

**Corsley and Chapmanslade Churches
'Through the Open Door' Issue 237: Sudan Special**



High Achievers Riny Kornello, aged 17, with the 'Salisbury Cup' and the top girl, Salome Poni, with the 'Canterbury Cup'. Baroness Cox is on the right of the photo; Dr Margaret Griffin is on the left.

Riny got 86.9% and was the sixth-highest achiever in the whole of South Sudan. His father is Governor of the Central Bank of South Sudan; Riny hopes to study Engineering at University in Malaysia.

Salome achieved 83% and was the third-highest girl in the whole of South Sudan. Nationally, of the 17,103 candidates who took school certificate only 4,874 (28%) were girls. At JDMSS, 111 students took the exam this year; just under half were girls. Nationally, the performance in arts was better than science; at JDMSS, this was the other way round.

Visit to Juba - October 2013

Friday 18th October

We had a smooth overnight journey landing in Nairobi as the African dawn was breaking. On arrival at Juba Penny discovered that her visa had been wrongly dated by the Sudanese embassy in London and stated that she was to return to UK the next day! Much prayer transpired in the passport control queue as this was negotiated and eventually after being taken off to another office Penny was told it was 'Ok' which we took to mean she could stay until Monday when her return is planned. Later we discover that she needs a new visa and thankfully the provincial office sorted this out for another \$100. We had four extra suitcases filled with a range of weird items including batteries for the science lab, wrapped presents, and two laptops.

Richard managed to sweet talk the customs people telling them about the school and we got through without paying duty or losing any of the items. Praise God for these answers to prayer. We arrived at the school after lunch and there was a wonderful buzz of preparations for the opening with students practising singing and drama. So much energy and enthusiasm. Having settled in to our accommodation three of us at ECS guesthouse (rats, no power, plain breakfast) and three at the Juba Grand (imagine that yourself!) we all ate together at the Juba Grand on our first evening and slept well.

Morning Parade (assembly) was led by student called Kaguta Geoffrey. He led the singing with a clear love for God and Paul was able to speak with him later. He wants to be either a building engineer or a pastor. As I (Paul) have done both of these I encouraged him to do both too! Baroness Cox is arriving today to open the Boarding House on Saturday. The Archbishop is now unable to attend to conduct the dedication but his place will be taken Bishop Fraser Assistant Bishop of Juba. We were all busy this morning on our allotted tasks as the student erected awnings and washed out their classroom ready for the big day.



Some girls from the School Scripture Union Group singing worship songs and dancing.

Saturday 19th October

Gerry and Baroness Caroline Cox arrived safely yesterday. The school continued to prepare for the prize giving.

Paul and Penny called on Cathy at the CCC orphanage, taking gifts, little dresses for little girls and Teddies in beautiful embroidered bags for the orphans. There are girl 40 orphans at CCC (primary school age) and one, Esther, at JDMSS. Problem: who should receive the gifts. Solution: Cathy solved the problem by keeping them all for Christmas.

We had a very happy meal at the Juba Grande with Baroness Cox, much laughter and conversation. The Girls' Boarding House exceeds all our expectations. 26 are in residence at present, but 14 more can be accommodated. The girls have colourful bags on the ends of their bunks and their rooms are both spotless and attractive.

Today's Prize Giving suffered from African time, as was to be expected, but was a huge success. The Scripture Union worship was outstanding. The words of their first song had us in tears - 'King of kings, You are wanting to be our King, Lord of lords, You are wanting to be our Lord'. Baroness Caroline Cox introduced herself modestly as a nurse who had been given the gift of being a member of the House of Lords. She received this gift with the determination to be a voice for the voiceless in Westminster. She told us she had been to Sudan/South Sudan 40 times and honoured the people for holding the front line against darkness, through much suffering. Her Christian faith shone bright, as did that of many others today. Her message for the students was 'enthusiasm' meaning 'shining for God' - nothing being achievable without enthusiasm. The students who received prizes with jubilation and had friends draped them with garlands to applaud them too. At 5pm a weary team returned to their respective 'hotels'! Please pray for Paul to have a good rest, so he is refreshed and ready to preach at the Cathedral in the morning on Luke 18, the story of the persistent widow.

Gerry returned after the thrill of knowing the science grades more than matched those of other subjects. Indeed all the students need congratulating in passing their exams with a minimum average score of 65% - some with individual subject scores in the 90s. English grades were particularly good too. Gerry had a useful meeting with Archangelo, pre-planning for next summer's science course in Aweil, in the north of South Sudan. Many of the students remembered the visit of Natasha and Tanate and asked if they will be returning soon. Thanks for all your love and prayers. We are so blessed. His hand is upon us.



A photo taken in May when the builders handed over the keys of the Boarding House.

Sunday 20th October

We've had a wonderful Sunday worshipping and spending time with our Sudanese friends. Paul preached well to a full Cathedral congregation introducing his sermon with how the word of God is the basis of our unity and then the parable of the persistent widow showing the opposites of the story – how God is nothing like the judge, as he is generous and delights to give and we are not like the widow without a protector. The congregation clapped at the end (members of St Francis please note!).

We then drove to the CCC orphanage where we had coffee with other ex-pats. Richard met the project manager from Tearfund and arranged a meeting for Tuesday. Richard attended the later service at the Cathedral with powerful worship starting with 'How great thou art' enthusiastically sung and Bishop Justin of Maridi spoke on mission. There were two cabinet members in the congregation and the foreign minister for South Sudan also spoke hopefully about future relationships with the North. Richard spoke to him after the service. Gerry had lunch with friends, Wes and Jackie, who are working with Wycliffe Bible Translators, and are now engaged. (The secret is out!) The team walked from the Orphanage to Bishop Gwynne Theological College for a service with graduating pastors who will serve unpaid across Southern Sudan. This was followed by lunch in the shade eating chicken and chips with Sudanese salad eaten with our fingers.

Paul and Penny had not seen the Nile so we set out with Bishop Bismark as our driver. We drove over the only Nile bridge until you reach Khartoum and then went to Gabat where numerous steel river barges were being constructed, the rebirth of a river transport system. We also visited the church of Rev Daniel Dunyo who stayed at St Francis with the Mundys for three months in 2003. Daniel is Assistant pastor of this church and they had just finished a mission week and had been launching new services in their growing church. It was extremely hot and Bismark took us to a restaurant to enjoy a fresh passion fruit drink. Wonderful!

We met at the Juba Grand again for Baroness Cox's last evening (To us she is Caroline now!). Bishops Francis Loyo and Bishop Bismark joined us and it was a very happy evening. Caroline Cox commended the team and especially Margaret and Richard on the immense achievement that is Juba School and the new Girls Boarding House. She presented the Bishops with special pens containing powerful lights and said how they had been lights through the times of war and how she had found the joyful faith and worship of their people inspirational. Richard was presented with a beautiful carved ebony walking stick. As Richard tried using it on leaving the hotel Paul told him to find a wall to hang it on, as we need more work out him yet!

The last few days will be very busy which much still to achieve. Please pray that we can get Penny's passport back from immigration so that she can leave tomorrow afternoon. There is an important meeting about staffing at the girls boarding house with the Diocesan Secretary tomorrow. Please pray for wisdom for Margaret and Richard as they lead on this. Gerry is training the new science technician this week and asks for prayer for his meetings with university and ministry contacts and for God directed networking. Paul will be looking at a number of building issues. Graham is continuing the good progress he has made with reviewing the school's finances.

We give thanks to God for all that has been achieved. Thank you for your prayers.

Monday 21st October

Happy Trafalgar Day! Richard was excited. A good day with many good meetings and lots being accomplished. Parade (assembly) sets the tone at JDMSS, with student participation and humour as well as being a motivational time and a time to give praise to God. Penny got her passport and is now on her way home, but not without needing to give her fingerprints to immigration two hours before leaving! Paul and Graham had a solar power and building meetings. The Girls' Boarding House generator is unsuitable, being too small and noisy. Plans are in place to rectify this situation.

Richard and Paul gave the bursary students their letters and presents. Sponsors should expect replies. Gerry helped David, the new technician, with Archangelo's help to construct an electric

circuits kit. Rev Samuel went to the market and returned with eight 3m planks of wood on his motorbike, all planed to size, These will be used to construct more apparatus during the week.

Tonight we had the celebration meal as a thank you to the staff of JDMSS for the outstanding exam results. After a meal that ended with a wonderful platter of tropical fruit salad, there were some great speeches. Margaret took the opportunity to applaud the teachers and certificates of achievement were presented to the teachers who taught the school leavers.

Please give thanks for seeing God work out His purposes. Please pray for good rest. It is hot. For Robert Hayward, who arrives tomorrow, for Richard, Paul and Margaret to accomplish all they need to do on their last full day here.



Caption: Richard spoke on the theme of partnership. In the photo are five of the people who carried out the original evaluation of the Secondary School in 2006. It includes Rev Paul Taylor, Vicar of St Francis Church, Salisbury. St Francis church provided the original 'seed' money for the project and it was Paul's first visit since 2006. He was amazed to see the harvest that God has provided from that 'seed'.

Tuesday 22nd October

Greetings from a fresh Juba following afternoon rains, so now a cooler 31C!

Robert arrived on time from Addis Ababa and after a quick check-in at the ECS Guest House had an important meeting smoothing the way for an application to Christian Aid. Richard was able to visit the Tearfund office where he had a good time with the country manager. We are looking forward tomorrow to the unveiling of a plaque on the science laboratory by the country manager of Christian Aid.

Gerry had an excellent meeting at the Ministry of Education. Noel the former science technician came to help Gerry with David's training. Two engineers from a multinational came to see the Physics kits that David is making and were more than impressed.

Paula and Margaret had a very productive three hour buildings committee meeting with leaders from the school and diocese. The good news is that the diocese has a new buildings engineer called Sebit. There was much agreement on some difficult issues including the new reception area. Paul joined the inspiring JDMSS Scripture Union meeting with around 50 students singing and praying passionately.

Margaret had a happy time with the Boarding House girls, offering advice and answering questions. They love their new home though the generator isn't fit for purpose as they have no light most of the time. This situation will be rectified. Paul and Graham have worked to access the possibility of solar power instead. Tonight we enjoyed a meal with Larry Duffee, who is a mine of information on all things Juba.

Give thanks for our very special meetings, with all that we had hoped to do we have been able to do. Please pray for a safe return for Margaret, Richard and Paul tomorrow and for blessings on Gerry and Graham's work in the next few days. Your prayers are so appreciated. We want you to know that it is wonderful to be covered with blessing through our time here.

Thursday 24th October

Some sad news at JDMSS this morning. Stanley Modi, the older Physics/Engineering Science teacher woke up and had a heart attack and died. I got back to the school as the students were being told in a special assembly. Classes at the school have been cancelled until Monday morning. A number of teachers and students were going to the family home. David, the science technician, will join me in the morning to complete the work I have to do with him before I return to the UK, but this news is such a shock to everyone.

This morning I went to the university to join Ben with his College of Education teacher trainees for a Physics practical session. The Physics/Electronics technician, Paul, accompanied us. With limited resources, Paul has made some excellent apparatus. I am suggesting that David, who he met in the summer at JDMSS, goes to visit him, taking examples of things he has made. They could encourage one another and David could learn other skills from Paul. One of Paul's ideas is a solar powered dc lab supply. If he had the means to manufacture printed circuit boards he could even go into production with the system!

I also went to the Afex River Club and met their manager. To cut a long story short, they have agreed to give a proportion of the profits of a party to support the work David is doing to construct apparatus. This could partly support his salary next month and help to fund items he will need in his work. All the school will need to do is to set up a display of items that David has made. I am suggesting Edward, the head of Maths/Physics at the school, accompanies David on this night.

So, sadness and joy. It was only on Tuesday night at the celebration dinner that Stanley gave a lovely speech, his last speech this side of heaven. It was only at the science course in July that Stanley had shared with me his plans for retirement about living in the cool Kajo-Keji hills.

Please pray for Stanley's family, his work colleagues and students as they mourn the loss of this lovely, dignified and intelligent man. Please pray also for Robert Hayward and his work here and my safe return to the UK tomorrow.

Richard Dean and Team