Her Other Half* (Andrew S. MacDonald, 1997).

<i>Location</i>	<i>West Africa</i>	<i>Central Africa</i>	<i>East Africa</i>	<i>Other territory</i>	<i>Unclear</i>
<i>Quantity</i>	15	3	9	5	4

Calculated from “*How We Saved the World*”, a document compiled by the year group to catalogue their whereabouts after retirement.

In total, twenty-five AOs made contact over the course of the thesis – potentially over half of those posted during the period – with fourteen agreeing to interview; all but one of these interviews took place in person. Additionally, one AO was more content answering questions through an exchange of letters; five made email contact only; the widow of one also made contact via letter. Over the course of the thesis, three of those who interviewed or got in touch passed away, and AOs interviewed mentioned others, most of whom had died in the last decade. As such, of those posted as Agricultural Officers who joined the service at AO level (rather than Assistant Agricultural Officer, for which a university degree was not required), the thesis can claim to have entered into conversation with the majority of those still alive who were posted as an AO to East Africa in the mid- and late-1950s.

Questions put to AOs ranged in topic but were presented in chronological order, starting with AOs’ background, education, and jobs before moving on to their Colonial Service, followed by their time in East Africa both before and then after independence. AOs were each asked the same set of basic questions (see Appendix A), to which they had no prior access, and were encouraged to go off on tangents and include whatever they cared to when responding. Because of this, interviews lasted between one and five hours. Alongside these interviews, material published subsequently by AOs who worked in East Africa in the period under inspection has also been utilised. Four AOs published (or self-published) memoirs and at least two others were in the process of writing their own. A few other memoirs, by AOs in West Africa or by District Commissioners (DCs) or similar have been consulted, as have AOs’ contributions to the *Overseas Pensioner*.

The Bodleian Library, Oxford, houses many documents relating to agriculture in empire in the twentieth century. Of particular value to this project is the Oxford

Development Records Projects' Food and Cash Crops study. The study sent out questionnaires to former employees of the Colonial Agricultural Service, marketing boards, researchers and other officials involved in cash crop development. Some officials wrote up their responses at great length, while others provided only an extended CV and a few lines of their thoughts. This material, alongside a host of papers from other members of the Colonial Agricultural Service who were posted to East Africa, has provided the thesis with much contemporary material from the interviewees' senior officers or fellow researchers, illuminating some of the similarities and differences between those trained in pre- and post-war periods.

The Cambridge University Library holds the archives of the Course on Development (CDEV) that Cambridge University ran for training Colonial Officials and has thus featured prominently in chapter one. All admissions to the administrative and agricultural service underwent a post-graduate training qualification – the exact qualification dependent on the service they had signed up to – and the course as a whole was shared between Oxford, Cambridge and London universities. The agricultural dimension was hosted by Cambridge where AOs were trained – with the exception of some specialists – and material in the CDEV archive covers their course administration. The National Archives (TNA), Kew, has provided a wealth of Colonial Office (CO), Dominions Office (DO), and Overseas Development (OD) papers discussing policy and overseeing development projects, many of which, both before and after independence, relied on agriculture as the backbone of economic gains for the three East African countries.

The Kenya National Archives (KNA) holds material produced by the Kenyan Department for Agriculture before and after independence. This has been used to help understand the position of AOs in relation to their work on the ground, unlike the bigger picture policy approaches of officials in London. AOs were intimately involved with the day-to-day running of the department but, due to fading memories, recall less and less about it. Particular moments and events were easier for AOs to recall, thus the KNA's archives expose the official side of their experience and can uncover a side to AOs' relationships with each other and their superiors that was often omitted from oral testimony. While the KNA material is an asset when looking to understand AOs'

interactions with each other within and across Districts and Provinces, notable by their absence are their Tanzanian and Ugandan equivalents. This limits, to an extent, the conclusions that can be drawn from the use of the Kenyan documents alone, but does give additional insight into some of the unique aspects of agriculture in Kenya, notably the number of European settler farmers and the department's involvement with Mau Mau.

Finally, some contemporary in-house publications such as *Corona* have been consulted to see how AOs discussed and presented their work to members of other departments in the Colonial Service. Contemporary newspapers have also been used to explore how far AOs absorbed news at a regional or local level and how far it modified their understandings of East Africa compared with the ideas they arrived with or developed through local contacts.

Methodology

A number of methodological approaches have been used across the thesis, dependent on the source base and aims of any given chapter. Throughout, some of the analysis uses official documents – sources that can only sometimes reveal the personal rather than professional attitudes of AOs – but which nonetheless provide helpful context to many examples in the following chapters. A series of interviews form the starting point from which the thesis explores AOs' experiences, memories and the retelling of their times in East Africa, but other sources dictate the need for keeping different approaches to the source material in mind.

Prosopography

Lawrence Stone's 1971 definition of prosopography is 'the investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective study of their lives'.⁴⁵ Stone's broad definition is the approach taken herein and some of the pitfalls he highlights with approaches to prosopography have been considered throughout.

⁴⁵ Lawrence Stone, 'Prosopography', *Daedalus*, 100.1 (1971), 46–79 (p. 46).

Stone splits prosopography into two main camps, the elitist model studying small groups of powerful actors, and a model derived often from larger data sets and owing some debt to the social sciences.⁴⁶ AOs are undoubtedly an elite group, though some of the methodology used in chapter one, while not crunching enormous numbers, inspects the trends of AOs and other members of the technical services compared to those in the administrative services. Beyond the first chapter, AOs fit more comfortably into the elite group model Stone proposes.

One of the main potential pitfalls with prosopography is an attempt to aim to understand the ‘average’ experience or type of person in a group, as distilled down from the experiences of the group as a whole. Stone argues that this would ‘tend to exaggerate’ certain experiences that may not have been shared by the whole group, but due to the nature of surviving sources might give the impression of being typical.⁴⁷ Because of the use of interviews rich in anecdotes it was clear from the outset that there was no ‘typical’ experience for AOs in late-imperial East Africa, and this has been borne in mind throughout. AOs generally went to Cambridge then Trinidad, but not all did; AOs all had to pass a higher language exam to increase their pay within six months in Africa, but not all did; AOs remembered African farmers as conservative and often stubborn, but not all did.

In overcoming the limits of prosopography when concerned with a typical experience, Diana Jones has noted that most examples make use of multiple sources and methodological approaches, and Stone regards prosopography as more successful when limited to ‘easily defined and fairly small groups over a limited period of not much more than a hundred years’.⁴⁸ Accordingly, the time period here is short, barely a decade, and the source base, though relying on the interviews as a primary way to interrogate AOs’ interpretations of their experiences, is wide enough to allow for an understanding of the variety of experiences that these officials had throughout their time in East Africa.

⁴⁶ Stone, pp. 47–48.

⁴⁷ Stone, pp. 58–59.

⁴⁸ Diana K. Jones, ‘Researching Groups of Lives: A Collective Biographical Perspective on the Protestant Ethic Debate’, *Qualitative Research*, 1.3 (2001), 325–46 (p. 330); Stone, p. 69.

The Memoir

There are many – possibly thousands – of memoirs from those who served in empire.⁴⁹ Ashley Jackson has noted how, firstly, this provides a unique insight into many levels of the imperial administration; secondly, he urges readers to abandon an ‘if you’ve read one, you’ve read them all’ mentality in favour of understanding that ‘these books are part of a profitable engagement with professional historians over the historical record.’⁵⁰ Jackson notes that officials are often motivated into memoir-writing to demonstrate that, regardless of empire’s reputation as ‘bad’, not all who worked in it were. AOs appear little different, and this reflects their enthusiasm for interviewing, but the written record brings with it greater permanence and potential for precision from its authors, so should not be taken lightly.

AOs are often no different to other imperial officials when it comes to writing their memoirs. The structure of the books is chronological; the opening provides a family background followed by information on formative years, application to the CO, often the interview process and subsequent education, the voyage out, the stark differences of colonial life from the author’s childhood (usually) in Britain, on through their career and their return. Jackson recognises these, though there are more commonalities.⁵¹ AOs include some light-hearted anecdotes, some close shaves, some conflicting opinions with authority, tales of the mysterious African and reassurance that while some Africans must have experienced racism from imperial staff, the authors of these memoirs certainly never saw it.⁵² Many of these tropes cropped up in interviews, too.

There are some other common factors across the memoirs and interviews. Like the interviews, memoirs include appeals to modern values, and occasions of contradiction akin to cognitive dissonance, sometimes around the same subject. Peter Wilson who

⁴⁹ An excellent resource from which to start exploring the world of colonial memoirs is *Administering Empire: An Annotated Checklist of Personal Memoirs and Related Studies*, ed. by Terry Barringer (London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 2004).

⁵⁰ Ashley Jackson, ‘Governing Empire: Colonial Memoirs and the History of HM Overseas Civil Service’, *African Affairs*, 103.412 (2004), 471–91 (pp. 472–73).

⁵¹ Jackson, p. 472.

⁵² Colin Everard faces up to authority, reminding us of his moral high-ground in the process, over the use of department vehicles by other departments or for personal use, something administrators in Kenya (Everard was in Somalia) also frequently faced. Colin Everard, *The Guardian Angel: A Voice From The Wilderness* (Chippenham: Minerva Press, 1996), pp. 84–86.

served across independence in Tanganyika, was keen to stress his belief that fur looked better on animals than Hollywood actresses.⁵³ Fifty pages earlier, Wilson had dispatched a troop of monkeys with his gun, for causing havoc with his crops. He was saddened at what he saw as the necessity of the act, but then, unprovoked, also turned on guinea fowl and dik-dik with significantly less remorse.⁵⁴ Wilson does try to demonstrate his kindness to the reader later, however, with a high-speed foot chase to capture an African who stole Wilson's wife's handbag. Content with having the handbag returned and the African only lightly injured, Wilson tells us that the boy had been convicted for the same crime numerous times in the past. Wilson loudly decided not to press charges, stating that the offender 'must have learnt his lesson by now'.⁵⁵ When it came to African farmers, there was the general tendency for AOs to label them as 'conservative', but often praise their ingenuity, or how their planting or weeding methods in fact outshone the scientific approach AOs had been trained to administer. That these same issues arise for AOs across mediums at least helps confirm that as a group they display the same characteristics, as well as suffering from the same problems.

One interesting and notable exception to the usual is worthy of inclusion here. Andrew MacDonald (Uganda, 1956-1968) bucks the trend of imperial memoirs being about either the official writing them, or their time in empire, whether attempting to justify their role or otherwise. MacDonald frames his memoir as a biography of his wife, Olive. He is nothing if not nostalgic and even explicitly states in the subtitle what part of the book will be about: *Love Is a Grapefruit: The Life and Times of Olive Alexanderina MacDonald - An Exercise in Social Commentary by Her Other Half*.⁵⁶ And there is plenty of social commentary within. MacDonald rails against modern society, and for a man so terrified of modern sexual attitudes seems to have it on the brain. Sex, he reminds us, 'was not on the curriculum' when he went to college. Modern society presents us with a 'sad sham' of family life, with couples living in sin and expecting wedding gifts, only to

⁵³ Peter M. Wilson, *Bwana Shamba ('Mr. Agriculture'): The Autobiography of a Field Officer (Agriculture) in Tanganyika Territory (Now Tanzania) during the Closing Years of the British Colonial Era in Africa* (Chippenham: Pentland Press, 2001), p. 147.

⁵⁴ Wilson, pp. 86-89.

⁵⁵ Wilson, pp. 93-96.

⁵⁶ MacDonald.

divorce shortly after. The joint bank account is the true measure of trust.⁵⁷ Society had degraded to the point that fruit salads at children's parties were 'often laced with drugs', the MacDonald's believed.⁵⁸ In Denmark, one could often find pornography 'lying there beside the Daily Telegraph' – a sad state of affairs indeed.⁵⁹ Later on, we are treated to a sudden out-of-the-blue change of pace: 'we cuddled our children and abuse was something rarely even thought about'. MacDonald continued, directly linking urbanisation with greater levels of sexual abuse that, eventually, allowed him to arrive at the topic of modernisation in Uganda, though that section contains no sexual content whatsoever.⁶⁰

MacDonald's moralising on the state of the world is a rarity for AOs in memoir or in interview, and while there are occasional anecdotes by others that skirt around the issue of the passions of men in Africa, MacDonald really uses his book as a sounding board of ideas about modern society, peppered throughout tales of his career and his wife's ability to host and keep – with the aid of African servants – a tidy house and garden. We do hear much of Olive, as we do of MacDonald himself, and their daughter Fiona who, born with cystic fibrosis, clearly both dominates and enormously enriches their lives. MacDonald's memoir, though, serves as a reminder of the character of some of these men.

History of Emotions

Chapter three uses personal correspondence written by AOs to their colleagues and former colleagues to discuss the ways that AOs used these letters as a psychological tool to vent frustrations over decolonisation and the changing power dynamic within the agricultural departments of East Africa. The chapter employs recent historical approaches to help analyse and understand AOs' displays of emotions in their letters. Rather than explore individual emotions or expressions of emotion such as sadness, fear, love or anger, the letters are used to demonstrate how AOs communicated privately and how the day-to-day functioning of their professional networks gave them, as a group, the opportunity to communicate with others who shared their understanding of a situation, resulting in the writing and exchanging of the letters itself as being a cathartic act. Letter-

⁵⁷ MacDonald, pp. 22–28.

⁵⁸ MacDonald, p. 137.

⁵⁹ MacDonald, p. 131. This was 'inevitable' since the publication of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*: 'From then on it was all down hill' (p. 131).

⁶⁰ MacDonald, p. 96.

writing also served to solidify and enhance these networks. As William Reddy has noted, the history of emotions ‘is a way of doing political, social, and cultural history, not something to be added to existing fields’.⁶¹ The cache of letters used in this thesis benefit from some of the frameworks used by historians of emotion.

In terms of emotions and their place in social history that Reddy alludes to, it is worth noting that AOs are not ‘ordinary’ people. They hailed from very particular backgrounds and took up opportunities that, for the most part, only people with those backgrounds could have done. Much of this was due to social change occurring throughout their youth (the expansion of sciences at the Red Brick universities, for example) and some from political change (the post-war environment in the British Empire, where development came to the fore). Nonetheless, AOs were ultimately a group of privileged white men who took part in decolonisation and interpreted it personally firstly as a loss of power, then as an opportunity to regain some control in their professional lives by engaging with development agencies. How they communicated to overcome the problems they experienced sheds light on their mindset and attitudes that would be carried over into their second careers.

Chapter three’s analysis of AOs’ personal letters focuses on how AOs used their correspondence to signal their emotions to one another. The analysis avoids direct inspection of all emotions present in the letters in favour of assessing the function of the letters at their time of writing. Certain methodological approaches to these sources are therefore more beneficial than others. Of importance here is the distinction made in 1985 by Peter Stearns and Carol Stearns, between ‘emotionology’ and ‘emotional experience’.⁶² Emotionology refers to ‘the attitudes or standards that a society, or a definable group within a society, maintains toward basic emotions and their appropriate expression’.⁶³ AOs were part of a ‘definable group’ in society, namely those employed by the Colonial Service for work overseas. Chapter One puts forward the idea that as well as being a part of this larger groups of officials, AOs’ experiences in training and in East Africa helped to

⁶¹ Jan Plamper, ‘The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns’, *History and Theory*, 49.May (2010), 237–65 (p. 249).

⁶² Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, ‘Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards’, *The American Historical Review*, 90.4 (1985), 813–30.

⁶³ Stearns and Stearns, p. 813.

create their identity as a particular subgroup of officials in late-imperial/postcolonial Africa. Certainly in official correspondence, AOs usually conformed to what the Stearns label an ‘emotional climate’, in this case the emotional climate of the colonial administration.⁶⁴ Further reinforcement of this idea is peppered throughout the thesis, where administrators and AOs talk of the right ‘type’ of person to be employed for the CAS or Agricultural Service.⁶⁵ This ‘type’ of person was one that, alongside the professional and technical skills that the CO sought out in a recruit, could conform to the emotionology of the Service.

‘Emotional experience’ as the Stearns describe it is the emotions experienced by those under inspection. Emotional experience is harder, here, to pin down than emotionology. Where the latter is the emotional norms of any given group or society, the experience of the individual is bound by these norms, not by our current set of emotional norms: ‘emotional expression, such as diaries, will be filtered by prevailing emotionology’.⁶⁶ Thus, understanding the actual emotional experience of AOs through their letters does present difficulties.

The first hindrance is understanding the emotionology of the CO, or at the very least the subgroup of AOs, though from official documents generated by either group there appears to be little difference. AOs were different from other members of HMOCS, and in motivation for joining, even from other members of the technical services, but they appear similar enough in an emotionological sense. However, if the official documents are all an historian has to assess the COs’ emotionology, one could assume that characteristics of the prevailing emotional climate were, almost paradoxically, to remove emotion. There is the occasional expression that goes beyond the formal, though, even when these are filtered in to official correspondence, they appear mildly performative, as if to hint at the nature of an emotional attitude, using language as a device to do so. Given the nature of AOs, spread thinly across the region, official written correspondence was part and parcel of their working life and had to be used effectively to achieve or try to achieve the desired

⁶⁴ Stearns and Stearns, p. 816.

⁶⁵ Chapter One explores this in more depth, and some AOs talked about these qualities. For example, Richard Briggs spoke about the need to be sociable and confident as qualities looked for by recruiters. Richard ‘Dickie’ Briggs, recorded interview by author, Marlow, 17 August 2018.

⁶⁶ Stearns and Stearns, p. 825.

results for their current posting. For example, A.S. Leask, an Assistant Agricultural Officer (AAO) in Wundanyi, Kenya, wrote to his superior stating that completing a report for senior members of the department caused him ‘several sleepless nights’. Having finished the report he was ‘almost developing a neurosis about it.’⁶⁷ Leask’s other correspondence rarely used similar language, and we might assume that he felt much stress about the report, but due to the prevailing emotionology we might also presume that Leask was using the language he chose to use in order to demonstrate to his superior that the report had caused him a good deal of stress. The emotionology of the CO, however it came about, existed to ensure most official material upheld a formal, civil and polite tone, regardless of content. The bursts of what appear to be emotions in official material such as Leask’s give us more understanding of the emotionology than the emotional experience of AOs.

However, Barbara Rosenwein’s concept of ‘emotional communities’ is a useful concept to bear in mind when thinking about AOs’ use of personal correspondence. Rosenwein defines an ‘emotional community’ as ‘groups in which people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and value-or devalue-the same or related emotions. More than one emotional community may exist - indeed normally does exist - contemporaneously, and these communities may change over time.’⁶⁸ AOs’ communities did indeed change dependent on their interlocutor (something reinforced by looking at AOs interactions with ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’), and when AOs were at their most inward-looking, discussing issues of decline from just after independence solely with one another, their tone and content shifted from even the most casual of their professional communications.

In an interview with Jan Plamper from 2010, Rosenwein highlights other elements of her idea of ‘emotional communities’ that are salient to an understanding of what AOs used their networks to achieve, in this case an outpouring of grievances that followed independence. Rosenwein’s attempt to ‘pare this idea down to its essentials’ further aids the understanding of AOs’ reliance on one another in a supportive network: ““groups of

⁶⁷ A.S. Leask (AAO Wundanyi) to G.J. Gollop (PAO Coast Province (hereafter Coast)), 13 November 1952, Kenya National Archives (hereafter KNA), DAO/TTA/1/1/70/112.

⁶⁸ Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 2.

people animated by common or similar interests, values, and emotional styles and valuations”. The audience is an important feature in how emotional communities can be assessed, and personal correspondence sees AOs talking to each other rather than departmental superiors or the lower ranks.⁶⁹ Because their network was an emotional community, AOs’ ability to hit the right tone – avoiding most direct expressions of emotion in favour of knowing that their recipients would be as capable of reading between the lines as they were of writing between them – can expose some of the tropes of this community.

Lastly, two of Rosenwein’s thoughts on intersecting emotional communities reveal a little more about AOs’ ability to transition into development agencies after a stint in the post-independence African services. As well as ‘very different emotional norms’ sometimes being cultivated in a subgroup – more research could be undertaken to look at the letters of CAS members who also ‘stayed on’ and see if they share an emotionology with AOs – Rosenwein notes that there are possibilities for a person to move from one emotional community to another ‘without difficulty [...] as long as the new emotional community’s norms are not radically different from the original’.⁷⁰ Though AOs felt hostility to ‘outsiders’ because of a feeling of interference or usurping of power, the underpinning goals of development agencies were not dissimilar from those of AOs. A shared or overlapping emotional community would make for a smoother transition between the two groups.

Even though AOs seem often bound to the Colonial Service’s emotionology and display a cool, calm, distance accordingly, understanding the emotional communities in which they operated is beneficial to this thesis. These reveal a clear distinction between the personal and professional, despite the interactions in either mode being with the same people. It helps the understanding of AOs’ performative nature: they could capably understand the nuance of their relationships with others and knew who could shift into different emotional communities. This was not only performed when it was appropriate, but also when it was necessary. The letters show that AOs’ networks did not erode over decolonisation and that a reliance on these emotional communities enhanced them, despite

⁶⁹ Plamper, p. 253.

⁷⁰ Plamper, p. 257.

greater distances between the members. Understanding how the history of emotions can be applied to these sources brings another layer of interpretation.

Oral History, Memory and Nostalgia

The newly-collected oral testimonies of AOs are used throughout the thesis to explore the chapter topics and build up a picture of how one group of officials experienced decolonisation and its aftermath. Given that these interviews help drive the thesis, a few things should be kept in mind about them.

All of the participants were self-selecting. Most responded to an advert placed in the *Overseas Pensioner*. Those who did not see the advert were told about it by former colleagues and got in touch of their own accord. Occasionally in interview (one question asked about how closely in touch these men were now with their former colleagues) an AO would spring into action and dig out the contact details of another, pass on some names and last known whereabouts, or promise to contact other former colleagues and see if they would be happy to participate.⁷¹ Patricia Lorcin may be correct in claiming that OSPA was not a ‘tight-knit’ community for women when compared to others that existed to keep former expats from other empire’s colonies in touch, but male AOs certainly kept in touch with one another.⁷² Indeed, OSPA facilitated their ability to create a tight-knit community, distributing to its subscribers a list of all members and the territories in which they had served.⁷³ Several AOs met up infrequently for a drink; many still exchanged Christmas cards.

These AOs embraced their identity and took up the opportunity to speak ‘on the record’ and indeed several had done so before. Some AOs had contributed to the Oxford Development Records project, starting in the late 1970s, in particular the Cash Crops in Empire collection from the 1980s; others had already talked to academics, in some cases

⁷¹ For example, three of the earliest interviewees, Anthony Humphrys, Bill Mitchell and J.A.N. ‘Nick’ Wallis all did one or more of these at the end of the interview process, leading to additional interviews. Anthony Humphrys, recorded interview by author, Winchester, 3 August 2016; Bill (H.W.) Mitchell, recorded interview by author, Yarnton, 9 August 2016; J.A.N. Wallis, recorded interview by author, Lincoln, 16 August 2016.

⁷² Patricia M.E. Lorcin, *Historicizing Colonial Nostalgia: European Women’s Narratives of Algeria and Kenya 1900-Present* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 202.

⁷³ ‘Overseas Service Pensioners’ Association - Objectives and Activities’, 2017
<http://www.ospa.org.uk/about/objectives-activities/> [accessed 5 September 2018].

about the links between their imperial work and subsequent development agency careers; in others, about their imperial to postcolonial African experiences in particular.⁷⁴ These were men who often relished the chance to talk about their imperial pasts.

AOs' willingness to discuss their imperial experiences, and their willingness in some cases to do so repeatedly to different researchers, highlights a number of factors to consider when approaching the texts of their interviews. Firstly, OSPA, be it 'tight-knit' as a community or not, is explicit in its aims. Originally set up to assist former HMOCS employees claiming their pensions, it soon developed beyond that remit. OSPA's aims at its closure in late 2017 included the following:

- [To act] as a guardian, as far as resources permit, of the good name and reputation of HMOCS and its antecedents.
- [To promote] wider knowledge of all aspects of Colonial Service life and times, through publications, seminars and contacts with academic institutions, libraries, museums etc.
- [To serve] as an enquiry point about the Colonial Service, with members willing to respond to requests for information or comment.⁷⁵

AOs' retellings of their own histories, as this thesis demonstrates, were certainly attempts to uphold the 'good name and reputation' of the service, with earlier colonial efforts at promoting agriculture dismissed as inappropriate in style and later efforts by development agencies (before AOs joined them, of course) categorised as repetitive, unsound and impractical.⁷⁶ Through the eyes of AOs, the late 1950s and early 1960s were the golden age of agriculture in East Africa thanks, in no small part, to their presence and expertise. OSPA's aims do not necessarily suggest that AOs are always actively manipulating what they tell researchers. Nonetheless, in whatever the responses from interviewees, there is a manipulation of sorts. What they do choose to include when responding to questions and

⁷⁴ For the former see, for example, Wallis in Hodge; Wallis, Alastair Allan, Mervyn Maciel (though not technically an AO, see chapter three) had all contributed to 'Project Voices': Valentin Seidler, 'University of Vienna: Project Voices - Digital Humanities' <<https://homepage.univie.ac.at/valentin.seidler/project-voices/>> [accessed 5 September 2018].

⁷⁵ 'Overseas Service Pensioners' Association - Objectives and Activities'.

⁷⁶ Chapter two looks at the shift from 'policing' to 'advising' after the Second World War in Tanganyika; Chapter four assess how AOs felt about increasing numbers of foreign aid agency workers encroaching on their professional space.

how they choose to answer are not, even when other factors are taken into consideration, a purely innocent retelling of what happened as far back as seventy years ago.

This large span of time between the events AOs were asked to recall and the interviews in which they did so is not the only potential problem. Memories themselves are not a record of what happened at any given moment, but of how that moment is remembered and later presented. This is an issue with oral histories highlighted by H.R. Kedward in his overview of oral history work on the French Resistance. Kedward discusses Luc Capdevila's study of Liberation in France, 1944-1946, noting that Capdevila chose to exclude oral testimony because of the 'distinction between representations of the Liberation produced at the time and those produced subsequently by memory'.⁷⁷ AOs present a similar difficulty vis-à-vis the end of empire. Their possible OSPA-driven agenda is one aspect of this, as is the potential for AOs to wish to rewrite their own past, or that of the agricultural service in East Africa more generally.

Gauging how far AOs retold events to cast themselves in a more positive light is challenging, but the reshaping of certain aspects of their experiences is occasionally easier to spot. In his assessment of the evolution of oral histories, Alistair Thomson notes Luisa Passerini's work in highlighting 'the influences of public culture and ideology upon individual memory' and how they might 'be revealed in the silences, discrepancies and idiosyncrasies of personal testimony'.⁷⁸ Some AOs were certainly aware that empire was not held in the same regard now as in the 1950s. John 'Taff' Davies (Uganda, 1956 to 1972) confessed that he had barely talked to his children about his professional past in Uganda due to some of the stigma around empire.⁷⁹ Anthony Humphrys (Uganda, 1955 to 1963), similarly, was aware of how empire was perceived – at least in academia, which might be more critical than the British public's perceptions – and decided to take a course

⁷⁷ H. R. Kedward, 'Resiting French Resistance', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 9.March 1998 (1999), 271–82 (p. 276) <<https://doi.org/10.2307/3679404>>.

⁷⁸ Alistair Thomson, 'Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History', *The Oral History Review*, 34.1 (2007), 49–70 (p. 54).

⁷⁹ John Davies, recorded interview by author, Ross-on-Wye, 27 September 2016.

of ten public lectures at a local university on the rise and fall of the British Empire.⁸⁰ Humphrys, on being asked about Uganda's readiness for independence, replied:

No, at the time I thought you've got to accept change, it happens. We couldn't have stayed on. It had to be done. And we weren't making any money out of these damn colonies. I mean, why did we ever have an empire if... [stops suddenly].⁸¹

His view of the 'bigger picture' revolved around an economic return to Britain, something AOs' training had put across as an important factor. Humphrys' embarrassment at his hesitation, on realising his views betrayed a particular understanding of empire, was clear and he required brief reassurance to continue.

The adaptation of memories to suit modern standards is well-noted. Marie-Bénédicte Dembour, in her study of Belgian Colonial Officials, writes that 'the primary function [of memory] is not to store and keep the past intact, but to help the individual adjust to the requirements of the present'.⁸² AOs evidently did this with larger themes like empire itself, but also with more minor traits. At a day-long workshop on 12 June 2017, Mervyn Maciel (an administrative assistant at an agricultural station in Kenya), interviewed for this thesis and appearing 'in conversation' for a session at the workshop, revealed how accepting he was of his daughter's vegetarianism, a trait she ascribed as more recent, due to the growing modern popularity of plant-based diets.⁸³ Similarly, Humphrys was 'not really a hunting man' according to his own testimony.⁸⁴ However, friend and colleague Tony Pritchard (Uganda, 1955 to 1967) wrote that on the train ride from Mombasa to Kampala, after Humphrys had unfortunately had his luggage misplaced, Humphrys had 'nothing to his name except the clothes he stood up in and a pair of shotgun barrels'.⁸⁵ Clearly, some views had been retrospectively adjusted for modern

⁸⁰ Will Dahlgreen, 'The British Empire Is "Something to Be Proud Of".', *YouGov.co.Uk*, 2014 <<https://yougov.co.uk/topics/lifestyle/articles-reports/2014/07/26/britain-proud-its-empire>> [accessed 16 October 2018]; Humphrys, recorded interview.

⁸¹ Humphrys, recorded interview.

⁸² Marie-Bénédicte Dembour, *Recalling the Belgian Congo: Conversations and Introspection* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2000), p. 11.

⁸³ Sarah Longair, 'Objects of Colonial Memory', *University of Lincoln School of History and Heritage*, 2018 <<https://history.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/2018/02/02/objects-of-colonial-memory/>> [accessed 18 October 2018].

⁸⁴ Humphrys, recorded interview.

⁸⁵ "How We Saved the World", ed. by Anthony Pritchard and J.A.N. Wallis, in possession of author, compiled circa 2004, p. 27.

consumption and shifting cultural norms are recognised in memory studies as impacting on how an individual presents an idea.⁸⁶ There is no way to be absolutely certain what has and what has not been modified by an AO in interview, or why. Contemporary primary documents provide some alternative possibilities when looking at AOs' claims about their pasts, but to some extent the present conditions impact on the memories shared by AOs.

The interviews themselves – as events – were also notable. The ‘relationship between interviewer and interviewee’ and its impact on oral history was brought to the fore in the 1970s, with Alessandro Portelli arguing and demonstrating that what had theretofore been seen as a weakness of oral history could in fact be turned into a strength.⁸⁷ Indeed, how AOs treated the interview process helps reveal a little further, through unspoken means, how they wish their pasts to be treated. Undoubtedly, the profile of the interviewer affected AOs responses. Had AOs entered discussion with a younger or much older male, a female of any age, or a person of any gender from an ethnic minority, how quickly or not any trust – or something approaching trust – was established may have been significantly different. A passable knowledge of fertiliser composition (that had until these interviews remained remarkably unhelpful in day-to-day life) further helped establish a small connection between interviewer and interviewee that allowed AOs to bypass in-depth explanation of some of the science involved and feel a little more comfortable. Someone understood some of what they presented for interview, so they may have felt more at ease with opening up to reveal a little more in other areas of discussion.

Of the in-person interviews, all but two were conducted in the AOs’ homes. The two that took place elsewhere (John Peberdy (Kenya, 1954 to 1970) and Richard Briggs (Tanzania, 1960 to 1970)) were both in the home of that AO’s daughter, situated more conveniently for all involved. Hospitality was high from the moment of arrival with tea, coffee, snacks and very often the insistence that lunch be taken together immediately discussed: these men quickly and easily fell into the mode of host, subtly controlling the order of the day through tea breaks.

⁸⁶ Qi Wang, ‘On the Cultural Constitution of Collective Memory’, *Memory*, 16.3 (2008), 305–17 (pp. 312–13) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09658210701801467>>.

⁸⁷ Thomson, p. 55.

The majority of AOs preferred to conduct the interviews as if a formal process, interviewer and interviewee sat across from one another at a dining table; if not at a dining table, then in no less a formal setting in their living rooms: single, upright chairs set apart, rather than a sofa or more comfortable chairs. The exceptions to this, by coincidence or otherwise, were AOs who had not talked to researchers before about their imperial careers: Donald Thomas (Kenya 1955 to 1961), John Davies and Mike Bigger (Tanzania, 1956 to 1969) chose to interview in their respective lounges in more casual arrangements, Thomas having quit before independence, Davies having discussed his time in Uganda with few people before and Bigger choosing, for the most part, to give especially succinct answers and expand upon almost nothing. Bigger had been, another AO remembered, a 'quiet man'.⁸⁸ Giles Dixon (Kenya 1952 to 1965), a former maize researcher in Kenya, now well into his nineties, who was clearly still enthused by his subject also opted for his lounge but ensured that a coffee table separated interviewer and interviewee. The table – dining or otherwise – acted not only as a barrier between two people but remained functional as a space for AOs to display the occasional document or photograph from their time in Africa. Humphrys drew maps; on a follow-up visit, on the same table, he had laid out all of the letters to be examined in date order by author; James Tuckett (Tanzania, 1954 to 1965) had a small pile of documents ready; Nick Wallis (Kenya, 1955-1971), a clear wallet of papers; Peter Northwood (Tanzania 1959 to 1969), a collection of photos. Wallis, poor of sight, abandoned the small table between us at times to explore his apartment's repositories of documents and literature from his World Bank days, always confident, assertive and forthright in the delivery of his answers.⁸⁹ Most AOs treated the interviews as a formal occasion, coming out of this 'mode' not as soon as the recording device was off, but once the dynamic changed: when tea arrived, or at meal time. For coffee with Humphrys, we moved into the lounge, coming back to the dining table to resume the interview later. Although their manner was natural and generally relaxed in interview, there was a different kind of flow to the conversation – free from the restrictions of preservation – during those informal moments.

⁸⁸ Peter Northwood, recorded interview by author, Liphook, 31 January 2017

⁸⁹ My initial meeting with Wallis was at the Mercure Wessex Hotel in Winchester, 15 May 2016, where he was attending an annual World Bank Retirees event. His manner differed very little, no matter who his conversation was with.

The material AOs chose to place on the table was often also generously made available for borrowing. Once again, what they decided to pass on for use helps us see how they would enjoy being presented. A host of photographs were loaned, most often depicting European men looking at crops, though with some exceptions. Briggs had taken photographs of different types of landscapes, often with a lone Land Rover to one side, emphasising the isolation of some AOs. Northwood had a handful of photographs from when Geoffrey Nye, the CO's man in charge of agriculture, visited his research station. Another of Northwood's photographs shows the station staff in 1962: four Africans and six Britons. Northwood could only recall the names of his fellow Britons.⁹⁰ Others were clearly proud of their scientific credentials and passed on material from the research stations they were based at or articles they had co-authored.⁹¹ In one case, an article building on one AOs' research, centred around a shoot-fly named after him, was donated to demonstrate the lasting impact of some of his work.⁹² Other AOs set out some records of their service, or their pension agreement. The most significant document stretching to forty sides of A4 paper, "*How We Saved the World*", was compiled by one AO in an attempt to document the career trajectory and lives of AOs from that year group at Trinidad. Each surviving AO wrote a piece, and for those who had passed away, another AO contributed their knowledge of the deceased's career.⁹³ It was, one noted in email, 'never meant for distribution'.⁹⁴ The title is tongue-in-cheek, but how far is hard to gauge. Passing over this material for inspection was one way for AOs to feel helpful or present an image of helpfulness beyond their agreement to interview. It also, however, played into how they wished to be presented. The photographs that show them alongside crops, interacting with farmers and other officials, the crop spraying pamphlets, scientific articles, excerpts from OSPA contributions they have made: all play into the image of AOs as men of science, something that implicitly arose in interview.

⁹⁰ Various photographs from AOs Allan, Briggs and Davies (including Idi Amin on a tricycle) and Northwood.

⁹¹ Sir Joseph Hutchinson and M.H Arnold, *Cotton Research Corporation, 1921-1971: Golden Jubilee* (London: Cotton Research Corporation, 1971).

⁹² A.C. Pont, 'Some New Oriental Shoot-Flies (Diptera: Muscidae, Genus Atherigona) of Actual or Suspected Economic Importance', *Bulletin of Entomological Research*, 71.3 (1981), 371–93.

⁹³ "*How We Saved the World*".

⁹⁴ Anthony Pritchard, email correspondence with author, 7 September 2016.

This material reveals one final aspect of AOs' relationships with one another that is not especially evident through their interviews, and only very rarely in the informal moments between, when names were most often left unsaid. Most AOs got along well together but there were occasional moments of flippant behaviour that hinted at underlying animosity between some, though these cases were *very* exceptional. In general, AOs who evidently (from contemporary correspondence or other sources) were good friends with each other spoke of other AOs who were not as close in exactly the same terms, making their opinions of one another difficult to glean from interviews. One article passed on from the *Overseas Pensioner* magazine, designed to show some of the very general activities of AOs and written by Wallis contained the following:

[...] [M]y work centred on coffee; until 1962 promoting the expansion of the area under coffee and then, in view of the world surplus of coffee, promoting the diversification of farm production in coffee-growing Districts.⁹⁵

This section was underlined, and in the white space at the end of the article was written in biro 'It w[ou]ld have been better if he'd done nothing for the 7 years & kept an eye on the world coffee price!' This sentiment was reinforced off the record once and was certainly slightly tongue-in-cheek, but not entirely so. In contrast to this, two AOs who had not served together, Anthony Humphrys and Peter Northwood, struck up a friendship after meeting on a walking tour of Winchester and chatting to one another, discovering they both had their imperial and agricultural pasts in common. On the whole this network was solid but as with any group of people engaged in the same profession, personalities could clash.

AOs' wives also added to the interviews. Kedward talks of the 'woman at the doorway', where the wives of his interviewees would hover in the doorway to the room where the interview was in progress and intervene with 'corrections to the story when the man's memory failed or distortions crept into his account'. Over the course of his interviews, Kedward found that this had been the 'rural woman's household position at the time of the Occupation'.⁹⁶ AOs' wives, while not 'at the doorway', continued with some

⁹⁵ J.A.N. Wallis, 'First Posting in Kenya: An American Visitor to Machakos', *The Overseas Pensioner*, 2011 <<https://www.britishempire.co.uk/article/firstpostinginkenya.htm>> [accessed 2 December 2018].

⁹⁶ Kedward, p. 276.

habits forged in Africa. It was clear from both them and their husbands that the man's career had come first, but this did not stop them from working in the colonies (often as nurses or teachers) and being very socially active, a trait they continued throughout their lives. The wives of four AOs were absent for much of the interview, busy with meetings for local clubs and societies that they belonged to. On returning, two ate a quick lunch and disappeared once again – further social activities beckoned. Priscilla Brown and Elizabeth 'Nibs' Briggs pottered between kitchen and lounge/interview space, adding information to their husbands' anecdotes, filling in some of the gaps in their memories; Mike Bigger and Peter Northwood's (Tanzania, 1959 to 1969) wives performed a similar role, checking all was fine with tea or coffee, and adding a little of their own thoughts to the proceedings. Wives' conversation revolved around social occasions, home help and hosting guests, a practice they extended to the day of the interview. Women remembered, or at least retold, day-to-day minutiae of *living* in East Africa; their husbands, even when questions veered to the social, stuck to the role of AO, placing their answers within the context of *working* in East Africa.⁹⁷

AOs' wives were from a similar class background to their husbands and often received a private education. They remember navigating their way through colonial life with the help of works by, as Margaret Strobel calls them, 'industrious colonial women' who produced guides to domesticity in the colonies.⁹⁸ *The Kenya Settlers' Cookery Book and Household Guide*, for example, gives not only recipes using accessible ingredients, but a section on what to take on safari and a seven-page list of 'Orders to Servants' in two dialects.⁹⁹ Home help, from an *ayah* to look after the children to a cook, servant or more general 'houseboy', was the norm. AOs' wives worked whilst being housewives, subscribing to the 'dual role' played by women in Britain by the 1950s.¹⁰⁰ Unlike their middle class British counterparts, who saw a decline in domestic servants, these European

⁹⁷ Davies, recorded interview; James Tuckett, recorded interview by author, Brook, 4 October 2016; David Brown, recorded interview by author, Haywards Heath, 22 September 2016; Briggs, recorded interview; Michael Bigger, recorded interview by author, Leominster, 27 September 2016; Northwood, recorded interview.

⁹⁸ Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 17.

⁹⁹ *The Kenya Settlers' Cookery Book and Household Guide*, 12th edn (Nairobi: East African Standard, 1958), pp. 305–11.

¹⁰⁰ Caitriona Beaumont, "'What Is a Wife'? Reconstructing Domesticity in Postwar Britain before The Feminine Mystique', *History of Women in the Americas*, 3 (2015), 61–76 (p. 72).

women in the colonies in late empire could enjoy the benefits of domestic assistants.¹⁰¹ As hosts or attendees at official events, they were mindful of the hierarchies of colonial society, particularly where one sat. Formal events were still ‘very hierarchical’ recalled Briggs, with Elizabeth nodding in agreement beside him.¹⁰² Where AOs’ wives were present, they talked frankly with their husbands and, whether present or not, AOs would often claim that it was for the benefit of their wives and children – particularly their children – that encouraged them to eventually leave East Africa.¹⁰³

The form of the interview was a questionnaire, with plenty of room for answers to be expanded upon as the interviews progressed. Passerini has suggested that using a questionnaire implies to the interviewee that ‘it is uniformity that counts [...]. By encouraging subjects to present themselves as unique and irreplaceable through an autobiographical account, therefore, induces them to reveal their cultural values, and hence, paradoxically, throws light on stereotypes and shared ideas.’¹⁰⁴ Such an approach was taken with the interviews for this thesis. Rather than racing through a series of questions, AOs were given a question and, based on the initial answer, encouraged to expand and converse on the topics that emerged. Their discussion was at times completely unrelated to their agricultural careers but was revealing of their general outlook. Thoughts on intellectual copyright and patents, Brexit, and contemporary British politics proved revealing of a general right-leaning worldview based around the primacy of the individual, though not all AOs had come to the same conclusions and some noticeably bucked the trend.

A 2008 special edition of the journal *Memory* provides much background into the psychological understanding of the theory behind collective memory formation. First and

¹⁰¹ Beaumont, p. 70.

¹⁰² Briggs, recorded interview.

¹⁰³ The post-war group of AOs, due merely to the timing of their colonial service, found their children ready to attend secondary school at or around the time of independence in Kenya, Uganda or Tanzania. While most had sent their children to local primary schools, secondary education in Britain was seen as a great advantage compared to an education in Africa. Despite the loss of power and control over their professional domain, AOs would often cite children or family as a priority when considering leaving. For more on returning home for education, see Elizabeth Buettner, “‘We Don’t Just Grow Coffee and Bananas in Clapham Junction You Know!’: Imperial Britons Back Home”, in *Settlers and Expatriates*, ed. by Robert Bickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 302–28 (p. 307).

¹⁰⁴ Luisa Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class.*, trans. by Robert Lumley and Jude Bloomfield (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 8.

foremost are the uses of memory by different groups to help create a unique group identity. At the same time, an individuals' memory of their own 'experience can be substantially distorted or confused by external influences'. Also highlighted is how collective memory, when discussed or recalled in groups (the authors label this 'collaborative memory') can in fact 'promote accuracy' and additionally perform 'a range of functions that shared remembering may have beside or beyond accuracy'.¹⁰⁵ Although writing on the general rather than specific, Qi Wang tells us that from a psychologists' point of view, 'for collective memory to be formed and maintained, it has to be functionally related to the achievement of the group goals of a community, and the content and structure of the memory have to exhibit meaningful relationship to these goals'.¹⁰⁶ This is not to say that AOs' memories are accurate, nor that each individual in the group believed in the same group goals. However, in a broad sense, AOs all held an overarching belief in themselves, thanks to their similar formative education and background and specifically their education by the CO in tropical agriculture and related fields. AOs' belief in the science that they were taught and that had practical application initially bound them together as a collective.

AOs' collective memory contributes to their present identity as well as their past; how AOs interpret their own past helps them make sense of what they believe their group to be now. This does not come without difficulty. Throughout the thesis there are many examples of cognitive dissonance. Memories of a subject – often African agriculture or the nature of Africans – are sometimes almost immediately contradicted by the individual AO or by other AOs. In part, this is the nature of group versus individual memory; there are bound to be some contradictions given the expanse of time, territory and situations involved. Sometimes this dissonance may occur because the individual memory contradicts the aims of the group. Wang warns that 'creating a shared identity entails an active, constructive process that may contribute to memory distortions'.¹⁰⁷ Here, the distortions of the group memory conflict with the realities of the lived (or at least, remembered) individual experience. Additionally, the degree to which an individual

¹⁰⁵ Amanda J Barnier and John Sutton, 'From Individual to Collective Memory: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives.', *Memory*, 16.3 (2008), 177–82 (p. 179) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09541440701828274>>.

¹⁰⁶ Wang, p. 306.

¹⁰⁷ Wang, p. 307.

identifies as a member of a group influences how much ‘positive bias’ can be present in their memories.¹⁰⁸ Nick Wallis, who is likely the most interviewed AO by academics, fits exactly into this mould, with instances throughout his interview of department-wide praise for empires’ agriculturalists in East Africa and their sterling efforts as independence came and went.

Cognitive dissonance is also addressed by Dembour, who argues that officials – in her case Belgian officials – have tended to romanticise their memories to overcome cognitive dissonance or contradictions they see in the present day that conflict with their memories.¹⁰⁹ AOs romanticise their experiences a little, but also tend instead to not recognise their contradictions. If anything, the romanticisation of their African careers is more evident in their written work than oral testimony. Dembour does note that the singularity of any officials’ individual history is often lost, given the time elapsed between the events and the recall of them by officials, and AOs were clearly aware of this: ‘Memories fade’, wrote John Ainley, discussing his experience in Tanganyika.¹¹⁰ In interviews there were occasions where AOs could recall events, or a series of events, but confessed honestly to not remembering an exact sequence.¹¹¹ Occasionally, events were conflated. Dixon confidently remembered ‘the very day [his] wife and senior son arrived in Mombassa was the night the Ruck family were murdered in 1952’, but the Ruck murders were not to take place until January 1953.¹¹² Sometimes, not talking about events for years hindered memory recall.¹¹³ Dembour highlights the idea of anonymity in interviews. Would AOs’ responses have differed drastically if anonymity were agreed upon? Perhaps, yes, but by removing anonymity for these AOs, they have a greater likelihood of understanding their interview as a chance to ‘set the record straight’. This may have contributed to their perception of the interview as a formal event, rather than casual discussion. But simultaneously, going ‘on the record’ speaks to an AOs’ ego,

¹⁰⁸ Wang, p. 307.

¹⁰⁹ Dembour, p. 121.

¹¹⁰ John Malcolm Ainley, ‘Resettlement of Suspected Mau Mau Sympathisers in Tanganyika: An Agriculturalist’s Involvement’, *The Overseas Pensioner*, 1996

<<http://www.britishempire.co.uk/article/resettlementmaumau.htm>> [accessed 25 February 2016].

¹¹¹ Davies, recorded interview; Mitchell, recorded interview.

¹¹² Dixon, recorded interview.

¹¹³ Tuckett, recorded interview.

allowing them to discuss their expertise confidently, knowing it will forever be recorded and so at the very least giving insight into what they *want* to be represented by.

These collective memories often result in a nostalgia for empire from AOs. Scholars have noted – at least since the early 1990s – the rise in imperial nostalgia in Britain, with impressions of colonial wives as ‘heroic white women’ and empire’s increasing role in Britain as a ‘saleable commodity’.¹¹⁴ Others have perpetuated the nostalgia, championing empire’s apparent effectiveness at spreading democracy and the market economy, or more controversially suggesting that developing countries ‘reclaim colonialism’ to help reform weak states.¹¹⁵ More recently, some outspoken academics have held private seminars. Seemingly unhappy with the masses of good work that seeks to look at empire in an absolute but multifaceted sense, they look to perform relative equations, balancing the ethical rights and wrongs of empire (presumably to justify some of the ‘wrongs’) in an effort interpreted by others as a ‘simple minded equation’.¹¹⁶ Other than Humphrys’ lecture attendance in retirement, there is little that suggests AOs have sought to challenge their own nostalgia. For one AO, empire was a ‘bloody good thing’.¹¹⁷ Most AOs, on answering a question about whether they had revisited the territory to which they were posted and what they thought of the state of agriculture there today, lapsed into a much more obvious nostalgic state for their time in Africa in the 1950s and 1960s.¹¹⁸ The pleasures of colonial life – the club, sports, entertaining guests, occasionally even the hierarchical organisation – were long gone but remembered fondly. Several former East African AOs still meet a couple of times a year at what one AO called ‘sort of an old boys drinking association’.¹¹⁹ Lastly, at the end of the interview, the tables were often turned,

¹¹⁴ Strobel, pp. ix–x; Philippa Levine, *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset, Second Edition, The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset*, 2nd edn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. xii; William Cunningham Bissell, ‘Engaging Colonial Nostalgia’, *Cultural Anthropology*, 20.2 (2005), 215–48.

¹¹⁵ Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 2003); Bruce Gilley, ‘The Case for Colonialism’, *Third World Quarterly*, 2017, 1–17 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1369037>> (this has since been removed from the journal’s website after significant controversy).

¹¹⁶ McDonald Centre, ‘Ethics and Empire’, 2018 <<https://www.mcdonaldcentre.org.uk/ethics-and-empire>> [accessed 11 December 2018]; James McDougall and others, ‘Ethics and Empire: An Open Letter from Oxford Scholars’, *The Conversation*, 2017 <<https://theconversation.com/ethics-and-empire-an-open-letter-from-oxford-scholars-89333>> [accessed 20 March 2018].

¹¹⁷ Mitchell, recorded interview.

¹¹⁸ The potential to elicit nostalgic responses to questions like these also factored into the decision to make the questionnaire chronological in nature.

¹¹⁹ Mitchell, recorded interview.

with AOs asking more about the purpose of the research, the background of the researcher and the motivations for undertaking such a project.

It is perhaps because of these rose-tinted glasses that issues of race hardly emerged in interview: despite empire's foundations on racist assumptions, it would appear that, other than Mau Mau, race-relations for AOs in late imperial Africa were fairly easy-going. Of course, as part of the white ruling class it might easily have seemed that way.

Interviewing African staff or farmers may reveal another story. Hinting at this, Maciel, a Goan, remembered initially being the only non-white at Njoro's agricultural station in Kenya, recalling it as 'a white man's station'.¹²⁰ White AOs recall a friendly and professional working relationship with their black staff. At the same time, most AOs sought to distance their territory from empire at large and were often at pains to point out the differences that made them or their country an exception. Tanganyika was a mandated territory, so not quite the same; Uganda was a protectorate, so not quite the same. The comparison was almost always with Kenya ('the sophistication of Kenya', as one AO remarked), and AOs from Kenya were quick to point out that the high number of white settlers also made their situation unique, echoed by their Tanzanian and Ugandan counterparts in claiming that *their* situation, with little white involvement, was as unique.¹²¹ When a defence about the territory not being a colony could not be mounted, as was the case for Kenya, AOs would gently diminish the status of their rivals: Tanzania, the head of Range Management in Kenya recalled, was 'absolutely sleepy'.¹²² Playing into ideas about memory noted above, each AO believed they had very individual experiences, despite sharing many similar opinions and outlooks. They made sure to pass along their version of the territories' history, sometimes buying into myths about martial races along the way, an action which simultaneously meant that their roles were part of a long history of colonial intervention in Africa.¹²³ But whereas before, missionaries, explorers and then settlers were living on a frontier, post-war, AOs saw themselves as the new frontiersmen,

¹²⁰ Mervyn Maciel, recorded interview by author, Sutton, 20 December 2017.

¹²¹ For Kenya's sophistications see MacDonald, p. 101. Humphrys, recorded interview; Mitchell, recorded interview; Tuckett, recorded interview; Wallis, recorded interview.

¹²² John Peberdy, recorded interview by author, Salisbury, 4 December 2017.

¹²³ Humphrys, for example, recounted the history of British activity in Uganda, sticking more or less to the narrative presented by Apolo Kagwa, who made the most of his position to communicate a very particular history to the British, feeding into their assumptions about martial races. Humphrys, recorded interview; Reid, *A Modern History of Uganda*, pp. 27–29.

navigating decolonisation and bringing agricultural science to backwards people who needed a kickstart to modernise effectively.

Using memoirs in conjunction with interviews strengthens the value of both and helps to reveal some of the characteristics of AOs. They can be forthright, serious and concise; they can be light-hearted, playful and rambling.¹²⁴ Along the way, they reveal themselves as being totally aware and in control of how they present their pasts, whatever their opinions on the present may be. AOs' testimony tells us how they saw and see their role in Africa and the importance they attach to being one of the group who 'stayed on' to help shape the future of agriculture in East Africa.

¹²⁴ Several chapters in one West African AO's memoirs are, or feel as if they are, constructed almost entirely for the purpose of a joke, and often an uncomfortable one at that. Of note is the chapter on an African nicknamed 'Magic Sperm' in Donald MacIntosh, *Travels in the White Man's Grave: Memoirs from West and Central Africa* (Glasgow: Neil Wilson Publishing, 1998).

Chapter One - 'Nobody but the best': Agriculture as a force for modernity¹

Agricultural Officers in the post-war British Empire oversaw a great number of projects aimed at intensifying the agricultural outputs of the countries in which they were stationed. Even though District Commissioners (DCs) and other administrators were often heavily involved in development projects of the time, AOs felt themselves a distinct group of Colonial Officials, at once part of the larger body of officials, but, as specialist technical officers, simultaneously their own separate entity. AOs shared similar backgrounds and educational paths with one another that subtly varied, but varied nonetheless, from those in other technical and administrative services. This chapter explores AOs' backgrounds, motivations and training to show how AOs not only were, but also came to feel, distinct from these other imperial officials.

The chapter argues that members of the technical services were, to use a recruiter's phrase, a different 'type' of man to the administrative recruits.² AOs shared some commonalities with administrative recruits but hailed from a slightly different social background that was for the most part enabled due to the 'huge increase in the membership of the technical and scientific profession' that occurred after the Second World War.³ Their experiences and education were also different to the bulk of administrative officials, beginning with the larger numbers of AOs recruited into the service from grammar schools. AOs' family backgrounds were most often in agriculture and, family connections or not, many had worked in agriculture before signing up,

¹ Andrew MacDonald, a recruit who arrived in Africa in Sierra Leone but later took a posting in Uganda, believed 'The Colonial Service employed nobody but the best'. MacDonald, p. 91. Administrators on the University of Cambridge course also believed that 'Nothing but the very best is good enough or indeed worthy of the needs and aspirations of Colonial peoples', though as this chapter explores, their courses did not always produce the 'very best'. Colonial Office Note on Colonial Service Training: Comments by Members of the Cambridge Committee, 14 March 1952, Cambridge University Archives, Archives of the Course on Development and earlier and later development studies programmes (hereafter CDEV) 6/74/1, p. 7.

² Geoffrey Nye, Minute of 8 February 1954, The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA), CO 822/964. 1920' Read Report, on recruitment to empire, was also concerned with finding 'the right type of man'. Quoted in Masefield, p. 38.

³ Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 46.

creating an age gap between them and contemporary members of the Colonial Administration Service (CAS); AOs' parents' professions were usually more diverse than those of the parents of administrative recruits. Motivations for joining also differed from most members of the CAS. AOs tended to prioritise a career in agriculture and displayed different motivations from members of the other technical services, earmarking them as a distinct subgroup of officials.

AOs' university experiences and time at Cambridge and the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad (ICTA) helped further set them apart from those in the CAS. At Cambridge, members of the CAS were informally labelled 'cadets', while those on the Agriculture or Agricultural Science diploma course were most often referred to as 'probationers'. For ease of understanding, those terms are adhered to throughout this chapter. Despite the efforts of Cambridge to create camaraderie within potential future District Teams – groups of officers from different departments assigned to a district – the results were timetable clashes, overworked AOs and subpar academic performance. This situation continued a separation from administrative cadets and again helped to mark out AOs as their own group. While background and early education undoubtedly influenced AOs, their *esprit de corps* came more specifically from their postgraduate education, notably in Trinidad, and a camaraderie developed through their shared experiences in the field that was to be rekindled after retirement.

AOs saw their time at Trinidad as being of higher value than that spent at Cambridge. Trinidad allowed probationers to work in tropical conditions and put their agricultural expertise into practice on crops more in keeping with those they encountered in their subsequent careers. Trinidad also brought AOs together socially. The scientific knowledge and technique gained in training did enable AOs to forge ahead in East Africa with confidence, but also informed their attitudes towards Africans – particularly AOs' perceptions that Africans, while capable of agriculture, had low productivity levels – and that AOs' extensive training could help lift the quality and quantity of agricultural outputs in East Africa.

Cambridge and Trinidad were thus the places where ideas that would persist into the post-colonial era were inculcated in this group of officials. The 'type' of recruit – a nebulous mix of character and moderate ability, not unlike those admitted to the CAS –

was still important to the CO, and the inherent confidence that existed in many recruits was honed during their education for colonial service, enabling AOs to carry across their ideas and apply them in post-colonial East Africa.

Education

Most AOs who enrolled after the Second World War, whether destined for East Africa or other parts of the British Empire, had attended public schools or grammar schools. These AOs took degrees in Agriculture or a closely related topic, often had some exposure to empire and the wider world and tended to hail from solidly middle-class backgrounds. While AOs' postgraduate education served to mark them out as distinct from recruits for the CAS, despite the best efforts of Cambridge University to bring the two together, AOs' backgrounds – notably their schooling – and their embrace of the technical and scientific approach to their work set them apart from the beginning.

For the intake of all Agricultural Probationers to Cambridge from 1948 to 1954, 38 per cent attended public school (with a further one per cent at one of the Clarendon schools) and 46 per cent went to non-private schools. For the period 1955 to 1964, 23 per cent attended public schools, a further two per cent went to Clarendon schools and 60 per cent had been to non-private schools.⁴ Despite the small increase in those attending 'elite' schools, this demonstrates a significant shift from public to grammar school education during the final period of recruitment for empire's agriculturalists.

These schooling trends resemble an exaggerated version of those seen in the CAS. After 1914, fewer students from 'the socially topmost' Clarendon schools sought a career in the CAS. From 1919, a shift towards recruits from the other Clarendon schools and younger public schools emerged, and a third shift occurred after the First World War, as more recruits joined up that had been through the grammar school system.⁵ Figures for the

⁴ Public schools (for both eras) includes HMC schools and Scottish or Irish public schools. These figures are based on a variety of sources collected by Chris Jeppesen, to whom I am most grateful for his correspondence and discussion on the educational background of Agricultural Officers. See also the HMOCS Data Project results on this area in Gardiner, pp. 320–21.

⁵ Anthony Kirk-Greene, *Britain's Imperial Administrators, 1858–1966* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p. 136.

Agricultural Service mirrored and continued that trend but shifted much more considerably towards recruits with a grammar school education for the final intake. 31 per cent of students admitted into the CAS for the period 1926-1956 had attended Clarendon schools. However, for the period after the Second World War, only 10 per cent of CAS entrants had received a Clarendon education.⁶ In both cases, this was a far cry from the tiny couple of per cent of Clarendon students in the Agricultural Service from 1948 to 1964. While the shift from public to grammar school students was evident in both services, the Agricultural Service appeared to draw a much higher number from grammar school students than from public school students. Of CAS recruits, 33 per cent in the post-war era came from non-public schools, compared to 66 per cent of AOs in the same period.⁷

Most AOs progressed to a degree in Agriculture, reflected in the high numbers who attended Aberdeen, Cambridge, Durham, Edinburgh, Leeds, London, Nottingham and Reading universities, institutions with strong agricultural focus. Despite the smaller intake of 162 AOs for the period 1955 to 1964 (1948 to 1954 had seen 253 recruited into the Colonial Agricultural Service), these universities still dominated, with Cambridge, London and Reading remaining as the top three and recruiting 36 per cent of the total intake of AOs from 1948 to 1964.⁸

Background

Kirk-Greene rightly warns about making class assumptions based purely on school or university.⁹ Even so, he summarises the ‘typical member’ of the CAS as being of the ‘[upper] middle class, the meritocracy and the bourgeoisie’. Kenneth Bradley, a former DO in North Rhodesia, is used to further illustrate the point: administrative cadets were “the younger sons of the professional middle class, and had been given a Sound Old-Fashioned Liberal Education in the Humanities or preparatory and public schools, ending

⁶ Gardiner, p. 316.

⁷ Gardiner, pp. 316-321.

⁸ See fn. 4.

⁹ Kirk-Greene, *Britain's Imperial Administrators*, p. 137.

with an arts degree from one of the older universities”.¹⁰ Similarly, Hugh Foot – brother of former Labour Party leader Michael – who served in the colonial administrations of Palestine, Cyprus, Jamaica and Nigeria is typical of this. Foot’s father had a ‘growing solicitor’s practice’ and by 1922 had entered the House of Commons.¹¹ He attended Leighton Park School in Reading, Berkshire, a public school set up by Quakers, and read law at Cambridge.¹² AOs differed from these administrative cadets, firstly in the higher selection rate from grammar schools and secondly in their choice of degree and subsequent use of that degree during and beyond their postgraduate training. As a tentative conclusion, AOs generally hailed from the middle of the middle class; not the ‘upper’ section as Kirk-Greene calls it, nor were they akin to ‘sons of the professional middle-class’, as Nile Gardiner labels administrative cadets.

Robert Collins found that members of the Sudan Political Service (SPS) were one-third the sons of clergymen, the remainder having parents who were doctors, lawyers or civil servants.¹³ The SPS were not just administrators, but an elite group of them, so it may be no surprise that AOs differed from these administrators. Details from ‘Her Majesty’s Overseas Civil Service (HMOCS) Data Project’, conducted between 1983 and 1995 and drawing on responses to 1,900 questionnaires, suggest a more diverse selection of careers for AOs’ parents; careers that spanned the middle classes, without being heavily weighted toward the top end. AOs with parents who were doctors or civil servants numbered 11 per cent; but others – the largest group at 34 per cent – had farming backgrounds, a much more direct link to their agricultural career-paths.¹⁴ Other professions abounded, too: one AOs’ father was a master brewer, another worked in East Africa for the Eastern Telegraph Company as a high-ranking marine cable engineer – not an official piece of the colonial apparatus, but ‘high in the pecking order’.¹⁵ CAS recruits

¹⁰ The square brackets are Kirk-Greene’s. Kenneth Bradley quoted in Kirk-Greene, p. 136.

¹¹ Hugh Foot, *A Start In Freedom* (Aylesbury: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), p. 25.

¹² Foot, p. 27.

¹³ Robert Collins, ‘The Sudan Political Service: A Portrait of the “Imperialists”’, *African Affairs*, 71.284 (1972), 293–303, p. 301.

¹⁴ Calculated from figures reproduced in Gardiner, p. 297.

¹⁵ Sons of a doctor, civil servant, farmer, master brewer and cable engineer respectively: Bigger, recorded interview; Wallis, recorded interview; Oxford, Bodleian Library (hereafter OBL), A.T. Wilson (Northern Rhodesia, 1949–66) Overseas Pensioners’ Association Survey V, Towards a Retrospective Record (hereafter OSPA V), box 4; John Malcolm Ainley, *Pink Stripes and Obedient Servants: An Agriculturalist in Tanganyika* (J M Ainley, 2001), p. 2; Humphrys, recorded interview.

of the same period were more often the sons of businessmen, engineers, civil or colonial servants, or clergymen.¹⁶

The rising importance of development in the colonial agenda and in turn the increasing reliance on science and technology of the inter- and post-war years allowed a selection of candidates from slightly different backgrounds to those associated with more administrative roles to apply to work for the Colonial Service in this late period. However, AOs were not the only group affected by changes in educational trends. Collins argues that after the Second World War there was a significant change in the type of men recruited for the SPS. Alongside changes in the inter-war school curriculum, the 'war had irreparably damaged the firm belief in the superiority of British administration and the wisdom of British paternal rule'.¹⁷ AOs may have been from different backgrounds to administrative officers but did not necessarily share the opinions that Collins suggests SPS officers held. Firstly, their educational background helped them stand apart. Secondly, AOs concerned themselves not with administration but with agriculture, and often the scientific side of the subject. AOs believed they were needed by African farmers who they understood as inherently conservative and who had not yet been exposed to the science to which these AOs were schooled in.¹⁸ AOs believed that without them, African agriculture would not have the stimulation necessary to increase outputs in order to suitably enhance these countries' economies. They unquestioningly bought into the idea that Britain was now engaged in a period of development rather than subjugation and that this was for the good of the people of empire.¹⁹ In other words, AOs' backgrounds might have differed from those of administrative officers – and especially from those of the elite SPS – but AOs believed that to achieve East African development, British assistance was definitely required.

¹⁶ Those categories combined (out of thirty-two occupations listed) make for 48 per cent of the CAS' post-war intake. Gardiner, p. 295.

¹⁷ Collins, p. 302.

¹⁸ AOs did, of course, have interactions with and opinions on the administrative staff, both colonial and independent, discussed in chapter three.

¹⁹ Bill Mitchell and Humphrys both signalled that they saw the post-war British Empire as a very different force to the inter- and pre-war configurations. Mitchell, recorded interview; Humphrys, recorded interview.

Recruitment

Administrative officers were most often graduates of Oxford (the leading institution for recruits to the CAS) and Cambridge. For the period c.1926 to c.1966, 75 per cent of recruits to the CAS were Oxbridge graduates, with the next three most popular universities (London, Trinity College Dublin and Edinburgh) accounting for 12 per cent of the intake.²⁰ In other words, only 13 per cent of CAS recruits did *not* come from one of five universities. As Chris Jeppesen has written, ‘second-class Oxbridge Arts graduates continued to predominate’ into the later stages of recruitment for the CAS.²¹ The intake to the CAS from Oxbridge graduates can be attributed in large part to Sir Ralph Furse, who was Director of Recruitment for the Colonial Service from 1931 until 1948 and ‘rightly acknowledged as the father of the modern Civil Service’.²² Furse had a selection of academics at Oxford and Cambridge that he would use to sound out prospective recruits for the CAS.²³ The spread of future AOs across non-Oxbridge universities prevented the recruiting hand of the Colonial Service from reaching them all and mirrored the rise in science degrees at the ‘rapidly expanding’ redbrick universities.²⁴

Due to the lower numbers of AOs from Oxbridge, the traditional method of recruitment for the CAS found less success. AOs found their way to the Colonial Agricultural Service through a number of other routes. A few had noted that during their undergraduate course they had been approached by recruiters from the CO or received talks from its staff; one AO even recalled a talk from Furse at the University of Cambridge, but was ‘not inspired’ to join up after hearing it.²⁵ Indeed, the CO found the need to reinvigorate their recruitment drive for all services after the war, and had to appeal to a broader number of potential applicants than the usual public school and Oxbridge

²⁰ Kirk-Greene, p. 138.

²¹ Jeppesen, ‘Recruitment To the Colonial Administrative Service’, p. 30.

²² Kirk-Greene, p. 150.

²³ Kirk-Greene, p. 141.

²⁴ Jeppesen, ‘Recruitment To the Colonial Administrative Service’, pp. 30, 36.

²⁵ F.G. Smith (Tanganyika, 1949-1962) remembered a ‘Mr. Perry’ from the CO, whom Smith believed to be the director of recruitment. F.G. Smith, OSPA V, box 2; A.T. Wilson remembered hearing a talk from Furse. A.T. Wilson, OSPA V, box 4. Thanks again must go to Chris Jeppesen who kindly provided me with information from his research on motivations for joining the colonial services.

candidates. A shift toward targeting grammar and state schools, sixth forms, and a greater number of universities soon followed in the search for suitable candidates.²⁶

Furse's talk had fallen on the deaf ears of A.T. Wilson, who was instead motivated by a desire to pursue a career in agriculture with farmers not of his 'father's type', and had a 'social rather than imperialistic' calling to the Agricultural Service.²⁷ This kind of response is, however, easy to assert retrospectively, particularly in light of how empire came to be perceived, and can make a true assessment of motivations, especially those based on retrospective anecdotes, more challenging. L.J. Foster remembered a recruiting agent from the CO attending Reading, where Foster was studying Horticulture, and F.G. Smith recalled a Mr Perry from the CO approaching him as he lunched with other Forestry students in a pub.²⁸ The Agricultural Service also had its own occasional recruitment drive for candidates. Gilbert Roddan, a former CO man who became Kenya's Director of Agriculture in 1951, returned to Britain in 1954 to recruit from agricultural colleges when the Swynnerton Plan demanded a huge increase in qualified, able staff to simultaneously intensify Kenyan agriculture and assist in quelling the Mau Mau emergency.²⁹ Nonetheless, while Furse's method of channelling recruits with particular qualities often worked for the CAS, AOs were often self-selecting, and many applied via adverts in a variety of trade magazines, though newspapers also carried adverts.³⁰ *The Times British Colonies Review* (Autumn 1954) included a full-page advert, emphasising the variety of work available within the agricultural services, a brief history of the service, the new

²⁶ Jeppesen, 'Recruitment To the Colonial Administrative Service', pp. 21–22.

²⁷ A.T. Wilson, OSPA V, box 4.

²⁸ L.J. Foster (Nyasaland, 1949–62 and Sarawak, 1962–64, before being recruited to the Commonwealth Development Corporation by Roger Swynnerton, former head of agriculture in Kenya), OSPA V, box 2; F.G. Smith, OSPA V, box 2.

²⁹ Thurston, p. 54; it was noted that for the Swynnerton Plan (more of which in chapters three and four) to succeed there would need to be around 150 new agricultural experts trained up and sent out to Kenya, so the director himself decided to promote the cause: 'An overview of the Swynnerton Plan', May 1954, TNA, CO 822/964/18E.

³⁰ Peter Wilson saw an advert in *Farmers Weekly*: Wilson, *Bwana Shamba*, p. 1; John Ainley saw an advert in *Farmer and Stockbreeder*: Ainley, p. 11; Giles Dixon remembers being told of an advert in a newspaper: Giles Dixon (Kenya 1952–65), recorded interview by author, Barrow on Humber, 15 August 2016; D.G.P. Jenkins (Kenya, 1955–63) had seen an advert for extension officer in Kenya, D.G.P. Jenkins, OSPA V, box 2; J. Robertson (Kenya, 1950–64), OSPA V, box 2; Liam Murray saw an advert in *Scottish Farmer*: Liam Murray, 'Agricultural Officer, Tanganyika 1955–65', *The Overseas Pensioner*, 2016, 26–28.

direction the service was taking since the Colonial Development and Welfare Act and what a successful applicant could expect.³¹

Almost half of the AOs in the post-war intake went straight from university into training. This, along with careers from which other AOs came before they joined the Agricultural Service, also marked them out as different from CAS members. Of the post-war intake of Administrative Officers, 55 per cent had their pre-colonial career listed as one form or another of military service, including National Service.³² This stands in stark contrast to the non-administrative services, as table 2 (below) shows. Pre-colonial occupations of officers in non-administrative roles, joining after 1945, saw military service at 29 per cent. Within this, AOs were beneath average at only 23 per cent.³³ AOs also stood out as having a significantly higher proportion coming immediately from university to colonial service, ranking higher than CAS recruits and eclipsing the amount of other non-administrative service members. While a background in military service accounts for almost a quarter of the AO intake in the post-war era this is still far less than CAS recruits, over half of whom had military experience. To use the language of Furse, these differences would suggest that a different 'type' of man entered the Agricultural Service by comparison to the CAS.

Table 2: Post-war employment before applying to the Colonial Service

	<i>CAS</i>	<i>Non-CAS</i>	<i>AO only (as subgroup of non-CAS)</i>
<i>University</i>	29%	15%	45%
<i>Military experience</i>	55%	29%	23%
<i>Agriculture/forestry</i>	2%	4%	19%
<i>Other</i>	14%	52%	13%

Calculated from the HMOCS data project; Gardiner, pp.279-281.

When it came to picking the right 'type' of potential AO for the job, specifics were as hard to pin down as with recruitment for the CAS. Some of the elusive qualities of character outlined by Kirk-Greene when talking of DOs to be employed by the CAS were

³¹ Sir Geoffrey Clay [Agricultural Advisor at the CO], 'Careers in the Colonies – VIII: Research and Fieldwork in Agriculture', *The Times British Colonies Review*, Autumn 1954, p.26.

³² Gardiner, p. 279.

³³ Gardiner, p. 281.

a sense of loyalty, fair play, duty and service.³⁴ Ronald Hyam describes the CO as looking for candidates with “‘go and grit’, ‘stiff upper lip’, loyalty to the system, monogamous sexual restraint (if not total sexual denial), ‘straightforward dogged perseverance’, combined with common sense, pluck, and ‘moral strength’”.³⁵ These qualities, recruiters believed, often came from a public school education; university could further enhance this set of characteristics.³⁶ After the CO’s recruitment net was widened to include grammar and state schools, these characteristics were still sought after, alongside, for AOs, a degree in a scientific or technical subject rather than in the arts or humanities. They were to be, as Hyam puts it, ‘a practitioner of the public-school code and cultural ethos, even though not always from a public school’.³⁷

Alongside these characteristics, the CO had relied on recommendations from their sources within the public-school network. Even when patronage as an official policy of the CO was dropped as a recruitment tool after the 1930 Warren Fisher report, ‘professional patronage remained vital to the Colonial Service’.³⁸ A recommendation from a serving officer could go a long way for CAS recruits, though AOs seldom mentioned seeking out such recommendations from members of the Agricultural Service or CAS.

While AOs may have erred away from backgrounds in the arts and humanities, one AO remembered that the department looked for good, able, men, but not necessarily the best. There was an emphasis on sociability over academic prowess.³⁹ Richard Briggs remembered that ‘you had to be sociable’ to be successful in the service; Briggs feared for a colleague who, at Cambridge, ‘kept mostly to himself’.⁴⁰ Geoffrey Nye, Whitehall’s man in charge of agriculture in the colonies, feared that the wrong candidates would inhibit the progress of any agricultural scheme, noting that ‘it would be tragic if through over-enthusiasm a large number of men of the wrong type were to be recruited’.⁴¹ Precisely what this type was Nye did not record, but a mix of confidence, academic

³⁴ Kirk-Greene, *Britain’s Imperial Administrators*, pp. 13–15.

³⁵ Hyam, p. 11.

³⁶ Kirk-Greene, *Britain’s Imperial Administrators*, pp. 22, 138–42.

³⁷ Hyam, p. 11.

³⁸ Kirk-Greene, *Britain’s Imperial Administrators, 1858–1966*, p. 148; Jeppesen, ‘Recruitment To the Colonial Administrative Service’, p. 34.

³⁹ Peberdy, recorded interview.

⁴⁰ Briggs, recorded interview.

⁴¹ Geoffrey Nye, Minute of 8 February 1954, TNA, CO 822/964.

adequacy, sociability, obedience to authority and an appreciation for sport are all likely qualifying factors.⁴²

One of the reasons the CO had to look beyond its traditional recruitment grounds of the public schools and Oxbridge campuses was the disruption caused by the Second World War, but the onset of a slow decolonisation also played a part of in the potential career prospects a new recruit might look forward to; this further narrowed the pool. An agricultural career in the colonies was a large motivating factor for the last tranche of AOs, as we shall see, and the turn towards science and development as key facets of empire undoubtedly incentivised a few new recruits.⁴³ AOs were certainly beneficiaries of the latter. However, how far AOs predicted the decline of the British Empire when they joined, and thus how stable their careers might be, seems to have varied. Most AOs who commented on the subject believed they had an agricultural career in the empire ahead of them. Very few AOs explicitly stated that they were aware that independence was approaching. P.G. Thompson reported that he chose Fiji because he ‘wanted a colony with at least a ten-year life span before independence’, though he was never clear about how he knew this would be the case.⁴⁴ James A. N. (Nick) Wallis’ father advised Wallis not to join the Colonial Service because ““in ten years there will be no colonies””. Wallis Sr. was ‘in a senior position in the Colonial Office’ and in 1952 believed, Wallis understood, that the Empire would be gone by 1960. Wallis was surprised when he got to Kenya that this was not the ‘general understanding’ of those he worked alongside.⁴⁵ At Bill Mitchell’s 1953 Colonial Service interview, Mitchell (Tanganyika, 1955 to 1967) says that he had asked the interviewer what would happen should Tanganyika become independent? “Oh, don’t worry my boy, they won’t get independent before 1984 by which time you’ll be due to retire anyway”, came the response.⁴⁶ Administrators believed similarly.⁴⁷ Although AOs shared some qualities with CAS recruits, some were more sure of a career in

⁴² For a rundown of some of the qualities sought out by Furse that AOs (certainly sixty to seventy years on in interview) held, see Jeppesen, ““A Worthwhile Career””, pp. 138–39.

⁴³ For more on the reliance on ideas of ‘rational western science’ in the late stages of the British Empire, see Sabine Clarke, ‘The Research Council System and the Politics of Medical and Agricultural Research for the British Colonial Empire, 1940–52’, *Medical History*, 57.3 (2013), 338–58; Joseph M. Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert*.

⁴⁴ P.G. Thompson (Fiji, 1959–75), OSPA V, box 5.

⁴⁵ Wallis, recorded interview.

⁴⁶ Mitchell, recorded interview.

⁴⁷ Jeppesen, ‘Recruitment To the Colonial Administrative Service’, p. 23.

agriculture – imperial or not – than in empire. As Wallis wryly put it, regardless of decolonisation, ‘the world will always need food’.⁴⁸

For those AOs going into training at the end of the 1950s the writing was more self-evidently on the wall, yet some still found the appeal of ‘life deep in the African bush’ a persuasive recruitment tool. Alan Scaife (Tanzania, 1960 to 1967) remembered when he decided, part-way through his Agricultural Diploma at Cambridge, to enrol in the Colonial Service, that it was ‘much to the amusement of [his] more intellectual friends who reminded [him] that The Empire had had it.’⁴⁹ In 1944, Furse wrote for the Devonshire Committee that ‘[t]he pioneer era of colonial development has passed.’⁵⁰ Nonetheless, romantic notions of empire and the frontier life still appealed to some AOs even when independence for African countries appeared imminent. Autobiographies and memoirs also attest to this. Talk of sundowners on the veranda, impressive scenery and wildlife often take centre-stage in the chapters of AOs’ memoirs concerning their arrival, serving the dual purpose of enthraling readers susceptible to similar romantic notions of Africa. The pioneer spirit that caused one AO to lobby the Director of Agriculture in Uganda for a move to a more remote posting persisted beyond the inter-war years and was enough to overcome any anxieties over the direction of African nationalism when AOs joined the service.⁵¹ A career in agriculture rather than empire may well have been the underlying desire for most AOs, but even as independence approached, ideas about the potential for what was seen as an exciting lifestyle were persuasive enough to encourage recruits.

Motivations

Adding to their coherence as a group, AOs who ‘stayed on’ in East Africa after independence often had features of their formative years in common with one another. Most AOs of the period were born between the two World Wars, and while a few were

⁴⁸ Wallis, recorded interview.

⁴⁹ OBL, MSS Brit.Emp. s. 476, Box 6(39), Scaife, Alan, p. 2.

⁵⁰ Colonial Office, ‘Post-War Training for the Colonial Service: Report of a Committee Appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies’ (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1945), p. 20.

⁵¹ Humphrys, recorded interview.

born overseas, the large majority were British.⁵² Their motivations for joining the Colonial Agricultural Service are evident from memoirs, interviews and material held at Rhodes House, Oxford that catalogued responses from members of the OSPA about their reasons for joining up. Untangling genuine motivations has the potential to be fraught with difficulties, particularly when it comes to colonial officials constructing their own legacies. At the very least, several trends are noticeable.

Overall, AOs' motivations for joining the Colonial Agricultural Service are best grouped into four categories, although most AOs noted a blend of two or more as influencing their decision to join. The primary four categories were: the wish for a career in agriculture; the appeal of overseas service; imperial family connections; and a sense of vocation or mission. Beyond the four main reasons, two other factors fed into AOs' decision to apply to the Agricultural Service. These were the impact of National Service which was often successful in opening the minds of those who may otherwise not have considered overseas service at all; and the least frequently noted additional influencing factor, the cultural impact of empire in British schooling and society.

As with CAS recruits, a complex overlap of factors was almost always present.⁵³ Of the four primary motivating factors, most AOs placed a career – and more specifically, a career in agriculture – as the most important. Often the appeal of the Colonial Service was not something that came to the forefront of AOs' minds until after or late on in their degrees. Few AOs who have had the opportunity to write or talk about their experiences indicate that agriculture in the tropics was an aspiration they held before their university careers, though there were a handful of exceptions. Those born outside of Britain, often with links to empire or its administration, expressed a desire to return overseas after their education in Britain. Agriculture could provide a career to these men – their top priority – and work in empire enabled them to move overseas to practice this. More than a handful

⁵² The final list published by the Colonial Office detailing the Colonial Agricultural Service in depth was in 1938. According to this list, 93 per cent of staff at that time were British in origin. 98.9 per cent were from Commonwealth countries. G.B. Masefield also notes that, over the course of the Colonial Agricultural Service's existence, only four out of around one thousand members were women. Masefield, p. 7. As an example, from the pool of interviewees used for this project most were born in Britain, but others – with family connections to empire in one way or another – hailed from Zanzibar, Palestine and Kenya.

⁵³ For a detailed overview of post-war CAS motivations, see Jeppesen, 'Recruitment To the Colonial Administrative Service', pp. 31–39; from an inspection of some pre-war motivations that builds upon Kirk-Greene and Gardiner, see Prior, *Exporting Empire*, 2013, pp. 17–27.

embarked on agricultural work in Britain for a year or more before applying to practise in the colonies, again keeping them distinct from applicants to the administrative service.⁵⁴

Confusing matters, the appeal of overseas service was not only influenced by the presence of relatives farming overseas, but also by relatives in imperial professions.⁵⁵ Many AOs had loose imperial connections thanks to their relatives. M.J. Hannigan (Tanganyika, 1955 to 1961) was the son of British tea estate owners in India; Giles Dixon, a leading wheat researcher in Kenya who stayed on after independence, had an uncle farming coffee in the same country; Alister Allan (Kenya, 1960 to 1972), had an uncle in Kenya who farmed coffee; Bill Mitchell, who was posted to Tanganyika throughout independence, was the son of a Kenya coffee farmer; John Peberdy was brought up in the Caribbean, where his father of working class roots was a museum curator.⁵⁶ Some AOs arrived at agriculture through unexpected familial connections: Anthony Humphrys' older sister married a farmer and Humphrys proceeded to spend spare time in his teenage years working for his brother-in-law, contributing to his interest in agricultural matters.⁵⁷

Other AOs confessed to more straightforwardly continuing working in empire because of their fathers' professions and chose agriculture due to the appeal of outdoors work or to the advice of others. The appeal of the outdoors was a factor in recruiting for the SPS, though Collins suggests that a 'devotion to duty, [...] the paternal feelings of responsibility toward the lower classes within the village community, and even the enthusiasm for village cricket' were traits held by SPS officers; these all seem far less applicable to AOs, whose backgrounds – slightly lower down the social pecking order – were privileged nonetheless, but steered AOs towards outdoor pursuits and agricultural

⁵⁴ Humphrys, recorded interview; Wilson, p.. 1-3; Ainley, pp. 4-9; P.J. Grant, OSPA V, box 2; F.A. Leeds (Gold Coast, 1934-58), OSPA V, box 2; Dixon, OSPA V, box 2.

⁵⁵ David Brown, who served in Tanganyika, was the great-great grandson, on his mother's side, of Arthur Godley, Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the India Office for twenty-six years. Another of Brown's distant relatives 'went out as the first missionary of the Christian Missionary Society to Calcutta'. Brown, recorded interview; H.C.G. Matthew, 'Godley, (John) Arthur, First Baron Kilbracken (1847–1932)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33436?docPos=3>> [accessed 10 March 2017]; C.M. Cuthbert (Kenya, 1952-63), OSPA V, box 2; J.M.A. Sly (Nigeria 1955-66), OSPA V, box 5; C.E. Johnson (Central Africa, 1936-1964), OSPA V, box 5.

⁵⁶ M.J. Hannigan (Tanganyika, 1955-61), OSPA V, box 3; Giles Dixon, recorded interview; Alister Allan, OSPA V, box 2; Mitchell, recorded interview; Peberdy, recorded interview.

⁵⁷ Humphrys, recorded interview.

interests, often rooted in the sciences.⁵⁸ Wallis' father had served in the SPS and then the CO, but it was Wallis' careers advisor at Bryanston that suggested a career 'outdoors' due to his poor eyesight, so Wallis worked on a farm for several summers before attending Cambridge for his undergraduate degree in 1950.⁵⁹ Wallis had initially hoped to become an architect, another technical skill much in demand in the later stages of empire, making it clear that, for him, working in empire was the initial motivation, spurred on by the success of his father.⁶⁰

Candidates for the agricultural service who hailed from families with close imperial ties shared this trend with administrative cadets. As Kirk-Greene's inspection of the administrative service has revealed, 'family tradition, of imperial service overseas, was conspicuous in the make-up of the Colonial Service'.⁶¹ Alexander Storrar (Kenya, 1944 to 1965), for example, chose to sign up to the Agricultural Service because of a 'family tradition and a desire to work overseas'.⁶² It may be unsurprising to note that those AOs with families in agriculture stayed in agriculture, albeit overseas, just as those administrative cadets with families in imperial administration often followed in their fathers' administrative footsteps. Those, like Wallis, who held close imperial ties but had some experience and interest in agriculture, combined the two.

The final factor, a sense of vocation or mission, motivated only a minority of AOs. Again, the sense of doing good in a developing country was a reported factor in influencing many AOs and repeatedly crops up, but some were candid enough to reveal that this was by no means the primary motivating factor, often explaining that a stable career was more important, but that a welcome by-product was the ability to use skills in agriculture to help the developing world.⁶³ A few did profess to holding a missionary zeal and a desire to help, with R. Simpson (Tanganyika, 1948 to 1970, an unusually long stint) admitting that had he not joined the Agricultural Service he may have visited Africa as a

⁵⁸ Robert Collins, 'The Sudan Political Service: A Portrait of the "Imperialists"', *African Affairs*, 71.284 (1972), 293–303, p. 300.

⁵⁹ Wallis, recorded interview.

⁶⁰ Wallis, recorded interview.

⁶¹ Kirk-Greene, *Britain's Imperial Administrators*, p. 136.

⁶² OBL, MSS Brit. Emp.s.476, Box 7(46), Storrar, Alexander, p. 1.

⁶³ This pattern is similar when looking at CAS recruits; both sets of men had a tendency to justify their career decisions after-the-fact. See Jeppesen, 'Recruitment To the Colonial Administrative Service', pp. 32–33.

missionary. Simpson, whose parents were dairy farmers in Northern Ireland, demonstrates well the overlapping factors that featured for most AOs. Otherwise, AOs talked of being able to use their skills to improve the economic prospects of a country and help its development, but this usually came with the knowledge that, thanks to the drive for development, there was a good career in agriculture ahead of them.⁶⁴ Helping others was rarely the primary concern and was usually understood as a beneficial by-product of a career in agriculture in the colonies.⁶⁵

In general, AOs' motivations marked them out from administrative officials. HMOCS data, allowing multiple responses to predetermined categories, provides a greater spread of results from which to conclude but excludes the option of selecting a career in agriculture, forcing those respondents to select another motivating factor or factors. The HMOCS respondents are also from across the British Empire, helping us see a general view of AOs in empire, but less specifically those who would go to Kenya, Tanzania or Uganda. Nonetheless, the responses are valuable when it comes to painting some overall trends. Looking at respondents to the HMOCS survey, table 3 shows CAS members who signed up between 1919 and 1960 recording that their top four motivations were 'Family Tradition', 'Military Service Experience', the search for an 'Interesting Job' and 'Service to Empire'. The top four motivations for the non-administrative recruits (from a survey that included AOs), were 'Military Service Experience', 'Overseas Travel', 'Family Tradition' and 'Overseas Career'.⁶⁶ Military experience can thus be noted as a significant motivator for all members of the Colonial Service. However, dissatisfaction with a job, limited job prospects offered in the UK and pay and conditions offered in colonial service are notable by their absence from the top ten of CAS men. Despite the increase in the technical professions and the drive for scientific approaches to imperial problems, those with degrees in non-humanities subjects clearly felt that their career prospects were more limited by remaining in Britain.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Humphrys, OSPA V, box 2; Hannigan, OSPA V, box 3; G. Stern (Kenya, 1943-70), OSPA V, box 5.

⁶⁵ Ainley, OSPA V, box 5. Ainley wrote that his motivation was not 'altruistic'.

⁶⁶ Gardiner, p. 91.

⁶⁷ McKibbin, p. 46; Clarke, 'The Research Council System'; Clarke, 'A Technocratic Imperial State?', p. 456.

Table 3: Top motivations for signing up to the Colonial Service, 1919-1960

	<i>CAS</i>	<i>Non-CAS</i>
<i>Family tradition</i>	25%	10% (3)
<i>Military service experience</i>	20%	18% (1)
<i>Interesting job</i>	11%	5% (12)
<i>Service to empire</i>	10%	6% (10)
<i>Help Colonial subjects</i>	8%	11% (8)
<i>Adventure</i>	7%	9% (11)
<i>Overseas career</i>	7%	9% (4)
<i>Overseas travel</i>	7%	11% (2)
<i>Academic influences</i>	6%	4% (13)
<i>Interest in Africa/Asia</i>	6%	8% (6)
<i>Outdoor life</i>	6%	3% (14)
<i>Responsibility</i>	6%	2% (17)
<i>Pay and conditions</i>	5%	9% (5)

Numbers in parenthesis indicate the position of motivations for non-CAS staff, from highest to lowest. Respondents to the survey were able to choose more than one motivation. For non-CAS, in seventh place was 'Poor job prospects' (8%) and in ninth place 'Job dissatisfaction' (6%). Figures extracted from Gardiner, p.91.

While CAS and non-CAS motivations for joining differed, AOs were not even entirely typical of the non-CAS recruits. Non-CAS men reported their top two motivations as 'Travel Abroad' and a desire to 'Help Colonial Subjects', the latter of which had almost twice as many AOs than other non-CAS members select as a motivation. 'Service to Empire' barely featured as a motivation for AOs (around 4 per cent) and accounted for only 6 per cent in the overall responses from members of the non-administrative services for the longer time period, marking the most distinct difference between administrative and non-administrative recruits. Indeed, AOs who stayed on in East Africa understand themselves more as having served Africans, rather than empire. The lower percentages demonstrate a trend amongst agriculturalists in the post-war period. In the HMOCS data project results, alongside members of legal, forestry and veterinary departments, AOs have their top motivations as only just edging ahead of lower options.⁶⁸ The differential between top and bottom motivating factors for other non-administrative services and, indeed, for most administrative officers of the same period is usually larger than that for the legal, forestry and veterinary groups.⁶⁹ Opening recruitment up to those with a slightly

⁶⁸ Gardiner, p. 293.

⁶⁹ Gardiner, pp. 291–93.

more diverse set of experiences and backgrounds appears, as one might expect, to have also altered the composition of motivations evident across recruits.

Table 4: Table comparing motivations for joining the Colonial Service post-1945

	<i>AO</i>	<i>Non-AO, non-CAS</i>	<i>CAS</i>
<i>Travel abroad</i>	12%	10%	5%
<i>Help Colonial subjects</i>	11%	6%	10%
<i>Career overseas</i>	7%	11%	8%
<i>Interest in Africa/Asia</i>	7%	9%	6%
<i>Military service</i>	7%	29%	35%

Table shows AOs' top five motivations and their ranking for all other non-CAS, non-AOs and CAS members. Figures extracted from HMOCS data project; Gardiner, pp.291-293.

The two minor factors that influenced AOs also helped to distinguish them from other officials of the period. AOs were less likely to have undertaken military service than those in the CAS but only a little less likely to have done so than other non-CAS employees (table 2). Despite this, AOs were much less motivated by any service they did do, whereas it formed a primary factor for other non-CAS and CAS members as the dominant motivation in the post-war era. Military service did, however, open the minds of some AOs to serving abroad, keeping the career in and of itself as the motivating factor, not the military experience abroad beforehand. AOs were not the only Colonial recruits influenced by National Service or military experience, with Kirk-Greene writing that applicants for the CAS in the 1950s had often served overseas and many had done so in Africa or South East Asia, enjoying the 'tropical life enough to make it the wished-for context of their career'.⁷⁰ But AOs still felt the influence of National Service, be it their own or that of others. L.J. Foster, for example, remembered that at Reading University 'almost all' of his fellow students were ex-servicemen.⁷¹ Other AOs remember their own time in the military as exposing them to situations abroad that made the idea of an

⁷⁰ Kirk-Greene, *Britain's Imperial Administrators*, p. 142.

⁷¹ L.J. Foster (Nyasaland and Sarawak, 1949-64), OSPA V, box 2. Interviewees David Brown (Tanganyika, 1954-62) and Anthony Humphrys (Uganda, 1955-63) and James Tucket had also completed their National Service, as did many others, including Colin Everard who worked on locust control in Somalia, then later in Uganda, Everard.

overseas career less daunting; for others, seeing ‘peasant farmers’ stimulated an interest in overseas agriculture.⁷²

The presence of empire in British culture and schooling kept awareness levels of a possible imperial career at the back of AOs’ minds, though undoubtedly would have been present in the education and lives of CAS cadets as well. Edgar Wallace’s novel *Sanders of the River* first appeared in print in 1911 and on screen in 1935. Sanders – or what he represented – endured into the post-war period as the ‘archetypal colonial administrator of the early years of the African empire’ so much so that the *Daily Express* invoked him in 1951 to attempt to gather new administrative recruits for the CO.⁷³ Sanders’ image was still bound up with the ‘adventure’ of going to Africa, at least in the mind of one AO, and others also noted the sense of adventure associated with the continent.⁷⁴ Alongside Sanders, memories of reading Rudyard Kipling at school and geography lessons that pointed out how far Britain’s imperialism had enshrouded the globe lurked in the minds of AOs, influencing their choice of career.⁷⁵ In this, AOs were definitely not alone, with the ‘secularized missionary zeal’ of Kipling also influencing recruits to the SPS.⁷⁶ The two minor factors that influenced AOs were therefore also present for other groups of recruits to the CO, to varying degrees, and supplemented AOs’ reasons for joining the service by, in one way or another, exposing them to ideas that normalised either travel, service, or empire.

Colonial Probation: University of Cambridge

Regardless of recruits’ eventual destination in empire, the usual route to the Colonial Agricultural Service was to spend one year studying agriculture at Cambridge, followed by another year at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture (ICTA) in

⁷² Brown, recorded interview; Scaife, OSPA V, box 5, p. 2.

⁷³ Chris Jeppesen, ‘Recruitment To the Colonial Administrative Service’, *The Historical Journal*, 2016, 1–40, p. 2.

⁷⁴ Humphrys, recorded interview; Bigger, recorded interview, A. Kerr (Uganda, 1954–69), OSPA V, box 2; John Goldson (Kenya, 1960–63), OSPA V, box 4; Scaife, OSPA V, box 5.

⁷⁵ Allan, OSPA V, box 2; P.J. Grant (Nigeria and Northern Rhodesia, 1955–??), OSPA V, box 2; Humphrys, recorded interview.

⁷⁶ Collins, pp. 300–301.

Trinidad. It was at Cambridge that probationers' identity as a separate sub-group of officials began to solidify, even though they studied alongside administrative cadets for several lectures a week throughout the university year. The year at Cambridge was not the be all and end all of solidifying the group, as evidenced by AOs like Bill Mitchell and Michael Bigger. Mitchell had gone straight into his second year at Wye Agricultural College and completed his degree within two years, but stayed on for a third, studying geology in his spare time and assisting with research undertaken by the College on sheep grazing in different conditions. During this year, Mitchell also attended economics and statistics courses. Mitchell's studious attitude played well with the CO, who suggested he skip the year at Cambridge as he would be repeating content, and head straight for Trinidad. Despite missing the Cambridge experience, Mitchell found himself, at Trinidad, in Tanganyika, and after his colonial service, part of the group of AOs who evidently identified as a group of their own, in distinction to Administrative Officers and other members of the District Team, but simultaneously as part of that larger group.⁷⁷ Similarly Michael Bigger who 'stayed on' in Tanganyika after independence, had studied for his postgraduate year at Imperial College London on a specialist entomology course after his degree from Trinity College, Dublin, in Natural Sciences.⁷⁸ Thus, while Cambridge (and, in general, a different background to many Administrative Officers) began the process of creating a group identity among AOs, Trinidad and, more importantly, shared experiences on the ground in East Africa, appears to have solidified it.

Nonetheless, the Cambridge course offered to AOs is worthy of inspection, laying the groundwork for some of the opinions AOs would soon form. Mitchell was an exception to the rule; in general, the postgraduate experience of most AOs found them training alongside administrative cadets. The two groups had their own timetables, but course administrators made sure that probationers spent some of their time learning subjects primarily aimed at applicants to the CAS, to foster relations between the two groups. As such, the course for the CAS should be briefly inspected. The universities of Oxford, Cambridge and London all took administrative cadets for the Colonial Service. Educational reforms for Colonial Service recruits were drawn up by the Devonshire

⁷⁷ Mitchell, recorded interview.

⁷⁸ Bigger, recorded interview.

Committee in 1943, a report published in 1945, and the initial course for the CAS recruits named the ‘Devonshire First Course’. A ‘Second Course’ was designed for officers who had been in the field for a few years, initially as a way to bring administrative officers up to speed after a period of war-time suspension of the initial course. After 1953, the First Course became Course A and the Second Course, Course B.⁷⁹ The university a cadet attended was dependent upon the territory they had been assigned to, as the universities divided cadets by language. Cambridge dealt with cadets assigned to East Africa and Northern Rhodesia, who were taught Swahili and Bemba; Oxford taught Swahili and Hausa to other cadets for East Africa and those preparing for a posting in Northern Nigeria; London took the remainder.⁸⁰

Agricultural probationers spent from October to August of their first year in training at Cambridge. The Devonshire committee had recommended that administrative cadets spend from October to December of the following year on the First Course.⁸¹ Cambridge had, however, kept the amount of time required for cadets within the standard university year (with some exceptions) to accommodate teaching staff, and to allow for lectures to be attended by students on courses other than the First Course. The First Course was designed to give cadets a ‘general background to the work which he is going to take up; [...] a proper sense of proportion; [...] and [...] the minimum of indispensable knowledge on which to start his career’.⁸² These aims are reflected in cadets’ timetables. In 1948/1949, administrative cadets read Imperial (later Colonial) History, Anthropology, Law, Economics, Native Administration, Government of Dependent Territories, Tropical Agriculture, and Forestry. Alongside this were lectures on Primitive Beliefs, Islam and a language. In Easter term, Surveying and Field Engineering was taken, as was Animal Health.⁸³ The timetables changed each year, with course administrators constantly

⁷⁹ For simplicity, this chapter will use only the terms ‘First Course’ and ‘Second Course’, the latter of which was not a course that Agricultural Officers took part in at any period.

⁸⁰ Fergus Wilson, ‘Colonial Service Course, Cambridge, Handing Over Notes 1953’, CDEV 6/94, p. 1.

⁸¹ Colonial Office, ‘Post-War Training for the Colonial Service: Report of a Committee Appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies’ (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1945), p. 41.

⁸² Colonial Office, p. 6.

⁸³ Colonial Administrative Service, First Course Lecture Programme, CDEV 6/2.

modifying content and seeking feedback from former students, lecturers and colonies that had received new administrative recruits.⁸⁴

Agricultural probationers were subjected to far more scientific lectures and practical lessons than administrative recruits. A probationer was put on either a course for a postgraduate Diploma in Agricultural Science or a Diploma in Agriculture. Researchers – who later often found themselves working on research stations conducting crop trials and experiments – tended to emerge from the former. Extension officers – who were tasked with convincing African farmers to take up new farming methods – most often emerged from the latter. Those who did not attend Cambridge most often started out in research, having studied at specialist institutions before Trinidad prepared them from tropical crops. Those studying for the Diploma in Agriculture had theoretical and practical sessions in Soil Science and Agricultural Botany three times a week, with an hour of additional Field Experimentation on Wednesday mornings. Probationers on the course for Agricultural Science shared these, and also had theoretical and practical sessions in Zoology and Physiology, Crop Pests and Diseases and a general module on Agriculture.⁸⁵ By 1953 Plant Pathology was introduced, and from the early 1950s, a module on statistics held by the Mathematics department was also opened up for probationers to attend.⁸⁶

The Devonshire Committee had recommended that probationers and cadets train together to some extent ‘in order to foster early contacts which would later on assist co-operation in the field’.⁸⁷ From 1946 onwards, probationers were encouraged to attend the first fourteen lectures on anthropology. These were initially given by E.E. Evans-Pritchard, a highly regarded and prolific anthropologist who had just been made a Reader at Cambridge.⁸⁸ Probationers also attended the Lent Term’s run of lectures on Tropical Agriculture (the earlier Michaelmas Term’s material being deemed too basic for

⁸⁴ CDEV 6/5 contains much discussion about this.

⁸⁵ Timetable for ‘Diploma in Agricultural Science, Michaelmas Term’, and Timetable for ‘Diploma in Agriculture (One-Year Course for Graduates in Agriculture)’, CDEV 6/5/8.

⁸⁶ Plant Pathology: H.H. McCleery (Overseas Services Course, Cambridge) to J.W. Howard (Overseas Services Course, Cambridge), 11 August 1953, CDEV 6/5; Statistics: J. Hanley (University of Cambridge, School of Agriculture) to H.H. McCleery, 15 September 1954, CDEV 6/5.

⁸⁷ Wilson, ‘Colonial Service Course, Cambridge, Handing Over Notes 1953’, CDEV 6/94, p. 3.

⁸⁸ ‘Pritchard, Sir Edward Evan Evans-’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2011 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-31089>> [accessed 11 August 2018]; Mary Douglas, *Evans-Pritchard* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1980), p. 10.

probationers, already versed in rudimentary botany from their science or agriculture degrees) by J.G.M. King, and the first four or six lectures on Animal Health, covering the very basics.⁸⁹ More shared lectures arose over time. By 1948, probationers' attendance to Anthropology was revised down to four lectures and the two groups additionally shared four lectures in Colonial History, Geography, Native Administration and Forestry, as well as those already noted. One administrator of the course was 'sceptical as to the value of such a small number of lectures in any subject' but understood the potential value of probationers having an 'opportunity for meeting administrators on common ground'.⁹⁰ The idea, then, was to foster some kind of relationship between the two groups. However, despite the aim of uniting probationers and cadets, the two remained distinct groups throughout their training.

The different focal point of their academic endeavours, combined with the slightly different backgrounds, and the probationers' tendency towards science-based subjects over the CAS' humanities graduates, ensured probationers and cadets already had their differences before beginning any postgraduate study. The division of cadets by language may also have added to probationers' group identity. Cadets destined for East Africa could get to know one another, sharing all their lectures and knowing they would be posted to the same territories after their training. Probationers were to be sent to all areas of empire, not just limited to those for which Cambridge could provide language provision. Because of this, language for probationers was not compulsory. In 1950 course administrators saw it as 'pointless' to instruct probationers in a language, due to their imminent posting to Trinidad, where there were no staff to continue their language training, which would likely go unused and be forgotten.⁹¹ Three years later, and despite the administrations of Kenya and Tanganyika requesting a better grounding in language for all recruits sent out to them, probationers had not been timetabled a language.⁹²

⁸⁹ M.H. Varvill (University of Cambridge) to R. Ede (University of Cambridge, School of Agriculture), 15 August 1946, CDEV 6/5/4; Frank Engledow (University of Cambridge, School of Agriculture) to Varvill, 28 November 1946, CDEV 6/5/6; Varvill to Miss Sheil (Colonial Office), 26 August 1946, CDEV 6/5/5.

⁹⁰ Hanley to V.H.K. Littlewood (University of Cambridge, Colonial Services Course), 6 October 1948, CDEV 6/5/11.

⁹¹ Hanley to A.G.H. Gardner-Brown (University of Cambridge, Colonial Services Course), 17 July 1950, CDEV 6/5.

⁹² McCleery to Hanley, 6 October 1953, CDEV 6/5.

Other factors exacerbated the differences. After many of the Devonshire Report's proposals had been implemented, timetables for both groups were 'overloaded'.⁹³ J. Hanley, who organised the probationers' timetable, believed that giving them additional lectures beyond the 'technical subjects' that made up the bulk of their studies would 'certainly affect their prospects in the Diploma examinations'. Although Hanley stated that the probationers' timetables were not entirely full, they were nonetheless kept very busy and had high expectations placed upon them: 'No one has ever challenged the necessity for the Agriculturalists to be up [sic] in the Long Vacation.'⁹⁴ One AO recalled his postgraduate Diploma in Agriculture being 'much more demanding' than his undergraduate experience.⁹⁵ Probationers were also immediately disciplined if found to be absent, with anything more than one session missed 'regarded as a serious offence'.⁹⁶ More lectures with cadets had the potential to eat in to probationers' private study and reading time, as well as making additional field work outside of timetabled sessions harder to plan for.⁹⁷ Two timetables reveal that, by the late 1940s in Michaelmas term, probationers on the Agricultural Science Diploma were solidly booked from 9am to 1pm, Monday to Saturday, with an hour break on Tuesdays at 10am. This hour off was made up for by another class on Tuesdays, extending the day until 3pm. A timetable for the Diploma in Agriculture shows at least two hours timetabled for six days a week.⁹⁸ These two hours were shared lectures, meaning that for a minimum of 12 hours a week all probationers studied together. From at least 1950, probationers had timetabled activities into the Long Vacation. Practical Field Engineering and Surveying occurred every morning bar Sunday, from the second full week in July for one month; these were taken with cadets, who also stayed on for the Long Vacation before being posted to their territories.⁹⁹ Probationers had further additional lectures scheduled for the Long Vacation, as many were prevented from attending courses on Animal Health and Colonial History in

⁹³ Varvill to Miss Shiel (Colonial Office), 26 August 1946, CDEV 6/5/5.

⁹⁴ J.W. Howard (Colonial Services Course) to J.T. Saunders, 15 May 1950, CDEV 6/74/1.

⁹⁵ Humphrys, recorded interview.

⁹⁶ Hanley to Howard, 17 October 1951, CDEV 6/5.

⁹⁷ Hanley to Littlewood, CDEV 6/5/11.

⁹⁸ Timetable for 'Diploma in Agricultural Science, Michaelmas Term', and Timetable for 'Diploma in Agriculture (One-Year Course for Graduates in Agriculture)', CDEV 6/5/8.

⁹⁹ Gardner-Brown to Hanley, 5 June 1950, CDEV 6/5; Hanley to Gardner-Brown, 10 July 1950 (with enclosures), CDEV 6/5.

term time due to their clashing timetabled classes.¹⁰⁰ In sum, in term time, probationers had between two and five hours a day, six days a week, and over the summer period more than enough to keep them occupied academically.

Cadets were no less busy. Their timetables for Michaelmas, Lent and Easter terms from 1953 to 1959 (by which time the course was renamed the Overseas Services Course 'A') likewise reveal a six-day week, usually with a minimum of three hours of contact time a day. From 1953, cadets also had sessions from 2pm until 7pm for three or four days of the week.¹⁰¹ While both groups had very full weeks at Cambridge, the desire by course administrators that probationers not only fulfil their timetables, but additionally attend around a quarter of the lectures that cadets did, was perhaps unrealistic, and certainly demanding. It also failed, to some extent, to achieve the aim of the committee in fostering 'early contacts' for later co-operation. Fergus Wilson, a former-AO and at that time the lecturer in Tropical Agriculture at Cambridge, noted in 1953 that the course presented something of a contradiction. Probationers had a 'very full programme of technical instruction' that 'fully occupied' them and 'anything which may help foster co-operation and appreciation of the other man's job must be of the highest importance'.¹⁰² At the same time, he acknowledged that the enormous workload that probationers were under prevented them from taking part in other activities alongside cadets.

The African Services Club (later the Colonial and then Overseas Services Club) at Cambridge had been set up to give cadets and probationers a more informal setting in which to mingle, but Wilson saw the increase in workload as being prohibitive to probationers in attending events put on at the club, unlike cadets, who only had their own timetables to contend with.¹⁰³ One probationer remembered that he 'didn't rush to [the club]; you were more interested in your college'.¹⁰⁴ Others disagreed, and preferred to ignore the curfew of their college in favour of occasionally getting an evening or two a

¹⁰⁰ Hanley to Gardner-Brown, 25 January 1950, CDEV 6/5; Gardner-Brown to Hanley, 5 June 1950, CDEV 6/5.

¹⁰¹ Draft timetables, usually modifying those from the previous year, can be found in CDEV 6/3.

¹⁰² Wilson, 'Colonial Service Course, Cambridge, Handing Over Notes 1953', CDEV 6/94, p. 3.

¹⁰³ Wilson, 'Colonial Service Course, Cambridge, Handing Over Notes 1953', CDEV 6/94, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ Brown, recorded interview.

week in at the club, though even then only mixing with their own.¹⁰⁵ Even into the 1960s the lecturer in Tropical Agriculture, E.W. Momber, complained that stimulating any interest in evening activities was ‘virtually impossible’ and that, while the club did provide something of a hub for the course members, it did so only in a ‘limited’ way.¹⁰⁶ There was the occasional opportunity for leisure time, but even then probationers kept their own company. In January 1950, course administrators found out that plans were afoot for probationers to attend an international rugby match at Twickenham.¹⁰⁷ Probationers were thus more their own group than part of a group with cadets, despite attending some lectures with the latter.

If the Devonshire Committee’s plans to have probationers and cadets work together at postgraduate stage had failed, or at best, not succeeded to the degree course administrators would have liked, how far did Cambridge succeed in preparing Agricultural Probationers for service? For the technical side of the course that made up probationers’ primary timetables, former AOs had mixed feelings. Some AOs believed their Cambridge education was good, setting them up for Trinidad well.¹⁰⁸ Other AOs found that Cambridge repeated some of the content of their undergraduate degree, but was, in general, still a good grounding in the principles of agriculture.¹⁰⁹ At the other end of the spectrum, Cambridge was seen as unnecessary or a missed opportunity. In the former camp was Briggs, speaking, he believed, for most of his year group:

The general feeling of all of us at Cambridge was, I think, that we had a wonderful time, we learnt to play snooker and bridge very well but we’d already got a degree in temperate agriculture and now we were doing a diploma in temperate agriculture. It was a waste of time.¹¹⁰

Briggs’ father-in-law, a lecturer at ICTA in Trinidad was apparently ‘of the same opinion’.¹¹¹ Humphrys, who found himself in extension work, never once had to set up a

¹⁰⁵ Briggs, recorded interview; Alister Allan, recorded interview by author, Southampton/Stirling, 26 August 2016.

¹⁰⁶ E.W. Momber, Overseas Services Courses 1960-61: A Note by the lecturer in Tropical Agriculture, 16 June 1961, CDEV 6/96, p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ Hanley to Gardner-Brown, 25 January 1950, CDEV 6/5/14.

¹⁰⁸ Brown, recorded interview; Wallis, recorded interview.

¹⁰⁹ Northwood, recorded interview.

¹¹⁰ Briggs, recorded interview.

¹¹¹ Briggs, recorded interview.

trial experiment when he worked in Uganda (1955 to 1963) but remembered having to do so multiple times at Cambridge. Peter Wilson, in Tanganyika and also in extension, did find himself planting demonstration plots to compare crop treatments to show local farmers.¹¹² Allan, in extension in Kenya, did similarly, remembering that he had worked closely with research stations and published the results of his trials.¹¹³ Cambridge can thus be seen to at least prepare some AOs well, but the challenges an AO faced in Africa determined how effective they understood their training to be.

Humphrys, contemplating with hindsight, saw his time at Cambridge as a missed opportunity: 'What was really out of order at Cambridge was that they didn't teach us anything in the management of people.'¹¹⁴ As noted above, Humphrys' and Briggs' responses suggest that their opinion of Cambridge was informed by their subsequent role in empire; they were, however, two of the few with complaints. Roger Swynnerton, who worked in Tanganyika and then Kenya before working for the Commonwealth Development Corporation, summed up how the training at Cambridge was seen, he believed, by many:

The usefulness of the professional training at Cambridge varied with the individual's previous degree training. With one exception, for those already having degrees in agriculture it was less relevant than those graduated in pure science [...] For the entomologists and mycologists, concentration on pests and diseases of crops was important. For the agriculturalists, besides agricultural botany, the most valuable component of the Cambridge course was the training given on agricultural experimentation and statistics, both in the lecture room and in experiments carried out on the University farm since, besides agricultural extension, development and administration, an Agricultural Officer almost invariably had to run an experimental programme or station in the District to which he was appointed [...] The Cambridge year can be considered to have been a good induction year.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Wilson, p. 134.

¹¹³ Allan, recorded interview.

¹¹⁴ Humphrys, recorded interview.

¹¹⁵ Roger Swynnerton in OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 7(48), Swynnerton, Roger, p. 2.

Humphrys may have successfully avoided running experiments as an extension officer in Uganda, but in general Cambridge provided a solid underpinning for AOs to use in service.

However, there were some AOs who felt less than satisfied with the course, and wished for it to award a Master's degree, rather than diploma status. Donald Chambers, who went on to become Director of Agricultural Development in Tanzania from 1961 to 1964, remembered:

I was both disappointed and irked that we were not afforded post graduate status and were subjected to petty bureaucracy and unnecessary restrictions, which I personally found very tiresome, having had a considerable amount of responsibility in H.M. forces. Additionally, I was disappointed by the poor academic standards of the School of Agriculture in comparison with the much derided "red brick" universities.¹¹⁶

Chambers had attended Cambridge at the tail end of the 1940s, after reading Agriculture at Durham and completing his National Service overseas and, given that most feedback on the course came from AOs who were slightly younger and less experienced, is one of the few with explicitly negative comments. Like Swynnerton, most AOs found that Cambridge was a good – if sometimes repetitious of their undergraduate degree – induction for Trinidad, where they had the opportunity to apply the knowledge from their undergraduate degrees and the technical skills from their postgraduate diplomas.

Retrospectively, when talking of their course, AOs scarcely mentioned their attendance at the cadets' lectures, though course administrators took the time to collect feedback and make certain amendments accordingly. Cadets and probationers alike had hoped to be lectured by people with 'first-hand experience' of working in the colonies.¹¹⁷ In 1947, when this request was made, the lecturer in Tropical Agriculture, J.G.M. King, already fulfilled the brief, having served for nine years in Tanganyika as an AO.¹¹⁸ Attending Cambridge in 1949, Chambers would likely have received lectures in Tropical Agriculture from King's successor, a Mr T. Bell.¹¹⁹ Fergus Wilson, taking over from Bell,

¹¹⁶ Donald Chambers in OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 1(6), Chambers, Donald, p.5.

¹¹⁷ Varvill to Engledow, 6 March 1947, CDEV 6/5.

¹¹⁸ Varvill to Engledow, 29 November 1946, CDEV 6/5; Ede to Saunders, 7 May 1946, CDEV 6/5/1.

¹¹⁹ T. Bell is timetabled for delivering lectures in Tropical Agriculture in 1949's lent term, and is not, particularly with what comes next, to be confused with George Douglas Hutton Bell (Douglas Bell), who ran

praised King's lectures and efforts, but poured disdain on Bell.¹²⁰ Assessing how well received or not any given lecturer was by the students is, however, difficult. Where Wilson believed Bell unenthusiastic, Keith Mather, who had completed the First Course and gone to Songea District in Tanganyika by 1951, thought that 'Agriculture, had it not been for the genial and unassuming Mr. Bell, might have been a waste of time.' Mather continued: 'Far too much time was spent telling us about soil and the cycle of plant life (whatever that is) & cataloguing things like rain, wind, heat & cold.'¹²¹ On the other hand, AOs brought up soil science and rainfall, temperature and other local conditions and used them in their work.¹²² Opinions on the quality of the agricultural course can therefore be seen as almost entirely dependent on how far the material taught coincided with the experiences of AOs on reaching their territories and getting to work in their new roles.

Suggesting that administrative cadets may have also assessed the success of the course based upon the issues they would go on to face, Mather wrote:

[H]ow far did the course succeed in giving us a considered acquaintance with colonial problems? The answer is that it failed. It did so because the lectures were ill-coordinated & too informative. To import detailed knowledge of imperial history, economic analysis, colonial administration, social anthropology & agriculture inside two university terms is impossible.¹²³

Mather had comments on other lecturers too, and noted that despite having completed an undergraduate degree in Economics at Manchester shortly before enrolling on the First Course, he found the Economics lectures at Cambridge incredibly hard work and wondered how those totally new to the subject would have coped.¹²⁴ While Mather's assessment suggests that cadets struggled with the enormity of the content, AOs were

the Plant Breeding Institute for a number of years, and who Giles Dixon remembered very fondly; Colonial Administrative Service Course, Lecture Programme, Lent Term, 1949, CDEV 6/2; 'Douglas Bell' (Obituaries), *The Times*, 10 July 1993, p. 19; Dixon, recorded interview.

¹²⁰ Fergus Wilson, 'An Agriculturalist in East Africa, 1933-1964. Part I: Colonial Agricultural Service, 1933-1952', Cambridge University Library: Royal Commonwealth Society Library (hereafter RCMS), Papers and photographs of Fergus Wilson, 162/1/1, p. 187.

¹²¹ Keith G. Mather to Gardner-Brown, 5 August 1951, CDEV 6/74/1, p. 3.

¹²² All interviewees reportedly took local conditions heavily into account. Even Humphrys, who had not used his technical skills to set up trials, was happy to offer advice on rainfall in Uganda or in the UK, devising for me some prime holidaying locations based upon data.

¹²³ Mather to Gardner-Brown, CDEV 6/74/1, pp. 1-2.

¹²⁴ Mather to Gardner-Brown, CDEV 6/74/1, pp. 1-2.

simultaneously dealing with their own, overcrowded timetables and a good portion of the lectures that cadets attended. As such, across the board, attendance and exam results were not necessarily what course administrators had hoped for.¹²⁵ One subject that did enthuse probationers and ensure their regular attendance and participation was Tropical Agriculture, eliciting enthusiasm in the lecturer's end of year reports, given that it was to be the focus of their future careers.¹²⁶

Administrators and academics were quick to defend their position. Responses to claims of intensity and difficulty were typified by the CO's countering of criticism such as Mather's. 'Any system of training will evoke criticism'; Colonial Officers who had not attended courses had wished for some training while those who had attended training were 'frequently dubious' of any course's utility.¹²⁷ Cambridge academics duly responded, some on similar lines to the CO. Fergus Wilson, in Cambridge's meeting to assess the memo, was quick to defend both agriculturalists and the course. Wilson believed that 'these Cambridge courses over the past 25 years have done more to break down Administration-Agriculture isolation than [sic] any other single factor.'¹²⁸ However Wilson did also underline the need for the right people to apply to, train on and administer the First Course, as 'Nothing but the very best is good enough or indeed worthy of the needs and aspirations of Colonial peoples.'¹²⁹ Others were similarly defensive of the adequacy of the course. Frank Debenham, Professor of Geography and former member of Robert Falcon Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition of 1910 to 1913, believed that the reason for criticism from cadets was because the wrong type of person had been selected to go into the CAS.¹³⁰ Debenham was not alone in his views of the new intake in the early 1950s, when concerns were raised about the agriculturalists. Before too many changes were to be made to the course, it was deemed by both Hanley and Engledow that it was 'better to

¹²⁵ Hanley to Gardner-Brown, 17 July 1950, CDEV 6/5.

¹²⁶ B.J. Silk, Report of the Lecturer in Tropical Agriculture: Overseas Services Courses, 1958/9', 9 June 1959, CDEV 6/96.

¹²⁷ Colonial Office, Memorandum on the training of Colonial Civil Service wants of the Administrative Grade, late 1951, CDEV 6/74/1, p. 51

¹²⁸ Colonial Office Note on Colonial Service Training: Comments by Members of the Cambridge Committee, 14 March 1952, CDEV 6/74/1, p. 5

¹²⁹ Colonial Office Note on Colonial Service Training: Comments by Members of the Cambridge Committee, 14 March 1952, CDEV 6/74/1, p. 7.

¹³⁰ Colonial Office Note on Colonial Service Training - Comments by Professor Frank Debenham, CDEV 6/74/1.

wait until the standard of agricultural recruit rises'. Hanley acknowledged, once more, the busy timetables and vast array of topics covered, but feared the course was in danger of turning out men who 'are often considerably weaker than men who took the course in years gone by', while simultaneously remarking that, in those 'years gone by', there was far less content on the course, apparently unaware of his own contradiction.¹³¹ Almost a decade later, E.W. Momber, who was delivering the Tropical Agriculture lectures by 1961, reported that exam results for cadets and probationers on the course had only been 'a shade above last year's low level'.¹³²

Whether probationers on the course were appropriate for it or not, their skills and technical abilities were honed at Cambridge, with emphasis on practical work and the theory behind it; the broader tropical agricultural picture was left to be painted by whomever was delivering the lectures. Jeppesen has argued that using former officers to lecture new recruits provided continuity between the inter- and post-war eras.¹³³ At Cambridge it can be seen that continuity did indeed exist, though for AOs, the science- and technology-based aspects of their learning were revised and updated, albeit within the paradigm of Africans' poor use of the land and an Imperial ability to supposedly rectify this; opinions of Africans appear to have remained fairly static. Some of King's notes from his 1947 lectures survive, as do some of Wilson's contemporary material from the early 1950s. The two shared many ideas and approaches to peasant agriculture, but Wilson was particularly influenced by the failure of the Groundnut Scheme, which only arose during King's time lecturing.¹³⁴ Before Wilson's 1950 to 1952 tenure at Cambridge he had taken a three-month extension to his tour in Zanzibar to visit research stations and post-war development projects in both East and West Africa.¹³⁵ King had taught students to be wary of the potential for 'catastrophic results' of a monoculture approach to farming, if one of the many ecological factors at play were to go awry.¹³⁶ Wilson had seen these results for himself. Wilson's time in Tanganyika, at Nachingwea and then Kongwa,

¹³¹ Hanley to Gardner-Brown, 17 July 1950, CDEV 6/5.

¹³² Momber, Overseas Services Courses 1960-61: A Note by the lecturer in Tropical Agriculture, 16 June 1961, CDEV 6/96, p. 1.

¹³³ Jeppesen, 'Recruitment To the Colonial Administrative Service', p. 23.

¹³⁴ F. Wilson, RCMS 162/1/1, pp. 172-176.

¹³⁵ F. Wilson, RCMS 162/1/1, p. 167.

¹³⁶ J.G.M. King, Outline of Talks on Colonial Agriculture ['Mr King's Syllabus'], 1947, CDEV 6/5/21, p. 2.

looking at two of the three areas utilised for the failed Groundnut Scheme left him ‘surprised and disappointed’.¹³⁷ Wilson’s first-hand experience undoubtedly impacted how he saw and taught colonial development, and in his memoir he was critical of the setup whereby Directors of the Scheme in London ignored the real challenges on the ground in favour of policy-driven ideas.¹³⁸ AOs, be it in memoir, interview or responses to surveys, are all critical of the Groundnut Scheme and its planning.¹³⁹ The Scheme lasted long in the British press, public and political memory, and hung around as a point of reference in popular culture for some time after it was wound up in 1951.¹⁴⁰ The Groundnut Scheme was also one of the few development projects the British public had heard of at all.¹⁴¹ For this reason it is difficult to assess how far AOs’ thoughts (or those of Wilson himself) on the scheme were influenced by Wilson and his colleagues and how far the prominence of the scheme in the mind of the public influenced AOs’ thoughts, but all were keenly aware that intensive study had to take place before even small projects were to begin.

Under Wilson, Sir Frank Engledow, who oversaw Agriculture at Cambridge and had been consulted about the Groundnut Scheme – raising some issues with the proposal – gave the first two lectures on Tropical Agriculture about the emergence of modern systems of agriculture from the hunter-gatherer stage onwards.¹⁴² From there, Wilson proceeded along scientific lines with genetics, before moving on to talk about modern best practices as he saw them. Also included was one lecture just about his experience, no doubt lending some weight to the idea that practical experience was always preferable to classroom excellence, a notion that some AOs fell back on later when development agencies began encroaching upon their space.¹⁴³ Wilson commented on the Chagga and ‘the importance of understanding traditional systems, before ‘improved’ ones were introduced’.¹⁴⁴ This reliance on local knowledge was certainly taken up by the last

¹³⁷ F. Wilson, RCMS 162/1/1, p. 173.

¹³⁸ F. Wilson, RCMS 162/1/1, p. 173.

¹³⁹ Humphrys, recorded interview; Mitchell (who branded it a ‘major cock-up’), recorded interview; Wallis, recorded interview; Wilson also includes a minor conspiracy theory in Wilson, p. 47.

¹⁴⁰ Stefan Esselborn, ‘Environment, Memory, and the Groundnut Scheme: Britain’s Largest Colonial Agricultural Development Project and Its Global Legacy’, *Global Environment*, 11 (2013), 58–93, pp. 68–69.

¹⁴¹ Esselborn, p. 68 fn. 33.

¹⁴² Minute by Sir H. Tempney, 30 April 1946, TNA, CO 852/603/6; F. Wilson, RCMS 162/1/1, p. 189.

¹⁴³ Wallis, recorded interview; Humphrys, recorded interview; Mitchell, recorded interview.

¹⁴⁴ F. Wilson, RCMS 162/1/1, p. 190.

generation of AOs. James Tuckett, who served in Tanganyika/Tanzania from 1954 to 1965 would assess what crops should be focussed on in any given area by looking at what was already most successfully grown there, how it was grown, and if there were any conditions to indicate that it could be farmed on a bigger scale or more intensively.¹⁴⁵ This approach to agriculture is certainly in opposition to large-scale plans monocropping huge regions, and reflects King's notes and Wilson's beliefs. King emphasised the 'low level of productivity' from peasant agriculture, though with East Africa being one of the more productive regions.¹⁴⁶ Wilson believed that African agriculture could be enhanced.¹⁴⁷ How far Wilson taught this belief is hard to know, but by the mid-1950s, smallholder agriculture had become a primary focus of AOs on the ground and was solidified with some of the ideas of the Swynnerton plan in Kenya. The desire to increase productivity in any way possible – via indigenous methods or otherwise – was the goal for AOs.

Probationers and cadets alike were also taught a little of how their lecturers perceived Africans. While Wilson reacted to the Groundnut Scheme and adapted some of his thinking, the rebranding of paternalism through development did not always change how the old officers talked about or perceived Africans. Both groups were told by King of Africans' 'gregarious' nature, and Mather recalled being repeatedly told how Africans were 'wonderful judges of character'.¹⁴⁸ These attitudes certainly formed a part of AOs' thinking, alongside their understanding of African farmers that Cambridge tried to instil in them. King highlighted African farmers' 'low level of productivity', lack of an 'effective system', 'very limited knowledge', inability to save money to purchase farm-related goods and an 'aversion to living without neighbours' (reinforcing the apparent communal, 'gregarious' aspect of Africans).¹⁴⁹ These broader, cultural reflections on agriculture went hand-in-hand with the scientific and technical knowledge that AOs gained, reinforcing that Africans needed assistance and that AOs, armed with scientific knowledge, could enhance African agriculture accordingly. Indeed, AOs definitely came away from

¹⁴⁵ Tuckett, recorded interview.

¹⁴⁶ King, Outline of Talks on Colonial Agriculture, CDEV 6/5/21.

¹⁴⁷ F. Wilson, RCMS 162/1/1, p. 172.

¹⁴⁸ King, Outline of Talks on Colonial Agriculture, CDEV 6/5/21, p. 3.; Mather to Gardner-Brown, CDEV 6/74/1, p. 7.

¹⁴⁹ King, Outline of Talks on Colonial Agriculture, CDEV 6/5/21, p. 3.

Cambridge with the technical knowledge from their course, which was put into practice and refined at Trinidad, and a broad understanding of a range of agricultural issues.

[W]e all were so versatile we could deal with crops, or livestock, or forestry, or fisheries. We'd done it all in a superficial way, but then we could switch. So I went from being a field officer dealing with individual farmers to being eventually quite a high-powered research officer, but all [from] the same academic base. But I had the confidence to move ahead. Realising that I didn't know all the answers but I knew where to look.¹⁵⁰

This response again highlights how, dependent on later challenges that AOs had to overcome, their training was assessed as being of various degrees of use.

Cambridge exposed AOs to a wide array of theoretical and practical applications of agricultural methods but also had its limitations when it came to the subsequent application of that knowledge. Andrew MacDonald, who served in Sierra Leone and then Uganda, finally accepting a position at Makerere University to teach Crop Husbandry, remembered when compiling his notes for the course that '[a]ll was well, apart from the fact that I found my knowledge of East African agriculture was not as comprehensive as I had thought.'¹⁵¹ MacDonald's focus on extension work in Uganda – assisting African farmers in increasing their productivity – had only incorporated a limited number of crops and climactic conditions. Similarly, Humphrys, who stayed in extension, made use of fewer technical skills and was in greater need of help managing people, while those who started in or transitioned to research, or who moved around more before independence, benefitted from the training.¹⁵² Though not acknowledged in Cambridge, T. Hughes-Rice, who eventually became Deputy Director of Agriculture in Kenya, had recognised early in his career that the 'main problem' in the Native Reserve areas was less a technical one and more a 'Human problem'. Gaining the 'confidence, respect and willing co-operation' of the people was as necessary as the department's technical abilities.¹⁵³

The training at Cambridge created a kind of 'specialist generalist'; AOs were well-versed in underlying principles and many facets of agriculture, often enough so as to adapt

¹⁵⁰ Wallis, recorded interview.

¹⁵¹ MacDonald, p. 90.

¹⁵² Humphrys, recorded interview.

¹⁵³ OBL, MSS Afr. s. 531, *Machakos Agriculture*, 'The Human Element', 6 October 1949, p. 1.

to new climactic conditions or challenges from pests and diseases, but their training only gave them broad enough outlines from which to begin. Their agricultural adaptability gave them the ability to swiftly apply their knowledge to new situations but not, without subsequent experience with a crop or in an area, an in-depth knowledge of the whole of East African agriculture.

Colonial Probation: Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, Trinidad

Firstly, not all probationers that had attended Cambridge went on to Trinidad, though it was overwhelmingly the norm to spend a year at the ICTA. Giles Dixon had been trained exclusively in wheat, a crop he kept with for the rest of his career, and was deemed more than suitable after his time at Cambridge to get out to Kenya and begin work.¹⁵⁴ AOs who did attend were lectured on Tropical Agriculture, complementing their Cambridge experience, and had a larger scale project to oversee and report on.¹⁵⁵ Lectures were four days a week, Monday to Friday, with Wednesday lecture-free for either a trip to a farm or other area of agricultural interest, or for sports, with an occasional mixture of the two. In 1959, AOs were being lectured in Botany, Entomology, Animal Behaviour, Tropical Soils, Soil and Water Conservation and Economics. On Mondays at least, lectures took up four hours.¹⁵⁶ There was also 'an assortment of other lectures on subjects ranging from clip card filing to irrigation'. As one AO wrote in his diary, 'We don't get much time to get bored, and the hours just seem to fly past.'¹⁵⁷ AOs were expected, on arrival, to find a suitable supervisor for their proposed project, which ran alongside their lectures. These projects covered a range of aspects: David Brown spent a year studying the mechanisation of manure moving; Bill Mitchell worked for the first time with Anthony

¹⁵⁴ Dixon, recorded interview. Dixon had also worked on crop breeding in the UK before his posting to Kenya.

¹⁵⁵ Bigger, recorded interview.

¹⁵⁶ Alister Allan, *Unpublished Trinidad Diary*, entry for period 5 to 9 October 1959, in possession of author; Allan, *Diary*, 26 to 30 October 1959.

¹⁵⁷ Allan, *Diary*, 6 to 19 November 1959.

Humphrys on a land-use survey; Wallis, arriving late and being assigned the only remaining project, reluctantly worked on tobacco production.¹⁵⁸

In all, this amounted to another busy timetable, but AOs were the focus of all of the training at ICTA, increasing the cohort effect. For some, Trinidad would also have been their first trip abroad. For the most part, married men and their wives (and occasionally children) arrived from September to November. The bulk of the bachelors arrived together in mid-September.¹⁵⁹ The trip out as a group would have taken nearly three weeks, giving some time for both reflection on Cambridge and an opportunity for AOs to get to know one another better without the pressure of study to burden them.

AOs' memories of their experiences indicate that some life-long bonds were made and that AOs' identity as a group truly solidified. All interviewees who attended remembered enjoying their time at Trinidad and there are few complaints evident in other sources. It appeared to be the perfect opportunity for AOs to put the technical information learned at Cambridge into practice in tropical conditions. Brian Dowker, who worked in Kenya from 1956 to 1964, remembered that Trinidad 'provided essential background knowledge' for his time in Africa.¹⁶⁰ The time in Trinidad was viewed as more helpful than the time at Cambridge. AOs could use a great deal more of the knowledge gathered in Trinidad, relating as it did directly to tropical crops, rather than some general principles taught at Cambridge that may never have come up again in the course of their careers.

AOs' memories invoke a more collegiate and friendly atmosphere at Trinidad, with Brown recalling that he had a 'great experience', and that he met both his fellow students and lecturers in the club there, unlike when in Cambridge.¹⁶¹ Archibald Forbes (who would later get to the top of the agriculture department in Tanganyika), attending in the mid-1930s, found his experience 'invaluable'.¹⁶² Briggs met his future wife, the

¹⁵⁸ Brown, recorded interview; Mitchell, recorded interview; Wallis, recorded interview.

¹⁵⁹ Allan arrived 29 August 1959, and noted the arrival of married couples from then on, with the majority of other AOs arriving on 17 September 1959: Allan, *Diary*. Wallis remembered rowing in Japan for Cambridge University, and arriving more than a month late for the start of the course, which restricted his freedom of choice for his main project. Ultimately, he reluctantly took on tobacco growing at Trinidad, a crop he was never involved with again: Wallis, recorded interview.

¹⁶⁰ Brian Dowker, personal correspondence with the author, 3 October 2016.

¹⁶¹ Brown, recorded interview.

¹⁶² OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 2 (12), Forbes, Archibald, p. 1.

daughter of a lecturer.¹⁶³ Alister Allan was enrolled in Trinidad in 1959, and within a week of arriving on the island had been invited along with his wife, Margaret, to dinner with Mrs Webster, the wife of the Principal, and Professor John Purseglove, head of Tropical Botany.¹⁶⁴ Allan enjoyed the evening, and the presence of Purseglove is a reminder of how small a world the AO community was. Purseglove had served in Uganda from 1936 to 1952, upon which he followed in Wilson's footsteps and at the latter's recommendation, became the lecturer in Tropical Agriculture at Cambridge, subsequently going to Singapore and then becoming Professor at ICTA.¹⁶⁵

Sport was also emphasised at Trinidad, and the ICTA had a rugby team, a badminton team, and a golf club.¹⁶⁶ The latter saw Allan partner with one of his Professors to play against employees of Caroni Ltd., a sugar cane company, in a tournament after an inspection of their premises and demonstration of their crop dusting techniques one Wednesday afternoon.¹⁶⁷ This greater focus on sports and increased interactions between staff and students came together to provide AOs with a greater sense of themselves as a group, studying together but without administrative cadets or additional non-agriculture lectures. Both the journey out and sporting activities helped to foster a team spirit between AOs that bound them as a group of officials more so than at their time at Cambridge.

The work at Trinidad was clearly technical and in depth, and the frequent visits to sites of interest containing a variety of soils and tropical crops would all ensure that time at ICTA was seen as more appropriate to AOs' training than time at Cambridge. But the Trinidadian experience was not entirely positive for all AOs. Humphrys, though he did his surveying project alongside Mitchell, 'didn't take advantage' of Trinidad. He failed his Diploma and believed about ten others in his year to have done the same, but also understood that the recruiters got 'jolly slack'.¹⁶⁸ Briggs, while not failing, remembered several in his year doing so, though they were still posted to Africa by the CO.¹⁶⁹ Frank Debenham at Cambridge may not have been too far off the mark if this was the case, but

¹⁶³ Briggs, recorded interview.

¹⁶⁴ Allan, *Diary*, 9 September 1959.

¹⁶⁵ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp.s.476 (32), Purseglove, John; F. Wilson, RCMS 162/1/1, p. 194.

¹⁶⁶ Allan, *Diary*, 12 to 16 October 1959.

¹⁶⁷ Allan, *Diary*, 17 to 23 November 1959.

¹⁶⁸ Humphrys, recorded interview.

¹⁶⁹ Briggs, recorded interview.

when AOs from Humphrys' year at Trinidad later wrote up their experiences those who failed either neglected to mention their failure or were unable or unwilling to contribute.¹⁷⁰ Back in London, Humphrys had to report to Geoffrey Nye, agricultural advisor to the CO. Humphrys recalled 'he wasn't very severe with me. He said it was a pretty poor do, and I had to agree with him really. He said just carry on, so in the end it didn't make any difference at all.'¹⁷¹ How far this exposes the initial application and interview stage as inadequate is hard to assess, but may indicate that, as agricultural services expanded across the 1950s, demand outstripped supply, just as figures for CAS recruits had slumped at the end of the decade. Nonetheless, the time at Trinidad unified AOs through team activities, topics that felt more appropriate than those studied at Cambridge, and the fact that they understood themselves to be the entire focus of the course, unlike in Cambridge where cadets and their lectures were, for better or for worse, a disruption to AOs.

Conclusion

Agricultural Officers were a slightly different group of recruits to others in the Colonial Services. For some AOs, there were fewer differences between themselves and CAS candidates, but for many others their backgrounds and early education set them apart. In the latter period of empire, the Colonial Agricultural Service followed and surpassed the trend of the CAS to recruit more men from grammar school backgrounds. Doing so also meant that a more diverse body of recruits enrolled at Cambridge, keen to pursue agriculture and science after deciding at undergraduate level that the Agricultural Service was for them. Their motivations also set them apart from administrative recruits, with some minor coinciding factors, but with the desire for a career in agriculture being the dominant factor. Gardiner has not only helped to progress from Robert Heussler's earlier work on officials, but has demonstrated that there were indeed some differences between administrative and technical recruits.¹⁷² This chapter goes further, to suggest that AOs, while often claiming themselves to be different from other non-CAS recruits, do appear to have had different motivations from others in the technical services, singling

¹⁷⁰ "How We Saved the World".

¹⁷¹ Humphrys, recorded interview.

¹⁷² Gardiner; Heussler.

them out as a cohesive sub-group with their own identity that was evident in part from the beginning and was enhanced through education.

At Cambridge, the Devonshire Committee's objective of fostering relationships for a more smooth-running administration on the ground in empire failed when it came to agricultural probationers and administrative cadets. Probationers non-attendance at Club events and the need for them to only attend a handful of lectures in around two-thirds of the subjects studied by cadets ensured that, while they came into contact with cadets, they remained their own group, exaggerated by their later experience in Trinidad.

Administrators of the course presumed the poor quality of the men, rather than the course itself, was to blame. That some AOs failed the diploma may support this, but the experiences and transferable skills gained appear to have made up for any shortcomings in the quality of the men recruited, allowing them to be adaptable within the broad field of agriculture, and preparing them adequately for most of the tasks they would come up against in their subsequent postings to empire. This knowledge and the AOs' year in Trinidad, solidified them into a group that understood itself *en masse* to be different from administrators and from other technical officers. AOs were more concerned with practical applications of knowledge and believed they were better placed to understand problems facing African farmers with whom they were to come into contact with shortly after their training.

Chapter Two – Agriculture and local networks

Engaging with farmers, staff and other local relationships

Examining the ways British Agricultural Officers (AOs) interacted with African farmers, non-African farmers, African staff and with one another helps explain how AOs saw themselves, their work and their position in a colonial society during the late period of empire and into independence in East Africa. AOs perceived African farmers to be innately conservative, a sense supported by three beliefs and underpinned by policy: African farmers, in contrast with AOs' experiences of already established European settler farmers, needed to have new techniques demonstrated to them to understand them; this was made easier by having other Africans show farmers these new techniques; and, thanks to a great increase in the amount of propaganda issued by the East African Departments for Agriculture, these demonstrations had to be reinforced by as much of this propaganda as possible to encourage more African farmers to follow suit.

However, despite this being AOs' 'default' position, their practical experiences with African farmers and their knowledge of other challenges farmers faced often contradicted these perceptions. AOs recognised several of these contradictory factors: the success of indigenous methods of agriculture; the organisation of structures such as co-operatives, designed to support farmers; and the potential for resistance to colonialism. None were considered linked to the perceived conservatism of African farmers despite all offering partial explanations. AOs needed to maintain their 'default' conservative visions of African farmers in order to justify their own presence and usefulness as empire wound down. AOs did not have an especially fluid understanding of their own identity and thus did not adapt to the contradictions African farmers could present. Instead, AOs had a fixed position shaped by education and occasionally earlier wartime experiences. They cast African farmers in opposition to this, regardless of the contradictions these farmers presented, creating a cognitive dissonance around their understanding of African farmers. Furthermore, even with the recognition of co-ops as a potential asset to successful farming, AOs criticised the lack of upfront funding and support for farmers alongside an

inadequate supply of consumer goods that might help motivate Africans to generate more income for themselves.

AOs' attitudes towards African farmers differed depending on the former's proximity to the latter. Those who initially worked in extension and those who later took roles overseeing wider areas of policy in the agricultural ministries displayed greater awareness of some of the problems affecting African farmers. Research staff who remained in research had considerable knowledge of the projects with which they were involved, but expressed fewer opinions on, and had less contact with, African farmers. Researchers frequently viewed the approach to farming through a more scientific lens while, perhaps predictably, extension officials had a slightly more human view of African farmers and their habits, although they still saw African farmers as students to be taught, with a professional distance maintained between themselves and the farmers. This was encouraged by a new form of didacticism that emerged after the Second World War, focussing on becoming 'friends and advisors' to African farmers. The 'friendship' could only go so far, however, as distinct differences between the two groups were still maintained to help uphold colonial authority.

European and Indian farmers were generally viewed as more independent, more capable, less conservative and more in need of advice – rather than demonstration – than their African counterparts. Settler farmers could go too far the other way, being overzealous in their attempts to maximise yields, causing different problems for AOs to deal with than those presented by Africans. Otherwise, European and Indian farmers were viewed as different to African farmers due to their use of the Agricultural Department or Ministry, reflecting their position, often as estate owners already invested in cash crop production; and their status in colonial society in comparison to Africans.

AOs believed they were politically neutral, and used their African staff to justify this, enjoying professional relationships with African colleagues who declined to express political affiliations or beliefs, or those who, like AOs, saw the influence of politics as a prohibitive factor to getting good work done. Staff were tutored in the ways of the British AO, and the hierarchy of officials was only allowed to be challenged by African colleagues who shared those officials' late-colonial mind-set. This was particularly notable in Tanganyika, where the Africanisation of the agricultural services had been

resisted more strongly by its staff than in Kenya or Uganda. AOs valued a British agricultural education for Africans, and when that was not present, the more educated in general, and the more agreeable to AO's beliefs an African colleague was, the better the two would get along. This helped provide a great feeling of security and solidarity against the encroaching political atmosphere of independence.

African farmers

Inspecting the attitudes held by research and extension officers towards African farmers, and often towards Africans more generally, reveals how those AOs understood both their own role in the mid- to late-1950s as empire wound down in East Africa, and their subsequent place in the newly independent countries. Although AOs most often saw their roles as the start of a career, they had noted the additional benefit of helping African farmers. Despite this, both extension and research officers employed different methods to allow themselves to remain emotionally unaffected by the plights or successes of farmers. Researchers focussed on their work – breeding programs, storage methods, fertiliser and pesticide trials and a host of other experiments to improve the outputs of farmers, African or otherwise – while extension officials had a slowly growing number of African staff – Assistant Agricultural Officers (AAOs) and Agricultural Instructors (AIs) – to mediate their relationships with farmers. Researchers' immersion in their work may easily explain some of their attitudes. Their goals were successful research designed to increase and expand the production of cash crops; they engaged with the problem, but not the people. As such they could be seen as exponents of colonial agricultural policy in the region, focussing tightly on their remit, but at the same time being given a 'free reign' over what experiments were carried out, with 'little interference' from the colonial government or the station director.¹ Michael Bigger, who spent eight years from 1956 as an entomologist at the Southern Regional Research Station in Nachingwea, Tanganyika remembered that staff did not have 'very much to do with farmers', neither African nor European, and that if the overarching goals set by a research officer in Dar-es-Salaam were considered, the

¹ Bigger, recorded interview.

station was left alone.² Researchers came into contact with those Africans who worked as staff at research stations, generally in subordinate roles as assistants until the run up to independence (from the late 1950s, university-educated African research staff became more common, though stations were still short-staffed) and house staff. This was certainly the case for Giles Dixon, for example, whose research focussed on wheat growing in Kenya during the late 1950s. Dixon's anecdotes of individual Africans are restricted to those concerning the 'personal servant' of Hugh Thorpe, Senior Research Officer and Dixon's superior.³ Brian Dowker served in Kenya from 1956 to 1964 at Katumani Experimental Farm in Machakos.⁴ He came across African farmers only when he '[o]ccasionally travelled out into Machakos district in the company of extension officers'.⁵ Extension officers also fed back local knowledge to researchers, gained from fieldwork or meetings held to engage with local farmers and hear some of the problems they were facing.⁶ This only served to further insulate researchers from more direct contact with African farmers.

Still, researchers shared attitudes with extension officers about the African peasantry. Bill Mitchell, who briefly worked in extension before becoming a research officer in Tanganyika, remarked that African farmers were 'basically fairly conservative' and would 'go along with' an idea if it could be demonstrated, 'but if you merely told them about something they would [just] say "oh, yes"'.⁷ 'Demi-official' material also recorded this view. Notes from the Department of Agriculture in Uganda, designed to advise new AOs on some of the responsibilities and difficulties they may have encountered serving in Uganda, stated that '[t]he African is one of the best *apparent* listeners in the world. The Agricultural Officer should not be misled into thinking he has "put something over" until he has seen that something done in the field'.⁸ The spectacularly named Robin Fuggles-Couchman, former Assistant Commissioner for Agriculture in Tanganyika, wrote in 1964 that 'knowledge of how to increase productivity

² Bigger, recorded interview.

³ Dixon, recorded interview.

⁴ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Oxford Development Records Project, Box 1 (11), Dowker, Brian.

⁵ Brian Dowker, personal correspondence with the author, 3 October 2016.

⁶ Wilson, *Bwana Shamba*, pp. 140-41.

⁷ Mitchell, recorded interview.

⁸ OBL, MSS Afr. s. 1226, Cumisky, J.L., p. 4.

outstrips the people's willingness or ability to apply that knowledge'.⁹ Officials believed, and passed on the belief to AOs, that by demonstrating the practical results of applying proven methods, the conservatism of African farmers could be challenged and, in some cases, overcome.

As such, demonstration plots were common, and both research and extension officers noted the benefits.¹⁰ Anthony Humphrys worked in extension in Uganda from 1956 to 1963 and 'was running plant breeding plots and [...] a 200 acre farm within [his] district [...] for demonstrating planting techniques and using oxen'.¹¹ John Ainley served in extension in Tanganyika/Tanzania from 1949 to 1964. While in Tanga Province, the northernmost coastal province in the country, he set up a cotton test plot to demonstrate to farmers the benefits of dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) spraying for reducing insect infestation. Ainley 'was relying on [the] visual evidence [of the test plot] to get the message across', which according to him worked, as cotton production in the area increased 'fourfold' over the year up to the end of 1958.¹² The assessment of Africans by both research and extension officers was that if a method or result had been seen, it would more likely be replicated; the demonstration was essential. Peter Wilson also served in Tanganyika as an extension officer through independence.¹³ Wilson noted that 'the best method to convince growers was to grow demonstration plots' but took the approach a stage further. The plots should be 'grown by selected farmers themselves, not by an instructor, or even ourselves, otherwise the successful crop grown in the correct manner would be deemed successful only because *we* had grown it'. This only furthered the conservative image of farmers and suggests that AOs saw these Africans as believing they were not as capable of particular feats as their British colonisers or their African staff. Demonstration plots overseen by African farmers that produced high-quality cotton went 'a long way in persuading others to follow suit'.¹⁴

⁹ N.R. Fuggles-Couchman, *Agricultural Change in Tanganyika: 1945-1960* (Stanford, CA: Food Research Institute, Stanford University, 1964), p. 68.

¹⁰ Davies, recorded interview; Allan, recorded interview.

¹¹ Humphrys, recorded interview.

¹² John Malcolm Ainley, *Pink Stripes and Obedient Servants: An Agriculturalist in Tanganyika* (J M Ainley, 2001), p. 155.

¹³ Wilson, p. 163.

¹⁴ All quotes from Wilson, p. 134.

Wilson's approach typified a new type of didacticism that diverged from earlier methods of agricultural extension. By the late 1940s, agriculture in Tanganyika had started to expand and outputs from estates (usually European- and Indian-owned, rather than African) increased dramatically from 1945 to 1960.¹⁵ Small-scale African farmers who, according to a study undertaken from 1949 to 1950, oversaw on average between three and six acres each, still needed development and encouragement to mechanise.¹⁶ To achieve this, from 1949 the Tanganyika Department of Agriculture began the 'very slow build-up' of qualified African AIs, believing that African staff had a 'better understanding of local prejudices that [had] to be overcome when introducing new ideas to African cultivators'.¹⁷ David Mwakosya, the African Director of Agricultural Extension in Tanzania's Ministry of Agriculture, wrote in 1966 that colonial extension practice had indeed once been based around 'rules and orders'. Mwakosya claimed this had been the case since the inception of the department until the late 1950s, when it was replaced with an approach of 'persuasion and conviction'. He argued that the former method had fostered a feeling of inferiority among African farmers and made extension workers see farmers as 'irrational and irresponsible'.¹⁸ Fuggles-Couchman, Wilson's superior, noted that 'before the war and for some years after 1945 the agricultural staff tended to be policemen rather than advisors'. From 'about 1955' he continued:

Very strenuous efforts were made to divorce the extension staff from the role of policemen and to concentrate on their proper role of advisors and friends to the cultivators. [...] Suspicion has been removed and farmers have started to come to ask for advice, with the breaking down of the African farmer's old attitude of fearing to be better than his neighbour.¹⁹

Another reason for the change in approach by British AOs may have been the change in priority of different crops. The 1950s ushered in an era focussing on cash crops, whereas the inter- and immediate post-war years had, John Iliffe writes, focussed on

¹⁵ N.R. Fuggles-Couchman, *Agricultural Change in Tanganyika: 1945-1960* (Stanford, CA: Food Research Institute, Stanford University, 1964), p. 28.

¹⁶ Fuggles-Couchman, p. 23; p. 29.

¹⁷ Fuggles-Couchman, p. 74.

¹⁸ D.A. Mwakosya, 'Communication Techniques in Agricultural Extension', in *Agricultural Development in Tanzania*, ed. by Hadley E. Smith (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 89–93 (p. 90).

¹⁹ Fuggles-Couchman, p. 75.

preventing soil erosion.²⁰ Measures to prevent soil erosion were seen as important in preserving the quality of the land, but with little riding on the issue for AOs, the ‘policeman’ approach could work well enough. Once crops were to be grown for export, AOs had to find methods that might least alienate African farmers and minimise resistance to change.

Extension officers in the late-colonial era were clearly beginning to use the ‘persuasion and conviction’ method to overcome these problems; research officers endorsed the approach, sharing extension officers’ views on demonstration plots, believing they allowed farmers to ‘form their own opinions’.²¹ Mwakosya also reveals that the British attitude towards African farmers – that they were ‘die-hard [conservatives]’ – continued to be held by the independent government.²² He believed that four types of farmer existed ‘the world over’: farmers who were easily convinced (a small minority); those convinced only by seeing results before adopting a new method; those who preferred to wait for others to adopt a new method; and those who were not convinced and did not wish to be so (another small minority).²³ Demonstration, and having other African farmers display successful results to their peers, were two ways of satisfying and educating the two main groups.

High-positioned British staff who ‘stayed on’ brought their knowledge and beliefs to the new governments, which made it easier for other AOs to transition smoothly through independence and explains why some AOs’ attitudes persisted after independence. Joseph Hodge has drawn attention to how ‘development structures’ lived on long beyond independence – there was a space into which the ex-colonial AOs could fit.²⁴ Hodge cites Frederick Cooper’s explanation that independent governments sought to ‘demonstrate to voters that the state was improving their lives’ as the reason for this continuation.²⁵ In time ‘former colonial policies, especially conservation measures’ were

²⁰ Iliffe, *Agricultural Change In Modern Tanganyika: An Outline History*, p. 34.

²¹ Dixon, recorded interview.

²² D.V. Chambers, ‘Capital Innovations for Small Farms’, in *Agricultural Development in Tanzania*, ed. by Hadley E. Smith (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 78–88, p. 79.

²³ Mwakosya, pp. 89–90.

²⁴ Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert*, p. 255.

²⁵ Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 88.

abandoned, but the idea and ideals of development were entrenched.²⁶ Researchers in particular, who had been funded by a variety of groups, from colonial governments to independent research boards to foreign institutions, found the transition to independence particularly smooth and experienced little change. ‘Things went on much the same as before’, commented one research officer.²⁷ Access to most facilities was maintained and changes were ‘not quite as big as [one] might [have] expect[ed]’ them to be.²⁸ Sabine Clarke’s work on the heavy focus on research and technology in the ‘second colonial occupation’ after the Second World War shows how Britain emphasised research as a part of the development drive.²⁹ Coupled with Cooper’s assessment of the inheritance of the developmental mind-set, this goes some way to explaining why the status quo, particularly in research, was maintained throughout the early independent era.

Beyond Cooper’s idea of the independent governments inheriting and maintaining ideas of development, assessments of African farmers and how they could be taught were passed on to a new generation of African AIs. Demonstration was emphasised to these AIs as a method to convince African farmers to engage with new approaches to agriculture. Agricultural Field Officer J. Macer-Wright, based in Tanganyika before independence, composed a handbook for Instructors, some of which revealed the attitudes of extension staff and further demonstrated the belief that African farmers needed to be shown exactly what to do in order to take up new methods; by using African instructors, AOs neatly disguised the paternal as fraternal. Instructors could provide the function that Wilson regarded as necessary: Africans needed other Africans to impart information if it was to be taken up. AIs were told in no uncertain terms what their relationships with African farmers should be: ‘An instructor is a teacher; he is not a policeman’.³⁰ In order to hammer the point home it was noted that one of the ‘Golden Rule[s]’ for instructors was ““MAKE FRIENDS”. You will get much more done if you are a friend of the cultivator instead of a policeman’.³¹ R. F. Le Duc of the Tanganyika Department of Agriculture wrote to Macer-

²⁶ Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert*, p. 255.

²⁷ Mitchell, recorded interview. Humphrys, in extension in Uganda, remembered similarly: ‘It carried on very much as before’, Humphrys, recorded interview. Bigger agreed, Bigger, recorded interview.

²⁸ Bigger, recorded interview; Wallis, recorded interview.

²⁹ Sabine Clarke, ‘A Technocratic Imperial State?’.

³⁰ Notes for Instructors, OBL, MSS Afr. r. 94, Macer-Wright, p. 1.

³¹ Notes for Instructors, OBL, MSS Afr. r. 94, Macer-Wright, p. 4.

Wright, stating that the ‘Director [of Agriculture] himself’ reported that the handbook “shows great appreciation of the way in which we are now trying to put the methods we advocate before the African farmer”, while De Luc called the work ‘admirable’.³² ‘Demonstrations’ wrote Macer-Wright, ‘are very important indeed. You can and must SHOW’ a given method. ‘[D]o not move on until you are convinced that the Cultivator knows what you have done and WHY. This “why” [was] most important’ in order to show the farmer that it was not just a method devised ‘by the Government to annoy [the farmer]’, another nod to farmers’ supposedly conservative nature and their possible reluctance to take orders from the colonial staff.³³

Wilson and Macer-Wright’s approach in Tanganyika, using African AIs to encourage African farmers, can be explained in part by the increased drive toward the Africanisation of the agricultural departments in this era. It also confirmed to AOs the superiority of British staff over other Africans. Rather than understanding the idea of training African staff in the mould of expatriates as a threat to expatriate staff, it merely reflected the enormity of the task at hand, indicating the importance of the AOs’ own role. There was an ‘increasing scope’ of field work to be done, but a shortage of African staff seen as capable enough to do so. At the same time, nowhere in East Africa could train African AIs to the same level of education as their British counterparts.³⁴ British AOs thus remained assured that they were part of a hierarchy that placed them above both African farmers and African colleagues. This idea was kept in place by notes from Departments of Agriculture to new extension staff: ‘An important part of your work will be to teach other people to do what you could probably do yourself with much less trouble.’³⁵ From 1960 this began to shift, with ‘further training of particularly promising Field Officers’ becoming available to enable a handful of the best to reach the levels of British AOs.³⁶ Indeed it was Fergus Wilson, who taught many AOs throughout his Cambridge tenure, who returned to Uganda and set about reforming Makerere’s syllabus from 1952 to ensure

³² R.F. De Luc to J. Macer-Wright, 11 June 1957, OBL, MSS Afr. r. 94, Macer-Wright, Notes for Agricultural Officers, Tanganyika.

³³ Notes for Instructors, OBL, MSS Afr. r. 94, Macer-Wright, p. 2.

³⁴ Fuggles-Couchman, p. 74.

³⁵ OBL, MSS Afr. s. 1226, Cumisky, p. 4.

³⁶ For plans, see Development of School of Agriculture at Makerere College [1953], TNA, CO 822/531.

Africans were tutored similarly to their British counterparts.³⁷ Wilson also made efforts to make sure his graduates received employment, asking Kenya's agriculture department to take on eighteen of his newly-trained men, though the outcome of his request is not recorded.³⁸ In Tanganyika at least, however, as soon as this hierarchy and the superiority of British staff were significantly challenged, by offering degree courses at Makerere that would train fully-qualified African AOs up to the British standard, Fuggles-Couchman complained that it deprived the service of the ability to train a Field Officer cadre.³⁹ Regardless of the increased knowledge that an African AO, rather than AI or AA, would have, they were deemed over-qualified for the job that the colonial administration had intended for them.

Propaganda also went some way towards ingraining the idea that African farmers were conservative at heart and was heavily used in Tanganyika and Uganda. Its presence alone suggested that African farmers needed to be told or assisted in multiple ways to fully comply with agricultural policy, beyond solely being shown new methods, and complemented the change of extension AOs from 'policemen [...] to advisors and friends'.⁴⁰ The propaganda, issued by the departments of agriculture for each country in the run up to and beyond independence, made use of visual, aural and printed material, the latter frequently taking the form of pamphlets or leaflets containing seasonal advice on planting, spraying and harvesting.⁴¹ There were also regular newsletter-type publications, from which the leaflet's content was often taken. Visual aids included the reintroduction of film showings, and agricultural broadcasting in Tanganyika focussed on a radio

³⁷ RCMS 162/1/2 contains Wilson's unpublished memoir of his time reforming Makerere.

³⁸ Minutes of a DAO Conference held in Nyeri on 28th and 29th November 1960, KNA, PDA/EBU/1/1/229/4, p. 4

³⁹ Fuggles-Couchman, p. 74.

⁴⁰ Fuggles-Couchman, p. 76.

⁴¹ Fuggles-Couchman, p. 75. For examples of leaflets see: Uganda Department of Information for the Department of Agriculture, *Okufuuyira Ppamba: Amagezi agaweebwa Ekitongole Ky'obulimi* [Spraying Cotton: Advice from the Department of Agriculture] (Kampala: Uganda Bookshop Press, 1959?); Uganda Department of Information for the Department of Agriculture, *Okuziyiza Kayovu: Amagezi agatuweebwa Ekitongole Ky'obulimi* [Suppressing Pests: Advice from the Department of Agriculture] – Luganda Version (Kampala: Uganda Bookshop Press, 1959?); Uganda Department of Information for the Department of Agriculture, *Okuziyiza Obuwuka Obwonoona Emmere Mu Materekero* [Suppress Pests from Infecting Products in your Stores] (Kampala: Uganda Bookshop Press, 1959?), two of which also provided an English translation; Lint Marketing Board, *Pamba/Cotton* (London: Brown Knight & Truscott Ltd., 1960?). The latter is a small, illustrated guidebook to successful cotton planting, growing and picking practice, in Luganda and English, with full page illustrations in colour.

programme – which John Ainley had a hand in writing – loosely based on *The Archers*.⁴² The newsletters or magazines were local publications, written in the vernacular. One of the most successful magazines, *Ukulima wa Kisasa (Modern Farming)*, began life in the Lake Region of Tanganyika. Ainley honed his Swahili skills, editing it for a time and believed the twenty-page publication to be of increasing popularity with ‘forward looking’ farmers.⁴³ It proved popular in the area and in 1959 saw an increase in circulation from 1,700 to 10,000 copies per month. By 1960 circulation had doubled to 20,000 copies per month.⁴⁴

The need for propaganda was not enough, retrospectively, to make extension officials question the success of their own efforts. It had been used more frequently after the war, some time before any of the last cadre of AOs began their careers in Africa, but was not a new tool of the CO when it came to influencing perceptions of Africans. According to Rosaleen Smyth the use of films had ‘figured prominently’, though with limited successes, in British efforts in Africa in the 1930s to ensure there was no erosion of white superiority in the mind of Africans.⁴⁵ Colonial officials in Whitehall thought Africans ‘particularly vulnerable to the “power of the visual medium” as they were “in no position to judge between the true and the false”’.⁴⁶ The paternalistic idea that British officials could use propaganda to shape the minds and opinions of Africans was therefore not new. Indeed, there had been an effort in late 1930s Tanganyika to use film as a visual aid to help the agricultural departments; the guarantee of Colonial Development and Welfare funding was conditional on that basis.⁴⁷ By the start of the war the various film projects had fallen by the wayside. However, coinciding with the introduction of the ‘friends and advisors’ approach, film made a resurgence as a propaganda method, especially in Tanganyika and Uganda (the latter of which, alongside Kenya, had seen little

⁴² John Malcolm Ainley, ‘The African Archers: Advent of Radio & Broadcasting in Tanganyika’, *The Overseas Pensioner*, 2003 <<http://www.britishempire.co.uk/article/africanarchers.htm>> [accessed 25 February 2016].

⁴³ Ainley, ‘The African Archers: Advent of Radio & Broadcasting in Tanganyika’; Ainley, *Pink Stripes and Obedient Servants: An Agriculturalist in Tanganyika*, p. 208.

⁴⁴ Fuggles-Couchman, p. 76.

⁴⁵ Rosaleen Smyth, ‘The Development of British Colonial Film Policy, 1927–1939, with Special Reference to East and Central Africa’, *The Journal of African History*, 20.1979 (1979), 437–50, pp. 437–438.

⁴⁶ Smyth, p. 438.

⁴⁷ Smyth, p. 444.

exposure to the earlier cinematic forays of the CO).⁴⁸ The Uganda Soil Conservation Report for 1949, prepared for the CO, detailed the screening of a film, *The Story of Sayi* (1947), dealing with one African farmer's struggle against soil erosion. '[I]n its preliminary showings in Buganda [the film] [...] met with responsive audiences. There [appeared] to be considerable scope for this medium of propaganda.'⁴⁹ Tanganyika began moving along the same path. Wilson remembered the 'Filmrover', a vehicle fitted with a generator, portable screen and loudspeakers, driving around the bush to towns where a group of farmers could be gathered together and educational films on all aspects of cotton growing could be screened. Despite the success of *The Story of Sayi* in Uganda and earlier efforts screening films on proper tanning practice and tea growing in Tanganyika, Wilson asserted that Africans in Tanganyika were unaccustomed to 'this sort of magic'. It was necessary to first screen a variety of films to normalise the idea of film projection itself. Having learned nothing from the Lumière brothers' initial screenings, Wilson screened 'travel films' issued by the British Council, resulting in 'almost everybody [standing] up and [running] off in blind panic'. African farmers soon settled into the idea however. Their favourite film betrayed an interest in politics (it starred future Prime Minister of Tanganyika Rashidi Kawawa) but gave Wilson scope to play on racial stereotypes. Africans were apparently in 'hoots of laughter' watching Kawawa 'running about on screen'.⁵⁰ This kind of representation of Africans, painting them as somewhat child-like, was common from Wilson, who appealed to other stereotypes, not least of which was the 'wonderful zestful rhythm that only an African [could] achieve'.⁵¹ One of the early films shown to the Tanganyikan audience in the 1930s was a locally made 'farce imitating the knockabout Hollywood style of the 1920s', suggesting that, while Wilson's audience may have responded as he suggests, British officials continued to presume that simple physical comedy was one sure-fire method to appeal to the supposed childlike nature of Africans.⁵²

Taking an exam in a local language (most commonly Swahili) was required to advance up a pay grade in the Colonial Agricultural Service, but also provided another route to convincing African farmers to adopt new methods. The divide between research

⁴⁸ Smyth, p. 445.

⁴⁹ Uganda Protectorate Soil Conservation Report for 1949, TNA, CO 536/222/7.

⁵⁰ Wilson, pp. 135-37.

⁵¹ Wilson, p. 9.

⁵² Smyth, p. 444.

and extension officials was more apparent here. Researchers in the lab spoke in English, to both one another and to African staff. ‘[T]he technical world was in English’, remarked Dixon, whose ‘knowledge of Swahili was very poor’.⁵³ Bigger believed it helped little with his work but ‘certainly helped with [his] increments of salary’.⁵⁴ Extension officials had more reason to use the vernacular, talking to farmers or chiefs in order to convey ‘simple techniques’ to as many African farmers as possible.⁵⁵ This served to reinforce the messages in leaflets and newsletters, or to spread the word to semi-literate and illiterate farmers. Speaking the same language also, once again, reinforced the ‘advisors and friends’ approach; when it came to African farmers, Mitchell believed ‘we were on their side’.⁵⁶ Some extension officials took matters further. Wilson became more than adequate in Swahili, publishing *Simplified Swahili* in 1970 which, according to his publishers, sold over 30,000 copies.⁵⁷ As already noted, Ainley’s Swahili ‘improved apace’ with the editing of *Ukulima wa Kisasa*.⁵⁸ The ability to converse with African farmers, at whatever level, undoubtedly assisted ‘getting to know the district and the people’, a key aspect of the post-war style of extension.⁵⁹ Roger Swynnerton, author of the Swynnerton Plan, served in Tanganyika from 1935 to 1950 before spending the following ten years in Kenya, leaving before independence.⁶⁰ He ‘got it agreed’ with the Department of Agriculture in Tanganyika that postings should be for ‘two tours of [two-and-a-half] years’ in order to build these relationships between extension workers and farmers.⁶¹ Ainley’s African *Archers* also emphasised the importance of reinforcing advice in the vernacular.

As broadcasting services were established in Tanganyika, the Agricultural Department ‘quickly took advantage of it for spreading agricultural propaganda’. There were more serious advice-based programmes, but the highlight of the half-hour

⁵³ Dixon, recorded interview.

⁵⁴ Bigger, recorded interview.

⁵⁵ Humphrys, recorded interview.

⁵⁶ Mitchell, recorded interview.

⁵⁷ Peter M. Wilson, *Simplified Swahili* (Harlow: Longman, 1970); Wilson.

⁵⁸ Ainley, ‘The African Archers: Advent of Radio & Broadcasting in Tanganyika’.

⁵⁹ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 7(48), Swynnerton, Roger, p. 45.

⁶⁰ For a full copy of the Swynnerton Plan see ‘A Plan to Intensify the Development of African Agriculture in Kenya’, TNA, CO 822/965.

⁶¹ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 7(48), Swynnerton, p. 46.

agricultural broadcast was the Tanganyikan version of *The Archers*.⁶² Ainley refined the show over time. He took a radio to villages to allow farmers without access to one to hear it, and decided that the show ‘needed a bit more realism’. Ainley introduced more characters so that as various agricultural situations presented themselves, the main characters – farmers themselves – could overcome problems and successfully grow and harvest their crops. Many situations were considered, and Ainley introduced a ‘local chief, a shopkeeper, a game scout, useful when baboons or elephants were damaging crops’. It was ‘all designed to improve crop yields’ but Ainley ‘always tried to keep the programme light with plenty of jokes and incidents’, appealing to the same presumed child-like nature that caused Africans to so adore slapstick comedies. Despite the initial limited radio circulation ‘the audience widened’, and Ainley remembered one farmer enthusing about a character who had told ‘him to get a move on with his planting’.⁶³ In a 1964 survey of post-World War Two Tanganyikan agriculture, Fuggles-Couchman noted the success: ‘the spoken word of the radio appears to carry great weight’. Indeed, extension advice that was ‘previously scorned’ was taken up when backed by additional propaganda.⁶⁴ Only Humphrys in Uganda remarked upon this scorn, and even then only assuming that African women ‘probably hated’ him, given that he would greet the men and instruct them in weeding, which they would in turn pass on to their wives.⁶⁵

The three factors outlined above – demonstration from AOs, demonstration from African AAOs and AIs, and propaganda to reinforce new methods to farmers – all combined to influence AOs’ understanding of African farmers as conservative. However, AOs’ identity was not as simply formed as Said’s idea of ‘flexible positional superiority’ might suggest.⁶⁶ It could be assumed that AOs understood themselves in relation and opposition to the African farmers’ ‘Other’, but beyond these three arms of agricultural outreach, African farmers’ behaviour often clashed with those expectations. Ainley’s mention of ‘forward looking’ and ‘more literate farmers’ suggests that he felt at least some African farmers had broken from the conservative image, and when AOs actually practised demonstration techniques, their experiences did not always match up to their

⁶² Fuggles-Couchman, p. 76.

⁶³ Ainley, ‘The African Archers: Advent of Radio & Broadcasting in Tanganyika’.

⁶⁴ Fuggles-Couchman, p. 76.

⁶⁵ Humphrys, recorded interview.

⁶⁶ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (St Ives: Penguin Classics, 2003), p. 7.

preconceptions. Instead, AOs arrived, fresh from their colonial education, with their sense of self formed from their training. They were well-tutored in growing a diverse selection of tropical crops, applied rational Western scientific methods to their techniques and believed that capitalism was a global process that Africans needed to engage with to develop their countries, irrespective of their colonial or independent nature. When AOs arrived, they already understood their own position, and this was enforced upon them once again during their initial time in Africa. Humphrys spent his first days in Busoga District, Uganda, looking at old files and District books; Wilson was briefed on conditions by Fuggles-Couchman and given a handful of lectures to show him ‘how Tanganyika “ticked”’, suggesting that some of the understanding of African identity was inherited from the previous generation of AOs and Colonial Officials.⁶⁷ The ‘stubborn resistance’ of African farmers was noted, while working in extension was seen as a ‘specialized art’, adding an air of importance to the role.⁶⁸ Notes from Departments of Agriculture often supported this view.⁶⁹ The identity of Africans was, therefore, shaped by AOs in reaction to the beliefs AOs held about themselves. If AOs were sent out to the colonies to impart their knowledge and help develop East Africa, then East Africa, and by implication East Africans, could not already possess this knowledge or ability to develop.

However, AOs did recognise that African farmers displayed traits that confounded the understanding of them as conservative. Successful indigenous methods, administrative and structural challenges, and possible resistance to the colonial authorities were all recognised by AOs. All three appeared to contradict the solely ‘conservative’ image of African farmers. Adapting new extension techniques to work with existing indigenous methods would lead to a better take up of ideas by African farmers and signalled the ability of officials to work with the farmer’s apparently conservative frameworks, rather than against them, achieving the same outcomes. After a seventeen-year stint in Malawi, Archibald Forbes arrived in Tanganyika in 1954 as Deputy Director of Agriculture. Of his time in Africa, Forbes later recalled that during the late colonial period there was an emphasis by AOs on getting farmers to plant in rows, unlike their earlier agricultural practices. Importance was also placed on transitioning to single crop fields, but ‘later work

⁶⁷ Humphrys, recorded interview; Wilson, p. 13.

⁶⁸ Fuggles-Couchman, p. 26; p. 77.

⁶⁹ OBL, MSS Afr. s. 1226, Cumisky, J.L.

indicated that mixed cropping gave a larger yield per hectare; a lesson learned'.⁷⁰ David Brown, working in extension in Tanganyika, remembered that if African methods were working, 'you'd let them carry on [...] you didn't do any policing'.⁷¹ Ainley found that one could be accepting of local custom not only if it produced better results, but if it also coincided with technical advice. Planting times of cotton were vital for maximising the crops' yield.⁷² Ainley found village elders would only plant cotton when 'a certain star cluster was near the Southern Cross'. 'Fortunately', this coincided with when he needed the farmers to plant.⁷³ The official line to new AOs, at least in Uganda in the mid-fifties, was to be aware that 'African cultivators [had] farmed in this country for centuries and not unexpectedly, may know a lot about it'.⁷⁴ These examples make it clear that local custom or established African agricultural techniques were accepted, but only when they increased yields or coincided with scientifically sound advice for growing. Successful African agricultural practice did not in itself dispel the understanding of farmers as conservative but caused both Forbes and Ainley to realise that, conservative or not, contemporary African methods were as or more capable than progressive, scientifically-backed approaches. Those higher in the departments of agriculture were aware of this possibility, too: 'It is prudent to gain a full understanding of existing methods before rushing into recommendations for changes', read the same set of notes warning of the conservatism and unwillingness of African farmers to change methods.⁷⁵

There were also degrees of acceptance and resistance from African farmers to working within established agricultural practices. J.A.N. Wallis 'stayed on' in Kenya until 1971, working for the Ministry of Agriculture after a brief spell in extension from 1955 to 1956. Wallis found that while African farmers were amenable to advice concerning coffee growing, it was 'difficult to persuade them' to look after beans or maize ("“mahindi”, [...] because the first maize was brought in by Indians"). Nonetheless, working within the

⁷⁰ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 2 (12), Forbes, Archibald, p. 3.

⁷¹ David Brown, recorded interview.

⁷² Humphrys, recorded interview. AOs in extension were issued with detailed guidance on what crops should be planted, weeded and picked throughout the year. See for example: Chief Agricultural Officer, *Buganda Kingdom: A Crop and Soil Conservation Calendar* (Agricultural Services: Mengo, 1958), in possession of Humphrys and viewed by author 16 September 2016.

⁷³ Ainley, p. 155.

⁷⁴ OBL, MSS Afr. s. 1226, Cumisky, p. 9.

⁷⁵ OBL, MSS Afr. s. 1226, Cumisky, p. 9.

understanding of the farmers provided a solution. When hybrid maize was introduced it was thought that resistance to advice would be even greater. Renaming it “hybrid” [...] worked very well’. Understanding it ‘as a new crop’ meant that ‘people accepted it’ and in turn followed extension advice. Wallis understood that some indigenous systems worked. What may have seemed poor agricultural practice for four years may suddenly produce impressive results in the fifth.⁷⁶ From this it appears that African farmers believed that, when it came to established crops, they knew best, but with the introduction of new crops any uncertainty may have lessened their reluctance to turn to AOs for advice.

Comments about the reluctance of African farmers to adopt new methods were also scarce, despite the rhetoric of conservatism from AOs. Occasional anecdotes from extension staff on the challenging nature of African farmers suggested only a ‘small minority’ of farmers were problematic. For the main, as Wilson put it, ‘the vast majority [...] were very receptive to new ideas and farming practices’.⁷⁷ Fuggles-Couchman wrote that African farmers in some parts of the country ‘had undergone a profound change’ in how they saw the cash economy, encouraging them to farm more intensely.⁷⁸ But AOs did fall back on the idea that African farmers were conservative or lazy: women wanted to wait to plant cotton until after the rain when the ground was soft, rather than the appropriate time before rainy season; AOs understood Africans to believe it was ‘too much like bloody hard work’ to enact soil erosion measures.⁷⁹ Others recognised different issues at play and that the blame may have lain elsewhere, such as a lack of consumer goods available to incentivise farmers to enter the economy on a wider basis.⁸⁰ This suggests that some AOs believed Africans capable of changing their methods in theory, but that external factors prevented these farmers from doing so. Confessing that African farmers were all capable, just without adequate incentive, would again clash with AOs’ understanding of themselves and shatter the illusion that African farmers were as conservative and incapable of change as Cambridge had made them believe to be the case. Chambers, the AO who recognised this problem, was Director of Agricultural

⁷⁶ Wallis, recorded interview.

⁷⁷ Wilson, p. 45.

⁷⁸ Fuggles-Couchman, pp. 63-64.

⁷⁹ Anthony Humphrys, recorded interview.

⁸⁰ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 1(6), Chambers, Donald, p.5.

Development (Tanganyika, 1961 to 1964), and from his senior position appeared to see farmers' place in the wider economy, something other AOs did not always recognise.⁸¹

AOs noted a little more resistance to their advice from African farmers towards the onset of independence in Tanganyika. Bill Mitchell remembered that immediately before independence some 'Africans were becoming more bolshie, in as much as they were taking less notice of and having less respect for Colonial Officials' but that it 'didn't really affect [him] on the research side' of things, only his extension colleagues. Though Mitchell recalled that African farmers 'were less inclined to follow what advice they were given', he conceded that there was only 'a bit of [resistance]' and that extension AOs 'tried to get on with the job'.⁸² Before independence, then, AOs appeared to understand that African farmers were usually inclined to take the advice they were given, suggesting that the demonstration/propaganda approach was either enough to overcome their conservatism, or that there were different degrees of resistance to change from African farmers; AOs firmly believed the former.

AOs also held views on the challenges that African farmers were up against that sought to exonerate these farmers from some of the blame over the difficulties they faced. Chambers arrived in Tanganyika as an AO in 1951, became Acting Senior Research Officer in the Northern Region Research Station near Arusha in 1957, then PAO Tanga until working in the Ministry overseeing countrywide research from 1961. Wallis made the switch to research in 1956, focussing primarily on coffee, and became involved with various cooperatives and coffee boards in Kenya throughout and beyond independence.⁸³ Both felt that a multitude of concerns faced African farmers, ranging from practical planting, harvesting and processing problems to cooperative society funding issues to mechanisation.⁸⁴ By contrast, Bigger, who remained at the Nachingwea station until 1963, upon which he moved to the Coffee Research Station at Lyamungo, spoke nothing of issues affecting farmers beyond those related to his own research.⁸⁵ Even this understanding did not stop AOs from falling back on the conservative view of African

⁸¹ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 1(6), Chambers, p.1.

⁸² Mitchell, recorded interview.

⁸³ Wallis, recorded interview.

⁸⁴ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 1(6), Chambers; Wallis, recorded interview.

⁸⁵ Bigger, recorded interview.

farmers. Chambers exclaimed at the ‘considerable ingenuity’ of a farmer who dug a pit to hide a tractor in when debt collectors came calling despite, under the circumstances, this being a relatively sensible option.⁸⁶ Indeed, the way African farmers were financed appeared as a greater concern to extension staff that had to work more closely alongside them – or to those who climbed to higher positions after independence – than to lab-based researchers. Humphrys was critical of a system where ‘good farmers’ got into ‘debt through no fault of their own’; Chambers critiqued the ‘under-capitalisation’ of co-operatives, delaying payment to farmers until the co-ops had sold on the produce, rather than on receipt.⁸⁷ Mitchell, too, noted that after independence the co-ops let large nationalised estates in Tanganyika go to ‘rack and ruin’ because of financial issues.⁸⁸ All three began in extension and all but Humphrys moved to research, yet despite later career moves their sympathies toward some of the African farmers is evident from their early experiences. These AOs also understood that farmers were not restricted just by their conservatism, but, as Chambers demonstrates, it was an easy belief to which to revert.

Falling back on the conservative stereotype provided a greater endorsement of AOs themselves; if Africans were capable of development on their own, the AOs’ role was redundant. Fuggles-Couchman, who emphasised the use of propaganda, noted that despite the high circulation of *Modern Farming*, it was ‘difficult to assess the impact of this paper on agricultural output’, though it had ‘certainly aroused considerable interest among the more literate farmers’.⁸⁹ Indeed, the actual popularity of *Modern Farming* as a publication is also difficult to assess. Priestner, an AO until 1960 in Musoma District on the eastern shore of Lake Victoria, wrote that issues of the magazine were distributed by AIs and unsold copies from the previous month were collected, but no figures were provided.⁹⁰ Chambers was disappointed at farmers’ response to visual aids, despite the efforts the Department went to in producing and procuring them.⁹¹ In independent Kenya in 1966 it was also recognised that *Modern Farming* had not been as effective as it could

⁸⁶ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 1(6), Chambers, p. 7.

⁸⁷ Humphrys, recorded interview; OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 1(6), Chambers, p. 11.

⁸⁸ Mitchell, recorded interview.

⁸⁹ Fuggles-Couchman, p. 76.

⁹⁰ OBL, MSS Afr. s. 922, Priestner, A., Handing Over Notes as Field Officer (Agriculture), p. 9.

⁹¹ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 1(6), Chambers, p. 10; Farm Institutes, undertaking research and training farmers, also contributed to the amount of propaganda distributed to farmers. OBL, MSS Afr. s. 801, Randall, p. 12.

have. The editor of the Kenya edition, Mohamed A. Koor, noted that around sixty per cent of Kenyan farmers were ignorant of modern farming techniques, the magazine was under-circulated and methods of ‘persuasion, indoctrination, information, education and propaganda’ were needed to convince farmers to progress, with ‘particular emphasis in audio and visual aids’.⁹² The continued use of propaganda, despite the effectiveness being at best low and at worst difficult to judge, again helped AOs justify that they needed to be in Africa. Keeping a conservative view of farmers at the back of their minds enabled AOs to uphold their own position, hardening the belief that African farmers were not capable of successful crop growing, even when there were some clear exceptions.

Extension AOs’ attitudes towards African farmers were also influenced by the chain of command structure within the Departments of Agriculture. AAOs and AIs had more practical contact with African farmers, while AOs could keep a position of authority, addressing farmers in groups and in a particular manner, not working with farmers in a hands-on day-to-day scenario as AAOs and AIs would. With less interaction between the AOs and African farmers, the formers’ perceptions of the latter were more easily maintained. The way AOs disseminated information to farmers, aside from propaganda, could also utilise a principle of indirect rule, the method of governance strongly espoused by Lord Lugard in the 1920s. While AIs would instruct farmers and farm-workers one-on-one, AOs could talk to local chiefs who could in turn pass on advice about planting or harvesting times to farmers under them. Brown and Humphrys, in Tanganyika and Uganda respectively, both alluded to this method of instruction.⁹³ Passing information through chiefs was noted in AOs’ training, though served a dual purpose. Chiefs were seen as “‘unprogressive’” and some AOs regarded the use of them as ‘a waste of time’, but it was understood that channelling information through chiefs could enhance relations and an AOs’ ‘standing with the local population’.⁹⁴ Part of the work of AOs was

⁹² ‘Paper prepared by Mohamed A. Koor, Editor, “Ukulima wa Kisasa” for Ministry of Agriculture Seminar on Extension Services for the Smallholders’, KNA, AN 2/14/2, pp. 1-2.

⁹³ Brown, recorded interview; Humphrys, recorded interview.

⁹⁴ G.B. Masefield, *A History of the Colonial Agricultural Service* (Aylesbury: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 67-68.

managing these relationships with senior Africans and, as Humphrys had identified, AOs received very little in the way of training for this task.⁹⁵

Chiefs in pre-independence Tanganyika and Uganda would also be kept up-to-date through a *baraza* (pl. *mabaraza*), the Swahili term for both ‘meeting’ and ‘meeting house’, in the context of an authority or elected council. The location was often a local court-house.⁹⁶ These meetings were designed to gather Africans from the area to discuss matters of concern to them, and for chiefs to pass messages to different groups of Africans. AOs were often present, and were advised to use *mabaraza* to issue agricultural advice but were reminded: ‘let the local people run the meeting, do not try to run it yourself.’⁹⁷ Some AOs used the opportunity to promote propaganda, with slide shows projected for farmers’ benefit.⁹⁸ Officials instructed AOs on how to operate at a *baraza* to ensure agricultural messages were well-communicated. AOs were to keep their talks between five and twenty minutes and were to ‘Speak simply, confine the talk to as few subjects as possible, use homely illustrations familiar to the people and finish the talk with a quick summary of the points raised.’ Brevity was essential, though not because of officials’ attitudes towards Africans, but due to the nature of the meetings, which could see chiefs and a variety of sub-chiefs giving formal speeches for half an hour each, causing their audience to often ‘disperse as soon as they can’.⁹⁹ Other tips given to AOs included to lightly question Africans who had questions or problems at a *baraza* in a conversational way. Information obtained from this method, the Department of Agriculture in Uganda believed, was ‘more likely to be true than answers obtained from a specific enquiry which [were] apt to be coloured by fear of increased taxation etc.’. The typical African was, the Department continued, ‘extremely polite, so polite in fact that in some cases he will tell a lie if he thinks the truth unpalatable to the officer’. Like most groups of schoolchildren there were always one or two troublemakers to be found at the *baraza*, the Department contended, reinforcing an aspect of the child-like stereotype. Complaints could be ‘frivolous’ or ‘mischievous’, questions were sometimes ‘stupid’. But the Department urged AOs to not ‘administer a direct snub’ but to engage with the

⁹⁵ Humphrys, recorded interview.

⁹⁶ Wilson, p. 229.

⁹⁷ OBL, MSS Afr. s. 1226, Cumisky, J.L., p. 9.

⁹⁸ Ainley, ‘The African Archers: Advent of Radio & Broadcasting in Tanganyika’.

⁹⁹ OBL, MSS Afr. s. 1226, Cumisky, J.L., p. 10.

questioner and ‘lead him on by his answers to one’s questions into a ridiculous position’. Others present would immediately pick up on the tactic; ‘a little laughter’ from his peers could go a long way to silencing the troublemaker. The position of teacher was not to be lost, and thus speaking to African farmers in larger groups would maintain an AOs’ authority. When *mabaraza* were not the ideal location, an AO might take some African farmers through fields, asking what was right or wrong with what they saw there.¹⁰⁰ The methods encouraged by the Department were designed to enable AOs to communicate to groups of farmers, but also to ensure their position of superiority over Africans remained.

After independence, the way some of these meetings were conducted changed when supervised by African AOs. Richard Briggs remembered David Mwakosya (who became Director and then Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture after Tanzanian independence) taking part in *mabaraza*. After announcing the official line on planting, weeding and harvesting for whichever crops were grown in that locality, Mwakosya would pick a farmer and ask his opinion on these matters, then move to another, slowly bringing in farmers to discuss their thoughts.¹⁰¹

[M]ore and more farmers were brought into the discussion and after and [sic] hour or so David would sum up and close the meeting. There would then be an informal further discussion over [...] a free cup of tea, a couple of biscuits and a free Crown Bird cigarette for each farmer plus a few Swahili songs on a wind up gramophone. David always wanted as many ladies as possible to attend even though they never entered into the discussion. He always said they would remember the extension message and prod their husbands into adopting it either partially or entirely.¹⁰²

Mwakosya’s use of an informal discussion is not something noted by other AOs as a tactic when conducting meetings with farmers and demonstrates a definite shift even further from ‘policeman’, focussing on a friendly atmosphere rather than the issuance of advice.

European AOs maintained more of a personal distance from African farmers. AOs’ objective was the achievement of policy, not the personal successes of farmers. Shortly after independence in Tanganyika Wilson and Richard (‘Dickie’) Brown, the Director of

¹⁰⁰ OBL, MSS Afr. s. 1226, Cumisky, J.L., pp. 9-11.

¹⁰¹ Richard Briggs, email correspondence with author, 9 October 2018.

¹⁰² Richard Briggs, email correspondence with author, 9 October 2018.

Agriculture for Kilosa District, began to introduce oxen to help farmers plough their fields. Wilson's anecdote on the project's origins recounts a sense of 'astonishment [...] great excitement and celebration' from the farmers at first seeing what the oxen could do at a demonstration day in the district.¹⁰³ Word spread, and cotton producers throughout the district requested the assistance of the oxen; Wilson's team were only too happy to help. The project ended in failure and in his memoir, Wilson displays a greater sadness at the death of the oxen to tsetse fly – the failure of the project – than at how such a death may have kept African farmers only at subsistence level. For some AOs there was a recognition that judging the priorities of African farmers was a difficult business. Chambers, for example, found a supply of cheap oil drums that he had washed out in order to sell at cost price to farmers to store grain in. The farmers subsequently used them for water storage.¹⁰⁴ AOs continued to focus on the objectives of the department more than those objectives' integration into African farming methods, a by-product of the conflict between AOs perceptions of farmers and how these perceptions could be contradicted by interactions with farmers.

However, there were occasional efforts to get input at more senior levels from African farmers. In 1961, E.M. Green, Assistant Director of Cash Crops in Central Province, Kenya, had received demands from African farmers for greater representation on Provincial Agricultural Committees. Green recognised the need for this and encouraged it, hoping to make adjustments to the committee without 'undue disruption'.¹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, in interview, no AOs remarked on how they found out what farmers wanted, only on what AOs would have the farmers do.

A problem that some AOs acknowledged was resistance by farmers to colonialism, especially just before or just after independence. As previously noted, Mitchell remembered farmers as 'bolshie' only from the point that independence seemed likely.¹⁰⁶ Chambers remembered farmers after independence removing or breaking down soil erosion measures 'on the pretext that they were a reminder of the Colonial regime', suggesting African farmers did not feel comfortable outwardly displaying resistance until

¹⁰³ Wilson, p. 142.

¹⁰⁴ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 1(6), Chambers, p. 11.

¹⁰⁵ E.M. Green, Administrative Directive, 23 January 1961, KNA, PDA/EBU/1/30/7.

¹⁰⁶ Mitchell, recorded interview.

the perceived safety of independence was upon them.¹⁰⁷ Humphrys started to have problems with a ‘local prince’ who, realising that independence was near, began demanding more and more support from the Department of Agriculture from a pool of resources designed to help struggling smallholders. Humphrys was adamant that he would not authorise the request.¹⁰⁸ Despite an increase in these kinds of incidences in the run up to and just after independence, resistance or rebellion by African farmers was not bound together with conservatism in the minds of AOs, allowing them to continue to simultaneously hold two contradictory viewpoints. The more senior Fuggles-Couchman, whose overarching role may have allowed him to see a wider variety of responses from farmers rather than the individual experiences used to inform extension staff, appeared not to have mentioned resistance to colonialism by African farmers at all.

Another factor that allowed AOs to maintain their opinions of African conservatism was how far they believed they ‘knew’ or ‘understood’ Africans. Humphrys ‘didn’t really understand them, certainly not the farmers [he] met. They would be working to a different agenda’. He believed that this lack of understanding may have led him to make some ‘stupid suggestions, which [the farmers] knew were ridiculous’ due to a ‘family or tribal’ reason.¹⁰⁹ This hints at the perpetuation of tribal stereotypes, but also suggests Humphrys felt that somewhere a fundamental difference in understanding existed between himself and the African farmers he encountered. The lack of understanding of farmers enabled the default perception of conservatism to remain a comfortable place to which AOs could retreat. Mitchell, though talking only of co-workers, responded that he ‘suppose[d] one had a good working relationship but didn’t understand all their habits, what they’d get up to in their private lives and so on’. He continued: ‘One didn’t pursue and was probably not that interested.’¹¹⁰ Having formed opinions of Africans already, there was no need to investigate further. Part of the boundary between AOs and African farmers, however, came from the need to maintain a pedagogical relationship. Macer-Wright’s handbook for AIs clearly stipulated that ‘Health, Cleanliness and Smartness [...] [were] important – perhaps more important than you think [...] Bad health goes with dirt

¹⁰⁷ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 1(6), Chambers, p. 8.

¹⁰⁸ Humphrys, recorded interview.

¹⁰⁹ Humphrys, recorded interview.

¹¹⁰ Mitchell, recorded interview.

[...] Instructors CAN look clean and smart and they MUST'.¹¹¹ Two uniforms for fieldwork were provided for AIs, and they were expected to wear them, much as AOs wore their uniforms when visiting African farmers. Despite the appeal to a certain type of friendship, the teacher-student boundary was reinforced by a smarter, cleaner presentation on the part of those working for the colonial authorities. AOs and their subordinates remained distinct in dress from the African farmers they were advising, and their uniforms underlined these differences.

Simultaneously, while AOs may not have 'known' Africans, nor wished to 'know' them, they did hold an understanding of how others perceived them. Wallis understood there was an African stereotype and knew it could be sometimes played on to the advantage of the British. When an American diplomat visited Wallis' district in Kenya before independence, he recognised that a series of 'lucky coincidence[s]' heavily influenced the impression of Africa on the visitor. After a tour of some bush-clearing sites, the two arrived at a rest house, and Wallis heard a drum sounding in the distance. On investigating, he and the diplomat found 'bare-chested women and men dancing, a full moon. It was a real Hollywood set – completely unprepared. This American was so impressed, saying "you've set on an amazing visit for me". I said "I didn't plan anything, it's just everyday stuff for us." It was so funny.'¹¹² Thus the ability to at once know 'Africanness', whilst not 'knowing' Africans was another contradictory view AOs held, but the former was used to bolster their role, in the eyes of non-African colleagues.

Wallis provides an example here not only of how AOs tapped in to stereotypes to impress outsiders, but of how AOs built up a cache of examples to demonstrate certain points they wished to get across and how particular memories had obviously solidified with time. In interview Wallis called his American visitor a diplomat, possibly a congressman, though in a piece for OSPA detailing the same incident, he referred to the visitor as an 'academic or diplomat'. Otherwise, the story runs very similarly in both sources with the 'uninhibited' African men and women dancing, the day starting with an encounter with lions and elephants blocking the road during their bush tour and even a mention in both of a rhinoceros' fatal encounter with a bulldozer clearing low level brush

¹¹¹ Notes for Instructors, OBL, MSS Afr. r. 94, Macer-Wright, pp. 2-3.

¹¹² Wallis, recorded interview.

to discourage tsetse fly in the area.¹¹³ It is no coincidence that Wallis uses the story multiple times. It plays into romantic visions of Africa (other than the unfortunate rhino incident, told as a tragedy with hints of a battle between man and nature in order to truly progress), and his awareness of the reality of these ideas being infrequent (his emphasis that none of this was ‘set up’ for the visitor and all pure luck and good fortune). The reader or listener comes away with the impression that the American visitor was naïve in his expectations and Wallis – aware that these stereotypical events were not that common – is the more aware and understanding of what Africa was really like. We are left with the impression that Wallis knew Africa so well, he could utilise it influence others who may have held a simpler understanding of the continent.¹¹⁴ The anecdote ended the same in interview and writing, by noting that Wallis knew not how the American reported back to his superiors about his time in Machakos.¹¹⁵ There is no reason to doubt Wallis’ memory here, and plenty of people use anecdotes to express experiences, but they are used here – and elsewhere – by AOs to help distil down elements of their African experience not only that they remember, but that they wish others to take away, often reinforcing their knowledge and ability to understand Africa, even if not Africans, who proved more elusive.

Wallis also remembered the Kamba being more receptive to soil erosion measures because many had served ‘in the war in troops in South East Asia where they’d seen terraced farming’. It had made a ‘huge impact on them’, yet another example of the idea that Africans needed to see something in action before being able to understand its benefit but dispelling the idea of total African stubbornness to new ideas. However, former African soldiers may have been interested in economic gain more than adopting the methods espoused by the colonial authorities. Hal Brands’ work on the King’s African Rifles (KAR) and the activities of demobilised Africans indicates a desire by former *askaris* (soldiers) to maintain their position at the top of a social and economic hierarchy.¹¹⁶ Brands argues that many Africans who returned to civilian life after the

¹¹³ Wallis, ‘First Posting in Kenya: An American Visitor to Machakos’.

¹¹⁴ For more on AOs’ thoughts on Americans, see Chapter Four.

¹¹⁵ Wallis, recorded interview; Wallis, ‘First Posting in Kenya: An American Visitor to Machakos’.

¹¹⁶ Hal Brands, ‘Wartime Recruiting Practices, Martial Identity and Post-World War II Demobilization in Colonial Kenya’, *Journal of African History*, 46.1 (2005), 103–25
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853704000428>.

Second World War sought out skilled labour and jobs in urban areas, despite the hopes of settlers to see them return to agriculture. Ultimately, the government created barriers for the veterans and, after a clampdown on ex-servicemen's associations, made it increasingly difficult for them to organise after mid-1947.¹¹⁷ Wallis saw the KAR as partly responsible for opening the minds of Africans throughout the whole of East Africa; being posted abroad and exposed to other methods of tropical agriculture provided 'the seed on which [AOs] were building'.¹¹⁸ But, especially given that 10,000 Africans returned to Machakos where Wallis was stationed, with only 10 per cent re-enlisting within a year, there were still a great many Africans by the 1950s in the area who may have held greater economic aspirations after their stint in the KAR and adopted methods not because they had seen them in the past, but because some desired a route to maintaining, or rekindling, economic prosperity.¹¹⁹

When remembering African farmers, the majority of AOs focussed on agricultural ability by region or district, rather than particular tribal attributes. Most thoughts on farmers reflected AOs' focus on local conditions. This could incorporate not only terrain or climactic factors (altitude for coffee growth, soil types more suitable for particular crops) but some historical aspects. Coffee, for example, had been grown in Bukoba, Tanzania, for 'hundreds of years' alleged Mitchell.¹²⁰ While coffee had been in the area since the sixteenth century, this historical understanding of African farmers by Mitchell accurately chimes with what Richard Reid sees as the typical European approach to African history in the early part of the twentieth century: before colonial intervention, Africa, with few written cultures, had no history.¹²¹ Mitchell's views suggest that he believed that African growers in Bukoba could cultivate coffee because they had always done so. By extension, Africans elsewhere could not cultivate coffee, because they had never done so before and thus needed European assistance in order to adapt. The maintenance of this view of African history, as Reid argues, helped to initially justify colonial rule, and the persistence of the idea reaffirmed to Mitchell notions he had about

¹¹⁷ Brands, p. 121.

¹¹⁸ Wallis, recorded interview.

¹¹⁹ Brands, pp. 107, 123.

¹²⁰ Mitchell, recorded interview.

¹²¹ Richard Reid, *A History of Modern Africa 1800 to the Present*, 2nd edn (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), p. 6.

Africans that helped justify his own presence at the end of empire. Mitchell's understanding suggests he believed that without the British intervention in the agricultural sector, Africans would never surpass a basic level of production.

In interviews, AOs gave little time to the idea that certain tribes were more or less capable than others at taking up ideas, steering clear of the idea of martial races. Similarly, memoirs also lack this trait, though there are some exceptions, with Ainley for example recalling the 'haughty bearing so typical of the Masai' as two Masai inspected a polling booth near Tanganyika's independence.¹²² However, even though it remained little mentioned, it was evidently not an unknown aspect of AOs' experiences. Wallis remembered that after some successful irrigation was implemented as a part of the Swynnerton Plan in Kenya's Central Province in the late 1950s, Africans from other provinces were invited to view the results. While AOs hoped that others would apply the same practices elsewhere, Africans from outside of Kikuyu-dominated Central Province apparently agreed that the work was impressive, but noted that 'of course the Kikuyu are hard workers, and we don't like to work that hard, so it won't work with us.'¹²³ If those non-Kikuyu Africans had indeed spoken as Wallis recalled it would suggest that, for Wallis, they merely reinforced the idea that there were conservative African farmers. If they had not – and Wallis was partial to his anecdotes – it suggests a transmission of the idea of the martial race back onto Africans, distancing it from the European mind. Either way, 'knowing' Africans thus appeared to extend only to broad generalisations rather than specialist insights that were the product of productive interaction.

Finally, AOs maintained their superiority through understanding farmers as conservative and not allowing contradictory evidence to play into any redefining of these farmers' characteristics. This, alongside the supporting statements from their superiors, allowed AOs to confirm the worth and status of their own roles. Indeed, to some degree they also wished for Africans to be grateful for assistance. Dixon believed that 'if [Africans] g[o]t things for free, they d[id not] seem to see the [...] value in [them]'; Chambers concurred, and was 'a firm believer that free hand-outs are not generally

¹²² Ainley, *Pink Stripes and Obedient Servants: An Agriculturalist in Tanganyika*, p. 178.

¹²³ Wallis, recorded interview.

respected'.¹²⁴ 'Free hand-outs' went against the ethos of the AOs' brief: to engage Africans in the cash crop economy. African gratitude would provide further endorsement of the AOs' activity from the very group they were persuading. Combined with AOs' education, their ability to produce and disseminate propaganda – regardless of its impact – and a lack of African staff to significantly challenge their position, the conservative image of farmers could justify the British presence in the agricultural sector, whatever the variation in ability of African farmers and the challenges that may have faced them were.

European/non-African farmers

AOs' relationships with non-African farmers were not the same as with African farmers. AOs served in an advisory capacity towards Europeans, had a more direct relationship mediated less by African AIs and AAOs and could use European farms, at least in Kenya and Tanzania, to conduct research which could later be pushed out to African farmers. However, despite the ethnic similarities to AOs, white European farmers only served to further enhance a collective identity between late-colonial AOs rather than to create a sense of kinship between fellow Europeans.

The two main populations of European settler farmers in East Africa were in Kenya and Tanzania; Kenya had by far the largest number of Europeans. Since 1902, immigration to Kenya from Britain had been encouraged, and most settler farms were in an area known as the White Highlands, bordering the Kikuyu-dominated Central Province. By 1952 there was approximately 15,000 square miles inhabited by 30,000 Europeans, of whom 2,500 were farmers. Africans, by contrast, numbered around 5 million in total and had only 52,000 square miles of land suitable for agriculture remaining for them.¹²⁵

In Tanzania, the location of settler farmers was dictated by earlier German rule.¹²⁶ The majority of settler farms were in the north-eastern corner of the country, the location of former German plantations and farms. During the British period a 'few settlers' broke

¹²⁴ Dixon, recorded interview; OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 1(6), Chambers, p. 4.

¹²⁵ Garland G. Parker, 'British Policy and Native Agriculture in Kenya and Uganda', *Agricultural History*, 26.4 (1952), 125–31, p. 128.

¹²⁶ John Iliffe, *Agricultural Change In Modern Tanganyika: An Outline History* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1971), p. 13; Hans Ruthenberg, *Agricultural Development in Tanganyika* (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1964). p. 13; Mitchell, recorded interview.

this trend and started farming in Oldeani and the Southern Highlands.¹²⁷ By 1964 only 1.1 per cent of Tanzanian land was alienated to Europeans, and of this 60 per cent to British citizens. Europeans and Asians ‘almost exclusively’ dominated the plantation and large estate growing in Tanzania.¹²⁸ Plantation outputs increased throughout the 1930s, and by 1960 outputs for sisal (the main cash crop), tea and seed beans far eclipsed their immediate post-war levels, while coffee, pyrethrum and tobacco also increased, but at a less rapid pace.¹²⁹ Despite the high outputs and the significant amount of African labour the estates employed, production could have been higher and more profitable. Nonetheless, outputs were ‘undoubtedly better’ than the average for African farmers.¹³⁰

Uganda had the fewest settler farmers. In 1952 it was estimated that there were fewer than 7,500 Europeans in Uganda, and of them only around fifty engaged in agriculture. Non-African agriculture accounted for around 1.17 per cent of agricultural land use.¹³¹ Indians were the main group of non-African, non-European agriculturalists.

At its founding in 1906, the Agricultural Department in Kenya had been ‘geared almost exclusively’ toward the white settler population. Maize, coffee, sisal and wheat were established as the primary crops. Because of the inexperience of some European farmers, they ‘demanded and received various support services, such as research stations’.¹³² This was particularly the case after the First World War, with the second wave of immigration from the UK.¹³³ Until shortly after the Second World War, there was only one research station in Kenya dedicated to African farming.¹³⁴ The focus on research for white settlers persisted into the 1950s; Dixon’s research on breeding various strains of maize suitable for different soil and climactic conditions was originally intended for the European farmers.¹³⁵ Field Days were held for settler farmers to attend so they could be told about new developments, akin to the demonstration days held for African

¹²⁷ Iliffe, p. 13.

¹²⁸ Ruthenberg, p. 13.

¹²⁹ N.R. Fuggles-Couchman, *Agricultural Change in Tanganyika: 1945-1960* (Stanford, CA: Food Research Institute, Stanford University, 1964), p. 22.

¹³⁰ Ruthenberg, p. 17.

¹³¹ Parker, p. 124.

¹³² Anne F. Thurston, *Smallholder Agriculture in Colonial Kenya: The Official Mind and the Swynnerton Plan* (Cambridge: Cambridge African Monographs, 1987), p. 4.

¹³³ Sir Michael Blundell, *So Rough a Wind* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), p. 34.

¹³⁴ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 7(48), Swynnerton, p. 6.

¹³⁵ Dixon, recorded interview.

smallholders.¹³⁶ Wallis was chief advisor for coffee to a settler community at Ruiru from 1956. Alister Allan's first job on arrival in Kenya's Laikipia District, Rift Valley Province, in 1960 had been to clear a backlog of farm plans for a handful of settler farmers.¹³⁷ Despite some farmers who 'could see the writing on the wall [...] a few had paid the Agricultural Department for farm plans'.

Farm maps were prepared by Agricultural Department teams, then we laid out soil [conservation] ditches, roads, dams if [necessary], drainage ways, etc[.] We prepared cropping programs, rotations, livestock plans for cattle, sheep, pigs, buildings needed, and then made financial budgets, for the next 5 years. It was a bit odd to be doing this, while many people thought the Titanic was sinking!¹³⁸

Allan's work, and that of other AOs in Kenya, would also be of benefit to African farmers after independence. '[T]he maps and conservation works were used later when the farms were sold for small scale African settlement schemes' under the Million Acre Settlement Scheme (MASS) from 1962.¹³⁹

Wallis felt that Kenyan white farmers were overall easier to deal with, but more argumentative and to some extent overzealous by comparison to Africans. Wallis' assessment presents something of a contradiction in itself, but with white farmers speaking in English, communication was more efficient. The argumentative nature that Wallis attributed to settler farmers was an obstacle to overcome for AOs, but Wallis recognised that it came from an approach to farming that differed from Africans. AOs' conservative stereotype of the African farmer meant that encouraging Africans to take up new methods was seen as a challenge. In opposition to this, the argumentative character of settler farmers stemmed from a desire on the settlers' part to maximise yields and profits and increase the settler's livelihood. Wallis found that settler farmers, in contrast to Africans' conservative approach to change, could 'overdo' things (the source of Wallis' arguments with settlers), particularly when it came to irrigation control and fertiliser application. Settler farmers had a 'just in case' attitude: they did not require more irrigation, but would

¹³⁶ OBL, MSS Afr. s. 1125, Department of Agriculture, 'Field Day – Mau Summit' (p. 47).

¹³⁷ Alister Allan, email correspondence with the author, 21 April 2016.

¹³⁸ Alister Allan, email correspondence with the author, 4 February 2017. For a good example of the level of detail involved in a farm plan by the Kenya Department of Agriculture, see OBL, MSS Afr. s. 1125, Department of Agriculture, P.W.A. Davies to Mr. Welton, 31 August 1956, pp. 1-36.

¹³⁹ Allan, email correspondence, 4 February 2017.

put some additional measures in place, despite possible water storage issues; Kenyan estates might ‘double [...] up’ on pesticides to ‘get a bit more money [from the harvest]’ at the risk of destroying the ecosystem and creating new problems. ‘I don’t think we ever got that point across successfully to the large-scale farmers’, Wallis remarked.¹⁴⁰

Chambers came up against similar issues in Tanganyika, where he believed European farmers on the slopes of Kilimanjaro and Meru were ‘over demanding’ in ‘the expectation that agricultural research was a substitute for proper crop husbandry’. As with the European farmers Wallis encountered, there was a risk they might ‘overdo’ things and be argumentative. One farmer had taken two wheat crops a year for twelve years, to maximise his profits but became ‘disenchanted when advised to put something back into the land!!!’¹⁴¹ Some settler farmers responded to advice, with Dixon remembering succinctly that ‘advice to [settler] farmers worked’; a view easier to hold from the confines of a research station.¹⁴²

The attitude of some Kenyan settler farmers towards AOs may be explained by one of two attitudes that many settlers held towards Kenya’s Colonial Government. Michael Blundell was a settler farmer who arrived in Kenya in 1925 and, after a stint in the KAR, purchased his own farm before becoming a representative of the settler community in the Legislative Council and serving twice as Minister of Agriculture, first from 1955 to 1959 and again from 1961 to 1962. Blundell saw a difference between later arrivals and the earlier wave of settlers. Kenya settlers divided into two distinct political camps: those who sought to oppose and challenge the Colonial Government – ‘the old Colonial machine’ – to champion their own rights and their position in Kenyan society; and those ‘who advocated government by agreement’, seeking compromise and working alongside the government to ensure the aims of as many groups as possible were recognised.¹⁴³ The latter group may have been more amenable to advice, as newer residents of the country, less experienced in farming than the earlier settlers. Blundell’s assessment of settler farmers is, however, likely to be heavily influenced by his founding of the New Kenya Group (later the New Kenya Party) in April 1959. The NKG was opposed by the United

¹⁴⁰ Wallis, recorded interview.

¹⁴¹ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 1(6), Chambers, p.4.

¹⁴² Dixon, recorded interview.

¹⁴³ Blundell, pp. 73, 77.

Party, a ‘more conservative’ group of settlers who, unlike the NKG, opposed multi-racialism as a solution to Kenya’s political problems.¹⁴⁴ The presence of the two opposing settler parties suggests there were indeed differences between settler farmers in their approach to government and multi-racialism, but Blundell would have reason to exaggerate these differences to enhance his progressive position at the time, given the later KANU victory in the 1963 Kenyan election. Nonetheless, some settler farmers seemed to have adopted an approach to agriculture where they attempted to farm the land beyond its capabilities and would only reluctantly cede to AOs’ advice.

AOs’ relationships with European farmers in Tanzania were also of a far more advisory nature than the instructive approach taken towards African farmers. European plantations had a ‘direct link’ with research stations.¹⁴⁵ In general, there was less interaction between extension officers and European farmers in Tanzania but land on the estates was used to conduct trials.¹⁴⁶ Shortly after independence, Mitchell had eighteen ongoing fertiliser trials at European estates around Lyamungo, just south of Kilimanjaro. Mitchell worked closely alongside the European farmers, having them harvest and record the differences in yields for each trial area.¹⁴⁷ This contrasted with the demonstration method advocated towards African farmers. It appears AOs believed that, whilst African farmers needed to be *shown* how to farm, Europeans just needed to be *told*. European farmers were seen as capable of assisting researchers while continuing with their own farming, even if their outputs had room for improvement. Not unlike in Kenya, some research stations in Tanganyika were geared purely towards research for estate and plantation owners. The research station at Nachingwea, where Bigger and Peter Northwood were based, served the otherwise sparsely populated area that had been the site of the ill-fated Groundnut Scheme, where European farms of over a thousand acres were the focus of research.¹⁴⁸ European owners of established plantations were also seen as responsible enough to ask for advice, rather than needing to be demonstrated to. In

¹⁴⁴ John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-War World* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), p. 265.

¹⁴⁵ Mitchell, recorded interview.

¹⁴⁶ Brown, recorded interview; Mitchell, recorded interview, Peter Northwood, recorded interview by author, Liphook, 31 January 2017.

¹⁴⁷ Mitchell, recorded interview.

¹⁴⁸ Northwood, recorded interview.

Uganda, Humphrys noted that one large Indian-owned sugar estate had been more likely to bypass extension officers and go directly to research stations, or to eschew domestic assistance altogether and contract advice from other growers in the area or experts abroad. Far from being averse to having his authority overlooked by the estate, Humphrys saw it as the plantation's owners making the best use of their resources. The owners 'knew about sugar growing. They were [a] really professional, competent people. They employed a lot of Africans, put a lot of money into African development.'¹⁴⁹ Humphrys appeared to be aware that this estate did not need his help, nor necessarily that of the Agricultural Service, and was happy for them to defer to other expertise given their contribution to the agricultural project as a whole.

The idea of the frontier, as Bill Schwarz has written, played a significant part in settler identity in two ways. The first was in transactions between the metropole and the colony, 'marking the boundary between civilized settlement and untamed nature'; the second was the 'racial frontier'.¹⁵⁰ As much as the former shaped perceptions in Britain, the latter's role served to not only create a space for the settlers to inhabit, but provided an idea for AOs to react against that allowed them to further carve out their own identity in colonial society. This was particularly the case in Kenya. Settlers were a distinct group from Africans, as were AOs, but despite the interaction between settler and AO, there is some evidence to suggest that AOs kept their distance from Kenyan settlers socially and maintained only a professional relationship. Wallis was keenly aware that having worked on a European farm in Kenya during the war may have led to others believing he was 'pro-settler'. He endeavoured to keep at 'arm's length' from the settler community and 'never established personal relations'.¹⁵¹ In this example it becomes clear that some AOs had to, or felt they had to, remain distinct from European settlers. Keeping this distinction would have maintained AOs' authority over the settler community and reveals a little more about how Wallis felt he had to act as a member of the Colonial Agricultural Service. Maintaining a professional front separated AOs from settlers and suggests that, despite any temptation, AOs did feel the need to retain their place in the colonial hierarchy with respect to the groups they served. Dixon, too, had little to do with settlers beyond their

¹⁴⁹ Humphrys, recorded interview.

¹⁵⁰ Bill Schwarz, *The White Man's World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 111.

¹⁵¹ Wallis, recorded interview.

professional roles.¹⁵² Bill Mitchell, who was born in Kenya in 1932 to a settler family farming coffee, did maintain some relations with the settler community but had been posted to Tanganyika rather than Kenya, where the settler population was far lower. Even these interactions were situation dependent and Mitchell, as noted earlier, saw himself on the side of the African farmers. Mitchell's social life was a 'bit quiet' when posted to Lushoto District as there was no club to socialise at. The couple of settlers he knew were conveniently located close by for social contact. In Bukoba District, however, a few 'commercial types' belonged to the same club, but there was little outside interaction beyond work.¹⁵³ Broadly, AOs kept themselves separate from the European settler communities. They inhabited an overlapping frontier: while settlers pitched themselves against Africans and the government, AOs saw themselves as different from African farmers and subordinate co-workers in the field, but as a part of the Colonial and then Independent Governments. AOs could place themselves at the forefront of the frontier as officials. Equipped with knowledge and a mission, AOs' ability to work with African and settler farmers crossed a racial divide that also allowed AOs in late-imperial Africa to cast themselves retrospectively as a set of progressive-minded officials; their knowledge bridged the gap between both sets of farmers. The heroism that Schwarz regards as an important part of the frontier identity also came into play.¹⁵⁴ AOs' role was important, with all three countries relying heavily on agriculture to keep their economies going, and British development plans focussing strongly on improving the sector, both before and after independence. AOs could dispense this knowledge, bringing science to the frontier with them that would, as AOs understood, lead these countries to better futures.

There were continuities before and after independence that meant AOs had to also act as mediators between farmers and government. This further solidified AOs' identity and enhanced the idea of their independence on the frontier. Before independence in Tanganyika, David Brown found that, despite his less frequent interaction with European farmers, some 'were easy to deal with but there were one or two European farmers that were a bit difficult'. Because of the small community of Europeans, political connections

¹⁵² Dixon, recorded interview.

¹⁵³ Mitchell, recorded interview.

¹⁵⁴ Schwarz, p. 115.

before independence could be invoked to override the advice or authority of AOs.¹⁵⁵ In a similar fashion, Humphrys' difficulties with a local prince in Busoga, Uganda, who demanded barbed wire and oxen for his one-thousand-acre estate from a pool of resources designed for smallholders, came about because of imminent independence and the prince's connections to government.¹⁵⁶ Though only anecdotal, these memories reveal how farmers belonging to more powerful political groups could attempt to exploit agricultural resources, and that AOs had to act as buffers to this kind of behaviour. That this was the case suggests that AOs felt the need to uphold governmental authority and preserve their role as gatekeepers of governmental agricultural resources and knowledge. Patronage networks could be employed by European farmers just as they could by Africans. AOs could defend against this but were a key part of the District Team. Their ideas of exceptionalism were reinforced because they felt themselves, as Priscilla – wife of David – Brown put it, in their own 'separate watertight compartments' that dictated how they had to act with respect to other groups.¹⁵⁷

African Staff

The Agricultural Service was one of the earliest departments of the colonial governments in Africa to begin Africanising its staff.¹⁵⁸ Throughout the 1950s, across all three territories, the higher positions in the Colonial Agricultural Service were most commonly held by British expatriates. In Tanganyika, the gradual influx of African staff to the service started in the late 1940s.¹⁵⁹ However, the pace of Africanisation in Tanganyika's Agricultural Service did not hit its stride until 1959. An increase had been seen throughout the 1950s, but there were 'hardly a dozen' non-junior positions taken up by Africans in 1955/56, demonstrating the slow pace.¹⁶⁰ When Michael Bigger arrived in 1956 he was aware of only one African AO in the entire country.¹⁶¹ Independence changed this, and Tanganyika rapidly promoted Africans to higher positions in the

¹⁵⁵ Brown, recorded interview.

¹⁵⁶ Humphrys, recorded interview.

¹⁵⁷ Brown, recorded interview.

¹⁵⁸ Anthony Kirk-Greene, 'So Few in the Field: The Staffing of the Colonial Agricultural, Forest and Veterinary Services', in *How Green Was Our Empire? Environment, Development and the Colonial Service* (London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 2005), pp. 23–30, p. 24.

¹⁵⁹ Fuggles-Couchman, p. 74.

¹⁶⁰ Ruthenberg, p. 110.

¹⁶¹ Bigger, recorded interview.

department. In mid-1962, 65 of the 162 extension staff in Tanganyika were African. By the end of the year those 65 held almost all of the higher positions. Europeans who wished to stay were 'systematically' moved to teaching or research posts.¹⁶² By comparison, Kenya's rate of Africanisation of the agricultural service eclipsed its southern neighbour. Spurred on by the Swynnerton Plan, a huge number of African AAOs and AIs were recruited to assist the improvements in smallholder agriculture. Though the entire quota of additional staff in Kenya's agricultural service requested by the plan was not achieved until 1961, the increase in staff was noticed by AOs.¹⁶³ When the plan commenced in 1954 there were around 50 AOs, 209 AAOs, 1,254 AIs and 10,746 Assistant AIs.¹⁶⁴ By the end of 1962 there were 137 AO positions, 6 of which were held by Africans. There were also 279 AAOs – a mild increase from the mid-50s – of whom 51 were Africans.¹⁶⁵ By 1961 in Masaka District, Uganda, Humphrys was the only senior member of staff in the Agricultural Department who was not African.¹⁶⁶

AO's relationships with their staff illustrates that AOs believed themselves politically neutral. The politicisation – as AOs saw it – of some areas of government including the agricultural service, particularly as independence approached, allowed AOs to harden this idea and cast themselves in opposition to some of their African colleagues. AOs' broadly good relations with African colleagues also demonstrated a level of professionalism, reinforcing AOs' idea of themselves as apolitical and allowing them to see themselves as observers of, rather than participants in, independence. Avoiding political allegiances in the run up to independence would maintain their professional image and avoid their association with any particular independence movement. Only when significant challenges were posed by Africans at the same or higher rank was politicisation of the service seen as a real issue of concern, playing into the idea that AOs felt the need to also maintain their own position in what would soon become a post-colonial society.

¹⁶² Ruthenberg, p. 110.

¹⁶³ Wallis, recorded interview.

¹⁶⁴ Extrapolated from information provided in Thurston, pp. 79-80.

¹⁶⁵ *The Economic Development of Kenya: Report of a Mission Organized by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development at the Request of the Governments of Kenya and the United Kingdom* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1963), p. 88.

¹⁶⁶ Senior Staff – A.B.C. Scales: Masaka 1961, in possession of Anthony Humphrys, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

In general, as independence approached, there appeared to be only slight changes, if any at all, in the working relationships that research officers held with most of their African colleagues. Alan Scaife, a researcher in Tanzania from August 1960 to July 1967 gave high praise to his assistant, Zephaniah Emmanuel, who played a 'vital part' in the success of his research.¹⁶⁷ Dixon, researching in Kenya, where the station employed several Kikuyu support staff, remembered that throughout Mau Mau and across independence there was very little difference in day-to-day life and work, but conceded that he was not in an area affected by the emergency. Nonetheless, he 'did not feel any sense that the African support staff were unhappy'. This was, he believed, because of the 'entirely technical' nature of the work, suggesting that AOs believed Africans were possibly immune to wider politics if their daily lives instead focussed their energies in what AOs saw as a non-political world.¹⁶⁸ Likewise, Wallis remembered staff relations as 'hierarchical, but very positive' and could recall no tensions.¹⁶⁹ Davies, researching in Uganda, saw one of his African colleague's newly-grown beard as a quiet rebellion against the colonial regime as independence approached, but noted little else changed, including their working relationship.¹⁷⁰ Mitchell remembered his African research staff as professional people, unconcerned 'with village politics and stuff like that'. Indeed, Mitchell saw Africans at his research station in Tanganyika as able to 'rise above' the 'tribalism' of African politics which, he insisted, were mostly minor local squabbles in Tanganyika, at least around Lyamungo. Mitchell may have been simplifying matters, as John Iliffe suggests that in Lyamungo during 1960 to 1961 'clans and extended families had limited influence' and issues that did arise in the area between Africans were more concerned with education, viewed as a route to money and power.¹⁷¹ If anything, Mitchell believed, African research staff had 'no illusions about their fellow men' and were quite possibly 'worried' about their job security. In Kenya he understood this was even worse, with potential Kikuyu dominance after independence being seen as a significant threat for some.¹⁷² This opinion chimes with that of Malcolm MacDonald, the last governor-general of Kenya before independence. MacDonald believed that if Kikuyu were marginalised at

¹⁶⁷ OBL, MSS Brit.Emp. s. 476, Box 6(39), Scaife, Alan, p. 8.

¹⁶⁸ Dixon, recorded interview.

¹⁶⁹ Wallis, recorded interview.

¹⁷⁰ Davies, recorded interview.

¹⁷¹ John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 467.

¹⁷² Mitchell, recorded interview.

independence there would not be a peaceful start to the new nation, suggesting they should be allowed to ‘assert their superior abilities in government’.¹⁷³ MacDonald had a history of siding with future Kenyan President Kenyatta, and saw him as a good candidate for Kenya’s leadership as well as a ““gifted performer””.¹⁷⁴ With this obvious bias, Mitchell’s views may have been retrospectively imposed, but what is clear is that those AOs engaged in research saw themselves and their colleagues as almost wholly professional, and believed any political views held by African staff were kept in check in the workplace because of these levels of professionalism. Extension workers could be understood in a similar light. Brown kept out of politics, as did his African Field Assistant (AAO), Timothy. The two got on well and both Brown and his wife fondly remembered Timothy, recalling him descending into a fit of giggles at Priscilla’s discomfort on a bumpy car journey.¹⁷⁵

Where low or no levels of political engagement from African staff existed, or those staff did not threaten the hierarchy of AOs or the ease with which they could work, there were only a handful of complaints from AOs. However, when higher positions appeared to be taken by Africans who were more politicised, British officials were more critical. AOs’ perceived neutrality and benevolent view of themselves was, they appeared to think, without political overtones, despite the already mentioned potential for resistance from some African farmers and the mild subversion of some staff as independence approached. Some clerical staff could occasionally cause ‘trouble’ accusing British AOs of ‘racialist’ attitudes in order to get their way, but this was not the norm.¹⁷⁶ Conversely, AOs saw politicised Africans of similar rank as a threat to the quality of the work that would be carried out. At the Coffee Research Station at Lyamungo, Tanzania, Mitchell had problems with the station’s newly-appointed director who saw himself, Mitchell believed, as a ‘budding politician, more interested in going to committee meetings to decide what to

¹⁷³ Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963-2011* (Padstow: Yale University Press, 2011), pp. 4-5.

¹⁷⁴ Donald C. Savage, ‘Jomo Kenyatta, Malcolm MacDonald and the Colonial Office 1938-39: Some Documents from the P.R.O.’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 3.3 (1969), 615–32 (p. 615); Clyde Sanger, *Malcolm MacDonald: Bringing an End to Empire* (Buffalo, NY: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995), p. 359.

¹⁷⁵ Brown, recorded interview.

¹⁷⁶ Mitchell, recorded interview; Humphrys, recorded interview.

do with Ian Smith and South Africa' than running the station.¹⁷⁷ In contrast, Humphrys was happy to hand over Busoga District in 1963 after Ugandan independence to an apparently apolitical African, Eliphaz Odeke, remarking that Odeke was 'as well-educated as I was, he'd got all the contacts. It seemed to me that he could do a better job than I could.'¹⁷⁸ The two exchanged letters for around a year after, with Odeke keeping Humphrys informed of updates in the local political scene and the projects in motion in the agricultural sector. They even briefly rekindled contact in 2004. Humphrys may have found Odeke an acceptable choice not only because of his distance from Ugandan politics. Odeke was also educated in agriculture in Britain, and their apparent ease at discussing personal and professional matters suggests that he may have been seen in similar terms to how Humphrys saw himself, given the formative nature of the education AOs received.¹⁷⁹

Mitchell's difficulty with his African superior also reflected an attitude recognised by the upper levels of the Department of Agriculture in Tanganyika and suggests that positive working relationships between AOs and African staff came about through a shared set of ideals, ingrained during education. Forbes, Deputy Director of the Department from 1954 to 1961, 'appreciated that Tanganyika was on the rapid road to independence' and began Africanising the department. He started by localising staff on the various boards until independence, when they 'were controlled by the producers of the product they represented'. The Department itself proved more troubling to Africanise due to a 'certain resistance to the promotion of local people'.¹⁸⁰ This resistance explains the low numbers of African staff in Tanganyika. Fuggles-Couchman had criticised the policy of Makerere University producing too many highly qualified extension officers at the expense of less qualified Field Assistants.¹⁸¹ An assessment of Tanganyika agriculture published in the same year as Fuggles-Couchman's, though based on extensive research by the African Studies Centre of the Ifo-Institute for Economic Research, a Munich-based think tank, claimed almost the exact opposite:

¹⁷⁷ Mitchell, recorded interview.

¹⁷⁸ Humphrys, recorded interview.

¹⁷⁹ Eliphaz Odeke to Anthony Humphrys, 2 February 1964, in possession of Anthony Humphrys, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

¹⁸⁰ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 2 (12), Forbes, p. 2.

¹⁸¹ Fuggles-Couchman, p. 74.

50 capable high ranking officers are certainly more important to the agricultural development of Tanganyika than 1,000 average Field Assistant Officers, as the work of the latter cannot really bear proper fruit if they are not given proper guidance.¹⁸²

Fuggles-Couchman's approach removed the challenge to British knowledge at higher-ranking levels of the service. He may have been fully aware that Makerere University had, to some African nationalists from the 1930s onwards, been seen to embody African solidarity, which might have posed yet more threats to British knowledge.¹⁸³ Macer-Wright's handbook for African AIs, discussed above, also ensured that British AOs could control the knowledge that was passed on to their African subordinates.¹⁸⁴

Indeed, in contrast to those African staff who did have a British education, those with altogether low levels of education were viewed as having potential flaws. Poorly educated AIs might have felt a 'lack of prestige', possibly due to their 'lack of personality'. Others were too bullish and risked 'steam rollering' policy through an area with no regard for nuance.¹⁸⁵ Control of how African AIs might operate was maintained through instruction from British superiors, and the emphasis in Macer-Wright's handbook on cleanliness, personal presentation and a clean, sharp uniform transmitted the colonial approach to the subordinate groups of African staff. De Luc, a senior administrator in the department in Tanzania, called the work 'admirable' and noted that the 'cunningly devised repetition and revisions could not fail to leave an impression on even the least intelligent [sic] of our field staff'.¹⁸⁶ Forbes had hoped to send those Africans seeking higher ranking positions in the department for overseas training, presumably understanding the colonial education as far better than that on offer at Makerere.¹⁸⁷ Certainly, those Africans who did share an educational background with British AOs were accepted with greater ease at the higher levels of the department, while those at the lower-ranking end could have accepted ideas communicated to them.

¹⁸² Ruthenberg, p. 156.

¹⁸³ Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, p. 358.

¹⁸⁴ Notes for Instructors, OBL, MSS Afr. r. 94, Macer-Wright.

¹⁸⁵ OBL, MSS Afr. s. 1226, Cumisky, J.L., p. 9.

¹⁸⁶ R.F. De Luc to J. Macer-Wright, 11 June 1957, OBL, MSS Afr. r. 94, Macer-Wright, Notes for Agricultural Officers, Tanganyika.

¹⁸⁷ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 2 (12), Forbes, p. 2.

Kenya differed from Tanzania. While the latter had Fuggles-Couchman-type figures who staunchly defended the status quo when it came to African staff, the Kenya department was mildly more progressive. Before independence in Kenya, there was an appreciation by AOs that the department needed more local officers and that the structure of the department prohibited certain routes for progression. To move up to the position of AO, one needed a degree and the majority of African staff were without this. A 1953 conference at Embu, of AOs stationed in Eastern Province, recognised the difficulties in moving good staff forward. ‘Intelligent instructors’ were to be selected to go on six-week farm planning courses and the Provincial staff noted that it seemed unfair to prohibit long-serving African staff from ascending the department. It was put forward that staff the department believed entitled to promotion were instead to be awarded an additional bonus – between fifty and one hundred pounds – each year. ‘Most officers were in sympathy with this suggestion’ and discussion about exactly how much AAOs should be awarded ensued.¹⁸⁸ While this was an operational issue, with better pay incentivising staff to perform better and thus being able to plug gaps in the department, it was an issue country-wide. By 1958 in Rift Valley Province, African promotion was well underway. Again, the department negotiated the existing rules governing advancement. Before promotion to a certain level was possible, an African AI had to have given ten years’ service. This was addressed by awarding those who performed well the prefix of ‘Acting’, to overcome the administrative hurdle.¹⁸⁹ Again, the treatment of subordinate staff was down to operational issues, especially the need for more senior Africans to oversee larger areas as budgets were tightened.

There were instances of greater concern for the welfare of African staff, too, though they were not always met favourably by senior members of the department. The DAO Nyanza found, in mid-1961, that accommodation for African staff in his District was not suitable, having not been insect-proofed. He told his superiors that staff were experiencing ‘considerable distress’. The Acting PAO agreed the situation was undesirable and stated that he would ensure that, in the future, steps were taken to make

¹⁸⁸ Minutes of Provincial Conference held at Embu, 15th to 20th June, 1953, KNA, DAO/ILBU [KBU]/1/1/97/2.

¹⁸⁹ Minutes of a Meeting of District Agricultural Officers, Held in the Provincial Agricultural Office at 10.30am on Monday, 3rd March 1958, KNA, AN 13/12/284.

sure staff were accommodated in suitable buildings.¹⁹⁰ This situation suggests that as well as operational issues (staff with a worse home life will perform worse in the field), those AOs in extension at the District level, who came into contact with African field staff, did have some concern for their welfare while those more removed in regional headquarters remained focussed on the policy.

Humphrys' relationship with Odeke, the African to whom he handed over the District, also indicated that British-educated African staff were more readily accepted by AOs as equals than those Africans who received their training at home. In the eyes of AOs, education was a valued commodity for Africans to possess, and a similarity of mind-set would ensure a smoothly running relationship. Humphrys' handover of Masaka District in 1961 to an African colleague was a success because the latter had been 'groomed for a year' by Humphrys to handle the district and was 'well-educated, intelligent [and a] [...] good man'.¹⁹¹ The other African colleagues Humphrys kept in touch with also looked on political influence poorly. S.B. Kikule had worked as an AAO with Humphrys in Masaka District in the late 1950s. Kikule shared in the ideal of a non-political agricultural service and when communicating by letter preferred to 'avoid discussing politics lest [he] get thrown out of [his job]'. Kikule shared the view that there was creeping 'political bias' in making senior appointments to the service.¹⁹² A third African colleague of Humphrys, E.K. Makanga, a clerk at Masaka, felt the same, but wished to write little about it for fear of censorship or worse.¹⁹³ A belief that the Department of Agriculture should be run as an impartial part of the civil service, rather than a politicised arm of government, helped these men bond beyond independence.

It is also clear from social interaction between AOs and Africans that 'well-educated' Africans were more readily accepted. There was no colour bar in at least one of the clubs Wallis frequented in Nairobi (set up, he suggested, to combat the more official Nairobi Club which did prevent African attendance). This was the same for Mitchell in

¹⁹⁰ Minutes of the Meeting of DAOs' and Heads of Sections held in Kisumu on 6th July 1961, KNA, PDA/EBU/1/1/229/36, p. 5.

¹⁹¹ Humphrys, recorded interview.

¹⁹² S.B. Kikue to Anthony Humphrys, 20 February 1964, in possession of Anthony Humphrys, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

¹⁹³ E.K. Makanga to Anthony Humphrys, 27 April 1964, in possession of Anthony Humphrys, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

Tanganyika and Davies in Uganda.¹⁹⁴ Mitchell remembered that the ‘more educated’ Africans would be the ones who would join the clubs, otherwise populated, more often than not, by British Colonial Officials. Mitchell was also the ‘personal friend’ of an African boss of a coffee research station in Kenya, noting that ‘he [the boss] was a sort of “honorary European” in fact, rather than us being “honorary Africans”. He was completely westernised.’¹⁹⁵ How far those Africans who had been educated in Britain or ‘groomed’ in the manner of thinking that a British official employed were accepted because of these reasons is difficult to distinguish. What is apparent is that those Africans who shared in the late-colonial mind-set were more readily accepted as equals by AOs.

Conclusion

The local relationships that Agricultural Officers in East Africa maintained during the final years of colonial rule and across independence played an important part in their attitudes towards agriculture in the region. Those who ‘stayed on’ had often reached significant positions in the departments before independence and remained in their role or a similar one, or were transferred to another role within the department of equal or greater importance. The attitudes AOs formed towards farmers – some carried over from their education, some solidified through interaction on the ground – often dictated how AOs believed policy should continue to be enacted after independence. This was the case even with respect to African farmers, who often defied AOs’ expectations in their agricultural habits. African farmers frequently contradicted the understanding that AOs had of them, but the conservative stereotypes were reverted to in order for AOs to help justify their own presence and, by understanding African farmers in this light, AOs felt more confident in their own identity and at ease with working in late-empire which they understood from the point of view of developing the colonies, rather than exploiting their subjects. Gauging what African farmers needed was sometimes difficult, but AOs’ training and the confidence in their own superiority allowed them to often explain successful African

¹⁹⁴ Wallis, recorded interview; Mitchell, recorded interview; Davies, recorded interview.

¹⁹⁵ Mitchell, recorded interview.

methods as happy coincidences, though there was an appreciation that Africans had centuries of experience working the land and should first be observed rather than altered.

AOs could contrast African farmers with European settler farmers to help enhance the differences between the two groups, again reinforcing stereotypes towards Africans and proving for AOs that the agricultural departments were a necessity. Settler farmers provided a different set of challenges for AOs but again provided a group for AOs to identify against. While settlers could take up scientific advice to the extreme there was a tendency, particularly in Kenya, to avoid socialising with them. Settlers could be a political lot, and AOs maintained what they understood as an apolitical stance, at the forefront of their scientific frontier.

African staff provided a further point of contrast, and, as policy dictated a certain amount of education to rise through the ranks of the department, the African colleagues of AOs who shared their values were those with whom AOs bonded more closely. AOs were more accepting of Africans with a western education, or at the very least a basic education alongside an agricultural one, a shared language and a similar attitude to the creeping politicisation of the departments. Before independence, Tanganyika saw the greatest levels of resistance to the promotion of Africans within the Department of Agriculture. There was greater control over how both senior African staff (educated outside of Africa) and junior African staff (instructed clearly to maintain colonial values) were to be educated, and the attitudes of senior British AOs could contrast sharply with supposedly neutral bodies who inspected the situation from outside. There was a slight distinction between how AOs considered their subordinate staff, dependent on proximity and position within the department, but the desire for a greater African workforce came with an understanding that some of the restrictions of the colonial hierarchy had to be navigated in innovative ways to allow the African workforce to expand and in particular for the best men to rise through the department.

The final cadre of AOs to arrive in the ten or so years running up to independence in East Africa could also break with the earlier imperial era. AOs in all three countries saw their task of cash crop development of African agriculture as separate from their predecessors who often focussed on soil erosion, and, thanks to these AOs' presence at independence, could imagine themselves as overseers of the process from an agricultural

perspective, negating any ideas of empire's decline by focussing on the continuation of their roles, after having ensured that senior African staff shared their values and junior African staff had at least been inculcated with them to some extent. This provided a smooth transition to independence for AOs, which could in turn sharpen their later criticisms of the independent governments, who often broke away at the policy level from an imperial outlook and could remove AOs from positions of power over agricultural extension and research through the government's outsourcing to aid and development agencies.

Chapter Three – ‘Insiders’

The personal networks that helped AOs to mediate their experiences of decolonisation were in part forged thanks to the training and structure of the Colonial Agricultural Service. The structure of the service and the conditions in which AOs worked provided the means to create and enhance professional networks that both played a part in reinforcing or creating new personal contacts and could be used to transfer knowledge to the wider scientific community in East Africa and beyond. The publications that research AOs produced contributed to their sense of prestige, making some of their subsequent difficulties with the transition to independence even more apparent as, they felt, standards slipped with the intrusion of ‘politics’ into research.

AOs’ interactions with, and opinions of, farmers and subordinate staff were only one set of concerns that can help us understand how AOs saw themselves. At the District level, AOs fed information both up and down the chain-of-command and had to negotiate their way within this power dynamic. AOs had a fairly free hand when it came to their District, and their immediate proximity to field staff could create different concerns from those of the Provincial/Regional Agricultural Officers, the latter of whom were more focussed on policy and, especially as independence approached, financial matters.¹ AOs’ rhetorical style altered when communicating with either those at their own level or with PAOs and other superior staff. Style could also alter depending on the subject at hand, highlighting existing alliances or subjects that were less contentious between DAOs and PAOs.

AOs’ training helped to create a cohort effect year to year, but their shared sets of experiences and operational environments gave this last generation of AOs their own group identity that lasted beyond independence, often into second careers, and was later rekindled after retirement through various networks that AOs had established. This final group of AOs had all come into a different East African environment than their superiors.

¹ Provincial/Regional Agricultural Officers, hereafter PAOs or RAOs. The former was the terminology in Kenya, where Provinces was the method of organising the country; the latter in Tanzania and Uganda.

Agricultural development had built upon a body of scientific work carried out by researchers from the 1920s onwards, but in the post-war era the pace had intensified. As independence approached in East Africa there was an increase in the speed of Africanisation (though as mentioned above, at different rates in different countries and with different reactions from senior staff). There were low numbers of European staff, leading to a greater community effect, occasionally with an 'under siege' mentality. AOs' understanding of themselves as being in their own 'watertight compartments', even when seen as part of the District Team, solidified the cohort. Thus, these AOs had worked with a larger number of African subordinate staff than their superiors and had been exposed to this environment immediately unlike their superiors who had seen the number of local employees slowly rise since the end of the Second World War. The final generation of AOs held different levels of professional respect for their African colleagues dependent upon when such colleagues had come into the service. Those Africans who worked their way through the ranks, often from AI to AAO and upwards, were regarded more highly than those who appeared after independence. European AOs deemed Africans who started working in the agricultural departments after independence as 'political', though often this new group of Africans were well-trained, but deployed in what must have appeared to the remaining Europeans as a haphazard and continually changing manner. Finally, while not applicable to all AOs, many went in to the service with a different understanding of empire to their predecessors, having seen several countries gain their independence before attending the Diploma course at Cambridge. This gave them an underlying awareness that empire was in a state of flux.

AOs maintained their personal and professional networks simultaneously. Official correspondence between the same or similar ranks had a more personal tone. Personal correspondence was utilised to keep in touch with former ex-Trinidadians from the same year group. In their spare time, AOs visited each other, occasionally under the guise of research, with research publications and seminars being used to more effectively disseminate knowledge and kick-start or transfer new ideas. Journals were available to stations and AOs reported their presence and influence. Meetings and conferences brought together DAOs and AOs within a Province or Region and provided a good platform for knowledge exchange and an ability to transmit ideas across borders between areas where local climactic conditions were similar in nature, sometimes providing shortcuts to the

types of experiments to be carried out. Provincial and Regional Conferences continued this trend at a higher tier of the departments and independence saw many DAOs rise to these levels, bringing with them their own unique experiences that shaped how they dealt with their work.

Lastly, AOs' networks gave them opportunities to relieve some of the stress they felt over decolonisation. Having a group of like-minded colleagues or former colleagues to communicate with helped maintain friendships but gave a sense of solidarity to this group of men under pressure and facing enormous change. Britain's loss of empire was significant to these AOs not only because they had been educated, often at public schools (though increasingly at state schools as time went on), in a climate that took for granted Britain's empire, but because the existence of empire was a given factor throughout their lives. Though they knew throughout their training that imperial power may not have been what it once was, their enrolment in the Colonial Agricultural Service saw empire play a huge part of their personal and professional identities. Decolonisation had the ability to impact on these AOs' personal power and prestige as well as that of Britain's.

Networks of knowledge

Personal and professional networks were often entangled, with some relationships forged in training, some in research and some in extension. All of these networks could facilitate knowledge exchange at a scientific and agricultural level, but the intensity of the exchange depended on the set of conditions under which AOs operated in different countries. The colonial administration in Kenya, for example, was keen from the early 1950s to encourage inter-district exchanges between AOs in a Province to broaden the knowledge of each officer; anecdotally at least, in Tanganyika and Uganda officers benefitted from their existing friendships more than the department's organisation, even if all three countries held District and Provincial/Regional conferences periodically. AOs took great pride in the belief that this knowledge was being used to assist African agriculture. These AOs look back on their time in Africa as a period where they were working to develop agriculture in these countries and believed firmly that the line taken by the colonial governments, with an emphasis on land ownership and implementing the

latest research possible, was important to Africans. These values were also important to the AOs themselves, with interviewees feeling they all had a part to play in the story of African agriculture, and many maintaining these networks through organisations such as OSPA.²

There were occasionally limits to AOs' acquisition of knowledge that came about from other individuals' influence over what could and could not be acquired by AOs in their districts. In Kenya, a centralised library, overseen for the Ministry of Agriculture by M.E. Luckham (who had at her disposal enough resources to write a short, early history of the department in 1959) enabled stations across the country to order in books, journals and reports relating to agriculture.³ These were not restricted to the region, with journals such as *Iowa Farm Science*, *Tropical Agriculture*, *Rhodesian Farmer*, *Journal of Agriculture - South Australia* and *World Crops* all in circulation.⁴ The library, at least under the authority of Luckham, was not always amenable to AO's requests and thus, certainly for extension officers, could be seen as a wider gatekeeper of agricultural knowledge to the department itself, occasionally causing disturbances. In October 1959 the DAO Eldoret, RVP had requested a handful of books from the librarian on a variety of topics including farm buildings, plant diseases and field drainage. The librarian replied via the PAO, forwarding on only one of the six requests. Luckham stated that the DAO's office already had the best book on farm buildings, that now the department was 'issuing detailed leaflets to all districts' there was no need for books on plant diseases, two other books were 'considered not necessary' and a final book – on veterinary practice – was already held by the office negating the need for a further copy.⁵ The DAO Eldoret did not hold his petulance back: 'It appears that everybody else knows better than we do as to our book requirements, and I see little point in ever requesting any books if this is the attitude that is

² All interviewed AOs felt that their role had helped East African agriculture. Wallis was particularly happy with his role as an expert on coffee, contributing to its production across the world through his 'second career' at the World Bank: Wallis, recorded interview. Mitchell believed 'we ought to be proud of' the British Empire and that it was, with the exception of slavery, nothing to 'be ashamed of': Mitchell, recorded interview.

³ M. E. Luckham, 'The Early History of the Kenya Department of Agriculture', *The East African Agricultural Journal*, 25.2 (1959), 97–105.

⁴ Acting Assistant Director of Agriculture (hereafter Ag. ADA), Rift Valley Province (RVP) to M.E. Luckham, 13 November 1959, KNA, AN/7/21/30. Most of KNA, AN/7/21/1 to AN/7/17 and many beyond in the same file all detail loan requests and circulation of material.

⁵ Ag. PAO RVP to DAO Eldoret, 26 October 1959, KNA, AN/7/21/3.

taken for a perfectly normal request.' He continued to add some 'further comments', ranging from the sarcastic to the combative.⁶

From the attitude of the DAO Eldoret, it can be seen that AOs did have a thirst for knowledge and a desire to do their jobs whilst being as well-informed as they possibly could on issues they would be dealing with. The DAO voiced his annoyance to the Assistant Director of Agriculture at Nakuru and was surprised that the book on farm buildings was really the best in circulation given it was published in 1945, saying he 'assume[d] some advances had been made since then'. He was also frustrated that as 'a very large part of our work [was] connected with livestock' he should be denied the books that would help deliver best practice. The DAO's concerns also extended to his Farm Manager, who desired to have access to the veterinary handbook onsite, ensuring he too was as informed as possible should issues with their animals arise.⁷ Given Wallis' remarks about the masses of unpublished research that he found sitting around in Kenyan Agricultural Research Stations, the role of the central library in Nairobi, dictating in some cases who would or could have access to what information, may have played an unconscious part in what research was being conducted or how extension methods were being enacted on the ground, at least during Luckham's tenure.

Despite these centrally imposed occasional restrictions on access to particular types of knowledge, methods existed by which AOs could enhance their networks and overcome these restrictions. There were three main methods used to strengthen the knowledge of AOs that also contributed to creating and maintaining their networks. Firstly, researchers' trips to see crops and trials in neighbouring Districts, Provinces and countries could help adjust trials at other research stations; the light sense of 'competition' and the exchange of field officers between Districts in Kenya to view schemes on similar terrain to that found in their own District helped to keep DAOs and AAOs open-minded to new ideas; lastly, scientific conferences and publications provided an opportunity to disseminate information to a wider network of scientists and indirectly to other AOs.⁸

⁶ DAO Eldoret to ADA Nakuru, 29 October 1959, AN/7/21/18. Unfortunately, the paper trail appears to end there.

⁷ DAO Eldoret to ADA Nakuru, 29 October 1959, KNA, AN/7/21/18.

⁸ Even in the early 1950s, the department in Kenya was organising inter-district visits: A.S. Leask to G.J. Gollop (PAO Coast Province (hereafter Coast)), 17 April 1951, KNA, DAO/TTA/1/1/70/63. This continued

Where the first two opportunities were less evident for an AO, such as for James Tuckett, the only researcher in Njombe, Tanganyika when he arrived in 1954, collecting data from trials and seeking to publish it would still help to disseminate the information.

Departmental reports were still called for and gave a solid foundation from which experiments could be constructed and carried out.⁹ In Tuckett's case, his work on pyrethrum development was published by the department and was designed to be used by other AOs in the same country who might put it to good use in their region, particularly if they found themselves overseeing farmers on similar soil types or climactic conditions.¹⁰

AOs believed that agricultural advance was key to African progress because it would develop the economy of the countries, whether under a colonial or independent government. AOs would retrospectively express this opinion through their dismay at the lack of perceived progress after independence, painting it in contrast to the late colonial era. The economy in Tanzania 'backfired' and 'nose-dived' due to nationalisation of agriculture, according to Bill Mitchell. Tuckett also believed that the Tanzanian economy was 'upset [...] quite seriously' as a result of government intervention in marketing (incorrectly, Tuckett believed) established crops like pyrethrum, coffee and cotton. Wallis believed that Kenyans just needed to see the 'economic advantage' of terracing to adopt it as a method of land organisation (a similar view was shared by Michael Blundell who hoped for the organisation of land into 'sound economic units'). In Uganda, John Davies saw the export market for Uganda as a primary source of income for the country.¹¹ Due to their education as probationers at Cambridge, AOs' understood that the expansion of the economy called for the expansion of agriculture.

to the end of the decade and was recommended beyond that point, too, though with an increasing emphasis on keeping costs down. See Conference of Directors and Senior Officers of Overseas Departments of Agriculture and Agricultural Institutions, September, 1958: Extension Methods in African Areas of Kenya, by A.H. Savile, Chief Agriculturalist and T. Hughes-Rice, M.B.E., Assistant Director of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture, Kenya, KNA, PDA/EBU/1/30/1. 'Competition' quote from Peberdy, recorded interview.

⁹ OBL, MSS Afr. s. 1140, J.R. Tuckett contains Tuckett's 1956 draft report on Njombe district and the possible direction for agricultural policies to take based on his assessment.

¹⁰ James Tuckett, *Ministry of Agriculture Bulletin No. 5: Pyrethrum* (Government Printer: Dar es Salaam, 1961).

¹¹ Mitchell, recorded interview; Tuckett, recorded interview; Wallis, recorded interview; Sir Michael Blundell, *So Rough a Wind* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), p. 206, Davies, recorded interview.

To successfully achieve economic expansion, AOs understood, scientific methods and western conceptions of land tenure needed to be taken up by the African farmers. Spreading this knowledge within the community of AOs was achieved in part through research journal publications. Scientific journals were often to be found at the research stations, and Wallis urged his colleagues to publish their findings for the benefit of the East African community.¹² He was not alone in doing so, or in publishing his research.¹³ Research from several stations was sometimes collated to be as comprehensive as possible and draw on the expertise from a number of crop types and conditions.¹⁴ In Kenya, Brian Dowker published his research in a couple of journals and felt some of it significant enough to include when outlining his achievements to the Oxford Development and Records Project.¹⁵ Highlighting the importance of research to the expansion of knowledge (and the network of AOs in Kenya), John Peberdy was quick to note Dowker's credentials in particular, calling him the 'saviour' of dry land African maize.¹⁶ AOs had a firm belief in each other's ability to research, and more importantly to research issues that could solve agricultural problems in their district or more broadly in East Africa.

This championing of research and researchers did not exclude some of those who published from outside criticisms. These could be directed towards the relevance of their research. Despite AOs' good intentions, they could occasionally get caught up in scientific problems at the expense of directing research towards issues more pressing for farmers. M.H. Arnold worked in Uganda at the Namulonge Research Station (later the National

¹² Mitchell, recorded interview; Northwood, recorded interview; Bigger, recorded interview; Wallis, recorded interview.

¹³ Many respondents to the Oxford Development Records project on Food and Cash Crops and interviewed AOs published work in journals including: *East African Agricultural Journal*, *Empire Journal of Experimental Agriculture*, *East African Journal*, *East African Agricultural and Forestry Journal*, *East African Wildlife Journal*, *Bulletin of Entomological Research*. Interviewees Bigger, Allan, Wallis, Davies, Northwood and Tuckett also all published.

¹⁴ A great example is Giles Dixon, Hugh Thorpe, Mike Harrison and Brian Dowker, 'New Cereals - 1961', *East African Agricultural and Forestry Journal*, 27.3 (1962), 139–41.

¹⁵ Brian Dowker, 'Rainfall Reliability and Maize Yields in Machakos District', *East African Agricultural and Forestry Journal*, 28.3 (1963), 134–38; Brian Dowker, 'Sorghum and Millet in Machakos District', *East African Agricultural and Forestry Journal*, 29.1 (1963), 52–57; Brian Dowker, 'New Cereal Varieties - 1963: Katumani Synthetic No.2', *East African Agricultural and Forestry Journal*, 30.1 (1964), 31–32; Brian Dowker, 'A Note on the Reduction in Yield of Taboran Maize by Late Planting', *East African Agricultural and Forestry Journal*, 30.1 (1964), 33–34. James Tuckett also included his department publication (fn. 4) in his correspondence with the Oxford project.

¹⁶ Brian Dowker, 'Breeding of Maize for Low Rainfall Areas of Kenya', *Journal of Agricultural Science*, 76 (1971), 523–30, Peberdy, recorded interview.

Crop Research Institute) during the 1960s. Arnold's edited collection of essays and articles looking at the contribution of the Station to a better agricultural future for Uganda was published in 1976.¹⁷ S.J. Carr, a reviewer for the *Experimental Agriculture* journal, broadly praised the science in the book and sought out what made Namulonge distinctive amongst the large number of research stations operating in tropical conditions. Carr highlighted the progress at the Station, the advanced mechanisation, the high yields and the work on soil erosion, a problem that developed as land use intensified. Carr noted that these advances were admirable and that the farm at the Station and its increased usage for research continued to bring up more questions to be investigated and progress was being made on these. The problem: 'many of the questions were not those likely to be asked by Ugandan farmers'.¹⁸ Again, some senior AOs recognised that it could be difficult to predict what farmers needed, suggesting that all could have benefitted from greater consultation. As noted in chapter two, Chambers, in Tanzania, recalled that the department found a stockpile of forty-four-gallon oil drums and paid for them to be steam-cleaned. They were issued to farmers to use as grain storage but, having nowhere to store water – a factor unrecognised by the department – African farmers immediately used them for this instead.¹⁹

Similarly, in Kenya A.R. Melville, the Chief Research Officer of the department, had been alerted much earlier than 1976 to this problem and attempted to ensure that all PAOs were made aware of it. At a Provincial meeting in 1959, Melville declared he had found some officers 'over-desirous' that their experimental stations should earn good revenue from the experiment plots. Melville reiterated to those present – Provincial Officers for all Provinces in Kenya – that the primary purpose of a research station was to 'find the answers and to show farmers how to apply those answers when they had been found'. If this was achieved, stations could look into making money from their crop

¹⁷ The station was donated by the Cotton Research Corporation to the Government of Uganda at the start of 1972, a fact celebrated by the corporation in their golden jubilee publication, co-authored by Arnold Hutchinson and Arnold.

¹⁸ S.J Carr, 'Review: Agricultural Research for Development: The Namulonge Contribution. Ed. Arnold M. H.. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1976), Pp. 363, £13.', *Experimental Agriculture*, 13.4 (1977), 401.

¹⁹ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 1(6), Chambers, p.11.

outputs.²⁰ Research AOs, while striving to help African agriculture and taking pride in their scientific advances, may have allowed their faith in science to lead them away from some of the problems of the peasant farmers for whom they were researching. Researchers embraced their work but the tight budgetary restrictions on them could clearly lead them away from assisting African farmers, towards improving African farming. This could be to the financial gain of the research station, ensuring researchers continued their work, and can show us the round-about ways that researchers utilised science to perpetuate their own positions in East Africa.

Conversely, some researchers allowed their work in East Africa to influence most if not all of the rest of their careers. Wallis went on to work exclusively with coffee for the World Bank. Colin Leakey worked in Uganda, initially as a Plant Pathologist, from 1961 to 1973.²¹ Leakey was one son of Louis Leakey, a paleoanthropologist who the CO understood to have significant insight into Kikuyu customs and Mau Mau in particular.²² The younger Leakey's work focussed for a time on breeding more digestible beans for malnourished babies in Uganda, a project that became a personal mission for him to complete in the years after despite the initial research being cut short by Idi Amin's rise to power.²³ Giles Dixon remained in wheat breeding, Mike Bigger continued looking into pest control. Researchers appear to have had the freedom to specialise more intensely or move to different, but related, areas of research after their East African experiences.²⁴

²⁰ Minutes of the Provincial Agricultural Conference held at Agriculture House, Nairobi, 27th to 29th April, 1959, p. 15, KNA, DAO/ILBU [KBU]/1/1/97/236.

²¹ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476 (25), Leakey, C.L.A., p. 1.

²² Bruce Berman and John M. Lonsdale, 'Louis Leakey's Mau Mau a Study in the Politics of Knowledge', *History and Anthropology*, 5.2 (1991), 143–204.

²³ For better or for worse, Leakey has been the subject of some praise in the press, alongside light but frequent ridicule due to the nature of his endeavours. This was not least because of the invention of the 'flatometer', a device designed to measure the volume of gas emitted by human flatulence. Leakey concentrated on bean breeding and attempted to market his low flatulence beans to some of the big players in the field, only to have both Heinz and Branston turn up their noses at his output. Curiosity from NASA, who wished to reduce this problem for astronauts in space where it is a significant issue, proved that his endeavours were more than just hot air. See Stephen Moss, 'The Flatulent Life of Mr Bean', *Guardian*, 7 November 2005; Geoffrey Luck, 'Warmist Gasbags' Noxious Emissions', *Quadrant*, 2013 <<http://quadrant.org.au/opinion/doomed-planet/2013/01/warmist-gasbags-noxious-emissions/>> [accessed 19 January 2018]; Colin Leakey, 'Press', *Colinleakey.Com* <<https://sites.google.com/site/colinleakey/publications/press>> [accessed 19 January 2018].

²⁴ Dixon, recorded interview; Bigger, recorded interview. John 'Taff' Davies' CV has him continuing agricultural research, but diversifying within his field as an entomologist to look at cereal production and eventually taking on greater administrative responsibilities, erring away from the research side of things, Davies, recorded interview.

After independence, for those who 'stayed on', research networks (unlike extension networks, as private letters demonstrate) expanded as development policies found funding, often from external agencies. The setting up of the East African Common Services Organisation (EACSO) created a number of agriculture-related bodies which all held annual conferences. Although Mitchell saw African policy as having a negative impact on agriculture, he remembered positively that the connections within East Africa became greatly enhanced, with 'quite a bit' of collaboration between services:

[O]ne had quite a lot to do with the other countries under the aegis of the East African Common Services [...] There was the scientific place at Muguga [Central Province, Kenya] [...] for climatology studies. They used to come down with their climate recording van and work on our shade trial. There was a soils lab in Kenya that we dealt with. And when I was in Uganda, in Bukoba [1956-1961], we dealt with the Uganda Veterinary Department over the chick-rearing scheme, and also they helped us sometimes if we had technical problems with the cattle and so on. They were more handy and more accessible than the Tanganyika services.²⁵

Veterinary departments were commonly part of a District team that also included a medical officer, co-operative officer, agricultural officer and in some cases a public works department officer and a forestry officer. Each officer had his own role to play, with the District Commissioner keeping abreast of the overall progress. AOs remembered the prominence of the team, and it played a part in the networks of various technical officers in the District. However, other than occasionally inspecting each other's work while on safari and being a part of the social scene in the area by virtue of being there, AOs networks were focussed more within and across their department than the team.²⁶

Collaboration between researchers had been frequent before independence too, particularly in crop research.²⁷ Northwood talked of an on-going exchange before independence of hybrid maize samples between Nachingwea and research stations in

²⁵ Mitchell, recorded interview.

²⁶ Tuckett remembered socialising with members of the District team because they were some of the few other Europeans present in remote areas, Tuckett, recorded interview. Humphrys new a couple of officers in the team personally and recalled going around his district on safari and being shown and praising non-agricultural developments, Humphrys, recorded interview. Brown remembered being a part of the team, but at the same time within his department, Brown, recorded interview.

²⁷ Dixon, recorded interview.

Kenya.²⁸ Entomologists would alternate locations for East Africa-wide meetings to discuss how each dealt with insect-related problems.²⁹ Dixon had collaborated with the East African Agriculture and Forestry Organisation (EAAFRO) at Muguga (about fifteen miles from Nairobi, Kenya), itself a collaborative endeavour between Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zanzibar, with Britain stumping up twenty-seven per cent of the funding, Zanzibar four per cent and the remainder split between the other three African countries.³⁰ Pooling data and ideas was clearly important to AOs and how Britain envisaged colonial research to operate.

But all was not equal. Some AOs saw Tanganyika as less integrated than others. Swynnerton noted a dearth of conferences in Tanganyika, with distance and poor communications making collaboration more difficult; Peberdy remembered Tanganyika in contrast to Kenya as 'absolutely sleepy'.³¹ For areas around the border of Tanganyika this may have been easier to overcome, with Mitchell travelling across from Bukoba to Uganda to inspect Robusta coffee samples before starting a trial.³² The maintenance or expansion of collaborative arrangements could enable AOs to continue the same networks, certainly of researchers, across independence, bringing a greater feeling of familiarity to proceedings. This stands in contrast to how AOs often wrote about their situations after independence in personal letters, seeing the department as part of a rapidly crumbling world, under-resourced and disconnected from those in neighbouring countries.

The territorial differences between Tanganyika and Kenya can partly be explained by the number of white settler farmers in Kenya and the response to the Mau Mau Emergency. Tanganyika's lower number of settler farmers, and greater number of established agricultural estates that required less interaction with the department, meant less pressure on the department to work with and develop those areas. The intensity of work with African smallholders in Kenya was one part of the British and Kenya government's response to Mau Mau, realising that to 'forestall future discontent by

²⁸ Northwood, recorded interview.

²⁹ Davies, recorded interview.

³⁰ 'Visit to the East African Agriculture and Forestry Research Organisation, Muguga', *The Commonwealth Forestry Review*, 41.4 (110) (1962), 339–50; Dixon, recorded interview.

³¹ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 7(48), Swynnerton, p. 13; Peberdy, recorded interview.

³² Mitchell, recorded interview.

broadening the middle class collaborative base' could produce a greater agricultural yield for the entire country at the same time as quelling some dissent.³³

These differences drove the agricultural sector in Kenya and the focus on research built on a growing culture of scientific knowledge accumulation within the agricultural department. Alexander (Sandy) Storrar came to Kenya in 1943 and worked in the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in RVP. Using the expertise he gained with the SCS, Storrar was the first to introduce farm planning when he became an AO in Nakuru. Storrar's plans took a scientific approach, assessing the topographical factors of the land and working from there to assess what crops, cattle and farming techniques would be best practice to produce high yields and maintain the fertility of the soil. This was slowly rolled out to African farmers, at a less intensive pace.³⁴ The presence of white settler farmers in Kenya had ensured a large amount of data collection for some time, and from the start of the 1950s there was an emphasis placed on the mapping of ecological zones as the department had otherwise focussed on statistics (rainfall, yields, improvements with respect to different fertilisers and so on), but were by then hoping to produce thorough gazetteers, giving all Districts access to a 'mass of information' from which officers could begin to apply to similar areas in their own Districts.³⁵

After independence there was an influx of development organisations holding regional conferences that went beyond the Provincial level.³⁶ AOs could further increase their networks within development agencies, familiarising themselves with the organisations and how they operated.³⁷ There were occasional instances where political progress could hinder agricultural advance, adding to AOs' perceptions that African majority rule was interfering with their work, unlike their perceptions of the colonial administration that, although financially restrictive, remained apolitical in their minds. The 1967 Arusha declaration, where Nyerere outlined the path for Tanzania based around 'African Socialism' spawned a short phase of 'Tanzaphilia' that, Emma Hunter suggests,

³³ Thurston, p. 2.

³⁴ Thurston, pp. 56–57.

³⁵ Minutes of Provincial Conference held at Embu, 15th to 20th June, 1953, KNA, DAO/ILBU [KBU]/1/1/97/2

³⁶ Wallis remembered being particularly busy accompanying Bruce McKenzie to regional and international conferences.

³⁷ Dixon, recorded interview; greater exploration of this is found in chapter 4.

within a decade turned to ‘Tanzaphobia’.³⁸ AOs who served in Tanzania seem to share this outlook, remembering fondly the early days of Nyerere’s premiership.³⁹ However, Peter Northwood remembers the Agricultural Station at Tengeru, near Arusha, undergoing severe disruption as administrative staff from the East African Federation needed to be housed near the site of the announcement. They were ultimately placed in the quarters of the station’s staff, causing many to leave for other stations and the remainder to live for a short time on local farms so they could finish the trials they had been working on.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, the regional collaborative agencies that Mitchell recalled, the increasing presence of global organisations like the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and on-going donations from bodies such as the Rockefeller Foundation into certain strands of research all kept the East African agricultural research community tied together, even if Kenya appeared to lead the way when it came to the interconnectedness of AOs.

Beyond the expansion of networks that would help provide a stepping-stone to the future for AOs, there were also attempts to push the older generation of researchers forward. Upon his arrival at Ruiru in 1956, Wallis found masses of unpublished data from local experiments. He believed it ‘ridiculous’ to keep the material unpublished. As if to emphasise his progressive credentials and desire to get research out to the wider world and beyond individual research stations, Wallis urged his elder colleagues to submit their findings for publications, enabling other AOs to have easier access to their data.⁴¹ For newer AOs this was unquestioned, with several earning their Ph.D. qualifications through publishing.⁴²

³⁸ Emma Hunter, *Political Thought and the Public Sphere in Tanzania: Freedom, Democracy and Citizenship in the Era of Decolonization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 210–30.

³⁹ Mitchell, recorded interview; Briggs, recorded interview.

⁴⁰ Northwood, recorded interview.

⁴¹ Wallis, recorded interview. A few of Wallis’ pieces include: J.A.N. Wallis, ‘Water Use by Irrigated Arabica Coffee in Kenya’, *Journal of Agricultural Science*, 60 (1962), 381–88; J.A.N. Wallis and I.D. Firman, ‘Spraying Arabica Coffee for the Control of Leaf Rust’, *East African Agricultural and Forestry Journal*, 28.2 (1962), 89–104; J.A.N. Wallis and I.D. Firman, ‘Spraying Arabica Coffee for the Control of Coffee Berry Disease’, *Annals of Applied Biology*, 55.1 (1965), 1744–7348.

⁴² Alister Allan being one example, Allan, recorded interview; Colin Leakey – who also prolifically published during his time in Uganda (1961–1973) – being another who was awarded his PhD by Cambridge for going down the ‘publication route’, OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 7(25), Leakey, C.L.A., p. 1.

AOs' Official Networks

AOs at different levels of the department worked within a set of conditions on the ground that found them overseeing AAOs and AIs, the numbers of whom would depend on the size of the District and the quantity of farmers it held. That AOs' correspondence with these lower ranks of the department was 'official' work is evident from the tone. In Kenya at least, where the archival record is particularly rich, Districts would communicate occasionally with one another, usually about logistical issues, inter-District visits and visits by higher up officials.⁴³ Occasionally, grievances of AOs were expressed in official correspondence between them. A.A. Talbot and A.S. Leask both passed their Swahili exam in August 1950, making them some of the earliest of the post-war intake into East Africa.⁴⁴ This was before a concerted effort at Africanising the lower ranks of the Kenya Department, and Talbot became AAO Teita, Leask AAO Kwale, both in Coast Province. In April 1951, Leask was tasked with going into Teita (now Taita) and examining the conditions there to report back to the PAO and see what similarities and differences existed between the two areas and what approaches to agriculture might be shared between the two. Leask found his mission a success of 'infinite interest and value' and 'strongly advocate[d] the expansion of inter-district visits of this kind'.⁴⁵ Leask's report was shared with Talbot, who responded openly and frankly about some of the problems facing him. 'We get no help whatsoever from the Forestry Department!!', he wrote, adding 'No offence was given by your notes. I only wish they could have had a wider circulation amongst the powers that be!!'⁴⁶ Leask and Talbot had each other's sympathetic ear, but the PAO, G.J. Gollop, was more business-like in his replies. Gollop summarised his thoughts on Leask's report with mostly amicable but very short responses such as '[i]n hand', '[v]ery much so', and occasional disagreements, curtly expressed and with no explanation: 'I disagree with you, we consider soil control measures very inadequate.'⁴⁷ The differences in tone demonstrate a much friendlier collegiality between the two AAOs than between the AAOs and Coast's PAO.

⁴³ Documents in KNA, PDA/EBU/1/1/229, 'Meetings of AOs in other districts' is of particular relevance in demonstrating this.

⁴⁴ 'Langauge Examinations', *Kenya Gazette*, 31 October 1950, p. 952.

⁴⁵ Leask to G.J. Gollop (PAO Coast), 17 April 1951, KNA, DAO/TTA/1/1/70/63.

⁴⁶ A.A. Talbott to Leask, 24 April 1951, KNA, DAO/TTA/1/1/70/64.

⁴⁷ Gollop to Leask, 20 April 1951, KNA, DAO/TTA/1/1/70/65.

However, PAOs were not uniformly or consistently more aloof in their correspondence. John Peberdy remembered that, as he rose up through the department to PAO status, he would mediate requests from more senior staff before passing them on to DAOs and junior staff. Peberdy felt greater empathy and understanding with younger officers, having also been trained in the post-war period, than for the earlier generation of pre-war recruits.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, the earlier generations of PAOs could also act as a buffer to criticism of their DAOs. L.H. Brown, as Acting Director of Agriculture in Kenya in 1957 was unhappy with a report – intended to advise on policy in Voi District, Coast Province – and wrote to the PAO of Coast. Brown dismissed the report as focussing on the short term and encouraged the PAO to ‘push [the report] back at the District Agricultural Officer’ and ‘get him to clarify his ideas’. Brown encouraged the policy to be modelled ‘upon the Central Province Policy or the Coast Province Policy as prepared by Mr. Gollop [PAO of Coast Province in the early 1950s], which was, in turn, based on Central Province Policy’.⁴⁹ While the language used by Brown was not too harsh in tone, the sentiment was one of displeasure. The PAO, writing to Teita’s DAO who authored the original report, considerably softened the blow: ‘It would seem from the Director’s letter that the District Agricultural policy has not been prepared on the correct lines.’ It was further suggested that the two talk about it at an upcoming AO conference.⁵⁰

DAOs and AAOs could occasionally find themselves working alongside PAOs when it came to crafting Provincial policy. If there were agricultural conditions in a district that may be applicable to other areas in the province, this could be especially the case, and the District Commissioner (DC) would gather the relevant staff together. At least at short notice, the DC’s tone in official correspondence was less curt and more apologetic than a PAO may have been, with one DC of Coast Province in Kenya calling a District’s AAO, a European, in a ‘quite frantically urgent’ message to arrive promptly in the morning so the small team the DC was assembling would have a full three hours to come up with a five year plan for agriculture.⁵¹ The expertise that AAOs were seen as having was invaluable, potentially a cause of the softened tone from a DC, and that AOs took

⁴⁸ Peberdy, recorded interview with author, Salisbury, 4 December 2017.

⁴⁹ L.H. Brown to PAO Coast, 9 August 1957, KNA, DAO/TTA/1/1/70/150.

⁵⁰ PAO Coast to DAO Teita, 13 August 1957, KNA, DAO/TTA/1/1/70/151.

⁵¹ DC Voi to AAO Wundanyi (Leask), 5 November 1955, KNA, DAO/TTA/1/1/70/118.

their work seriously is attested to by the way all AOs interviewed discussed both their scientific output and the importance of extension work. Additionally, most AOs continued working in similar areas of research or put their extension abilities to use after empire through their second careers. One year group at Trinidad collated a document in the early 2000s, circulated within the group and cataloguing their careers in and after their time in East Africa. Many chose to highlight their scientific achievements and, while tongue-in-cheek to some extent, the title “*How We Saved the World*” is indicative both of AO’s belief in their achievements and the wry humour that all interviewees appeared to have.⁵² They did take pride in their research, believing that it was truly contributing to African advancement. For many this, along with organisations such as the OSPA, has also enabled AOs to use their scientific background to carve out a role as objective, rational experts not only on African agriculture (which many were) but on Africa itself.

The differences between older PAOs and DAOs were more complicated than a simple break between pre- and post-war recruits. There were differences between the generations in the style of education and the type of candidate selected for the Colonial Agricultural Service, as chapter one has helped to demonstrate. There was, however, much that still bound the two sets of men together, most obviously their working in the same operational environment. While a DAO in Machakos, Peberdy remembered being told by his PAO that the earlier generation of AOs in Kenya had done everything that this new (and ultimately final) generation could build upon and had set the terms within which they could operate.⁵³ Some older superiors engaged in a teasing camaraderie with their subordinate staff and revealed another set of attitudinal differences between those with a university education fresh from the academy and those with some experience in the field beyond their degree, played out in how they interacted with their staff. Geoff Dickin was an AO in Tanganyika from 1957 to 1960, so did not see out independence, but nonetheless experienced interactions with an earlier generation of researchers at the Ukiriguru Research Station. One, James Peat, had been at St. Catherine’s College, Cambridge in the 1920s, joining the Empire Cotton Growing Corporation and receiving his C.B.E. in

⁵² “*How We Saved the World*”.

⁵³ Peberdy, recorded interview.

1956.⁵⁴ Peat was notorious for reportedly insisting on ‘all the correct etiquette’ at dinner, even when on safari, but Dickin remembered floating an idea with him and Peat, ‘instead of arguing the point, would stare down his nose at me and say in a superior tone, “Dickin, did you learn that at university?”’ Dickin remembered feeling ‘squashed’, until he ‘recognised the twinkle in [Peat’s] eye’. Dickin also remembered that when Peat summoned another officer he would call their name in a ‘haughty fashion’ that matched the ‘aloof manner’ that Peat held. Peat’s superiority was not, however, simply performative. Dickin recalled Peat with enormous respect and listed many of his achievements, some of which (contoured tie ridges, early planting, manuring, weeding) Peat had played a ‘major part in initiating’, supporting Peberdy’s memory of his superior setting the state of play that AOs of the late 1950s could operate within. Peat’s performative actions, exaggerating any superiority yet displaying a cheekiness towards others, reinforced the hierarchies that were in place in the Agriculture Department rather than eroding them. As if to show that this worked in a top down fashion, Dickin also recalled that Peat’s playfulness fell short when he was visited by *his* superiors. If Archie Forbes (at the time Deputy Director, but later Director of Agriculture) or the Director of Research visited Peat it could cause him to ‘break his routine, or get a little rattled’.⁵⁵ The hierarchy on which these younger officers’ relationships were based appeared, therefore, to also be in effect throughout the chain of command to the top of the department.

This hierarchy did help to pass on ideas between the generations of AOs. By 1960, after six years in Kenya, John Peberdy had become the youngest PAO in the country and was posted in Central Province. Prior to this, Peberdy was both AO and then DAO in Machakos, Eastern Province. Although Peberdy acknowledged that there was a generational difference, he also suggested that there was still a great influence over the new generation of AOs by their predecessors. Peberdy remembered that his PAO emphasised strongly getting men out into the field and that this duly became something Peberdy strove to continue.⁵⁶ Peberdy believed that beyond this, his experience and

⁵⁴ ‘News of the Society’, *St. Catherine’s Society Magazine* (Cambridge, September 1930), pp. 13–17 (p. 17) <http://www.society.caths.cam.ac.uk/Public_Magazines/1930.pdf>; *Supplement to the London Gazette of Friday, 25th May, 1956* (London: HMSO, 1956), p. 3123.

⁵⁵ Geoff Dickin, ‘A Tribute to Ukiriguru and James Peat’, *The Overseas Pensioner*, 2013 <<http://www.britishempire.co.uk/article/tributetoukiriguru.htm>> [accessed 25 February 2016].

⁵⁶ Peberdy, recorded interview.

training shaped his ethos but he was keen to emphasise that having men in the field as frequently as possible, talking to and interacting with farmers to discover new problems to be solved, was key to a successful department. The earlier generation of AOs, having had longer experience in Africa, could impart this knowledge – knowledge that was not always passed on explicitly at Cambridge and Trinidad – but gained by experience in the field. As Humphrys remarked, there was a missed opportunity during training to teach probationers about the management of people.⁵⁷ The gap in knowledge was filled by the advice of superiors.

In general, then, the hierarchy of the department dictated what kind of relationship one would, or could, have with a colleague and while in general respectful there were times when some AOs expressed grievances with those of an older generation. As well as Leask's frustration, Mitchell, for example, described John Wakefield, one of the officials behind Tanganyika's failed Groundnut Scheme, as a 'real bullshit man' who would obscure the truth about yields in the district, and blamed him for the failure of the scheme.⁵⁸ However, given the scale of the Scheme's failure, criticism of Wakefield was fairly safe ground upon which to tread and Wakefield was no longer serving in Tanganyika while Mitchell was. Other AOs responded to their problems differently. Donald Thomas, a researcher in Kenya, left the CAS to become a farmer before Kenyan independence because he believed his research was not being taken seriously by his superiors.⁵⁹

Senior staff in Kenya did try to help keep up the department morale and as such interacted with newer AOs to boost their confidence. In 1955, Gollop was praising staff at a Central Province conference for 'their co-operation and their loyalty throughout the period [of the emergency]' and stating that despite the 'multitudinous difficulties' the department had faced, the staff had conducted 'excellent work', their achievements being reinforced to increase morale when set against the difficulties of the situation. By 1960, Storrar had risen to Deputy Director of Agriculture and joined a provincial meeting in

⁵⁷ Humphrys, recorded interview.

⁵⁸ Mitchell, recorded interview.

⁵⁹ Donald Thomas, recorded interview by author, Nairobi, 29 August 2017.

Central Province for a morning, using the opportunity to deliver a morale-boosting speech, by saying that:

East and Central Africa were looking toward Kenya to see what they were doing in the Agricultural sphere and that Officers should be justly proud of what they were doing and of the progress they were making. [Storrar] asked that this should be passed out to Divisional officers and Junior staff in order that they should be encouraged to carry on in difficult times.⁶⁰

The ‘difficult times’ were, for the main, due to financial constraints on the department. Independence was still a few years off and Kenya was making a slow recovery from lower production during the Mau Mau emergency. PAOs took up the idea with one explicitly suggesting a refresher course for AIs, which ‘in the present unsettled times [...], with a stress on morale, would be quite valuable’.⁶¹

The morale boosts from superiors were, while perhaps not expected or anticipated, something that reinforced what AOs believed to be the professionalism of the department. Superiors were at once sterner to lower level staff, but displayed a caring, encouraging side too. Humphrys had displayed dissatisfaction with his first posting to Kampala, where he had saw himself as ‘DAO the streets of Kampala’, getting little agricultural work done. (That phrase, used in interview by Humphrys, was lifted from his own contribution to *“How We Saved the World”* and nicely demonstrates how memories are solidified through their continued retelling, with certain phrases becoming stock for the narrator).⁶² After expressing his unhappiness with his position to the Director for Agriculture of the area, he was called, some time later, to the Director’s house for a meeting. Humphrys could ‘see that trouble was on the horizon’. Believing he was to be given the sack, he mentally braced himself for the worst, but was instead offered lunch and a transfer to be the DAO of Masaka. This did not stop him from believing that, ultimately, ‘all bosses [were] bastards’. Conforming to this, Humphrys was liable to chastise AAs and AIs (of whom he was not even the boss) who strayed wrongly into his District and despite the favour shown

⁶⁰ Minutes of District Agricultural Officers’ meeting held in Nyeri Provincial Agricultural Office on 25th and 26th September, 1960, p. 3, KNA, PDA/EBU/1/229/9.

⁶¹ J.W. Gurr (PAO Coast) to all DAOs Coast, 4 May 1961, KNA, DAO/TTA/1/1/49/91.

⁶² Humphrys, recorded interview. A very similar example happened with Wallis, noted in the methodology section.

to him by the Director at the start of his career, took umbrage with his superiors in favour of supporting his own staff. In the safe at the agricultural headquarters in Masaka, Humphrys kept what he called the 'Goat Bag' (presumably made from goatskin, though Humphrys did not reveal this). Into the bag went a small amount of all the AAOs wages for each month, designed as a collective pot to ensure that should one of them be arrested by the police there was money to bail him out. Whenever Humphrys got word that auditors were on their way, believing they would confiscate the Goat Bag, he would pack up, fetch his cook and go on safari until the weekend, when he knew the auditor would have returned to Kampala.⁶³ Though only anecdotal, when combined with the approach of PAOs and department Directors or Assistant Directors, it seemed that each layer of staff did feel a responsibility to protect those immediately beneath them in the hierarchy of the department.

Indeed, when this hierarchy was broken, complaints were voiced. In Kenya, when Field Assistants – the lowest in the agricultural ranks – skipped a layer of the hierarchy and wrote to DAOs seeking promotion before their probationary period was up, they were told in no uncertain terms to desist: 'All eligible officers are considered yearly and it is not the slightest use writing in and asking for promotion', wrote K.R.C. Letts, the DAO of Taita.⁶⁴ Given this exchange took place in early 1962, there may have been some desire to keep the structure of the department more firmly in place to ensure that, whenever independence was to occur, the department inherited by African staff was one that the colonial administration had kept in order. This may have also been an example of Africans gaining in confidence as independence seemed increasingly likely, despite other AOs not recalling any differences. However, more senior staff could go against this. Storrr expressed interest in finding out more about AOs who had failed their language exams and was prepared to pass those who had passed the oral and attempted the written at least six times as long as they had demonstrated improvement.⁶⁵ Much as Humphrys and possibly others failed their Diploma but were still sent to Africa after Trinidad, Europeans, as long as they tried, would be able to carry on working in the department despite not meeting

⁶³ Humphrys, recorded interview.

⁶⁴ K.R.C. Letts (DAO Taita) to AAOs in his district and DAO Voi, 11 January 1962, KNA, DAO/TTA/1/1/188/15.

⁶⁵ Storrr (Dir. of Agriculture), 'Exemption from Standard Written Examination', 22 June 1960, KNA, DAO/TTA/1/1/49/22.

certain standards, while African staff of lower positions who tried to climb the ranks in their own way were often kept at bay. It was soon realised by Letts that due to harder access for Africans and dwindling European recruits, in Taita there would, without early promotion, be a shortage of staff. The DAO believed that the department would have to ‘accept that for some years there will be many Assistant Agricultural Officers without diplomas’.⁶⁶ Manpower pressures forced senior AOs to deviate from accepted policy.

The Africanisation or localisation of the department in Kenya was a cause for concern for AOs there, though often not down to a perceived racial threat (that came later, and AOs in interviews and in personal letters started to blame failings on Africans at different levels in the department for being too political or ideological). DAOs and PAOs were most often concerned that a lack of qualified African personnel to staff the departments would result in poor performance. By 1961 in Central Province there were concerns that the Province was ‘considerably under strength’ because of the few newly qualified Europeans arriving and the slow pace, before independence, of Africanisation.⁶⁷ In Southern Province, Kenya, it took another year before Africanisation became the ‘objective for the future’, but this still predated independence and lends credence to the memories of those AOs who suggest in their oral testimonies that Kenya was, in terms of Africanising its staff, a step ahead in East Africa. It was noted that this would potentially cause ‘morale’ problems for those European officers who remained, but taking any action on the issue was pushed back to the next meeting.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, it was clear that at Provincial level in Kenya, staff were aware that independence and the Africanisation of the department would cause issues for those Europeans remaining. The morale-boost from senior staff was a necessity, but one that, when absent, seemed to remove the little professional comfort or security AOs felt they had before independence.

AOs’ Personal Networks

⁶⁶ Letts to PAO Coast, 12 December 1961, KNA, DAO/TTA/1/1/49/204.

⁶⁷ Administrative Directive: Department of Agriculture, Central Province from E.M. Green, Ag. Assistant Director of Cash Crops, 23 January 1961, KNA, PDA/EBU/1/30/7.

⁶⁸ Minutes of Staff and Finance Meeting – Southern Province. Held on Friday 9th February, 1962, in PAO’s office, Machakos, KNA, MW 2/13/21.

Physical

AOs' relationships with each other were maintained both professionally and personally. Most AOs under scrutiny here reached Provincial or Regional level at any time just before independence onwards and had the shared experiences of their Cambridge and Trinidad education. While that education created common ground with their predecessors, the emphasis on development and the turn away from 'policemen' helped AOs to carve out a shared identity in distinction to those already rising through the ranks. This last group of AOs' predecessors had overseen the shift from enforcing agricultural policy to befriending (though usually only in a professional sense) African farmers and advising and guiding them, which was seen as a significant step in changing agricultural smallholder production for the better; as one PAO excitedly put it when there were enough staff on the ground to act as advisors, 'the old order changeth!!'.⁶⁹ The timings of AOs' postings also contributed greatly to the nature of their work and interactions with one another. Before the mid-1950s there had been a high level of mobility within empire for members of the Agricultural Departments of East Africa for those in both extension and research roles.⁷⁰ After this period, until the time of independence, AOs found themselves restricted to longer postings in a single area. These longer durations of time in the same areas would deepen (though not dramatically widen) these personal and professional networks.

Two factors contributed to the reduction in AOs' mobility, and thus the nature of their relationships with one another. Firstly, Roger Swynnerton realised a difference between the nature of his postings in Tanganyika and then Kenya. In the former, throughout the 1940s, Swynnerton had come to realise the importance of longer postings. They would enhance the relationships that AOs had with their staff, enable them to gather more detailed information about their districts and to both know and be known by the farmers in the district. When Swynnerton was moved to Kenya in 1951, one of his earliest interventions was to request that postings there were altered to become a minimum of two

⁶⁹ PAO Coast Province to DAOs and AAOs in Coast Province, 18 November 1957, KNA, DAO/TTA/1/1/70/178; N.R. Fuggles-Couchman, *Agricultural Change in Tanganyika: 1945-1960* (Stanford, CA: Food Research Institute, Stanford University, 1964), p. 75.

⁷⁰ The CVs of many officials involved in agriculture and empire were collected, along with some personal testimonies, by the Oxford Development Records Project in the early 1980s for their Food and Cash Crops in the British Commonwealth. See OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476.

tours of two and a half years in any one district or division. This ensured the continuity he believed to be of benefit to the department and reveals that for the higher up staff moving between postings, ideas from one territory could flow directly into another.⁷¹ The second reason for AOs remaining in the same region was the duration of overall service. Earlier extension officers, while doing shorter tours than Swynnerton had hoped for, would move around within a country and after a number of years' experience and usually a promotion, go elsewhere in empire. Because of the timing of AOs' arrival in East Africa, by the time independence arrived most had only been able to move from district to district once or twice. At independence AOs either left altogether, remained where they were, or were moved to other positions within the department of the same country.

After independence most AOs who remained were moved to and kept in senior positions, with new African AOs arriving to fill the lower ranks more rapidly. These African AOs would come and go in Uganda, though 'most seem[ed] to go and few come', resulting in staff shortages.⁷² The turnover of staff at District level was also much faster than in the colonial era. In Jinja, Humphrys had been the DAO for three years before independence, yet from 1964 to 1967 there were four new DAOs who came and went.⁷³

The increased proximity of European AOs to each other for longer periods of time helped to make new connections and to maintain some of the connections made in training and imperial service in East Africa. The small numbers of European recruits to AO positions and above in the post-war period also contributed to the tightness of these networks.⁷⁴ Despite being scattered across East Africa some of these friendships could be continued alongside or under the guise of research. Professional networks therefore doubled as friendship networks among those AOs involved in research, both of which helped foster a fluidity of ideas that, given the similarities between certain areas in different countries, were beneficial in increasing the outputs of farmers. For researchers,

⁷¹ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 7(48), Swynnerton, pp. 45-46. Wallis was also a fan of this continuity of approach, and his criticism of development agencies was, in part, formed around their inability to have vast, long-term projects to oversee to completion. Wallis, recorded interview.

⁷² Humphrys, quoting letter Max Permain to Humphrys, 9 November 1963, recorded interview.

⁷³ Humphrys, quoting letter Permain to Humphrys, 1 May 1967, recorded interview.

⁷⁴ Monica Peberdy, married to John, remembered going out to Kenya by boat a year after her husband and on the voyage making friends with Tony Humphrys and Bill Mitchell, both of whom were the year after her husband in Trinidad. She and John met them on several subsequent occasions during her time in Kenya. Peberdy, recorded interview.

before independence there were regional research conferences and opportunities to travel cross-border to investigate successful crops. Mitchell was sent across the Tanganyika border to Kawanda Research Station in Uganda to research Robusta coffee in the area and see if it could get it ‘off the ground’ in Tanganyika. At Kawanda was Tony Pritchard, an ‘ex-Trinidad mate’ of Mitchell’s. The two spent a portion – possibly a large portion – of Mitchell’s six weeks driving around the entire country, visiting any coffee areas, including the West Nile area in the northwest. When they were there, the pair took the opportunity to ‘nip [...] over the border’ into what was then the Belgian Congo and admire the amount of European goods in shops there that Uganda and Tanganyika both lacked.⁷⁵ The amount of freedom that researchers had over their work could give them opportunities like these to successfully continue friendships. These trips gave a certain amount of freedom to researchers or DAOs showing researchers around their Districts, and researchers were often called to attend Provincial/Regional or District meetings to update others on the progress of certain experiments or visits to other areas and stations.⁷⁶

Extension staff had some opportunities to maintain friendships from their education if circumstance was on their side and they were posted to the same Provinces or Regions; or to create new ones which could then be maintained on leave. Mitchell and Humphrys ‘would meet occasionally’ thanks to the closeness of their early-career postings either side of the Tanganyika/Uganda border.⁷⁷ In Kenya, before independence, AOs in neighbouring Districts within a Province would visit each other to see how schemes operating under similar conditions to their own Districts were progressing.⁷⁸ These visits, however, were still under official control, more tightly than with researchers. When an officer erred from convention in Kenya, the PAO would send out a timely reminder that ‘Any officer who visits a District should notify, and get the approval of, the Officer-in-Charge of that District’. In case there was any ambiguity, the PAO pointed to the incident

⁷⁵ Mitchell, recorded interview.

⁷⁶ ‘Minutes of a Conference of District Agricultural Officers held at Provincial Headquarters, Machakos’, 1959, KNA, MW/2/13/1A, is both a good example of a Provincial meeting gathering DAOs together and one that includes three of the AOs interviewed for this project, namely Peberdy, Dowker and Thomas, the latter two presenting research to the PAO (G.R. ‘Dick’ Henderson) and to Peberdy for use in the field.

⁷⁷ Humphrys, unpublished memoir, viewed by author 3 August 2016.

⁷⁸ Peberdy, recorded interview.

he was referring to, ensuring the AAO who had arranged for the trip got the message for future visits.⁷⁹

At this time in Kenya there was competition between Districts, though it remained ‘unspoken’, but friendships were forged through the operational environment – regardless of educational past – at District level that were kept up during and after independence, especially as the pool of white staff on the ground diminished.⁸⁰ When officers met for Provincial meetings every few months, all DAOs in a Province were present, and while the official minutes document the workings of the department, there was time for chat and socialising.⁸¹ Local leave opportunities provided another option, with groups heading out for excursions together. Humphrys went to Malindi at the coast in Kenya with Tonys Armitage and Pritchard and David Innes. The four visited the agricultural show in Nairobi and generally relaxed throughout their time away.⁸² In Tanganyika, Peter Wilson maintained correspondence with David Macdonald, a friend from Harper Adams Agricultural College. Macdonald was not an AO but was running a tea estate in the southern highlands area of Mufindi. The two families spent a Christmas together, with Macdonald giving the Wilsons a brief tour of the area and a chance to exchange presents with some of the local African staff on the estate.⁸³ After independence in Kenya these trips could continue but with much greater restrictions placed on travel arrangements and cross-border trips became much less frequent. According to Peberdy, after independence in Kenya there was ‘two or three’ times more internal travel than before, the implication being that the new African staff were happier to use department vehicles with greater frequency. This meant fewer days of the month spent with farmers. Following on from the inherited advice of his superiors, Peberdy reduced the travel budget accordingly to remedy the problem.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Ag. PAO Coast to District AAO, ‘Safari of Marketing Officer to Shimba Hills’, 3 October 1952, KNA, DAO/TTA/1/1/158/324.

⁸⁰ Peberdy, recorded interview.

⁸¹ Peberdy, recorded interview.

⁸² Humphrys, unpublished memoir.

⁸³ Peter M. Wilson, *Bwana Shamba ('Mr. Agriculture'): The Autobiography of a Field Officer (Agriculture) in Tanganyika Territory (Now Tanzania) during the Closing Years of the British Colonial Era in Africa* (Chippenham: Pentland Press, 2001), pp. 81-85.

⁸⁴ Peberdy, recorded interview.

Correspondence

When research excursions or visiting neighbouring Districts could not effectively act as a backdrop to maintaining friendships, correspondence was kept up. Dick Horell, an AO in Uganda from 1953 to 1964, remembered that 'Camaraderie in the Service was tremendous'.⁸⁵ This camaraderie undoubtedly helped to make some of the relationships that continued though, as with most professions, some colleagues were not always as amenable as others. One co-worker of Humphrys, Bob Scott, was labelled 'a very odd chap'. Another of Humphrys' friends remembered spending time handing over his area with Scott to be 'absolute hell. I think it was mainly the way he talked at me rather than to me'. It was further speculated that the 'powers that be' did not get on with Scott.⁸⁶ Nonetheless, clearly those who kept in touch with one another were friends to some degree and this gossip only provided another point over which to bond.

The maintenance of friendships through letters exposes the thoughts of AOs at the time. These letters, as lasting physical documents that AOs could revisit throughout their lives in moments of reflection, also contribute to how AOs later remembered and interpreted their own experiences. Humphrys, for example, has a particular opinion of group farms and tractor supply issues that is either coincidentally exactly the same as that of Permain or, more likely, is entirely informed by their communications after Humphrys departed for the UK. Similarly, John Ainley, after his time in Tanganyika, relied on 'contemporary reports' from which to judge the lack of success of Nyerere's villagisation policy which he strongly believed was 'alien' to the majority of farmers and which he strongly opposed in his autobiography.⁸⁷ AOs could forthrightly give their opinion as though from a memory, but their memories in some cases were constructed from the experiences of others, not necessarily by themselves.

⁸⁵ Dick Horrell, 'Agricultural Officer in Uganda: Motivated by Job Satisfaction and Certainly Not by Money!', *The Overseas Pensioner*, 2013

<<http://www.britishempire.co.uk/article/agriculturalofficeruganda.htm>> [accessed 25 February 2016].

⁸⁶ Humphrys, quoting Permain to Humphrys, 7 April 1964, recorded interview.

⁸⁷ Ainley, *Pink Stripes and Obedient Servants: An Agriculturalist in Tanganyika*, p. 226.

Mitchell and Humphrys, who had bonded at Trinidad, kept in touch via letter when both were in East Africa. The core of Mitchell's correspondence talked about conditions aside from work (Moshi was 'pretty civilised by T.T. [Tanganyika Territory] standards & has good fishing & shooting & sports facilities'); independence 'went off well' in Dar-es-Salaam though caused work to become increasingly 'chaotic' as more and more European staff left government; and the activities of other ex-Trinidadians and mutual friends.

Mitchell signed off with an invite to Humphrys to come and stay.⁸⁸ This correspondence with friends and colleagues continued beyond independence and after AOs left for their second careers.

The themes evident in Mitchell's letter succinctly provide the categories that most discussion and gossip in these exchanges would contain: the physical conditions of where the author was and how this affected daily life (including any short anecdotes demonstrating the effect); life in the department, often linked to wider political issues of the time; the whereabouts of mutual friends and colleagues.⁸⁹ AOs' wives, usually absent from the official record, also kept to these categories in their correspondence with Humphrys. Kath Parsons was married to Keith, an RAO for Mbale District, Uganda and former colleague of Humphrys. In early 1964, after Humphrys had left, she wrote that '[e]veryday life here is just as it always was though politics are hotting up a bit. Busoga, I believe, is not too happy [...] Teso seems much the same'.⁹⁰ The remainder of the letter focuses on leisure activities and where mutual friends in the department were then stationed.

Beside these 'sections' there was a performative element to the correspondence that helped to maintain and define the nature of the relationships that Humphrys had with his colleagues. While some of the deprecating and self-deprecating humour ran throughout the letters as a device to lighten the otherwise depressing tone, it was usually deployed by the writer early in the letters. The nature of the comments – dismissing one of Humphrys' letters in favour of 'intellectual conversation', for example – seems most likely to reflect the kind of camaraderie found amongst AOs that got along and worked most frequently

⁸⁸ Mitchell to Humphrys, 29 February 1962, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

⁸⁹ All of the letters Humphrys kept from his time in Uganda and the following five years that are from eight different European AOs conform to this formula with the odd deviation in sections to expand on anecdotes.

⁹⁰ Kath Parsons to Humphrys, 21 January 1964, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

with one another.⁹¹ Peter Taylor, a government farm manager that Humphrys worked with in Uganda, was particularly fond of light-hearted jibes towards the latter, jokingly presuming that Humphrys must have been too busy ‘making money’ in his new job to fit in any letter-writing.⁹² A few others also engaged in a similar tone with Humphrys. This performative aspect in AOs’ letters displays a sense of comfort in corresponding with an old colleague and a potential retreat from the worsening situation that AOs usually proceeded to describe.

Alongside concerns about decolonisation, East African agriculture and the state of the governments in the newly independent countries in general, some AOs could use the letters to talk about ‘quite a lot of personal stuff’.⁹³ Some discussed their romantic interests or those of other AOs revealing a particular way of talking about women. The approach could be very dependent on the AO in question but for bachelor AOs, writing about the opposite sex gave them opportunity to reaffirm their masculinity and create a different kind of bond with each other, something not on display in correspondence from married men. Taylor, who was clearly searching for a particular aesthetic when it came to African women, believed the men in his District in November 1965 to be ‘fine specimens’, but the women: ‘Eurgh! Shapeless stinking eyesores, all with shaven heads but for the odd tuft’. Taylor had asked AAOs to encourage more women to come on agricultural courses, but would not ‘break down & weep’ should they not manage to attend.⁹⁴ Max Permain, an AO in Jinja who worked under Humphrys and who the latter understatedly defined as ‘a pretty good chum’, relied on metaphors from nature to describe African women.⁹⁵ Angela, a nurse and the future wife of African DAO Odeke, ‘really [was] smashing. High cheek bones, light brown colour, super figure, jersey eyes and good udder!’ Despite the bovine comparisons, Permain meant this positively, and noted – presumably amazed at the thought – that Angela was also ‘sweet to talk to, too, and twists well’ though he had not danced with her since “‘the shake’ came out”.⁹⁶ Dances

⁹¹ Peter Taylor to Humphrys, 24 January 1964, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

⁹² Taylor to Humphrys, 18 November 1965, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

⁹³ Humphrys, recorded interview, Winchester, 16 September 2016. Humphrys was not prepared to have certain letters photographed because of the amount of this ‘personal stuff’ contained therein and discussed with the family of one AO what they would be happy to have used for this project.

⁹⁴ Taylor to Humphrys, 17 August 1964, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

⁹⁵ Humphrys, recorded interview.

⁹⁶ Humphrys, quoting Permain to Humphrys, 7 April 1964, recorded interview.

were clearly popular with Permain – a single man – who attended one in Nakuru on 17 July 1963 and noted that the ‘fruits seemed pretty ready’. Fortunately for the women in question, Permain had ‘[drunk] a fair bit and did not attack’.⁹⁷ While married and single AOs appeared to have many similarities in their work habits, their social habits certainly differed.

Permain’s occasional discussion of women in his letters clearly demonstrates a particular type of relationship with Humphrys where the two felt secure to discuss the topic. Indeed, the style of rhetoric was dependent on the attitudes and relationship status of the AO. Humphrys was a bachelor, and this was clearly an important part of his identity in general, enough so to title an early chapter in his unpublished memoir ‘Masaka: Bachelor First Tour in Uganda’.⁹⁸ It also improved his social circle as a greater number of guests could stay in his house though the ‘stiffs’, including Humphrys’ mother, did not react well to his ‘nubile, well developed’ cook.⁹⁹ Bachelorhood extended beyond Uganda’s AOs, with Alister Allan noting the arrival of bachelors at Trinidad in one larger group, indicating that even from their days of colonial agricultural education the lack of a partner was also a part of how AOs saw themselves and may have made the prospects of life overseas seem full of even greater adventure.¹⁰⁰

At the core of the letters, though, were the aforementioned three ‘sections’. Each section performed a different function. The conditions and anecdotes about day-to-day life were almost all designed to highlight that change after independence was not necessarily obvious to the outsider, but something bubbling under the surface, noticeable to those working for the government.¹⁰¹ The letters suggest that AOs believed they had a particular understanding of the situation in East Africa, that despite the lack of obvious change these AOs were in a position to see through the positives of independence and witness an administration that they believed could not measure up to its British predecessor. This

⁹⁷ Humphrys, quoting Permain to Humphrys, 16 August 1963, recorded interview. Permain also talks of women as ‘fruit’ in another letter when discussing the potential infidelity of an AO in Humphrys, quoting Permain to Humphrys, 7 April 1963, recorded interview.

⁹⁸ Humphrys, ‘Masaka: Bachelor First Tour in Uganda’, in unpublished memoir. Viewed by author 16 September 2016.

⁹⁹ Humphrys, recorded interview.

¹⁰⁰ Allan, *Unpublished Trinidad Diary*, entry for 17 September 1959, in possession of author.

¹⁰¹ Some autobiographies emphasise this point too. See, for example, MacDonald, pp. 90–96.

outlook reinforced the group identity of AOs: they may have been friends, but their position as colleagues enabled them to appreciate the differences between an officers' social life and professional life. While politics was 'hotting up' in Busoga, in Uganda in general 'things seem[ed] very little changed in spite of mutinies and parties'.¹⁰² In Tanzania, 'life [...] outside of work continue[d] to be pleasant and pretty easy going'.¹⁰³ Mention of leisure activities harked back to a colonial past when officials in many locations had good access to such things. Giles Dixon, on his wheat station in Kenya, was not far from a golf course; Mitchell enjoyed this pastime too.¹⁰⁴ Others enjoyed duck shooting or sailing, fishing, or driving sports cars; another took part in ploughing competitions, mixing work and leisure.¹⁰⁵

The club was also a prominent feature of social life for these AOs and one that can show different types of change for AOs after independence, especially when contrasted to working life. The racial makeup of some clubs remained stuck in the colonial era, with one RAO in Tanzania commenting of his club that of the fifty members, after independence there were only two Asians and no 'locals' despite a few senior European members encouraging the latter to join.¹⁰⁶ Mitchell remembered that after Tanganyikan independence, Africans complained that the Morogoro Club was discriminating against them by charging the same for Africans as for Europeans and that, thanks to the prevailing political climate, the club was shut down. Mitchell's anecdote came alongside a host of other remembrances by him of 'political' interference after independence. Although it tells us a single detail about the Morogoro Club, it also reveals Mitchell's attitude towards some Africans' activities after independence. Mitchell called it one of many 'petty

¹⁰² Davies to Humphrys, 11 March 1964, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

¹⁰³ Whitehead to Humphrys, 5 April 1964, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

¹⁰⁴ Dixon, recorded interview; Mitchell, recorded interview. Wallis, while able to play, chose not to due to the high number of settlers engaged in the sport while he was a DAO, Wallis, recorded interview; Permain joked to Humphrys about his failing skills due to being 'frantically busy' after independence, Humphrys quoting Permain to Humphrys, 9 January 1964, recorded interview.

¹⁰⁵ Keith Parsons was a duck shooter and fisherman: Kath Parsons to Humphrys, 21 January 1964; Mitchell and others sailed a bit when stationed at Bukoba, being on the shore of Lake Victoria (Mitchell also played tennis); Mitchell, recorded interview; Peter Taylor was into sports cars: Taylor to Humphrys, 18 November 1965, both letters viewed by author 16 September 2016. Giles Dixon, Bill Mitchell and James Tuckett also played some tennis: Dixon, Mitchell, Tuckett, recorded interviews. Allan was described as a 'great ploughing man' by Dixon, recorded interview. In phone conversations with other former AOs, they remembered Allan similarly and while Allan now judges ploughing competitions, his participation continued as a contestant for some years after his service in Kenya.

¹⁰⁶ John Whitehead to Humphrys, 8 November 1963, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

incidents' and used the club's closure to suggest that he believed Africans may have wanted independence but were not prepared to pay the price for it, literally in this case.¹⁰⁷ However, not everywhere was subject to such radical change. In Mbale, Uganda, the club 'hadn't changed for two years' in 1964, with only one prominent European noted as absent.¹⁰⁸ Njoro, Kenya, was a 'white man's station', and at least one Goan administrator working on the station would drive to Nakuru to visit the Goan club there, not having access to the European one closer to the station.¹⁰⁹ Mitchell, feeling the need to justify the racial differences, believed this was an East African phenomenon, that before and after independence, clubs and societies seemed to form on racial or national lines, with Greek, Hindu, and European clubs present in Moshi, Tanganyika, that changed very little with independence.¹¹⁰ The comfort of continuities between eras made the transition to working for an independent government an easier task to stomach for AOs and made for relatable links to the past when communicating with old colleagues.

In the letters, day-to-day conditions outside of work then gave way to comments on the department, usually at a local level. Sometimes these were comments on the agricultural conditions, with one extension officer writing to Humphrys in mid-1963 about a portion of the cotton crop in Jinja receiving good and timely planting. Cotton planted later suffered from drought conditions, with more problems emerging at the picking stage.¹¹¹ However, most often these comments revolved around staff or policy as either standalone issues or impacting on the amount of work Europeans faced in the departments. Staff concerns usually related to the influx of African staff at the local level, but on occasion were aimed at those higher up the chain of command. These anecdotes served to highlight the contrast between civilian life and work life after independence and make it clear that some AOs believed the departments of agriculture were suffering administratively after independence. Farmers were not the only obstacle to progress as governments Africanised faster than before and new staff presented more apparent problems to European AOs who remained. As AOs saw it, the problem was two-fold. Government policy could be blamed in an over-arching sense, and yet simultaneously the

¹⁰⁷ Mitchell, recorded interview.

¹⁰⁸ Keith Parsons to Humphrys, 21 January 1964, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

¹⁰⁹ Mervyn Maciel, interviewed by author, Sutton, 20 December 2017.

¹¹⁰ Mitchell, recorded interview.

¹¹¹ Humphrys, quoting Permain to Humphrys, 16 August 1963, recorded interview.

individuals who were in positions as a result of the policy were also at fault. Inexperienced staff were being quickly promoted to positions of responsibility both within the agricultural departments and outside of them, to the detriment of the department and to the annoyance of European AOs.

Criticism by AOs of African individuals came easily. Taylor wrote in August 1964 of the ‘shambles’ that awaited his return from leave, going so far as to say of his (African) temporary replacement that he had ‘never met such a lazy B[astard]’.¹¹² In late 1963 John Whitehead, promoted to RAO in Tanganyika and taking over from an African, saw himself as ‘engaged mainly in cleaning up operations!’¹¹³ By 1964, Whitehead was still attempting to get the department back on track. He had:

[T]he quite unpleasant task at the moment of remanding my accounts assistant and another officer locally [in charge of] water development for fiddling. This makes the 4th theft of public funds in the Ministry here in 8 months.¹¹⁴

The accounts assistant had been a loyal government servant for twenty-nine years and was used by Whitehead to symbolise the difficulties that existed after independence and to imply the corrupting power of African governance, even on staff who were previously seen as loyal to the British administration. Contrastingly, Africans who had come to higher positions in the Department of Agriculture under the Colonial Government, such as Humphrys’ former colleague Odeke, could also come in for neutral treatment and occasionally even praise.¹¹⁵ Sometimes, rapid promotion caused shock, and some AOs clearly felt the racial divide: ‘Big steps up lately for “them”’, wrote Taylor in mid-1964.¹¹⁶ In some cases there was the overcoming of any earlier suspicions. Permain had later worked alongside Odeke and got on ‘pretty well’ with the latter, referring to him by first name. Odeke included Permain in his social circle after independence and even complimented his ability. Permain candidly revealed to Humphrys that he ‘reckon[ed] [Odeke]’s pretty genuine, I think he wants to be the Regional Agricultural Officer next

¹¹² Taylor to Humphrys, 17 August 1964, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

¹¹³ Whitehead to Humphrys, 8 November 1963, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

¹¹⁴ Whitehead to Humphrys, 5 April 1964, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

¹¹⁵ Whitehead to Humphrys, 5 April 1964, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

¹¹⁶ Taylor to Humphrys, 17 August 1964, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

year'.¹¹⁷ Permain and Humphrys must have viewed African motivation for friendship as different to European for genuineness to have been discussed at all, but it is clear that within the department, Europeans saw the African staff who joined them before independence as more reliable types, but viewed those who arrived afterwards with some suspicion.

The blame for the corruption of these individuals, be they long-standing employees or newcomers to the department, was placed on the policy of Africanisation or localisation and the increasing imposition of policy from above. Taylor had avoided Karamoja, a region in the northeast of Uganda, for ten years, and was posted there in late 1965, noting the change in attitude towards Head Office amongst the staff that was most unlike his earlier postings. In Karamoja, letters from the Commissioners could 'wait a bit', if they were answered at all, though Taylor now believed this appropriate, given how much 'nonsense' came from above as time went on.¹¹⁸ African staff, new or otherwise, were exonerated from blame if a European deemed the problems presented from higher up to be more disruptive than those from below.

Sometimes the distinction between Africisation and other policy was more clear cut. Other remaining AOs adopted similarly dismissive language of Africanisation's perceived woes, focussing more directly on the staff themselves. Whitehead and his wife Thora both separately referred to the Department as a 'shambles', John believing that 'Tanganyika was fast degenerating [...] Africanisation as a policy in Govt. has been officially stopped – but it's too late unfortunately'.¹¹⁹ Whitehead was also unhappy with a series of break-ins, resulting in the loss of more funds. The blame for this was also placed squarely at the feet of Africans, with the acknowledgement that these events only came about due to the Africanisation policy: 'This sort of thing has increased directly proportionally to the degree of localisation of the police so you can draw your own conclusions!'¹²⁰ While the inference of Whitehead's comment is obvious, it also implies a

¹¹⁷ Humphrys quoting Permain to Humphrys, 9 January 1964, recorded interview.

¹¹⁸ Taylor to Humphrys, 18 November 1965, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

¹¹⁹ Thora Whitehead to Humphrys, 7 November 1963 – the reason for this shambles was, apparently, 'a departing African' who had held the post before Thora's husband arrived; John Whitehead to Humphrys, 31 January 1964. Both viewed by author 16 September 2016.

¹²⁰ Whitehead to Humphrys, 5 April 1964, viewed by author 16 September 2016

set of unspoken assumptions between him and Humphrys, that there was an obviousness or a shared belief that standards would inevitably slip once Africans, not Britons, were in charge of law and order. As fellow AOs, it was unquestioned by either that this needed clearly defining, being part of the inevitability of African rule as those AOs saw it.

Furthermore, concerns with the end of a European official presence in the department highlighted the dwindling numbers of European staff and their increasing sense of professional isolation. One letter from Thora Whitehead recalled how Europeans were being drafted in to run co-operative banks and shops as ‘there [we]ren’t the Africans to do these jobs’.¹²¹ As noted earlier, senior AOs in Tanganyika believed too many low-level (AIs or equivalent) African staff were being trained for the departments.¹²² This view was shared by those in Kenya, with John Peberdy remembering that government was training ‘more people than we needed’.¹²³ Although unspoken, the concern that certain departments or areas were being fed new European staff, while the Agricultural Departments were being increasingly filled with Africans who AOs saw as being the cause of a shambolic situation, played into AOs’ fears that their departments were being sidelined and that they were subject to even further isolation as lone Europeans in that environment.

Africanisation of the departments was a policy that directly impacted on remaining AOs, but agricultural policy also came under fire, with criticism of ‘chaotic’ and ‘rushed’ government-imposed schemes.¹²⁴ The schemes criticised in contemporary personal correspondence are the same that AOs targeted in their later reminiscences about post-independence agricultural policy. In Uganda and Tanzania these were related to group farming, where farmers were, certainly as AOs saw it, collectivised to work en masse, tending to larger plots of land than their individual holdings. Julius Nyerere, Tanzania’s President, had written about the true ethos of collective farming as he saw it, and how the growth of large farms resulting in a turn to employment on capitalistic wage labour terms

¹²¹ Thora Whitehead to Humphrys, 7 November 1963, viewed by author 16 September 2017.

¹²² Fuggles-Couchman, p. 75.

¹²³ Peberdy, recorded interview.

¹²⁴ Whitehead to Humphrys, 5 April 1964; Humphrys, recorded interview; Whitehead to Humphrys, 8 November 1963, Permain to Humphrys, 7 April 1964, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

erred away from what he saw as African socialism.¹²⁵ In this sense, the disappointment with group and collective farming can be seen as an ideological criticism from AOs, eagerly ingrained in the capitalistic mind-set that encouraged small holder tenancies or land ownership, and certainly aware of Cold War concerns at independence.¹²⁶ However, group farming of sorts had been in place under the colonial administrations. In Tanzania, Michael Jennings argues that collective farms were in place towards the end of the 1950s, not through any particular ideological basis, but to 'both change and better control' Tanzanian society and its products.¹²⁷ AOs had no qualms about villagisation (albeit in a very different context) throughout the Mau Mau emergency, which also led to the introduction of Swynnerton's land consolidation – not quite group farming, but a not-so-distant cousin.¹²⁸

In the independent era, however, group farms, collective farms or villagisation came under fire from AOs not from a purely ideological perspective (though some claimed the idea was 'anathema' to some groups of Africans in Tanzania, in contrast with Nyerere's assertions).¹²⁹ In 1964 there was some suspicion, researcher Davies noting in a letter that he could not 'help feeling this group farming lark will really explode one of these days'.¹³⁰ The policies, Max Permain believed, had been poorly thought through and were impacting on the farmers. After several disgruntled letters expressing concerns over the impact of policy on farmers, Permain concluded in 1967:

Group farms in Busoga are absolutely hopeless and are all closed down following years of failure with loan repayments, except Nakabaale where things are carrying on in a very heartless manner as there is no free land there.¹³¹

Permain's concern with farmers' conditions, alongside policy, displays some difference from other AOs who focussed on policy and outcomes almost exclusively. For Permain,

¹²⁵ Julius K Nyerere, *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 106-144.

¹²⁶ More on this is explored in Chapter 4, demonstrating that AOs were more than aware of the independent governments courting countries from a variety of ideological backgrounds for aid donations and agreements.

¹²⁷ Michael Jennings, 'Building Better People: Modernity and Utopia in Late Colonial Tanganyika', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 3.1 (2009), 94–111, p. 97.

¹²⁸ Wallis, recorded interview.

¹²⁹ Mitchell says that the Chagga 'were independent smallholders and didn't want anything to do with anything like that'. Mitchell, recorded interview.

¹³⁰ Davies to Humphrys, 11 March 1964, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

¹³¹ Humphrys quoting from Permain to Humphrys, 1 May 1967, recorded interview.

there was more of a sympathetic view towards farmers, underlining again that policy had failed them. Before independence the conservatism of farmers, their inability to adopt new methods and their unwillingness to enter into the cash crop world had been held up as problematic, regardless of contrary evidence in the field. After independence, governments were to blame. It was a ‘fine state of affairs’ Permain began, ‘when the government force tractors on unsuspecting peasants, who make rather a mess, and then lock up the poor chaps who try to make a reasonable living’. If the farmers were forced to pay off the loans they owed for the tractors, Permain believed, ‘many of them would make a loss’.¹³² These new schemes could also push European AOs to their limits in terms of work. Permain was working ‘out in the bush’ from 9am until 7pm and doing all office work at night as additional responsibilities for schemes he did not agree with were placed upon him.¹³³ Despite this overwork, the combination of agricultural policy and Africanisation was, for him, squarely to blame for increasing problems.

Lastly, AOs’ letters turned to where former colleagues were moving. Even with a relatively unaffected social life the department was, AOs thought, on the decline thanks to political interference resulting in inept staff. The exodus of Europeans played up the idea that AOs were now part of another frontier, not just the scientific. Alongside their beliefs in the supremacy of science and their position within the officialdom in colonial society at the end of empire, the remaining dwindling numbers of Europeans displayed something of an under siege mentality. Europeans were dispersing to the last remaining colonies or moving within the Commonwealth; Africans who had risen up through the department under empire’s rule left for new posts or intensive training programs in foreign countries.¹³⁴ This was usually seen as an inevitable move. AOs could pine for an alternate existence, with John Davies, who remained in Uganda until 1972, telling Humphrys in 1964 that the latter was ‘probably wise to abandon ship’ when he did. ‘Many old faces are

¹³² Humphrys quoting from Permain to Humphrys, 7 April 1964, recorded interview.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ John ‘Taff’ Davies wrote of colleagues leaving for (Southern) Rhodesia and Bechuanaland, Max Permain wrote to Humphrys bemoaning the loss of Odeke to a three-week course, another African AO who was leaving for the USA to study and the stations’ ‘3 best AAI [who were] off to Israel for 2 years in Oct[ober]’. Davies to Humphrys, 11 March 1964; Permain to Humphrys, 6 August 1963. Letters viewed by author on 16 September 2016. Kenyan African AAOs were also given the opportunity to go abroad for courses after independence, as positions were offered as part of larger aid arrangements. See Minutes of DAOs conference, 6 April 1961, 10 April 1961, p. 5, KNA, PDA/EBU/1/1/229.

leaving [...] many AAOs seem to leave after one tour', Davies continued.¹³⁵ Another colleague noted as early as November 1963 that he thought the 'writing was on the wall' for remaining European staff.¹³⁶ Each of the seven letters from Permain to Humphrys provided updates on the staff situation, and Permain took solace in an ex-Shuttleworth College of Agriculture man, Paul Taylor, being posted to his District in late 1963, who would 'be good company'.¹³⁷ Permain also attended Shuttleworth, and mentions this connection in three letters to Humphrys clearly signalling the importance of some shared educational experience, despite Taylor being a year ahead of Permain and the two not knowing each other until brought together by work.¹³⁸ In January 1964 another ex-Shuttleworth AO, Keith Porter, also arrived in the District and gets a mention in Permain's by then regular staff updates.¹³⁹

The pessimistic attitude felt by those AOs in Uganda was kept from being all-consuming by the hope provided by this correspondence. Humphrys became a sounding board for his former-colleagues to express themselves to, and question about potential second careers. John Whitehead was keenly researching jobs in New Zealand, Australia or South Africa and Keith Parsons, also looking for a route out of Uganda, thought that opportunities for agriculturalists in England looked 'pretty poor [...] the best thing would be farming'.¹⁴⁰ These communications definitely strengthened bonds between AOs at this stage of their careers, whether they stayed on for some time or left only a short while after independence, as they experienced independence and a new set of challenges that emerged from it in the same manner. Humphrys, who by 1964 was working for British Oil and Cake Mills in Britain, tried to help out a few of his former-colleagues by responding to requests to send copies of magazines with information about house prices in Britain.¹⁴¹ His help and advice was gratefully received and continued to reinforce the group

¹³⁵ Davies to Humphrys, 11 March 1964, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

¹³⁶ Whitehead to Humphrys, 8 November 1963, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

¹³⁷ Permain to Humphrys, 6 August 1963, viewed by author on 16 Septmber 2016.

¹³⁸ Permain to Humphrys, 6 August 1963; Humphrys quoting from Permain to Humphrys, 16 August 1963 and 9 November 1963, recorded interview.

¹³⁹ Humphrys quoting Permain to Humphrys, 9 January 1963, recorded interview.

¹⁴⁰ Whitehead to Humphrys, 5 April 1964; Parsons to Humphrys, 21 January 1964, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

¹⁴¹ Whitehead to Humphrys, 17 March 1964, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

mentality, that AOs of his generation in East Africa were all attempting to fight the same battle.

Besides these sections, lengthier missives by those who remained longer kept Humphrys abreast of the political situation vis-à-vis working conditions for Europeans, with Peter Taylor prompted into action by the January 1964 army mutinies arriving at Jinja.¹⁴² Taylor's letters demonstrate the perhaps obvious point, that criticism of government and senior figures was far easier to express in personal letter than by official communication.

In one letter, Taylor sets about criticising Ugandan and British responses to two different crises. First, Taylor offered Humphrys the 'inside story' on the Tank Hill Party. The Tank Hill Party was a get together organised by five young European men that took place on 11 December 1963, the night before Kenyan Independence. The party attracted at least 150 other Europeans from around Kampala. The organisers had nicknamed themselves 'The League of Ex-Empire Loyalists' and pulled few punches in appealing to a particularly debasing set of stereotypes about Africans on the event's invitations. The dress code was to be based around *Sanders of the River* and many guests arrived in their pith helmets and mosquito boots à la Sanders. One female guest wore a *busuuti* dress – a symbol of Ugandan nationalism – and another had made a bikini out of the Union Jack. 'God Save the Queen' was sung at midnight as a radio broadcast the lowering of the British flag in Kenya.¹⁴³ The party itself carried on until early the following morning; the political fallout lasted into the new year, as questions arose in Uganda and Britain about the ongoing European presence in newly independent countries in Africa. Rumours abounded about what exactly had occurred, from songs that mocked Africans to claims in the Ugandan parliament that the woman in the *busuuti* dress had been dragged across the room by a rope around her neck as a demonstration of how the British saw independent Africans treating women.¹⁴⁴ The reaction from Ugandan politicians was strong. Uganda's

¹⁴² For more on the mutinies see Timothy Parsons, *The 1964 Army Mutinies and the Making of Modern East Africa* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003); Mark Baynham, 'The East African Mutinies of 1964', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 9.2 (1990), 153–80 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/02589009008729495>>.

¹⁴³ Timothy Parsons, *The Second British Empire: In the Crucible of the Twentieth Century* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), pp. 231–33.

¹⁴⁴ A seminar paper by Edgar Taylor looks at the role of the party and its immediate aftermath for Uganda's politics. See Edgar Taylor, "The Tank Hill Party": Generational Politics and Decolonisation in East Africa',

Prime Minister Milton Obote was looking for a way to unite the factions of his party and possibly distract from other domestic policy issues, and the Tank Hill affair gave him opportunity to do so by capitalising on the opposition to European racism.¹⁴⁵ The Youth Wing of the UPC had focussed ‘their attention largely on symbolic causes that dramatized the alleged hollowness of Uganda’s independence’ and threatened to undermine the power of Uganda’s politicians. Obote saw the opportunity for all in the UPC to come together against events such as Tank Hill.¹⁴⁶

The organisers, young men hoping to make careers from the postcolonial situation that Uganda found itself in, believed the party to have been a tongue-in-cheek look at imperial rule. One thought that the Ugandans who deported him had ‘no sense of humour at all’, though as Timothy Parsons points out, they had neglected to realise that many Ugandans ‘never found the experience of imperial rule to be particularly funny’.¹⁴⁷ For Humphry’s ex-colleague Peter Taylor, the response from Obote and Sir David Hunt, British High Commissioner in Uganda, was unacceptable. Hunt had worked with Obote to hastily deport fourteen of those involved in the party, including the five organisers, in an attempt to prevent any African backlash. Taylor conceded that the party was ‘rather a silly thing to do’ but that Hunt needed his ‘backside kicked’ for his conduct in deporting the organisers. Taylor also noted that there were some civil servants that attended the party but who went undiscovered, ‘including at least two of our chaps’ in the Department of Agriculture.¹⁴⁸ A loyalty to existing colleagues trumped any loyalty to the remnants of overall British control, and Taylor’s dismissal of the ‘silly’ discussion in ‘LEGCO [Legislative Council]’ indicates that, even while he was up-to-the-minute on current affairs gossip, Taylor was happy to refer to the Ugandan Parliament by its former name, harking back to a time when Britain did still have more direct control over Ugandan administration.¹⁴⁹ If the fragility of the role of Europeans ‘staying on’ was running under

2017 <<https://wiser.wits.ac.za/content/tank-hill-party-generational-politics-and-decolonization-east-africa-12709>> [accessed 12 February 2018].

¹⁴⁵ Taylor, pp. 16-17.

¹⁴⁶ Taylor, p. 11.

¹⁴⁷ Parsons, *The Second British Empire: In the Crucible of the Twentieth Century*, p. 233.

¹⁴⁸ Peter Taylor to Humphrys, 24 January 1964, viewed by author 16 September 2016. Edgar Talyor writes that ‘many’ of the guests were, in fact, civil servants. Tank Hill was an area of fifty mostly European households.

¹⁴⁹ Taylor to Humphrys, 24 January 1964.

the surface of everyday life, Hunt's role in assisting the deportation of the party organisers was a clear demonstration that Europeans now were not in the position of power they once had been, even those working for the administration.

Max Permain took a slightly different view. Like Taylor, he believed that the 'Tank Hill affair was a bit off [...] from the British's [sic] point of view':

I would have thought people who had been out here a year or more would know that sort of thing was asking for it. Although some of them didn't care, they put all the rest of the whites who remain in rather a poor position. It is interesting to note that old Bayerlien and [his] Mrs. said how bad the invitation was before the party even took place.¹⁵⁰

Permain dwelled far less on the political fallout than the on-the-ground implications for the remaining white community: the house of the Labour Commissioner, Martin Bayers, had been broken into 'and the man came at him with a panga'; the editor of the Uganda Argus was kidnapped. 'Soon the ruffians in the backstreets will think they can do anything to us with impunity.'¹⁵¹ Permain saw these events as a symptom of the diminishing status of Europeans in Uganda but did not stretch as far as Taylor when it came to the High Commissioner or Obote's response. While both AOs shared similar grievances about issues in the department, their reaction to wider political issues such as these highlight that an individual's own personality had its part to play in how these events were understood on the ground. The tone of the letters to Humphrys differs between Permain and Taylor with the latter seemingly more oppositional towards African authority while Permain was more accepting of the situation and concerned moreso with the impact on his own work.

Taylor downplayed the significance of the Tank Hill Party, assuming over-reaction on the part of Obote and Hunt, and similarly thought the 1964 army mutiny, over pay and conditions for African troops, should have been handled differently. '[I]nstead of dropping pay demands at the drop of a hat (or Onama) they want to sort a few of 'em out. The rest would probably soon decide to be loyal again, just like they were claimed to be the day

¹⁵⁰ Humphrys, quoting from Permain to Humphrys, 9 January 1964, recorded interview.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. The editor of the Argus had been abducted and forced to 'walk around Kampala's main market with a bunch of bananas on his head', see Parsons, *The Second British Empire: In the Crucible of the Twentieth Century*, p. 232. Edgar Taylor suggests the break in at the Labour Commissioner's home was also organised by youth wingers, and Parsons notes that the house that held the party was burned down.

before yesterday!',¹⁵² Taylor continued criticism of the British troops who arrived for being 'more worried about their own skins than ours', another expression of the perceived threat to the European community in Uganda. No matter, though, as Taylor believed that, at least short term, the impact of the mutinies had been low. Ugandans were fairly unaffected, with the 'usual hum of the unwashed crowds' remaining the norm in Jinja. Only after Taylor's commentary on recent events did he turn to work, and again it was to vent frustration with recruitment difficulties and logistical issues, the latter of which in particular appeared to be a cathartic exercise on Taylor's part.¹⁵³ For Peter Taylor, having another Briton who had shared some of the same experiences as himself gave him the opportunity to let off steam and discuss the way he saw Uganda being run under African governance and how involvement from Britain in post-colonial Uganda was not able to steer African policy to the degree it may have done just a few years earlier. These contrasting attitudes suggest that the recently ex-colonial civil service was far from united when it came to attitudes towards African independence or managing situations on the ground.

Humphrys also kept up some correspondence with his African staff, but how typical this was for other AOs is hard to know. For Humphrys, most correspondence with European former-colleagues lasted for two or three years before petering out, with some exceptions, but correspondence with African staff came to an end after only one or two exchanges. The content of the correspondence with African staff was very similar to that with Europeans: conditions, the department, and what others had been doing lately. The colleagues discussed in these letters by African AOs were those in the immediate area – the same district or station – rather than those in a wider network. One notable difference in correspondence to Humphrys from Europeans and Africans was the perception of security and insulation from the new government. Life for Europeans, albeit struggling against poor administration and bad policy choices in their opinions, remained, according

¹⁵² Felix Onama was the Minister for Internal Affairs who had, only days before the mutiny in Uganda, issued a statement reassuring the public that 'army morale was high'. Once the mutiny (which was rumoured to be far more sinister than a pay dispute, given the recent Zanzibar revolution) was underway, Onama visited the barracks at Jinja and was taken hostage until he personally agreed to renegotiate pay terms on the spot. Timothy Parsons, *The 1964 Army Mutinies and the Making of Modern East Africa* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), pp. 115-117.

¹⁵³ Taylor to Humphrys, 24 January 1964, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

to their letters, fairly similar to before independence.¹⁵⁴ However, Sam Kikule, who had worked with Humphrys for three years in Masaka District, wrote in February 1964 that he would prefer to not discuss politics by letter, 'lest I get thrown out of my job'.¹⁵⁵ How far Kikule was being over-cautious, or European staff felt a continued superiority despite political events and thus felt unchallenged, is not clear. From the contrast between the two, European AOs who stayed on certainly had no qualms about criticising government or individuals in letters after independence. They felt a definite security in doing so and in knowing that, even when matters were not explicitly stated, their former colleagues would understand the message in its entirety.

These letters and the anecdotes within them served a dual-purpose for AOs. Firstly, they reinforced this final batch of AOs' identity as a group by keeping each other informed of the whereabouts of friends and former colleagues, allowing the network to exist even if only in the minds and memories of author and reader. Secondly, they also served to emphasise the increasing isolation of European AOs. These letters at once combine the comfort of a network – there were people to write to who would understand the situation in the same way as the author – and the despair of a declining way of life, as AOs understood it. There was certainly an inquisitive side to some, asking Humphrys about life back in Britain and for information on the housing market, but there was also a cathartic aspect. The letters were an outlet for the woes of AOs when it came to the changes they were having to adapt to as African staff (who they saw as often substandard in quality if not educated under the colonial regime) were drafted in to assist the implementation of African policy that, regardless of any similarity between colonial policy, could never be seen as being of such quality.

Conclusion

AOs' networks functioned in different ways. The friendships established in training and on the ground could flourish under the conditions of research and occasionally through extension, but relationships both new and old – Mitchell had been to

¹⁵⁴ Examples include all previously cited Whitehead letters and most by Peter Taylor.

¹⁵⁵ Kikule to Humphrys, 20 February 1964, viewed by author 16 September 2016.

Trinidad with Humphrys; all of Humphrys' Uganda colleagues had not – could help officers navigate their way through the loss of power, prestige and the feeling of impending catastrophe that appeared to them after independence. Where education seemed the common denominator in keeping in touch far beyond independence, in the immediate short-term AOs' operational environment brought them together and they sought solace in communicating their worries and fears to each other, safe in the knowledge that the recipient of their correspondence would understand, sometimes without any explicit reference to what they believed were the real problems.

In personal correspondence, criticism of government from Europeans after independence in their letters was always comparative – relative to their time in empire rather than absolute – and placed blame squarely at the feet of the new government and, often when talking of the department, new staff. African staff that ascended in the department before independence were viewed far more positively than those who appeared after, even if the latter were more appropriately trained, as Peberdy suggested may have been the case in Kenya with more institutions emerging to increase the number of qualified men in the field. Letters provided an outlet for concerns, a method of maintaining networks and a way to reinforce the seemingly contradictory notions of simultaneously being a part of a strong group but being increasingly isolated and powerless.

Higher up AOs saw the potential morale crisis coming with the onset of Africanisation. The move was encouraged to prepare the departments for independence when it was acknowledged that there would be an exodus of European staff. For those that remained it also provided the potential to assign blame more easily for remaining AOs' misgivings with the departments, their isolation in a society whose values were suddenly not the same as AOs' colonial experiences, and the apparently persistent interference of African political actors in their work.

AOs' professional relationships did benefit the region in terms of the exchange of knowledge, kept up alongside more output from researchers, and enabled them to see themselves and each other as experts while doing what they saw as best for African farmers, whether this was the case or not. Their expertise paved the way for future careers in development agencies but also allowed AOs to look back on their time in the CAS as

one where their expertise was put to use, combined with the backdrop of independence that saw them on a new frontier as part of a small group of ex-colonial officials still on the ground. Combined with their experiences interacting with aid agencies and foreign governments in the pre-independence era, AOs could use this to carve out the next stage of their careers, going from what they often saw as a loss of power, to a regaining of authority over African agriculture.

Chapter Four – ‘Outsiders’

Hostility to Outsiders

AOs would later remember some hostility towards ‘outsiders’: representatives of foreign governments, aid agencies and some members of the British government and HM’s opposition. ‘Insiders’, who worked for Agricultural Departments or related arms of Colonial Governments, were often welcomed (when on official visits) to encourage the spread of knowledge and the maintenance of personal and professional networks within the colony. Outsiders, in contrast, were seen by AOs –and in particular by those based in extension work – as encroaching on AOs’ personal and professional space, interfering with AOs’ progress, often unqualified to pass judgement by comparison to AOs, and consuming time that AOs could better spend addressing more pressing concerns in their district. Furthermore, outsiders such as aid agency workers were a constant reminder, especially after independence, of the loss of power AOs experienced as African governments accepted financial assistance from a variety of new donors and lenders.

This understanding of outsiders could lead to some hostility from AOs. The tone of AOs’ hostility could take a few different forms, which appear to be designed by AOs to enhance the status of the AO and reduce that of the outsider. Andrew MacDonald, who remained to teach agriculture at Makerere University, Uganda, denigrated with punctuation when he wrote of a ‘favourite bed and breakfast place for FAO ‘experts’’ to stay in.¹ Similarly, John Ainley implied a lack of expertise amongst outsiders, calling a visitor to Tanganyika after independence ‘an American ‘agrarian’’, part of a group of ‘newly arrived ‘advisors’’ in the country.² Wallis remembered that Swedish aid donors ‘sort of reinvented the wheel a bit’ with their encouragement of already attempted terracing methods in Machakos after independence, simultaneously implying that colonial methods were the right methods to reinvent.³ Ainley used the same phrase when talking of

¹ MacDonald, p. 171.

² Ainley, *Pink Stripes and Obedient Servants: An Agriculturalist in Tanganyika*, p. 223.

³ Wallis, recorded interview.

American “advisors”.⁴ Peberdy remembered a couple of American ranchers coming over to Kenya from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in around 1961, who disagreed with each other over how to best reform the range management system.⁵ More importantly for Peberdy, they also both disagreed with him, challenging his expertise. As with these examples, AO’s hostility was not often totally aggressive or indeed utterly scathing. It clearly implied a dislike of interference from those outside of the department and a suspicion of their ability or qualification, in opposition to AOs’ belief in their own credentials and experience.

AOs remembered outsiders as having had less involvement before independence, though which of the three countries one was posted to could make a difference. Before independence, there had been ‘interest but not interference’ from aid agencies in Tanganyika, Tuckett remembered; Mitchell recalled similarly.⁶ Ainley wrote that ‘after independence there was an influx of foreign visitors’.⁷ Mike Bigger and Peter Northwood also both remembered very little involvement from development agencies until after independence, despite both being in a research setting where foreign assistance was more common.⁸ On the ground in Uganda, Humphrys had a World Bank representative visit before independence and stay with him on a tour of the area but ‘wasn’t aware’ that the Bank were doing much in Uganda; ‘After independence [...] they were funding all sorts of things’.⁹ John Davies noted a few of his station’s staff being externally funded, but he was nonetheless left alone to pursue research relevant to his own role.¹⁰ Outsiders were certainly more visible to extension officers shortly before independence and beyond, while research continued to enjoy assistance from aid agencies much the same as they did in the late 1950s.

It was the type or source of assistance that differed: AOs remembered the involvement of Western countries in Kenya, a good deal of Chinese interest in Tanzania

⁴ Ainley, *Pink Stripes and Obedient Servants: An Agriculturalist in Tanganyika*, p. 224. Richard Briggs, in a twist on the standard phrase, used ‘reinventing the egg’. Briggs, recorded interview.

⁵ Peberdy, recorded interview.

⁶ Tuckett, recorded interview; Mitchell, recorded interview.

⁷ Ainley, *Pink Stripes and Obedient Servants: An Agriculturalist in Tanganyika*, p. 223.

⁸ Bigger, recorded interview; Northwood, recorded interview.

⁹ Humphrys, recorded interview.

¹⁰ Davies, recorded interview.

and a small Russian presence in Uganda. No territory or AO stands out as totally unaffected by outsiders, and, despite a similarity in ideological background between British AOs and Americans, US involvement in Kenya tended to draw the most frustration. AOs in Kenya believed non-departmental outsiders had had a greater presence there before independence in late 1963 than in Uganda or Tanganyika, though the most obvious example of influence from outside the colony was the British Government's financing of the Swynnerton Plan. The plan was the 'most comprehensive development scheme ever funded by the Colonial Office' receiving £5.75 million in May 1954, later upped to £7.95 million with only a few minor amendments.¹¹ In part because of the high funding received for the scheme and in part because the plan was based around a very localised approach to improving high potential areas, criticism from AOs was less evident. At the same time, while the funding was welcome, Wallis criticised the 'terrible performance of parliament in Westminster' saying that 'almost all they did was counter-productive'.¹² Nonetheless, Kenya was not the only recipient of funds from London in East Africa. The Tanganyika Development Plan of 1955 to 1960 channelled £8.5 million into agriculture in the country.¹³ Uganda had been receiving assistance from the Commonwealth Development and Welfare fund and at its independence received financial gifts and grants of around £2.25 million and loans of £8.35 million from the British Government.¹⁴

From the memories of AOs, 'outsider' presence before independence was seen as mostly beneficial to researchers and in particular to researchers in Kenya. After independence however, extension workers felt the brunt of what they perceived as interference from aid agencies. This perception appears to have been spread fairly evenly between AOs from all three territories, but hostility to American aid workers was more evident – partly because of proximity, partly because of a lack of any language barrier and

¹¹ Anne F. Thurston, *Smallholder Agriculture in Colonial Kenya: The Official Mind and the Swynnerton Plan* (Cambridge: Cambridge African Monographs, 1987), p. 76; Oliver Lyttleton (Secretary of State for the Colonies) to Kenya Government, 14 May 1954, TNA, CO 822/964/8; more detailed plan finance material available in TNA, CO 822/971.

¹² Wallis, recorded interview.

¹³ 'Tanganyika Development Plan, 1955-1069', in R. de S. Stapledon (Governor's Deputy, Tanganyika) to Lyttleton, 1 April 1954, TNA, CO 822/1007/2.

¹⁴ 'Aid for Uganda', 13 May 1964, TNA, DO 214/17/4.

partly because of pre-conceived ideas about Americans – than towards Chinese or Soviet visitors.

AOs appeared to be minimally impacted by HMG's involvement before independence in goings-on on the ground, other than the power Whitehall held to inhibit schemes that they believed were not worth financing. This stands in contrast to how some administrative staff felt Britain's government had acted towards them. In the inter-war years in Sudan, members of the SPS often felt 'betrayed by the Foreign Office'.¹⁵ After the war, one CAS man in Tanganyika noted the change in role for District Commissioners, becoming 'harassed politician[s]'.¹⁶ As early as 1950, one DO in Nigeria was reluctant to talk to schoolboys about the career prospects of the administrative service.¹⁷ As such, this chapter helps to highlight the differences felt by different Colonial Officials in the run up to, and after, independence. AOs' preoccupation with agricultural development, exemplified by their rejection of the 'political' when it came to interference from politicians – be they British or African – and their championing of the methods learned at university to apply their scientific knowledge to African 'problems' was backed by the governmental emphasis on development. This helped AOs cast themselves as technocrats pursuing a purer good, devoid of political interference, and quite unlike the pressures that DOs would face, mediating between rising nationalist forces (and in Kenya a significantly vocal white minority).

Agricultural researchers benefitted from being posted to Kenya, with more outside organisations investing before independence. Giles Dixon remembered money and some staff financed by the Rockefeller Foundation which helped strengthen research connections for him between the station he was at in Njoro and CIMMYT, the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center. Dixon saw this less as interference and more as an arrangement to help the 'community of plant breeders' exchange materials more freely and welcomed the involvement.¹⁸ At the same time, Wallis, working elsewhere in Kenya, could not recall involvement of other outside agencies before

¹⁵ Wm. Roger Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonization* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), pp. 535, 546–49.

¹⁶ Jeppesen, 'Recruitment To the Colonial Administrative Service', p. 29 fn. 137.

¹⁷ Jeppesen, 'Recruitment To the Colonial Administrative Service', p. 24.

¹⁸ Dixon, recorded interview.

independence, nor the involvement of foreign governments with his work.¹⁹ In short, as AOs remember, aid agencies and foreign governments had far less involvement before independence than after. However, these memories also highlight that extension and research AOs had very different experiences of external involvement: research stations received more financial or personnel assistance before independence, with less apparent involvement by aid agencies with extension officers. Extension officers, when confronted with development agency involvement, were often subject to new schemes or the suggestion of new schemes, unlike researchers who often found the additional available finance could assist them in continuing work already underway.

The variety of responses from extension and research officers to outsiders both before and after independence evoked these often hostile responses for three main reasons. Firstly, the level of accountability that officers felt outsiders were burdened with was seen as significantly less than that of themselves and other AOs and had the potential to lead to disruption within the agricultural sector or the country at large. Secondly, AOs' political perceptions of these outsiders could be influenced by their understanding of global relations and affected by trends in the metropole's politics, muddying the waters when it came to AOs' understanding of what was and what was not 'political'; and thirdly, the operational insularity of AOs, much of which – along with their education – helped inform their views about how African agriculture should be organised, set them in opposition to these outsiders.

All three reasons overlapped to some degree and as with other aspects of AOs' experiences, more contradictions between experience and memory are revealed. AOs would criticise staff from these aid agencies: David Brown remembered the World Bank coming to Ghana when he worked there after his stint in East Africa, telling Ghanaians how to farm cocoa, when, Brown believed, Ghanaians knew far better.²⁰ Ainley, pre-empting Wallis, wrote about Americans 'reinventing the wheel' with their advice and suggesting schemes that were already in existence in Tanganyika.²¹ Aid-givers were, in general, seen as interlopers who did not have sufficient experience or knowledge to

¹⁹ Wallis, recorded interview.

²⁰ Brown, recorded interview.

²¹ Ainley, *Pink Stripes and Obedient Servants: An Agriculturalist in Tanganyika*, pp. 223–24.

adequately address the problems they had been sent to solve. Whether this was the case or not, AOs remember feeling it. Yet, despite this, Joseph Hodge has noted how, while many in the Colonial Service remained in the colonies, ‘Owing to their specialized knowledge and extended field experience, there was for many of them a relatively seamless transition from being late colonial technocrats to becoming postcolonial, international development experts.’²² In the technical services, more than the average (around one third of those serving overseas, according to Anthony Kirk-Greene) ‘stayed on’ due to their specialist knowledge.²³ Even though AOs were hostile towards outside interference, they were not so reluctant that they dismissed these agencies as future employers. In one way this demonstrates AOs’ pragmatic approach to forging a career-path that they claimed was the reason for joining the agricultural service in the first instance. AOs retrospectively justified the move to development agencies by painting themselves as experts with experience and knowledge. After empire, AOs would lend these qualities to development bodies that they otherwise felt a hostility towards due to a perceived dearth of these qualities.

Finally, before inspecting the three apparent reasons AOs responded as they did to outsiders, it is worth noting that the reactions of AOs to this group often belies the outcomes of their involvement. Dixon and Davies’ memories of additional research staff and funding for experiments helped the wheat industry in Kenya and the entomology-related problems of food storage in Uganda respectively. Wallis believed that the ‘international connections’ he had developed over his time in Kenya greatly helped him successfully transition into his later role within the World Bank.²⁴ John Peberdy, despite his difficulties with American cattle ranchers, remembered that after independence there was ‘more money than we could spend’ alongside a huge increase in the number of funding meetings to channel aid appropriately.²⁵ In Tanzania after 1961, John Whitehead remembered supervising an Oxfam-backed project at Mtwara alongside which offers of aid and assistance were arriving ‘at an embarrassing rate’. Rather than scrabble around for funding, Whitehead’s main problem became selecting staff who would benefit the most

²² Joseph M. Hodge, ‘British Colonial Expertise, Post-Colonial Careering and the Early History of International Development’, *Journal of Modern European History*, 8.1 (2010), 24–46 (pp. 25–26).

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Wallis, recorded interview.

²⁵ Peberdy, recorded interview.

from training on offer thanks to this extra finance.²⁶ Not all intervention by foreign governments or aid agencies was remembered as successful, though this was often down to perceived African corruption at high levels, siphoning off money, rather than the inability of outsiders to perform well.²⁷ Despite these inconsistencies, AOs still reported their annoyance with outsiders.

Reasons for Hostility

Accountability

AOs' reactions to some 'outsiders' were influenced by differences in the levels of accountability that those outsiders had to higher bodies, notably the colonial or postcolonial administrations to whom AOs reported. AOs were chiefly responsible to their departmental superiors and while often given freedom to guide farmers as they saw fit, AOs were ultimately accountable. They used their relationships with farmers and subordinate staff to attempt the implementation of the fairly broad policy agenda of increasing yields. Outsiders, by contrast, were sometimes people for whom there was no accountable party or for whom the accountable party had the possibility to infringe upon the ability of AOs to undertake what they saw as the correct course of action for agriculture in their district or province.

Though the issue of accountability appears to have been the least important of AOs' three concerns over the presence and activity of outsiders, it was an issue that had the potential to upset senior administrators who intended to balance the concerns of African nationalists and public (African) sentiment with an agricultural policy that focussed on making the sector more productive. Outsiders who could disrupt this without the fear of repercussion were thus fairly unwelcome. These outsiders help highlight two things: firstly, they make clear that AOs were dislocated from the decision-making

²⁶ "How We Saved the World", p. 13.

²⁷ Tuckett, recorded interview; Mitchell, recorded interview; Humphrys, recorded interview. Interestingly, those that mention corruption at the time of immediate post-independence served in Tanganyika or Uganda. Kenyan AOs, ensuring that their time abroad is preserved as one of purity, emphasised that corruption really became more of an issue when it came to development aid after they had left, or when they were working for aid agencies and could observe by taking on the role of the outsider.

processes around agricultural schemes if political concerns trumped those issues.

Secondly, they highlight the differences between the ways politicians in London viewed African agriculture in empire and some of the realities that officials on the ground had to deal with.

Lord Hudson's 1956 visit to Uganda demonstrates both issues and reveals that with matters of political concern around agriculture, AOs could be left out of the picture, reinforcing that their roles were technical, not administrative, but undermining a little of the importance they attached to themselves. The Conservative Peer had returned from Uganda with the impression that African smallholder methods were not efficient and that European plantations would be preferable. The CO, who believed Hudson's suggestion of greater European influence over the agricultural sector might cause enormous political friction, by-passed AOs and the entire agricultural department and went straight to Governor of Uganda Andrew Cohen. As much as AOs would emphasise their importance on the ground, when it came to larger political questions around agriculture they played second fiddle to senior officials in London and East Africa. The Governor's hackles were raised by Hudson, whom he believed to be harbouring good intentions but unappreciative of the political sensitivities around agriculture and land use. Hudson, who had been Minister for Agriculture in Britain during the Second World War and who was seen as hugely successful in increasing the agricultural output of Britain's farmers and public, had expressed interest in initiating a debate in the House of Lords about land utilisation and 'related problems'.²⁸ In interview, AOs recalled very little about political difficulties and local sensitivities, but one that would crop up on occasion was land tenure, notably from Humphrys who had been based in Uganda.²⁹

Hudson arrived in Uganda a year after the East African Royal Commission (EARC) had finished collecting data for a report addressing land use issues that resulted in a set of Land Tenure Proposals published by the Ugandan Government in January 1956.

²⁸ For an overview of Hudson, see: William Gavin and Marc Brodie, 'Hudson, Robert Spear, First Viscount Hudson (1886-1957)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2011 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-34037>> [accessed 1 September 2018]. Quote from W.A.C. Mathieson (Colonial Office) to Lord Hudson, 11 May 1956, TNA, CO 822/946/1.

²⁹ Humphrys, recorded interview.

The Commission outlined a move to clearly demarcated smallholdings and individual tenure to ensure the most efficient mixed cropping. Cohen himself had been concerned over the contents of the Report but, Grace Carswell writes, conceded that the material relating to land tenure was most valuable.³⁰ Although the proposals would not entirely fulfil their potential – pre-colonial land tenure traditions in Kigezi led Ugandans to question exactly what the purpose of these land tenure reforms were, as chiefs and leaders used their closer connections with the colonial government to gain titles and appropriate land from other famers – the immediate result in Uganda was for the creation of a Ministry of Lands and the appointment of Zakaria Mungonya as the new Minister.³¹

Mathieson at the CO believed that Hudson could amplify the impact of his suggested debate on land use if he waited until Mungonya was in London as part of the delegation from the Uganda Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.³² Despite Mathieson's timing suggestions to Hudson, the former was clearly concerned by the implications of a debate in the Lords of any sort that looked too narrowly at Ugandan agriculture. Mathieson wrote to Cohen outlining Hudson's concerns: Hudson was impressed with the fertility of the land in the areas he saw but looked 'unfavourably' on the 'actual utilisation of the resources of the land [which] seem[ed] to fall so far short of what was now technically obtainable and economically desirable.' Hudson was particularly critical of the 'attitude of mind of the people' and the system of land tenure in place and believed that the introduction of European plantations would maximise the agricultural outputs. Mathieson informed Cohen that 'like a good official I made a number of deprecating noises' and attempted to highlight the difficulties with such a question, noting to Cohen that 'a Peer with a reputation like Lord Hudson's' would be difficult to discourage from asking a question altogether.³³ In Cohen's four-page reply, the Governor did his best to impress upon Mathieson that he believed he was 'not making too much of this [...] This is just the sort of issue which might really disturb the Baganda.'³⁴

³⁰ Grace Carswell, *Cultivating Success in Uganda: Kigezi Farmers & Colonial Policies* (Oxford: James Currey, 2007), p. 116.

³¹ Carswell, pp. 115–17.

³² CO 822/946/1.

³³ Mathieson to Cohen, 11 May 1956, TNA, CO 822/946/2.

³⁴ Cohen to Mathieson, 18 May 1956, TNA, CO 822/946/4.

Cohen's appeal to Mathieson had some impact, with Hudson watering down his question to a far less specific one, but Secretary of State for the Colonies Alan Lennox-Boyd contacted Hudson to dissuade him further, noting that the Buganda were 'a sensitive and suspicious race above all in matters relating to their land'.³⁵ Cohen reiterated his concerns once more: 'If much is said about it in parliament what is said is likely to be twisted here by those interested in arousing opposition to such plans'. Hudson relented after pressure from Lennox-Boyd, agreeing to restrict questions to the contents of the EARC report.³⁶ Political issues on the ground in Uganda had been of significant concern for Cohen and Hudson's interference, although hoping to improve the agricultural situation in Uganda, was based on only one short trip to one area and an apparent unawareness of the political tensions that might be exacerbated by introducing large European-run plantations.³⁷

AOs themselves showed little awareness of contemporary British domestic politics and beyond those who Hudson would have met on his visit may well have been totally unaware of the tensions it caused. AOs had access to British newspapers, but 'the local press was quite informative'.³⁸ The news that AOs chose to seek out was local or regional, if they chose to seek out any at all. '[O]n the whole one was too busy with one's affairs out there on the job, in the life in the Southern Highlands, that one didn't really involve oneself with the wider world at all' said one AO.³⁹ While AOs played up their position on the ground it is also clear that when matters of political sensitivity could crop up, the department as a whole was bypassed in favour of more senior figures.

AOs' awareness of the goings-on of their fellow countrymen back home was sharpened when it came to the direct influence of British politics on the countries AOs were stationed in. Mike Bigger in Tanzania recalled that British politics did not really

³⁵ House of Lords Minutes of Proceedings, Tuesday 12 June 1956, no. 107 (HMSO: London, 1956), 941-948, p. 946; Lennox-Boyd to Hudson, 12 June 1956, TNA, CO 822/946/6.

³⁶ Hudson to Lennox-Boyd, 19 June 1956, TNA, CO 822/946/8.

³⁷ 'As far as I know he only saw the Owen Falls Dam in Busoga and did not in fact go into the country there; but I expect he thought Busoga extended to the west side of the Nile. After he had seen something of the country of Buganda he quickly formed the view about land use and agricultural standards among the Baganda' wrote Cohen: CO 822/946/4.

³⁸ Mitchell, recorded interview; quote from Tuckett, recorded interview.

³⁹ Tuckett, recorded interview.

affect him, ‘except of course when they started setting up for independence’.⁴⁰ Wallis was particularly animated in his dislike for Labour MP and later life peer Fenner Brockway. Brockway was notably anti-colonial throughout his political life, chairing the British Centre for Colonial Freedom from 1942 to 1947 and helping in the 1945 establishment of the Congress of Peoples Against Imperialism.⁴¹ As a member of the opposition, Brockway was not only not accountable to the Colonial Government, but able to agitate the Conservative Government in Britain.⁴² Wallis appeared to keep out of British politics, even with respect to Africa, but with this one exception:

I think the irritation of interference by Fenner Brockway did reach me. This bloke [did not] know what he was talking about and [was] causing untold damage. But he was not the British Government, just one member of parliament out on a trouble-making trip.⁴³

As Kenyan officials went, Wallis was not alone. In October 1952 Brockway had visited the country and caused great distress to Michael Blundell who was infused with a dislike of Brockways’ ‘history of affiliation and sympathy to the communist movement’ that he felt would encourage African unrest, not stability.⁴⁴ The visit was ‘ill-considered and ill-timed’, believed Blundell, who on talking with Brockway was forced to concede that he had ‘no connection’ with communism and was simply a ‘sincere, emotional, rather muddled thinker’.⁴⁵ In contrast, Donald Thomas, who retired before independence to remain in Kenya as a farmer, thought Brockway of fairly sound mind.⁴⁶ In their politics generally, Wallis erred towards favouring the Conservative Party, and Thomas the Labour Party. The latter also reported being heavily influenced by his Quakerism, something other AOs who knew him remembered clearly.⁴⁷ AOs appeared to have had little investment in UK politics, remembering little and targeting for praise or condemnation those who,

⁴⁰ Bigger, recorded interview.

⁴¹ ‘Brockway, (Archibald) Fenner, Baron Brockway (1888–1988)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-39849>> [accessed 1 September 2018].

⁴² And agitate he did, appearing as figure of ridicule when Lennox-Boyd wrote to Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in 1955 about the idea of South Arabian Federation, noting Lennox-Boyd was not ‘chasing self-government “pour les beaux yeux de Fenner Brockway”’ [“for the love of Fenner Brockway”]. Lennox-Boyd to Macmillan, 1 November 1955, TNA, CO 1015/1212. Thanks to Joe Higgins for bringing this to my attention.

⁴³ Wallis, recorded interview.

⁴⁴ Blundell, pp. 108–9.

⁴⁵ Blundell, p. 108.

⁴⁶ Thomas, recorded interview.

⁴⁷ Thomas, recorded interview; Peberdy, recorded interview.

broadly, were in alignment with their own politics.⁴⁸ At best, AOs took an interest only in British politics if there was a connection to their experiences in Africa.

Wallis was particularly irked by the ‘terrible performance’ of parliament in Westminster (‘almost all they did was counter-productive’) over the distribution of money to the African Land Development board (ALDEV).⁴⁹ Other than this comment, Wallis offered little substance over the ‘terrible performance’ and switched the subject of the conversation in interview to Swynnerton’s ‘philosophical dramatic shift’ to focus on the high, rather than low, potential areas that were not otherwise being sufficiently exploited. AOs’ interactions with less accountable figures was low, and when it did exist was more often met with annoyance due to a reason other than the lack of accountability these outsiders had to the department.

The Hola Massacre

Despite the claims of many AOs that British politics and events largely evaded them, there was a slight awareness of how events in Kenya were received in Britain. This is demonstrated by Wallis and the case of the Hola Massacre. His criticism extended both to the press’s handling of the incident and towards specific politicians, believing that their reaction only exacerbated the problem of how to treat detainees in and after Mau Mau and suggesting that those in London did not appreciate the difficulties that officials in Kenya were dealing with at the time.

On 3 March 1959 eleven Kikuyu detainees in the Hola prison camp on the Tana River were beaten to death by their warders. Initially, the *East African Standard* – something of a mouthpiece of the settler population – stuck to the line of the Colonial authorities who stated that the men had died after drinking from a water cart.⁵⁰ Questions were asked in parliament by Labour MP Barbara Castle (who was shortly followed by Wallis’ favourite, Brockway, pushing the government on the state of emergency in

⁴⁸ Though little was said in interview about politicians, Davies remembered fellow Welshman ‘Jim Griffiths and that lot’ from Griffiths’ spell as Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1950-’51. Davies, recorded interview.

⁴⁹ Wallis, recorded interview.

⁵⁰ *East African Standard*, 5 March 1959, p. 1.

Nyasaland) and historians have argued that the Hola incident and subsequent inquiry led to the winding down of detention camps and the release of prisoners.⁵¹

Launching a surprising defence of the circumstances of the massacre, Wallis retold the events, casting the Kikuyu detainees as child-like figures (they ‘were being naughty, not digging their cabbages’) and the guards as rival tribesmen of the Kipsigis (the head guard) and Kalenjin (the warders), out for easy revenge on the Kikuyu and given a licence to ‘take firm action [...] very firm action’ by Tom Askwith, overseer of the ‘Rehabilitation’ programmes for Mau Mau prisoners. Askwith himself wrote:

Those who belittle the programmes of education and recreation organised in the work camps overlook the salient fact that no outbreaks of violence or unrest occurred in the camps during the Emergency, apart from the time when the detainees were killed in Hola. One can only hope that the inmates also obtained something of value from their time in detention even though it was no picnic.⁵²

Wallis had known Askwith ‘because he rowed for Cambridge in the 1930s, so we had an annual dinner for boat race day’ and was angered by the British press’ response to the massacre:

It was built up as such a huge story, called the Hola *Massacre*. Killing fifteen [sic] people is not good, but it was blown out into a huge issue. You can imagine all the newspapers in London were full of ‘Hola Massacre!’ Tom Askwith was terribly upset about this because quite clearly his letter didn’t say ‘and do not kill anybody’ but just said ‘take firm action’, and they took firm action all right.⁵³

While Wallis downplayed the incident with the suggestion that the numbers did not warrant the title of ‘massacre’, his concerns laid with Askwith’s feelings and the apparent over-reaction of the British press. He would later claim that ‘this eventually brought down the British – one of the British – governments, I forget which one it was’ (Macmillan remained PM until 1963, replaced by another – short-lived – Conservative government

⁵¹ Reid, *A History of Modern Africa 1800 to the Present*, p. 277; Kathryn Tidrick, *Empire and the English Character* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1990), p. 154; Barbara Castle to House of Commons, *Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates*, 5th Series, DCII, 1502-1503 (26 March 1959); Fenner Brockway to House of Commons, *ibid*, 1506-1508.

⁵² Tom Askwith, *From Mau Mau to Harambee: Memoirs and Memoranda of Colonial Kenya*, ed. by Joanna Lewis (Cambridge: University of Cambridge African Studies Centre, 1995), p. 119.

⁵³ Wallis, recorded interview.

under Alec Douglas-Home). Though that memory was incorrect, his assessment that ‘[the killings] had [a] huge impact on British politics, rather than British politics having a huge impact on Kenyan politics’ was not too wide of the mark; the massacre increased tensions within the Conservative Party and saw Labour take up anti-colonialism as a more prominent political cause.⁵⁴

Wallis’ implication, especially when taken with Askwith’s defence of internment and its positive benefits for those detained, was that the deaths at the Hola camp were a result of Kenyan tribal rivalries – warring between Africans – rather than part of a nationalist struggle. Mau Mau ‘disrupted life in Kenya’ but was only really an issue in Central Province, believed Wallis, who at the time was posted to Machakos, ‘outside the trouble areas’.⁵⁵ On the whole, Wallis saw Mau Mau from an agricultural point of view, with incidents such as Hola being infrequent and blown well out of proportion. Early in the emergency ‘practically no agricultural development took place’ writes Anne Thurston.⁵⁶ By the late 1950s, Wallis believed the emergency regulations allowed AOs to turn the situation to the advantage of the agricultural department, especially over tea development, with land consolidation playing a key role in what Wallis saw as the efficient use of areas suitable for farming. Kikuyu elders and AOs worked together to divide up the land into suitable units, ranked by their quality and distributed accordingly; ‘a very tidy system’, he believed.⁵⁷

Wallis saw the crisis as a way to improve the agricultural sector, but just as with Lord Hudson’s proposed question to the House, conversations had taken place much higher up the chain of command that dictated the course of subsequent events. Initially, AOs were used to clear forest land and lead patrols, knowing the layout of their Districts. After the rediscovery by the CO of Swynnerton’s memo on his agricultural plan, Kenya Governor Evelyn Baring took an increasingly keen interest in how agriculture might provide a political solution to the uprising. Baring went to the Minister for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Ferdinand Cavendish-Bentinck, only meeting Gilbert Roddan, the

⁵⁴ Elizabeth Buettner, *Europe after Empire: Decolonization, Society, and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 57.

⁵⁵ Wallis, recorded interview.

⁵⁶ Thurston, p. 70.

⁵⁷ Wallis, recorded interview.

Director of Agriculture, on a few occasions. Baring was always keen for new information but, Thurston writes, was 'not intimately acquainted with the content of agricultural thinking' despite being sympathetic to the department. Kenyan ministers negotiated with the CO in London to secure the funding behind the Swynnerton Plan, so while Wallis' claim that AOs made the most out of the emergency conditions may be correct, this would not have been possible without political forces at work outside of the department, a factor often overlooked by AOs.⁵⁸

Other AOs were more explicit in airing their beliefs around Mau Mau. Peberdy '[didn't] buy' that it was part of an independence struggle but, almost in the same breath, admitted believing there was some nationalist sentiment among Africans since the beginning of the emergency, though this flourished more significantly, he believed, after 1959.⁵⁹ Askwith, tasked after the war with monitoring the public sentiment of Kenyan Africans and especially the Kikuyu, was more keenly aware of rising nationalism and Kenyatta's place within it. AOs, posted to remote areas dotted around the country and often tens of miles or more from one another, were removed from the centres of nationalist thought in more urban areas of East Africa, explaining their lack of knowledge.⁶⁰ Dixon remembered having to patrol areas around Njoro for part of his time there, mostly spent driving between white farmer families in the area to check that 'nothing untoward was going on'.⁶¹ The emergency did not change Dixon's working life, though for a while he carried a pistol on his belt, never with cause to use it, and the only significant event to happen on his patrols was finding 'a bunch of ammunition in a sack' at a sawmill.⁶² Wallis saw the problem as confined to Central Province for the most part.⁶³ However, Mitchell in Tanzania, who had relatives in Kenya saw the impact as more far-reaching: '[I] thought that pre-independence things looked pretty sticky in Kenya because we'd had the Mau Mau revolution and there was a lot of acrimony'.⁶⁴ Ainley and Briggs –

⁵⁸ Thurston, pp. 69–72.

⁵⁹ Peberdy, recorded interview.

⁶⁰ Askwith talks about his experience once tasked with gauging African sentiment and the control the Kenyatta had over Kikuyu workers in Nairobi in Askwith, pp. 45–50.

⁶¹ Dixon, recorded interview.

⁶² Dixon, recorded interview.

⁶³ Wallis, recorded interview.

⁶⁴ Mitchell, recorded interview.

in separate operations – settled some Mau Mau in the north of Tanzania.⁶⁵ While AOs in Kenya played down the emergency to some extent, AOs in neighbouring Tanzania remembered how they felt about it. ‘Mau Mau must have been terrible in Kenya. Oh God, it must have been foul’, said Briggs, recalling a story he was told about one village of Africans who were mutilated: ‘they chopped everybody’s hands off’.⁶⁶ Though this played into Wallis’ beliefs of Mau Mau being a struggle between Africans, Briggs remembered being shown photos by a Kenyan policeman of mutilated cattle, clearly impacting on the lives of white farmers too. AOs outside of Kenya, relying on news and information from third parties, were fed more of the horror stories of Mau Mau than some of the AOs in Kenya who went on patrol and oversaw, at least partially, some of the agricultural plans offered up as a solution.

In interview, Briggs used Mau Mau as a point from which to discuss human nature. ‘The ‘mad African’ always seems worse than any mad European’, he began, adding:

I’m sure that white people, supposedly civilised people, are just as brutal as the uneducated African. I’m convinced of it. I’d like to think that I would know better, but I don’t know. I think people can regress. The circumstances, if they’re sufficiently severe, sufficiently extreme, can make you forget a lot of things that you’ve learnt.⁶⁷

Briggs was alone in his tacit admission that Kikuyu Kenyans felt under pressure and responded accordingly. Other AOs mentioned their impressions of Mau Mau or how it affected them, rather than its possible causes, with those outside Kenya affected more by hearsay than experience, occasionally amplifying their perceptions of the emergency.

The response by Wallis to the Hola Massacre underlines that AOs only engaged with politics and the media in Britain when the impact would be felt where the AO worked, or when personal connections to others involved were evident. Outsiders who were not accountable to Colonial authorities but who could disrupt activities in the

⁶⁵ John Malcolm Ainley, ‘Resettlement of Suspected Mau Mau Sympathisers in Tanganyika: An Agriculturalist’s Involvement’, *The Overseas Pensioner*, 1996
<http://www.britishempire.co.uk/article/resettlementmaumau.htm> [accessed 25 February 2016]; Briggs, recorded interview.

⁶⁶ Briggs, recorded interview.

⁶⁷ Briggs, recorded interview.

colonies were a source of frustration, but a rare one, and anger flared only when a significant intrusion into the running of a colony emerged. Other reasons for hostility towards outsiders trumped the interference by these unaccountable parties, impacting, as they would, more significantly in AOs' ability to undertake their duties successfully.

Political Reasons

AOs' rejection or hostility to 'outsiders' not only tells us something about AOs' own political views but reveals the extent to which their beliefs were cultivated in East Africa or drawn from their past in Britain. Hostility to outsiders for political reasons was most often directed towards foreign governments (and on occasion the British government or opposition) rather than aid agencies. Where aid agencies may have represented a threat to AOs' authority and been a constant reminder of their current or impending loss of power in the process of decolonisation, they were not the only perceived hindrance that was faced from outsiders. Foreign government programs, more commonly in place after independence, could draw the ire of AOs.

The Cold War loomed in the background as independence approached but appeared to not directly concern AOs. When asked about the impact of the Cold War situation, one replied 'It wasn't [a concern]. It really wasn't. One didn't recognize an awful lot of what was going on in the world outside. [It] didn't really impact on our lives.'⁶⁸ This AO was based in Tanganyika, but a similar attitude was displayed by most AOs interviewed. However, the post-independence expansion of aid, notably from the United States and China, reveal that AOs appear to have understood the Cold War almost solely from a domestic standpoint. Cold War issues were understood much the same as British political issues; AOs were not concerned with the Cold War *per se*, but the effects of it on their territory and, even then, they dislocated those effects from any form of global ideological struggle. Before independence, concerns relating to international events were rarely seen through a Cold War lens, if seen through any lens at all. Even events that gripped the rest of the western world could pass by without much attention from AOs. The

⁶⁸ Tuckett, recorded interview.

Cuban Missile Crisis was ‘hugely distant’, remarked Giles Dixon.⁶⁹ Humphrys response outlines his priorities:

In 1956 I was in Masaka, [Suez] meant nothing to me. I was just interested in the district and the people and the agriculture and girlfriends. I was just a twenty-five-year-old enjoying myself, particularly in '56. By Cuba I'd got a wife and children. I knew about Cuba, but I thought to myself that the chance of the Russians lobbing an atomic weapon into Uganda was a bit on the remote side. Except that if they did lob it into Uganda they would have lobbed it into the Jinja Falls, which was supplying electricity for the whole country. So I was aware of Cuba; I wasn't aware of Suez.⁷⁰

As far as AOs were concerned, global issues were of more or less importance depending on their impact (or, as above, their potential impact) on the ground in whichever territory one was posted to. In a broad sense and aside from moments of global tension, this could come down to interactions with USAID personnel, or Chinese or Russian government aid workers and representatives.

Chinese Aid

The influx of Chinese aid and development programs in the region was for the most part directed to Tanzania. Indeed, AOs made a direct link between Nyerere's socialism – ‘his crazy Chinese ideas; these half-baked socialist ideas that didn't work’ – and the appearance of Chinese officials and workers in Tanzania.⁷¹ With the Sino-Soviet split fracturing relations between the two communist superpowers China, from 1963, made efforts to demonstrate that it, and not the Soviet Union, should be the inspiration for socialism in the Third World. The Chinese government sent funding and personnel to a host of Third World countries to compete with Soviet aid offers to decolonising countries, with Tanzania being a significant recipient.⁷² By the end of the 1960s the Chinese were

⁶⁹ Dixon, recorded interview.

⁷⁰ Humphrys, recorded interview.

⁷¹ Mitchell, recorded interview.

⁷² Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 162–63.

Tanzania's largest foreign aid donor and 'largest African ally'.⁷³ The Chinese government, which believed Mau Mau was an outright struggle against imperialism, also briefly attempted to secure a foothold in Kenya, providing a touch over twenty-two per cent of all foreign grants to the country for 1964/5, their only loan to Kenyans between 1964 and 1968.⁷⁴ Uganda, on the other hand, saw the Soviets win out against the Chinese, providing credit of USD 16 million throughout the 1960s.⁷⁵

One example helps demonstrate that officials on the ground were, in one way or another, less concerned with Chinese influence than officials in the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Foreign Office. F.S. Miles at the British High Commission in Dar es Salaam wrote in November 1965 to the CRO and FO updating them on the latest situation on Chinese assistance to Tanzania.⁷⁶ Miles used Jimmy Skinner, the British Finance Manager of the National Development Corporation – 'the parastatal body with whom the Chinese and other aid donors primarily deal with over industrial, and certain agricultural, projects' – as his information source. The NDC was also the Tanzanian successor to the Colonial (later Commonwealth) Development Corporation that was heavily involved in agricultural research and investment at the end of and after empire in East Africa. Skinner clearly did not believe the threat from the Chinese too great: he was 'not quite so negative about the Chinese as we were', and 'he had found them so tiresome and time-consuming that he had handed them over to one of his Asian colleagues'. Skinner also believed that Chinese involvement in Farm Settlement Schemes might not be all bad 'for at least the Chinese ought to know how to grow rice.' Alongside this assumption came some more race-based thought on Africans' inability to hand-make finely woven cloth, instead requiring the labour of 'nimble-fingered Chinese workers'. Echoing Barbara Castle on her April 1965 visit, the High Commission recommended a policy of "studied casualness". Miles noted Castle commenting that 'as developing

⁷³ Alicia N. Altorfer-Ong, 'Old Comrades and New Brothers: A Historical Re-Examination of the Sino-Zanzibari and Sino-Tanzanian Bilateral Relationships in the 1960s' (unpublished doctoral thesis, LSE, 2014), p. 10.

⁷⁴ Iba Der Thiam and James Mulira, 'Africa and the Socialist Countries', in *General History of Africa VIII: Africa Since 1935*, ed. by Ali A. Mazrui and Christopher Wondji (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 798–829 (p. 804); Poppy Cullen, *Kenya and Britain after Independence: Beyond Neo-Colonialism* (Cambridge: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 185.

⁷⁵ Thiam and Mulira, p. 815.

⁷⁶ F.S. Miles to Norman Aspin (CRO), 11 November 1965, TNA, FO 371/181899.

countries needed all the aid they could get, they should take it from wherever they could get it'.⁷⁷ John Peberdy, by that time in charge of Range Management in Kenya, remembered that the Kenya Government were keen to access aid donations from wherever they could be sourced, and agreed with this approach.⁷⁸ The FO decided to allow the Chinese to continue operating in Tanzania as they were, in the hope that the Tanzanian Government would become weary of some of the pitfalls of Chinese aid. It was, Miles said, 'increasingly difficult to obtain suitable products from China which [could] be debited against the [gift-in-kind]' and the Chinese, given enough time and rope seemed likely if not to hang themselves then to 'get themselves snarled up in a knotty tangle'.⁷⁹ Concerns were present over the influence of the Chinese, but an assuredness of superiority by senior officials in East Africa could ensure that Chinese efforts to influence the Tanzanians were monitored with little intervention.

While CRO and FO concerns over Chinese aid were mediated by higher level officials in East Africa, AOs usually shared Skinner's more relaxed approach. They remembered Chinese involvement to varying degrees and with an occasional curiosity over Chinese interactions with Africans. Some Chinese visitors were incredulous at the idea of fertiliser not always being the most effective method through which yields could be increased.⁸⁰ Andrew MacDonald noted a Chinese circus troupe in Uganda at independence, though MacDonald believed that the Ugandan audience were captivated not by the ideology of the performers, but by the idea that a bicycle used in a balancing act routine involving twelve men could hold unprecedented amounts of bananas for transportation.⁸¹ John Ainley wrote of taking a group of three Chinese agriculturalists around the Tanzanian countryside, surprised at their lack of agricultural knowledge. Ainley attempted to select an appropriate group of farmers to introduce to the visitors but the 'farmers whom [he] had carefully selected for the visits were somewhat surprised to be asked mainly political questions', often concerning which foreign government supplied the most aid and 'whether there was any appreciable opposition to the ruling political

⁷⁷ Miles to Aspin, 11 November 1965, TNA, FO 371/181899.

⁷⁸ Peberdy, recorded interview.

⁷⁹ Miles to Aspin, 11 November 1965, TNA, FO 371/181899.

⁸⁰ Northwood, recorded interview.

⁸¹ MacDonald, p. 96.

party'.⁸² When the presence of other nationalities after independence did not impact on the lives of AOs, AOs more or less regarded them as a curiosity or insignificant.

There were instances where interaction with Chinese officials would affect the work of AOs. Richard 'Dickie' Briggs, who worked in Tanganyika from 1960 to 1970 after a brief stint in British Somaliland, believed that Nyerere's socialist ideals meant that Chinese aid givers were given carte blanche to operate aid schemes however they pleased. Briggs recalled a rural irrigation scheme after independence taking place near an area he was at the time supervising. The Chinese contractors had set up a water refinery and filled up tankers with drinking water for their workforce. Briggs approached them to ask for some drinking water for his men, but the Chinese replied that they had seen Africans drink from lakes, streams and rivers, and they saw no reason Briggs could not do the same. Outraged, Briggs went to the department to complain and found himself accused of racism towards the Chinese and moved to oversee a different project.⁸³ Briggs saw this as symbolic of post-independence attitudes to aid in Tanzania, noting that the Chinese were out to benefit themselves as far as possible.

Briggs' assumption that Chinese aid was beneficial for China rather than for Africans suggests a belief that British aid, on the other hand, would be of benefit to Africans. Alicia Altorfer-Ong has demonstrated that Chinese aid to Africa was 'not primarily economic, but political', which is not to suggest aid nonetheless had no economic gains for Africa or China.⁸⁴ Politically China, as previously noted, sought to be the dominant communist influence in Africa, against the USSR. However communist powers acted, Briggs preferred to understand the British injection of aid into the region as a continuation of a version of empire that AOs saw as a benevolent, apolitical force for good; some more senior British officials clearly disagreed.⁸⁵ David Hunt, British High Commissioner to Uganda, contacted the CRO, stating:

⁸² Ainley, *Pink Stripes and Obedient Servants: An Agriculturalist in Tanganyika*, pp. 224–25.

⁸³ Briggs, recorded interview.

⁸⁴ Altorfer-Ong, p. 10.

⁸⁵ More than a handful of AOs noted that after independence they experienced the agriculture departments becoming more 'political'. To them, this usually meant more ministerial input or an understanding that staff were being frequently moved around to satisfy political urges: ministers or senior African administrators demonstrating their power, favours to tribal allies or a desperation to impress those in more senior positions

I start from the point that I have always regarded aid purely under the aspect of how much good it could do for Britain rather than for the recipient. I feel no altruistic urge and no feeling of moral obligation. I quite like the people of Uganda and some of the members of the Government but other things being equal I should be perfectly happy to punish Uganda by reducing or withholding aid so long as there is no danger of punishing Britain.⁸⁶

Hunt, who enjoyed a close working relationship with Obote that was made closer still soon after the above telegram due to the outbreak of the East African army mutinies, clearly saw aid in terms of British gains.⁸⁷ British firms, too, would lobby the CO about involvement in aid and development schemes.⁸⁸ This is at odds with Briggs' implication over British aid being decidedly less good for Britain than Chinese aid was for China.

The CRO was, however, keenly aware of the political implications of aid giving in postcolonial East Africa. Contributions towards Tanganyika's Five Year Development Plan were considered by the CRO in June 1964 based around purely political reasons. '[F]avourable publicity', a desire to 'not be outshone by the Communists' and the need to 'mollify' Tanganyikans who were 'at present indignant at what they regard as our generous independence settlement to Kenya' were the primary reasons put forward to contribute to the plan.⁸⁹ In terms of political gains and aid, the CRO could giveth and the CRO could taketh away. Walsh-Atkins tested the waters with other officials in the CRO over the implementation of an unofficial tightening up of aid to Uganda as a subtle retaliation for the deportation of British nationals after the Tank Hill party and as compensation for 'British property damaged'. Walsh-Atkins suggested that, instead of reducing the amount of experts or equipment sent to Uganda, the department might begin 'as a sort of sanction' that would fall short of a change in policy, 'to "go slow" in supplying' both men and machines. He confessed it was not in the longer term interests of H.M.G. and would be potentially detrimental to 'our community in Uganda' but would

were some of the ways this was understood by AOs. Recorded interviews of Humphrys, Davies, Mitchell, Wallis.

⁸⁶ Sir David Hunt (British High Commission, Kampala) to Sir Saville Garner (CRO), 14 January 1964, TNA, DO 214/17/3.

⁸⁷ Obote 'relies on me for news of what is going on', wrote Hunt after the mutinies began in Uganda. Hunt to Walsh Atkins, 22 January 1964, TNA, DO 226/10/72.

⁸⁸ Secura Incubator Co. Ltd. to Nye, 28 January 1956, TNA, CO 822/964/30 and enclosure. Secura manufactured poultry incubators in Carlisle.

⁸⁹ 'Draft paper for The Development Policy Committee – Aid to Tanganyika and Uganda', June 1964, TNA, DO 214/18/3. For the back and forth on the plan itself, see TNA, DO 214/34.

send a message.⁹⁰ The idea was quickly rebutted by ministers, who compromised by suggesting to go slow on gifts, but remain as before on experts and other aid. Sir Andrew Cohen, by then at the Department for Technical Cooperation, was glad to hear of the objections, comprehensively explaining why he believed any reduction in aid would have negative impact politically rather than sending a message to the Ugandan Government: ‘anything that can be done to put the incident behind us by continuing our recruitment and other technical assistance activities is desirable’.⁹¹ Briggs, along with other AOs who understood Britain and British aid as a way for Britain to do good in the world, was not privy to the behind-the-scenes machinations at the CRO, with the absence of this information giving them no cause to think of British intentions as anything other than good.

American Aid

AOs’ views on American aid and interventions on the ground were more scathing than toward the Chinese or Soviets. The latter got barely a mention from AOs beyond Wallis’ memories of Bulgarian universities indoctrinating young Kenyans to become ‘terrorists’ and Peberdy recognising a distinct absence of Russians in Kenya, at least as far as he was aware, with most development roles going to Americans or American-trained men.⁹² As noted, before independence Rockefeller money had been channelled into research stations and was occasionally ear-marked for extension officers. After independence in East Africa, aid from the United States increased. This coincided with a change in attitude towards African nationalism and independence movements, largely bought about by US President John F. Kennedy after his 1960 election. Kennedy doubled US economic aid to Africa and promoted the presence of the Peace Corps, offering technical experts for infrastructure projects in an effort to combat Eastern bloc aid donors, whom Kennedy understood to be “‘missionaries for international Communism’”.⁹³ Gregg Brazinsky argues that American aid to Tanzania from 1960 to 1968 was, year-by-year,

⁹⁰ Walsh-Atkins, minute, 6 January 1964, TNA, DO 214/7.

⁹¹ Cohen to Sir Saville Garner, 16 January 1964, TNA, DO 214/17/2.

⁹² Wallis, recorded interview; Peberdy, recorded interview.

⁹³ Philip E. Muehlenbeck, ‘John F. Kennedy’s Courting of African Nationalism’, *Madison Historical Review*, 2.July (2004), pp. 13–16.

roughly the same as aid coming from China (\$6 billion USD per annum), and, echoing Altorfer-Ong, suggests that Beijing strove to strategically invest in visible schemes to maximise the political benefit at home.⁹⁴ The competition with China ultimately resulted in an increased American presence on the ground, working on projects not dissimilar to those on which AOs had been and were engaged in, causing more interaction between the two.

As with Chinese aid-givers, Americans were not seen by AOs as having any significant presence in Africa because of Cold War concerns, despite the obvious political goals of their governments. AOs found fault both with American projects and the Americans' approach to these projects. The projects often came under fire for being short-sighted, a repeat of past endeavours or inappropriate for local conditions. The personality of Americans was criticised, and was perhaps easier to criticise than that of Chinese visitors who could, for the most part, only be understood by AOs via an interpreter.

Extension officers were most affected by Americans, with researchers continuing much as before independence: 'We were getting excellent [American financial] support and that continued and it went on for a while [after independence], I know', remembered Dixon, who was the beneficiary of a study tour to the USA in 1959 and continued funding thereafter.⁹⁵ Wallis believed American influence had, in part, incorrectly shaped some of the agricultural concerns in Kenya. As Machakos' soil eroded in the 1930s, a Kenya AO had gone to America to look at their attempts at tackling the issue. He returned with a 'totally inappropriate point of view' that focussed on conserving soil at the expense of water conservation, the latter of which, Wallis believed, was the key factor to concentrate on: if irrigation could be introduced to manage rainfall run off, instead of allowing it to erode hillsides, the issue of soil erosion itself would dramatically drop off. Wallis' disdain for Americans would continue. Wallis just stopped short of a personal insult when describing another American, though quickly revealed the source of his disdain: 'When I was in Machakos I did have to show an American round, who was full of... I think he was a congressman. He was concerned about the wicked colonial system trampling on the poor

⁹⁴ Gregg A. Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World: Sino-American Rivalry during the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), pp. 272–73 <<https://doi.org/10.15713/ins.mmj.3>>.

⁹⁵ Dixon, recorded interview.

Africans'.⁹⁶ Wallis' annoyance with Americans extended into his time consulting with the International Coffee Organisation, when he believed that American advice issued to Brazilian growers about the dangers of coffee leaf rust was 'rubbish'; his expertise came from Kenya's long struggle against the disease, since 1913 he noted to the Brazilian delegation, writing himself into a global legacy of Kenya's agriculture.⁹⁷ For these anecdotes, Wallis could create the impression of Americans as less experienced agriculturalists, issuing false advice to unsuspecting growers that allowed him and his expertise to help save coffee in both Kenya and Brazil.

Others rubbed Americans in less self-serving ego-massages. Peberdy found himself most aggrieved at a couple of American range management experts who arrived in Kenya with USAID funding in 1961. Victor Bunderson and Leland Fallon had 'different ideas' about how to approach the issue that stemmed, Peberdy thought, from the two originating from different areas of America and thus having different experiences of range management dictated by their own local conditions, not those of areas in Kenya (Bunderson worked in Coast Province, Fallon in Turkana). Both disagreed with Peberdy and believed they 'knew' how to do ranching. The AO argued at length with both, causing the AO to visit Melville the Director of Agriculture, in an attempt to find a way to work together.⁹⁸ The outcome was an influx of American teachers focussing on range management, and in a 1971 article in the journal *Rangeland Ecology & Management*, Peberdy was noted as one individual who had been key to an awareness of the issue in East Africa, with Bunderson and Fallon noted for their work 'laying ecological groundwork and recommending management techniques before any formal education was begun'.⁹⁹ Despite their differences and Peberdy's annoyance at the pair's indifference to his methods, the outcome was positive and Peberdy remembered all three eventually getting along well.¹⁰⁰ In Davies' recollections of Uganda, there was a smattering of Cold War frost. 'We never talked about [the Cold War] because essentially what we were talking about was science. The Americans that I had on the station were very, very

⁹⁶ Wallis, recorded interview.

⁹⁷ Wallis, recorded interview.

⁹⁸ Peberdy, recorded interview.

⁹⁹ J. H. Robertson, Gene F. Payne, and C.V. Jensen, 'Range Education in East Africa', *Rangeland Ecology & Management*, 24.3 (1971), p. 171.

¹⁰⁰ Peberdy, recorded interview.

qualified people, from universities.' Despite this, 'If [an American] got ill they'd be treated by a Russian. On the whole they didn't do this; on the whole they'd go to Kenya, their embassy had a doctor. But if there was an emergency they had to see a Russian.'¹⁰¹ Davies, like Dixon in Kenya, found that research was not negatively affected by the presence of American staff or aid.

Extension officers tended to have anecdotes and thoughts on Americans that were, to some extent, more generic (other than Peberdy, above), and held thinly veiled criticism, targeted usually toward suggesting Americans were nothing more than ineffective do-gooders. Before independence in Tanzania, David Brown recalled that 'the Americans thought they should "help the natives". They sent out a fully qualified lieutenant of the [US] navy. That was in Songea.'¹⁰² This sarcastic 'help the natives' sentiment is similar to Wallis' 'wicked colonial system' and reiterated by Mitchell's more straightforward 'Americans think that they're doing the right thing'.¹⁰³ John Ainley argued that '[t]he first impression was given by some that we, as the controlling power, had dragged our heels over the years and agricultural improvements had been slight'. Tanganyika's Increased Productivity Plan, Ainley suggests, shows there was no lack of willing, just a lack of finance.¹⁰⁴ Mitchell remembered several gaffes by Americans at independence in Tanzania, including an apocryphal story about President Nixon (at that point Vice President), turning to the nearest black man at Ghanaian independence, saying 'hey boy, how does it feel to be independent'? 'Actually Mr. President,' came the reply, 'I wouldn't know. I'm from Mississippi'.¹⁰⁵ Ainley, in his memoir based on his Tanzanian experience, does not record the outcome of his interactions with Americans, but dismissively notes how a Texan cattle rancher suggested ranching schemes with knowledge of neither rainfall levels nor tsetse fly in the area. '[B]alanced extension work takes considerable time to be effective', Ainley authoritatively but defensively writes, 'and cannot be done overnight, as some of the newly arrived 'advisors' seemed to indicate. My first experience of this attitude was with an American 'agrarian'.' This is the only example of American inability that Ainley brings up in his book, yet he notes that this was not typical, though says there

¹⁰¹ Davies, recorded interview.

¹⁰² Brown, recorded interview.

¹⁰³ Mitchell, recorded interview.

¹⁰⁴ Ainley, *Pink Stripes and Obedient Servants: An Agriculturalist in Tanganyika*, p. 223.

¹⁰⁵ Mitchell, recorded interview.

was a habit for these ‘advisors’ to be ‘trotting out projects which had been tried or were already in operation’.¹⁰⁶ Just as with Peberdy, these examples may be few and far between, but they stuck with AOs. These ‘outsiders’ gave AOs a group towards which they could channel their frustrations with the precarious nature of post-independence work. Briggs recalled a Cold War stand-off as American road building and the Chinese-backed TanZam railway construction crossed paths, leading, he believed, to Nyerere appearing on site to ease tensions.¹⁰⁷ When talking of aid agencies, and more specifically American-based ones, the phrase ‘reinventing the wheel’ also often appeared from AOs. For the most part though, non-Kenya-based AOs’ brief anecdotes and opinions of Americans reflected what Henry Kissinger later called Britain’s conviction ‘that its colonial tradition conferred a special knowledge of African problems’.¹⁰⁸

Finally, in terms of attitudes towards Americans by AOs, one other aspect stands out. Only mentioned by two AOs, Dixon (research, Kenya) and Davies (research, Uganda), was interactions with African-Americans. Dixon believed that despite his time in Kenya, he had never experienced racial tensions until he got to America for his study tour in 1959.

[I]t was the first time where I’d met Afro-Americans [sic] where they were, what shall we say, self-consciously different from us, and had their own attitudes, and you could feel tension.¹⁰⁹

This tension between AOs and, as Davies put it, ‘American – what do you call them these days, coloured people?’ apparently did not last long in Africa. Initially, he believed, African-Americans ‘came in and felt that we were bloated colonialists’. Working environments and the post-independence atmosphere eased tensions: ‘[b]y that time we played golf with the Africans; we played golf with the Americans, but some of the Africans took them [African-Americans] for a ride!’. Davies believed Africans played on their culture to exploit African-American aid workers. ‘It was an African society and the extended family [was important], we understood it. But, they knew not to push it too far

¹⁰⁶ Ainley, *Pink Stripes and Obedient Servants: An Agriculturalist in Tanganyika*, pp. 223–24.

¹⁰⁷ Briggs, recorded interview.

¹⁰⁸ Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979), p. 417.

¹⁰⁹ Dixon, recorded interview.

with us. But with a black American?’ Because of continued attempts by Ugandans to exploit this group of aid workers, ‘they became very anti-African’. Davies’ memories seem to still conform to an idea of white superiority – that Africans were never so exploitative towards their former colonial masters – and, as opposed to inter-tribal rivalry, tension and conflict between two groups of the same skin colour leading to African-Americans being less favourable towards Africans than European aid workers or former-colonial servants.

Most of these memories of Americans imply that AOs were uneasy with interlopers who saw themselves as doing good but who had not the experience nor ability to do so as successfully as AOs who had undergone imperial training. Though AOs in East Africa did not, like Briggs had with the Chinese, accuse Americans of entering into development for self-gain, Maurice Vidal-Hall, a forestry officer in Sudan, noted in 1960 that American aid was ‘all rather a farce’. Americans demanded expensive houses, employed many of their own men who had little grasp of local languages and tried ‘to introduce American high-pressure, mechanised methods into backward African localities’.¹¹⁰ AOs registered but did not really consider the Cold War context unless it affected their work, nor that Western powers sought to gain from developing the newly independent countries.

Some of these perceptions of Americans were not exclusive to AOs. Other Americans, indeed, recognised some of the difficulties with their operatives overseas working on development projects. 1958’s *The Ugly American* focuses on the fictional country of Sarkhan in Southeast Asia, with American Foreign Service officials portrayed as elitist, aloof, unengaged with the problems faced by the Sarkhanese, uninterested in learning the local language and very happy to propose inappropriate large-scale projects.¹¹¹ Homer Atkins, the titular character, was held up as an ideal to which Americans working abroad in the third world should aspire. Atkins learned the language, befriended local people and worked at a grassroots level with them on projects that they

¹¹⁰ Maurice Vidal-Hall to Aunt Barbara, from El Obeid, 19 August 1960, Sudan Archive, Durham, 727/1/30-31. Many thanks to Chris Prior for bringing this to my attention.

¹¹¹ William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick, *The Ugly American* (New York: Norton, 1958); Seth Jacobs, *The Universe Unraveling: American Foreign Policy in Cold War Laos* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), pp. 93–94.

wanted to see happen. As Seth Jacobs has pointed out, despite Atkins being one of the “good” Americans, he still displayed, as AOs did, a paternal approach towards his affairs with local people, a tendency to sometimes see them as childlike and to tutor them as such.¹¹² Seen at the time as a warning for Americans to adjust their approach to postcolonial engagement, AOs’ perceptions of American aid agency and USAID staff echo the presentation of the Foreign Service in what was one of America’s most popular books of the late 1950s. AOs’ presentation of themselves as engaged with Africans, working on projects that (they believed) Africans wanted and needed and, of course, being the ‘good’ kind of official abroad, all chime with how Atkins is presented in contrast to his lesser countrymen.

Not all AOs took such a position on Americans. Researchers in Kenya have already been noted as part of this group, but those who ‘stayed on’ but transitioned to educational roles either seemed to not come into contact with Americans or simply not have contact sufficient enough to elicit any strong response either way. Amazingly Andrew MacDonald, who used his memoir to take aim at almost everything in society that changed during his lifetime such as the corrupting influence of modern urban living, pornography, management systems in the NHS, ‘that dreadful timewaster, television’, and the most feared ‘political correctness’, avoids criticism of Americans. Their arrival, as part of an influx of other aid-givers, is recorded, but they are grouped together with the ‘Russians, the Japanese, Norwegians, plus the international organizations, and so on’.¹¹³ On the whole MacDonald enjoyed the variety of nationalities entering Uganda, socialising with a wide range while teaching Crop Husbandry at Makerere and wrote of the ‘very generous and helpful’ nature of Americans, based on a trip to New Orleans he made some time in 1964.¹¹⁴ Peter Wilson, who moved into education in Tanzania, does not mention an American presence. Educators, possibly being less under threat professionally from American interference or out-performance, found few problems with a US presence in independence East Africa.

¹¹² Jacobs, p. 94.

¹¹³ MacDonald, p. 96.

¹¹⁴ MacDonald, pp. 107–10.

Gauging AOs' opinions on Americans before there was a significant number of them on the ground in East Africa is difficult. Allan, in his diary entry for 24 October 1959, shortly after arriving at Trinidad, noted spending the day with other new arrivals: a lot of fellow Scots, one Englishman and 'also an American, but 'one of the good kind'.¹¹⁵ For some AOs, then, ideas about Americans, or the 'kind' of person an American could be, went out with them rather than always having been cultivated in East Africa.

Nonetheless, it would be something if all Americans engaged in aid projects were of the 'bad' variety, yet in general AOs appeared to hold more hostility towards them than towards Chinese or Soviet visitors. Much as Ainley was bemused by his Chinese officials, Peter Wilson remembered having a most enjoyable time teaching Swahili to a group of Russian veterinary surgeons and their interpreters, particularly enjoying the end-of-course party they threw for him where a 'liberal supply' of *Stolichnaya* appeared at a local hotel booked for the event.¹¹⁶ AOs, with a significant language barrier between them and Chinese or Russian officials, may have seen Americans as more of a threat due to the ease with which they could communicate with each other, the closer involvement with former colonial schemes (detailed below) and the pre-existing idea that there was indeed a 'bad' kind of American.

Sources of news

AOs' views on outsiders and their intentions did not emerge from nothing. Given that hostility towards Communist influence was, for AOs, fairly low (or in the case of Wilson and his Russian vets, put aside if a good party could be had), it appears that AOs did not share the Cold War concerns of the FO. As we shall see, operational insularity proved the greater reason when it came to how AOs understood outsiders. Americans were treated with – or thought of as deserving – greater disdain than Chinese or Soviet visitors. But Americans, as AOs remember, also worked alongside Britons who stayed on, unlike Russian or Chinese representatives, who appeared to have kept themselves separate from former British Colonial officers. That Americans were more visible and present day-

¹¹⁵ Allan, *Diary*, 24 October 1959.

¹¹⁶ Wilson, p. 168.

to-day, especially in Kenya, helps support the idea that interference, not politics or ideology, was the main cause for AOs frustrations with outsiders. Nonetheless, while AOs formed opinions about those with less accountability through how actions in Britain impacted their existence in East Africa, how did they come to find this information?

AOs, whether they remember international incidents like the Cuban Missile Crisis or not, had sources of news. As Tuckett noted, ‘the local press was quite informative’ and negated the need for reading the British press.¹¹⁷ Not all AOs agreed. Mitchell, remembering that he read the *East African Standard*, assumed others were of like mind. ‘Nobody ever read the Tanganyika News or whatever the local paper was, I never did anyway.’¹¹⁸ David Brown, a few years before Mitchell arrived, remembered having ‘a wireless – battery operated – and we used to pick up the news sometimes. We had, was it *The Times*, once a week?’¹¹⁹ Brown’s wife, Priscilla, confirmed. It is likely they received *The Times Weekly Review*, a rebadged version of the weekly edition of *The Times* that ran until 1951, the *Review* picking up the same role until 1963. The overriding consensus amongst AOs was that no matter the news source, this kind of information changed very little. ‘How much it affected us I really don’t recollect’, said Priscilla.¹²⁰ By 1964, Davies remembered he would listen to the BBC World Service in the mornings while he prepared for work and that he first heard about the 1964 army mutinies this way.¹²¹ While AOs had a variety of options open to them when it came to keeping up with current affairs, they were by no means uniform in choosing their news sources.

There are hints that AOs paid attention to the national newspaper(s) of their territory, rather than the British press. Peter Whitehead’s response to the Tank Hill party and his anger at Hunt and Obote clearly came from somewhere.¹²² Davies and Humphrys, both also in Uganda, were aware of the incident.¹²³ Briggs in Tanzania had no knowledge at all of Tank Hill when asked; AOs in territories other than Uganda do not mention it

¹¹⁷ Tuckett, recorded interview.

¹¹⁸ Mitchell, recorded interview.

¹¹⁹ Brown, recorded interview.

¹²⁰ Brown, recorded interview.

¹²¹ Davies, recorded interview.

¹²² Taylor to Humphrys, 24 January 1964; for more on Tank Hill, see chapter three.

¹²³ Davies, recorded interview; Humphrys, recorded interview; Davies to Humphrys, 11 March 1964.

whatsoever.¹²⁴ The front pages of the European-owned *Uganda Argus* were for the most part dedicated to upcoming Kenyan independence throughout December 1963.¹²⁵ Only on 21 December did the Tank Hill story appear in the *Argus*, after being reported elsewhere in the press it said, quoting Obote's claim.¹²⁶ In that issue it received three solid sides of broadsheet coverage, marking it out as a significant event at the time. *The East African Standard*, a settler mouthpiece published in Nairobi but, as Mitchell demonstrates, read beyond Kenya, kept Tank Hill off of the front pages. Even the *Daily Nation*, a tabloid publication from Kenya, kept Tank Hill off the agenda. In the UK, *The Times* neglected to report on the main event, only bringing it to the publics' attention two days before Christmas, with a slim column relegated to page five, briefly running through the timeline of events and denial of the party-throwers that they were in any way 'disrespectful to East African leaders or to Uganda'.¹²⁷ It took until mid-January for the British parliament to make any reference to the event.¹²⁸ AOs in Uganda could probably not avoid hearing of the party, but given the ignorance of AOs from other territories (and even Humphrys, who had only shortly returned home from Uganda) it appears that in Uganda AOs read the local news, and elsewhere in East Africa others did likewise.

AOs were potentially wise, too, to keep an eye on the local press. Despite AOs having stayed on as part of the continuing British presence in the country after independence, the British High Commission (BHC) and, in turn, the Dominions Office (DO) in Whitehall on occasion would glean information from newspapers rather than political contacts. By early 1965, Kenya was starting to experience a maize shortage due to the failure of the long rains.¹²⁹ The BHC caught wind of an agreement between the American and Kenyan Governments that would see 50,000 tonnes of maize imported from America, worth around one million pounds, and seen as a loan by the Americans. The BHC's source was the *East African Standard*. Clearly, the *Standard*, or other newspapers,

¹²⁴ Briggs, recorded interview.

¹²⁵ Starting with 'Uhuru Day Draws Closer: Zanzibar – Tomorrow, Kenya – on Thursday', *Uganda Argus*, 9 December 1963 and continuing throughout the week.

¹²⁶ 'Party Angers Parliament: This is no joke, says Dr. Obote', *Uganda Argus*, 21 December 1963.

¹²⁷ 'White Party House Burnt Down', *Times*, 23 December 1963, p. 5.

¹²⁸ Arthur Bottomley to Duncan Sandys (Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations and for the Colonies), *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 687, 29 (16 January 1964).

¹²⁹ J.H. Greenfield (British High Commission (hereafter BHC) Nairobi, Kenya) to R.M. Tesh (East Africa Political Department, CRO), 10 June 1965, TNA, DO 214/11/5.

could in some cases reveal relevant news that the ex-pat community may not have been able to otherwise discover.

Some events were more widely reported, with independence for each country being given a good deal of coverage in the press of its neighbours. Kenyan independence in particular was held up as important, and in Tanzania, Tuckett remembered having an awareness of Kenyan news.¹³⁰ By and large, however, each country used its own newspapers to report its own news.

Operational Insularity and Personal Perceptions

The operational environment that AOs worked within contributed to their perception of outsiders. Firstly, before independence, the split between researchers and extension officers created a different perception of development agencies and other outsiders. Researchers experienced, in general, a lack of difficulty with outsiders, both before and after independence, which stands in opposition to the memories of extension officers when it came to interference with their work. The additional funds and staff allowed researchers to enjoy the opportunity to continue working on problems that they believed African farmers were facing (though as chapter three has shown, there were instances where researchers may have gone beyond their brief for financial reasons or simply in the pursuit of additional scientific knowledge that may not have been as immediately relevant to farmers). That is not to say that extension officers did not benefit from donations from outside foundations, though sometimes the disparity between the two may have felt grating. In the 1950s, the Rockefeller Foundation had realised that the focus on grains and in particular on wheat at the International Wheat Research Station in Njoro could benefit American, not just African, agriculture; the foundation heavily invested in the station from 1958. Njoro received USD\$100,000, with USD\$32,000 going towards new laboratory equipment and housing for staff, the remainder being spent on additional staff. The Foundation eventually took over the running of the station.¹³¹ At the other end

¹³⁰ Tuckett, recorded interview. As the last East African country to gain its independence,

¹³¹ Maurice N. Amutabi, *The NGO Factor in Africa: The Case of Arrested Development in Kenya*, 2nd edn (New York: Routledge, 2013).

of the spectrum, extension staff benefitted from Rockefeller funds in the Rift Valley in 1960 by using them to buy a portable display to show farmers educational material.¹³² Researchers' operational environments may have been insular on a day-to-day basis at their research station, but the networks, conferences and research trips allowed for a diverse experience alongside this. Dixon was even sent on a funded trip to America by the Rockefeller Foundation with some involvement from the US Department of Agriculture.¹³³

Extension officers could be more territorial than researchers. Humphrys would banish AAOs from neighbouring districts who strayed into his district.¹³⁴ Even though this was towards 'insiders', there was an unwillingness to cede any aspect of his territory to others. AOs appear to have taken quite literally the 'in charge' aspect of their title (often expressed by the department as Officer i/c [in charge] of X station/area/research programme).¹³⁵ As we have seen, this could be used to maintain friendship networks, both on leave and in a professional capacity. When visits were not seen as maintaining or enhancing these networks, AOs could object. In Kigezi, Uganda, the resettlement scheme of the early 1950s was seen by the CO as a flagship operation of the Agriculture Department.¹³⁶ It was achieved at a 'remarkably low cost per head', easing the over-population problem that AOs had diagnosed as an issue in the area.¹³⁷ The scheme was taken up by the CO to promote the good development work going on in empire, and received attention in *The Times*. In early 1951, the newspaper published two photographs side-by-side to demonstrate the change in the area now the Agriculture Department had started to educate local farmers, compared to the apparent overcrowded and incorrect farming methods that the Bakiga tribe were otherwise practicing.¹³⁸ Whether intentionally or not, the Africans present in the images reinforced the message of progress. In the

¹³² KNA, PDA/EBU/1/1/229/6 Minutes of DAO Conference held at Nakuru, 9 August 1960, pp. 9-10.

¹³³ Dixon, recorded interview; Amutabi, pp. 178-181.

¹³⁴ Humphrys, recorded interview.

¹³⁵ As well as official documents, Humphrys, Mitchell, Wallis, Tuckett and others used and use the terminology.

¹³⁶ More on the resettlement scheme, its implementation of policy and broader implications for development with respect to population growth can be found in Carswell.

¹³⁷ Sir John Hathorn Hall (Governor of Uganda) to Jim Griffiths (Secretary of State for the Colonies), 'Kigezi District Resettlement Scheme', 11 April 1950, TNA, CO 536/223/8/1.

¹³⁸ Excerpt from 'An Experiment in Western Uganda', *The Times*, 13 February 1951, enclosed with TNA, CO 536/223/8/3.

photograph where the preferred methods of strip cultivation were being practiced stood an African dressed in light-coloured cotton jacket and trousers, holding his hat. In the photograph beside it from several years earlier are two Africans, but in traditional dress with loose-fitting robes; one carries a barrel on their head.¹³⁹ Together with the redefined land use, the change in clothing styles between the two pictures also demonstrated an idea of social progress, hand-in-hand with the agricultural.

Because of the publicity and success of the resettlement scheme it drew many visitors, much to the annoyance of DAO John Purseglove (who later went on to lecture new recruits at ICTA). Writing to Geoffrey Nye at the CO, Purseglove said he was feeling like a 'Cook's [Travel] Agent' due to visits in the space of two weeks from Oliver Woods of *The Times*, a 'Mr Rodgers' [sic: Rogers] from the CO and 'a large party of District Commissioners, Agricultural Officers and Africans from Tanganyika and an Assistant District Commissioner from Basutoland'.¹⁴⁰ The problem persisted beyond these visits in February and the Chief Secretary's Office, Uganda, wrote formally to Rogers at the CO to ask for a restriction in the number of overseas visitors to the scheme. The district staff and the African local government officials had to spend 'far too great a portion of their time with the visitors, to the detriment of their other duties'.¹⁴¹ AOs saw their work as important and if visits from elsewhere were not contributing to the development of the land, AOs preferred to spend their time doing their job, rather than putting too much time into showing around outsiders.

The Kigezi Resettlement Scheme shows AOs' desire to undertake their work without too much interference. Nye at the CO asked Purseglove to write for the *Empire Journal of Experimental Agriculture* on soil conservation work and on the resettlement.¹⁴² Purseglove had already written up his findings for three journals and believed he had written 'quite enough' on the subject for now.¹⁴³ As with the increasing number of visitors, Purseglove had disseminated his research to a wider body of agriculturalists and

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ John Purseglove to Geoffrey Nye, 16 February 1951, TNA, CO 536/223/8/5.

¹⁴¹ Chief Secretary's Office, Uganda to P. Rogers, Colonial Office, 5 May 1951, TNA, CO 536/223/8/6.

¹⁴² Nye to Purseglove, 19 December 1950, TNA, CO 536/223/8/4.

¹⁴³ Purseglove to Geoffrey, 16 February 1951, TNA, CO 536/223/8/5.

scientists and was happy to go back to work in his district rather than continue writing up the same results and act, in this case, as a mouthpiece for the CO.

Purseglove's visitors were from other countries and, with the exception of the Agricultural Officers from Tanganyika, other departments. When AOs were faced with visits from fellow Agricultural Officers the response was usually not as hostile. Despite Humphrys' admonishment of subordinate AAOs from outside of his district, officially sanctioned visits of other AOs were accepted without hostility. In May 1957 E.U. Isang, a Nigerian AO on a tour of Africa to inspect soil conservation methods in different countries, was due to visit Teita, Kenya. The Director of Agriculture insisted that Isang be given every possible assistance and be shown around each province by the appropriate staff.¹⁴⁴ There is every possibility that this acceptance and encouragement by senior AOs applied in West Africa too, as L.H. Brown, at the time Kenya's Chief Agriculturalist, paid a visit to Nigeria in 1961 to look at the 'sound agricultural practices' in place and how Nigeria had dealt with land fragmentation, a problem also faced in Kenya.¹⁴⁵ In 1951 in Kenya, the AAO Voi was 'very pleased to welcome the proposed party' of sixteen agriculture pupils in order for them to see the practical implications of growing citrus fruit, wattle, vegetables, and the growing, processing and marketing of coffee.¹⁴⁶ These visits, from insiders in the case of the students, but also from an outsider of sorts – the Nigerian AO – would all enhance the knowledge of African agriculture to be used within the Agricultural Departments on problems shared across the continent. The visits could also be seen as a tacit endorsement of the quality of the work AOs were undertaking in their districts. If AOs' pride in their work in subsequent interviews is any indicator, they would have been happy to welcome visitors interested in their successes. This pride contributed to the ease with which AOs welcomed some outsiders. As long as district work was not detrimentally impacted, the spread of their scientific knowledge and extension methods

¹⁴⁴ 'Tour by Mr. E.U. Isang: Teita District', Ag. PAO Coast to DAO Teita, 31 May 1957, KNA, DAO/TTA/1/1/158/328.

¹⁴⁵ 'Some Observations on Nigerian Agriculture', L.H. Brown, received 6 March 1961, KNA, PDA/EBU/1/30/10.

¹⁴⁶ W.L. Lane (for AOO Voi, who drafted the note while on safari) to AO (Experiments) Matuga, 26 August 1953, KNA, DAO/TTA/1/1/158/316.

could continue to improve African agriculture with little perception of rivalry with those AOs from other countries.

These interactions also reflected elements of AOs' perception of their own power. With the visiting students, the incumbent AO maintained his superior position as a gatekeeper of knowledge. The students wished to learn about agricultural techniques and practices as they were understood by the Agriculture Department and eventually apply their knowledge, but the AO held the power to teach as much or as little as he saw fit. Similarly, as host to a Nigerian AO, East African AOs could choose which areas in the province to show their guest and thus exert their power over the Nigerian's acquisition of knowledge through both what Isang saw and what his hosts chose to tell him. Outsiders from the CO were, certainly in the Kigezi example, inspecting the situation because it was seen as a success in order to ensure a steady trickle of positive publicity in the metropole; AOs were more concerned with their knowledge being applied in an African context and preferred to undertake their work than engage in a PR campaign for the CO.

The displays and dissemination of knowledge to students and other AOs also points to the segue that some AOs made into education at the end of their spells working directly in agriculture. Instead of taking his next posting to Mafia Island off the coast of Tanzania, Peter Wilson saw that volunteers were being sought out for Tengeru Horticultural Research and Training Institute (HORTI), not far from Arusha. Wilson felt himself a family man, and had hoped that taking up a teaching post within the department would allow him to forego safaris and be at home every night.¹⁴⁷ Similarly, in Uganda, Andrew MacDonald was posted in mid-1960 to become Deputy Principal of Bukalasa Agricultural College.¹⁴⁸ Within a year, MacDonald had resigned from this post and moved to Makerere University College as a Lecturer in Crop Husbandry, starting in October 1960.¹⁴⁹ Like Wilson, MacDonald also cited family reasons as his motivating factor for switching to education; MacDonald's daughter, Fiona, born in mid-1956, was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis and MacDonald's life on safari put increasing pressure on his wife, Olive, to dedicate more time to Fiona's care.¹⁵⁰ Teaching could maintain a position of

¹⁴⁷ Wilson, p. 153.

¹⁴⁸ MacDonald, p. 89.

¹⁴⁹ MacDonald, p. 90.

¹⁵⁰ MacDonald, pp. 76, 89.

authority or power, but allow an AO to dramatically change their home life after a few years in the field.

Recruitment to the Colonial Administrative Service after the war had seen an increase in married men applying, and this caused disruption in the service, with officers increased concerns over working and living conditions. AOs in the later period reflected their CAS counterparts, with marriage patterns stabilising after the 1940s, and fewer men arriving with families.¹⁵¹ MacDonald married after a tour of service in Sierra Leone; Wilson married before heading out to Tanganyika.¹⁵² The transition to teaching in agriculture and/or for the department had the ability to satiate the desire for a more stable family life while remaining in the colonies and as the spread of agricultural colleges and other education facilities increased, AOs had a greater ability to pursue this career path as an alternative or precursor to development agency work.

Furthermore, the desire to teach was certainly not an inherited trait, with just a touch over one-and-a-half per cent of those in the agricultural service having teachers as parents.¹⁵³ Teaching did maintain and refashion a particular set of relationships that AOs experienced. Not only did these AOs manage to escape some of their departmental colleagues' frustrations at and after independence, they also could carry over the pedagogical from the field into the classroom. AOs maintained a position of intellectual superiority as the head of the class or lecture theatre and simultaneously helped fulfil the department's needs for educated farmers and an increasingly Africanised workforce who were well-versed in agricultural matters.¹⁵⁴ This re-branded paternalism meant the continuation of methods employed by the British as they were newly taught to Africans. Peter Wilson, teaching crop husbandry and 'agriculture related sciences' at Tengeru,

¹⁵¹ Jeppesen, 'Recruitment To the Colonial Administrative Service', pp. 18, 37–38.

¹⁵² MacDonald, pp. 25–26; Wilson, p. 2.

¹⁵³ Only 1.62% of respondents to the HMOCS Data Project who joined the Colonial Agricultural Service after 1945 had fathers who were teachers. Gardiner, p. 297. Even taking into account other didactic professions, the proportion of AOs with parents in these professions is still much lower than administrative officers.

¹⁵⁴ In Kenya, the department had been seeing a drop off in newly recruited European staff by the end of the 1950s, with too few capable African staff rising through the ranks to take up these positions. E.M. Green (Ag. Assistant Director of Cash Crops), Administrative Directive, Department of Agriculture, Central Province, 23 January 1961, KNA, PDA/EBU/1/30/7. There was some pressure from below, too, with Fergus Wilson, himself a former employee of the Agricultural Department, pushing officials in Kenya to employ 18 recent graduates of Makerere despite official uncertainty over sources of finance. Minutes of a DAO Conference held in Nyeri on 28th and 29th November 1960, KNA, PDA/EBU/1/1/229/24.

replicated the mix of lecture-based learning for African students in tandem with work on test plots, each holding a different crop found in the region, just as had been done at Cambridge and Trinidad respectively.¹⁵⁵ This switch to teaching helped ensure that AOs could continue to feel as if they were helping with a colonies' progress towards independence (or its development after) and, at a simpler level, kept some AOs in work when the option of continuing in the field might have felt foreboding with independence and career-uncertainty on the horizon.

Even at Provincial level, the desire to get more work done rather than show others around any given scheme was evident. In December 1961, a six-man team of USAID agricultural extension officers, led by Edwin Booth, visited Kenya, where USAID already had a man stationed.¹⁵⁶ From January 1962, Booth was to take the other five men around Provinces, Districts and Training Centres throughout the country, with the backing of Hughes-Rice, on behalf of the Director of Agriculture. Hughes-Rice hoped that those officers concerned should provide 'all possible co-operation and assistance' so the Americans could gain a more 'intimate' understanding of the agricultural situation. The USAID officers were to be regarded as 'part of the Departmental team' though in an advisory rather than executive fashion.¹⁵⁷ Hughes-Rice felt the need to close by reminding PAOs throughout Kenya of the expertise of these visitors, despite their lack of Kenyan context:

They are all men of wide experience in many parts of the world, and I have confidence that they have much valuable "know how" and new techniques which will usefully supplement and improve ours. They for their part will most willingly give any assistance and knowledge in their power to further the job we are trying to do.¹⁵⁸

Hughes-Rice clearly felt the need that these points be spelled out to officers, and while Gurr, PAO Coast, believed the message from Hughes-Rice self-explanatory, he insisted to DAOs that he did not consider that members of the District teams make any 'special

¹⁵⁵ Wilson, pp. 162–64.

¹⁵⁶ John L. Cooper, Food and Agriculture Officer, USAID, 15 December 1951, KNA, DAO/TTA/1/1/49/215E2.

¹⁵⁷ Hughes-Rice, Ag. Deputy Director of Agriculture (Kenya), 3 January 1962, KNA, DAO/TTA/1/1/49/215E1.

¹⁵⁸ Hughes-Rice, 3 January 1962, KNA, DAO/TTA/1/1/49/215E1, p. 2.

visits' to show USAID officers their work, but continue normal duties with the visitors in accompaniment.¹⁵⁹ Even if AOs supported or approved some visitors more than others, their own work was the priority.

Hughes-Rice's emphasis on the ability of USAID 'outsiders' was also a reaction to a problem the department had faced in Kenya in the preceding years. Some staff, it was believed, were becoming too insular and controlling over their districts. At the Central Province Agricultural Conference in Nyeri in June 1955 it was noted that officers were 'becoming too parochially-minded' and that meetings with other officers from outside of their districts were needed to try and reverse this trend.¹⁶⁰ AOs would be unlikely to confess to any such parochial attitudes, but even by 1960, when a debate was taking place over the expansion of *Ukulima wa Kisasa* (Modern Farming) magazine to incorporate Kenyan agricultural matters alongside the original Tanganyikan farming issues, one senior AO had to defend himself by claiming he was 'not just being parochial in this – our farmers want to see Kenya development, not Tanganyika'.¹⁶¹ Using the perceived needs of farmers was a helpful way of circumventing any accusations of thinking only about one (albeit, in this case, one rather large) area.

The insularity of a territory – be it an entire country overseen by the top of the department or a district overseen by a DAO – could affect AOs' perceptions of agricultural issues. Interactions with the CO could conflict with perceptions of the situation on the ground. When the Swynnerton Plan was submitted for approval to be financed from the Colonial Development and Welfare fund, Geoffrey Nye, who handled agriculture in the colonies from London, was more cautious than Swynnerton or the Kenya administration when it came certain proposals. Nye was dubious about the expansion of pineapple growing areas under the Plan, noting that in general pineapples were being 'heavily flogged these days and everything points to overproduction'. The Plan called for a five-fold increase in production and Nye believed the Colonial Products

¹⁵⁹ J.W. Gurr (PAO Coast), 6 January 1962, KNA, DAO/TTA/1/1/49/215.

¹⁶⁰ Minutes of the Central Province Agricultural Conference held at Nyeri on 15 June 1955, KNA, DAO/ILBU [KBU]/1/1/97/39[??].

¹⁶¹ Thomas Hughes Rice was in 1960 the Assistant Director of Agriculture, Nyanza Province but was soon to become acting Director of the entire department, 'Gazette Notice No. 5583: Appointments', *Kenya Gazette*, 21 November 1961, p. 1424. Quote from Hughes-Rice to Acting Director of Agriculture, 5 November 1960, KNA, AN 7/21/271.

Laboratory should first investigate the potential in increased demand for canned pineapple, lest the market become saturated before the crop was ready for export under the plan.¹⁶² The CO informed the Acting Governor that should any part of the plan be dropped it would be pineapples that would be ‘cut out first’.¹⁶³ Writing to Oliver Lyttleton, Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Acting Governor kept his focus on the local conditions rather than world markets, asking for clarification on the point and noting that expansion had begun already and that ‘reports of quality [were] good’.¹⁶⁴ Lyttleton wrote back emphasising that while Kenya was as good a place as any to grow pineapples, other colonies and Commonwealth countries were already producing enough to meet demand and were continuing to expand production. Lyttleton emphasised that whatever was to be done ‘should be done quickly. Market competition will be much more intense in two years [sic] time than it is now.’¹⁶⁵ Seven months later, there was still concern at the CO about the quantity of crops from Kenya for export under the plan amidst marketing difficulties that had been growing in recent months.¹⁶⁶ Nye’s initial concern over the ‘downward direction’ of global markets shows how the perspective of the CO differed from both the Governor and Swynnerton.¹⁶⁷

Moreover, AOs remember marketing issues but with few exceptions these were to do with local markets – food produced for sale within the country or, at the very least, within East Africa – rather than addressing contemporary global market trends. At the shift to independence, some officers transitioning into more senior roles, such as Wallis and Tuckett, gained more experience of the marketing side of agriculture and inclusion in world markets.¹⁶⁸ Even then, in interviews AOs had a grasp of how their work affected local markets and of the importance of having access to these, but rarely spoke of the global picture other than, on occasion, in the context of their second careers in

¹⁶² Nye, Minute of 8 February 1954, TNA, CO 822/964.

¹⁶³ ‘Note on Plan to Intensify Development of Agriculture in Kenya’, TNA, CO 822/964/7, p. 3.

¹⁶⁴ Acting Governor to Oliver Lyttleton (Secretary of State for the Colonies), 14 June 1954, TNA, CO 822/964/12.

¹⁶⁵ Lyttleton to Kenya Government, 4 July 1954, TNA, CO 822/964/16.

¹⁶⁶ Lyttleton to Kenya Government, 9 February 1955, TNA, CO 822/964/19.

¹⁶⁷ Nye, Minute of 8 February 1954, TNA, CO 822/964.

¹⁶⁸ Wallis, recorded interview; Tuckett, recorded interview. Mitchell also chaired some marketing board meetings in his District. Mitchell, recorded interview.

development agencies.¹⁶⁹ AOs were bound strongly to seeing issues from the position of their district, province or country, where they claimed to be an authority on these matters.

Another contradiction evident from AOs was how the CO, an outsider in itself, would not only try to channel some development funds into these countries, but enlist the assistance of other foreign governments to help with different agricultural projects. This kind of assistance, whether AOs on the ground liked the intervention or not, was sought out for Kenya by Bruce McKenzie. While McKenzie was later to become Minister for Agriculture in Kenya's first independent government and had been in the post from 1959 to 1961, in early 1962 he provided the CO with information about then Minister for Agriculture Michael Blundell's visit to the UK for the Lancaster House talks. The CO, themselves limited when it came to how much funding could be provided, were at the time creating a list of projects 'to be furnished to the Germans of development expenditures of which they might relieve us'.¹⁷⁰

Funds from HMG were looked upon differently depending on how far funded projects interfered with AOs' perceptions of how that project should be carried out. Before independence, Kenya had a large – the largest – injection of British funds from the Colonial Development and Welfare Act to help kick-start the Swynnerton Plan.¹⁷¹ Even before the plan was officially off the ground, HMG granted an advance of £100,000, upped shortly thereafter to £400,000 for the recruitment of new staff.¹⁷² As Anne Thurston has argued and countless AOs have pointed out in her text and elsewhere, the programme, backed by London and Nairobi, was largely organised and directed by AOs on the ground. Because of the self-directed organisation, AOs praised the plan rather than approaching it cautiously or with hostility as could be the case with foreign government and aid agency investment after independence. The investment from the UK in Tanganyika before independence was not mentioned by AOs in interview: their projects and plans continued with the use of the money and minimal outside interference caused minimal disruption. In Uganda before independence, Humphrys remembered that AOs 'used to complain a lot

¹⁶⁹ Wallis, recorded interview; Tuckett, recorded interview.

¹⁷⁰ Minute, D.J. Derx, 6 February 1962, TNA, CO 822/2527/6.

¹⁷¹ Plan for Agricultural Development in Kenya, TNA, CO 822/964.

¹⁷² Oliver Lyttleton (Secretary of State for the Colonies), 26 March 1954, TNA, CO 822/964/1; Lyttleton, 1 May 1954, TNA, CO 822/964/6.

about the lack of money coming from England to develop. We said if we had more money we could develop [Ugandan agriculture].¹⁷³ Roger Swynnerton believed that Uganda was a country that held 'the highest agricultural potential in East Africa' but that ministers in the Agriculture Department before independence were at fault for allowing a lack of adequate financing and planning. Swynnerton believed that because these ministers had been ex-Directors of Agriculture, they were not aggressive enough in convincing London that money should flow to them rather than social services or public works, nor did they have 'convincing agricultural planning'.¹⁷⁴ Of course, Swynnerton's assessment of Uganda's pre-independence ministers also helps to emphasise that Swynnerton clearly believed his plan to be adequately 'convincing' and the ministers he worked for to be 'aggressive' enough to succeed in obtaining funds.

In Kenya in 1965, the Maasai Development Scheme sought to capitalise on the view of 'educated' Maasai who, it was reported, wished to shift from a pastoral lifestyle to one of continued communal land ownership but in conjunction with a 'static' way of life.¹⁷⁵ The scheme was funded by a multitude of sources including USAID, the UN and the World Bank.¹⁷⁶ Later, local finance was found from the Rombo Catholic Mission, in addition to these international donors.¹⁷⁷ The Agricultural Department wanted to seize on the opportunity presented to them by these 'educated' Maasai members, though it is never clear how far they were assessed as being educated because they agreed with the Department's approach to land use. Nonetheless, the DAO Maasai reported that 'It would appear we are being given a fairly free hand on how this will work and it will, therefore, be up to us to make it work.'¹⁷⁸ Even after independence, if agencies provided funding but minimised their interference with agricultural matters, AOs, instead of feeling any intrusion, saw it as a motivating factor to succeed, which would encourage further investment. Indeed, different aspects of development in the Maasai Scheme were shopped

¹⁷³ Humphrys, recorded interview.

¹⁷⁴ OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 7(48), Swynnerton, Roger, p. 14.

¹⁷⁵ 'A Plan for the Development of Kenya Maasailand', Department of Veterinary Services, Kabete, 20 July 1965, pp. 5-6, KNA, AN 2/28/4.

¹⁷⁶ 'Record of a meeting held at 2:45pm on 29th July 1965, in the Ministry of Agriculture, Nairobi', KNA, AN 2/28/1; 'A Plan for the Development of Kenya Maasailand', Department of Veterinary Services, Kabete, 20 July 1965, p. 8, KNA, AN 2/28/4.

¹⁷⁷ J.M Rotich (DAO Maasai) to W.D. Ware-Austin, Assistant Director of Agriculture (ADA), Rift Valley Province (RVP), 15 February 1966, KNA, AN 2/28/87A.

¹⁷⁸ Symon (DAO Masai) to DC Narok, 20 July 1966, KNA, AN 2/28/170; emphasis in original.

out to different donors. At a meeting in November 1965 it was noted that an application for funding from Germany to finance the ploughing of seven thousand acres had been sent off.¹⁷⁹ Even then, the money from Germany would only fund the ploughing of certain areas. The Chairman of the Osupuko Local Council, Samuel Koriata, who was a proponent of the scheme, expressed the frustrations of some of the Maasai who saw their neighbours' lands being ploughed but theirs left alone until the money from Germany arrived. This, Koriata believed, caused some to doubt the scheme.¹⁸⁰ Ware-Austin, the Assistant Director of Agriculture in Rift Valley, was 'just as disappointed' but helpless to do anything.¹⁸¹ If outsiders could provide finance without being interfering, AOs made the most of the opportunities, but this lack of direct involvement in a scheme also meant that AOs had less ability to hasten the arrival of funds.

Staff in the Maasai Scheme could exercise what control they did have to make the most of outsiders. J.K Ole Tipis, MP for Narok (East), had concerns about the way the scheme was working out at his time of writing: sharecropping rights were sold to 'Greeks, Italians, Indians and European Contractors'. Tipis emphasised the effort that he had put in on behalf of the department in convincing many of his constituents that the scheme would be a successful one, but saw the potential for a sharecropping arrangement to turn into exploitation of a new Maasai labour force.¹⁸² McKenzie diplomatically eased Tipis's woes, again noting that the German Protestant Church was sending funds for additional work and that no contractual arrangements at all had yet been agreed.¹⁸³ McKenzie was keen to keep Tipis and others on the side of the department. Only six months earlier it had been noted by the Provincial Range Officer, RVP, that the support of politicians in the Maasai Scheme had helped win over the local population and demonstrated 'the value of close liaison with Politicians'; a far cry from the politicisation recalled by some AOs

¹⁷⁹ The funding appears to have been from the Protestant Church in Germany (KNA, AN 2/28/127). 'Notes from a meeting on Masai Wheat Development held in the R.V.P. Building Conference Room on 13.11.65', KNA, AN 2/28/66, p. 1.

¹⁸⁰ Samuel S. Koriata to Symon (DAO Maasai/Ngong), 5 October 1965, KNA, AN 2/28/31; J.M. Rotich, DAO Masai (acting??) to W.D. Ware-Austin, Assistant Director of Agriculture (ADA), Rift Valley Province (RVP), 29 January 1966, KNA, AN 2/28/79.

¹⁸¹ Austin to DAO Maasai, 9 February 1966, KNA, AN 2/28/83.

¹⁸² Hon. J.K. Ole Tipis, M.P. for Narok (East) to Bruce McKenzie, Minister of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, 1 April 1966, KNA, AN 2/28/127.

¹⁸³ McKenzie to Ole Tipis, 20 April 1966, KNA, AN 2/28/139.

occurring at or just after independence.¹⁸⁴ In this case, outsiders, when singing from the same hymn sheet, were of great value to the department's continued drive for what it believed to be agricultural progress.

The free hand given by some external funders regarding the intricacies of a scheme gave opportunity for some AOs to pick projects that they either thought most likely of success, or that may have entailed less effort to produce results than other schemes. The Executive Officer of the Sheep Development Committee, James Barbour, did 'not really want to be involved in' the planning of the Maasai scheme, which proposed the introduction of sheep into the region. Barbour believed the levels of clearing work that would have to take place to make the area suitable for grazing to be 'considerable' and bowed out of the project.¹⁸⁵ After this, the scheme was adapted to focus more heavily on crops. Wherever investment came from, certain issues could still deter AOs from becoming too deeply involved in aspects of projects that could prove difficult to achieve; additional finance for projects did not trump practical realities.

Understanding the tone and language used by development agencies (who often shared it with those engaged in colonial development) could help AOs secure backing for future projects that managed to continue colonial development aims. In this way, 'outsiders' could be subtly persuaded to invest or assist in projects that the department were keen to see maintained. Just as the Maasai Development Scheme was funded and a 'free hand' awarded to AOs in charge, if AOs could persuade outsiders to take up a project wholesale, or with minimal tweaking, then their animosity to those outsiders lowered. Before independence in Kenya, in early June 1962, the Chief Hydraulic Engineer (CHE) put together a report to be passed on to the World Bank, addressing water development measures to be implemented after independence.¹⁸⁶ The CHE's comments on his report demonstrated a realistic approach: even soon after the report's submission to the World Bank there had been 'indications' that not all of the projects would be fully funded by the

¹⁸⁴ 'Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Provincial Agricultural Board, RVP, held on 10th September, 1965, in the Conference Room of the Provincial Secretariat, Nakuru', KNA, AN 7/14/55, p. 3.

¹⁸⁵ James Barbour (Executive Officer, Sheep Development Committee) to Assistant Deputy Director of Agriculture, RVP (no date, sometime between 24 and 29 December, probably 26 December 1965) KNA, AN 2/28/72.

¹⁸⁶ 'Water Development after Uhuru: The World Bank Survey Mission to Kenya', KNA, PDA/EBU/1/30/36A.

Bank.¹⁸⁷ While the CHE was not, of course, an AO, Peberdy, by that point the Deputy Director for Agriculture, had circulated the report to a handful of DAOs in Central and Eastern Province where a few of the proposed projects were to take place, suggesting it be circulated further by them for the ‘edification’ of their staff.¹⁸⁸ The Engineer’s synopsis of the report reveals that the department (water resources were the remit of the Department of Agriculture) was willing to tactically pitch development projects and assess when agencies would accept or reject particular proposals. The CHE was well aware that schemes that were recommended in reports stood a higher chance of receiving funding in the future than schemes that were not.¹⁸⁹

The 1962 report reveals both similarities and differences between Kenya’s Department of Agriculture’s aims and those of the World Bank; AOs at lower levels may have been less attuned to these differences than those in more senior positions who realised they could use this influx of aid to their advantage. Firstly, senior officers had greater liaising powers with their equivalents in other territories. The Kenya report was ‘materially assisted by Uganda’s experience’.¹⁹⁰ The Mission had completed its survey in Uganda some months before their Kenya visit. The team Uganda put forward to oversee the Mission had no water development officer. Because of this, the CHE asserted, the Bank wrote off water development for Uganda ‘in a single paragraph’.¹⁹¹ Humphrys and Swynnerton’s assessment of Uganda’s need for more money and departmental heads who could lobby for funding may have served Uganda poorly, but could eventually benefit Kenya.¹⁹² The Kenyan report made much of the focus that development agencies held with enhancing areas of ‘high potential’. Wallis argued that this began in Kenya with the Swynnerton Plan.¹⁹³ Instead of increasing inputs into low potential areas in efforts to make as much land as possible productive, the thinking went that the productive land should, instead, be made as productive as possible. The CHE confessed that some plans that sought to supply water and irrigation to lower potential areas were less likely to find

¹⁸⁷ KNA, PDA/EBU/1/30/36A, p. 1.

¹⁸⁸ Peberdy to DAOs of Nyeri, Kiambu, Fort Hall, Embu and Meru, 5 June 1963, KNA, PDA/EBU/1/30/36.

¹⁸⁹ KNA, PDA/EBU/1/30/36A, p. 2.

¹⁹⁰ KNA, PDA/EBU/1/30/36A, p. 2.

¹⁹¹ KNA, PDA/EBU/1/30/36A, p. 2.

¹⁹² Humphrys, recorded interview; OBL, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 476, Box 7(48), Swynnerton, Roger, p. 14.

¹⁹³ Wallis, recorded interview.

backing, but that he had made a case for the ‘sociological and humanitarian consequences’ if these areas were to be ignored.¹⁹⁴ By appealing to sensitivities beyond those of basic crop yields, the CHE hoped to have the Bank fund a wider range of projects.

The Agricultural Department, at least in Kenya, fed into the agenda for development in the post-colonial era by ensuring that certain projects that would be deemed more suitable for external funding were pushed to the fore. The way the department used ‘outsiders’ here considerably impacted the future course of development. The implications of this in Kenya were, as has been noted elsewhere, to focus on areas of ‘high potential’: fertile land with conditions that were the most suitable for crop growth. The Swynnerton Plan put the focus more directly on these high potential areas.¹⁹⁵ The hope had been to encourage cash crop industries to increase in size to a point where they could become self-sustaining and would need fewer AOs monitoring progress. These AOs would then be moved from high-yielding regions to other areas. Despite this, the department in Kenya still encouraged farmers on low potential land. However, by early 1961 the department faced the problem that fewer new European AOs and AAOs were arriving and not enough Africans were being trained to fill the gaps; the department was ‘considerably under strength’.¹⁹⁶ This caused the Acting Assistant Director to move men from low to high potential areas in order to ‘fill the vacuum’ left by under-recruitment.¹⁹⁷ While high potential land was the greater producer of goods, it is evident that in Kenya, low potential land was not totally ignored by the department but became a sacrifice to under-staffing and under-funding, the latter hampering the employment of more junior staff.¹⁹⁸ With the shift of staff from low to high potential areas, projects in high potential areas were likely to have both greater returns regardless of the department’s inputs, due to the nature of the land, and greater returns still thanks to the focus of staff in these areas. As the Chief Hydraulic Engineer’s report indicates, it was these projects – ones with

¹⁹⁴ KNA, PDA/EBU/1/30/36A, p. 3.

¹⁹⁵ Wallis, recorded interview.

¹⁹⁶ ECM Green (Ag. Assistant Director of Agriculture) to DAOs, Central Province, 23 January 1961, KNA, PDA/EBU/1/30/7 p. 1.

¹⁹⁷ Green to DAOs, KNA, PDA/EBU/1/30/7 p. 2.

¹⁹⁸ Green to DAOs, KNA, PDA/EBU/1/30/7 p. 2.

greater chances of success that – that led to them being pitched to development agencies for funding or assistance.

Before the Swynnerton Plan, high potential land was still seen as the most rewarding agriculturally, with any emphasis on low potential areas over high seen as ‘potentially disastrous’.¹⁹⁹ Nonetheless, the later shift by the Akamba into low potential areas of Machakos appears to have been a successful one. They suffered ‘hardships and setbacks’ due to droughts but responded by taking their knowledge of high potential areas and evolving a more resilient system.²⁰⁰ This ultimately meant that by 1974, low potential areas of Machakos, once prohibited for African farmers, were able to increase their yields significantly. One group, who had been farming on a smaller plot of high potential land, saw an increase from 5.5 to 24.5 bags of maize per season once they had moved to and established themselves in lower potential areas.²⁰¹ The Kenya Department of Agriculture appears to have been underfunded and short-staffed enough to cause them to cast aside the possibility of maintaining a significant presence on low potential areas. These constraints led to a subsequent focus on high potential areas and plans for their continued development dominated funding applications and reports, setting the trend for much of the 1960s and ‘70s.

Lastly, AOs had a psychological attachment to their operational environment and their role in the Colonial Service. Outsiders, whatever their origin, agenda or level of involvement, represented two things. Firstly, they were a threat to AOs’ expertise; secondly, they were a reminder of the challenge that decolonisation bought with it on a personal and professional level. Chapter one has shown how AOs’ colonial education, whether it was useful to them or seen as a wasted opportunity, inculcated the idea that they were equipped with knowledge and the ability to apply it in an African context. They fully believed that they were of benefit to African agriculture and moreover that they were the most appropriate people to deliver and implement this knowledge. If AOs’ superiors were inviting aid agencies to start work on projects, AOs’ self-beliefs were challenged. AOs were content to dismiss the help of development agencies and refer to their members in

¹⁹⁹ Tiffen, Mortimore, and Gichuki, p. 266.

²⁰⁰ Tiffen, Mortimore, and Gichuki, p. 266.

²⁰¹ Tiffen, Mortimore, and Gichuki, p. 56.

scathing terms. Researchers received less interference from ‘outsiders’, but as we have seen, extension workers found themselves either over-burdened with visitors that distracted them from their work or, in memory at least, hostile to assistance from outside.

Secondly, the timing of development agencies’ arrival must have grated on AOs. Decolonisation itself was a challenge to AOs. While both extension and research staff had undergone largely similar training through Cambridge and Trinidad, their careers meant different things to them. Both groups had been born and grown up in a world where the British Empire was a part of British identity. Some AOs had spent time overseas because of their parents’ employment in empire, others had simply been aware of the empire and all had been aware of it sufficiently enough to see the potential employment prospects it offered for them. For those who may have been relatively unaware of the empire through their formal education, the increase in empire propaganda of the early war years that Wendy Webster argues ‘projected empire as a multiracial community’ would have helped bind them to the idea of empire as part of a wider community and something that had, even if in the background, been present throughout their lives.²⁰² Following their early years and regardless of their motivations for joining up, AOs’ adult lives relied on empire for their livelihood. Departments all believed themselves sort-staffed and underfunded, but the looming threat of decolonisation was something AOs could not control, nor could they really mediate. As independence in Kenya approached, Wallis remembered ‘everything was uncertain and fluid’. ‘What’s going to happen?’ was the question looming in his mind.²⁰³ There was ‘a certain wonderment as to quite whether swift Africanisation would be practicable’ said Dixon, concerned with the decline of the department. Even though the funding for his research barely changed after independence, Dixon ‘couldn’t see [him]self staying in Kenya to old age, even if they wanted [him]’.²⁰⁴ These anxieties crossed borders, too. In Tanganyika, Mike Bigger remembered a feeling of wariness.²⁰⁵ The psychological upheaval and uncertainty that decolonisation brought with it, challenging AOs’ past, present and future, could be embodied by development agencies.

²⁰² Wendy Webster, *Englishness and Empire 1939-1965* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 22 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13398-014-0173-7.2>>.

²⁰³ Wallis, recorded interview.

²⁰⁴ Dixon, recorded interview.

²⁰⁵ Bigger, recorded interview.

Conclusion

AOs' attitudes and responses towards outsiders helps us see that they did understand themselves as experts in, if not masters of, tropical agriculture. Minor difficulties with unaccountable parties voicing opinions on the activities of a colony were either somewhat invisible to AOs or, when they did become visible, seen as meddling from interfering outsiders who knew no better. AOs believed their experience on the ground and understanding of their colony was definitive, and those who offered opinions from afar did not understand the realities.

Cold War concerns, especially when emerging African nations were seen as a surrogate battleground for influence from both sides, also did not really influence AOs' thoughts on outsiders. The Cold War did help usher in a large chunk of aid to the three countries and AOs did remember and happily retell anecdotes about some of American, Russian or Chinese officials they came into contact with, even when this caused friction, but their memories were not understood through a Cold War lens. Instead for AOs, the Chinese were regarded with little real suspicion – an understanding shared by others on East Africa, though not in London – and Americans were something of an annoying curiosity. US involvement itself was of little issue, but the approach of those on the ground could frustrate AOs. In all of these cases, the greatest frustrations arose when AOs' operational insularity was pierced by the involvement of outsiders. This would happen more readily with American aid than Chinese or Russian.

Extension officers took the brunt of the 'problems'. Researchers had enjoyed external funding for some time before independence and additional income to their stations, setting up new experiments or improving old ones, was a welcome addition. Extension officers felt the interference more keenly. Outsiders before independence would impinge on their time, outsiders after independence would impede their progress. Projects were adapted or abandoned as new personnel arrived to take charge or consult on what should be done and AOs, in an attempt to demonstrate their ability and prowess, would claim that these new personnel fell into predictable traps of repeating already tried and tested schemes or conducting trials that had been set up in the past. These outsiders

challenged AOs' knowledge, power and superiority. Some AOs found methods of overcoming this challenge such as turning to teaching, helping to keep them in a position of superiority instructing Africans in a more formal classroom setting instead of their old districts. This way, AOs could still convince themselves of their benefit to Africans.

No territory appeared exceptional or immune from these factors. Kenya saw more aid from America, and so greater frustration with Americans, but again, this came because of the tendency of outsiders by their presence alone, to remind AOs that an age of independent African nations was upon them. The reminder bought to AOs by outsider presence, namely that they were not the only ones that Africans were willing to engage with as agricultural instructors, challenged their authority.

Given many AOs soon found themselves working for international aid agencies with whom they had come into contact while employed by African governments, this challenge to authority was soon rectified. AOs shifted to the very agencies whose staff had been outsiders, simultaneously addressing what had been criticised as a lack of expertise and knowledge of East African agriculture and ensuring some of the power to dictate the course of tropical agriculture was back in the hands of the men who believed they were the masters of it.

Conclusion

This thesis demonstrates some of the ways that Agricultural Officers posted to late-imperial East Africa negotiated and remember their experiences across independence. By tracing the final generation of AOs who received an education from the CO and inspecting their work in East Africa, it argues that despite the CO's attempt to foster relations within future district teams in Britain before officials were posted in the colonies, the nature of AOs' background and education meant that each group had its own separate identity. This separation was reinforced on the ground, where AOs solidified the networks that had been loosely formed in Britain and tightened in Trinidad. Furthermore, it argues that AOs used these networks professionally to disseminate knowledge and data, emphasising their dedication to a particular strand of western science, and that their professional networks were deeply intertwined with their personal ones that became of particular importance as independence occurred, enabling AOs to vent frustrations and seek reassurances from each other. Despite the influx of officials representing Communist powers into East Africa, AOs were unconcerned with the Cold War and focussed almost solely on their ability to increase Africans' capacity for agriculture, finding frustration with almost anyone from outside of the department who sought to interfere with their work, regardless of their ideological leanings. As independence continued, AOs felt a loss of power and control over their own work and looked to further their careers in agriculture and regain their control over African agriculture by seeking employment with development agencies. Moving into these agencies helped cement the belief that one needed practical experience in any given field to truly understand it, a feature that the CO emphasised in education and that AOs continued to believe once in situ, using it to justify their superiority over those they believed were trying to interfere with their work.

AOs help to further reveal that, far from being a monolithic bloc, by the post-war years HMOCS had diversified its intake, and no more so than throughout the technical services. AOs were one distinct group even within this sub-category, and further study is needed to understand the attitudes of other groups and how different or alike they were to AOs. Technical staff clustered in urban areas, for example, may well have had a very different relationship with Africans and a different understanding of what they perceived

as the nature of Africans given the greater number of wage-labourers from different parts of any country or ethnic group rather than the more homogenous countryside.

Nonetheless, AOs' education reflects the CO's desperation to recruit in the post-war era: despite several AOs failing to pass their diplomas, they were sent out to East Africa with barely even a slap on the wrist. AOs' education formed the backbone of their understanding of agricultural problems and reinforced their faith in the sciences; they arrived in Africa with what they understood to be the latest scientific approach to crop growing, ensuring they remained confident even in the face of successful indigenous methods. The relationships they forged in training and service were rekindled in later life through groups such as OSPA which saw AOs renew their purpose, reinforcing their own identities and promoting a narrative of empire and decolonisation for public and academic consumption. This post-retirement presentation of events focussed on the assistance those working in late empire were attempting to provide to the colonies against the backdrop of African politics that pursued the goal of independence which was, AOs believed, at best too hasty and at worst marked by a total unpreparedness. This was, they thought, in contrast to empire's long-term plan to develop countries across the globe that required assistance.

By inspecting the variety of relationships formed during their imperial careers, this thesis reveals how AOs arrived at their beliefs, providing an insight into some of the attitudes that Africans continued to face after empire. AOs' relationships with farmers contributed significantly to how AOs saw themselves, reinforcing their *raison d'être* and an understanding that they were at the forefront of a new scientific frontier, bringing a rational approach to agriculture that could counter the apparently overzealous settler or conservative African farmer. A mixture of experience and pre-existing beliefs influenced how they viewed farmers and could reinforce racial stereotypes about the capability of different ethnicities, largely conforming to the existing racial hierarchies of the time: European settler farmers were enthusiastic and capable but impatient for results; Indian plantation owners kept themselves to themselves, sourcing their own knowledge from existing experts in similar crops elsewhere and making a tidy profit by doing so; Africans, while dependent on traits of the tribes from which they hailed, lacked enthusiasm for new agricultural methods and were resistant to change.

Uncovering the experiences of African farmers and African AIs and their opinions of AOs and the interactions they had with them could reveal a lot more about the dynamic between the two groups. There are many questions still to be answered from the perspective of African farmers, though obtaining evidence would pose significant challenges given the time since elapsed and that most information collected about farmers of the period was collected by the colonial governments themselves in the context of their understanding of agriculture at the time. How African farmers remember AOs and what their motivations were for complying (or not) with AOs' suggestions can illuminate further some of the issues AOs and farmers faced. Additionally, how African farmers saw AAOs and AIs – most often African themselves – and the slowly increasing number of Africans in senior positions in the department as independence came and went could help reveal how African farmers viewed their own role in nationalist movements and how they understood the role of Africans in the colonial administration. Did farmers comply more readily with agricultural advice and orders meted out by other Africans, who the colonial authorities believed might be better at convincing them, or was this another assumption by AOs, explained away by the prevailing opinions on the nature of Africans held by many at the time? Furthermore, while this thesis touches on the role of subordinate African staff, a group who AOs did often look back fondly on with official documentation painting a more mixed picture, more could be done to explore their role at independence. Subordinate staff saw an increase in their political power even if they retained the same lower position in the agricultural departments and understanding their role across independence would give an even more comprehensive account of the agricultural departments at the time.

AOs are a good example of how late imperial policy was mediated by individuals on the ground. Their sense of importance was boosted in Kenya after the British Government financed the near £8 million Swynnerton Plan, regardless of the political motives behind its implementation. Tanzania and Uganda's reliance on agricultural exports during the late colonial period, even without the same level of investment from Britain for one-off plans, kept their AOs afloat with self-belief. Yet still, as independence approached and occurred in all three countries, funds dwindled and the importance of extension staff – AOs and their subordinates – attached to local relationships increased. Humphrys' interactions with local chiefs, for example, could directly impact how far other

local Africans conformed to his vision of agriculture in the area. As nationalistic sentiment rose, overtly or otherwise, the individual relationships AOs maintained with farmers increased in importance, especially after the post-war move away from the 'policeman' attitude in agriculture. AOs were imparters of knowledge and conscious of the need to be diplomatic with farmers, encouraging existing farming methods when they outshone imported models; forcing change on Africans was considered too heavy-handed and more likely to encourage resistance rather than compliance. Despite broader works on agricultural policy in empire often looking for larger trends or, as MacKenzie might have it, the next potential apocalyptic events in agriculture, AOs' responses were to local conditions.¹ Where one group of Africans resisted implementing protective measures from soil erosion or additional fertiliser use, another group may have embraced them. Where changes did occur, they were achieved through a mixture of propaganda, the continual reinforcement of these methods by AOs, and the relationships AOs and their subordinates had with farmers. AOs appreciated that while many African methods may not have conformed to Cambridge's vision of agricultural production, they saw greater yields than western methods and were thus allowed to continue.

AOs' concentration on the micro rather than the macro also contributes towards work on the Africa's position in the Cold War. Far from East Africa being a political hotbed of competing Cold War concerns, some governmental departments and individuals were clearly more concerned with geopolitical issues than others. Undoubtedly, there was plenty of political activity in certain areas.² High Commissioners and administrators kept a keen eye on where Chinese or Russian aid was channelled, as well as the African politicians more heavily influenced by communist powers, discussing it amongst themselves and with Whitehall. AOs, however, had a different experience. Mainly in rural areas, AOs lived their day-to-day lives within the boundaries of their districts or provinces. They were stationed in member countries of the non-aligned movement and were often recipients of aid from capitalist nations or encountered development projects either funded, staffed, or both, by communist powers. Yet AOs thought in terms of practicalities. They thought minimally about key Cold War events and adapted quickly,

¹ MacKenzie.

² George Roberts, 'Politics, Decolonisation, and the Cold War in Dar Es Salaam c. 1965-72' (Unpublished PhD thesis; Warwick, 2016).

even if crabibly, to the influx of foreign visitors as independence approached. ‘Getting the job done’ came first, regardless of who AOs had to deal with in the process. The chief concern of AOs was increasing agricultural yields. Difficulties with Chinese or Russian officials were interpreted purely through the lens of how they did or did not impede AOs’ professional performance. Ideology was little considered by AOs, and when it was, their scorn was for the impact on agriculture (when looking at villagisation, for example) rather than any larger political implications. While some AOs talked of the ‘nature’ of Africans, and socialist policy in Tanzania running against this perceived nature, AOs blamed any problems on African elites and often took their own understanding of rural Africans to be definitive. AOs did see new ‘political’ appointments to their agriculture departments, as Odd Arne Westad has recently noted, but operational insularity ensured that any thoughts of strategizing over the Cold War by African elites was hardly considered by AOs.³ The Cold War, for AOs, appeared simply to be the backdrop to independent Africa. They understood, due to knowledge of marketing and crop prices, their role’s contribution to a larger global system, and saw an increase in the number of foreign workers they had to navigate, but their chief concerns remained with agriculture at the local level, with larger concerns related to its integration into regional and global markets, regardless of ideology.

AOs’ rarely waning confidence was bolstered by the continuation of their careers after independence with development agencies and other agricultural companies heavily involved with development. Where Hodge looks at post-colonial careering in development agencies, and in particular the World Bank, this thesis helps to inspect in greater depth the experiences that led to the formation of attitudes carried forward.⁴ AOs promoted a view of Africa that encouraged the idea that Africans, due to their nature, needed outside assistance in order to succeed (with success measured by quantity and quality of produce and the degree of integration into a global market) and that AOs, be it before or after independence, were the best suited to help deliver this assistance. AOs recognised some of the difficulties with modernising agriculture in Africa, particularly bureaucratic stagnation in co-operatives, a lack of loans payable to farmers, and difficulties incentivising farmers to produce quality produce for profit if there were too few consumer goods to purchase

³ Westad, p. 91.

⁴ Hodge, ‘British Colonial Expertise, Post-Colonial Careering and the Early History of International Development’.

with that profit. All problems which the farmers themselves were unable to influence. Before independence, these reasons dominated alongside the conservative attitudes of rural Africans; after independence co-operatives suffered from corruption too, an influx of senior Africans to the agriculture departments removed what AOs saw as a political neutrality from the service as each new official sought to impress his political master to enhance his future position. Where pre-independence agricultural schemes could continue, AOs navigated their way around these issues, but when new schemes came to fruition that departed from AOs' understanding of how agriculture should be modernised, challenging AOs' position, power and knowledge, they became aggravated. Their experience in empire and their negotiation of development agency funding bodies – learning the language of development to continue their own projects – made them ideal candidates for later employment by development agencies, additionally reaffirming that their knowledge was adequate to solve Africa's agricultural problems and returning them to a position of authority once more.

Given AOs claimed motivations and the number of aid and development bodies in East Africa around independence, the thesis also extends some of the more recent trends in literature on humanitarianism and empire.⁵ Many AOs saw a career in agriculture as their goal, but plenty confessed to secondary motives before joining up of helping those less fortunate than themselves. Whether these were views held contemporaneously with signing up or were retrospectively imposed (and both situations certainly applied to different AOs), the idea of late empire as some form of humanitarian project – a benevolent force for good, developing the less fortunate – was clearly present in their minds at the time or used as a device through which to present the imperial stage of their career as justifiable and positive.

⁵ An excellent starting point for looking at empire and its relationship with humanitarianism is Emily Baughan and Bronwen Everill, 'Empire and Humanitarianism: A Preface', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40.5 (2012), 727–28 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2012.730826>>; Rob Skinner and Alan Lester, 'Humanitarianism and Empire: New Research Agendas', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40.5 (2012), 729–47 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2012.730828>>; Kevin O'Sullivan, 'Humanitarian Encounters: Biafra, NGOs and Imaginings of the Third World in Britain and Ireland, 1967–70', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 16.2–3 (2014), 299–315 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2014.936706>>.

The networks that AOs formed are also a key part of this study. Their creation reveals the nature of how the CO hoped to integrate future officials, along with its successes and failures in making a cohesive whole from groups of officers engaged in very different roles throughout the administrative and technical services. Their enhancement highlights how, as Sabine Clarke has argued, empire in the inter- and post-war years shifted toward a technocratic outlook, feeding into AOs beliefs that empire was apolitical: AOs' local, regional and international conferences allowed for the massive amounts of data collected in East Africa to be presented to their peers and analysed according to the scientific values of the day, providing an ongoing excuse to continue involvement with African agriculture. The perpetuation of AOs' networks has helped AOs remain a part of a bigger group of former colonial officials and rekindle their friendships after retirement, giving them space to discuss their careers and consciously engage with a wider debate about how empire is remembered.

The thesis also speaks to the body of work on the history of emotions. As chapter three details, AOs' networks performed an additional function, being used as independence came and went as a support mechanism. The letters AOs wrote to each other detail some of their thoughts and fears at African independence and use AOs' networks as a psychological tool, an outlet for their frustrations. Applying methodological concepts from the history of emotions peels back another layer and allows us to see how AOs relied on their familiarity with the emotionology of their fellow men to communicate effectively. They could reveal their thoughts and emotions without, seemingly, revealing very much at all. AOs could be confident that because of their shared mindsets and conformation to a particular emotional community the recipient would understand the sender's woes. Gaining an understanding of how AOs communicated in private brings firstly a greater depth to the interpretation of some of their formal work, be it official correspondence or memoir. Secondly, it aids the understanding of how these men felt at the end of empire. They were an elite group; for the most part they created the records left behind that historians have to analyse when it comes to imperial approaches to African agriculture, but their emotional responses to the end of empire bring an extra interpretation to their attitudes. The thoughts about their volatile position and decline in power help to explain their search for work in development agencies that could once again place them in a position of superiority. These concerns barely appear in the official material and using oral

testimony only gives AOs the opportunity to reinvent their experiences for the interviewer. Finding contemporaneous texts to interpret help lay bare their personas, almost more emotionless than emotional, which can be prised open to reveal a fear and panic that is summarised in their memoirs by the suggestion that it was ‘time to go’, often with little emotion attached to the sentiment. While their memoirs help us understand how AOs wished their role to be preserved and presented (along with an insight into how AOs narrativize their experiences), they have far fewer revelations about the undercurrent of difficulties faced as independence dawned. The letters and the methods through which they are analysed bring into focus another side of AOs’ personalities and experiences. Applying concepts from the history of emotions provides another way to distinguish between different groups of people within the same organisation and help understand the particular choices they made and the deeper dynamic of their networks.

The thesis also adds to the body of work that draws upon oral testimony to further understand the experiences of those in empire. Oral history is often the preserve of groups who have been otherwise side-lined or silenced, but this is markedly not the case with AOs. However, giving AOs a voice in their own right and allowing them to use it as they wish still has great value. Though AOs’ experiences may be hardly comparable to the trauma felt by ICS officers who witnessed partition in 1947, or district officials in the Belgian Congo, they still shaped the opinions of AOs and, to them, felt like important experiences.⁶ AOs’ role in the first major wave of development in Africa helped shape the development scene in the 1960s, and on occasion their ascendance to top positions in these agencies, such as Wallis’ place in the World Bank by the mid-80s, saw them significantly influencing global agricultural development for years to come. Understanding how AOs wish to be remembered and wish to present the end of empire to us brings with it a chance to see how narratives around empire and decolonisation are created and how memory and collective memory functions for groups that seek to justify their own pasts and who often have a semi-public platform from which to do so.

⁶ Catherine Coombs, ‘Partition Narratives: Displaced Trauma and Culpability among British Civil Servants in 1940s Punjab’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 45.1 (2011), 201–24 <<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107585737.010>>; Dembour.

Ultimately, AOs were undoubtedly convinced of their own usefulness and hoped to continue it after empire's decline through other means. The end of empire symbolised an end to a set of beliefs and adherence to a system to which AOs knew no alternative, so they chose to maintain their authority. In doing so, they perpetuated an outlook on agriculture that others have shown came to influence the course of development and contribute to an institutionally ingrained approach to developing countries that has affected and continues to affect the approach to agriculture in these countries today.⁷

⁷ Peter Wamboga-Mugirya, 'Uganda's Mountain Areas Lack Proper Management of Land and Soil Erosion', *Daily Monitor*, 2015 <<https://www.monitor.co.ug/Magazines/Farming/Uganda-s-mountain-areas--land-soil-erosion/689860-2777892-k5ma7qz/index.html>> [accessed 3 January 2019].

Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaires for Agricultural Officers

1) Joining

- Why did you decide to join the CS/Agr dept?
- Were there personal or family connections to empire?
- What are your memories of the training you received for service and how do you feel it helped your work?
- What were your first impressions on moving to Africa? This can be political, social, lifestyle – whatever sticks in your mind.

2) Pre-independence

- What was day-to-day life like?
- Before independence how were your personal and professional relationships with research staff, and Agricultural Instructors? Was/How was local knowledge used?
- Were there differences between dealing with African and European farmers?
- How important was learning the local language to your work?
- How far did any close personal relationships with members of the CS help or hinder your work?
- How far did any close personal relationships with members of development agencies help or hinder your work?
- To what extent were you aware of British politics at the time and how far did they affect your work?
- Did you feel that growing levels of African nationalism had much affect in rural areas?
- Do you think you had a different type of relationship with Africans than other types of colonial officials?
- Did you have much contact with AOs in other districts, and other neighbouring countries? [If so, how helpful was this?]

3) The coming of independence

- Why did you stay when so many of your colleagues left?
- What do you remember as some of the big changes at Independence?
- Subset of questions [Re: impact of independence to use as prompts if needs be]:
 - o How much autonomy did you have in your role? Was this affected after Independence?
 - o What are your overriding memories of independence?
 - o Did African attitudes towards you change after independence?
 - o Attitudes of African farmers etc.

- What do you remember about development agency involvement post-independence?
Was/How was this different from before?
- Was it harder working in independent Africa.
- If so, do you regret staying on?
- What were the influences of internal politics on your work?
- Did the influence of other countries' aid agencies or officials interfere with your work?

4) What happened next...

- How do you feel the agricultural sector in these countries has changed since your departure?
- Anything you'd like to add/final thoughts?
- How far do you feel you 'knew' Africans after working so closely with them?
- Throughout your career, did you encounter issues with land tenure, were these different after independence?

[Kenya only] – Did you experience working under Bruce McKenzie? If so, how was working under Bruce McKenzie?

General: Do you feel your work had implications beyond the agricultural sector?

[Household dynamics, education, health, further development?]

Any further general thoughts on your experiences in East Africa?

Appendix 2: Ethics consent forms from Agricultural Officers



CONSENT FORM (FACE TO FACE: v. 1.0)

Study title: British Agricultural Officials in East Africa, 1957-1966

Researcher name: Rob Joy
Staff/Student number: 25115715
ERGO reference number: 21071

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. a.y.a.

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study. a.y.a.

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected. a.y.a.

Data Protection

I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.

Name of participant (print name). Alexander Young ALLAN

Signature of participant. Alex. Y. Allan

Date. 9th Aug, 2016

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

CONSENT FORM (FACE TO FACE: v.1.0)

Study title: British Agricultural Officials in East Africa, 1957-1966

Researcher name: Rob Joy
Staff/Student number: 25115715
ERGO reference number: 21071

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

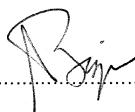
I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected

Data Protection

I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.

Name of participant (print name)..... MICHAEL BIGG

Signature of participant..... 

Date..... 27.9.16

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

CONSENT FORM (FACE TO FACE: v.1.0)

Study title: British Agricultural Officials in East Africa, 1957-1966

Researcher name: Rob Joy
Staff/Student number: 25115715
ERGO reference number: 21071

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had
the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

AB

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data
to be used for the purpose of this study

EB

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at
any time without my legal rights being affected

CB

Data Protection

*I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this
study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will
only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will
be made anonymous.*

Name of participant (print name). ELIZABETH BRIGGS

Signature of participant. E.A. Briggs

Date. 17-8-18



CONSENT FORM (FACE TO FACE: v.1.0)

Study title: British Agricultural Officials in East Africa, 1957-1966

Researcher name: Rob Joy
 Staff/Student number: 25115715
 ERGO reference number: 21071

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

 RB

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study

 RB

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected

 RB

Data Protection

I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.

Name of participant (print name)..... *RICHARD BRIGGS*

Signature of participant..... *R. Briggs*

Date..... *17th August 2018*



CONSENT FORM (FACE TO FACE: v.1.0)

Study title: British Agricultural Officials in East Africa, 1957-1966

Researcher name: Rob Joy
Staff/Student number: 25115715
ERGO reference number: 21071

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected

Data Protection

I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.

Name of participant (print name)..... D.A. L.L. Brown Am. Brown

Signature of participant..... D.A. L.L. Brown

Date..... 27.09.2016

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

CONSENT FORM (FACE TO FACE: v.1.0)

Study title: British Agricultural Officials in East Africa, 1957-1966

Researcher name: Rob Joy
Staff/Student number: 25115715
ERGO reference number: 21071

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

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Data Protection

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Name of participant (print name)..... JOHN CECIL DAVIES

Signature of participant..... 

Date..... 27/9/16

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

CONSENT FORM (FACE TO FACE: v.1.0)

Study title: British Agricultural Officials in East Africa, 1957-1966

Researcher name: Rob Joy
Staff/Student number: 25115715
ERGO reference number: 21071

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had
the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

RJD

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data
to be used for the purpose of this study

RJD

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at
any time without my legal rights being affected

RJD

Data Protection

*I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this
study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will
only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will
be made anonymous.*

Name of participant (print name). Charles E. Dixon

Signature of participant..... Charles Dixon

Date..... 15-8-2016

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

CONSENT FORM (FACE TO FACE: v.1.0)

Study title: British Agricultural Officials in East Africa, 1957-1966

Researcher name: Rob Joy
Staff/Student number: 25115715
ERGO reference number: 21071

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had
the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

ARI

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my
data to be used for the purpose of this study

ARI

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at
any time without my legal rights being affected

ARI

Data Protection

*I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this
study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will
only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will
be made anonymous.*

Name of participant (print name)..... A. R. HUMPHREYS

Signature of participant..... A. R. Humphreys

Date..... 3/8/16



CONSENT FORM (FACE TO FACE: v. 1.0)

Study title: British Agricultural Officials in East Africa, 1957-1966

Researcher name: Rob Joy
Staff/Student number: 25115715
ERGO reference number: 21071

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

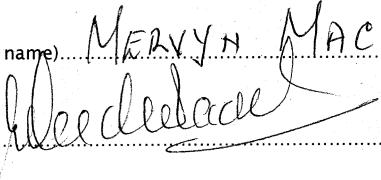
I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected

Data Protection

I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.

Name of participant (print name)..... MERVYN MACIEL

Signature of participant..... 

Date..... 28/12/17.....

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

CONSENT FORM (FACE TO FACE: v.1.0)

Study title: British Agricultural Officials in East Africa, 1957-1966

Researcher name: Rob Joy
Staff/Student number: 25115715
ERGO reference number: 21071

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had
the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

hwm

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my
data to be used for the purpose of this study

hwm

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at
any time without my legal rights being affected

hwm

Data Protection

*I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this
study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will
only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will
be made anonymous.*

Name of participant (print name)..... *Hugh William Mitchell*

Signature of participant..... *H. Mitchell*

Date..... *9/8/2016*

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

CONSENT FORM (FACE TO FACE: v.1.0)

Study title: British Agricultural Officials in East Africa, 1957-1966

Researcher name: Rob Joy
Staff/Student number: 25115715
ERGO reference number: 21071

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected

Data Protection

I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.

Name of participant (print name)..... PETER NORTHWOOD

Signature of participant..... Peter Northwood

Date..... 31/1/2017

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

CONSENT FORM (FACE TO FACE: v.1.0)

Study title: British Agricultural Officials in East Africa, 1957-1966

Researcher name: Rob Joy
Staff/Student number: 25115715
ERGO reference number: 21071

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected

Data Protection

I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.

Name of participant (print name)..... *JOHN REBERDY*

Signature of participant..... *John Reberdy*

Date..... *4/12/17*



CONSENT FORM (FACE TO FACE: v.1.0)

Study title: British Agricultural Officials in East Africa, 1957-1966

Researcher name: Rob Joy
 Staff/Student number: 25115715
 ERGO reference number: 21071

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

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I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study



I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected



Data Protection

I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.

Name of participant (print name)..... DONALD B. THOMAS

Signature of participant..... D B Thomas

Date..... 02/09/2016

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

CONSENT FORM (FACE TO FACE: v.1.0)

Study title: British Agricultural Officials in East Africa, 1957-1966

Researcher name: Rob Joy
Staff/Student number: 25115715
ERGO reference number: 21071

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected

Data Protection

I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.

Name of participant (print name)..... **JAMES R. TUCKETT**

Signature of participant..... 

Date..... **4 | 10 | 16**



CONSENT FORM (FACE TO FACE: v.1.0)

Study title: British Agricultural Officials in East Africa, 1957-1966

Researcher name: Rob Joy
Staff/Student number: 25115715
ERGO reference number: 21071

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

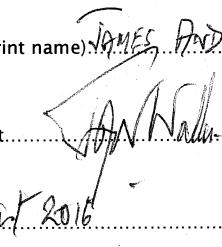
I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected

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Name of participant (print name): JAMES ANDERSON NICHOLAS WALLS

Signature of participant..... 

Date..... 16 August 2016.....

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Correspondence

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