

SEPTEMBER 2019

St Peter's Church, Farnborough summer team trip to Ibumu



James Rogers, team leader of this short term mission trip, writes to tell us about their time in Tanzania.

Two years ago, I wrote an article for BushNet about the St Peter's, Farnborough, short term mission trip to Ikuka in Tanzania, I finished that article with 5 words, "Would I go again? Absolutely!". Well, the "absolutely" happened and myself, with a team of 10 others, travelled to the area again this summer.

This time the destination was the village of Ibumu, about 30 km north of the town of Ilula, in the Iringa district of Tanzania. The 11 of us from St Peter's consisted of 6 who had gone on the previous trip and 5 who hadn't. One of our party, Chris,

departed a couple of weeks earlier than the rest of the us to help prepare the way.

The journey to Tanzania started badly! The bus booked to take us to the airport for our flights cancelled at the last minute; fortunately we were able to muster willing volunteers to ferry us to the airport. The rest of the journey to Tanzania went well. Flying via Qatar, and Kilimanjaro to Dar Es Salaam, where we were met by Andre VanWoerden.

A few hours in the bus to Morogoro for an overnight stay, then the next day onto Iringa where we met the rest of the VanWoerden and Rollett families.

The next morning we loaded up the vehicles with our luggage and set off for

Inspiring the women in Ibumu

While we were out in Ibumu I was totally surprised by the way we inspired the women of the village. After a few days with our team of men and women on the building site, one of the villagers mentioned that they were watching us build and the women of the village felt encouraged and empowered to help on site too, which is something they never do. This photo was taken of them throwing bricks alongside us, which was a very special occasion for all of us.



I will always be totally blown-away by the amazing experience we have every time we visit Tanzania!

"We go out with a giving heart, an action that is so wonderfully received, not only from what we get but from what we give".

Shirene Comrie

Ibumu. It's a journey of contrasts: the boisterous town of Iringa, the smooth road to Ilula and finally, leaving the tarmac behind, it's a rough road to Ibumu through an increasingly beautiful mountainous landscape.

We arrived at Ibumu, just in time for church on Sunday (we had left Farnborough on Thursday) or as these things work in Tanzania, church was "just in time for us". We were greeted by the secondary school children escorting the vehicle to the church. A lovely service, accompanied by loud amplified music (Ibumu now has electricity), beautiful singing and dancing, led by Pastor Bart. Services in Tanzania may follow the traditional Anglican liturgy, but they have an incredible vibrancy. By dint of their good weather, the Grace at the end of the service is held outside only after everybody has shaken hands with, and greeted everybody else.



Then onto our accommodation. The village was kind enough to lend us the village office buildings, a communal space for eating, meeting and worship as well as separate offices converted, albeit temporarily, into bedrooms for the team. A stunning location just beneath the Image mountains.



The next day we started to work with the community, firstly a visit to the secondary school to meet the inspirational head mistress, Naja Msokwa, and her staff to plan our teaching with them. Onto building site number one, the Sunday school building next to the church, the foundations already laid, and the bricks just fired in the kiln on site, in fact on the first day of the build the bricks were still hot!

That afternoon we were back at the secondary school for teaching. The secondary school curriculum in Tanzania is taught in English, we were asked to help improve the pupils' English, it was a subject of debate pre our departure how we might teach them this, once at the school we found that fun, interactive games and songs were the best approach, "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" was a great favourite. Outside games were also a great hit, relay



races and the "square game" were very popular, especially as all the teachers joined in with the students.

After the first few days, we moved on to a building project at the secondary school, helping with the construction of an administration block. There were four usable rooms when we were at the school, all intended to be classrooms, but one is currently used as a staff room/office, one is used for a building store, leaving just two classrooms for 130 students. The new administration block will provide dedicated offices and a staff room, thus freeing up space for teaching. Separately a science lab is close to completion as is another classroom block, allowing the school to expand over the next few years. Hopefully electricity and water supplies will be there before too long.



While building at the secondary school we worked with many volunteers from the village, the staff including the head teacher got stuck into the brick laying and the students, during their breaks, helped us to move bricks.

In our second week in the village we ran "kids club" in the afternoons with play, craft and Bible stories. Craft is simple but is incredibly popular, the Bible stories are translated for the children, not only into



Swahili but also into the local language of Kihehe, and games were played either in the church, or out on the sports field nearby.

In-between these activities we had a day's visit to the Compassion project in Ilula, where some of the team sponsor children. This was a fantastic day, catching up with our sponsored children, visiting some of their homes and getting to know the project.

We also had a visit to the village of Ikuka, where some of the team stayed two years ago, it was good to meet some of our old friends and to see progress on the buildings we had worked on, it was encouraging to see progress but disappointing that the medical facility is not yet in use, we understand why, and that we have to get used to "Africa Time", but disappointing nevertheless.

There were walks in the village, hikes in the mountains and a short visit to the village's primary school where we discovered that one of the classes comprised 127 students.

The constant throughout our stay in Ibumu was the support we had from the head mistress and Pastor Bart and his wife. Mama Prosper. They were often with us at our accommodation; this

really reinforced the link we had with the community.

Our last day was a celebration with the village; speeches, dancing and feasting. We were also honoured by the attendance of the Bishop of Ruaha, it was a fantastic end to our stay in the village but tinged with sadness as we said our goodbyes.



Heading home, with a day in Iringa, a bus to Mikumi for a day's safari, and finally Dar Es Salaam, for the flight home, with an unexpected lay over in Qatar due to a flight delay.

The team returned home safely, undoubtedly changed by the experience, deepened in faith and with relationships with a community that we will treasure and develop.

It only remains for me to say... Would I go again? Absolutely!

Dates for your diary

Board Meeting: 25 October 2019 in London

Board Meeting: 17 January 2020

EIUK Annual Conference and

AGM: 29 February 2020. Venue to be announced.

Summer event: 4 July. Sue Fallon is celebrating 35 years with EI!