

KEMPSON ENTERPRISE TRUST

(Charitable Trust formed in 1989 - Reg. No. 900126)

OUR REPORT for the year 2002-2003

For thirteen years now we have been encouraging young people, sixth-formers from both St John's School and Marlborough College, to do a wide range of enterprising and inspiring activities. Most of these have tended to be Gap year projects overseas, but we stress that we are eager to support almost any idea, academic or athletic, long-term or brief, at home or abroad, that embodies the spirit of enterprise. In this we are inspired by the example of 'G' Kempson, teacher, climber and all-round Renaissance man, who died in 1987.

We have now made grants of over £27,000 to projects involving well over 80 sixth-formers. This sampling from some excellent reports gives some idea of the range of experience of those the Trust supported last year.

Kitty Irby (MC) spent "the most amazing five months of my life" in North-west India; she planned to teach in a remote tribal school, but because of Hindu-Muslim conflict she had to change her plans. Instead she went to a Gujarati pre-primary school, where she was the first white skin they had seen, and then to an English-medium primary school where she taught English, Physics ("never my forte") and Art; here, to cover her lack of drawing skills, she introduced papier mache modelling. The family she stayed with treated her like their own and gave her true insights into Indian family life. She says, "I have been totally won over by India".

Tom Wilkins (St J) and a friend set out in July to cycle the entire Devon and Cornwall coastline (400 miles), raising £2000 for a cancer charity in memory of his mother. After a tough start when Devon was found to be "far more hilly than it seemed on the map", they got into their stride and were in Lands End on Day 5, had a bit of a rest at Newquay, and were overturned by a sheep in the mists on Dartmoor. Having completed the planned route at Minehead, they decided, as an encore, to cycle most of the way back to Marlborough!

Rebecca Davis (MC) wrote a lovely report about her five months in Morocco, working first in a refuge for unmarried mothers in Casablanca, then in a girl's boarding school on the other side of the Atlas Mountains on the edge of the Sahara. The mothers at the refuge, often victims of rape or prostitutes, were often very young and usually rejected by their families and found it hard to care for and bond with their babies. Rebecca quickly learnt to look after babies and regularly visited the local maternity ward; "always very emotional visits, and I will never forget the sensation of holding a baby in the first hours". She was

there to celebrate (rather squeamishly) the sacrifices of Eid al Cabir, and used her painting talents to decorate the walls with scenes of gardens and waterfalls. "Zweemaal (Beautiful)", gasped the Berber mothers.

Pippa Fletcher (MC) went to Belize in Central America with *Trekforce*; for her first six weeks she helped improve paths up a river creek to enable tourists to enjoy the area, cutting rails and mapping caves along the creek. After a month of Spanish language training she went to teach in a Spanish-speaking village in North Belize where the official language is English; the 4 - 7 year olds she taught to read had never spoken English before. Later she moved on to teach the more boisterous and aggressive 9 - 14 year olds which she found very challenging. "I learnt a lot about myself", she says, "and I am sure I have made some lifelong friends through the experiences we shared together".

Chris Gourley (MC), as part of an extensive travel (he was one of the first tourists to enter Baghdad after the war) was in Cuba, and from here he wrote an insightful critique of the workings of a totalitarian state. The continuing US blockade of the island, the Marxist propaganda that suggests that Capitalism owes them something, and the fact that tourism was introduced mainly as an economic necessity, all these factors have affected many peoples attitudes. "The most intriguing, baffling and thought-provoking country I have been to".

Glider pilots have to soar, to catch their lifts on rising thermals in order to stay aloft, and **Peter Ballard (St J)** for whom gliding has been the love of his life for two years went to hone his skills on a Young Pilots Soaring Course before competing in the junior national championships with mixed weather and fortunes. "A thoroughly enjoyable fortnight and an experience I hope to repeat as a fully fledged competitor".

Kate Hand (MC) spent the first two days in India in serious cultural shock! She was there to practice journalism for three months with *Teaching and Projects Abroad* in a small town in Tamil Nadu. There she helped to put together the *Siwakasi Times*, writing about everything from goatherds to pollution and all the local religious festivals. She even earned a weeks placement at the Madurai office of one of India's leading newspapers, and travelled widely in Tamil Nadu and Kerala sampling the richness and generosity of India.

After this she moved to South America to spend two months in Ecuador, partly teaching English and (even more usefully) environmental studies to youngsters and adults, and partly doing conservation work in a cloud forest nature reserve near Quito. Here, in "one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen", she helped with the many processes of re-afforestation, looking after the saplings and small trees, collecting seeds to be raised in the greenhouse and cutting back the undergrowth.

Victoria Price (MC) found remoteness in Zambia, working with *Greenforce* in the Kafue National Park. With about 18 others she lived in a simple camp with no electricity, with a water pump in the village and a wood fire for cooking. The team was carrying out a scientific survey of all the species in different habitats in the park. This involved bird and butterfly counts, traps to catch small ground creatures and measurement of trees and plants. They also did 'line transects' and vehicle drives at various times of day and night to spot and record the larger mammals, meeting leopards, antelopes, elephants (which could be dangerous) and packs of wild dogs. At one stage the work was extended to an island in a nearby lake. In this isolated life, quite cut off from the outside world, the abnormal became an everyday occurrence and a passing herd of elephants was scarcely remarked on. After this she travelled in Namibia, South Africa (where among other things she wrote the visitors guide to Wakkerstroom, a small town with good bird-watching) and Zimbabwe, "still beautiful but with the evidence of Mugabe's rule everywhere"

Pandora Crawley (MC) pursued her interests in theology and medieval history in an amazing tour of Syria, starting in Damascus where she stayed with a Syrian family and taught at an orphanage while exploring the lanes and souks of this ancient city. After two months improving her Arabic at a convent in Maaloula, she travelled widely visiting crusader castles, mosques and tombs, and riding camels with the Bedu. The outbreak of war in Iraq made things tense but did not stop her progress. She worked and studied at an active monastery in a medieval fortress before finishing in Jordan and the Dead Sea. "I have taken back invaluable knowledge of the Arab world, Islam, the struggles of the Christian community and the tensions and delicacy of the Palestinian question".

In a more dangerous world, we feel that international understanding and broader experience improves the chance of peace in the future. The Trustees would like to thank all those who have supported us in the past. We still need your help to enable us to continue and extend this very worthwhile work, and we appreciate any donations or suggestions.

Trustees of the Kempson Trust

Please send any donations to the Treasurer: John Robins

9 Swan Meadow Pewsey Wilts SN9 5HW

Tel: 01672 562703