



Cooking in the Kitchen

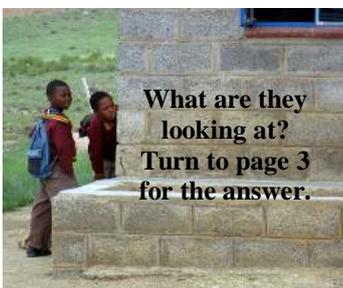
The big project over the last few months has been the building of a kitchen for the school. We had hoped that a grant would be available from DfID in the UK, but when this fell through, we were very grateful that Rafiki Thabo Foundation said that they would cover the cost—nearly £20,000.

For the past year, the meals have been cooked down in the village and trundled up the hill to the school in a wheelbarrow. But with the expected growth in student numbers next year, there really was a need for proper on-site cooking facilities.

The builders did an excellent job and our cook was dancing with joy when she saw the built-in wood-fired cooking pots.

The kitchen was first used on the very last day of school when we held a farewell party for Form C and our departing teachers when—as a very special treat—meat was included on the menu. You can see some of the girls chopping vegetables outside by the kitchen window.

It is unusual for a secondary school to provide lunch and it is a big attraction in a country where so many go hungry.



What are they looking at?
Turn to page 3 for the answer.

It's easy to be a Friend

If you have e-mail, it is easy to sign-up for future issues of *Fusi News*. Just send an e-mail to friend@fusischool.org with subscribe in the subject. You will automatically receive future issues, but can unsubscribe just as easily.

If you know anybody who might be interested to follow our progress in Lesotho, please pass on this copy of *Fusi News*, and tell them how easy it is to receive their own copy.

You can also learn more on our web site at www.fusischool.org

Looking Back Over Two Years



Elizabeth Dunford has spent the last two years as an unpaid volunteer, teaching mathematics at Fusi Secondary School and helping the school become established. In this interview, Fusi News asked her to reflect on her experiences.

Fusi News: After two years in Lesotho, what memories will you be taking with you back to Britain?

Elizabeth Dunford: The warm welcome of the Basotho people and watching the school grow from having a small number of students and an uncertain future to

what it is today.

FN: Looking back, what do you count as your main successes over the two years?

ED: The most important was getting the school registered with the Ministry of Education. Without that, the school had no future—it would have been an illegal school and under threat of closure by now. It also led to the Ministry agreeing to pay the salary of the Principal and one of the teachers. Eventually it should pay for all the teachers.

The registration also showed the local community that the school was here to stay and they have really taken it on as their own school of which they are justly proud.

I am also very pleased that we managed to introduce school lunches, providing a meal every day to children who often do not have enough to eat. It was quite a thrill to see the smoke coming out of the kitchen chimney for the first time on the last day of school.

FN: What have you found are the biggest differences between being a teacher in Lesotho and in Britain?

ED: The children here have such difficult home backgrounds. They often live in extreme poverty and many are single or double orphans. My last day at school started with me being told that

the mother of one of my students had died the night before. Funerals are part of the everyday life here for us teachers. The Principal and I will be at the funeral of the mother and, if it is like others I have attended, students from the school will sing during the ceremonies.

As for the teaching, that has had to be done in a classroom with virtually no resources beyond a piece of chalk. The students, too, have such a limited experience of the outside world. The standard example in mathematics of parallel lines is a railway track—but this is something which they never see. I once mentioned Paris—but none of the students had heard of the place.

FN: What remains to be done at Fusi?

ED: Government grants. It's essential that the Ministry pays the salaries of all the teachers so that the school can become self-sufficient. The Principal is in touch with them every week, but things move very slowly here.

FN: How do you feel about leaving?

ED: I am sad to leave because Fusi Secondary School has become such a large part of my life, but I'm leaving it the good hands of Mr Ramaqele, the Principal, and it's time to spend time with my family again and get to know my new grandchild.

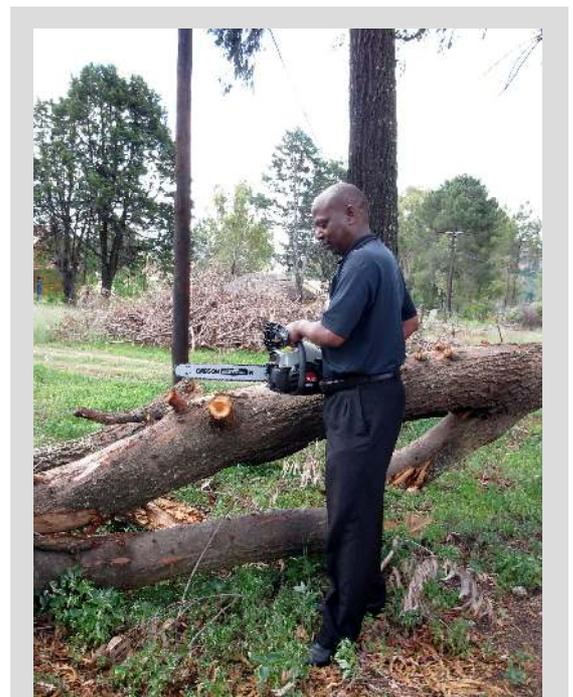
Disappointments

Our last newsletter was full of hope with our applications for building grants, but the recession has hit hard. As reported on the front page, the application to DfID for building the kitchen proved unsuccessful. Indeed, we have heard that DfID is cutting funding to Lesotho and may be recalling their representative in Lesotho. So the school is extremely grateful to Rafiki Thabo Foundation for stepping in and enabling the kitchen to be built.

Similarly, our application to the self-help fund of the American Embassy in Lesotho to build a library was unsuccessful.

So far we have still to hear officially about the Japanese funding which would provide Fusi Secondary School with additional classrooms and, perhaps, other buildings. However, our enquiries seem to confirm that the school is still on the list, along with others in the country, to benefit from the Japanese programme—although it now seems that much of 2011 will be taken up with the tendering process and we have concerns that classrooms, even if they are built, may not be ready in time for the start of the 2012 academic year.

Finally, our plans to have a Peace Corps Volunteer teaching at the school in 2011 have had to be put back for a year. Following the tragic shooting of a volunteer in the capital, Maseru, Peace Corps decided not to bring in a new set of education volunteers in November but, instead, have been carrying out a thorough review of their security procedures in the country. If all goes well, however, the school should be allocated a maths/science teaching volunteer in 2012.



The new kitchen has wood-burning stoves and so the chainsaw donated by Madley Brook Primary School in Oxfordshire is going to see a lot of use in the coming months. Our picture shows the school Principal trying it out.

Farewell Party



The last day of school was a farewell party for the Form C who had sat their Junior Certificate and would be leaving the school. It was a big event for the village of Ha Fusi and, as well as students and parents, it attracted a big following from the pupils at Fusi Primary school—two of whom are featured on our front page and others are shown in the picture on the left.

The Principal, Mr Ramaqele, presented prizes to the best students in each year. He was assisted by the English teacher, Mrs Khesa, who was also an excellent Master of Ceremonies for the day. To the left of the picture is the Village Chief who is a member of the school Management Board and a very enthusiastic supporter of the school.

The students provided entertainment during the day. The school choir was in excellent voice, the girls danced the traditional litolobonya (shown below) and the boys had everybody laughing with their send-up of traditional dance.



The school said goodbye to Mrs Mofolo who has taught Sesotho at the school for the past two years. She is going to teacher training college on a three year course to become a fully qualified teacher.



As the Chief and others remarked, the day was tinged with sadness as the school said goodbye to Elizabeth Dunford after two years teaching and helping develop the school. Last year's students gave her a seshoeshoe (traditional dress) as a parting gift and she is pictured above with two of the students and Mrs Molefi who is Deputy Chair of the School Board .



No event is complete in Lesotho without a full set of speeches—and the farewell party was no exception. The two ladies shown above making their speeches have both played an important part in establishing Fusi Secondary School. Mrs Rameqele (on the left) is Principal of Fusi Primary School and it was her attempt to give school leavers some extra education that inspired Andy Uglow to raise the funds to build the secondary school. Miss Pholosi (on the right) has been involved with education locally all her life—and is still active at the age of eighty-four—and worked closely with Mrs Rameqele in starting the school.

Class of 2010 ... and beyond



Our picture shows the school's Principal handing out the exam papers at the start of a Junior Certificate examination for this year's Form C. Junior Certificate is a national examination taken after three years at secondary school: the standard is roughly equivalent to Year 10 in the UK. Students who pass the core subjects—maths, science, English and Sesotho—qualify to enter High School.

This was the first time that a public examination had been held at the school. Last year's registration of the school came too late for the school to qualify as an examination centre.

Our Principal has set himself the goal of developing Fusi into a High School but, for the present, students have to leave Fusi after taking their Junior Certificate and attend two years of High School elsewhere, at the end of which they take COSC (essentially traditional 'O'-level) which is the qualification to enter university.

The school has already had over sixty applications for students wanting to start in Form A next year and we are expecting many more at the start of term. So the Principal has decided that, rather than turn students away, he will have two Form A classes next year. How do you fit four classes into three classrooms? The answer is to put the relatively small Form C into the store room of the kitchen. And what do you do in 2012? Answer: hope that you can get priority in the Japanese building programme.

This does mean that the school needs some extra desks. A gift-aided donation of £60 buys a sturdy desk like those shown in the picture, which is made in Lesotho and so also helps provide much-needed work for local people. Could this be the Christmas present you are looking for to give to that person who has everything? Please see below for how to donate.

Thanks For Your Donations

We hope that this newsletter has shown how your donations are continuing to make a huge difference to the lives of young people in Ha Fusi and surrounding villages. We continue to press the Ministry of Education to find the money to pay the rest of our teachers, but until they do we still need to find the cost of their salaries. Rafiki Thabo Foundation also sponsors needy students who fail to qualify for government sponsorship.

All donations are most gratefully welcomed.

If you would like to make a financial donation to benefit the school please visit www.fusischool.org/howtodonate.