

Newsletter 2

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Greetings from The Gambia...

By January I will have been in The Gambia for a year- time has passed so quickly!! Even though I have adapted well to life here I don't think I will ever sleep through the mosque's call to prayer at 4.45am or the night frogs' late night songs! Many times since I came to live here I have experienced the kindness of strangers- often these folk have very limited material wealth but they share generously from what they have- a very humbling experience!



With friends Adama and Awa

My work continues in Methodist Special School and Albion Lower Basic School....

In **Methodist Special School** I am working alongside school staff in developing a play-room for the pupils using the resources already available. As few of the teaching staff are trained in working with pupils with special needs they do not realise the value of structured play opportunities in the education of the pupils. As time goes on it is my hope that the staff will observe the pupils enjoy their new learning experiences in the playroom and using the outdoor play equipment and recognise its value in the pupils' education. The playroom has now been in operation for a month following the much needed cleaning, reorganisation and fighting off the mosquitoes living in the room! Already the pupils are enjoying the practical activities and using the equipment which had been in the store underused for some time.

My transport to Special School has now improved since the repair by English donors of another minibus available to the school. No longer do we need to push the minibus and we always arrive to school on time!



The rainy season (particularly in August and September) caused a lot of damage to Special School- particularly to the roof and classes below. As a result the opening of school for the new term had to be delayed while urgent repairs were carried out. Some pupils had their classes outside while repairs were being completed. On behalf of the Irish Methodist Church I made a contribution of approximately £100 towards the repairs.

Please remember the Special School in your prayers as I seek to work with the School Board and school staff to address some of the management, financial and organisational difficulties present.

In **Albion Lower Basic School** we now have just four working computers (previously there were five) but this doesn't stop learning...classes continue and the children as always show the same enthusiasm for learning even though five pupils may have to share one computer! At Albion we are all looking forward to the arrival of the container hopefully before Christmas organised by the Irish Container Ministry- on board will be some additional



computers and printers- what a difference they will make to the teaching and learning in Albion.

As a result of a gift of money from my friend Hazel in memory of her husband I have been able to make a donation of £200 to the Methodist Clinic at Marakissa so that the roof of the waiting area there could be repaired so that people could be protected from the sun and the rain whilst they wait patiently (for many hours) for treatment.

I am always delighted to receive your emails, letters and text messages bringing me encouragement and assuring me of your support as I work here in The Gambia. I thank you too for your continued financial support and the huge effort that has gone into the organisation of the container to bring so many much needed resources here! May the Lord bless you for your generosity and your faithfulness to Him.



I was able to return home from mid-August to mid-September and had a great time with friends and family catching up on all that had happened in my absence! I also had time to fit in a few talks about my work in The Gambia. The weather was so bad when I was there that I was accused of bringing the Gambian rainy season home with me! I will be spending Christmas in The Gambia- this will be my first time to spend Christmas apart from friends and family. I would ask you to remember my friends and family in your prayers.

I pray that as you prepare for Christmas and celebrate Christ's birth your hearts will be filled with hope and peace knowing that Christ is Emmanuel...God with us.

Ruth

At Fivemiletown Methodist Church with my niece Sarah in her Gambian outfit.

If I go up to the heavens You are there; if I make my bed in the depths You are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast. Psalm 139 v8-10