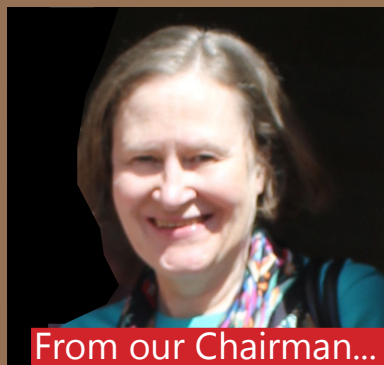


Issue 4

Spring 2012

NEWSLETTER

Produced by the HASTE trustees, and printed with thanks to kind benefactors of the charity



From our Chairman...

Happy New Year! What a year 2011 was for HASTE, with Lizzie Couch running the Marathon, John Platt's wine tasting in May and his superb command of the Quiz Night (congratulations to the winners, Coram Chambers). Then there was Sarah Whitehouse's lunch in Islington, some generous donations and a lovely Garden Party in July.

But dare I say that 2012 promises to be even better in fundraising terms? Already Andrew Hussey, a teacher in Birmingham, has offered to run the London Marathon for us, and Busola Johnson has organised a concert in Islington in June.

Last year was also the best year we have ever had in terms of establishing schools. Recently I took a party of eight to spend a week in The Gambia and we were able to open three schools during our trip. We are presently looking for the sites for two new schools.

Of course, I am acutely aware that none of this could happen without you, our friends and supporters. Thank you so much for all you have done and the effort you have put in. I would like to say that the problems in Africa are noticeably improved by our work but sadly I have to say that the problems are huge and we are making a tiny contribution to alleviate them.

I hope to see you at our events in 2012. In the meantime may I wish you all a very good year.

Judith Hughes QC



New Year projects visit

Eight HASTE representatives headed to The Gambia for a week in December 2011. But how did they get on?

We met at dawn at Gatwick Airport on 27 December for a week-long trip to The Gambia. Much of our luggage contained old shirts, paint and brushes, pencils, pens, rubbers, rulers, chalk and stencils – not the usual holiday paraphernalia.

Our team – Judith, Inigo, Sarah, Lucy, Lizzie, Mike, Zoe and Katie – then spent a productive time visiting existing schools, painting walls and helping to open our newest projects.

It was nice to see Erenyang School (shown above), which we rebuilt in 2009 is beautifully finished, furnished and is thriving. The children were on school holiday but turned up in their uniforms to greet us on our first day, as did the children at Sunu and Demaro schools.

Besides meeting and greeting kids, we also got the chance to get our hands dirty. At the school of our Gambian contact Musa Mendy, the Demaro Haste Nursery School, where we went on day two, we were able to paint a mural. This was the first time any of us had been hands on with HASTE work and it was great.

Our work on New Year's Eve was even more involving. We spent the day white-washing the walls of the school compound

in Sinchu where the school built with Lizzie's marathon funds was just being finished.

The younger members of the team threw themselves into the painting of an alphabet on the walls while the oldies coloured in (being careful to keep within lines!) It was quite amazing and a transformation of the area.

On Monday 2 January we opened three new schools. The Sinchu school, which has been named after Lizzie, plus two more: Mariama Haste Nursery School and the LBK Haste Nursery School in Fajikunde. All in all, it was a very successful trip.





Helping HASTE: Lizzie's story

From deciding to run the London Marathon to becoming an honorary Gambian villager. **Lizzie Couch** reflects on an incredible journey...

I cannot believe that it is only a year ago that I was pounding the pavements with what seemed like two impossible tasks in mind: to run a marathon and to raise £10,000 for HASTE.

It was an incredible honour to be asked to run in the charity's inaugural London Marathon place. I have seen the amazing work my family and the HASTE supporters have done over the years and I really wanted to do my bit.

It was by far the hardest thing I have ever done. When I came to the UK five years ago I had hardly run a mile in my life – a marathon was certainly never in mind. When it came to training, apart from the odd run where my fiancé or flatmate joined me, I ran by myself through a particularly harsh UK winter.

There were definitely times when I questioned what on earth I was thinking about by agreeing to do this. One day in particular springs to mind. I'd taken a Friday off work to get a long training run in. The goal was 35km, it was about 5°C and it rained horizontally for the entire three hours. I was saturated to the core. But it's amazing how the body and mind can keep going when you have a task at hand. The thought of giving children in the Gambia a chance at a better education kept me going every step of the way.

Then in December, going out to the Gambia and seeing HASTE's work first hand was incredible. I was unbelievably proud – the charity has changed the lives of thousands of Gambian families

and it is an honour to be a part of it.

I cannot even begin to put into words just how overwhelming it was to see my school and meet the kids in Sinchu for the first time. It made all of that training so insignificant – what's a little bit of pain to give these children a chance at an education in their community?

Working with our team to paint the school, with support from Musa and his sons and colleagues, and having the local children running around at our feet, is a memory I will always treasure.

It was an incredible honour to have the school named after me and to have that extra-special connection to the kids in Sinchu. I hope it's not too long before we can go back and see how the school is progressing.



HOW CAN I HELP?

We're thrilled to be able to say that we've now built eight schools from scratch and provided school supplies to many more, but we can't do anything without funds to do so – and every penny counts. We welcome donations of cash, yes, but just as important are donations of pens, pencils, notebooks and other equipment, which we ship out to the schools. We also welcome donations of craft and well-kept bric-a-brac, which we can (and do!) sell to make money for the projects.

If you'd like to buy any of our knitwear, attend one of our events (see below), or if you have a new suggestion for how we should/could be raising funds please do contact the chairman at iandjbing@btinternet.com. We believe that we can help people in need, even if it's just one person at a time. Help us help them. Thank you!

2012 Calendar

24 April

Andrew Hussey runs the London Marathon

9-10 June

Open Garden in Biddenden, 43 North Street, Kent TN27 8BA

30 June

Concert at St James's Church, Prebend Street, London N1 7DS

6 July

Garden Party at 38 Canonbury Park South, London N1 2JH

27th November (tbc)

Quiz at St James' Church Hall, Prebend Street, London N1 8PF

PUT THESE DATES IN YOUR DIARY!

I WANT TO HELP

- PLEASE ACCEPT MY DONATION OF £.....
- I AM A UK TAX PAYER AND HASTE CAN CLAIM BACK GIFT AID ON MY DONATION.

If you would like to send a donation, simply fill out this form and send it with cash or a cheque made out to HASTE to: 38 Canonbury Park South, Islington, London N1 2JH, c/o our chairman Judith Hughes QC.