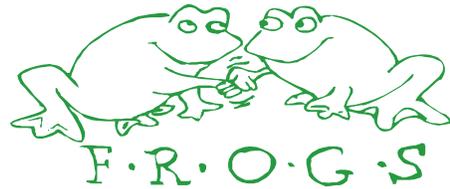


FROGS FANFAIR

AUGUST 2006



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JOINT INSTIGATOR OF FROGS RECEIVES PRESIDENTIAL AWARD!

At this year's Independence Celebrations in The Gambia, President Yayha Jammeh announced the annual list of people he had chosen to receive the MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ORDER OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA. Included in the list this year was a name dear to all early member of FROGS – YAHARR JALLOW!!

Yaharr (pictured below with Sally) was one of the first people Sally met in her early days in The Gambia back in 1987. It was Yaharr's influence after the completion of Sally's original project KWIRE, that encouraged her to found FROGS the rest is history!



The award is in recognition of Yaharr's devotion to the children of The Gambia and the influence she has had in all aspects of education. The Award Ceremony took place at State House in Banjul on 28th April and Yahaar was accompanied by her husband and sister.

Frogs wishes to congratulate Yahaar on the award and wish her long life and happinessInchalla.....

NEWS FROM 'THE COMMITTEE'!

We held our AGM in March this year when, due to Sally and Malcolm's move to The Gambia we had to elect a new Chairman and Secretary, and to change the Constitution to allow for two Gambian based members.

Sue Ford was elected as Chairman and Ann Beale, a long standing supporter of FROGS who has been to The Gambia a number of times, was elected as Secretary. Thank you Ann for taking this role on. Sally and Malcolm were elected the Gambian based members. The rest of the Committee remained the same – Lynne Davies was re-elected as Treasurer, with Kirsty Hawkins, David Jordan and Brenda Sladen as Committee members.

The UK based Committee meet regularly to discuss projects that have been applied for through Sally in The Gambia. Prior to the Committee considering them Sally visits the schools to assess the need and ensures that all the estimates for the work and materials submitted are reasonable – Sally has become very knowledgeable in the costs in The Gambia and knows when estimates are not realistic!

Once the Committee has all the information they consider each project based on need, how much money is available along with looking at the 'Project Manager' workload for Sally in The Gambia. All monies are sent out to Sally by International Transfer, and Sally sends back to the UK receipts to cover all the payments that she makes along with pictures and text for the website and Newsletters. We communicate with Sally by email in order to keep up to date with each project on a regular basis – what would we do without modern technology!

You will have seen in recent Newsletters, and in this one, projects that have been completed – and the difference they have made to the schools in The Gambia. A big thank you to Sally for all her hard work 'on the ground' and we thank all our members and friends who continue to support and raise money for FROGS.

We wish Malcolm all the best as he retires from Aylesford Newsprint - he will be travelling back to The Gambia with Sally at the end of September. We hope that they have a long and happy retirement -albeit a continuing busy one with all that FROGS brings!

SUMMER FAYRE 2006!

A big Thank You to all who helped at the Summer Fayre at Aylesford Priory on a very hot day in June. We raised the sum of £710.63 to go towards our projects.



Sally & co on the Merchandise Stall

CELEBRATIONS!

Maggie Parkins

In October 2005 the Key Stage 1 children (5/7 year olds) of Westfield School in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, made their Harvest Festival a very special event indeed. Their teachers wanted to broaden the meaning of this annual festival for the children. What better way to do this than to make gifts of much needed school resources for FROGS? I was sent a beautiful invitation and was thrilled to receive boxes of pencils, felt tip pens, rulers, paper and much, much more on behalf of FROGS. I thanked the children at the end of the Assembly and promised them that I would personally distribute their gifts to Gambian school children during my next visit in Spring 2006.

With Sally's help and advice I was able to share the gifts between 3 schools – Bijilo Nursery close to Sally's home, Seino Lower Basic and Madiana Lower Basic. It is hoped that educational links can be built up between Seino and Madiana School and Westfield First School. I am making a photographic album with messages from the children of Westfield School for Sally to take back to The Gambia in September. With FROGS encouragement, hopefully the Gambian school children will draw and write about their school lives.

I am going to make a display at Westfield School of photographs, articles of African dress and dried plant life such as calabash which the children can shake and hear the seeds rattle. This will be in the Entrance Hall with a large FROGS label attached. I hope the school children of Westfield will feel that a little bit of The Gambia has come to their school.

Thank You to the pupils and teachers of Westfield School. Your kindness is much appreciated.!



Pupils of Westfield School with their gifts.

FROGS JOIN IN AND 'CLEAN THE NATION'

In The Gambia the last Saturday of every month is CLEAN THE NATION DAY or SET SETTAL. This scheme was set up last year because the disposal of litter is a major problem as there are very few organized collections, or commercial rubbish disposal sites.

On these Saturday mornings between 9 am and 1 pm everyone is SUPPOSED to clean their own compound

and immediate area. You are not allowed to travel – banks and shops are closed.

Since settling here last year Sally has organised the children from adjacent compounds and distributes plastic bags for them to fill with rubbish and return to her. She burns the rubbish and rewards each child for each bag – pencils, pens, balls, all of which are welcome payment!

For the April clearance the FROGS team joined in and together with 14 children cleaned the immediate area – a case of every little helps!!



Brenda reading with children after the clear up!

DEVELOPMENT AT JEDDAH LBS

Jeddah LBS is a rapidly growing school. Since our first visit back in 2003 several new classroom blocks have been erected, two by the Government and one with donor money. The donor money unfortunately did not stretch to rendering the walls. When FROGS visited last year the Headmaster appealed for help to render the outside walls of the block.



The project was approved and the funds handed over on the 10th April 2006. The project was finished on the 4th May and the classroom block now looks extremely good and is protected from the elements. The project cost £531.25.

Gambian Nursery School Workshop April 2006

Maggie Parkins

It was a shame that Barbara Jordan could not be at the weekend Nursery School Workshop run by FROGS in April 2006. Barbara did much of the ground work for this workshop, but a knee operation prevented her travelling to The Gambia. I was therefore asked if, as a retired infant teacher, I would take her place. I knew I had a great team to work with – Sally Reader, Brenda Sladen and Anne Beale, so I agreed.

The teachers who attended came from 20 needy schools selected by the Regional Education Officer, Anna Ceesay. FROGS members had visited the Nursery Schools in October 2005 to familiarise themselves with the needs of the individual schools.- they found schools with 90 children in a class in dark and dusty classrooms with few or no resources; but there was evidence of good teaching!

The Workshop planned was to encourage active learning for the Nursery children. In The Gambia English is considered essential for a child to progress educationally. Barbara had decided that a whole day would focus on this area, followed by a ½ day on maths.

Learning through play is one thing in a light, well resourced and fully staffed British classroom. It is quite different in the poor conditions faced by teachers' in The Gambia. The emphasis was therefore placed on 'teaching from the front' as if to the whole class.

The FROGS team had made durable and colourful alphabet and number resources which were shared with the teachers in an interactive way. Teachers' were also encouraged to use their own resourcefulness; so it was that the whole class joined in activities such as thinking about hidden items in the teacher's handbag – shape, texture, begins with this letter sound; along with 'mango maths' when they used branches laden with unripe fruit plucked from a tree in the compound to do various mathematical tasks such as adding, subtracting, estimating etc.

The teachers were amazing, and it was a privilege to work with them. During the group sessions everyone had the opportunity to use the resources and we had time to learn more about the teachers' and their school lives. We enjoyed ourselves enormously!

The Workshops ended with a speech from the Regional Educational Officer, and the teachers' were given Certificates of Attendance, along with some resources for them to use in their schools.

Later in the week we visited 2 Nursery Schools unannounced and were thrilled to see Workshop resources being used. In particular we were pleased to see the 'Green Boards' in action as all 248 of them had been hand painted by FROGS! So thank you to Barbara, Sally, Brenda and Anne who gave their absolute all! It was a wonderful experience and one not to be forgotten!

JAMISA LBSHelping with security!

Project description – *to improve school security by raising wall, fitting security wire and purchasing and fitting gates!*

Jamisa is a very poor urban area in Brikama and the condition of the Lower Basic School reflects this. The school is one of the most neglected that FROGS has ever been involved with as they have had no recent Government assistance and the buildings were locally built and very old.

When the FROGS team visited in 2004 a classroom had just collapsed due to poor construction and heavy rains. The newly appointed Headmaster was struggling bravely and we discussed the needs of the school; his priority need was security!

At that time even though the compound was walled it was not high enough to deter intruders, and also there was no gate. The compound was open to youths wanting to play football and make mischief. Locals were also using their water supply and raiding the school garden!

FROGS decided to take on the raising of the wall, fitting barbed wire and purchasing and fitting gates.

This has now been done, and the perimeter wall is now a reasonable deterrent with secure gates.

In his 'thank you' letter to FROGS the Headmaster said that because FROGS has made the school secure the Government is now building him two 6 classroom blocks and another donor a third! The national water company NAWEC is also going to provide a tap to ease the problems associated with watering the garden.

He says 'BRAVO TO FROGS' for making these things possible. Life is looking up at Jamisa LBS!



The cost of this project was £1008.32.

TANJEH – A PLACE FOR SICK CHILDREN

Tanjeh is a sprawling fishing village in the Southern Kombos of The Gambia. The teachers at the school had long been concerned that when children went sick with malaria and other fevers there was nowhere, except the bare floors, to lay them down. When the FROGS team

visited the school in 2005 this problem was discussed and as there was a 2 roomed disused classroom block on the site they decided it could be converted into a Sick Bay.

The 2 rooms were wrecked, and the roof in ruins, but estimates were obtained and the project was approved by the Committee. In February 2006 Sally visited the school to check out the costing and to purchase the first materials needed to start the Project. At this visit local carpenters, labourers, welders and masons were also contracted. Sand, roofing sheets, cement and nails were purchased, and block making began. Sally visited every 3-4 days and progress was rapid.

The old roof was stripped and replaced, the interior wall replaced, the cracked exterior walls repaired and the footings strengthened. New windows were made by the welder and the existing doors plated and new locks fitted.

After 3 weeks the building was transformed – painted an aqua colour, tiled floors were laid, tie dye curtains hung and health posters put on the walls by the Rawlinson family – FROGS members and visiting Sally and Malcolm.



On Thursday 27th April 2006 the Sick Bay was handed to the school community at a Ceremony attended by the visiting FROGS team, representatives of the Alkalo, pupils and teachers.

The Red Cross teacher expressed her delight that in the future sick children at Tanjeh School will be well catered for. Three beds and mattresses have been purchased with money donated by visitors to Sally and Malcolm's compound. Lockers are being donated by a Gambian friend and bowls and buckets have been purchased.

Once again this was money well spent!! The project cost just £921.00, and children no longer have to suffer in the dust and heat!!

A HOME SCIENCE DEPARTMENT FOR GREATER BANJUL LBS

When a FROGS team visited Greater Banjul two years ago after distributing computers etc they were appalled to see the lack of basic equipment in the so called Home Science Department. There was no means of teaching practical cookery – imagine learning to cook theoretically!!!

The room was a basic classroom and very dilapidated. Estimates were obtained and the project approved by the Committee. In October 2005 the first funds were handed over.

The school worked steadily, supervised by Sally. A crazy tiled floor was laid, the walls repainted, windows remeshed to prevent insects entering, tables resurfaced and work stations built around the walls (in concrete and not wood as termites love to snack on wood!). Two double drainer sink units have been installed with cupboards underneath with metal doors. The school carpentry and metal work departments provided some of the labour.



On Friday 28th April 2006 the FROGS team visited the school and Sally 'cut the ribbon' in front of Educationalists, Regional Officers, previous Principals, The Principal, teachers and pupils. During the speeches everyone reiterated the fact that the upgraded facility would enhance the teaching of Home Science at the school. The pupils present were thrilled with their new room.

Another successful project costing £817.81.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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**Keep up to date by watching our Website on
www.friendsofgambianschools.co.uk**

Sally and Malcolm will be living in The Gambia from October to the end of July, returning to England from July until the end of September.

**They can be contacted on the following email address:
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