

GRIOT – POWERED BY CARLTON
2nd anniversary 23/08/24
By Hywel George

The date has always been significant for me. It was the day in the year when we would celebrate the birth of my father. Though he was a strident presence in the family, for most of the year, the household energy was dominated by my elder brother, my mum, trying to hold us all together and me, the baby of the tribe. But August 23 was dad's day.

Ron George died many years ago, but the calendar has remained pointed to this mark in the year when I actively remember him and give thanks for all that he left me, in energy, drive and doggedness – he had a flashing charisma too, though I don't claim to have inherited it!!



Ron George, a big influence!

Then, two years ago, August 23, 2022, the date took on a whole other meaning!

At [Griot Ltd](#), we had been negotiating enthusiastically for several months with a potential investor – an investor that would secure our work in East Africa and spring-board us to even greater endeavours.

On August 23, 2022, the signed contracts were exchanged and the deal was finally done – Griot Ltd, became powered by @Carlton!!

The @Carlton Group is a dynamic, independent power-generator, highly active in the renewable space, with significant holdings in solar and green hydrogen.



Carlton Group on a tour of projects - May 2022

What's happened since has been astonishing!

It began with a visit to the UK of my co-director in Kenya @erickimori. The two of us joined the bosses of Carlton to plan our initial mission. After five days in a hotel in Cardiff we confirmed our initial strategic direction.

The first task was to commission an academic baseline of the mangrove eco-systems at Sabaki estuary, to the North of Malindi. This study, led by @PwaniUniversity and @KEFRI is the first of its kind in Kenya.



Sabaki mangrove ecosystem, in need of restoration

Next, we enhanced our corporate responsibility programme in Narok. This project supports Maasai girls who are choosing education, over genital cutting (FGM) and early marriage. Initially, we had four girls we were supporting, who were living in the home of one of our friends in the town. Now, we have 12 girls, living in a six-bedroomed house we have built. They are all in education. The eldest four have just graduated from high school. Two are beginning university next month, two others are starting college. They are all, in their separate ways, destined to be leaders in their community.

Our first major investment project was a water initiative, *Maji Bora* (Better Water). We had past experience of rehabilitating water boreholes and providing water to needy communities. With a track record of provision to over 420 villages we had the expertise to make a big difference.

So, we undertook extensive community consultation in two counties – Kilifi, on the coast and the arid county of Turkana in the northwest.



Simon Watson from Carlton, meets the community in Turkana

Engineering began in December 2023. Now, eight months on we have nearly completed the task of providing safe, clean, abundant drinking water to many hundreds of communities – 600 community hand-pump boreholes and four high-yielding solar installations.

The total number of beneficiaries of this project alone is conservatively estimated to be considerably higher than half-a-million.

The water project has gone a long way to addressing seven from the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – gender equality in particular (as water collection generally falls to women and girl children).

We have also been granted through National Government, via Kenya Forest Service, a ten-fold increase in the mangrove lands we have to manage – to restore and conserve - supporting the communities that live around them to find sustainable livelihoods, while protecting these most valuable ecosystems.

Ultimately the work we do will be funded through the sale of the carbon-credits that are generated from the delivery of these life-sustaining programmes. But a young carbon developer needs solid support and a helping hand along the way.

Fitting then, that we should celebrate the anniversary of our contracting with just such an influence, on the day that would have been the 97th birthday of my dear dad. A man who suffered few fools, but who stood, ever-present, behind me as I was going through my teenage years and my young adult life.

His strength, generosity and wisdom I still channel, over 30 years after his passing. I am now delighted to have a parallel set of support structures behind the company, the projects and the people I now have the privilege to lead.

It's been a great first two years with @Carlton – I raise a glass to many more!

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Standing together with the Maasai Girls in Narok