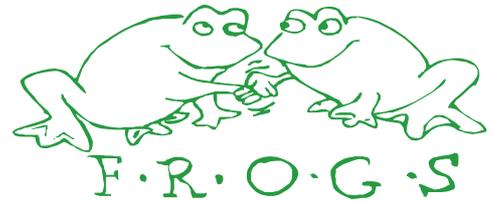


# FROGS FANFAIR

October 2003



FROGS is a Registered Charity No. 1069168

## *THE STORY SO FAR – Sally Reader*

In 1992 I took part in the Kent Weald Ranger Expedition to The Gambia. Following this, myself, along with other members from this group decided that there was an ongoing need and set up what is now known affectionately throughout The Gambia as 'THE FROGS'.

After two years of not a lot happening the first FROGS container of school materials arrived in The Gambia and under the guidance of Yahaar Jallow (then Deputy Head Teacher at New Jeshwang School) was shared between 5 schools. The sight of this material being transported away from the unloading site has now become familiar!

There was steady development over the first few years, with the number of Gambian schools appealing for furniture and materials growing, and more and more schools here finding out about us and giving us the goods that are needed. We settled into a pattern of delivering containers and having a holiday at the same time.

Since 1998 we have been dispatching multiple shipments peaking with 5 containers in 2002 and 2003!



*Desks destined for Brikama Primary School in 1995 – enough for one class in a school of 40 classes!*

The number of schools currently on our Register is 135 Lower Basic Schools, 55 Nursery Schools and 30 Upper Schools and Skills Centres. Benefiting schools are chosen at an average of 4 'main share' schools per container who will receive furniture, and then others who just receive books and other items.

We need to raise £3000 per container – pro-rata this hasn't changed much as the Dalasi/Pound exchange rate has moved so much in our favour. Storage is currently provided by Aylesford Newsprint, a great improvement on pigsties at Kits Coty Farm and our store at The Friars.

Members and volunteers take a whole day to load the containers, and unloading is done by the current team in

The Gambia along with the Head Teachers of the benefiting schools.

Travellers from England consist of any member who wants to come for 2/3 weeks hard work at their own expense. Since 2000 eleven members have taken part at various times. It's very rewarding to see the improvements that are slowly becoming evident. Last months containers saw 23 schools receiving help and Sally, Brenda and Dave made 29 school visits either as a follow-up or for assessment purposes. A very busy 14 days! Very little holiday time these days!

FROGS has grown considerably in 10 years, both in stature and reputation.

We could not continue with FROGS without the help and support of our members and friends who help with fund raising, sorting gifts at the store and helping on loading days, and of course our donors who give us such worthwhile gifts for our schools. Amongst our recent donations were some wonderful tables and chairs, which have furnished the Staff Room at Muhammeden LBS, and thousands of pencils and art materials. We have had footballs and football kits, even two goals. One school gave us enough brand new school dresses to clothe every girl at one of our schools.



*Boxes and boxes of pencils!! How many pencils do you think there are?*

Please continue to support us in whatever ways that you can, be it fundraising or providing materials - no matter how little you feel that you are contributing, every little bit helps. **A BIG THANK YOU TO YOU ALL!**

\*\*\*\*\*

## **LOADING DAY AUGUST 03**

Thank you to everyone who helped –another successful loading day. Special thanks to Greenshield Cowie who ensured the containers arrived on time, and to the very helpful drivers.

***Jessica Phillips, granddaughter of Brenda Sladen has helped at Work Days at our Aylesford Store (see picture below), and her school has also put their old uniforms to good use, and Jessica has sent us this article:-***



**Notting Hill and Ealing High School** is a long – established school of about 830 pupils, aged from 5-18. It is one of many schools in the Girls’ Day School Trust which covers all of the United Kingdom, and Notting Hill has recently been given permission to build a new Study Block, which will include music rooms, study rooms and a swimming pool in the basement.

Everybody in the Junior School has recently had a change of uniform, so to put the old uniforms to use we agreed to send them to The Gambia with FROGS. I was sent photos of the many school children in The Gambia who received these uniforms and put them all together to make a poster for our school Noticeboard. By that time, I was taking home bags and bags of uniforms, so the next thing to do was to send them off!!

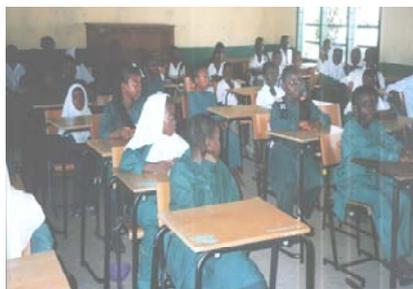
I am sure there are still many more uniforms to come, and soon my year, Year 6, will be leaving to go to the Senior School. We will have to buy another new uniform, but at least we know what to do with our old ones now!

We look forward to hearing more about the school children in The Gambia, who are receiving support from FROGS

\*\*\*\*\*

**A RAY OF HOPE – Dave Jordan**

Imagine a Primary/Junior School in an Inner city environment, close to a port, in a deprived run down area.



***FROGS furnished classroom at Muhammadan***

Muhammedan Lower Basic School is in such an area, surrounded by warehouses with many vehicles delivering, collecting and parking outside the gates. Dust and fumes cover everything. Muhammedan stands out like a beacon in the midst of the squalor and poverty. The school is celebrating its centenary this year and has been freshly

painted in the school colours of white and green with paint supplied by FROGS.

The Head Teacher is Mrs. Awa Njie who has been in the school for 4 years. She began teaching in Muhammedan, then moved away after 9 years and worked in various schools for 21 years before returning in 1999 as Head Teacher. She is very popular with her staff and commands great loyalty from them. All the staff work well together.

The School Motto is ‘Discipline and Hard Work’ and this is the guide for all their activities. The Head Teacher is allowed to administer corporal punishment, but within strict guidelines – schools in The Gambia are beginning to suffer some of the problems seen in Britain with parents questioning the role and authority of the teachers.

As in the majority of Gambian schools, the buildings surround a sandy compound. The perimeter wall and gates front onto the busy main road.

The school has 628 boys and 597 girls on the register, and operate a 2 shift system in line with most Gambian schools. The 1<sup>st</sup> shift is 8.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. and the 2<sup>nd</sup> shift 2 p.m. to 6.10 p.m. There are 19 female teachers and 8 male teachers, plus 4 teachers of the Koran.

The children starting in Grade 1 at 7 years old work in groups so that those who have attended a Nursery School are able to help and encourage children who have not been so fortunate.

The school teaches Science, but only from text books as they have no laboratory or equipment for practical work. The school is very progressive as the staff use Gambian produced teaching aids in the classrooms which is quite unusual. Some of the classrooms have been furnished with locally made desks and chairs.

The school has sports teams (football, handball, athletics, rounders), runs a Girl Guide Unit, Red Cross Group, Drama Group and hopes to begin a Scout Troop soon. It has a very effective PTA which supports the Head Teacher and staff in all their endeavours.

There are computers in the school which cannot be used until two teachers have completed their training and there is a more reliable electrical supply.

In 2000/1 FROGS donated tables and chairs which have been recently repainted by the school. In April 2003 cupboards were donated and these were put into use in the library and resource rooms, making a very attractive working environment. In September 2003 teachers desks, chairs and carpets were donated and within 2 days of the containers being unloaded, these were placed in the Head Teacher’s office and Staff Room.

**A run down school in a deprived inner city area?? NO,** Muhammedan is a very good example of how effective a dedicated Head Teacher and staff can be. It is a real credit to them all.

**FROGS are proud to be able to help such a forward looking school!**

### ***A FUND RAISING IDEA – Maggie Parkins***

As a new FROG member and having just returned from my first working visit to The Gambia in April 2003, I was keen to share my experiences and memories with my good friends, the Berkhamsted Ladies Rambling Group. This group is made up of 10 women with a variety of jobs, hobbies, hobbies or not hobbies, but who have two things in common: a love of walking and of taking suitably reinforced refreshment after the hike has been completed!

The ladies know of FROGS, and have already given donations, but are interested to know more. The photographs help to satisfy their curiosity and so I'm not at all surprised when Sandi Bandy decides that we should provide money for a classroom floor.

I am happy to provide a venue for a simple Gambian supper, a date is fixed and some three months later we gather in my garden to eat Gambian dishes of Chicken Yassa and Mango Pavlova. We contribute £4 each towards the evening. By this time Sandi has the bit between her teeth and not only comes exotically dressed in a Moroccan outfit she has but arrives with small gifts and cloakroom tickets, and hey presto we have a Raffle!

By the end of the evening we had raised enough money for 2 floors, enjoyed a meal and had a brilliant time together.

In case you feel like trying this idea of food, fun and fundraising here is the recipe for Chicken Yassa that Sally gave me for the evening! Everyone seemed to enjoy it, or maybe they were just being polite!!

### **CHICKEN YASSA**

***2 kg chicken***

***4 garlic cloves***

***1 chicken stock cube***

***Pinch of salt***

***½ teaspoon black & white pepper***

***2 tbsp vinegar***

***1 tbsp lemon juice***

***3 onions diced***

***3 potatoes – peeled and diced, 1 tsp mustard, 4 tbsp oil.***

**Season chicken with salt, pepper, lemon juice, mustard and squashed stock cube – leave for 30 mins. Grill chicken until golden brown. Heat oil in pan on low heat, add onions & potatoes and fry until golden brown. Add excess juice from seasoned chicken and 2 tbsp of water. Cook for 5 mins. Add grilled chicken and simmer for 5 mins. Serve with mixed vegetables, rice and salad.**

\*\*\*\*\*

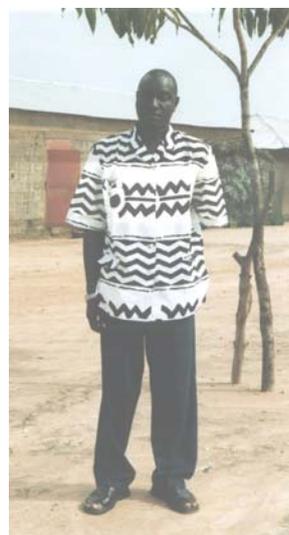
### ***AMADOU KAMBI – Profile by Brenda Sladen***

When I walked into the Headmaster's office in Jeddah Lower Basic School I was greeted by a very dynamic and imposing gentleman – Amadou Kambi. The office was neat and organised, which mirrors his personality.

He was born in 1961 in the far west of The Gambia in Kiang Karantaba, and was educated in the Lower River Division. He told me that he had always thought he should spend his working life 'assisting the needy' and decided that being a teacher would fulfil this ambition.

After leaving school he spent 4 years travelling in Region 6 as an unqualified teacher. Each year he sat an Entrance Exam to attend The Gambia college to gain a teaching qualification, and each year, having passed, was rejected at interview. At the 4<sup>th</sup> interview he was asked whether he would give up if turned down again – his response was 'no, I will continue every year until I am accepted'. He was accepted at his 4<sup>th</sup> attempt!. After 2 years training he passed his finals and has been teaching in Primary schools ever since.

During his college years he became President of the Student Union, and gained the nickname 'The Man', which has followed him throughout his career. He recently became Teacher of the Year for his region, which was greeted enthusiastically by his colleagues.



When asked how he sees his role as Headmaster he replied 'It is my job to promote the school to the public and to get benefactors and sponsors to help us develop and improve'. An example of this is the establishment of the School Garden – with the assistance of FROGS. He told me that as well as supplementing the school feeding programme, they have been able to sell produce to help fund projects and activities within the school.

Amadou is very keen on football and athletics – despite not having 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> Grades the Football Team reached the semi-finals of the local League. He is also a member of the Teachers Union and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Teachers Credit Union – each teacher is obliged to save a minimum of 50 Dalasis per month which gains interest.

Amadou lives in Brikama with his wife and 5 children, ranging from 4 – 15 years. The future? 'I see myself in years to come running a model school with all the necessary materials for effective learning to take place'.

There was much evidence that this will happen – the Nursery School which started in an outhouse 9m x 9m for 70 children seated on benches has now moved into a newly built classroom, with desks and chairs provided by FROGS. Still rather cramped, but much improved. There is talk that another classroom will be available soon.

### **SMALL PROJECTS FUND**

The first projects both at Berending on the North Bank, were set up during the team's recent visit to help develop the school further. A Tie-dye Project was set up to produce tie-dye fabric for school uniforms and other local use. Sally and Brenda bought everything required from a 'shop' in Serrekunda including the dyes, scissors, fixatives, huge plastic tubs, galvanised pails and long rubber gloves. The second project is a gardening one, and spades, forks, rakes etc were bought.

We also provided 14 schools with lockable metal First Aid cabinets, complete with basic medical items which were received very enthusiastically by head teachers. This will be an ongoing project with new schools benefitting each year.

The projects for doors etc. are being set up and will be reported on in later newsletters.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **FUTURE EVENTS**

**SOCIAL EVENING, Friday December 5<sup>th</sup> at The Brassey Centre, Aylesford, 7.30 for 8 p.m.**

A get-together evening for members and supporters of FROGS, with light seasonal refreshments. Come along and meet other members, see video footage and photographs of recent visits and our work in general.

A Fundraising raffle will take place of an Aylesford watercolour painted by a local artist, Richard Byers - see article below, to raise funds for FROGS- Tickets £1 on the night, or beforehand from committee members.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **RICHARD BYERS – ARTIST**

Richard was born and educated in Essex. He spent 5 years in the army during World War Two, becoming a Captain in REME. He has a degree in Mathematics, which he taught for 20 years, ending his career at Maidstone Technical High School for Boys. When he retired in 1980 he attended a series of classes with Adult Education in all aspects of art, reviving his interest in painting. His paintings are spread countrywide, including New Zealand, Canada, Ireland, South Africa and the USA. He has been married for 60 years. The painting of Aylesford was done specifically to raise funds for FROGS.

\*\*\*\*\*

**CHRISTMAS DRAW** – books are enclosed with this Newsletter. Please support this fundraising venture by selling all your tickets to your friends and family. The draw will also take place at the Social Evening on December 5<sup>th</sup>. Please return money and ticket stubs to Sally by Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December, or on the night. More books available on request.

\*\*\*\*\*

**CALLING ALL SCHOOLS** – Are you able to let us have a stall at your Christmas Fair? Can we come to talk to the children at an Assembly, or provide a display in your school for a week? If so contact Sally.

### **WANTED!**

Manual typewriters, ribbons and carbons.

*1<sup>st</sup> aid manuals and basic materials*

Garden tools especially hand forks and trowels

*Football Boots – all sizes especially small child*

Woodwork and metalwork tools. Microscopes.

*Videos of Shakespearean Plays.*

Home economics equipment and work surfaces.

*Dressmaking patterns and buttons for children's clothes.*

Dressmakers Dummy.

*Novels – fiction/non fiction for teachers.*

Ceramic floor tiles.

*Small steps for reaching high shelves.*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Available soon** - African colouring books/notelets – packs of black and white sketches of African life.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **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

\*\*\*\*\*

### **REMINDER**

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, contact numbers below at the end of this Newsletter.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **MEMBERSHIP FEES**

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 or your name will be removed from the Mailing List.

\*\*\*\***EMAIL**\*\*\*\*

**Don't forget to send your email address to the Editor [sue@airclean.co.uk](mailto:sue@airclean.co.uk), for future Newsletters. Any information or articles can be sent as well.**

### **CONTACTS**

**Sally and Malcolm Reader, The Venture,  
Collingwood Road, Aylesford, ME20 7ES - Tel:  
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**