

Subject: RICK HOPCRAFT & PARMOIS OLE KERITO (TINEA)

Dear Friends,

I am afraid that with great sadness, I have some very bad news to report to you.

Our dear friend Rick and his tracker Tinea were both tragically killed by a Buffalo this last Tuesday evening, the 23rd November, at Rick's farm at Naivasha in Kenya.

The details are not clear, but what roughly happened is as follows:

Rick and Garry, his son, had seen an injured Buffalo with a badly swollen leg on the farm and called the Kenya Wildlife Services. Rick had asked for permission to shoot the Buffalo, and this permission was declined because of the hunting ban in Kenya. They then asked the Wildlife department to come and shoot it. They turned up too late on Monday evening and returned again on Tuesday afternoon. What happened next is not clear, but Rick accompanied the game scouts to show them where the Buffalo was, and was not carrying a rifle, presumably because he was not allowed to shoot the Buffalo. Tinea however did have a rifle, as he has a permit as a guard on the farm to carry such a weapon. The Buffalo charged, the government game scout shot and missed, and the Buffalo hit Tinea before he could shoot and knocked the gun out of his hand. The Buffalo then was instantly on Rick, and killed him on the spot having punctured his chest. Tinea managed to grab hold of the rifle and fired a shot at the Buffalo going away, but missed. Tinea died 15 minutes later from internal bleeding.

Tony Seth-Smith, who is now in his mid 70's, was called in as he is an honorary Kenyan game warden. The Buffalo was found on Wednesday morning after a two hour search and Tony shot it without any further problem. Under the circumstances, a superb effort by Tony. I must be clear that some reports relayed to me said that Rick was hit by the Buffalo first, and others say that Tinea was hit first. Either way, both were tragically killed.

Bette, Rick's wife, is surrounded by friends and family, and I have talked to her several times and also to Garry. She is still in shock, and has not really come to terms with what has happened, and as she said to me, it is like a bad dream. Rick and Bette's daughter, Cara had to be flown out from Switzerland and arrived back in Nairobi on Thursday, and is now back on the farm with her family.

Rick's funeral, a private family service will take place on Thursday. Tinea's family will be having a traditional Masai tribal burial for him at Tinea's 'shamba' on Tuesday. A celebration of Rick and Tinea's life, and send off, will take place at the Hopcraft farm, Loldia, Naivasha, on Friday, 3rd December at 11.30 am.

Rick will of course be sadly missed by all of us and as you know, everyone in our organisation had the greatest respect for him, not only as a man of integrity and a gentleman, but also as an extremely fine and ethical hunter. Rick has been a lifelong friend to me, having gone to the same school and growing up in the same region of Naivasha, and hunting together on more safaris than I can remember. Doubly upsetting was the fact that Tinea was my first gun bearer, and he and I grew up on our ranch in Naivasha, and did all our early hunting together. He was the bravest of trackers, and will be much missed. So, Tinea knew my family for something like 20 years and for the last 40 years, worked for Rick. Tinea was 65 years old, and Rick was 63. None of us can believe what has happened.

Robin Hurt