

KEMPSON ENTERPRISE TRUST

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

OUR REPORT for the year 2003-2004

In our eleventh year, the Trust continues to grow and to pursue its objectives of encouraging enterprising activity among sixth-formers at St John's School and Marlborough College. In this, we recall the inspiration which E G H Kempson gave to so many of his pupils in such a wide range of interests, from mountaineering to printing, botany to local history. We continue to help students to do things which will broaden their experience, build confidence, and enrich their lives.

During the year, we were able to support 10 pupils and a one expedition, all planning to work and travel in their Gap year. The range of their experience was considerable, and we have tried to give some idea of this, using some of their excellent reports.

Rebecca Walker (MC) spent three months in conservation projects in Ecuador. She was able to appreciate and enjoy the great diversity of this lovely country as she worked on different placements in the coastal region, the mountains and the jungle. First she learnt to sharpen a machete to weed and prune and harvest in a remote wet forest reserve on the western side of the Andes with 'tremendous downpours, the baking sun and the incredible plethora of flora and fauna'. Next she went north to cloud forest at 3,500 metres in the Andes, an acutely threatened environment, with views down into cultivated valleys which fifty years ago were all forested. Her last month was spent in a reserve in the Amazon Basin, tending the botanical garden and teaching English at two local schools, and she then went for two weeks to the Galapagos Islands, 'the experience of a lifetime'.

Beccy Polack (St J) went to Mexico and worked for three months in a day centre for very severely disabled children. This was challenging; 'It was hard to see how I could help them', she says. 'But I soon saw that little things made the largest difference to their days'. She was able to learn a lot more about the children's conditions when American donors visited the centre with new equipment and some medical professionals, but also experienced the huge gap in child care standards between the richer and poorer countries.

Rebecca Honey (MC) greatly enjoyed the experience of teaching in a large, relatively well equipped international school in Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. She taught a variety of subjects to children from 6 to 16, even teaching sport: 'The boys especially enjoyed being better than a British person at football!' Visiting Zambian homes and

travelling to the Victoria Falls and Lake Kariba, she was impressed by the unfailing friendliness of the people.

Since **Jack Gormley (MC)** plans to read Medicine, he chose a medical project for four months in a large regional hospital in Cape Coast, Ghana, living with a local family. At first he was put in the Physiotherapy department, but soon found his way to working in Accident & Emergency assisting and learning from the nurses and the Ghanaian and Cuban doctors. Because he showed himself keen to learn, he was soon assisting in minor operations, practicing the skills of stitching, putting up drips, and helping midwives deliver babies. There was much that was hard for an 18 year-old coping with death and adventures in an African hospital; 'But I put myself out there in a big way, and loved every bit of it'.

Rufus Herner (MC) went to Chamonix in November for a season of winter alpine climbing, but stayed longer. After earning a bit as a ski technician, he got fit by ice-climbing and ski touring in this wonderful area, the birthplace and heart of alpinism. Then with a friend he tackled many of the great winter routes, culminating in the Messner Route on the Aiguille Argentiere, 'a long route done at night, and due to the fact that we neglected to bring any sort of emergency shelter, the temperature never let us stop moving.'

As winter turned to spring and the snow melted, he got back to rock climbing and got a job teaching others. Rufus has realised, as a result of this experience, that he wishes to devote his life to mountains.

Laura Sharp and Florence Everson (St J) learned an enormous amount about South India during their three-month there, going first to Chennai (Madras) and Madurai, then on an 'eight hour marathon' over the Western Ghats to Kerala to work at Navajeevan childrens home, helping to look after 250 boys and girls. At first they felt 'incredibly homesick and very alone', but they quickly settled in and made many friends, playing with the older children before and after school and looking after the nursery, the 3 to 6 year olds; playing, dancing and helping with their English. The children came from violent and deprived backgrounds but were happy and loveable, and it hard to leave them to move east to Tamil Nadu to work at a smaller home called Avvai Ashram. Here they really were immersed in south Indian life, the food, dress and customs, and making yet more friends. They found it a profound shock to return home.

It was, they say 'an experience we will always carry with us... it has broken any thoughts we had that poverty equals unhappiness.'

Mark Wright (MC) went to a remote island off the north coast of Honduras called Santa Elena, and within a few weeks with Coral Cay had become 'a fully qualified - if rather inexperienced - marine surveyor'. He gives a detailed account of the training - learning to recognise sixty different corals, forty species of algae and over 150 species of fish - and how the team of four surveyors with their Boat Marshal on the surface systematically count the species in a series of underwater transects, carefully defined areas of the reef. Mark dived about 90 of these surveys and became especially

fascinated by the marine algae, making his own discovery of a previously unknown species. He is left too with memories of the turtles, sharks, pilot whales and the graceful eagle rays.

For many years Marlborough has enjoyed a link with the town of Gunjur in the Gambia. It is a thriving fishing community with several large schools, but no piped water or electricity. **Charlotte Gibson** (MC) went to teach English in the Upper Basic School and stayed with the hospitable Manlafi, his two wives and fourteen children (not much peace or quiet!). She was quickly a part of the family with her own Gambian name, learning to manage the water from the well, using the latrine, washing from a bucket, and eating hugely from the communal bowl. She soon saw how central the family was to everyone's lives, and how the lack of interest in punctuality ('GMT = Gambian Maybe Time') goes with a higher priority for people and relationships. She enjoyed her teaching, making efforts to go beyond rote learning, and noting great differences of ability within classes. 'My experiences in Gambia were invaluablely precious.'

The Trust also helped Elizabeth Loveday (St J) and a group of 12 young people on the month-long Summer Visit to Gunjur. They all stayed with their hosts in the village (at the hottest and rainiest time), met key local people, took part in many of the development projects, like health education and a new vegetable plot, and helped to paint and decorate the development office and Pre-school (and each other). They visited the capital, Banjul, and travelled up the Gambia river before returning to Gunjur for a last football match and farewell parties for their many new friends.

Finally we congratulate **Tom Tapper** and four friends, **Robbie, Danny, Mark and Luke** (all St J) who cycled the 988 miles from Lands End to John O'Groats to raise a staggering £7000 for Cancer Research UK. In spite of hot weather, midges and sundry mishaps, they completed 'the most challenging adventure of our lives' triumphantly in 16 days. The Trust is glad to have been able to help them.

We hope that these accounts will give an idea of the quality of experience that the Trust has helped young people to enjoy; we have now made grants of over £30,000 to projects, involving more than 100 sixth-formers. The Trustees would like to thank all those who have supported us in the past. Recent world events have certainly not made for a safer world, but have also underlined the need for more and better international understanding; we hope that the work of the Kempson Trust is a small but significant contribution to this. We continue to appreciate any donations or suggestions to enable us to extend this very worthwhile work.

Trustees of the Kempson Trust

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