

CHOLE CHANGING

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CHOLE MJINI TRUST FUND
Issue 9
www.choletrust.org



THANK YOU, THANK YOU AND THANK YOU!

A special 'thank you' for three acts of great generosity since our last Newsletter.

First of all to **Rod Berens** of Berens Capital Management in New York, for his donation of US\$2,500 to the Kindergarten. Rod and his family visited Chole over Christmas, enjoying the wonderful diving and passing the time with Jean de Villiers reciting poetry by Philip Larkin, washed down by ice-cold beers!

And next, **Richard Graham**, Founder and CEO of Genki English, the leading computer



based English teaching method, which has already made a worldwide

impact. Richard visited Chole in 2012 for teacher training, and supports the establishment of exposure to English in primary schools. He donated £2,000 towards a solar powered IT system to allow Genki to be introduced in the new Primary School library. This is important because primary schooling is taught in English and secondary in Swahili.

And finally, thank you to the trustees of a family trust who, with no previous connection to Chole and wishing to remain anonymous (*but you know who you are*) nevertheless made a grant of £1,000.

REVIEW OF 2014

The Harambee Committee has prepared its draft report to the Trust for 2014; in due course the report will be on the Trust's website. In the meantime the article below reviews the key points.

2014 saw a continuation of one of Tanzania's biggest challenges – increasingly serious shortcomings in secondary education, which particularly affect a poor region such as Mafia. The reasons are complex, but two key problems are language barriers, as pupils are taught in Swahili at primary school and English in secondary school, and a shortage of teachers. Because progression through secondary school requires exams to be passed one result is that there are ten Chole students in tertiary education (university and diploma studies) and 45 in Forms I–IV in secondary school, but because of failures in prior years none in Forms V–VI.

Against this background, the **Learning Centre** takes on increasing importance, providing additional tuition especially in English language and IT to address some of these shortcomings. During 2014 we were especially fortunate that **Ben Dewfall**, whose story is overleaf, spent nearly 3 months on Chole teaching ahead of his application to join the Royal Navy. The year also saw Harumu Hassani, Selemani Mohamedi, Bakiri Abdurlahmani and Huseni Zaidi return to teach for a period in the Learning Centre during their holidays as part of an arrangement for secondary school and university leavers to repay the support given to them. Last year:

- 23 Form 1–IV students continued their studies in the Learning Centre;
- 17 primary school Standard 7 (ie last year at primary school) were prepared for their leaving exams to gain admission to secondary school.



Volunteer teacher Ben Dewfall at the Learning Centre

In addition seven secondary school leavers were given additional tuition in English language and computer skills, and have all now got jobs working full time in tourism.

The **Kindergarten**, which had 79 registered students, also saw some important changes in 2014. First all the original thatched roof finally needed replacing, so was replaced at a cost of Tshs 5,273,000 (£1,550) with a corrugated iron one. It is hoped that funds will also be available in the near future for the refurbishment of the playground.



However the biggest challenge facing the Kindergarten follows the retirement in November 2014 of Johari Rajabu, the headmaster since the Kindergarten opened in 2000, seen in the picture his last graduation ceremony. The intention is to continue the Montessori ethos in the Kindergarten, and so in 2013 the Trust supported two students, Mshangama Hassan and Mwanaidi, who gained Montessori teaching certificates and are now gaining work experience in other Kindergartens before returning to Chole.



Kindergarten graduates 2014, with Teachers, Village and Ward Leader. Johari Rajabu, the retiring headmaster is in the back row on the left

Of the ten students supported in tertiary education, five are at university whilst the other five are at college studying on diploma and certificate courses, with a strong bias towards courses in business and financial management. One of the funding challenges is to ensure the increasing numbers of tertiary students can be provided with laptops.

Eight students have now completed their studies through tertiary education; this is an astonishing statistic, given that upto 1997, in the entire history of the Chole community, only one child had ever completed secondary schooling. Three of those students who have gained Bachelor of Education degrees are now teaching in private schools, whilst a fourth, with a degree in Anthropology, is working for the Helen Keller Foundation as a Project Manager in their Vitamin A programme. Three of the other four have diploma in accounting and public administration, whilst the eighth, with a diploma in medical administration, is working in Mafia District Hospital.

The bursaries advanced to tertiary education students are divided into a grant and a loan; we expect loan repayments to start soon, which will progressively contribute towards future bursaries, as loans are recycled.

THE CHOLE MJINI TRUST FUND

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TRIATHLON IN THE DESERT

We have been astonishingly lucky with the heroic efforts people have made to fundraise for the Chole community, but a special medal must surely go to **Charlie Coghlan**, already a



very generous donor, who before Christmas completed the Iron Man Triathlon in Bahrain, raising nearly £2,200 for the Kindergarten.

Charlie himself said:
"The triathlon was one

of the hardest things I have done - massive amounts of training and then 5 hours and 40 minutes of solid exercise on the day.

I was extremely pleased overall with my time - 30 minutes for the 1.9km swim, 3 hours for a 90km bike ride and then 2 hours for the half marathon. I had never run further than 15km in training, so the last 6km was all new territory!



Charlie Coghlan (right) with his team in front of the Bahrain skyline

The support from friends and family for an incredible day was amazing. Very pleased that I was able to use the experience for a worthy cause as well".

We can only doff our cap in admiration and gratitude, and thank his wife Olivia and his family for their forbearance during the months of training.

Fresh from his triumph in Bahrain, Charlie has now returned to the UK, taking up a post teaching physics at Bradfield College.

CHOLE MJINI LODGE

The Trust is about helping others - but there are many other reasons to visit Chole!

An internet search quickly brings up the virtually unanimous praise for Chole Mjini Lodge as a destination for a very special holiday, but why not see for yourself at www.cholemjini.com which also has many wonderful photographs?

You can contact the Lodge at **Chole Mjini Lodge, Chole Island, PO Box 20, Mafia Island, Tanzania** ♦ Tel: +255 787 712 427 or +255 784 520 799 ♦ Email: 2chole@gmail.com

Good tour operators specialising in Africa can also give you extensive details about Chole Mjini Lodge.

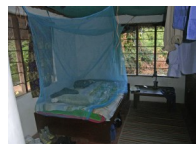
Please also do not hesitate to contact **Anne de Villiers personally** about the Chole Project at anne.k.dev@gmail.com

VILLAGE LIFE

In July 2014 **Ben Dewfall** arrived in Chole for 3 months, to be greeted by someone walking up to him, hand outstretched, and saying *"you're Ben, I'm living with you for the next couple of weeks"*. This was Kevin Mavukillo, shown left with Ben, in front of the house Ben rented for Tshs 124,000 (£35). Kevin, from a village near Mgorogoro was an intern on Chole studying birds as part of his ambition to be a safari guide.



Ben's long term ambition is to join the Royal Navy, and he travelled to Chole before that to teach in the Learning Centre. The house he rented had wonderful views over the sea, with a wooden bed and straw filled mattress and the obligatory mosquito net. Throughout his stay he used a Sawyer water filter for fresh water, with a small amount of power provided



by the solar panel just visible on the roof of the house. Because he was on Chole during Ramadan, the day often started before sunrise,

with a breakfast of fresh fruit such as papaya or banana, washed down with black coffee.

Lunch was generally in the Lodge, partly to ensure that Anne and Jean could provide ongoing guidance and partly because during Ramadan lunch was not taken in the village. And then he would cook dinner on a 'Chole Aga' back at his house.

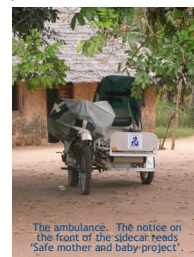


Ben developed programmes covering a number of English language teaching requirements in the Learning Centre, all scheduled to fit around other activities by the pupils. Using the Learning Centre's computers he made extensive use of Genki English Language teaching software. The major classes were:

- English language drop-in classes for both students and teachers. Attendance varied a lot depending on other activities.
- A showing of DVDs of the Blue Planet series, which Ben had taken with him, each Wednesday evening, followed by a discussion in English. These sessions were very popular, with an impact beyond English language teaching.
- Conversation classes in English every Friday evening based on random topics.
- On Saturdays, in partnership with Mr Maswi, a teacher from Mafia, he worked with the primary school teachers to develop their proficiency in Genki.



In addition to his efforts in the Learning Centre Ben also spent time with Dr Augustinal Miromo, the Clinical Officer of the Health Centre, to identify the top health issues on Chole. The most common by a long way was malaria, or the consequences of malaria, leading to a possible conclusion that priority should be given to providing mosquito nets, together with education in their use; in the past fishermen have discovered that mosquito nets also make good fishing nets



Ben, who did his best to learn Swahili beforehand, freely admits that on arriving on Chole he did wonder what he had let himself in for for the first few days. However he now says that it was a wonderful experience, teaching him how little 'stuff' one actually needed to be happy, and that that he never felt insecure or threatened in any way. And he became so tuned into a slower, less frenetic life that after he returned it was several weeks before he re-connected his mobile phone!

How You Can Help

Our objective is to become redundant when the people of Chole achieve self sufficiency. However the road to self sufficiency needs a level of investment, especially in education, healthcare and facilities, beyond the capacity of a poor community, however hard it tries.

You can help in any number of ways:

- By becoming a regular donor. Regular donations are especially valuable, giving children entering the schooling system confidence that they will be able to complete their education.
- Just £25 / month funds an annual Form V+ secondary school bursary for a child.
- The Trustees will be happy to discuss specific projects for larger commitments. For example, a long term donor generously funds the Kindergarten.
- If you - or someone you know - is planning an adventure such as climbing Kilimanjaro, then doing it on behalf of the Trust can be a very effective way of fundraising.
- Practical help; for example, a few months teaching on Chole can be rewarding and can contribute a great deal.

If you would like to help the Chole Project then please contact us at:

**chole@rech.co.uk
+44 (0)20 7228 9864**