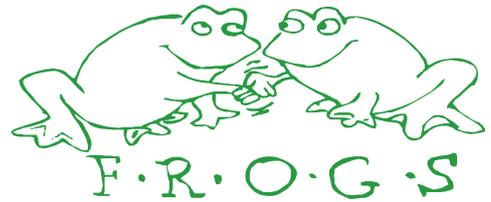


# FROGS FANFAIR

May 2003

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## THE TRAVELLERS RETURN

After the loading of the 3 containers back in March – a big thank you to all who helped – they arrived safely at their destination.

The FROGS team of 6, headed by Sally ensured that unloading and distribution went smoothly. They visited a number of schools during their trip, and were very impressed with the high standards that they found, and saw first hand how FROGS input has contributed to them.

An article by Maggie Parkin who joined the team gives her views of FROGS and her trip to The Gambia.

The Jinack Project was successfully completed and news of that can also be found later from Ann Watts, the Project Co-ordinator.

**Once again, those who travelled to The Gambia bring back their stories, which remind us of the purpose of FROGS.**



*The Travellers on a well earned day off*

## FUNDRAISING EVENTS

**OPEN GARDEN at THE VENTURE, KITS COTY**  
(Sally's home)  
**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June from 1.30 p.m.**  
\*\*\*\*\*

**SUMMER FAYRE**  
11.00 - 4.30

**The Friars, Aylesford (joint venture with The Friars)**  
**Helpers required – please contact Sally**  
Please distribute separate Flyers attached

## THE JOURNEY TO JINACK

*Ann Watts*

Two years ago, Sally Reader asked in my school St. Peter's Church of England Primary School, Aylesford, Kent would like to correspond with Jinack Lower Basic School in The Gambia. This was done and the children started to write and send drawings and photos. On seeing the condition of Jinack school the idea of helping them began to develop.

In September 2002 I launched the Fund Raising Campaign.

Rose Colhoun, Headteacher of Madginford Park Junior School in Maidstone also joined the group. Two of her staff, three of St. Peter's and various friends and relations and partners made up the group of twelve that finally set out to Jinack during the Easter holidays.

After six months of fund raising and gathering of materials such as paint, brushes, rollers, ladders, tools etc to do the job, along with school resources we were ready to pack the sea container at the beginning of March.

We flew out to The Gambia on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April.

We spent three nights at The African Village Hotel before leaving for Jinack on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April.

What a greeting awaited us on Jinack! The entire community was there – music, dancing, speeches ..... went on for three hours.

Work began on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup>.

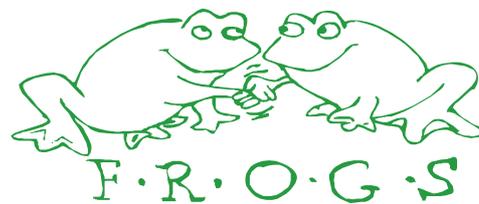
During the week we painted eight classrooms, four floors and the Head Teacher's office. We were ably assisted by a group of Gambian Scouts from Essau, along with people, Elders and children from the village. Finally we painted the outside white and the doors a fresh, bright green, and fixed some display boards onto the classroom walls.

The village community of Jinack made us so welcome, and looked after us so well. For every member of the group it has been an amazing, enlightening experience. We have learned so much and hope that our contribution will enable the children and community of Jinack to develop and grow.

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## *SAFFIE BOBB JOBE*

Saffie was born and educated in Banjul, leaving with GCE 'O' levels in Maths, French, English Literature and Bible Language. She taught as an unqualified teacher at St. Josephs for three years before going to Yundum College. She graduated from there in 1987 and taught at various schools until moving to Bakau Newtown Lower Basic, where she is now Headmistress.

She is very involved in FROGS and does a great deal of the paperwork that is required to get the containers from the port to Bakau Newtown School. She allows her school to be used as the centre for distributing everything that FROGS send, and also arranges the Handover Ceremony. This Ceremony is attended by Headmasters and staff from schools who benefit from the container contents.

Saffie has two sons and four 'adopted' daughters. The girls are still supported by their parents and often spend time with them but their parents feel that living with Saffie and her husband will give them a better chance to succeed.



Saffie is due to retire in June and she is thinking of going back to her first love – sewing – and hopes to open a Sewing Shop where she would teach girls to make garments to sell.

## *THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR .....*

When Maggie Parkins decided to join the FROGS team for The Gambia 2003 visit she knew little about what we would do.

However her friends rallied round and raised over £1000 for FROGS funds, and provided T Shirts for a children's football team. The NHBC donated £500 worth of stationery which is currently being boxed for distribution.

Well done Maggie's friends!

## *SMALL PROJECTS FUND*

Following approaches by schools and other supporters, FROGS has decided to set up a Small Project Fund – to cover just that – small projects!

In some of our schools small repairs are needed before we put good furniture or books in. Floors need re-laying and roofs repairing.

These projects are not expensive at European values – a floor can be done for £50, and 20 sheets of corrugated roofing costs about £30

We need floors at Munyagen and Giddah and help with a roof at St. Matthews. Fences are required at St. Marthas and Berending.

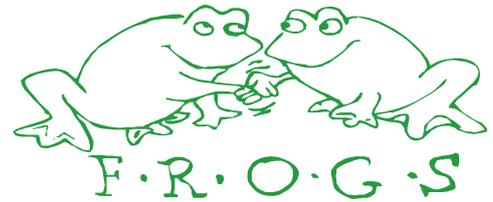
If you'd like to sponsor a personal project please contact Sally – she has the list!

Money for these projects will not be taken out of our mainline fundraising.

## *REMINDER – MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE DUE*

FROGS Membership Fees became due on 1<sup>st</sup> April. If you haven't paid please send your cheques as soon as possible. £5 for families and £3 for concessions.

At the AGM it was decided not to increase fees at the moment, but to keep the situation under review. Last years appeal for a book of stamps from every member was most successful in saving postage costs – we would like to repeat this again this year!



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### **GROWING UP IN THE GAMBIA**

*Maggie Parkins*

**A year ago I had never heard of FROGS.** A friend of mine was given Sally's number by The Gambian Experience following her holiday in The Gambia. As I had retired from full time teaching I was able to deliver footballs, books and paper that had been collected, and met Sally for the first time last July. Immediately I was hooked, and did my bit last August with other volunteers at The Friars store. **I especially remember comments from those who had been to The Gambia such as 'we have so much and they have so little'.** As I drove home, I was certain that I wanted to join FROGS and go to Africa. I spoke to Sally and was thrilled when she confirmed that I could join those going to The Gambia in April 2003.

**I learnt such a lot in my two weeks in Africa** – how resilient, proud and generous the people are in the face of poverty – and the fact that we were welcomed with dignity. I saw how important a small thing such as a stick of chalk can be and felt deeply frustrated knowing that boxes of chalk are thrown away in British schools. I saw the pleasure of children having tables and chairs to sit at while they work and thought how such basic school furniture is taken for granted back home. I relished the thrill of children playing with FROGS equipment in Yahaar's nursery, enjoying the slide in the shade of the trees. The school gardens that are flourishing, producing salads and vegetables to eat and sell even though the water has to be hoisted up from the well and often carried some distance by the children.

**I will remember Banjul – chaotically exotic!** Waiting, waiting outside the Customs House for papers to be stamped so the containers could be released. Fierce negotiations for drivers and labourers and then ONE container was driven out – destination Bakau Newtown School. The containers are highly emotive objects, containing all the desirable things that have been collected, given, packed in with minute care, so that the doors have to be forced shut! **No surprise that when the container swings into the school compound that I feel tears fill my eyes! No surprise, either, that the recipients are excited and impatient and ever watchful for their share.**

**As a teacher, I was impressed by the commitment of many of the teachers,** one in particular was prepared to spend some of his tiny salary to buy paint to advertise his school on the outside wall.

Others spend time trying to improve wall displays and are proud of how their pupils can read all the words around the classroom. The quality of the teachers' blackboard presentation was as impressive as the end of term questions were demanding! **But how difficult it must be to teach** when dust saturates everything because cupboards are not available, when tables are unbalanced and then break because the classroom floor is crumbling away in need of strong cement! How to teach so many children when the basic resources are so scarce. **Yet the desire for children to speak, read and write in English is valued and as the writing on the outside of The Malcolm Reader Library at Chamen School proclaimed – 'Knowledge is power'.**



*Chamen School*

**I noted the thoroughness** with which Sally and team visit schools, recording what is needed and what requires to be done – not just by FROGS but by the staff also! There is no place for sentiment, only for careful assessment, the results of which are clearly communicated to the Head. All protocols duly respected!

**I am eager to return,** so that I can follow up what has been a beginning for me. Thank you to my family who encouraged me so much, to the many generous friends who made donations/gifts to FROGS, to the National House Builders Council for a wonderful £500 of stationery goods, the Swift Class at Bridgewater School, Berkhamsted for collecting so many useful resources. And to Sally, Brenda, Anne, Barbara and David – your friendship and desire to help me see as much as possible, have enabled me to have an unforgettable experience that opened my eyes in many ways. Thank you!



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### ***ANOTHER FROGS SUCCESS.....***

This time in the horticultural field.

Last September Sally was asked to plant a "Friendship Tree" at St. Martha's Skill Centre to mark the start of our sponsoring them. This establishment provides training in domestic skills for girls between 16 and 25 whose academic education has been interrupted in one way or another, helping them to support themselves and their families.



A hole had been prepared for planting, watered and covered with cardboard. When Sally uncovered the hole to plant the Mango Tree ...guess what? Out popped some very small frogs! The real thing this time!

A quick check in the basket last month found the tree thriving with at least two new leaves. Perhaps in years to come we will be able to pick our own FROGS mangoes.

The Skills Centre is doing so well that they hope to build three more classrooms ready for the September term.

### ***WORKDAYS***

For sorting, refurbishment etc  
**Thursdays and Saturdays 9.30 a.m. – 1.30 p.m.**  
To join us at Aylesford Newsprint please ring Sally

### ***STOP PRESS!***

No-one is allowed to deliver items to the store at Aylesford Newsprint without first contacting Sally or Malcolm and only for large or numerous items. All other materials should be delivered to our store at The Friars. Sally, Lynne, Brenda and Sue have keys. Contact numbers below.

### ***WANTED!***

**MANUAL TYPEWRITERS, RIBBONS AND CARBONS**  
*1<sup>ST</sup> AID MANUALS AND BASIC MATERIALS*  
**GARDEN TOOLS ESPECIALLY HAND FORKS AND TROWELS**  
*SOMEONE TO REFURBISH BICYCLES*  
**BOOKS, INFORMATION, TOOLS ABOUT BEEKEEPING**

### ***\*\*\*\*\*EMAIL\*\*\*\*\****

**In the future we hope to email the Newsletter to members with this facility – this will cut printing and postage costs. All members who are prepared to receive future Newsletters by email, please send your address to the Editor – [sue@airclean.co.uk](mailto:sue@airclean.co.uk). Any articles for future Newsletters can be sent to this email address as well.**

### ***CONTACTS***

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01634 862365**

**Lynne Davies, Tel: 01622 761823**

**Sue Ford, Tel: 01622 761163**

**Kirsty Hawkins, Tel: 01622 672873**

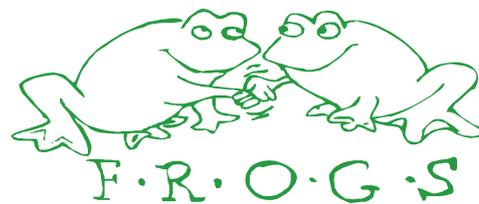
**Brenda Sladen, Tel: 01622 882395**

**David Jordan, Tel: 01375 641659**

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