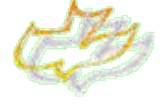


Hope and Kindness Newsletter



October 2007

Bringing a message of Hope and Kindness to Kenya
Registered Charity No. 1108996

5th Birthday Celebrations



It may have become a bit of a cliché and something we have said and written more than once but living in a developing country, like Kenya, even for just one year, really is a “life changing experience” and life can **never** be the same again. In some ways it’s hard to believe that five years have passed since the start of that journey but in other ways it’s even harder to remember life “BK,” (Before Kosele.) Combining our two very different lives, here in the UK and there in Kenya continues to challenge us on all sorts of levels but the fact that Hope and Kindness is now officially registered as a Trust in Kenya and the foundations for the new school buildings are finally underway convinced us that this was a time for celebrating.

Arranging a party for 65 children was always going to be a challenge so we were extremely grateful for the support of our 11 visitors, Louise Blake, Emily Buckler, the Appleton family - John, Vanessa, Harvey and Chip and the May family - John, Fiona, Jessica, Juliet and Nathan. The

day began as a great Sports Day event. Egged on by our visitors from England, four teams competed very enthusiastically and demonstrated great sportsmanship - unlike the adults who cheated disgracefully in the races between visitors and staff!

After the sports we celebrated with party food – crisps sweet buns, eggs and sodas. Special thanks to John (the pilot), Fiona, John (the monkey – sorry John!), and Vanessa for making the fruit salad and to whoever invented freezers for the ice cream! (This was a real treat - courtesy of the owners of the “supermarket” in our local town Oyugis who have just invested in a freezer). None of the children had ever had ice cream before! Our visitors then treated us to a very unique version of “The Good Shepherd” in a puppet show featuring a monkey, a parrot and a lemur! Finally, there were gifts for all of the children. It was a day that none of us will forget in a hurry.

It was also a time to reflect on all that we have been able to achieve - thanks to the support and encouragement of our sponsors and the hard work of the team in Kosele. All of the children who live in our home and those who attend the school as “day scholars” continue to thrive. In a country where so many people of all ages die of easily preventable diseases it is a real privilege to be involved in caring for these children. As our school continues to grow we hope that very many more children will be able to benefit from our work.

Throughout our visit we were also reminded of just how vulnerable the people in the local community are. In the first week of their visit Judi and Ellie had to attend the funeral of a small boy, brought to them in a desperate state and too sick to survive. Late one Saturday night, Terry made an emergency trip in the Land rover to take a dangerously sick lady to hospital to be treated for severe malaria. A local hospital that has just started to provide free counseling and antiretroviral drugs for HIV and AIDS is inundated with new patients. There is still so much to do.

Signed and Sealed - School building imminent!

This summer we have taken the final steps towards building our new classrooms. It has been a long and often frustrating struggle to get to this point. Following meetings with the local council planners in Kosele, the architect who designed the buildings, the building contractor from Kisumu, the Kisumu lawyer who witnessed the contract, Uncle Tom Cobbley and all..., building work finally started on the 14th of September (creating job opportunities for 10-15 local people for the 4 months of construction.) By January 2008 we hope there will be 4 brand new classrooms and an office for the teachers. This really is a fantastic development for us. We have always believed in providing a good education for the orphans and poorest children in the community around our home. It always

sounds corny but, the children really are the future of Kenya and they need to be well educated as well as loved and cared for. In our school the children are also well fed. All of the children who come to the school receive a free breakfast and cooked lunch. Apart from helping them to stay healthy and grow strong it means they can concentrate in class and make the very most of their education. Their carers are also relieved of the burden of providing food for the whole extended family.

We have appointed a new Head Teacher to lead our teaching team and can’t wait to see the teachers and the children using their new classrooms. Our next steps will be to prepare for phase 2 of the school - 4 more classrooms and a nursery unit!

“Quinter”ssential Hope and Kindness

Africa is an enormously diverse continent and I am always wary of talking about our little place in Kosele, in the heart of Luo land, as though it were typical of the experience of every person living there. So what follows are simply my observations of those I have met, mostly women and children, who live the reality of poverty (earning less than \$2 a day) in rural Western Kenya.

One thing we had to acknowledge during this visit was that tribalism (there are 42 different tribes in Kenya alone) is still very much an issue on a National and local level. In December, Kenya will be electing its new Government and the history of unequal distribution of resources and economic opportunities, perceived to be tribally based, has caused great divisions and spats between and within parties not least in selecting the potential leaders of ODM - the new opposition party. Closer to home, we witnessed for ourselves the challenge that some of our neighbours and church members had in receiving and accepting our new Kenyan Pastor, Pastor Paul a Kikuyu! Just as in the politics of this country it seemed that God had set them the greatest challenge and the most perfect opportunity to prove the difference that Christ makes. To be fair the majority of our neighbours quickly warmed to Pastor Paul, to his infectiously friendly manner and his genuine care and concern.

Being based in this very rural part of Kenya means that most of our neighbours are from the one tribe, the Luo people. Again, the things I describe may not be typical of all Luos but are common enough observations of our immediate neighbours for me to share them here. Generally, the people we have met are very peaceful, very polite, respectfully dignified and somewhat restrained in any demonstration of their emotions. Even the children rarely give expression to their pain or distress. For example, one of our 8 year old boys recently experienced a near “Goliath” moment when a sharp stone left a deep gash in the side of his forehead. After receiving this blow he had to sit through a very bumpy 20 minute journey in the Land rover to the hospital where his wound was eventually stitched. At no point did this little boy utter a cry or shed a tear, he simply “endured.”

In the short 5 years that we have been involved in this little part of Africa I have seen plenty to cry about and, unlike the children, I have often had to let my tears flow. This visit was to be no exception. On my first Sunday morning, just as we were about to cross the field to join the church, we were called to the main gate to see a young mother who was carrying a very sick, small boy. The mother was clearly distressed as her child literally gasped for breath and slipped in and out of consciousness. We prayed for him (his name was Elijah), we grabbed money from the cash box and flagged down the first vehicle we were able to stop (unfortunately there was no one around who was able to drive our vehicle). Our manager Mary

traveled with them, made sure that he was admitted to a decent private hospital and spent the day with them trying to reassure his mother, Pesila. Sadly, on Tuesday morning we heard that Elijah had died from TB. I do believe in a God who heals and I don't understand why some are healed whilst others continue to suffer and die. I wanted our prayer for his healing to be answered but instead had to comfort myself with the fact that at least we were able to play our part in helping a mum who needed to know she had done everything she could to save her child. We were also able to do something to alleviate the financial burden she had. Just 4 months earlier Pesila had buried her husband, she was 4 months behind with the rent, and owed Ksh 1200 (£10) for the small, but dry room she shared with her two small daughters.

The cost of Elijah's final hours in the hospital, 2 days in the mortuary and his small wooden coffin came to less than Ksh 4000 (£35). Responding to her financial need was an easy task to meet but, as we traveled back to her home with the precious load in the box between our feet, I worried about responding appropriately to her grief and to the rituals of a family funeral in the “Roha” church. As family members gathered at the graveside, taking care not to disturb the ground which marked the spot where Elijah's father had so recently been laid, I tried hard to “do the right thing.” The short service began with the wailing of an “official church mourner” and a traditional sounding hymn (sung in Swahili). Family members stepped up to gaze at and touch little Elijah one last time. His uncle looked on and “howled” as he gazed at the burial place of his brother now being extended to accommodate the burial of his only nephew. Pesila knelt at the end of Elijah's grave and wailed. Somebody passed her a handkerchief and then heads nodded to indicate that it was time to leave, time to make a dignified exit and return to the “room” that was their home. I was desperate not to draw attention to myself, this was their time and their pain but I could not hold back my own silent tears as my own heart ached for this mother and her two little girls, 8yr old Rebecca and 6yr old Ruth, who had first lost their father and now their baby brother. Back in that small dark room they asked me to pray. I don't remember what I prayed, I know it felt inadequate so I did what many “mzungus” do when words just don't suffice. I held her and I hugged her. I hugged her for a long time because **she** didn't let go, I couldn't hear but I could feel her sobs..... In this part of Africa “hugging” is not a natural or common response to any kind of situation. Stopping long enough to offer sincere and very firm “handshakes” is an important part of common courtesy, good manners and genuine friendship but reaching out to touch and to hold, particularly in times of distress, is very rare. Most of my experiences in Kenya have taught me or reminded me about the things that should be important to all of us. I have learnt so much from them but on this occasion I believe I was able to bring something of our culture that met a need there, that could not be satisfied by anything less. I am a believer who believes that the words in the Bible are all inspired by God and that they do have the power to bring healing and comfort and strength. But I also believe that God often needs us to simply be ready to go, to be his



Pastor Paul -
Challenging tribalism

arms, to be his hands and to carry a tangible as well as spiritual or practical experience of His love. The Bible speaks of God's power to meet us in our darkest places of sorrow and to heal and restore our joy. If my visit was for this moment alone I would not regret the time or the cost but God is good and there were many moments of joy ahead of us too.



The day before I met Pesila and Elijah I had been taken to a field where another young mother had recently buried her husband. Her name was Lillian and she and her 2 year old daughter, Quinter, were "living" in a shelter like the one in this picture.

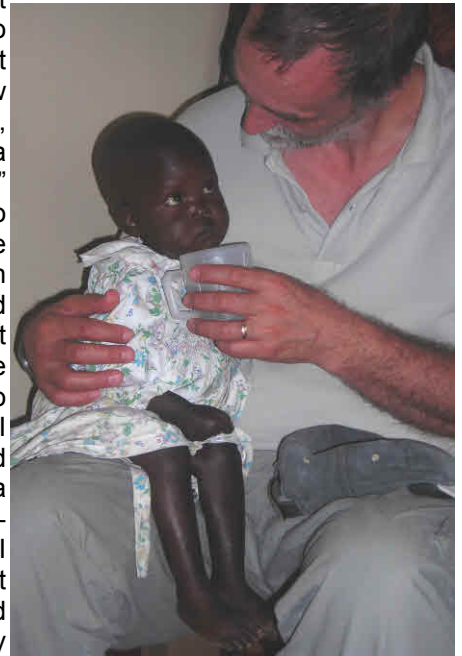
Similar structures are used by some of our neighbours to keep their goats safe at night but, like me you would probably not consider it fit for your dog let alone a mother and her small child. There was nothing to sit on, no room to lie down and no obvious evidence of any food to be eaten ...the potential for another tragedy was obvious. In the same field was a similarly constructed, very slightly larger and more solid looking "house" that was lived in by her mother-in-law and two teenage nephews. Lillian's own parents had died and it was obvious to her neighbours that the mother-in-law did not appreciate the added burden of a young daughter-in-law and a very sickly granddaughter. Sometimes the extreme desperation of poverty can effectively rob people of their basic humanity - even towards those they would normally defend. We spoke to Lillian and her mother-in law and expressed our concerns about the little girl's health. We explained that we would like to help but, having arrived unannounced, we felt we should give them time to discuss the matter together and come to us if they felt they would like some assistance.



The day after Elijah's funeral Lillian arrived at our gate with her small, poorly daughter and she agreed to stay with us whilst we sought medical help and advice for little Quinter. Fortunately, we have a new medical centre near our home. So far it does not have all the resources or funding to provide all tests and treatment but it does have a very unique commodity in this part of Kenya in the form of a well qualified and experienced doctor. He was very thorough, being well grounded in the importance of collating a full family history and recommended that we encouraged Lillian to have herself and Quinter tested

for HIV. At more than 2 years of age Quinter weighed just 8 kg and in the doctors own words "she has missed significant milestones for a child of her age." She barely responded to any sort of visual or audible stimulus, she could not walk or even stand and had previously been diagnosed with TB. Thanks to the kind counseling from Mary and our friend and visitor Ruth Grigg, Lillian eventually overcame her fears and agreed to the tests. In the last year the antiretroviral drugs and some excellent counseling programs have finally become available in this part of Kenya. Lillian and Quinter tested positive and they have both been accepted onto the program for treatment. Lillian herself looks strong and appears to be in good health - she has been reassured that with these new drugs she can look forward to staying that way for a long time to come. Quinter has shown us that miracles do still happen and that God does listen to our prayers. With a supplemented diet, proper medication and bucket loads of love and attention it is no exaggeration to say that Quinter has been "transformed." In the first two weeks she put on

a whole kg in weight and then started to take her first footsteps. She now smiles, laughs, shouts, "throws a really big wobbly" when it's time to come out of the "bath tub," is an excellent mimic and has the biggest personality I have ever seen in a two year old. Before I left, Lillian thanked me for being like a mother to her - simply because I had made sure that she and Quinter had "everything" they



needed. In the 5 years I've been involved in Kosele I have had a number of people ask me to be their "mother." Once I've got over the offence of being considered "old enough" to be their mother (often by people who are clearly older than me!) I have always declined the offer because I know that some are inferring hope and dependency on me - wishing to make me personally responsible for all their future needs when I can't even do that for myself. Usually they have to accept me simply as a "sister" or a friend. But this time, if she would allow me, I think I would really like to be a mum to Lillian if only for the privilege of being a "grandma" to Quinter (those of you who know how vain I am will understand just how special this little girl really is ...

We are now renting a small house with two light and airy rooms that Lillian and Pesila are sharing together with their three little girls (please keep them all in your prayers.)

This letter could not finish without a huge thank you to the numerous people who continue to touch the lives of our children in Kosele through sponsorship, donations, fund raising and actual visits to Kosele. To ALL of you "Asante sana" Thank you so much!

Judi Mott - September 2007

Visitors thoughts



George and partner on sports day

Our traveling party consisted of 2 families, which included 4 adults and 5 children varying in age, the youngest being 10 years old and the eldest 15 years old. Apologies for not sharing how old the eldest adult was! Each family lives in a village called Welford on Avon. We have been friends for quite a few years and, I believe, we became closer still due to sharing the most amazing experience of our lives together, visiting Hope and Kindness in Kenya.

We had many get togethers before going to Kenya in July/August of this year, with lots of planning, and discussion. In our minds we thought we knew vaguely what to expect, but when we actually arrived in Kenya our minds were stretched further! We felt excited, anxious, unprepared, nervous and adventurous, all at the same time!

On arriving at Hope and Kindness the overwhelming love that was shown to us, was incredible. People we had never met before became close friends after being there just a few hours! Oh, and if that wasn't enough, the children at Hope and Kindness were just amazing. We stayed a week (could have stayed forever). Every day as we arrived in our hired jeeps, the children greeted us and ran off with our own children to play 'good old fashioned' games, skipping, singing songs, and playing football of course – the universal game that you can play anywhere in the world. The Kenyan children played with real gusto, so much energy and skill. They played barefoot, not wearing your usual footie boots with studs and all the other trimmings that we wear to play football!!! Maybe the England team could benefit from this approach!



New friends

When asked what I remember the most, I cannot give just one answer, there was so much. What I would say is the laughter from the children. There was a real happiness. The meals were so healthy, and so delicious, and there was always plenty for the children to eat. The children's eyes were alive, a real contrast to the children who were living nearby. There was real hope, a future; the best that they could receive was given.

Then there was a little girl called Quinter who had been diagnosed as HIV+ve and having TB. The difference made by the medication and care given to her and her mother Lillian during our visit was awesome. Quinter was so listless at the beginning, but by the time we were leaving I remember seeing her splashing in the water and giggling! I will also remember hearing a little boy called Collins shout out the song 'Bob the builder' laughing and



George and Rose checking out the refurbished showers

chasing a bicycle tyre round and round all day long!

Other special memories -the deaf lady who had attended the church at Hope and Kindness for many years, she couldn't speak Swahili, or communicate using sign language. But she came, every week - The single coin dropping into the bottom of the church collection bowl, freely given by those who had so very little - The children who, as an act of love, wanted to give our children their only toy, a truck skillfully constructed by themselves out of wire and rubber Wow! - The party to celebrate 5 years of Hope and Kindness being there. There was a real beauty at Hope and Kindness, like an oasis amongst the sorrow and pain around. A real peace, a real sense of this is what life is about, giving to one and another. Caring and sharing.

We came away feeling positive, because we actually saw a huge difference being made. There is a real passion for the children's well being, physically, emotionally, spiritually and practically. We were certainly blessed by meeting such beautiful people. We will never, ever forget our time with everyone at Hope and Kindness. We learnt so, so much, and fell in love with all the children – that's the great thing, there never is a limit on how much love you can give out!

Thanks Terry and Judi for allowing us to go to Hope and Kindness, and for all of the eggy bread that Terry duly made for lunch! *By Vanessa Appleton*

Visitors Gallery



Emily and Louise - pavement artists!



As well as the Appletons and Mays we had three more visitors to Kosele this summer. Emily and Louise, 6th form students from Stratford High School, brought a lot of creative fun to the children. Ruth Grigg, a friend and sponsor, (pictured above) couldn't resist a return visit to see Alphonse in Kosele.

Collins, Ellie and Tom - our family in Kosele. It's really Collins' fault that we went there in the first place. He is now the Head Boy at the local primary school he attends. This year is a big year for Collins as he will be taking his KCPE exam, (end of Primary school examination). We are hoping that he will get a good enough mark overall to get into a good High School. Collins will be sitting his exams as you read this newsletter. We are sure that he will do his best and are praying for his success.



Annie Austin, (left), and Bernadette Munnely, (right) visited Kosele in January. We have only known them for a year but they have already been amazingly good friends to us and Hope and Kindness. Between them they have, with the help of their friends at Elim Riverside Church in Bewdley, raised the money we needed for the new field and most of the money we



needed for the new school building. As an employee of Npower all the money Bernadette raised was doubled through Npower's generous charitable giving. Many thanks to Npower for getting behind all of Bernadette's fund raising activities.

During their visit to Kosele Annie and Bernadette bought shoes for all of the children and made many new friends among members of the local community and our church members. Food was bought and prepared for a church thanksgiving meal, which was enjoyed by over 200 people. Annie paid for a new concrete path in our compound which proved to be a godsend during the next heavy rains. She also arranged an unforgettable 1st birthday party for our manager George's little girl Charlotte. Since their return from Kosele they have continued to work hard at all sorts of fund raising activities. They are keen to help us raise the £10,000 we need for a bore hole to supply clean water.

Sitting on a fortune



Yes, I know it doesn't look very pretty but.....

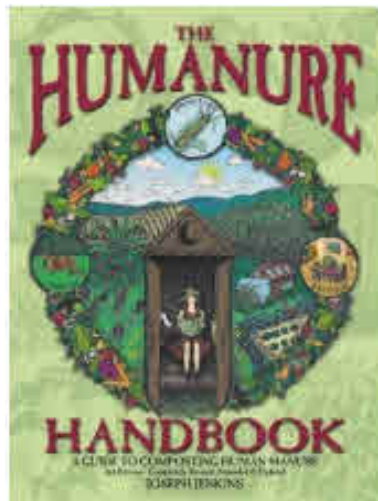
Actually squatting on a fortune would be a more accurate headline. On our most recent visit to Kenya this summer we had to make a very rapid flight change in Doha - off one plane straight onto another. Having spent 14 hours waiting overnight in Nairobi airport for the flight to Doha this rapid change was just the job, except..... I hoped I would have time to go to the toilet **before** we changed planes. So I was sitting on the plane wondering how quickly I could get to the loo. Then I started thinking about what happens to the contents of the loo in midair. Is the loud whoosh of air when you flush a thing you need to worry about?

Then I began to ponder the problem of our latrines in Kosele, (picture above!). Anybody who has used a latrine, (or Portaloo at an outdoor event) will know what an unpleasant experience it can be. I'm sure the "long call" at the latrine is the thing that all of our visitors to Kosele wish they'd only had to experience once! Trying to stop the latrines from overflowing is a constant headache - especially after a bout of rain. Working out the optimum time to have them emptied is a fine art.

So... as I type I'm sure I need to remind George, (one of our management team in Kosele), to make the best arrangements for emptying the latrines. Just to help you get the full picture that means pumping out the contents of the "three hole" latrine we have. It's currently used by at least forty people **every day!** It's not a nice job. It usually happens very late at night, (which is why the "product" is called Night Soil). The only good bit about the whole thing is that our night soil is pretty good fertiliser for our neighbour's field,

(quite a distant neighbour I hasten to add).

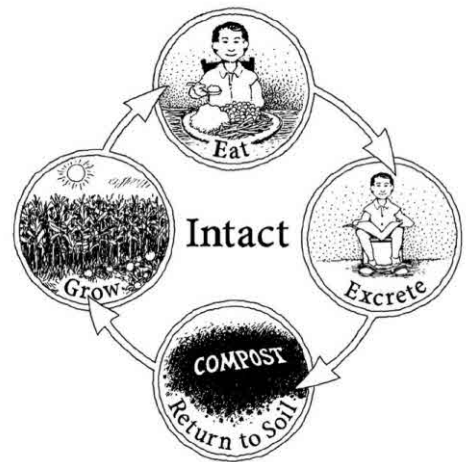
Just recently I've started to wonder if we could be more ecologically sound in the way we manage our sewage. Troublesome words like pathogens and worms have been biting away at my conscience. Fortunately there is. I've just read a book called *The Humanure Handbook - Third Edition - A Guide to Composting Human Manure*. It's the best book I've read all year - extremely ecological, practically prophetic and seriously scientific. (Just Google Humanure if you want to download it from the Internet). It is likely to change the way you think about the smallest room in the house forever.



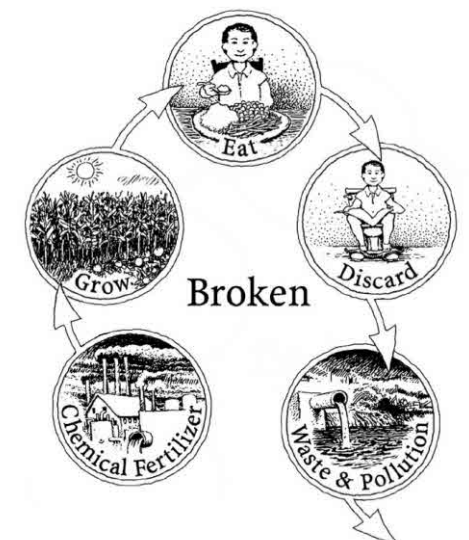
And so .. Back to our latrines. This summer we have started the first phase of building new classrooms for our school in Kosele. We are incredibly excited about this. It means that we will be able to double the number of children who attend our school. As all the children receive two free meals at school, (breakfast and lunch), they and their families receive a double benefit from attending school. I'm sure you'll see where the food connection is going in the context of this article....

That's right, it also probably doubles our "night soil" capabilities! So, as well as building new classrooms we will also have to double the toilet capacity.

This will be an extremely good thing for somebody in our community. It will provide an opportunity for a new kind of micro- enterprise. Organic production elevated to new heights. Not a job for the fecophobic though! The pictures that follow are taken from *The Humanure Handbook*. They explain a natural cycle that could revolutionise the way we dispose of



our waste **and** feed people - especially in areas where water is in scarce supply and fertilisers are too expensive for subsistence farmers. As it says in the *Humanure Handbook* "By respecting this cycle of nature, humans can maintain the fertility of their agricultural soils indefinitely,



instead of depleting them of nutrients, as is common today". The alternative is so stupid - it's criminal! I'll finish with another quote from *The Humanure Handbook*. "The world is divided into two categories of people: those who shit in their drinking water supplies and those who don't. We in the western world are in the former class. We defecate into water, usually purified drinking water. After polluting the water with our excrements, we flush the polluted water away, meaning we probably don't know where it goes, nor do we care. Every time we flush a toilet, we launch five or six gallons of polluted water out into the world". It's certainly food for thought! I can't wait to put our "composting" contract out to tender in Kosele.

Hope and Kindness Trust Kenya!

We have, at last, managed to register Hope and Kindness officially in Kenya. Completing our registration as a Trust in Kenya was one of the many tasks we wanted to complete during our visit to Kosele this summer. As ever the paperwork was quite a protracted business, but simple compared to the process of actually getting the final Trust Deed signed off by the officials in Nairobi.

A lot hinges on our trust



New management team from left to right George Oruko, Mary Adouda, David Nyongasa

registration. Now that we have a Trust number we can get all the land that we have bought over the last two years transferred over to us and have the title deeds changed. We should also be exempt from import taxes on goods that we bring in to Kenya for Hope and Kindness. This is particularly good news as we are about to obtain a shipping container to fill with clothes and school equipment.

Our re-vamped management team in Kosele, (pictured above) is proving to be a great success and will help us to keep on top of our increasing commitments to the orphanage, school and the community. They will be very busy over the next four months supervising the new school building. We have had good reports so far about the progress being made on the building work. We are very excited at the prospect of moving into the new school building, and are praying that we will raise the further funding we require to build the last 2 classrooms, (out of 4) before December. Next time you read our newsletter we should have pictures of the new school!

When you teach a man to FARM fish



Thanks to my friend Jacob I have discovered what I would like to do when I am able to return to Kenya on a more full time basis. His fish farm is one of the best projects I have seen in our part of Kenya.

Those of you who have read previous newsletters will have read about Jacob and Elizabeth, one of the children he looks after in addition to his own. Like all of the people we have met in Kenya, Jacob wants to be able to provide for the

extended family that he has "adopted". This summer he told me about his latest venture and I was amazed at what I saw. Jacob has taken the "teach a man to fish..." principle one step further and set up a fish farm on his land. When I first heard about Jacob's fish farm I was, to be honest, a little skeptical. After all, fish need water and I didn't think that Jacob's land was capable of supporting a fish pond. How wrong can you be?

The picture above on the left shows the main pond that Jacob has made. With the support of an advisor from a local Fisheries Department, Jacob has constructed and stocked a first class fish farm, made up of two ponds, and is well set to "harvest" from his new business twice a year. Fish is such a good source of protein that Jacob should be able to feed his family and turn a profit, (his ponds have been stocked with 500 fish). It is really thrilling to see friends like Jacob making such good progress.



Unable to contain our excitement

Thanks to our Bromsgrove friends, Tony and Jean Pratt **and** Alan Hickman from Safeguard Doors we are a step closer to shipping a container full of equipment and resources to Kosele. Tony and Jean have worked with unflagging enthusiasm on our behalf over the last three years - notably by arranging "Live Ate" meals which have proved great fund raisers. This summer they have excelled themselves by arranging for delivery of a free shipping container, generously provided by Safeguard Doors based in Wednesbury, West Midlands. It has been our dream for some time to send a container full of school

equipment, clothes and computers to Kosele. Now that we are a registered trust in Kenya we are able to obtain exemption from import duties on equipment that we bring in to Kenya.

We are planning to keep the container on a farm near Stourport while we fill it up. This shouldn't take long! We recently visited our friend Bernadette who, over the last six months, has been collecting school stuff, clothes and footwear from church, family and friends - and has already almost filled a garage!



And finally

“Asante sana”, (Thank you so much), to all the children and teachers at St Francis C of E Primary School in Bournville, Birmingham. Near the end of the summer term Judi was invited to do an assembly about Hope and Kindness. Even though everybody must have been feeling very tired and looking forward to a well earned rest they continued to work very hard doing jobs for mums and dads. In less than three weeks they managed to raise £360 which we then used to buy the first set of Year 5 text books for our school. You can tell by the smiles on the children’s faces that they were thrilled to have them and are now looking forward to the start of their new school year in January 2008.



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