

FRIENDS OF KAIRA KONKO NEWSLETTER

Patron: Dame Mary Fagan DCVO JP
HM Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire



Issue 6: May 2013

Dear Friends,

Firstly, let us apologise for the delay in getting this newsletter out but we have been extremely busy (as you will see below) and some technical issues haven't helped. Fortunately for us who are not IT literate, we have a new member of the committee who has kindly taken on the newsletter.

It really is hard to know where to start as it has been quite a busy period for Kaira Konko and the people of Soma since our last newsletter. Last summer saw the worst rains in The Gambia for over forty years and the Lower River Division, where Soma is situated, was badly hit. Many families lost their homes and tragically two young brothers, both pupils at Soma School, lost their lives when their house collapsed. At Kaira Konko we lost a wall when a tree came down and water came up through the hall floor as the water table was so high. We made repairs once the rains have stopped. Our well, 30 metres deep, which has been known to run dry, was full to the brim. Several of our Scouts compounds were badly damaged or uninhabitable and we did what we could to help with repairs. The rains have caused crop failure meaning even more hardship to people who have very little in the first place. If you would consider having a fund raising event or making an extra donation to help we would be very grateful.

On a brighter note we have had several groups from the UK visit KK and a steady stream of guests to occupy the rooms. We had our eldest visitor to KK to date, Mon Spiers, who celebrated her 80th birthday with a trip to KK. Mon has been in Scouting and a supporter of ours for years and it was her dream to visit KK. Her friends in Alton have knitted baby hats and vests in vast quantities so it was wonderful to see her personally hand them out. We thank Mon and her friends for their wonderful support.



Our main aim over the past year was to replace the Scout vehicle. It is such a work horse transporting building materials, Scouts, people etc. that the project cannot run without it. Thanks to some very generous donations we purchased and shipped a newer model to KK. The vehicle was serviced and new parts fitted where needed, new tyres and extra lights were put on before shipping. Thanks to Jon Winchester and his team for their fantastic effort in ensuring the vehicle was more than fit for purpose. It left KK in top condition. Lamin Kinteh our Project Manager is a very happy man and sends his sincere thanks to all.



In February 2012 members of the committee and friends went out to KK to attend the presentation of Lamin Kinteh's Honorary Commonwealth MBE. Dame Mary Fagan, Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire and our Patron, accompanied by the British High Commissioner David Morley and the Vice Chancellor of Winchester University, Prof Joy Carter journeyed to Soma for the presentation hosted at Soma School. A truly wonderful occasion. See report below. In June Lamin and his wife Fatou will be coming to the UK to attend the Queen's Coronation Celebration service at Winchester Cathedral and reception at the Great Hall Winchester. They will be kept very busy visiting schools, Scouting events and as many of



their supporters as possible.

Carmella Reece a teacher at All Saints Junior School, Fleet was awarded the Alumnus Student of the Year award at last year's Winchester's University Graduation Ceremony. Carmella, also an Explorer leader with 2nd Bentley Scout Group, was given the award for her commitment to Kaira Konko and Soma School. She and All Saints have made a major contribution fundraising for the Diamond Jubilee Appeal through their 'Learning through Friendship' scheme. We thank All Saints for their continued support in fundraising and for their annuals visit to KK and Soma School. Well done Carmella!



We are still supporting around 35 Scouts through school or college. Almami is doing very well on his Banking and Finance course in Banjul. Bintu, who is attending a plumbers course several kilometres away from home, has been gifted a bike. It has made life so much easier for her and in her words "made good muscles"! The rice fund is costing on average £150 per month or as much as we can afford. The price of rice is rising constantly.



Once again we take this opportunity of thanking you all for your support. Although Kaira Konko Lodge is self-supporting in as much as it pays the bills and wages, we will always need your support in sending the children to school, for the rice fund, funding small projects, well repairs etc. Please encourage your friends to become sponsors too.

Together we really do make a difference.

With thanks from Kaira Konko Scout Committee

News from All Saints School, Fleet

During our trip last year, we decided to set up a joint curriculum project sporting theme to celebrate the London 2012 Olympics. Each class up to complete a sporting event and both pictures and results were as a way of learning from one another. Money was raised to buy sports equipment which was put to great use during our stay. In Year 3, the have been creating games as part of their P.E Unit; we took a range of of the children at work and showed these to the Soma school children, then played and experimented with the range of equipment that we with us. The Year 4 Soma children enjoyed throwing javelins and measuring their distances. The Year 5 children took part in a relay event, recording times. The Year 6 children took part in a football event, keeping records of how many goals they could score against their teacher. The children at All Saints thoroughly enjoyed looking at all the photos and comparing distances and measurements.



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teamed
shared

children
photos
who
bought

Lamin Kinteh MBE – A Day of Celebration

Kaira Konko Scout Active Support and friends headed off to The Gambia to attend a presentation to Kaira Konko Project Leader, Lamin Kinteh. In recognition of his services to Scouting and educational projects Lamin Kinteh was appointed as an honorary Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.



After weeks of preparation in the town of Soma, the 8th February 2012 began with the formal presentation of Kinteh's warrant and insignia by the British High Commissioner, Mr David Morley, during a ceremony at Soma School. The ceremony was attended by the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Dame Mary Fagan DCVO JP, Marion Christmas MBE JP and the Vice Chancellor of Winchester University, Professor Joy Carter and most of Soma.

Awnings had been set up to provide shade to an array of sofas, chairs and benches set out in the school playing field (or sandy space). We arrived early to secure a seat on the sofas and watch as more and more people turned up, all in stunning Gambia dress; the women in beautiful fabrics with precariously balanced folds of fabric as headpieces and the men in the simple chamise and trousers or Friday best. When the visiting guests of honour had taken their seats alongside the District Chief Jarjussy, the compare took the microphone and introduced many speeches. Some speeches were in English, others were translated from Mandinka, all were long and each person ensured they mentioned all the right people. Some were interrupted by traditional dancers singing and stamping. The crowd surged forward to contribute money gifts, as is the tradition, while the speakers waited patiently.

Eventually the British High Commissioner made the presentation and Lamin Kinteh then spoke eloquently reminding the audience that all the projects that have been completed under the auspices of the link between Hampshire and Soma have been possible because of Scouting. He explained that it was only because Marion Christmas had trusted him and the Scouts that he had been able to truly realise the person he is and fulfil his potential by trying his best. Dame Mary read a personal message to the people of Soma from the Queen which was truly appreciated by the community.

Following the formalities Professor Joy Carter opened an additional classroom block funded by Dame Mary's, 'Queen's Diamond Jubilee Appeal' for Soma School. The Appeal was spearheaded by Winchester University. Students and staff from the University visit Soma School annually to work alongside teachers and pupils. We then all returned to Kaira Konko for an afternoon of cooking, eating and dancing. A fabulous day was concluded by an evening of traditional corra music played by Jaliba at the local Soma venue 'Moses'. It kicked off at 11.30pm and was still going at 3am.

A truly special day for all the visitors and the people of Soma town made even more memorable as Lamin Kinteh is only the third person in The Gambia to receive such an award.



Our Latest Project Appeal

Work is underway on the foundations of our new two bedroom accommodation block. The rooms will have the facility to offer either twin or bunk beds to maximise the accommodation for visiting groups. The cost of the block will be £8,000. We are actively fundraising and looking for sponsors so please help if you can.

Administration:

Thank you all for your support. In view of the increase in postage rates we are looking to produce an e-version of future newsletters. If you would like to receive your copy by e-mail in future please contact Anthea Bailey on antheabailey@bopenworld.com so that your e-mail address can be recorded. Thank you to those who have already done this.

If you wish to contact us for any other purpose please do so through the website www.kairakonko.com and this will be directed to Marion Christmas

Scouting UK has changed the name of Scout Fellowship to Scout Active Support so we are now known as Kaira Konko Scout Active Support. We are allowed to keep the name Fellowship on our bank accounts.

FORTHCOMING EVENT

Buffet lunch and
Gambian BBQ

Saturday 13th July
from noon

In aid of Scouting at
Kaira Konko Scout
Lodge

Band, raffle, bar
& games

£10 for adults and
£5 for children (4 to 16 Years)

Available from Ruth Farmers, Jackie
Heath, Paul Stubbington, Cassie
Northcott and Marion Christmas

or email
paulstubbington@ramboll.co.uk

Great
Gambian
Garden
Party








Scammels Farm, Vicarage Lane,
Copythorne, SO40 2PA
By kind invitation of Roy and Ruth Farmers



Kaira Konko