

# Don McMath Foundation

## Newsletter

[www.donmcmath.org](http://www.donmcmath.org)

[info@donmcmath.org](mailto:info@donmcmath.org)

The Don McMath Foundation Newsletter – 12<sup>th</sup> October 2004

Hello All

Most of the activity since the last newsletter has been in England. There is nothing to report from the Gambia as it is the rainy season so all work on the school is on hold. We have had a busy summer, most of our efforts have been on raising funds for the new school building. Through your generosity we have now raised about 60% of the money needed to build the first school building, work should start in November when Anne is back in The Gambia, we hope to have it finished by March next year!

As you are all aware we are currently running a prize draw with first and second prizes of Mappin & Webb vouchers kindly donated by Kiki Ratcliff via the Erith Rotary Club. We hope to raise up to £2,000 towards the school building costs from this. If anyone feels that they could sell more tickets then please get in touch with Mick as soon as possible. **If you have not yet returned your ticket stubs and money then please make sure they are back by the end of October as the draw will be held at 3.00 pm on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November** in The Monmouth Ash in Verwood.



Mick and Judy once again ran a stall at the Verwood Rustic Fair on Bank Holiday Monday 30<sup>th</sup> August, thanks to all who supplied goods for the stall, it was very successful and we made about £250, which included the Portmeirion pottery, which we sold successfully on Ebay. They would like to thank Graham Cook and Marilyn Warburton for their help on the day.

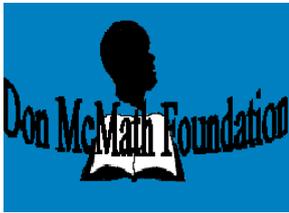
Our head teacher Malen came over on a visit for a month in September, she has spent three weeks of her trip at various schools in Verwood and Bexhill and has learned a vast amount about English teaching methods, which will be useful for her back in The Gambia.

Anne picked her up from Gatwick on the 10<sup>th</sup> September. On the Monday she went to Laton Ash Nursery School for a week to observe and take part in the activities at the school. At the end of the week the school gave her some presents for our school and also a doll for her baby. The press attended and took pictures.

During Malen's first week in England Anne & Malen were invited to Sybil Roughley's house for supper. Sybil had gathered a lot of details about education in the Gambia from the Internet and had compiled a folder for Malen which also contained a lot of useful contact information which will be very helpful back in The Gambia.



On Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> September a Don McMath fun day was held outside the Anchor Pub in Hastings Old Town. There was Indian Head Massage, Face Painting & Henna Tattoo's, Children's Pottery Painting, Hairdressing, Jewellery Stall & bric-a-brac stall. The press turned up & took photos of Malen, who talked to people who were interested in the school. The amount raised was £276.39, which was above expectations. Anne would like to thank Susanne for organising the event, and also Jackie, Gilly, Lorraine, Tracy, June, Kim and Laura for giving their time to make this



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a successful day.

On Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September Mick & Judy travelled to Bexhill from Verwood to collect Malen and take her to Verwood for a week. During her stay Malen spent a day at Verwood C of E First school, a day at Trinity First school and a day at Witchampton First school, Malen found these visits extremely educational and has learned a lot about UK teaching skills which she will find very useful in The Gambia. We would like to thank Fiona Brown, Alison Smith, Kate Caldwell and Sue Hancock for their hospitality. Malen was impressed with the friendliness of everyone she met on her trip.



During her visit to Verwood Mick and Judy held two informal receptions for Malen, this enabled her to meet some of our sponsors and for the sponsors to ask her questions about the school. During one of these receptions Ian Dominey of Verwood Rotary club presented us with a cheque for £500 towards the school building fund, they have also promised further funding over the next two years. We would like to thank them for their donation.



On the Tuesday evening we visited the 2<sup>nd</sup> Verwood Brownies pack where we held a question and answer session for them to find out more about the school, it went very well although Malen was amused at times by some of the questions, it is very difficult for English children to comprehend how different The Gambia and Gambian children are compared to here. The Brownies had managed to raise £140 for the school from a sponsored silence earlier in the summer and presented Malen with a cheque.

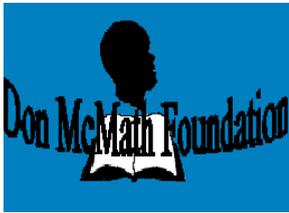


Mick and Judy took Malen for a visit to local sites on the Wednesday visiting Stonehenge and Salisbury Cathedral which Malen was impressed by even though the day was a bit cold and windy!

On Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> September Malen was returned to Anne and Monday saw her attending Christ Church School in St Leonard's. She spent a week there, each day in a different class. Two assemblies were held



so that the children could ask her about the school & Gambia.



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Charters Ancaster School invited Anne & Malen to speak to the children about the school & Gambia. They are hoping to help us by raising some money for the building work. The children were very enthusiastic and asked many questions.

The next day Malen returned to The Gambia.

Malen also managed to spend a weekend with her Aunt and Uncle in London during her stay

Malen wrote a report on her stay, an excerpt of which reads: -

“I like England because it is friendly, everybody is busy working and everybody works fast. [\(it should be noted that everything moves very slowly in The Gambia\)](#) I enjoyed my stay because I was treated nicely. I visited an old building and Stonehenge which are historical places. I like the weather but it is sometimes very cold for me, no mosquitoes and 24/7 electricity but Gambia is best for me.”

We would like to thank everyone who helped to make Malen feel at home.

Anne would like to thank the following people for their help. Pauline Ash & the staff at Laton Ash Nursery, Judy Harrison & the staff at Christ Church School, Mr Maultby & staff at Charters Ancaster School, Sybil Roughly & Joyce Gale for inviting us to dinner, and Shirley Collier for helping with the driving.

Thank you all for your offers of PCs, thanks to Graham we now have about 5 working ones which will last us for quite a while.

Some of you will have already received school reports of your sponsored child/children and some will receive them with this newsletter. These are typical of Gambian school reports. We feel that these can be improved somewhat and are working with Malen and others on a new format which we hope to introduce for next year.

We would like to send condolences to Shirley Collier and her family on the sad loss of Shirley's husband Ray. Shirley is one of the trustee's of the foundation.

Many thanks again to everyone who has contributed to make this a successful year for the Foundation

Anne, Mick and Judy McMath

12th October 2004