

Kempson Enterprise Trust

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OUR SECOND REPORT

to donors and supporters, covering 1995/96.

The Trust continues to honour the memory of E.G.H.Kempson by encouraging sixth-formers at St John's School and Marlborough College to take part in enterprising activities during their last year at school or in the year after leaving.

'G' Kempson's own interests and achievements were very wide, and he excelled in mountaineering, natural history, printing and local history, so the range of enterprise the Trustees can support is broad; we seek to encourage pupils to take advantage of this opportunity to gain experience between school and the worlds of university or work, even if they are not taking a gap-year out.

During the first five years, the Trust made grants of over £8000 to assist 30 projects involving 46 sixth-formers. In 1995 there were six applications and five individual grants were made to pupils, three at the College, two at St John's. Here is a brief account of some of these.

James Jelinek spent eight months teaching in Nepal; his report describes his courses in speaking Nepalese and teaching English in the exotic ambience of Khatmandu, and his daunting first experience of teaching in a dilapidated school in northern Nepal. He knew loneliness when his English companion was evacuated home with epilepsy, caught dysentery on one of his treks and climbs, and found great kindness and friendship amid some areas of extreme poverty.

Sarah Polak (St John's) was part of a group of eight students, three from St John's, five from the College, who spent a month of the rainy season helping to construct a community centre in a village in The Gambia which has had a cultural link with Marlborough for several years. Gunjur has no electricity or piped water, and she had to adjust to the language, the heat, the heavy rain and all the cultural and economic differences. She came to realise that although the people have less in material terms, 'in many respects they have more than we do; for example, they have a stronger sense of family importance, a stronger sense of community and the time to enjoy one another's company'. She made many strong friendships with the people of Gunjur, 'without doubt, the hardest place I've ever had to leave'.

Another sixth-former at the College joined an organisation called Coral Cay Conservation which recruits volunteers to carry out marine surveys in Belize (Honduras) for reef management plans. Alice Knight, who had already trained as a diver, joined 20 other volunteers in camp at exotically named

Calabash and, after learning to recognise the many different fishes and corals, dived twice a day to complete her survey, with a break on the mainland to sleep in a comfortable bed and visit the ancient Mayan temple ruins at Tikal. The volunteers took it in turn to cook, clean, maintain the diving equipment and do a bit of 'jungle bashing'. This was quite an expensive expedition, but she describes it as 'a fantastic experience and excellent fun, despite a lot of hard work'.

Charlotte Peters went with Operation Raleigh to Zimbabwe during the summer. She started by helping to build a school block in a mountain village 100 miles from the nearest town, where she was also able to do some teaching; next she worked on a clinic building in a National Park with many close encounters with a variety of wild life, and finally spent three weeks trekking and climbing in the Chimanimani Mountains, including the highest mountain in Mozambique and Zimbabwe: 'the experience was out of this world'. She hopes to go again with Raleigh as a staff member later and plans to return to the school she helped to build. It had been, she says, 'the most amazing opportunity of my life'.

These experiences are typical of all the young people who have already been helped to make good use of their sixth-form holidays and gap year by grants from the Kempson Trust. We want to continue to encourage not just large gap-year undertakings, but more enterprise in selecting from a wider range of projects: large and small, adventurous and academic, in Britain as well as abroad, but all offering a challenge and a broadening of experience.

So, not only in memory of 'G' Kempson's inspiring example, but also as a way of extending opportunities for today's sixth-formers, the Trustees sincerely hope that you will continue to support this Trust: together we can continue its excellent achievements.