

Working Visit to Tanzania by Sue and Tony Pace in January 2013,
on behalf of the Bugbrooke East Africa Trust.

Letter No. 6 9th March 2013

Dear All,

It is just me this time. Sue went home about 10 days ago where she found the cold a bit of a shock. She thought she had damaged her knee hauling her case upstairs but latest reports seem OK. I must say I find it rather odd writing this letter without her. We normally do this on a Friday evening sitting at the bar having our first drink with herself looking over my shoulder, making corrections and remembering things for me. Well I am at the bar but I am missing my assistant !!

The great event of the past two weeks has been the formal opening of the Dispensary. As we told you it was due to be completely finished two days before but of course it wasn't. There were painters working inside even as the party went on outside. It followed pretty much the same course as previous events of this type. It started an hour late and went on for 3 hours and we both got dressed up in various masai blankets and other bits. This time I also got presented with a chieftain's fly swat and a long masai walking stick – apparently the long sticks are for old men !!!



All dressed up

In the picture you can also see Carol Wingate, a good friend who we first met out here. She is a retired Pharmacist and has taken on the job of getting the dispensary up and running now it is built. She is a close friend of the Ward Councillor who came up with the idea of the

dispensary in the first place and visits their family every year. The real responsibility now lies with the District Medical Officer (DMO) but he has been away for the past week at his brother's funeral so there has not been much progress. The DMO has to assign a doctor to the Dispensary and we hope he will do that soon so things can start to move. Two patients have already turned up wanting treatment but they have had to be gently turned away. A couple of people (nurses we think) have asked about jobs but we have had to refer them to the DMO.



Opening the dispensary

After the opening, Sue and I went to dinner with Deputy Minister and MP Goodluck Ole-Medeye and his wife and we had a lovely evening and we drank some good Tanzanian red wine. He has also given a bottle of same which Sue has got home safely. A bit more about him later.

The school is still progressing well and after just 6 weeks of building was almost ready to take students. Now we had to get the school inspectors in to make sure it was acceptable – but then we hit a problem. The District Education Officer (DEO) said he would not instruct the inspectors (yes Tanzanian bureaucracy requires a written letter to people in the same building) until the teachers house was ready – then about 2 weeks away. This was never part of the original requirement and we don't understand why the DEO wants to make life difficult but he has never given us much support. Anyway I snapped off a text to my friend Goodluck and the inspectors came the following morning – *it's not what you know*!! They were delighted with the work and their report the following day said the school could open any time from next Monday. There are still lots more administrative hurdles to get through but that is for Anna, the headmistress, and now my landlady (I am staying at her house for the last two weeks), to sort out. It should go OK because Goodluck is now acting as her mentor and guide. He definitely wants the school to go very well because he wants, and is determined to arrange, the President to formally open the school next year.



Finished Classrooms

The big headache of the past week has been doors. Between the doctors house and the school we are short of 35 wooden doors , now several weeks late, and we couldn't get any response out of the man who is making them. In this country you can't just nip down to B&Q to get doors; they are made to order. Anyway eventually I got fed up with the delay and with my top fundi we went to Tengeru on the other side of Arusha where this guy has his workshop. Of course he wasn't there and by now, becoming very irritated, I texted him say call me or I will go to the police (we have pre-paid for some of the doors because they need funding to buy material). Well that got a reaction – he was almost pleading and the following morning we got 23 doors. Sadly the final 12 will have to wait until after I am home because there is a problem of getting decently dried timber but he knows he won't get his money until he delivers.

Managing the final works and the run-out of money has been a bit fraught but it seems to have all come together in the end. I will visit the bank for the last time this weekend and I hope the arrangements I have tried to put in place to continue some building while we are back in England will work. The weather over the past week has changed again; grey mornings with the threat of rain turning into scorching hot afternoons (30+) with distant thunderstorms; all the locals are convinced the big rainy season is about to start. The other big achievement of the week has been teaching Baba Laizer, the father of the house, to cook eggy-bread which we have fitted in between watching the Kenyan election results. Just so you understand, Tanzanian men don't cook – period. Well, he loves it.



Baba cooking eggy
bread

Well, that's it. I shall be home next weekend and I hope it's not too cold

Best to all

Tony

Letter No.5 22nd February 2013

Dear All,

Life has been quiet since we last wrote and we even managed a day off last Friday to go to Ausha National Park. It is the smallest of the parks and not that well stocked with animals but the birds are wonderful – lots of flamingos but sadly no colobus monkeys which we so loved last year. The weather having been unseasonably wet has now become seriously hot and dry so there is lots of dust. Sue is looking forward to being cool again but she will surely regret that!

The clinic is finished barring some plastering and the final paint but they say it will all be done by Saturday which gives us 2 days to get ready for the opening. The doctors house is not quite finished but the roof is on and most of the base plastering is done as well as electrics and plumbing.



The Ester Dispensary

The school is very close to being ready to take its first students and we hope they will come early next week. All effort is going into completing two classrooms and the toilets but we are being held up (again) by our “favourite” company, Tanesco, and lots of power cuts which has delayed the manufacture of windows and doors. Today the great adventure was the raising of the first of two 5000 litre water tanks which will site on the specially strong roof of the staff toilets. These toilets will eventually become part of a greater administration block which we hope to build next year. The school has a good and reliable water supply direct from a natural source and we had hoped to put an extra tap in to support the local community. Sadly this is beginning to look a bit doubtful as we are beginning to run very short of money.



School almost ready

Our hopes of improving the water supply to the community generally including our previous projects, seems to have ground to a halt. The local water engineers have failed to come up

with an estimate in 2 weeks despite continuous pushing and now we think we don't have enough money anyway. They have only been three years without water so maybe next year !!!

At our house we also have water and electricity problems. We don't really understand why but the university just shuts off the water from time to time so we have learnt to keep buckets full of stored water. What is really annoying is to watch neighbouring houses water their grass even directly after rain storms. It must be said that we see an awful lot of water being wasted !! As for electricity we are sure that Tanesco time the cuts to cause us maximum inconvenience – paranoia is not always wrong!



Manpower

Sue will be home on Thursday and Tony will have two weeks of peace before he returns.

Love to all

Tony & Sue

Letter No.4, 9th February 2013

Dear All,

It is two weeks since we last wrote and a lot has happened. As predicted life has become a lot calmer now that the political battles are over so we are usually back to our house by the early afternoon – just in time to miss the series of very unseasonal rain storms we have had in the last week. In fact for the last two nights it got so chilly we had to put a blanket on our bed.

Building is progressing very well. The school has now reached roof height and they have started to assemble the roof trusses. This is done sitting on top of the walls because if they are manufactured at ground level then it is far too difficult to lift them to roof height. The roof will go on early next week and windows and doors are due to go in on Tuesday. At that point the school is technically fit to accept students though there is actually quite a lot of finishing work still to do. If you saw the condition of some school in this country you would appreciate that even a three-quarter finished building is pretty good. The headmistress is trying to arrange for inspectors to come and see it next week so they can give the school a registration number and then it is legal. They have worked out a plan to transfer all the first year students from Olmotonyi Ward, who have gone to overcrowded

school elsewhere, back to this school so they should get about 100 students. Desks and books will also arrive next week. Not quite sure where teachers are coming from but apparently it is being worked on; we do know that quite a lot of teachers are interested in moving to the school so it seems promising.



Starting School roof

The toilets are progressing well – they must have toilets before the school can open. The kitchen which we started last week now has complete foundations. The water system has been extended to run right across the school site and we expect to start setting out a double teachers house next week; that will be the last major project for this year.

The Clinic is also well advanced – the roof is on, doors and windows are going in and the walls are being plastered. The initial stages of the plumbing and electrics have all been done. The doctors house, which we started last week is already at half height. It really does look quite impressive – almost like a small hospital and we think the community are quite excited about it. To compensate for some of the trees we have cut down for the school, we plan to plant quite a lot of trees behind the clinic; they will give shade and help to stabilize the river bank which is currently a rubbish tip. This week we bought them 50 fruit trees to plant on the river bank near the school. The environmental people said they wanted fruit trees to attract monkeys down the river.



Clinic with windows and roof

Trees are very important. When we visited last year's house at Makumira this week we found that they have no Colubus Monkeys passing as one tree was cut down lower down the slope. Colubus will never come to ground so now their aerial pathway is closed.

We had our first meeting with the water people this week. They had come up with an estimate of 74 million shillings (30,000 pounds) but we realised they had vastly over engineered the solution. With them we visited the potential new water source and quickly appreciated there was a perfectly good solution available for about 10 million (4,000 pounds). We don't even have that much spare but we think the government may come up with some money. We are meeting them again next week. Sue is really desperate to do this because it will get water back to the three projects at Kimnyak where we have put in water systems in past years. It will also get water to several hundred houses where they currently have to buy water in buckets every day. So if anyone has a spare thousand or two!!

On the same theme, we have been requested by an adjacent District to build them a school – they say they have 12 acres immediately available. Also the priest who was our landlord last year wants to build a new clinic way in a very rural area – we will be visiting next week to help him with the design. So lots more to do and anyone know any more big donors !!!!?



Sue on pikipiki delivering books

Sue has had a mad idea for Tony's 70th next Feb. half term. We're bringing the children and grandchildren out to celebrate at our favourite safari lodge (Tarangire Safari Lodge). They're very

excited that Grandad's paying, but Megan's not so sure about the injections they'll need!! If anyone would like to organise their own safari ending up there on 21st Feb 2014 we'd love you to join us. The good news is no deposit needed till Christmas, Bad news is you have to come and see all our projects!!

We are still hob-knobbing with the high and mighty. The weekend before last we had dinner – as our guest – with the local MP and government minister, Mr Goodluck Ole-Medeye, an absolutely charming man. We even persuaded him to abandon his phones for a couple of hours. We think they are planning for him to open the clinic this year. We also think they are hoping to get the President to open the school formally next year – wait and see.

We are both keeping well and losing weight.

Love to all

Tony & Sue

Letter No. 3, 25th January 2013

Dear All,

In most previous year we have done letters fortnightly because we didn't want to bore you too much but this year we have felt we had enough happening to trouble you weekly. But, at long last, the school is building, trees have been cut, foundations are being laid even as we write and walls will go up next week. Yes, the forest manager is still against us and reported us to the Police. The District Commissioner told them firmly to leave us alone. So from now on life is going to be very normal – for Tanzania – and we may only want to write fortnightly. This gives us more time for drinks at the bar on Friday evenings !!



School foundations
marked out

The clinic is progressing very fast and the roof is due to go back on early next week. We seem to have about 50 builders working for us and they work hard because they know we will pay them. Rates vary from £6 - £ 12 per day depending on skill.

On Thursday we took a day off from the school and clinic and went to the other side of Arusha to see last year's project and Mary David, the girl we have adopted this year, who has just started school. She seems very happy and keen to learn. We were very happy with the sight of Uraki Secondary School. Everything is being used and well looked after and they have built more with a grant from the government. We shall visit them again before we leave.



Mary David and Tony

The battle of the water is progressing slowly and we are trying to use what little influence we may have with the high and mighty to organise a local conference to address the various issues.

The sadness of this week is that Sue, our great mate from Australia, has gone home. We love you Sue – be nice to Col. Sue from Canada has also left so give our best to Mike. So now we have to talk to each other until Carol arrives next week from England.

We have heard all your snow stories and thanks for all the pictures. Tanzanians are quite horrified at the thought of snow and simply can't believe that children love it. Over here the weather has settled into a warm spell, pushing 30 every day with the occasional thunderstorm.

Love to all

Tony & Sue

Letter No 2, 18th January 2013

Dear All,

It has been another week of battling with the bureaucracy of Tanzania. On Saturday we knew the government was on our side because they ordered a very big-wig team to fly in from Dar-es-Salam to see the school site and start the environmental assessment. They said there was absolutely no problem and they would fast-track consent. Having read that, you should know that there is going to be trouble coming!! On Monday Tuesday and Wednesday, we were rung every day by very senior ministers and commissioners telling us it was all going OK (they really are terrified we will take the money back) and on Thursday the letter arrived by fax from Dar to say we have permission. We felt elated. Later that day we went to see the acting forest manager to take him his copy of the letter and he said it was not addressed to him so it would not do. I came out fuming. Back to the senior people and they said they would fix it. Friday morning at 7:00 we all went off to the District Commissioner (like think seriously senior- more powerful than an MP) and this pip squeek would not budge; he is either extremely brave or extremely stupid. So we have decided that regardless of the rules about who can cut trees, we are going to build the school anyway and cut for ourselves. If the police come we have friends in very high places.



Tony playing boss

As if this wasn't enough, Sue has decided she will take on a new battle. Several of the villages round the mountain have no water because one village higher up has blocked the pipe. She is determined to find a solution to this. We have an appointment to see the pipe owner next Friday to see if we can understand what is going on. More will surely follow !!! Just to add to the fun, we have also adopted a new Tanzanian school girl. We met her last year when she fed our workmen and she very bright and is desperate for more education. Sue took her to a private boarding school on Wednesday, opposite where we lived last year. We wait to hear how well she settles in. She also has an older sister (2 children but no man) who was educated in Kenya and speaks excellent English but could not get a job because her step-mother had burnt her education papers. Sue introduced her to the local pastor and now she has a job teaching English and computing. It just shows you don't always need money.



Kids on the road

And a bit more – we heard that the girl we “adopted” 7 years ago and put through 6th form and university, has not been paid in the first four months of her job, so she is giving it up and coming home. Not sure where this will lead but we quite look forward to meeting her husband and baby “Tony” – *you’d better believe it !!!!!*

The clinic is progressing well. To get rid of the existing tenants who didn’t seem to understand that they had to go, we took the roof off. They got the message and the rats didn’t like it either.

We hear that UK is having a cold spell. We sympathise with you because it has been quite cool here this week. Still lots of rain and, until today, the temperature never got above 25° - downright chilly.

Next week we are going to start the school. Two weeks late but the community are still determined to get 2 classrooms and a toilet ready by 15 Feb so they can admit students this year.

Just another quiet week in Tanzania !!

Love to all

Tony & Sue

Letter No. 1 , 11th January 2013

Dear All,

Yes it’s us again from Tanzania, sitting by the pool with our first beer of week; it’s warm and sunny though they have been having more rain than expected for this time of year so everything is very green and lush. We have been here just over a week and are well settled in. The journey out was very easy except for the National Express Coach that broke down just before it picked us up so they had to taxi us to the airport.

We rested up for a couple of days at the much loved but slightly crazy Impala Hotel in Arusha. We met two more Sues, from Canada and Australia, who are over here for a few weeks and whom we knew from previous years; great reunions. On Sunday we went up to our new home on the west slopes of Mt Meru at just over 5,000 ft. The house is OK but we drew the line at a squat loo so the

next day our top fundi put in a proper European loo for us. It has a cold shower but we have opted for warm bucket showers – lovely. We have a girl, Bernadette, looking after us for £10 a week doing all our cooking, cleaning and washing. She speaks almost no English and there has been much confusion about her duties but we hope it has all been sorted at last.



Our house with the cut grass

The big problem was that Sue suddenly became very sick on Sunday night and we suspect she had norovirus. For the next three days she was very poorly and did little more than stay in bed. In the meantime, Tony had to get started. On Saturday we had heard from Anna, our friend and headmistress that there was a problem with starting the new school. We still needed consent to build and this was delayed by need of an “Environmental Impact Assessment” EIA – which should have been done months ago. What this comes down to is a letter from Dar (500 miles away), to be produced by a civil servant who is sitting on his *rs* - the word “jobsworth” has been used often this week. So the main work for this week has been sorting out suppliers, getting the clinic started, and battling with the Tanzanian Bureaucracy – and meeting lots of old friends, some of whom Tony taught 8 years ago. We can barely move anywhere in Ngaramtoni without greetings and chats. On Tuesday Tony went off to meet the local MP, a deputy Minister, and he assured us he was on the case to get our building authority sorted. He is an absolutely charming man and he was confident it would all be done very quickly. He also introduced me to the Regional Commissioner who is a real power in the land and was very angry to hear of this delay and said he would get it fixed the next day (kesho). But we have long learned that kesho makes manyana seem very hasty – so guess what; it didn’t happen. We spent Wednesday and Thursday pushing the MP and RC and by Friday were getting very frustrated. Then the District Commissioner came into play so we went to see him and he says he will get it fixed over the weekend but the way he described it does not sound convincing though as I write this I have heard he has progressed the first step. Apparently the President is in Arusha on Monday and I have muttered about maybe I should go and see him !!!!!



Clinic Started

The good news is that the clinic has started. We found this quite by surprise as we walked up to the site on Wednesday and work had started. It was a great feeling. The first task is to build a security wall round the site and then they can get on with the main conversion. In the meantime we have been doing lots of work on designs and layouts and preparing detailed estimates.

Sue was pretty much fully recovered by Thursday. We hope to visit our other projects as soon as the school problems are sorted as they are all desperate to see us – and probably ask us to do more !!! It is a rich and varied life over here but it's warm and the beer is cheap.

Love to all and we love getting your news. This year we can get emails anywhere.

Tony & Sue