

A terrifying raid by armed bandits was the unlikely start to a romance between adventurers

Wounded Rob fell for the Scots girl at his side on the night he was shot

By Mike MacEachern

A SCOTS student held hostage by armed pirates in Africa fell in love with another captive.

Kerry Gillen, 28, and Rob Innes, a party of 22 British holidaymakers stranded down the barrels of guns in Tanzania the summer.

They were sitting together on the first night of their trip in the remote Indian Ocean island of Pemba when armed bandits dispatched an policeman stormed their camp, shooting Rob, 31, through the leg.

Now five months after their terrifying ordeal, the couple, who thought they were going to be hospitalised, have discovered romance.

They spent their first Christmas Day together at Kerry's family home in Striding, as they handed their babies together; they revealed romance blossomed out of what could so easily have been a tragedy.

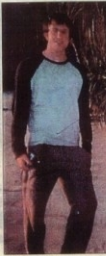
Kerry said: "It's strange to think that if that kidnappers hadn't happened we probably wouldn't have fallen for each other. Love occurred in the strangest way sometimes."

Their rescue was almost halted to tragedy in the manner when pirates traded with dangerous bandits in an Ivory and her friends in a restaurant whooie dining hall at the start of their Tanzania adventure.

A single shot rang out and the girl on Kerry's right, Grace Perriere, screamed. Grace, 38, from Whitburn, Cambridgeshire, had been shot in the side. Injured, the bullet narrowly missed her spine and passed through her hand, leaving a hole in Kerry's thigh. The pirates, who she had met previously, had a gun of 45 calibre, and another hand holding firing on the hot sun plunged into darkness.

As blood gushed from Rob's wound, a gun was held to Kerry's head and she feared she would be raped and murdered. She was dragged by her captives from the hot and then marched off to join another part of the camp where they threw her on top of fellow holidaymakers who she thought at first were dead.

The terrifying ordeal lasted an hour



HOLIDAY NIGHTMARE: The party of adventurers whose island paradise trip to Tanzania turned to one of terror

before the bandits fled, but some of the holidaymakers made a move for several hours until they were sure their captives had left.

Rob, from Striding, and Grace were taken to the nearest hospital before being transferred to the Tanzanian capital, Dar es Salaam, where they were reunited with an anxious Kerry and the others. Rob was well enough to go out for dinner with the group—from a restaurant called Shauri Moyo.

He said: "It was the first time we had all been together since the attack and I was glad to see everything was all right—especially Kerry. Although I hardly knew her, she had been sitting next to me when I was shot and now I just felt

'After he was taken off to hospital, I felt quite concerned and I knew then that I had strong feelings for him'

like I was him. It was a couple of days but really quite concerned about him and I knew then that I had strong feelings for him.

It was parked up all his clothes for me. I made sure that I was in charge of an suitcase even though I hardly knew

him. But it wasn't until several weeks after that Kerry and Rob were reunited where they and six others who had been in the group arranged to go on holiday

together to Grace to help cope with their trauma. And it was then they both confirmed their love for one another.

Kerry said: "In Grace, the others know a lot because they could see we liked each other."

"Neither of us were going to make the first move but my friend from St Andrews pushed us together on the beach and then ran off and hid. It was quite embarrassing, but we both knew that we each shared strong feelings for each other."

Rob, a product design student, has not yet had the bullet removed from his leg because doctors fear it would be too risky to try to dislodge it.

He said: "I feel that I got off lightly. Even though I had been shot, I was left alone straight away and the pirates started to attack the others. I just thought I had been hit by a lightning bolt."

"The other boys, of course, is that it brought me closer to Kerry. Things have worked out pretty well."

Kerry added: "It makes it a very interesting story—when people ask how did you meet your boyfriend, I reply, 'Oh, it was just when he got shot'."

She has already met Rob's parents. Now Kerry and Rob are enjoying the festive season with her father and mother, Jan and Doug.

Kerry said: "We've only been in love for a short time so there are no plans for a New Year's marriage just yet, but who knows about what might happen."

The love-struck pair gave each other the perfect Christmas gift for natural-born adventurers and it couldn't be more different from the one they received in Tanzania—a New Year's day long holiday in the French Alps.



CHRISTMAS KISSES: Kerry and Rob share a tender moment yesterday in the shadow of Stirling Castle in the French Alps

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Kerry and Rob exchange their special gifts