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“CHALK WOULD BE A MIRACLE”



When we visit the local market we never know what we may find under the stalls.

It is always with excitement that Pola and I prepare to go to Kenya to see our friends in the Mara, but also with a sense of responsibility. We were particularly excited in February to return to the medical centre and see it in full working order. We were not disappointed.

As we arrived the waiting room was full of mamas and children and a few men. It was a beautiful sight. We are not sure if more people are attending for treatment than would have visited the dispensary, but certainly the facilities are more appropriate.

Whilst we were visiting Mara Rianda Primary School, one of the pupils was taken ill and was in great pain and distress, we felt a sense of pride that our driver was able to take her to the medical centre where she was able to be treated and made comfortable. Those from Governors' Camp reading this newsletter, yes its true we used one of your vehicles as a makeshift ambulance, transporting a patient to the medical centre! Thank you. As we have mentioned many times, we are wholly reliant on the goodwill of Governors' and their generosity, without which we could not function.



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We frequently meet mamas who have given birth to their babies in the maternity centre. There are difficulties when births are at night as there is no electricity. Through the support of friends of Stephen Gale, who sadly died earlier this year we are in the process of installing solar lighting. A wonderful legacy in memory of a wonderful man.

The water system at the medical and maternity clinics is now completed. Clean running water is something we all take so much for granted. The Maasai at their homes somehow manage by harvesting rainwater, using bowls and buckets.



Some of the mum's with blankets knitted by supporters

There are ongoing water problems at Mara Rianda Primary School. We are trying to encourage the school committee to become less dependent on us and more proactive in raising funds from the community. The initial borehole drilled in 2005 is now insufficient for the 900 pupils at the school. You will remember there were less than 250 when I first visited in 2003. We have agreed to contribute to water harvesting as an interim measure. For the long term we are looking into the possibility of pumping and filtering water from the Mara river. It is over one mile away and will be costly but it is desperately needed.

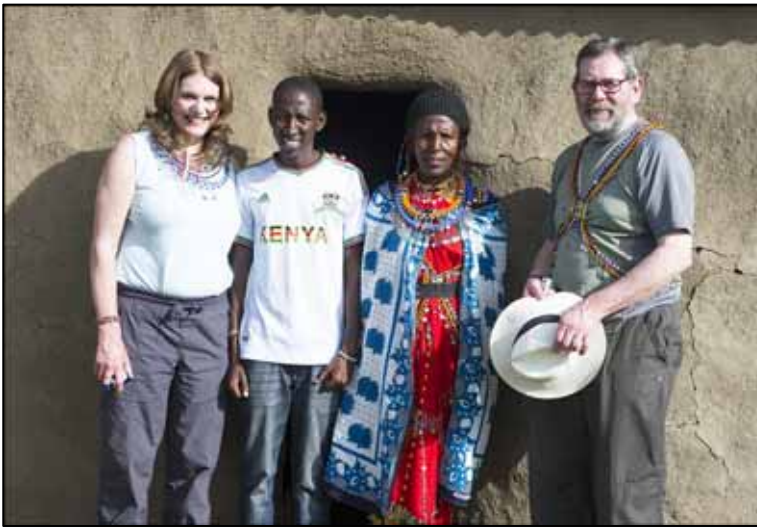


As usual we visited Enkereri Primary School, where the whole community come to thank us. A generous supporter has provided funds for all the pupils to have two sets of school uniform. The children are very proud to wear them.

Since we funded the building of the school in 2012 it has gone from strength to strength. We continue to supply educational materials and are looking to fund latrines and a kitchen for the school.

At one of the local villages we were very privileged to be invited to a special ceremony appointing two new elders. There was much singing and celebrating. A bull was killed and cooked but we declined their kind offer of eating with them. Yes, even me!





Jonathan with his mother and Sue & Richard

We have a sense of pride when supporters of the charity are able to visit and we can show them first hand the results of their generosity. We felt especially proud on this visit as Sue & Richard, the supporters of Jonathan through school and university, came and met him for the first time. It was a very emotional time for them, Jonathan and us. We don't usually pair up students with sponsors but this was an exceptional case.

Jonathan contacted me about six years ago and asked if we could provide a bursary for him to complete secondary school. He had previously attended Mara Rianda Primary School, but we had not met him. His brother had undertaken to pay for his secondary education and he had completed one year. His brother worked at a safari camp but lost his job. This was due to tribal clashes around election time when the tourist trade plummeted as people stopped travelling to Kenya, so Jonathan had to leave secondary school. He contacted us to see if we could help. Pola casually mentioned this to a friend, and the rest is history. Jonathan and his family invited us all to his home. As we sat in the shade of a tree outside their mud hut, surrounded by goats and the vast expanse of the Mara, drinking soda that had been offered, it felt surreal, yet so normal. We chatted and laughed together with Jonathan and his family who extended their thanks and gratitude to his sponsors. We were showered with beautiful gifts. Jonathan has since finished university and awaits his results.

Once again tourism is at a low level in Kenya and this drastically effects the entire country.



We visited our students at five secondary schools in Narok. They are all very grateful for the support they receive and it's always an immense pleasure to see the difference being made in their lives. Pupils at Oloomirani High School (left) and pupils at St Mary's Girls Secondary School (below).

If you are a UK tax payer a bursary can be funded by monthly standing order of £26 for four years. With Gift Aid your donations will effectively be the full amount required to fund one child for four years of education. If you are interested in assisting a child in this way please let me know and return the enclosed standing order and Gift Aid form.





Some of our boys at Ololulung'a High School



Pola & her girls at Oloomirani High School

Support is always welcome and greatly appreciated. There is always a need for new books, sports equipment and general school supplies as well as assistance with capital projects. Should you wish to give any support please make cheques payable to The Mara Rianda Charitable Trust.



Should you ever wish to come and join us in the Mara to see first-hand the work we are involved in please let me know.



September is normally the best time to join us as this is the time of spectacular migration. The Mara is very safe unless you are four legged prey for a cheetah!

As usual I do apologise if you feel this letter is an intrusion and should you not wish to receive any further letters then please do let me know.

Yours sincerely

Richard Long
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*And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.
Micah 6 v8 (NIV)*