

## DENYS GEORGE FINCH HATTON

Denys George Finch Hatton (24 April 1887 – 14 May 1931) was a big-game hunter, and the lover of Karen Blixen (also known by her pen name as Isak Dinesen), who wrote about him in her autobiographical book *Out of Africa* first published in 1937. In the book, his name is hyphenated: "Finch-Hatton".

### Early life

Finch Hatton was the second son and third child of Henry Finch-Hatton, 13th Earl of Winchilsea, by his wife, the former Anne "Nan" Codrington, daughter of Sir Henry Codrington, an Admiral of the British Fleet. He was educated at Eton, and Brasenose College, Oxford. At Eton, he was Captain of the cricket Eleven, Keeper of the Field and the Wall (two major sports played at Eton), President of the Prefects Society called Pop, and Secretary of the Music Society.

In 1910, after a trip to South Africa, he traveled to British East Africa, and bought some land on the western side of the Great Rift Valley near what is now Eldoret. He turned over the investment to a partner, and spent his time hunting.

### Relationship with Blixen

Finch Hatton was not known to have had any serious romances before he met Blixen. They were introduced at the Muthaiga Club on 5 April 1918. Soon afterwards he was assigned to military service in Egypt. On his return to Kenya after the Armistice, he developed a close friendship with Blixen and her Swedish husband, Baron Bror von Blixen-Finecke. He left Africa again in 1920, but returned in 1922, investing in a land development company.

By this time, Karen Blixen had separated from her husband, and after their divorce in 1925, Finch Hatton moved into her house and began leading safaris for wealthy sportsmen. Among his clients were Marshall Field and The Prince of Wales. According to author Mary Lovell, in 1930 Finch Hatton began a love affair with Beryl Markham, who was working as a race-horse trainer in Nairobi and the surrounding area. This relationship inspired Markham to take up flying; later, she would become known as a pioneer flyer herself.

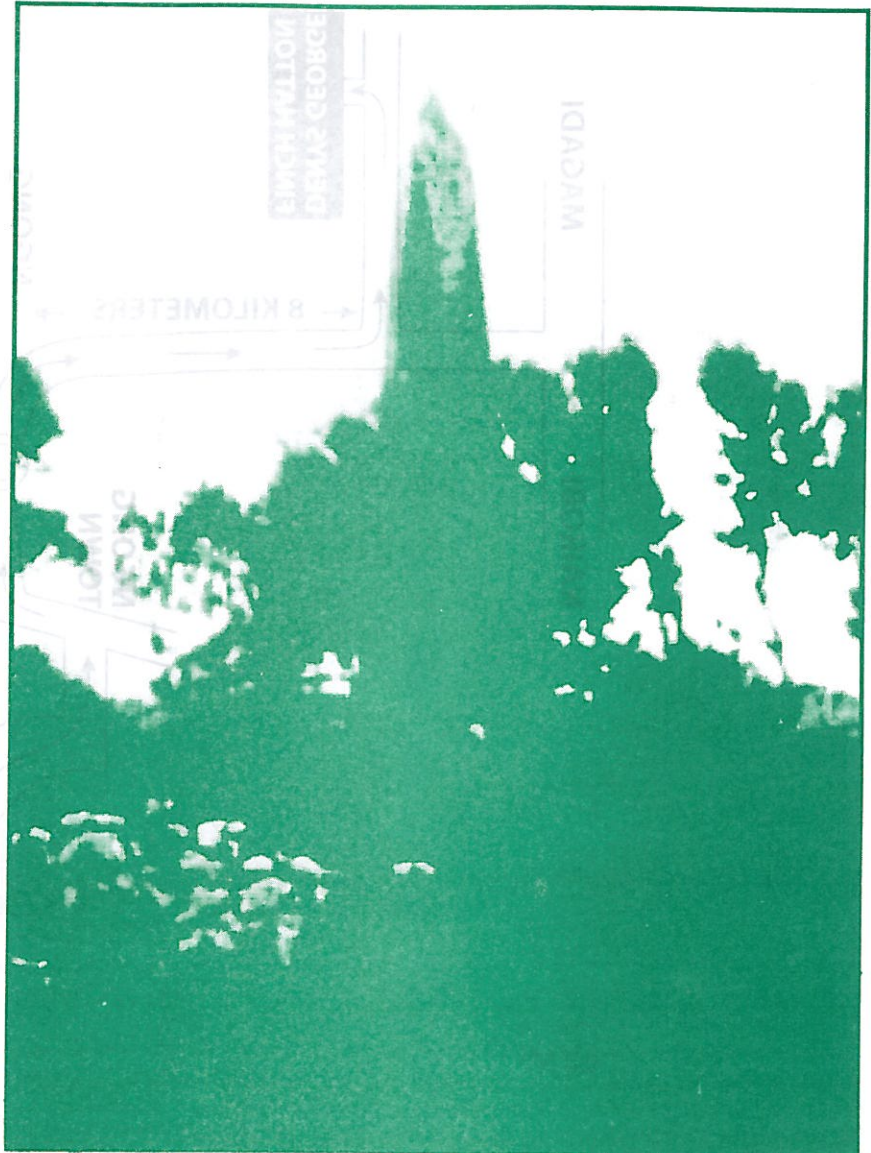
### Death

On the morning of 14 May 1931, Finch Hatton's Gypsy Moth took off from Voi airport, circled the airport twice, then plunged to the ground and burst into flames. Finch Hatton and his Kikuyu servant Kamau were killed.

In accordance with his wishes, Finch Hatton was buried in the Ngong Hills overlooking Nairobi National Park. Later, his brother erected an obelisk at the gravesite upon which he placed a simple brass plaque inscribed with Finch Hatton's name, the dates of his birth and death and an extract from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's narrative poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*: "He prayeth well, who loveth well both man and bird and beast." According to *Out of Africa*, there is a memorial plaque on a footbridge at Eton. The bridge is inscribed with the words "Famous in these fields and by his many friends greatly beloved. Denys Finch Hatton 1900-1906."<sup>[1]</sup>

### Fictional Portrayals

Denys Finch Hatton was played by Robert Redford in the 1985 film *Out of Africa*.



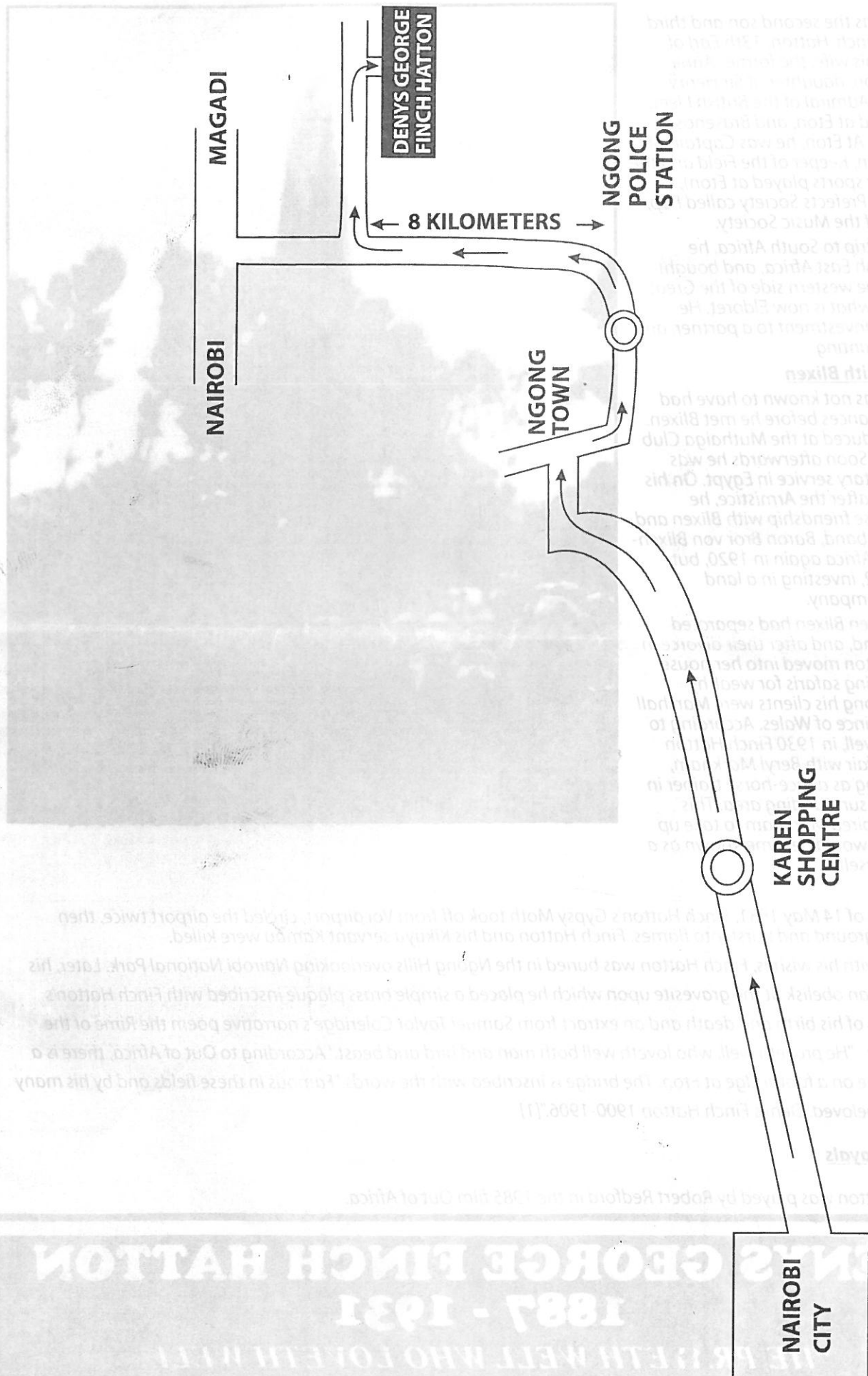
# DENYS GEORGE FINCH HATTON

## 1887 - 1931

"HE PRAYETH WELL WHO LOVETH WELL  
BOTH MAN AND BIRD AND BEAST"



# SKETCH MAP TO DENYS GEORGE FINCH HATTON



**DENYS GEORGE FINCH HATTON**  
**1887 - 1931**

THE PRETTIEST WELL WHO LOVES HIM WELL  
 BOTH MAN AND BIRD AND BEAST