

January 2015

Issue number 16



Delivering much-needed supplies

Dear Members,

A very Happy New Year to you all and let's hope 2015 brings you lots of health and happiness. I expect a lot of you will also be wishing that those coughs and colds will disappear – here's to wishes coming true! It was really good to see so many members at the AGM last year. Quick reminder that this is STOW's 10th anniversary year, so we'd welcome ideas about how to celebrate (and raise funds for STOW!).

In our last issue, we had a full-page article bidding farewell to Thurston's Barn but have now heard from John and Lindi that STOW will still be able to use it for future events – hurrah! We are now busy planning something exciting for you all to come to on June 20th. Do come and celebrate STOW's 10th anniversary with us.

I am back in Tanga at the end of this month to help with the distribution of the school uniforms and materials. We are hoping that 9 of our primary school children will have passed their national exams to go on to secondary school. I am waiting to hear from TUMAINI which schools they have gone to. We will be visiting them all to see how they are getting on in their first term.

September monitoring trip

I went out for 10 days in September with a member who had also been a VSO volunteer in Tanzania at the same time as me. Jane paid all her own fares and expenses and was a real help as she knew the area and could speak Kiswahili (see her article on pages 6 and 7).

Having arrived Friday night and stayed at the wonderful Heritage Hotel courtesy of the generous and kind owners, we set off early Saturday morning. Magdalena was with us, she had just started her accountancy course in Dar es Salaam and we were giving her a lift home for the half-term. It also gave me a chance to catch up on how she was doing, away from home for the first time. Here she is between Richard from the Land Management College and Fortunate from Kaole Agricultural College – all coming to Tanga for half



-term. It was an early start and they had not had breakfast. They cheered up when we reached Bagamoyo and they had breakfast at the College of Art canteen!

Fortunate, Magdalena and Richard getting a lift home for half-term.

In the 6 working days we were in Tanga, we visited 8 schools, 3 further education/vocational colleges and 25 homes. I spent a disproportionate amount of time in the Immigration Office getting my permit which, for \$200, allows me to carry out voluntary work.

Thanks to Realise Futures we were able to give three more students — Osmund, Felista and Richard — second-hand laptops to help them with their studies.



Osmund is studying medicine at Muhimbili National Hospital



Felista is at Bagamoyo College of Art



Richard is at the Institute of Land Management

You will have read about Mark's London Triathlon in the August Newsletter. He raised over £800 and his employers, State Street, are matching this.

STOW is so lucky to have you all as members. You provide our much-needed and much-appreciated support and funds – we couldn't do it without you.

Thank you so very much, may 2015 be a good year for you all.

Marie

Chair and Founder of STOW

Stories from my Visit Thinking Ahead

I was approached by Saada, one of our primary school children who had just finished her exams to go up to secondary school. She said the exams had not been difficult but was nervous about moving to secondary school where all the lessons would be in English. She felt she would need help. She is a very vulnerable girl who lives with her little cousin Halima and their grandmother in one small room with no electricity and no running water.



Saada's cousin, Halima, where they do their cooking outside their one room home



Saada reading a story book written and illustrated by a friend of Jane's

Saada asked if she could do a preliminary English course in the holidays to prepare for secondary school. We found that the 3-month course had just started that day and that she would be able to join immediately. We paid the course fee and gave her money for bus fares.

This kind of help with preliminary courses for children about to go up to secondary may be something to consider for all our students. Let's see how Saada fares!

What Courage!

When I am out in Tanzania I try to see all the children we support but we only usually see the homes of those children who are individually sponsored. However, this trip I got to see Mwanamvua who is at primary but not individually sponsored. We picked her up from Kasera school and drove for miles and miles. There were no shops in sight; there was no water and no electricity at the property. I asked her mother why she lived so far away from everything and she said she was grateful for being given a plot of land by the village chairperson and was building a house on it for her and her 2 daughters and little 5-year-old boy.

The 'house' had been built by mama out of sticks, mud and bits and pieces of building materials and tin and plastic sheets gleaned from other house builds. Someone has put a tin roof on the very precarious structure (as you can see it slants backwards). Mama told me that Mwanamvua leaves around 5.30 am to walk to school so she will arrive on time. There are no shops nearby so mama walks miles to a nearby village and brings water and food back on her head.

We could see no water or food in the house so took mama in the car to the village and bought her essential supplies. We then hired a motorcycle taxi to

Mwanamvua's mother's self-built house



take her and her goods back home. What amazing courage some people have to try and make the best of what very little they have in life. It was yet another very humbling and inspiring experience.

Enterprise!

I wrote in the last newsletter about Mariamu coming to an IGA (Income Generating Activities) meeting and getting a loan to start herself up in the tailoring business. When we had the IGA meeting in September she had repaid all her loan – how amazing is that! I was thrilled to find that 3 others were also able to pay their loans back in full. We then 'recycled' the returned funds to give further loans.

Asha was one of the lucky new recipients. She is planning to start a hairdressing business. I remembered her Head Teacher telling me a year back that she would be very good at this.



Asha asking for a loan at the meeting

Marie

Impressions of a returned volunteer

In September 2014, I went back to Tanzania for the first time in 15 years. I had been a volunteer on the island of Zanzibar which is in a very different situation from Tanga having a devolved government of its own and a strong tourist trade combined with a fairly lucrative trade in cloves. I had stayed in Tanga with Marie a few times and met some of her Tanzanian colleagues.

I had also visited Marie a few times in the UK and we had talked over the work she was doing, but that had not given me any idea of how STOW has developed over the 10 years it has been going, nor how Tanzania has changed. It was amazing to see how Tanzania has developed. Dar es Salaam is now one big traffic jam combined with one big building site. The low colonial buildings are being replaced with high-rise office blocks. Outside the city, I was impressed by the new road from Dar up to Bagamoyo; sadly part of it had been affected by terrible floods earlier in the year, but serious and well-funded efforts were being made to repair it.

Teachers' salaries are now paid direct into their bank accounts, so instead of going to the Ministry of Education and taking a day off school at the end of each month to sit in a long queue waiting for their money, I saw that they now often spend a Saturday in a long queue at an ATM – progress of a sort!

On the outskirts of Tanga there were new factories going up, alongside some which hadn't survived. There was a lot of talk of the Chinese engaging in road building and factory and hotel construction. Although some local labour was being used on these projects, separate self-contained sites were constructed as living quarters for the Chinese workers and foremen. One of these sites has since been handed over to Kiomoni secondary school. Marie told me that it has made a real difference to the school .



We had to go to the bank on a couple of occasions. We would arrive early, to be at the head of the queue. I was surprised and dismayed when the doors were opened to be elbowed aside in the rush to get in - whatever had happened to the polite, considerate Tanzanians? I guess they have had to join the modern world. On the other hand, individually people were still very thoughtful and helpful, sometimes trying too hard to tell us what they thought we wanted to know.

The market looked the same, some stall holders greeting Marie like an old friend, but where were the little girls who used to earn a few shillings by walking around with you carrying your purchases on their heads?

We did see signs of progress in the villages, electricity is on its way, drums of cables left on the roadside are watched carefully to ensure they don't disappear and reappear in another village.

The schools we visited are greatly affected by the increased cost of everything and they in turn pass this on to the students and families. I was shocked to hear about the school tee-shirts which have to be bought from the school and worn on Fridays regardless of the fact that many students can scarcely afford the basic school uniform. Porridge now has to be provided by the schools for breakfast every day but the parents are charged or asked to contribute a sack of oats. And of course fees are going up and up.

To all of this, I think STOW has adapted well. More secondary and higher education students combined with increased costs in everything means help goes to fewer students, but they are being well supported which is enabling them to get the education they need to go forward.

Jane Mallinson



Jane carrying a new study table and anti-malaria nets for four of our Tanga Tech students.

Winter thoughts from the Treasurer

As I sit here awaiting inspiration to strike of what to write this dark and chilly January morning, I can't help thinking that, when Marie and Pam (Stevens) visit Tanzania at the end of the month for one of the twice-yearly monitoring visits, it is likely to be too hot and sticky for my comfort.

As well as monitoring the progress of our STOW-supported children, Marie and Pam will also be working very closely with our local partners, TUMAINI, to review, support and promote the small business loans scheme which STOW has funded and developed over the past 10 years.

When I assisted with the monitoring trip some 3 years ago, I was very struck, and greatly humbled, by how very small loans of typically less than £50, made to very poor widows and carers often served to positively kick start successful small/micro businesses. The income generated from these enterprises provided, quite quickly, significant economic benefits to the wider family, so helping to raise them out of the most abject poverty which is still endemic for many in rural areas.

As important for me was to see the infectious and enthusiastic support those loaned money received from each other. Our Tumaini colleagues also offer ongoing practical advice and support, along with their ever-present 'you can do it for yourself and your family' message.

As we would expect not all such business schemes go quite to plan, but the success rate and return of money for recycling for new loans has been, for me, quite amazing.

Currently, we are helping 11 people to run enterprises including cooking and selling fish and other food, hair-

dressing, making and selling hats, and tailoring.

As you will know, many members generously support individual children throughout their time in education and receive annual progress reports from Marie. However, one member has always particularly asked that their regular monthly amounts be used for the loan scheme. Wearing my 'Treasurer's hat' might I encourage those members who just might be thinking about making an additional contribution to STOW's work to consider a regular, or one-off, donation towards sponsoring the micro-loan scheme. Marie would be happy to write a brief report to donors on the progress of 'their' individually sponsored loan. If you are interested please just contact Marie or any of the other Trustees.

Finally, my thoughts this chilly winter morning turn towards summer and the annual STOW Summer Evening planned for 20th June. Thanks to the generosity of the new owners, this can once again be held at Thurston's Barn.

As in previous years, we plan to hold a brief auction during the evening. So if you have any promises or items that are really too generous to be raffle prizes, we would be delighted to take them. Our auction last year made over £900 and it would be terrific to repeat or even better this amount.

So many thanks once again to all of you who support STOW by your continued membership, sponsorship, regular and one-off donations, events and help in kind. This is much appreciated by the Trustees and, more importantly, by those living in the Tanga region of Tanzania who are given the opportunity of an effective 'leg up' into a better, self-supporting life by way of education and enterprise. *Martin*

Receipts and payments 1st June 2014 to 18th December 2014 (draft)

RECEIPTS

Members' subscriptions £1,356

Donations £9,698.88

Child Sponsorship £3,765.81

Fundraising Events

Carrington's Barn 2014 £1,837

Bryans Barn £710.36

125 challenge £1,582

London Triathlon £838

Talks to schools, clubs etc £30

Gift Aid £3,548.72

Bank interest £1.15

Total receipts £23,367.92

Excess (deficit) of receipts
over payments £2,897.16

Balance brought forward
from 1 June 2013 **£30,447.66**

**Funds in hand at 31st
May 2014 £33,344.82**

Account balances:

HSBC Community account £5,862.73

Scottish Widows savings account £575.55

Virgin Money savings account £26,906.54

Total £33,344.82

PAYMENTS

Grant to TUMAINI (1st instal-
ment) £17,000

Cash for grants Sept 2014 trip £2,000

Total Tanzania payments £19,000.00

Bank transfer charges £0.00

2 return flights to Tanzania
for Feb 2015 monitoring trip £820.76

Carr.'s Barn 2014 licence £21.00

Public liability insurance £371

August 2014 newsletter £258

Total UK payments £1,470.76

Total payments £20,470.76

Note: The current (January 2015)
total funds are £34,582

Martin Stevens
Hon Treasurer

14th January 2015

The 125 challenge (1250 miles over 10 days on a Vespa 125 scooter)
(There is not nearly enough space to do justice to this epic journey—Ed.)

Alice's pithy summary:

"We made it to Scotland and back on a Vespa. Even getting a Vespa roadworthy was a headache after bringing a broken-down 1999 Vespa back to life only to thrash it to melting point on the first trial 125-mile run. The next Vespa, bought with 2 weeks to go, failed its MOT. Throw in lost keys, high winds, heavy rains, hurricanes, punctures, steep hills and passes, rivers on the roads, and a busted foot for the last 375 miles! What was planned as a pleasant, if a little uncomfortable, way to spend 2 weeks' holiday raising money for a good cause turned into an unexpectedly difficult challenge! Still, 1250 miles in 11 days (a day was lost to the hurricane) - done and dusted."

Despatches from the frontline:

Neil: "..... We set off from Norfolk with me on the Vespa and Alice, on her 'proper' motorbike with all the gear, as my support team. A lovely amble at the start was met with harsh winds and rain across the fens towards Leicestershire. The next day, we headed for the Lake District via the Tour de France route over the Yorkshire Dales...."



"....The autumnal reds and oranges pervading the Lake District were mesmerising and it was a wrench to leave, but the rain was beginning to take a

firm hold so we headed north with rumours of the back-end of Hurricane Gonzales about to hit the UK's West Coast...."

Alice: "....I have been riding for over 7 years and today has been some of the most challenging conditions I have ever encountered on a bike - high up on exposed moors with relentless, incredibly strong and gusty winds that continuously took the bikes sideways, combined with driving rain that did not stop all day, poor visibility and cold to the bones...and when there was shelter from the wind there were wet leaves everywhere making the roads an ice rink. When the sun came out for brief moments, you couldn't see a thing for reflections off the wet tarmac. I have spent most of the day on the lean just to go in a straight line. No idea how Neil has managed to keep going on something that should have been blown around like a feather and has all the power of a hairdryer!"

Neil: "A memorable trip, and along the way many people dipped into their pockets for STOW and we spread the word of their fantastic work. Alice seems to think that we could have a bash at getting to Africa one day for the cause, maybe a 250cc bike for next time, and 250 miles per day, who knows....." [Neil and Alice raised over £1500!]

Dates for your Diary

Beetle Drive!



Saturday 28th March 2015 at 6 pm

Hotdogs, wine, beer & squash, followed by the Beetle Drive with a break for ice cream, cake & coffee!

St Johns Church Hall, Saxmundham
(Parking available up the church drive or Waitrose)



Adults: £5, Children: £2
(minimum age 6 years)

Family ticket (2 adults, 2 children) £12

To book tickets phone 01728 663583 or pay on the door.

Midsummer still at the Barn!

Saturday 20th June 2015 at 7.00 pm



Welcome drink, supper,
entertainment
auction, raffle
News of recent trips to Tanzania

Thurstons, Rendham, IP17 2AR

Tickets £12.50 per person
available from:

STOW, Acorn Cottage, Kelsale, Saxmundham, IP17 2QY
Tel: 01728 603348, email: info@stowcharity.org

Since STOW's founding in June 2005 we have provided 1,856 school places, helping well over 300 individual children get an education.



*Innovative recycling of plastic bottles at
Mwang'ombe Primary!*



We are on the BT MyDonate website to help our fundraisers and to enable people to use a debit or credit card to donate to us.

Every penny of the money donated (excluding minimal card charges) comes to STOW including any Gift Aid due. We like to thank our donors so, if you use this service and want us to know who you are, please email us separately.

To register as a fundraiser or donor, go to www.btplc.com/mydonate and click on the 'Log-in/Register' button found near the top right of the screen, choose the 'Personal' tab and follow the on-screen instructions. Once you have created your personal account, you will then be able to log in and start fundraising, or sponsor a fundraiser, or donate directly to STOW.

STOW registered charity no 1112424