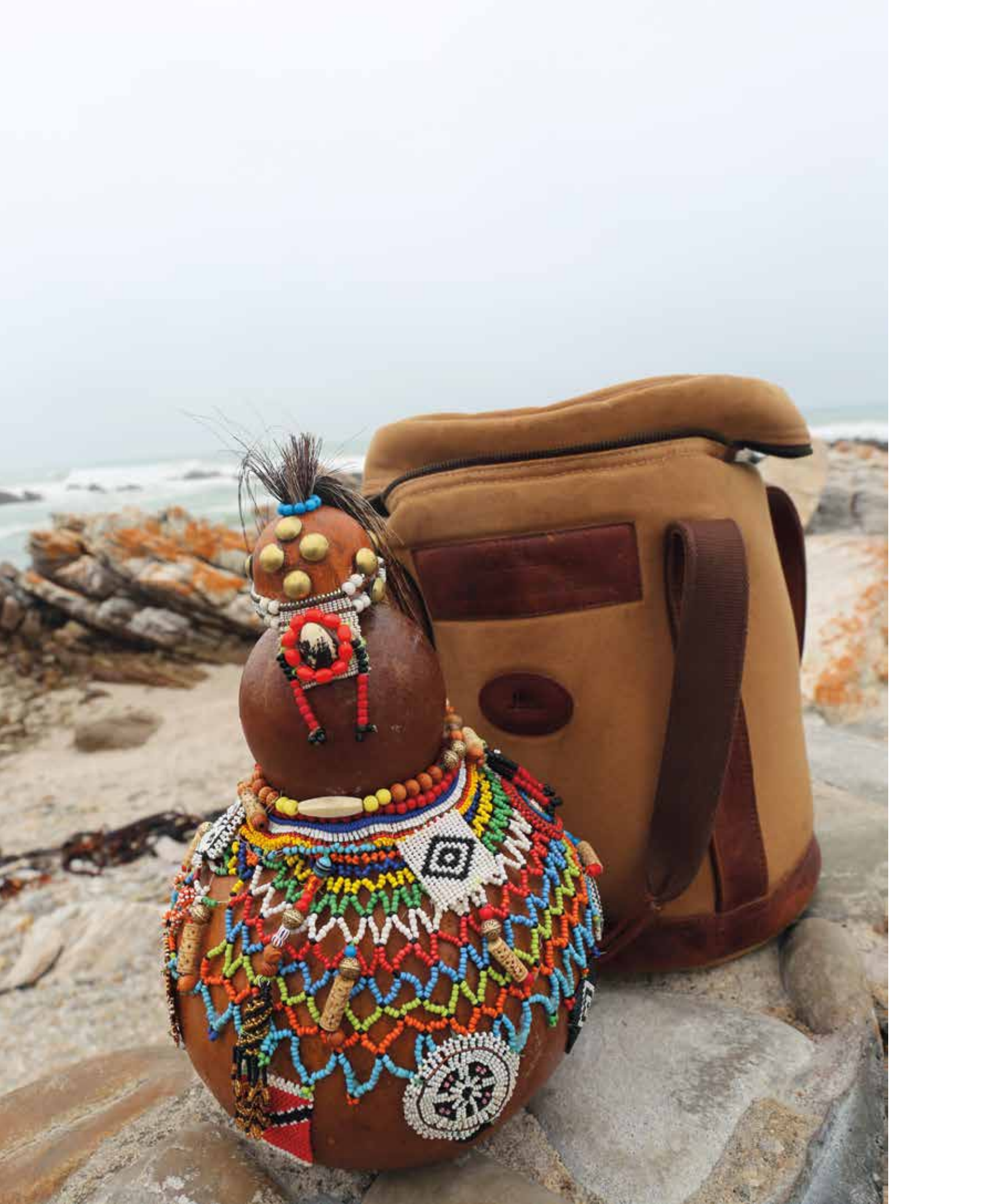




NORTHWARD BOUND WITH KINGSLEY HOLGATE

The start of the Defender Transcontinental Expedition.



I was about to embark on a rewarding journey. I had received an invitation to join the first few days of what would be Kingsley Holgate's 40th expedition. Nobody has accumulated more miles on the African continent than Kingsley. If one were to compile a list of his earlier achievements, they would include travelling the complete outline of Africa through 33 countries in 449 days, a waterway journey from the Cape of Good Hope to Alexandria, an East to West traverse along the Zambezi and Congo rivers, discovering the geographic centre point of Africa, and reaching all seven of the Africa's geographic extremes.

In case you're not familiar with the name, Kingsley Holgate is a South African explorer, humanitarian, author, and a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. In 2009, he was described by *Getaway Magazine* as "the most travelled man in Africa," more than a little reminiscent of the iconic David Livingstone.

It was the end of October 2021, and Kingsley was heading out on a new adventure, one of his greatest yet. After 20 months of lockdown, "all adventurers will agree, it's time to move again," says Kingsley. And he notes that this expedition has been almost two years in the making.

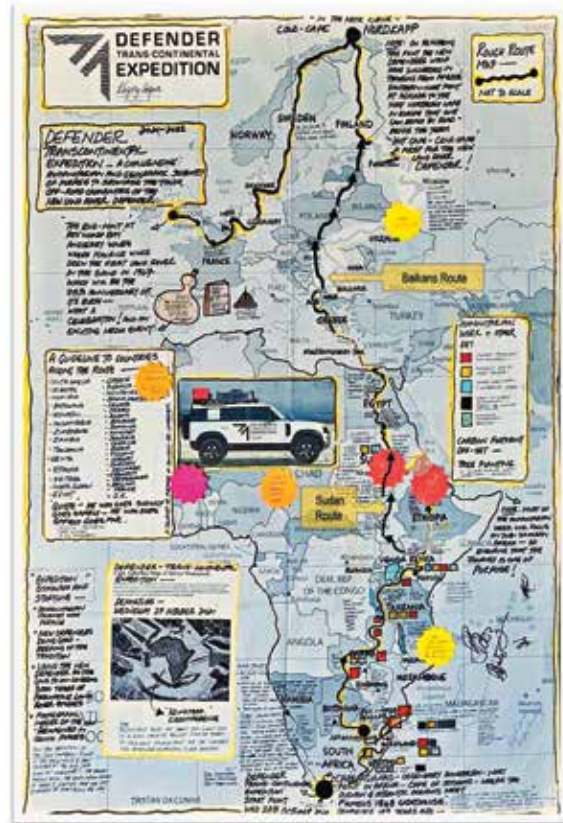
The New Defender Transcontinental Expedition will start at Africa's southernmost tip, Cape L'Agulhas, travel to Alexandria, then reach all the way up to the Nordkapp before heading down again and westward across Europe and the United Kingdom to the Welsh coast and the Irish Sea. The journey will cover approximately 30,000 km and 30 countries, including a visit to the New Defender's manufacturing site in Slovakia, before ending at Red Wharf Bay on the Isle of Anglesey where, in 1947, Maurice Wilks etched the first drawing of a Land Rover in the sand.

As we have all come to appreciate over the years, when Kingsley Holgate climbs into his car to go places, he will be doing something significant along the way. In his own words, "all our expedition have the principle of saving and improving lives through adventure."

In keeping with this principle, the New Defender Transcontinental Expedition includes projects such as Malaria Prevention, Mashozi's Rite to Sight, Water Purification, Early Childhood Development, endangered species conservation, and other environmental and humanitarian activities, all of which are covered in more detail on the Foundation's website kingsleyholgate.com.

COMBATting MALARIA IN AFRICA

The mosquito is the most dangerous predator in Africa and transmits malaria which kills young children at the rate of one per minute. Kingsley has been influential in building awareness for the problem by lecturing about the



Here is the route map; it shows the reroutes the expedition had to take through the two Sudans and then through the Balkans to avoid the Russian war in Ukraine. **Opposite:** Kingsley's famous Zulu calabash. **Opening page:** Kingsley Holgate.



Kingsley with his new Defender and Jacques “Nekkies” Smit’s Series 1 at the Cape Agulhas Lighthouse, the southernmost point of the African continent.





Clockwise from top right: Kingsley's *Writings On The Wall* (i.e., signing the Guard of Honour Series 1 Landys). Melville & Moon bag for...the expedition's Scroll of Peace & Goodwill. An authentic South African braai. Kingsley Holgate and Sheelagh Antrobus, his expedition and life partner and Project Rhino conservationist, in front of the Cape Agulhas Marker—this is where the Atlantic and Indian Oceans split. **Opposite:** Mashozhi's Right to Sight. This lady is only too happy to have a clear perspective again.

risks, teaching prevention, and distributing free mosquito nets to populations living in remote areas.

MASHOZI'S RITE TO SIGHT

The Rite to Sight project was first initiated by Mashozi (Gill) Holgate during the 2003 *23°27' Tropic of Capricorn* round-the-world expedition which lasted 18 months. Since then, the Holgate Foundation has distributed more than 218,700 pairs of eyeglasses to mostly elderly people living in remote areas. Venturing into some of the remotest areas, the team set up a gathering point, test the visitors, and fit those who need them with a pair of eyeglasses on the spot.

THE ACTUAL SEND-OFF

The predetermined location for the send-off party was Point L'Agulhas, not only the southernmost tip of Africa, but also where the Indian and Atlantic oceans *really* meet. There was a good turnout of well-wishers, but of particular significance was the Guard of Honour which was made up of fourteen or fifteen Land Rover Series 1 models—a fitting parade to send off its youngest descendent on what would also be the marque's first significant expedition since the new Defender's launch several years prior. Each of the cars that joined the party was given a special Defender Transcontinental Expedition sticker bearing the flags of South Africa, Norway, and England. Kingsley even managed to leave an inscription on several Series 1s.

There are several rituals which mark the beginning of a Kingsley Holgate expedition:

FIRSTLY, THE ZULU CALABASH. Partially charged with water from the combined oceans, it will carry its fill from South Africa to Alexandria and the Mediterranean, then to the Nordkapp and the Barents Sea. At each of these significant waypoints, the contents will be added to so that the combined water can finally be ceremoniously emptied from the calabash into the Irish Sea at Red Wharf Bay.

SECONDLY, THE EXPEDITION SCROLL OF PEACE AND GOODWILL. Each expedition documents the places it visits and the people met along the way in a beautifully bound ledger which is produced especially by Melvill & Moon for each occasion. By the end of the expedition, hundreds of pages will be adorned with anecdotes and signatures. I, too, was able to leave my mark along with so many others during these first few days.

THIRDLY, THE SPEECH OR WISDOM SHARING, as I feel is a more appropriate way of describing it. Kingsley Holgate is gifted with the ability to tell meaningful stories and to draw his audience in so close that he catches your gaze and seems to talk to you at a very personal level.



It's not just the big beard and deep voice that draws people to him, it's his ability to convey what he has to say with clarity, charm, and a mannerism that leaves the listener yearning for more. Born in Africa to a missionary family, Kingsley was fascinated by the stories his father told him about explorers. Whilst growing up he learned to speak Zulu and understand what it means to live so close to nature and to be at one with Mama Africa.

This occasion was, of course, no different and he told us the story of "The Pebbles of Life." Seven stones that mark various stages on a person's journey though life.

FOURTHLY, THE ISIVIVANE. Independent of the aforementioned story of stones, the Zulu word *isivivane* translates to *throw your stone upon the pile*. Whereas today, a monument is designed by an architect and constructed by employed workers, Zulu tradition anticipated each and every person contributing to and respecting something significant by literally throwing a stone upon the pile, thus creating a collective memory for future refer-





Clockwise from top left: The Guard of Honour. The expedition centres around three new Land Rover Defenders, two P400s and a diesel-powered D300 (from left to right: Sheelagh, Anna and Ross Holgate, Kingsley, James and Rob Melvill, Mike Nixon). Kingsley stowing away the Zulu calabash in a custom-made Melvill & Moon bag. Richard Gouverneur, MD for South Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa at Jaguar Land Rover, signing the Expedition Scroll of Peace & Goodwill. Anna and Ross filling the calabash with water from the two oceans. Defender Transcontinental Exhibition sticker with the three flags of South Africa, Norway and Great Britain.



The calabash holding water from the two oceans will at important way-points be added to so that the combined water can be ceremoniously emptied into the Irish Sea at the end of the expedition. Christian with Kingsley...before setting off. **Opposite:** Kingsley, here standing on the giant Map of Africa Monument at Cape Agulhas, is a gifted storyteller.

PEBBLES OF LIFE

Kingsley reflects briefly upon his own life and is keen to share a snippet of wisdom and a true take on life ...not just his own, but everyone's.

Taking seven pebbles from his pocket, he explains that each pebble represents a period of ten summers. Seven pebbles equals seventy years or a span of life we can hope to enjoy so long as we are spared anything too untoward along the way.

Addressing one of the audience, he asks, "how old are you?" — "53," replies the man.

"Well, I'll grant you three years as a bonus," says Kingsley as he discards five of the pebbles and explains "fifty years are gone. Hopefully you have memories filled with adventures, happiness, and no regrets. But the years are gone and there is no point in trying to relive the past. You just have to focus on what lies ahead."

"And the seventh pebble joins the five, because there is no guarantee that you'll be strong or able-bodied enough to enjoy that final decade."

Taking a brief moment, he looks at the last remaining pebble thoughtfully before placing it in the man's palm. "Put it in your pocket. It's going to become quite an inconvenience. It'll tangle with your keys and get mixed up in loose change. But, at the end of every day, you will retire it to a spot next to your bed and return it to your pocket the following morning. You'll hold it unconsciously, rub it smooth between your fingers, and accept it as a constant reminder for you to make time for adventure."

The moral behind the story of the Pebbles of Life: It's telling us to fell a conscious decision to shed any kind a monotonous and potentially mundane life in favour of getting out to enjoy the awesome adventures life and Mama Africa hold in store.



ence. Isivivane is also a metaphor for change which in itself is a steadfast component of all of Kingsley's expeditions.

There will be four isivivanes constructed at notable stages of the expedition: Point L'Agulhas, Alexandria, Nordkapp, and Maurice Wilks' graveside.

FIRST DAYS OF THE EXPEDITION

Having left Point L'Agulhas, I was now travelling with the expedition. Our first stop was a village where we would work on behalf of Mashozi's Rite to Sight. It is quite remarkable to witness the change a person experiences when suddenly equipped with eye correction glasses. Everything necessary was on board from eyesight test screens—some with the alphabet, others with animals—to frames and lenses so that a needy person could be fitted immediately.

Thereafter, we continued to Kruger National Park where we stayed in traditionally styled huts, had an amazing meal which included a speciality made from beef, garlic and cheese, talked, listened to more stories and, also a Kingsley Holgate tradition, savoured some Captain Morgan rum.

I was parcel to this journey for only a few days, but the experience and having to leave such a charismatic person and his partners proved a moving moment for me. Given the choice, I would have stuck with the Kingsley Holgate Foundation. Not merely for the sake of the journey, but to participate in all the good this handful of people are about to spread amongst numerous communities on its, in parts quite dangerous, path through Africa and Europe.

Keep well. 🌐