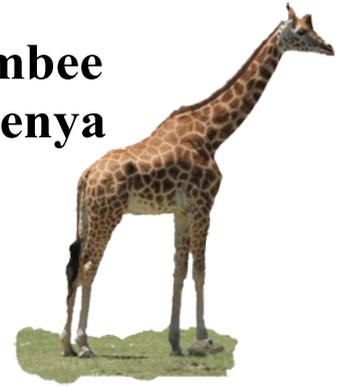


# Newsletter

**Harambee  
For Kenya**



*No 25 Apr '12*

Well we had a really good time in Kenya on our last visit. Jackie and I were able to go two weeks early where we spent all our time working hard, Jackie instilling new routines, or should I say re-instilling routines that had slipped! But it did not take too long for the boys to start getting back into the swing of things. In between this she was issuing clothes and shoes to the lads as well as sorting out items which finally arrived from the container, having been in storage in Nakuru. Oh boy were there a lot of things! In the meantime I was sewing, sewing and sewing! Mending clothes and changing quilt covers to sheets, about 30 quilt covers in all!!



This is what the room looked like after an initial sort. But it did get more organised. It didn't seem as much as this when we were packing it! When the boys went into the room to have things given them, their eyes popped out of their heads! But they were soon told that it is to be distributed throughout different parts of Kenya. They were so sweet and hardly asked for anything!

When it was so hot and Jackie could stand the heat in the classroom no longer, she came into Rafiki House and helped me by undoing the seems on the quilt covers. She managed to blow up a sewing machine! Well not really....it just decided to work on its own and then blew smoke out of the foot pedal.....very spooky!! Anyway, she tells me there are about another 30 to do when I go out there next time!!!! Aaagh!



The children were so sweet while we were out there. After school, the four younger ones did their duties willingly and quietly going to the river to collect water for us and then they would sit in the shade outside playing board games quietly. It was delightful to see them so content. What a change from when they first came to the house. We had two weeks of really hot sticky weather and followed on most days with rain which was great as this would mean we had our own shower outside where we cooled off and washed our hair! LUXURY!

We had visitors from the UK for four days. James, Derek and Margaret Frost came and painted the lounge area with gloss paint to try and stop the mud from staining the walls when the boys slap floor clothes around while trying to wash the floor! It certainly seems to have done the trick!

After two weeks Roger and a group of scouts and leaders from Bromley arrived. The pace increased somewhat with visits to schools, hospitals and Tabake were arranged interspersed with creating a shelter next to

Denilsons workshop. Now that is done we can extend his workshop. A couple of leaders have written about their experiences that you can read later in the newsletter.

### Our Thanks go to the following for their Support.

23rd Bromley Scouts & Leaders  
Polegate Primary School  
Greg & Sue Durrant and Family  
Express Finance & staff, Bromley.  
Margaret and Derek Frost.  
James Frost.  
Nanny Byles  
Julie & Alan Bexley  
Pete Davies

And all our regular supporters



## Funny Moments!!!!

Yes we do have funny moments when we are away and sometimes it is these that keep us going when we feel like giving up! (Yes that does happen sometimes but it is only a "FEELING")



This is Rehema School, the private school who have kindly taken in some of our children to educate them free of charge. Jackie and I went there and were impressed with the work they are doing so decided to give them items for the infant class. So we turned up with Jenny Owens, thinking that it would only be teachers present because our boys and Jared, house parent, had said that school had finished.....Ah! We arrived to find a prize giving going on and we were sitting next to the assistant head who asked "where

are your boys?" So we told her the truth.....playing in the garden!!!!!! The head teacher also asked us where they were....he got the same reply but with an apology that we thought school had finished two days before!!!.....Whoops!

How embarrassing that their "mums" were present and they were not!!!! Fortunately the Head was amused but made a final comment of "Please get Jared to come and see me!!!!!"



# Nyakoe

The children are doing really well with the three bigger boys settling in well at their secondary school. Jackie and I were able to visit Daraja Mbili Secondary School and saw them in their classes, looking very embarrassed that we had gone in there. This school specialises in helping poor and destitute children and serves the slum area of Kisii town. This is an advantage to our boys really as they can be themselves and are in effect there on equal terms with all the other students. The school has been helped by the Iranian Embassy who have funded and overseen the building of new classrooms, staff room and offices. The classrooms will be kitted out with science and computer equipment which should give the students a clear advantage over other schools in the area.



The new classrooms



Victor in class (in white shirt)

We stayed at Nyakoe for the time we were in Kenya.

Exerts from Jackies record of our visit.

Monday 19th March

This afternoon Denilson (Assistant House Parent and ex-resident of the House) took the younger boys down to the river to catch fish. They arrived back wet and happy with half a bucket of assorted sized fish which were cleaned, deep fried and eaten within the hour!

Today Lesley and I have done fairly boring things. Lesley went by matatu (local bus) to town for some shopping and to the bank. Being a msungu she got to sit in the front with the local Police Officer who was on his way to court!

I spent a couple of hours sorting the boxes from the container. We now have mountains of garments in neat piles around the upstairs room ready for counting and distribution.



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Tuesday 20th March.

We had some sewing machines donated. Lesley has been working with one that works like a dream. The two I tried to use didn't. The first obviously hasn't been used in years and it's in need of a good service as nothing moves. The second has a mind of its own. Things were working really well and I was beginning to



make a dent in the pile of towels when all of a sudden the machine started running on its own with smoke pouring out of the foot pedal – very spooky and very scary! Needless to say all sewing for me has ceased!

Later in the afternoon Jimmy and Andrew (Kenyan Trustees) arrived in two matatus with over one hundred boxes from the container, so my next task is sorting everything out. All the boys helped carry all the boxes up to the school room from the vans. It's amazing how much even the very small boys can carry on their heads.

Wednesday 21 March

This morning Lesley and I travelled up to town squashed in a matutu as we had to be at the secondary school by 9am. The boys brought home a letter on Monday inviting us to the official opening of 12 new classrooms paid for by the Iranian government and we had to be in our seats by 9am. We arrived at school at 8.40am and there was not a chair or other parent in sight. Callen the Dean of Students, who is responsible for guidance and counselling showed us around the school and the new facilities provided by Iran. Some of the new classrooms will be equipped as science labs and I spotted a dozen new computers ready for installation. We left the school at about 9.45am. The marquee and chairs had just arrived and the students were helping to set things up and when we reach the school gates a few parents were beginning to arrive. Typical Kenyan timing!



Thursday 22 March

Today has been a work day. I've spent the whole morning sorting out the boxes from the container so now everything is ready to be counted and sorted by size. It's amazing to see how much has been donated and some of it is brand new. I got very excited each time I came across boy's underwear as that is the one thing the boys really want! When the Scouts arrive next week I'll have to start sorting all over again. Lesley is still making sheets!

Continued.....

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Friday 23rd March

After going to the market I spent the morning sorting clothes ready for tomorrow's 'issuing'. I've now sorted all the t-shirts into big boys, small boys, play & smart; the same with the shorts. The trousers into smart, casual & jeans and suitable t-shirts and shorts for pyjamas.



Lesley continued sewing when she got back from except when she climbed up the big ladder to reconnect the pipe leading to the water butt – much to the horror and amusement of the locals!

There was great excitement with the arrival of the fundi to lay the foundation for the new building to house the POSHO mill. Most of the boys spent the morning 'labouring' for the fundis. Shovelling sand and stones, fetching water from the river and supplies like the bags of cement from the village.

Saturday 24th March

The 'issuing' is almost a ritual. It begins by me reminding the boys of the House rules, explaining the Rota and the daily schedule. Then I demonstrate how to make a bed and much to the amusement of the boys today I demonstrated how to use a face flannel and towel! I didn't think I looked funny at all! (from Lesley....Oh yes she did!)



All the boys are very keen to show us their school work. Earlier this week several of the smaller boys brought their school books with lots of red ticks for us to see. Isaac, one of the youngest boys doesn't get home work and only does a half day at school didn't want to be left out so he brought me his last terms exam paper to see. Here are some of his Social Studies and CRE answers. (His answers are in red. Also, remember that the exam was written in English and Isaac does not speak/read much English so he may have been guessing some of them)

We go to school to ? (laugh, learn, **steal**)

We use a ? to cross a river (**ladder**, road, bridge) *It did look like a ladder in the picture*

We wash our bodies in ? (bathroom, toilet, **river**) *Our boys do wash in the river*

A ? is a sad function (funeral, wedding, **birthday**) *I guess it depends how old you are!*

Our Father who art in ? (**school**, heaven, home)

We should love our ? as ourselves (plants, neighbours, **animals**)

We should pray and give food to ? people (**good**, sick, perfect)

Sinners go to ? when they die (heaven, hell, **Egypt**)

Jesus was crucified on Mt ? (**Kenya**, Sinai, Calvary)

The resting day is the ? one (6<sup>th</sup>, **9<sup>th</sup>**, 7<sup>th</sup>,)

(cow, bear, **giraffe**) is a small animal

More next time .....

# Meru

We had a meeting while we were in Nairobi where John explained more of what had been going on in Meru over the last few months. He told us that he had been speaking to the authorities to see if they would be willing to help with the street boys and he explained that we were trying to build a safe house for some of the boys to help the situation and specifically the children. He informed us that the authorities are acknowledging the work we are trying to do but they did take some boys off the street and put them in a cage. Then, the bigger boys were taken to a house by the authorities where food was needed and doctors were there to see the boys and circumcise n them. (It is normal and cultural that boys of about 9 or 10 are circumcised). But the authorities failed to feed them and John tried to help. It has been a big challenge for John and his son who helps him. After a while they did not know what to do with them so the boys were released from the building and are now back on the street. The boys were quite distressed about what happened and apparently a number of them have gone to ground. But a lot of the younger ones turned to John for help, even going to his house. That is encouraging to see that they are showing trust. It will help in their rehabilitation once they are at their new home.

As you can imagine this makes us more determined to start the building and as we write, John is organising, getting sand, ballast and other materials on site ready to start. Due to the drought prices are rocketing, so it is important to get supplies quickly to save some money.



We are really looking forward to being able to get these boys safely into a home, fed and cared for and hopefully attending school. At the moment they are grateful for the food they get and that someone cares for them. John and his small team should be congratulated on what they have done for these boys.

When people come to Kenya to help our project we try, where possible to help them achieve new experiences that are related to their work. Here are three accounts.

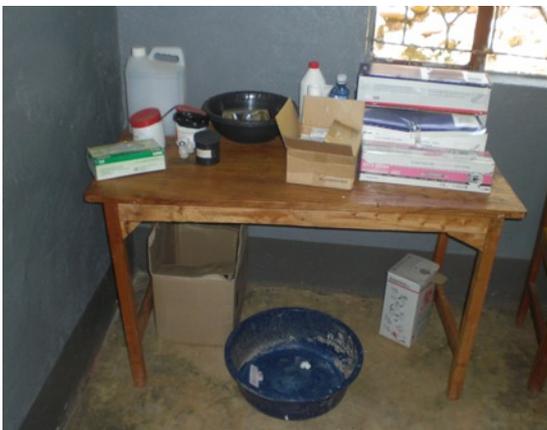
**An experience for a Student Nurse.**

**By Faye Sebborn**

During my expedition to ‘Harambee for Kenya’, I was offered the incredible opportunity to visit several Kenyan hospitals. This was such an important experience for me as I am training to be a children’s nurse back in England. I first visited the level 5 hospital in Kissi; this is one of the highest rated public hospitals in Kenya. Although it has the highest standards in Kenya, it did not compete with the level of health care we receive here in the UK. The Kenyans were very keen to show us around their hospital and explain how they do things in their country, this was very much appreciated. I was able to visit the children’s wards, gynaecology wards, premature babies, theatre, and labour and post natal wards. I interacted with patients, parents and staff; this gave me a first-hand insight into how their care is delivered. The most humbling thing about visiting this hospital was how lucky and glad the Kenyans felt to have a hospital of this standard in their town. I also visited a level 4 and 2 hospital. Whilst at the level 4, it was hard to believe that there were two lower standards, how could it get much lower? However I soon realised that the standard of the hospital wasn’t just judged on the degree of medical care, but the size of the actual hospital. At the level 4 hospital security and levels of patient safety that you would expect in any hospital in the UK and other 1<sup>st</sup> world countries were not apparent. We were free to walk into treatment rooms, wards and theatre rooms. On an encounter with the staff nurse on the premature baby unit, I explained that in England we only have one baby per incubator; she replied that they fill incubators with up to three babies and laughed at the concept of having one for each baby!

Although it was shocking to see the conditions that are classed as ‘excellent’ in Kenya it was possible to see how procedures have developed and how they are trying to improve standards, it is difficult due to the lack of money put into Kenyan hospitals due to the corruption of their country.

I would like to say a huge thank you to Lesley and Andrew for organising this life and career changing experience for me.



## A Life Changing Experience

I can't believe that after well over a year's planning and talking about our trip to Kenya that we've finally been and come back. Our group consisted of scouts and explorers from 23<sup>rd</sup> Bromley, their leaders and me and two friends who joined them as helpers for the trip. After months of preparation suddenly we were landing in what seems at first glance to be a normal holiday destination. However, after leaving the familiarity of the airport and driving through rural Kenya on our way to Kisii, the magnitude of Kenya's poverty came to light. For miles there would be nothing but trees and dust by the side of the roads, punctuated here and there by Kenyan locals journeying many miles between villages; a lot were very young children, sometimes alone. It was unbelievable to think that their parents would allow them such free rein, one of the many cultural differences found between Africa and the Western world. Every now and again we'd drive past villages and small towns made up of poorly constructed sheds and shacks that were their shops and homes. The children and many adults as well would wave and point at us, grinning and shouting 'mzungu!' meaning white man. What struck me most at this point was that they all seemed happy and content with their lives as they were; I then realised that they may not necessarily know of any different ways of life to compare theirs to.

We arrived in Nyakoe, a small village outside of Kisii, during the afternoon of our third day in Kenya, full of anxious anticipation as to what to expect over the next few days. I was especially apprehensive about meeting the street boys of the safe house as up to this point I hadn't given much thought as to what they would be like. I needn't have worried; they were amazing. Delighted to see us, they ran to meet us and were high fiving, fist bumping and shaking hands with all of us before we'd properly got off the bus. They hardly let us carry our own bags and hoisted our heavy suitcases up onto their tiny shoulders as if they weighed nothing, helping the scouts up and down the hill until everything was unloaded. To say the boys were friendly would be an understatement. Watching them and our scouts interacting was captivating. Many of the younger boys didn't speak much English, but the language barrier wasn't a problem at all. By the time the day was over and the children, Kenyan and English, were tucked up in bed, many friendships had begun to form already.

Over the next few days we settled into a daily rhythm, doing project work that involved moving fences and digging a foundation for a new patio area; visiting the supermarket for food in groups; fetching river water and above all, playing with the street boys. They were fascinated by our cameras and would borrow them to take endless pictures of us and each other. They would sit for ages plaiting mine and the other girls' hair. They would come and sit on anyone that was sat down and hug and kiss them like we were old friends. It was remarkable to see how affectionate these boys are, especially considering their past of neglect and suffering.



We went with some of the boys to school one morning and watched them sit their end of term exams. It was humbling to see how appreciative they are of their schools and how much they want to learn. It reminded all of us how much we take for granted at home; that an education for us is customary whereas for the children of Kenya it's a privilege they work hard to earn.

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The best part of the trip for me was also the worst part. We divided into groups and each group spent one of four evenings on a night tour of Kisii. I went out the first night and therefore had little idea of what we would be seeing. We drove around the town in a matatu, a privately owned mini bus, keeping our eyes peeled for street boys. The town by night was so different to during the day. We passed the supermarket we shopped at every day and only down the road we came across the first group of boys that were homeless and living on the street. It's hard to separate the details of that night as it melted into a blur of shock, horror and disbelief. We saw boys as young as 6 or 7 living on the street and many were high on glue. We saw girls as young as 13 stood on street corners selling themselves to provide for families at home. Rich, a helper at the safe house and a former street boy himself, stepped in between some boys and a security guard whose baton was raised high ready to beat the boys who had come too close to his shop. Towards the end of the tour we picked up three boys who were all 10 years old and brought them back to the house. They were washed, given new clothes and some food and then put to bed on spare mattresses. It was a good ending to a harrowing night to see these children being helped. It was even better the next day to see these boys being welcomed by the others to join in and play and to see them smile.

This experience gave us a chance to see what life was like for the boys before they were brought into the safe house. It was incredible to see exactly what the charity does to help them and to feel like we helped make a difference to those boys' lives in one night. The safe house has such a warm environment and a refreshingly happy atmosphere. The boys don't feel sorry for themselves; they've put the past in the past and are working towards bright futures. On our last night the mood was subdued; no one wanted to leave, the Kenyans wanted us to stay. Goodbyes were really hard to get through, both then and the next morning as we set off and I know that not one person on the trip would ever pass up the opportunity to go again.

One of the many highlights of the trip for me was listening to the scouts talk about what they had observed and learnt from their point of view. It was wonderful to see that it had impacted them as much as it had me and that they too had taken in the enormity of what we had experienced. I can't put into words how pleased I am that I was given the chance to do something like this. It sounds clichéd but for me this really has been life changing.



**Beth Franklin**

**Help us to help these children.**

**There must be many fundraising ideas that you have. Share them with us. You may even be able to think of more ideas that people can do in their own homes with friend. We can let you have pictures, videos and slide shows as well as leaflets so that you can share our work so that your friends/colleagues can know where the money goes. What about a mufty day at work or school? What about a group of 10 work colleagues putting in £2 PER MONTH to sponsor a child? It's over to you.**

## Another account from the last expedition.

Kenya...a completely life changing experience. It has been just over two weeks since our arrival back into the UK and from the minute I stepped off of the plane I have wished I never left Kenya. After spending only two weeks there it felt like a second home and the people who I was with had become a second family.

Around a year ago, a selection of 23<sup>rd</sup> Bromley Scouts and Explorers signed up to embark on what they didn't know at the time to be a completely world rocking experience. Throughout the year we worked together as a team to fund raise, train and organise our trip. A year to prepare seemed like a long time but in a blink of an eyelid we found ourselves sitting at the airport in the departure lounge awaiting our flight; everyone with mixed emotions not knowing what to expect. We had all been given an idea of the circumstances that would encounter but being told them by someone else is never the same as being subjected to situations yourself.

Eight hours later we were finally there. After finding our bus and loading our bags onto the roof we all climbed in and set off on our journey. Driving out of Nairobi we began to see the extent of Kenya's poverty. The further we drove away from the heart of Nairobi the sparser everything became; roads became dust tracks, tin houses and shops and children that looked as young as 4 wondering alongside the road. Already within the first half an hour of being there we realised how different our lives were.

Our third day in and we arrive in at the Harambee Safe House and wow, what a welcome. The boys came running down to us and before we had even got off the bus they were hugging, hand shaking and jumping about. I have never been so overwhelmed. Before we even had the chance to pick up our bags the boys were already carrying them up to the safe house on their shoulders and heads, effortlessly. I couldn't believe how strong they were.

Once we had put up our tents and unpacked we finally got to spend some time with the Kenyan boys. Over the week we really got to know the boys and each one of them was truly amazing. They all had their own unique personality which shone through and through. Our Scouts and Explorers got on with them like they had known each other for years and after speaking with a few of them when we got back they all expressed how happy they were to have been able to meet and spend a week with them. I think I can speak for us all, we really miss them.



Over the week we got stuck into some project work involving a lot of physical exercise and hard graft which I can safely say was very tiring. We were also allocated into groups and took it in turns to do the food shopping, water collecting and cleaning. We had a routine that worked well as we did it as a team.

An experience which I felt brought everyone a lot closer was the opportunity to visit Kisii in the evening. There were 4 tours over 4 nights. The leaders took the first trip so they were able to experience it for themselves and know what to expect when taking out their groups later in the week. I cannot even begin to explain my feelings towards what I saw. The matatu (a privately owned minivan) drove through the town where we witnessed girls as young as 12 selling themselves to provide for their family, many of them high so they didn't have to remember what they were doing. We also saw boys as young as 5 on the street sniffing glue to eliminate the pain they were feeling. We got the chance to smell the glue and even when the bottle had been disposed of the smell still lingered. The only way to describe the smell would be wall paper striper. What was most upsetting about the experience was that there was nothing in our power to help all of them; but knowing that there were charities like Harambee for Kenya out there helping children made it a little easier. After each tour when we arrived back to the safe house we would all sit in a group and talk about what we had seen. This showed how close and comfortable we had become as a group, being able to speak about how we felt without the feeling of being judged or feeling uncomfortable.

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Another opportunity we were given was the chance to visit a Kenyan School. Walking around was another culture shock of how different our upbringing is. We were given a tour by the deputy head teacher and asked to invigilate the examinations. We had been there for 10 minutes and already felt helpful. That was something about Kenya that I loved, even if they had known someone for a brief period of time they worked well together to get the job done. Out there everyone helps everyone giving a real sense of a community. When the school children came out for break we went onto the playing field with them. Some of the Scouts played football with them and some were taught a new version of hop-scotch. Being at the school and seeing how the children worked so hard and felt privileged to be there made me realise what we take for granted. We all had a great time at the school and again felt so welcome.

As the week drew to an end the atmosphere changed dramatically; while we all missed home, family and friends we all didn't want to leave the boys. We knew saying good bye would be one of the hardest things we had to do and it was. The boys waved us off in the exact place they had greeted us, however this time with different emotions.

On the next Scout meeting after we got back, I spoke to the scouts and asked how they were. They all said exactly the same as how I was feeling, they missed it, the whole experience but mostly they missed the boys. A lot told me of the great friendships that had formed and what they had learnt from the safe house boys.

I am so grateful for being given the opportunity to go on this expedition and would jump at the chance to go again. A day hasn't gone past when I haven't missed it.



Ellen Simmons

## Fundraising

**We need your help!**

**We are looking for more people to help us fundraise.**

**At the moment we have a small but happy band of helpers who do craft sales and boot fairs to help us raise funds to care for the children. Can you do one or maybe two boot fairs a year to raise money. We will give you I.D. so that people can see you are recognised fundraisers. Or can you come and help us do ours. Contact us now before the season starts.**

## Ideas

**Can you run a quiz night or race night to help us raise funds. What about a fork supper with friends and have a raffle? If each friend does a dish as a donation to the evening and everyone donates say £5 for a two or three course meal. Then you can send the donation to us for the kids.**

**What about a Kenya evening with Kenyan recipes?**

**Maybe you have a better idea. Share them with us and better still, run it and let us know how it went. Send us pictures and we can share your idea.**