

# Kamatungu News

October 2015

Many thanks to all the friends of Kamatungu School for the Deaf for their support in prayer during my recent visit to the school---I was so thankful for this support as I drove my nineteen year old vehicle along the rough roads of Tharaka on my own (especially as I can't even change a wheel!)

I arrived at the school during the last week of the summer break as I wanted to spend time with class 8 (the children with whom I had started the school), meeting their parents and making arrangements for their further education after they leave Kamatungu in November. We were



delighted to see each other again and it was lovely to see how the children had matured into responsible and caring young teenagers.

Depending on their transfer results these young people will either go to the high school for the deaf in Nyeri or to vocational training in Nairobi. All secondary education in Kenya has to be paid for and the families of these young people could never afford the cost involved so the parents asked me to thank you all most sincerely for the opportunity you are giving their children.

On the right you can see Peter's mother giving thanks at the news that Peter can go to Nairobi to learn a trade. She is a widow and struggles even to grow enough food to feed her family. Peter wants to learn welding so hopefully he will find work after he qualifies and be able to provide for his mother in the future.



The government now realizes the need for a vocational centre for the deaf in Tharaka so they have given ten acres of land and about £5000 to start the project. It will probably take a few years to complete but at least the ground has been cleared and the foundations started. This would provide a more sustainable option for the deaf children in the future. Hopefully we shall be able to provide for the children's secondary education until this new centre is in operation.



The highlight of the first week was Rachael's wedding. Rachael was my first housemother and she worked with me for the first four years of the school. She was a bright girl and had the qualifications to go to teacher training college but she didn't have the money. She saved all her salary during the four years she was at the school and then with the help of a small loan she was able to go to college. She qualified, got a teaching job, met another teacher (from a wealthy background) and they came back to Kamatungu church for their wedding. My class and I were invited and it was lovely to be able to share in the celebrations.



Class 8 in new clothes for the wedding



Bringing the bride to her husband's homestead

At the beginning of the second week all the children were to return to school to start the third term. However, the day before they were due to return the teachers' union declared a countrywide strike (which is still continuing at the time of writing!). I then decided to visit some of the children who live not too far from the school. Their homes were not accessible by car so I travelled by motorbike.



Setting out for Nicholas's home.

Then the road became too rough even for the motorbike so we walked the last few miles.



Nichols's parents were delighted to see us and of course immediately made us tea and chapatti



I had had new uniforms made for all the children so we brought Nicholas's with us.



He looked really smart in his new uniform and shoes. We left everything with him so he could wear them to church the next day.

During the weeks I was there I was able to visit a number of children in their homes and let the parents see the children in their new uniforms.

Some children lived too far away for me to visit so I sent Kibaara (the grounds man) on a motorbike to bring several of them into school.

Gacheri and her mum travelled four hours on the motorbike to reach the school.



Sunday school children in Portadown had raised some money to buy more chickens

for the school so Gacheri and her mum accompanied us to the market to buy the best chickens at a good price!!!



Peterson and his mother also travelled three hours on the motorbike to school. Kibaara took this photo when he went to collect them. The thatch roof of their home does not give much protection when the rains come. Some friends in Ireland had kindly sent money to build a better



traditional home for Peterson and his mum. Francis (our builder) said he would supervise this so we all went to the market to buy the iron sheets, posts, wood for doors etc. Hopefully the house will be built before the rains in December.

I would love to be able to help more of our children in this way as so many of them fall ill during the Christmas holidays due to poor shelter.



For the last week of my visit to Kenya my class returned to school despite the strike being on and we had a lovely week together. I had gone to Meru the previous week and bought skipping ropes, footballs, hoola hoops etc. to leave for the children to enjoy when the strike ends.



Class 8 really enjoyed trying these out.



We also had a great day at the goat market buying thirteen goats for the poorest families.



One little girl, Jenia, came to school not knowing about the strike so she was able to take her goat home with her on the motorbike.



On the Sunday we joined Rev Patrick at the community service (as there was no school service due to the strike). It was lovely to see some of the young people in the church using the laptop, screen etc. which had been sent out by the container ministry. The church is continuing to grow with a very active women's fellowship, men's fellowship, Sunday school and youth fellowship.

Due to the teacher's strike my visit turned out quite different from what I had planned but I had the opportunity to visit children's homes, spend time with people and do things which I might not otherwise have had time to do, so actually everything worked together for good. Please continue to remember the deaf children of Kamatungu in your prayers, especially class 8 that they will stay close to Christ as they move to the next stage of their education.



Thank you again for all your support in prayer and giving-----it is very much appreciated by the children, their parents and all at Kamatungu School for the deaf.

Every blessing, *Helen*