

January 2019

EDITOR'S BIT

Welcome to latest Lisa Kent Trust newsletter. Time for a break, a cup of tea and a Hobnob. Happy reading
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Did you know... kept animals – chickens, goats, cattle – are let out during the day and will wander quite a distance in search of food. It's not unusual to have to stop the car as several cows saunter across the road. But amazingly all of them will return home at dusk.

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Children in The Gambia take on the tribe and surname of their fathers. Mothers retain their own. Which can lead to some confusing moments!



Meridian School

FRIENDSHIP SCHOOL

The Friendship School continues to provide a good basic education for local children in the Sanchaba region. The really exciting news is that electricity has been installed in all the classrooms! This means that they now have (drum roll, please) both lights and ceiling fans. In addition to the obvious benefits, this means that the school can be used in the evenings for extra lessons or be rented out to the local community.

The outside of the school has recently been re-painted (by D of E students: more about them coming up). Due to the harsh effects of the weather and relentless heats, this job is rather reminiscent of painting the Forth Bridge so it was great to have some willing hands.



MERIDIAN SCHOOL

Last year saw the first group of pupils who had completed the whole nursery and lower basic schooling at the Meridian school graduate. Nearly all of them have gone on to upper basic schools, which is fantastic. Most of these now attend Yalding, which is a non-governemnt school operating in a similar manner to LKT. It has very high academic results so we are full of hope for our ex-pupils!

Not for the first time, the generator at the school broke down recently. This is a big deal as it is used to draw water from the bore hole. 350 pupils, scorching temperatures and high levels of humidity with no water is a big problem. Water couldn't come from a well in the nearest compound as it wasn't certain it was safe to drink. The other solution, to ship in bottled water, was more difficult than usual because one of the brands had been recalled due to contamination. By working hard over the weekend, our maintenance engineer managed to repair the generator, but possible lack of water is a constant worry.

NEWSLETTER

Of The Lisa Kent Trust Charity Number 1111569

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.....”
Quote from Nelson Mandela.



THANK YOU

To everyone who supports the Trust, from those who sponsor the children to donations of resources, attendance at fundraising events and those who encourage. We can't stress enough how much difference this is making to individual lives in The Gambia. We still have a number of children who are desperate for sponsorship so if you know anyone who would like to be a part of this, please e-mail liz@lisakenttrust.org.

PAST PUPIL

Haddy Njie was one of the first pupils to be educated by LKT. She always worked hard and achieved excellent results. Now, thanks to her amazing sponsor who is still supporting her, she has just started a nursing course. Both Haddy and LKT are very excited about this start to a new career which will hugely benefit not just her but her community and the country.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH STUDENTS

Young people doing their Duke of Edinburgh gold award have to undertake a Residential Activity, defined as a shared activity away from home for five days with unfamiliar people. Liz has trained as an assessor for D of E so over the past few years several people have come out to The Gambia for their Residential.



This November, there was a group of four young men: Alex, Alex, Stan and James (their names don't relate to the photo; I'm not sure which is which!). It didn't have the best beginning as their flight was very delayed so, instead of the middle of the afternoon, it was well after midnight before they arrived. Despite their tiredness, the heat and the probable culture shock they threw themselves cheerfully into the work. In pairs, they spent time at both schools, working as teaching assistants - including sports lessons - repainting blackboards and, as has already been mentioned, painting the Friendship School.



Sadly the grapefruit tree in this school became diseased and has had to be chopped down. Thanks to the boys, there's now a sandpit in its place. They also had the opportunity to buy ingredients from the local market and learn how to cook, Gambian style, with the help of the Head's wife. With all the energy of youth, they were

still up for football training with a local team in the evenings!

Believe it or not, there was still time to fit in trips to see some of the local wildlife such as monkeys, crocodiles and some of the birds for which The Gambia is famous. The group also saw some traditional dancing to drums and singing which skill seems to come so naturally to all Gambians and which the rest of us can only envy...

Quotes from the group regarding memorable moments:

"Going to the local tailor to have a shirt made." This particular tailor is deaf so all transactions are naturally carried out using mime, which is great when you can't speak the language!

"Giving a very poor child a new (to them) set of clothes and seeing the look of delight on his face."

If you would like to get involved with the work of the Trust or join us on our next trip, please get in touch.

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GAMBIAN EMBASSY VISIT

In September, Liz and Julia, two of the UK Trustees, were invited to the Gambian Embassy in London. There they met the Deputy Commissioner with the wonderful name of Mr. Bojang. He made them feel rather small by the sheer height of him (see photo!), but rather tall by the complimentary way he viewed LKT. He was most impressed with the commitment and amount of monitoring and involvement in the day-to-day running of the schools which marks LKT out from other charities in the country. He's looking forward to visiting the schools when he's next out in The Gambia. Meanwhile, Julia and Liz have been invited back to the Embassy for more discussions.



FUNDRAISERS

We are so grateful to everyone who fundraises for the charity. Whether it's through a big community event or a small local one, every penny is gratefully received and will be used to directly benefit the children of the Gambia. Hopefully we can profile many of you over coming newsletters.



This time it's the turn of George and Seth, just-turned-six twins. They decided, completely on their own, that they were going to sell their colouring-in pictures for charity. After their mother told them about the drive we ran last year, they became very excited at the thought that they could fund shoes to enable children to attend school and redoubled their colouring efforts! They made selling trays for their pictures, decorating them with LKT information (see photo). So far they have managed to raise £27 which is an amazing effort.