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Gambia Education & Teaching Support NEWSLETTER

Issue 2, October 2006



Julie writes: 'This visit was my first during the rainy season – and I realised how much more difficult life becomes with torrential rain, leaking roofs, impassable roads and damaged crops. As if life isn't hard enough already!' (see page 2 for full report)



Village children loved the finger puppets **Julie** took out for them. She said 'when they have so few things to play with, they really appreciate anything you can give them.'

Membership Renewal

The trustees of GETSuk **thank you** for supporting the charity again this year in whatever capacity you helped; membership, sponsorship, donating or general support. Your input has helped us meet many of our aims and where there are shortfalls we strive to strengthen them.

Membership of GETSuk remains the same at just £10 per year – we do hope you will join or re-join when it is due on 1st November 2006.

(Unless you have done so very recently of course.)

Please complete the form at the back of the newsletter, tick for Gift Aid (if appropriate) and return to The Secretary, Julie Limbrick.

109 Blenheim Road, Deal, Kent. CT14 7HA enclosing your cheque for £10. Rest assured it will be gratefully received and acknowledged. If you prefer, download a membership form from our web page www.getsuk.org

(IF YOU SPONSOR A CHILD, MEMBERSHIP IS NOT DUE AS IT IS INCLUDED IN YOUR SPONSORSHIP PAYMENT.)

Donations needed towards Computer equipment for the Office

We are in need of financial help with purchasing computer equipment and a small battery back-up system to run a low energy light and fan when the power is off.

Please help if you can; the total cost could be well under £1000 and it would make a huge difference to the staff who work in the office at GTS.

Francis Glynn



Classroom scene



Dodou Jobe, who came 5th in his class



Mendy twins

Update on Teacher Training

Francis Glynn (Founder and Hon Chairman, GTS and GETSuk) sent in the following report:

I spent an intensive weekend with Cliff Parfit in September and he has put together an outline training session for our Gambian teachers. This is to be delivered in 12 sessions – I had hoped to start this during the autumn term here in Gambia but the container was delayed in arriving.

My revised plan is to meet with Famara, our head teacher at Bakoteh, in order to go through all the materials with him. This will enable him to assist with the training which will start as soon as possible. To be realistic, I suspect this will actually be in early January.



Cliff Parfit, a retired teacher and advisor to GETSuk, has developed a Teacher Training Programme in a modular form.

Schools Monitoring Report - September 2006

Julie Limbrick (Hon Secretary GETSuk) sent in this item:

I visited Essau Nursery School on the North Bank and was pleased to learn that the headmaster, Mr Malick Manneh and teacher, Michelle Mendy had both successfully completed their teaching training certificate in Early Childhood Development at Gambia College. I promised to do my best to be present at their graduation ceremony in April 2008.

Also, I was able to visit the home of Sending Suso, a sponsored 20 year old student who had achieved her certificate in Management Studies. I presented her with a certificate from GETSuk and was pleased to learn she will continue her studies with on-going sponsorship.

The Mendy twins will begin nursery school this September and a visit to their home, in a very poor rural area, resulted in the presentation of a football and this lovely photograph of the boys for the magazine. I do hope they enjoy being school boys!

Although their sponsor had provided money for uniforms I ascertained no uniforms had been bought despite only two days to go before term starts. I could see that the money had, from necessity, been spent on food – and who could argue against that? Although not the case in this instance, it does serve to highlight how difficult it can be if the sponsor is unaware of the level of poverty that exists in so many families, and is therefore unable to understand why the money has not been used as directed.

For our part, we must do our best to explain to the Sponsor (if they are unaware of the family back-



Julie with Sending Suso

ground) and if the sponsor chooses not to increase the level of sponsorship then, whenever possible, the charity will do its best to meet the shortfall.

It is not easy on either side of the Atlantic. Most sponsors are aware of the hardships and do assist with extras if required. **(Please see back page)**

We try, however, to keep a firm hold and control as far as is possible on the use of the agreed expenditure.

FUNDRAISING NEWS

Fantastic Fundraising efforts by two intrepid GETSuk Supporters

Nick Plaister writes:

'I had been looking for an opportunity to raise some money for GETSuk and had also decided that I really needed to take a bit more exercise.

A chance conversation in the lunch queue found a group of 6 guys volunteering to run the "Grunty Fen Half Marathon" and Team Plus was formed. We all chose our own charity; luckily **Mike** also decided to back GETSuk. The Domino UK charity committee (www.domino-printing.com) kindly sponsored each of us for £250 and Marketing came up with some eye-catching T Shirts.

For the next 3 months, the only topic of conversation in the departments was 'how is the training coming, what time did you run, how are the injuries'. Finally the day arrived but unfortunately with clear blue skies and forecast temperatures of 26C. If anybody tells you it's easy to run 13.2 miles, believe me, they are less than truthful! The first 10 miles were tough; the last 3 were hell!

We all managed to finish! I only just made it, doing a bit of damage to my knee which left me on crutches for a week. All OK now.

Hope this encourages others to attempt something similar!

Mike and Nick have raised around **£1000**, for which we are very grateful! Thanks, boys - that's a brilliant amount to raise.



Nick (far right) & Mike (third from left)



Nick (no 37), running well!



Ongar Comprehensive School Reunion 1979-1983

Recently, past friends were reunited after twenty-eight years to help raise funds for GETSuk.

Shirley Britton, as Fundraising Secretary, organised the reunion for the second year. It has proved to be very popular as shown by the emails of appreciation from attendees: 'Thanks very much for Saturday evening. I managed to catch up with friends as well as have a great time!'

Entry to the event was 'buy two bricks at £5 each' for the Classroom Appeal, plus a signed gift-aid form, if appropriate.

People who attended the event will have their names placed on the GTS website 'Buy a Brick' wall and will also have their names inscribed on a plaque on completion of a classroom in The Gambia.

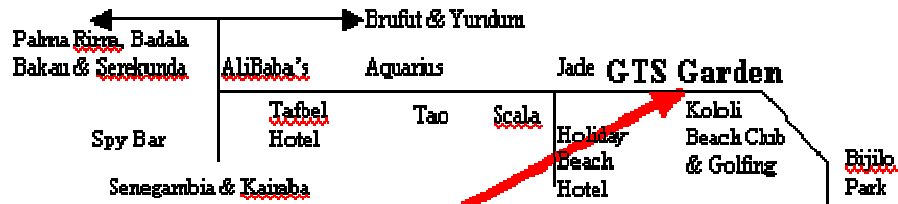
Raffles were held, with prizes generously donated by local shops.

Ongar Comp was closed down in 1989 and subsequently demolished and replaced by houses, including one belong to a famous past pupil Jade Goody, of Big Brother fame. Jade's house is situated on what used to be the school assembly hall.

Shirley has added that the final sum raised, including gift aid, is expected to exceed **£1000**, an amazing sum for one event.

Please keep **Shirley** up-to-date with your own fundraising events on Fundraising@GETSuk.org She will be delighted to hear from you!

Map & Directions to Restaurant and Office



Make your way to the 'Senegambia Strip' (all taxi drivers will know it), turn left at Ali Baba's restaurant on the corner. GTS is the last restaurant on the left.

The restaurant produces some delicious, reasonably priced food and has had very good reviews in the 'Rough Guide to The Gambia'.

The staff will give you a great welcome!

More Sponsors Needed to support On-going Projects,

like building and equipping schools. We cannot stress too highly the importance of these Projects. Of course, we need to maintain a balance between sponsoring school fees for individual children and providing the staff to teach them with maintaining school buildings and equipment.

Sponsors don't just sponsor for School Fees

Christine and Danny Bennett, sponsors of Lamin Bah, paid for his mother to have a wall built around her compound. They are also buying a bike for Lamin, to make it easier for him to get to and from school.

Azize Jobe's sponsors, Chris and Deanna Robinson, are buying him a bike.

Nick and Sheila Plaister bought Salifu Njie a bike to save him walking for two hours each day to get to school. Salifu was Head Boy in his final year at Primary School.

Some sponsors sponsor more than one child – Roy Hockaday and Eileen Renwick sponsor three students each!

Sheila, our Sponsorship Secretary, would like to thank the staff in Gambia, particularly **Kabs** and **Jerreh**, for without their hard work, none of this would be possible.

Are you living or working in an African Environment?

Shirley, our Fundraising Secretary, would like to hear from you. Please could you keep an eye out for children's'/youths' books written by African authors? If you do find any, please drop them in at the GETSuk office in Senegambia. Second-hand or new books would be warmly welcomed for the 'Reading Den' at Bakoteh.

Attention, all Members!

Accommodation in Kololi is now finished and offers self-catering facilities to members of GTS and GETS.

Three double rooms are available:

One at **£65** a week, with exclusive use of the shower and toilet.

Two at **£70** per week, both with en-suite showers and toilets.

All three rooms share the large living room and galley kitchen.

Also - a **self contained two double bed roomed house**, for up to 4 members with sitting room, verandah, kitchen and shower/toilet.

It has a big roof garden with excellent views all round (ideal for sunbathing or star gazing). The whole house costs **£140** a week whether fully occupied or not, as this house is let as a single unit.

We now have the luxury of a constant supply of water from a large roof top tank which gives power showers and running water in all taps.

Both the house and rooms are serviced daily by Fran's wife Filley, who can also be booked for shopping trips and traditional cooking sessions - as well as a laundering and ironing service, so members can enjoy their Gambian trip and return home with a case full of clean clothes and memories of real Gambian cooking!

To check availability & book any of the rooms, please contact Francis with your visit dates by email on rooms@GambiaTouristSupport.com

Stop Press!

The closing date for our Calendar Competition announced in the last Newsletter has been delayed until the next edition. We only had one entry that was not from GTS/GETSuk staff, (thanks, Chris Robinson!) Please send in your best photos of the Gambia to me (Rosie) at:

newsletter@GETSuk.org

The prizes will include a meal for two at our GTS Bar and Restaurant (excluding drinks) and the top prize will be a weeks free accommodation for two at GTS Kololi. (See left)