



# David School Messenger

The David School

Education Changes Lives

## TRUSTEES RETURN TO THE SCHOOL

David Wallwork, his daughter, Catherine Thomas, and Michael Houlden have recently returned from a successful two week trip to the David School in Sierra Leone, their first since the Ebola crisis.



The school is running smoothly, despite all the uncertainty of the last 18 months. There are now 250 pupils in the Primary School, ??? in the secondary classes and 12 teachers, including a new lady called Aminata Fullah. She is seen in the picture with her baby. She is combining teaching Year 2, studying and bringing up her daughter, Jane, as a single parent, so is an excellent role model for the girls at the school, especially the older ones.

There are a much larger number of pupils in Class One, due to the school having been closed for 18 months.



## SAD FAREWELL TO ONE OF THE SCHOOL'S LOYAL SUPPORTERS



Judy Wilkie from Edinburgh, sadly died in December last year. She and her husband, Alex, had been enthusiastic supporters of the David School Trust for many years. They visited the school, and raised a lot of money to support the pupils and community amongst their friends and Rotary colleagues.

A collection was made at her funeral, which the family generously split between the Trust and the Scottish Alzheimer's Society. Many thanks to everyone involved for the over £1300, which has been given to help the school's work. Our thoughts and sincere condolences are with Alex and his family.

A plaque will be put up at the School in Judy's memory.

## EXCELLENT PRIMARY RESULTS

The School's latest results for pupils at the end of their primary education have been excellent again, thanks to the work of the teachers. The Local School Inspector said that they were among the best in the district. He is therefore going to recommend that the school becomes government assisted, which would be an excellent move forward. The teachers' salaries would then be paid.

We also hope that the UN feeding programme which had been in place before the Ebola outbreak could be reinstated. This would be excellent as food is now scarce and very expensive.



## PRIMARY SCHOOL RE-ROOFED

Michael Houlden worked with the men shown on the right to totally re-roof the the Primary School building, which was the first one built in 2008. They all worked very hard to achieve this in just 2 weeks.

## GIFTS ARRIVE

On Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015, a group of Rotarians and other supporters packed a container for Freetown. It contained 100 bicycles, clothing, equipment and health supplies donated by Police Aid Convoys, The David School Trust and Street Child. It took 2 hours to pack it into the container in Retford, before it was taken by lorry to Doncaster and then by rail to Southampton. It has now arrived in Sierra Leone.



The gift bags donated by pupils at the Ashbeach School have been distributed, and were much enjoyed.



The Class 5 pupils in the pictures also have soap, toothpaste and toothbrush, and the boys each have a pair of long trousers to be taken home to be made into shorts.

Thanks to everyone involved in these projects

## SEWING MACHINES IN USE

The sewing machines that were shipped out a few years ago are being put to good use, and more of the community's ladies are becoming proficient at producing uniforms and other garments.



Some of the machines have been donated to another community nearby called Devil Hole, where Lucy organises the sewing groups.

Some of the women have learnt to tie-dye and are producing items like the dress in the picture.



## DAVID & CATHERINE KEPT BUSY

Whilst Michael was supervising the Primary School's new roof, David and Catherine were also kept busy throughout their stay.

Catherine was involved in ongoing health issues, taking pupils to the clinic that Dr David has been able to open again in Waterloo, and doing First Aid. Catherine also became godmother to Patricia Precious Coker, the daughter of a friend in Hastings. (See picture on right.)



David spent time with the teachers, working on classroom strategies and the importance of using English when teaching. It is Sierra Leone's official language, and pupils must pass it in order to pass their BECE exams at age 14. They have to get passes in 5 subjects, two of which must be English and Maths. Team building sessions were held, and each of the teachers was interviewed as part of their personal reviews, and to assess each one's expectations and concerns.

Meetings were held with the chief to discuss issues that have arisen whilst the school has been closed, and to decide on the way forward. David is going out to the school again in February to continue with this, and do more teacher training, especially with those teaching secondary pupils.



## ISATU BANGURA

Isatu is the blind girl from the community, who has been at the Milton Margai Residential School for the Blind In Freetown. She is now in her final year, and it looks as if she might be offered a place at the Freetown Secondary School for Girls. If she is accepted, she will continue to live at Milton Margai, and travel to her new school each day.

The man with her is Alfred Conteh, the Trust's driver and Key man in Sierra Leone.

**Thank you from everyone involved in The David School**