

Morning All,

10 August 2026

Well I started this 6 weeks ago, and finally edited this morning, so now I'm going to send as is, or it'll be September before it actually is sent!!

Love Erica & Michael

Hello, hello folks,

Early July

Well, I haven't written a personal newsletter in I'm not sure how long, so here goes.

It's always the reality that other things 'scream' louder than newsletters. A car (or 3) break-down and take days (weeks, months) to get back on the road, someone drops in and needs some documentation urgently, an email arrives about a compliance report I need to draft, the guys at the farm call and the specific item they need is indefinitely out-of-stock from your 2 key suppliers so the hunt is on, another child goes down with the flu... And that's just the last 3 days, and neither does it include all the normal stuff on my to-do list.

Mary is away in Australia for a couple of months, so there's a bit more to do around home than normal, but, by and large we seem to muck in and get it all done quite well. Home currently sleeps 11 and feeds 14 or 15 each day, so getting everyone out the door in the mornings is an achievement on its own. The farm staff leave for work at 06:30 and school starts at 07:00, so the last of the kids are out the door at 06:50 each morning, leaving me with sweet, sweet quiet until Michael finishes at 12:00.

I tend to cram the vast majority of my admin work into those few hours these days, leaving at least a couple of hours in the afternoon to just BE Mum before things like farm sales take over again in the late afternoon several days a week.

This afternoon Michael is home (has been all day as he has the flu) and it's one of those worrying peaceful moments when he's enjoying thoroughly the handyman's paradise in the back yard. The new 5T jack has been thoroughly explored and now the welding rods are being explored like 'pick up sticks'. Never trust a quiet 4 year old, he's probably up to mischief!



Last week Michael and I finally had our High Court appointment regarding his adoption, and before we all get excited, unfortunately we've hit another roadblock. The phrasing of the new adoption law, that was brought in around the time I got custody of Michael (3 ½ years ago) means that at present the High Court can't grant the adoption. A single female is not allowed to adopt a male child, nor a single male allowed to adopt a female child. The old law granted for

exceptions to this if it was in the best interest of the child. The new law, in its current format, does not. There is light in our tunnel



however, as the new law is under active review and there will be amendments made in due course... but when? Well, how long is a piece of string? No-one can predict that, however, it should be within the course of the next year... hopefully.

It does of course mean that travel continues to be off the table... which is probably the only blow that actually frustrates me at this point. I was a bit gutted initially when the decision was handed



down, we truly believed we were at the end of a very long legal road. But now, ah, it is what it is and so long as custody of my boy remains stable and not in question, I can wait.

And in the mean time? We go on just as we have. I still have legal documentation that says that Michael's been placed in my care, and that's still legal and valid and not about to expire any time soon (it expires on his 18th birthday), so life goes on just as it has while we wait for the act to be amended. It's not ideal. But it is okay.

Mum and ToF (Gordon and Glenys) have just been over for a few weeks visit. I think they managed to pick the busiest few weeks of the entire year and I sent them both home to rest and recuperate. We managed to cram in sanding and painting of doors, repairs and maintenance of draws and day-to-day equipment, purchasing of and first use of a new bore pump installation for watering our coffee plantation, trips to the farm, all our regular veg sales and markets, some admin work, agriculture show, lots of play with the kids, homework and reading, and, probably the single most important thing, several trips for ice cream with the kids. ToF even cleaned the entire 'tools and building equipment' container – arranging, rearranging and making it possible to lay your hand on any tool in a heartbeat. It hasn't been that tidy since the shelves were installed 7 years ago! Mum took some of the



normal logistics off my hands, and it was just a few days after she departed that I paused and 'hmmm'ed about having to do all my



own running around again. It was quite nice for someone else to do a



few (quite a few) things, leaving my hands free for other items on my never ending, forever growing larger, to-do list.

Mum and ToF arrived in time to be a part of the preparations and installation of our annual Agriculture Show, which is always an enormous load of extra time and pressure. This year we focused on developing market and marketing, and planting in stages so that you are always



harvesting, which are often much-neglected parts of farming and trip up many a farmer who simply believe that bringing 10,000 cabbages to market to sell in a single day is actually plausible. In reality they end up with massive transport costs, selling over several days as they move from market place to market place, and diminishing returns as the freshness deteriorates. And then go home with money in their pockets, but no plan for when the

next crop will be planted and therefore when they will next have a payday. We had a lot of fun and the guys from the farm basically ran the whole thing with me just ducking in and out periodically.

Vehicle logistics have been a bit of a nightmare the last few months. We very accidentally gave our truck a drink through the air intake after the final big storm of the wet season, meaning that it's been off the road for about 5 months having its engine rebuilt. (I will freely admit to being utterly horrified at the amount of damage that can occur when a truck breathes water. I had absolutely no concept of the damage that could be caused!) So, the old Hilux has been doing all the farm running with another vehicle going in on pick days in order to bring all the veg in. Now, the Hilux wants a rest (needs a few things done), the Pajero decided it needed a new brake master cylinder, and the refrigerated truck looks to have a split fuel pipe, so we are literally down to bicycle, motorbike and borrowing wherever we can. On Tuesday we actually hired a truck to take our veg into town for sales!

Relief is in sight, with hopefully 2 vehicles back on the road by the end of the week, but boy has it been a challenge. I've been on more public transport than ever before and turned many a head because, can white girls really ride bicycles?! We've grown (as an organisation and on the farm with the veg, pun emphatically intended) so much that we're now looking at needing to purchase another truck in order to be able to maintain and keep up with our growth.



We keep hitting new record marks at the farm. The latest (and exceptionally cool) one being 140kg of broccoli in a single harvest! 17 crates. Man was it impressive. More impressive still was that we were able to sell every last piece of it. It's not normal to have that much ready at one time, more commonly we have about 40-50kg, which is quite a manageable quantity to move.

We're about to start developing a new section of land at the farm – we're literally just waiting for a small machine and operator to finish their current job – which will give us 4 very large ponds, and a new section of flattened and filled land about 100 x 40m to grow in. We're in for more substantial growth.



The first



development phase at our new farm at Ngosa is starting to take shape too. We put in around 300 coffee trees at the start of the wet season, so now we're in dry we have to water regularly. A bore-pump, piping, cable and rope are being dropped down 50m every couple of weeks, connected up to a generator, poly and then flexi-pipe and watering by hand is taking place. It's quite a mission to put all the equipment in and out each time, but until we have the truck back on the road and can cement the equipment into place (so it can't vanish), needs must. The trees are growing nicely, so give it a couple of years and we'll be harvesting coffeeeeee. Lots of coffee.

We received in 2 shipping containers at the start of the year filled with donated clothing and supplies for distribution. The sorting started and went on very quickly with a team of sponsored teens and young adults helping to sort through and label items for easy identification, but with vehicles down we're a bit slow on the distribution front so far. Ben's 'office' (the sorting shed) is looking messy and cramped, so we're hoping to get things really under-way in the next couple of weeks, in which case, watch the LH facebook page for pics of the absolute joy on faces as people receive items that make a world of difference – blankets, shoes, school uniforms and more.



We drafted a letter to Social Welfare Headquarters regarding the Baby Unit and the desire to open the facility and as a Board have decided that every time one of us visits Lusaka we'll drop in and pay a visit and discuss progress with them. Hopefully a bit of gentle pressure will at least get some real communication happening, which will lead to progress.

We have elections coming up in a few weeks, so lamp posts and trees are being plastered with campaign adverts and many a Hilux kitted out with generators and large speakers and being turned into moving boom boxes. They can be heard coming a mile away, and when they park up and turn the volume up (further) we get to enjoy many a person having a good groove, Michael very much inclusive in that. I wouldn't want to work next to it all day, but it's certainly enjoyable to see everyone having a good time.

*Love Erica & Michael*