

CHOLE CHANGING

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CHOLE MJINI TRUST FUND
Issue 4
www.choletrust.org



BBC

BEES BUZZING for CHOLE!

Last November Lynn and Robert Berry and their son Piers stayed on Chole as part of a self-drive safari around Tanzania.

When not travelling, Lynn grows organic vegetables and makes honey – well, strictly speaking her bees make the honey. But these bees are different, because they labour for charity. Lynn has hit upon the wonderful idea of distributing her honey in exchange for donations to a chosen charity, and this year Chole has been lucky enough to benefit from her generosity and her bees hard work.



Oh, and we are told that you should never, ever get into a game of Bao with Piers! We have it on good authority that he became a real expert whilst on Chole.



DON'T BASH BANKS ...

Since Christmas the Trust has been the fortunate and grateful recipient of a very generous donation from a benefactor who wishes to remain anonymous, but works for a large bank.

And the bank itself, one of those regularly condemned in the press for greed, has agreed to match the value of the donation, making it a very material contribution to the 2012 budget. We thank both the donor and the bank.

THE CHOLE MJINI TRUST FUND

C/O 6 Manchuria Road
London
SW11 6AE

Tel / fax : +44 (0) 20 7228 9864
Email : chole@rech.co.uk
Website : www.choletrust.org
Registered charity no. 1136480

LEARNING CENTRE IT

SolarAid's installation of Tanzania's first ever Solar Nexus integrated solar power system on Chole and Al Crawford's fortitude and generosity in racing across Costa Rica to raise funds for Chole as his chosen charity set the scene for the island's community to join the IT age. A further generous grant by the David Anderson Africa Trust allowed a network to be installed in the Learning Centre last December.

Computers are so ubiquitous we do not give them a second thought. But then we expect electricity too. However Chole is so remote, so far from the Tanzanian National Grid, that introducing IT has seemed like an impossible dream.

Then in mid 2010 SolarAid installed Tanzania's first Solar Nexus system in the Learning Centre, and the possibilities opened up.

The challenge was finding computers able to operate on very low power (typically less than 20w), and rugged enough for the difficult environment. The answer lay in Moshi, near Arusha in northern Tanzania, where Dr Eduard Kavishe runs Kicheko



SolarAid's Solar Nexus controller
The key to Chole's IT ambitions

Limited. The chosen system is a hub server with four wifi workstations, colour laser printer, external DVD drive, low power projector to assist teaching and other peripherals. It runs both Windows and Linux, using the Deep Freeze anti virus system.

With the system specified we were able to finalise the funding, which came from two sources. First was Al Crawford, CEO of 192.COM, who generously chose Chole to benefit from his efforts in the Coast to Coast race across Costa Rica, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. We were then fortunate enough to receive a generous grant from the David Anderson Africa Trust, set up in memory of David Anderson, a career civil servant who was very influential in East Africa when it was moving towards independence, and was an adviser to President Julius Nyerere.

The response was immediate and enthusiastic, with the Learning Centre packed for the initial instruction. The primary objective is to improve English language teaching and develop IT familiarity, but we hope that another result may also be improved education for girls, who often do not demand the attention they need in a classroom setting. We hope the ability to learn at their own pace with computers will help them.



The computers arrive

As always happens, the effect of computers has been unpredictable. One result was summed up by Lyndsey Fair, the Chole Mjini Lodge manager, who emailed "Computers are still going well – they are

well, well used – all my staff are continually telling me they have email addresses but I keep on informing them that as I see them everyday I'd rather not email but talk to them face-to-face!"

This progress has continued. At Easter Hassan Kallaghe, who teaches in the Learning Centre, emailed to say "Here [on] Chole we [are] all fine as well, we are going on very well with teaching here [in the] Learning Centre. Thanks".

As skills develop so too do the demands, and the next challenge is already clear. Chole is so remote that web access is currently by dongles attached to mobile phones, which is expensive and tortuously slow, with a very low bandwidth. Any suggestions would be very welcome!

Looking Backwards ...

In 1995 the American anthropologist Christine Walley, now teaching at MIT, and the English naturalist Dudley Iles were invited to Chole. A few years later American researcher Lowell Brower (now at Harvard) made the same journey. All three recorded and documented the culture and natural environment of the island, and have not only retained their great affection for Chole, but still have many hours of video and audio recordings.

Four transcripts on our website give a taste of the astonishing wealth of material. One, an oral history, describes slavery, in sometimes truly appalling detail, at second hand - an elder relating what he was told first hand by his parent's generation. Then a charming story, interspersed on the original video with sung nonsense rhymes, tells how Kibaraka the water seller came to marry the King's daughter. The third re-tells with an East African slant the ubiquitous tale of the Jinni in the Bottle, and finally there is the fatalistic, bittersweet morality tale *Do you know the world, my Son*.

So now the circle can be completed. If we can find the necessary funding, then with the IT in place the Trust can plan a digital archive, returning to the Chole community a record of its culture and history to be available for future generations.

For a small Trust this is an ambitious and technically demanding project. Any expert help or advice would be very welcome. We also believe that it has the makings of a fascinating documentary.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

Of course all of our donors are hugely important, as without them we could not continue to help the Chole community. However there is something very special when a completely unexpected donation arrives.



In early March an automated email told us an online donation had arrived out of the blue. After further enquiries we found that Rachel Kelly (left), a Grade 11 student at St Clement's School Toronto, had visited Chole with her family, and on returning had organised a musical evening as her own fundraising initiative.

A huge, special 'thank you' to Rachel and to all of her friends and family who contributed.

WEBSITE UPDATE

Until now the Trust's website has been hosted free by Microsoft, but that is changing. The address, www.choletrust.org, is unchanged but in future there will be a modest £4 per month charge. It is not much, but is still a shame, as until now the only third party expenses have been bank transfer charges.

We have taken the opportunity to update the site, adding more detail and including more of the Oral Traditions (see separate story). Please take a look, and let us have any suggestions and especially any corrections.

CHOLE MJINI LODGE

The Chole Mjini Trust Fund is of course about helping others - but we know there are many other reasons for visiting Chole!

A web search quickly brings up virtually unanimous praise for Chole Mjini Lodge as a destination for a very special holiday. The Lodge was built and is owned by Anne and Jean de Villiers (see www.cholemjini.com for the full story) but since January 2011 it has been operated by AfrikaAfrika, who combine it with their other small, stylish safari lodges in pristine wildernesses.

You can contact AfrikaAfrika at

www.afrikaafrikasafaris.com

Tel: +255 769 204159
+255 754 642232
+255 753 005442

Email: info@afrikaafrikasafaris.com

All good travel agents specialising in Africa can also give you extensive details about Chole Mjini Lodge and AfrikaAfrika's other lodges.

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

2012 BUDGET

2012 will be a special year for the Trust, as it is our first full year following completion of the transfer from The Tribes Foundation.

The Chole Project has not changed; unlike many small charities supporting Africa, which provide funding for specific activities or projects, the underlying philosophy is for the community itself to decide its own priorities, which the Trust then seeks to fund. Fortunately our donors understand and support this approach, which empowers the community and allows it to control its own destiny. As in previous years the Harambee Committee has given priority to education in its 2012 budget.

The Kindergarten now cares for practically every child on Chole, providing a safe environment in which they are taught on Montessori principles, and also offering a balanced nutritious lunch every day and regular health checks. We are fortunate that the Kindergarten's cost of over £10,000 is fully funded by Leon Paul, suppliers of



equipment to the British Olympic fencing team, and a private donor.

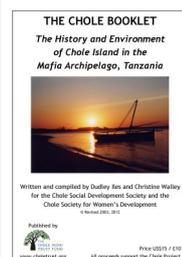
Costs in the Learning Centre are increasing, and will increase further with the installation of the computers, but are still less than £3,000 a year, including salaries for three teachers.

However by far the biggest part of the budget is for educational bursaries, covering secondary schooling and increasingly university and college. The 2012 figure is nearly £20,000, including remarkably provision for 10 university / college students. With the increasing demand for university education the Harambee Committee has now introduced a loan scheme, under which students repay their university bursaries.

Until all the exam results are in we cannot be sure whether the whole amount budgeted will actually be allocated; indications at the moment are that it may be underspent.

The balance of the budget covers administration and cleaners for the hospital, giving a total for the year of £34,000.

THE CHOLE BOOKLET



If you have visited Chole you may have seen, or perhaps even bought, *The Chole Booklet*, originally written by Christine Walley and Dudley Iles in 1997.

Its 88 pages provide an historic overview of Chole and the Mafia region, explaining its rich and often overlooked history. It also describes the natural environment, with lists of fish, birds and butterflies, and includes transcripts of oral histories and stories, together with notes on Islam, fishing, mat making and other local traditions and activities.

All that is so wonderful about Chole is summed up in the introduction by Mzee Suleimani Bacha, formerly Chairman of Chole village: *"It is our hope to exist in peace and understanding with those visitors who reach Chole. And when you leave to return to your homes, we will take it as a sign of gratitude if you say that you have been welcomed here with warm hospitality - and indeed we will endeavour to welcome you in such a way."*

The Trust plans to re-publish the booklet for the benefit of the Chole community priced at £10 / US\$15. Much of the text remains unchanged, but some sections, such as the self guided walks on the island, are being updated by Jean de Villiers. We expect it to be available in June, to be shipped out to Chole for when the Lodge re-opens after the rains.

If you would like to reserve a copy then please email us so that we can adjust the print run.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

The Chole Trust's objective is to become redundant as the people of Chole achieve self sufficiency. However the road to self sufficiency is challenging, needing 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 monthly standing order 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, two long term donors generously fund the Kindergarten.
- If you - or perhaps a family member or friend - 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