36 Adelaide Road, Bramhall, SK7 1LT.
www.rowleyprojects.com

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We got home on Thursday from a really useful and particularly relaxed trip. Thankyou to those who prayed about customs and the medication we take – we were waved through and the internal flight allowed our extra 40 Kg baggage free of charge. We even managed to reschedule our return flights as the flight to Paris was delayed due to fog at Charles de Gaulle and we would have missed our connection. It was very hot every day and poured down in the late afternoons and evenings but the ground is so parched it soaked it up and was dry by morning.

In Kisumu we did our usual banking – chatted with our personal banker, Duncan – exchanged currency, bought anti-malarials, supermarket shop, picked up our hire vehicle and went to meet the President of Kit Mikayi Rotary who then couldn't come at the last minute. This is Africa! We did however meet with a very capable and dependable woman from Rotary on the return trip. She is hoping the club in Cheadle will continue with its application for an international grant to help at school but she has also agreed to oversee the new water filter project in her area.

Our journey "home" to Nyandiwa was uneventful and we kept to an imaginary speed limit as we still haven't found the signs. Everline had washed all our curtains so fixing those up was our first job. The water pump seems to be 'troubled' so the loft tank water was limited and buckets were again the order of the day. We had electricity spasmodically but more on than off which was a real treat as we could boil a kettle and make peppermint tea. It's amazing to think that after all this time we at last have an electricity supply, supplemented with solar. I even did a bit of gardening at the front of the house and tidied up the gravel, much to the amusement of the family for whom 'gardening' is planting and harvesting useful crops. Steve fixed the shower, managed to knock out a window pane trying to free a bat and another evening spent a good half hour with a cushion shooing a bat out 'til Ev came in and hit it with her shoe ! Dazed but OK – the bat that is.

We spent time sorting our bags. Meds, bandages, plasters, gloves, 400+pairs of knickers & pants, 40 bras, scrabble boards, 1000+ pens & 300+ pencils, 500+ toothbrushes, babies' bootees, footballs, sweets. We try to give equally to classes and schools, keeping a record of who received what. We're collecting **NEW knickers size** 10,**12,14** & a few 16 or **ages** 8 -14. **NEW bras any size from 32 A – 36 B**. Most welcome are **boys' underpants** for **ages 14-18 or medium.** We take 60 kilos with us and come back with everything, including the other bags, in one 20 kilo bag plus hand luggage.

Education

We are sponsoring 7 students on Hope beyond Form 4 this year. (Cost - £1,000 per year for 4 years.) The government is also starting technical colleges to teach trades and we would really like to encourage our students to attend these.

Last report I mentioned Vincensia – sponsored through school; total orphan with three younger siblings, taken advantage of and mother of a little boy – Emmanuel Blessed and destitute but for your help this year again with a monthly allowance of £30. She is taking a course in Early Childhood Development at a local high school in the holidays when her brother Calvince can care for Blessed. We visited Vincensia in her home to encourage her. It's so difficult to see so many desperately poor people for whom we can do hardly anything. Sometimes heart rules head and Calvince did get a new pair of shoes before the only pair he has falls off his feet.

The government has decided that Form 4 trips will be in terms 1 or 2 only so this year's form has missed out. Tea and bread and mandazi (doughnuts!) every day for the 3 weeks of final exams are a pleasing substitute and the best we can do. There will be a trip for next year's Form 4 which we will subsidise 50% with the extra needy getting whatever the Principal decides. We also provide a pastoral fund which we keep topped up – it soon goes.

We handed out the goodies we had taken and took photographs of all 67 of our sponsored students. We also had long discussions with the principal about the government's proposed reorganisation of the education system now to be introduced in January 2018. We need to know what part we can play in providing buildings and materials but everyone is, as yet, in the dark.

The new dining hall is impressive with its newly finished floor. The carpenters from Sikri came to construct the first two (There will be 16 in total) dining tables made of local hardwood. Sikri is a rehabilitation Centre for the blind and deaf and two of the carpenters were deaf.

We visited our good friends Pamela and William. William is retiring as principal of a high school next July and has agreed to become liaison person between The Kingsway School, Cheadle, and Kolweny Kingsway. Hopefully we shall at last have useful, regular communications established.

The new design for the staff latrine is impressive. Something as simple as a modesty wall makes all the difference. (We had to explain to the builder what it actually was.) The school is building new latrines for students and we will pay to have walls round these too – the girls cheered when they heard.

It was gratifying to see two of our sponsored graduates working as community-paid teachers at the high school, Victor and Beatrice. Charles, another sponsored graduate is still teaching at the primary school but is being sponsored to gain higher qualifications so that he can become a lecturer.

We spent a good proportion of our time this visit in the primary school which has the most welcoming of staffrooms – they even provided a feast one day for lunch. We gave out the goodies, dresses, knickers, bras, pens, pencils, sharpeners, erasers, toothbrushes and cloth schoolbags made by students at The Kingsway. Class 8 also received pictures drawn by children in Didsbury Primary School and drew their own in response.

One of the teachers, Everline Banda does sterling work with the girls. She has a small room which she has turned into a girls' facility for changing, counselling and learning skills such as how to correctly hang a mosquito net and make sandals out of old tyres. She is going to coordinate a new project which has been piloted at our school and which we hope to roll out to any other schools in the area who would like to be involved. The government assigns funds to primary schools for sanitary protection for girls but it is woefully inadequate. Our

headteacher has agreed to use that funding, along with equal input from Rowley Projects and a contribution from parents to buy washable sanitary packs for every girl who requires one. These last at least a year, cost £1.25 a pack and are made by our wonderful sewing workshop lady, Mary Okoth. We will also build a small extension washroom to the girls' latrines at every school which takes part. (Approx £250 per school)

Class 8, taking final exams in the next two weeks, enjoyed the now annual thrill of a daily hot lunch funded by Eccles Community Choir. Never have we seen rice, beans and tea put away with such relish and in such quantity! There was cash left over so the choir is sponsoring tree planting at the schools in response to the government's plan of reforesting 10% of the country.

Water

We met with Joseph to discuss the proposed new water filter workshop at Kit Mikayi and stressed the need for him to be more pro-active in the sale of water filters as many homes still don't have one. They are, admittedly, prohibitively expensive for most families - £25 – but we suggested he try persuading people to share one with neighbouring compounds or those with a filter could trade in kind for a bucket of clean water.

Health

The government has recognised the value of our dispensary facility and has put in place a paid health practitioner, Collins Otieno. This is wonderful news as it takes all the responsibilty from us and means that charges can be kept to a minimum but any monies received will pay for the upkeep of the building and the salary for the assistant nurse, Eunice.

We met Collins and gave him the donations, paracetamol, germolene, bandages, dressings, gloves, plasters, vitamins etc.. We shared the pile with Kennedy at the main road. He studied dentistry with our friend Jon Robinson and is willing to impart his expertise to Collins when he has settled in. Ken runs a fine establishment with his wife, Jacqueline. It's always busy when we call and he keeps it spotlessly clean and well organised.

Church

Church on Sunday morning was full. Steve preached and Ayugi translated and I gave the usual greetings. We are always announced by our membership numbers –to much tittering – and as King and Queen of Kotuoya, the official name of our small area. Several different small groups sang lovely pieces.

We took hundreds of bootees knitted by my sister in law Liz's knitting group in Stirling. I shared them between three church groups and our ladies swooped on them in an orderly fashion!

After church we visited Leah, (top photo) an elderly grandmother who has raised some fine young men, the oldest being her stepson Eliakim, the manager of our goat project and father of Charles our primary school teacher and the youngest being her grandson Isaiah, one of our sponsored students who is now a teacher. She is very crippled and is too unwell to leave her tiny mud house. As we left we commented that she is much more contented and happy in her tiny, dark house surrounded by all her family who love her dearly than many an elderly person here in England.

We then called on Eliakim on the neighbouring compound to arrange for more goats to be bought. All the goats bought thus far have thrived, bar two which have been replaced, and have had kids which have been given to yet more widows or families. The place is abounding in goats.

Karowley

I've mentioned the electricity already. Steve always does maintenance – this time it was a hinge falling off the front door. Ayugi had 'fixed' the window handles so that they all now open, allegedly. Trying to use one of the 'fixed' handles was why the pane of glass fell out in the bat episode. Not Ayugi's fault. The handles themselves are less than useless and totally unnecessary as the windows are covered with metal grilles.

Steve spent time as always with Ayugi going over the accounts, reviewing projects and planning for new ones. Angela discussed the new girls' project with Mary.

We had visits from neighbours including Dorcas, a regular. Ayugi and Everline's adopted daughter Val was home from university in Kisii. She's a beautiful, intelligent woman. She asked me to teach her to sew and she's a quick learner.

We saw several men armed with clubs and about a dozen dogs passing the gate and were informed that they were hunting antelope and gazelle. We'd like to know where they are! We were told "They are around."

We are growing used to some customs now such as hollering and screaming accompanied by every dog in the area barking in the middle of the night to announce a death. Representatives from households get up and go to find out who it is and offer condolences. On our last night it was a 41 year old cousin of Ayugi, died of 'stomach problems' in hospital. That's the nearest the family will come to a diagnosis. One thing we did learn was that if a person dies at home the body has to be transported to the morgue by any means available. One morning Pamela took a relative's body propped up in the back of her car. Before anyone had a vehicle it was wheelbarrow to the road and then on the back seat of a bus! On that note……

Thankyou for making this work possible by your donations. You have sponsored many hundreds of students through school, provided life-enhancing and even radically life-changing water filters and tanks, clothing, sanitary protection, medication, school buildings and equipment, to mention just a few items. This year sees our 65th student going to university or college on the Hope beyond Form 4 Scholarship since the school opened with just 26 students in 2005. Your interest and prayer are vital and we are becoming increasingly aware of the necessity of the latter. Thankyou from everyone in Nyandiwa and indeed many miles afield. We attempt to be culturally sensitive in everything we do and our watchword is sustainability. Please feel free to contact us with any ideas, insights or potential solutions to challenges.

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