

Report on Visit by Graham Pountain to Bethany February 2023.

Travel: Flew with KLM. Flight on time to Amsterdam. Flight to Dar delayed 16.5 hours in Zanzibar (hotel provided). Missed connection with air Tanzania so had to rebook the following day. Set off On Tuesday at 2am in the morning arrived Thursday 11am – 3days travel including 2 overnights. Hopefully the return trip will be better.

Hippos: There is a family of approx 8 hippos living just off the Bethany shore line. They bathe near the point where we pump water from the lake. Our site workers are afraid to go into the water to set up our small petrol pump when the hippos are around as they are very aggressive. The children are no longer allowed near the Lake (Victoria) due to the danger of being attacked.

Agriculture: Bethany has planted many acres of Maize but the rains came late so we expect a very poor harvest this season due to most of the maize plants having died. Also the Hippos come out of the lake at night and feed on the rice and other crops which has been planted. The authorities will not intervene and say Bethany will have to live with the fact that the Hippos have decided to make the Bethany shore line their home.

Bethany Pre and Primary School: The school now has 355 students and the latest std 7 leavers results were encouraging and the students have now all left for the local government secondary school. The fact that our Bethany School is an English medium school means the children are well prepared for their secondary education which is all taught in English.

Secondary School Children: The results are in and we have two Div 1 students, several division 2 students and Misoji who managed division 4. As yet we have not been notified which high schools they have been selected to attend. Although High school attendance is now free (no fees) it is expensive to provide the various items they need before attending. The schools are all boarding schools so the students have to be provided with a mattress all their clothing including school uniforms, exercise and text books, sports equipment, calculator and bus fares etc. Due to the current financial position we no longer fund higher education except in exceptional circumstances. We do however consider certain students for vocational courses if funding allows.

Donorsee: We have joined this organisation to help us raise funds for particular needs. It involves taking a short video and asking people to donate for that particular need. We shall see how it goes.

Building work etc. We have no major projects at the moment but are making headway with various maintenance jobs. These include upgrading various bathrooms, repainting interiors and exteriors etc.

Electricity supply: We are connected to the mains power but also use solar panels and batteries as a backup. Lately the mains supply has been a little more reliable only going off for a few hours at a time.

Water Supply: We pump the majority of our water from the Lake (Lake Victoria) but also have a mains water supply. However the mains water supply has proved to be very unreliable sometimes being off all day.

Children in the home: No new children due to lack of funding

Home staff: Jesca would like to employ a new carer so that at any one time she has 1 lead-carer and 4 helper carers. Helen a qualified social worker who worked here on her placement and was very good may also be interested in a job even though the wage is below what she might expect

School staff : There have been some changes and I have printed off 10 new ID badges

TRA: Tax collection authority. They have changed the system and nothing is working at the moment

Land Title Deed: Whilst the Regional commissioner is happy to push the Land registry forward and along with others has promised to make a contribution towards it Jesca is unhappy because the land is designated for an Educational institution and carries a registration price of 9 million and yearly tax of 6 million. She believes that if it has designated as something such as other homes are registered then it would be cheaper. She is following this up.

Gifts from Tanzanians: Jesca says that since Christmas some individuals and some institutions have become interested in supporting Bethany with one off donations. These can include gifts to buy desks and benches to a day's food to celebrate someone's birthday.