

KEMPSON ENTERPRISE TRUST

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

OUR REPORT for the year 2000-2001

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 overseas in their Gap year. The range of their experience was considerable, and we have tried to give some idea of this, using their own excellent reports.

Justin Davidson (MC) spent seven months in Brazil, five of them working at Abrigo (= haven) Warboys, a well-run, but very basic, home for about 30 deprived children near the capital Brasilia. For most of the time he looked after 6 eight-year-olds, one autistic and one with a mental age of three. He learnt how hard it can be to care for such children, often filling the role of parent for some of them. 'It was a completely unique experience' he writes, 'and thinking back on my time there it now feels quite surreal. I will always feel an attachment to the Abrigo and Brazil.... I hope to still help the Abrigo's stretched finances by raising money'.

After three months travelling in Fiji, Australia and New Zealand, Merryl Lawry-White (MC) went to teach at a girls boarding school not far from the Uganda border in Kenya. She was there through the rainy season when the local village of Kiminini, with its dirt tracks and red mud buildings became a mudbath in the daily torrential downpour. She taught Biology, Chemistry and AIDS Education to two classes of over 40 girls, learning much about the tragedy of AIDS in East Africa from her pupils. She also coached the netball team and helped with the school choir. 'The letters, presents and hugs that I received when I left made me realise that all the effort and time I had spent with the girls had been appreciated.' At weekends she visited the Rift Valley and Lake Borgoria, pink with flamingos, and at half term rafted on the infant Nile in Uganda; after her teaching spell, she travelled widely in East Africa. 'For all the highs and lows I can say this has been the best year of my life'.

James Giffard-Taylor (MC) went with GAP to teach English for three months in Tanzania. Expecting 'a clean little village, where the sun always shines, with a little school immaculately looked after, and pupils who were enthusiastic about learning', he found dilapidated classrooms with potholed floors and pupils, 90 to a class, who were well behaved but cowed by frequent caning.

Chris Till (MC) took the chance to go and teach in an orphanage in the SOS Children's Village in Swaziland and found himself teaching drama to several large classes of keen youngsters (*The Sword in the Stone*, *The Princess and the Pea*, and people singing *The Grand Old Duke of York* in the streets of the capital). He also filled in when teachers were away and gave extra lessons to try to get some bright children into a good local secondary college, took parties of orphans on trips out of their village and arranged free riding sessions for them at a local riding school. Chris did two long trips exploring much of South and East Africa, and his chance to both work and travel 'gave me an opportunity I may never have again.'

William King spent 5 months teaching in Nepal, his first trip outside Europe, arriving in the monsoon to experience the culture shock of the crowding and squalor of Kathmandu. Then the hair-raising bus journey down to the town of Vijaynagar on the edge of the Terai, near the Chitwan National Park with its rhinos and crocodiles, where he had to get used to the heat, mosquitoes, the rice diet eaten with the right hand and the straw mattress on two planks of wood. His school was a government secondary school with 1400 pupils aged 6 to over 20, and 22 teachers. Teaching was hard and he became aware of the poverty and difficulties for his pupils, particularly the girls with their limited prospects and arranged marriages at an early age. He also experienced the effects of Maoist and police activity, and the corruption and political instability. But he also found the feeling of joy when he 'had actually managed to teach something, ... had given something back to the people I was living with...the people are the most kind, considerate people and I do not think anything could change that.'

In a vivid and detailed account, Ed Hind (MC) tells of his journeys to the Philippines to dive with Coral Cay Conservation with the serious task of mapping the coastline to set up marine reserves (when he managed to develop an obsession for fish) and a series of treks in rain forest areas to survey tree regrowth and forest life. He also found time for exploration and visits round Manila. His travels continued with a range of adventures in Australia and Southeast Asia, and he packed a huge amount of experience into his Gap year before returning as 'a fully bonafide conservationist'.

Sam Christey (MC) went with Raleigh International to Namibia where he set to, after a warm greeting and with a truly international team, to build the foundations for a school hostel. He also taught in the kindergarten and fielded

a football team against the local lads, forging close links with them. In the second phase the task was to construct a viewing hide above a water-hole in a remote National Park, with constant threat from lions and elephants. Finally he was chosen to trek down the Huab river which flows intermittently 300km from the Namibian highlands through volcanic deserts and dunes to meet the sea at the Skeleton Coast. Three weeks of cold nights, hunger, heavy loads and hard baking days brought him to the sea 'a stone lighter and black as a gateau'. Travel in Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa rounded off 'the most enjoyable and satisfying 3 months of my life'.

The Trust supported a group of pupils from MC who spent an insightful month in Tanzania. They began in the North with a tough trekking safari through the remote Crater highlands, exploring vast open plains and extinct craters with flamingo-covered soda lakes in their floors. Then they moved to the North Pare mountains, living with the pupils in a secondary school, seeking out the medicinal plants in the forests, and visiting a drought-stricken Masai village in the plains near the Kenyan border. Finally they moved out to the Moslem spice island of Zanzibar for wonderful diving, unique vegetation, and a terrifying trip in flimsy boats to see dolphins dancing in a six-foot swell. 'Tanzania offered us so many different experiences and the people we met accepted us all with such hospitality'.

We hope that these accounts will give an idea of the quality of experience that the Trust has helped to enable; we have now made grants of over £21,000 to projects, involving more than 60 sixth-formers. The Trustees would like to thank all those who have supported us in the past. Recent world events have tended to make travel more hazardous, but have also underlined the need for more and better international understanding; we hope that the work of the Kempson Trust is a small 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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