

SUMMER TRIPS

1. Tanzania 2013

Cranbrook School has been sending students to Tabora, a remote district of Tanzania, for nearly 30 years to work alongside the local people on projects to enhance their lives particularly in the areas of education and health. These projects are funded to the tune of many thousands of pounds by the students themselves, with help from the Lenten Appeal, the CSPA, Old Cranbrookians, parents and others. The trip is overseen by a small West Country-based charity: Friends of Urambo and Mwanhala (FUM). The trip has become increasingly popular amongst the students.



On 9th July 2013, 41 students and eight members of staff left Cranbrook to start this year's trip. After one night in Dar es Salaam and an 18 hour coach journey the following day, they arrived in Tabora. There, they were given a welcome breakfast by the Regional Commissioner and attended a Reception that evening hosted by FUM for Mr Masatu, the recently retired Regional FUM Officer. Mrs Daly presented him

with a beautiful clock from the school as a gesture of gratitude for all his hard work masterminding Cranbrook visits over previous years.

The team then split to three groups and moved to their respective Folk Development Colleges (FDCs). These colleges, which provide vocational training and education for young people, have been the centre for much of the work completed by Cranbrook students over the years, and have provided accommodation and a base from which they can then go out into the villages.

The Mwanhala group, initially led by Mr Rod Smith, Mrs Vehrlé Smith and Mrs Winnie Parson, then later by Mrs Jo Taylor, cleaned and painted the boys' dormitory at Mwanhala FDC. They then moved to the village of Isegenhe where they refurbished the village clinic and painted a classroom at the village primary school. FUM had persuaded Mr Hamilton to visit Nzega District, his visit



overlapping with Cranbrook. His task was to overhaul Mwanhala's electrical supply ready for connecting to the national grid and to fit an electricity supply to the new college borehole pump. He was also able to oversee the installation of solar lighting at the Isegenhe clinic for the students. The staff at the clinic were ecstatic that they can help with the night-time baby deliveries without the need for oil lamps!



The Urambo group, led by Miss Toni Pitt, Mrs Dot Ledsham and Mr Dan Felts, painted the Urambo Folk Development College assembly hall as well as clearing the football pitch (by hand!). They purchased a small herd of 11 goats for the FDC to run as a money-making project. The group then moved to the villages of Ibambo where they painted the 10 rooms in the new village health centre and to Uhindi where they partly refurbished the

busy Mother and Child Clinic. While in the FDC the Cranbrook students gave English lessons to the FDC students which were very well received and greatly appreciated.

The Sikonge group, led by Mrs Angela and Mr George Daly, arrived at their FDC to discover that there were no students on site. They had all been sent home because there was no water in the wells. The group was able to provide the necessary money to dig two new wells and work started on this the very next day. By the time the group left Sikonge, there was water in both wells and the students were returning to their studies. The group also painted the kindergarten at the FDC, the shower block and murals on the walls in the assembly hall. They moved on to the village of Utimule where they helped lay the foundations for the new staff house and quarried sand to help further with the building. In the primary school there, they painted educational murals on the classroom walls and provided financial support to the FDC so they could set up a school uniform-making project using new sewing machines provided through FUM and Workaid.



Whilst based in their FDCs and in the villages, all groups visited local primary and secondary schools, giving gifts from England plus a monetary donation, and they sang their group songs. These visits were good fun and educational, both for the Tanzanians and for Cranbrook students. Groups also took the chance to visit local district hospitals and other mother and child clinics – particularly useful for any prospective medics.

It was astonishing how tirelessly the teams worked as painters, cleaners and ambassadors of the School. The Tanzanian hosts loved their energy and friendliness; there is always keen competition in welcoming a group to their schools and villages.

Sadly, the Sikonge group were involved in an unprecedented, armed roadside robbery towards the end of their trip to the village of Utimule, but their bravery and calm behaviour during the attack meant no one was seriously injured. Though it meant the visits to the villages were shortened for all groups, the trip as a whole was able to continue to its planned conclusion.

All credit to the Sikonge group, both staff and students. Happily, the culprits have been arrested and many of the stolen items recovered.

All the groups reconvened at Mwanhala FDC for a final farewell reception, hosted once again by the marvelous Mama Malyeli, before their long bus journey to the Mikumi Game Reserve began. There, they had a fantastic day with sightings of most of the indigenous animals to be seen in East Africa: lions, elephants, giraffes, impala, buffaloes, wildebeest, zebra, hippos, crocodiles, baboons, warthogs and more! From there, it was three days of rest and relaxation at the New Bagamoyo Beach Resort right by



the Indian Ocean. Everyone deserved this rest break after all their hard work and travels, and they made the most of the local markets, the chance to paddle in the sea and to get up in time to see the sun rise over the ocean – not to be missed.

The long flight back to the UK on 7th August 2013 meant the end of an incredible journey, but the warm welcome by friends and family back at home was comforting. The students brought with them tales of how kind, friendly and generous their Tanzanian hosts had been; their life changing experiences from seeing how people really do live in rural Tanzania; their better understanding of how the schools and the clinics function; and of their trips to the game park and the beach – probably in that order!

