

Newsletter No. 8 September 2011

Swazi Voices charm



“Those wonderfully resonant voices, vital and clear, gave such pleasure.”

Jennifer, Iwerne Stepleton

After a great deal of work dealing with visas, Sister Judith and Lee Howe deserve our thanks to for their help, the choir of St Francis School, Mbabane, arrived here on November 28th. They found themselves in minus 7 degrees and thick snow, which none of them had ever seen. Luckily Lee Howe had got them each a hat and scarf, made in Manzini.



A warm welcome at Bacon's College



Zama Mavundla and a Year 7 Bacons student light the advent candle with Father Roger Hall at the Bacon's Assembly

Bacon's College, Rotherhithe, has been twinned with St Francis High School since 2006. Liz James, head of 6th form, had assigned a 'buddy' to each of the 16 Swazi students, it was not long before they were all singing together and practising for the first concert at Bacon's on the 29th. For those of you who were able to get to one of the three concerts you will know that it is not an exaggeration to say that the sound made by the choir is angelic. The reception they received after the first concert, the college assembly, was nothing short of rapturous. I know that the Principal, Tony Perry, felt that all the hard work put into the relationship between the two schools was more than vindicated as the choir sang 'Vumani Ingoma', rejoicing over the invitation to London.

Bacon's College 2010 Christmas appeal raised £7,400 towards paying the secondary school fees for their sponsored orphans.



Swaziland Charitable Trust

Reg. Charity No. 257666 England

In a blizzard we took the choir in a Thames Clipper from Rotherhithe to Westminster, when the conductor asked me where my students came from I explained and he asked them to sing. It was the first of many impromptu concerts that day. Walking in the snow from Westminster Abbey to Buckingham Palace, the students wet and freezing, I thought we could call in on the Swaziland High Commission. What a welcome we got there, no prior appointment and 20 of us needing drying out. Ushered in, cups of tea, radiators for wet socks and trainers then a song for the Swazi staff. Word reached Her Excellency Mrs Dumisile Sukati. She returned to be given a full rendering of many Swazi traditional songs which everybody joined in with and danced.



Her Excellency Mrs Dumisile Sukati, joins choir leader, Lindiwe Nkambule.

Later on, while waiting for over an hour for the bus in the Waterloo Road, the choir broke into song filling the dark snowy air with warm African voices. Passers-by stopped in awe as the students stamped their frozen feet and ululated.

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Hatfield House

On December 1st, the roads were impassable so it was decided to take the train to Hatfield for the third concert of the tour. Sadly many of the audience were unable to get there but the wonderful welcome from everyone at the house made the evening a huge success.



"The most memorable part of the trip was visiting Hatfield House. Considering the history of the House, I feel honoured to be in the same place in which Queen Elizabeth I resided and where some of the world's best known English leaders stayed." Similo Mamba



Dorset

The next concert was at Criche House. We met the bus from London on windswept Sandbanks.

The most memorable part of the trip was seeing snow and the sea for the first time in my life. England is a beautiful country with very loving and caring people.

Sigcebisse Nkambule

Sigcebisse and Gculisile on the beach



The concert was packed out in spite of icy roads. They sang 'Bless this House' to an enchanted audience.



"Saturday at Criche in Swaziland was thrilling. Those voices, that exuberance, that talent, what a joy." June Chichester

"It was wonderful to hear and actually see those lovely, smiley, enthusiastic faces. Veronica & Simon, More Criche.

Southwark Cathedral, Borough Market and Salt Keys pub

On Sunday we took them to Southwark Cathedral, they sang Psalm 23. Coming out of the cathedral, the sound of drum, a street party in Borough Market. With no invitation and a well-guarded entrance, we danced at the gates. The organisers spotted us, ushered us in and Swazi Voices found themselves performing. We got free rock'n'roll lessons and a hog roast



In the afternoon, they sang for their supper in a Rotherhithe pub, The Old Salt Quay.



The Tower of London

The last concert was in the church of St Peter ad Vincula in the Tower of London. After a fascinating tour by Father Roger Hall, chaplain to Bacon's College and the Tower, the choir sang on the altar steps to a full church. It was minus 8 degrees outside.



“What an experience to see those beautiful young people in their vivid costumes, singing like angels under those ancient walls. Although it seemed so effortless and fun, I can’t even imagine how much organisation it all must have taken.” Helen Harvey.



Her Excellency Mrs Dumsile Sukati, SCT Chair, Vicky McDonaugh, Attaché, Phindile Gamedze and Princess Cetuka.

Bacons College Student visits Swaziland



By Ned Frost, A level student in Bacon's College Sixth Form studying to do a degree in Medicine at university in 2012 (pictured with Caesar Bhembe from the St Francis choir).

Studying in a British sixth form I took education pretty much for granted. I knew in school we sponsored pupils to attend school, through the Swaziland Charitable Trust, but, shamefully, I don't think I really reflected on the impact of such sponsorship. But on visiting Swaziland in August this year, under the auspices of the SCT and

financed by a College Scholarship, when I talked to sponsors my own age, I was struck by the real life impact of such sponsorship - the fact that without sponsorship the possibility of a child attending school was non-existent, the fact that many options and doors were already closed to them due to no fault of their own, and many would miss out on the invaluable social education school provides. This was something I found

incredibly hard to deal with.

However these experiences have made me determined to raise as much money as possible in Bacon's College Christmas appeal and to sponsor a child in Swaziland myself, as I now fully understand from first-hand experience the amazing life-long impact such a commitment makes.

**Help an orphan
stay in school**

Text SWAZ11 £2 / £5 / £10 to 70070
to donate now eg SWAZ11 £5

JustTextGiving
by vodafone

Wristbands for Cash

Congratulations to Cash Smiersma, a key organiser in the 2006 Edinburgh University Fashion show that raised so much money for the SCT. She gets married in September and has asked any of her guests who so wish, to make a donation to the trust instead of a wedding present. We have got some wrist bands made for her to give away.

Orphans in final year

Our first two sponsored orphans graduate from high school this year; Bongiwe Mahlalela and Nonhlanhla Maweleta. We are so grateful to all the sponsors for their continuing support. Nonhlahla is supported by the Luxembourg Christmas Bazaar which has chosen to support The SCT again this year.



Swaziland Charitable Trust (Reg. Charity No. 257666)

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