



# DRUMBEAT

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The Newsletter of The Friends of The Gambia Association  
8 Essex Close, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4NP [www.fotga.org.uk](http://www.fotga.org.uk)

A Registered Charity UK No 1051745 and NGO in The Gambia No. A92

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RIGHT:

THE NEW OFFICE AT  
KOTU. ABOUT 600M  
ON THE RIGHT ON THE  
ROAD FROM KOTU  
POLICE  
STATION TOWARDS  
SERREKUNDA.



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## Chairman's bit



As the incoming FoTGA Chairman, my first action is to pass on my sincere thanks to David Smith, who has held this post for 6 out of the past 7 years. David is still on the team and I'm sure will be working just as hard to help the people of The Gambia.

The last year has seen enormous changes to the organisation and systems of the charity. On the front line for FoTGA is our new team in The Gambia.

On behalf of the Management Committee of FoTGA, I warmly welcome Ousainou Joof and Baboucarr Bahoum to The Friends of The Gambia Association.

Ousainou represents FoTGA in The Gambia. He joins us from the National Youth Council, where he acted as a youth co-ordinator. Before this Ousainou worked in the Gambia Women's Financial Association. Ousainou has diplomas in development studies and project planning.

Baboucarr joins FoTGA as our book-keeper, having worked in accounting for the National Youth Association for Food Security. He is well qualified in accounting and business management.

Thanks go to Sue Martin, Maggie Griffiths and Jeff Phillips from the committee who handled the recruitment and training of the new team.

Ousainou and Baboucarr have the task of introducing the new 'direct payment' system of support for sponsored children. They have already visited many of the schools to confirm student details and brief them on the new procedures. Even though they only started work in June, they managed to cover 75% of the students before the summer holidays.

Due to increasing costs, the Committee had decided not to continue the lease on our existing office. Ousainou and Baboucarr quickly located a suitable new office in the Kotu district. The new office is already up and running, see the pictures and map in this edition.

Most of our sponsors will be aware that our sponsorship secretary Katey Dudley-Smith has been unwell over recent months. We send our best wishes to Katey for a speedy recovery. During Katey's absence, Sue and I are dealing with sponsorship. Thanks to those sponsors who have been very patient during this time of multiple changes!

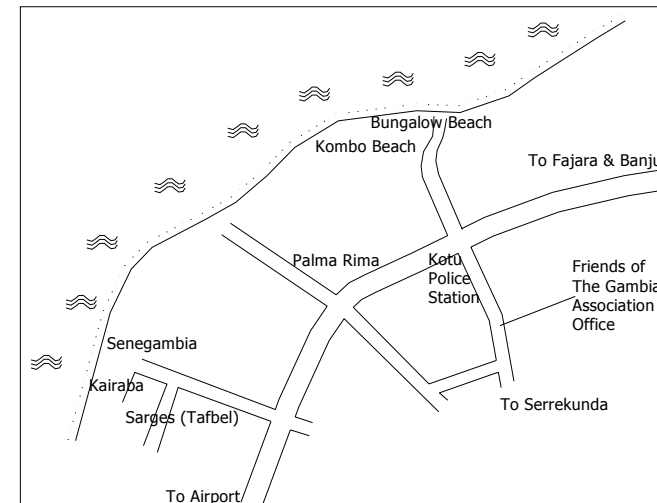
Until the new team is fully up to speed, we have had to reduce some of the other activities we carry out.

For projects, we have restricted our work to those activities currently in hand.

We are planning to continue shipping goods, but now ask that all non-medical items be fully funded by donors. It is our experience that a lot of goods we have shipped have limited use or value to Gambians. In many cases, it is better to sell goods in the UK and send funds to buy in The Gambia.

We have a very busy year in front of us, but we are confident the new team and new procedures will provide a much more professional support to the people of The Gambia and their sponsors.

Peter Pickett





Ousainou Joof  
Representative



Baboucarr Bahoum  
Bookkeeper

### **The new sponsorship scheme;**

A fixed amount will be paid based on the school grade attended.

Payments will be in three stages:

Term 1 40% - this will include money for uniforms and books

Term 2 20% -

Term 3 40% - this will include money for exam fees.

Payment of fees will be authorised in the UK on receipt of at least one school report from the previous year showing regular attendance, good punctuality and acceptable performance.

The UK Sponsorship Secretary will maintain the list of current students and will issue the list to the Gambian team.

A Student Summary Record will be used to track the receipt of reports and release of payments

### **Launch of Scheme**

A Ceremony was held at the new office to explain the new scheme to Parents and Students. The ceremony was attended by the Secretary of State for Basic Education, the NGO director and local dignitaries and was covered by television and radio. This helps FoTGA to become known in The Gambia and allowed many students to get in touch.

The first students received their vouchers to present to the bank for the first terms allowance. The parents have the responsibility to pay for fees, books, uniform, lunches etc wisely.

Twenty bags of rice sent by sponsors were handed out at the ceremony.

FoTGA would like to gratefully acknowledge the assistance given by Momodou Max Jallow and Ousman Ndow during the launch of the scheme.

## AGM 2007

The AGM was held in June 2007 at The Quality Hotel, Coventry. David Smith stepped down at the end of his second term of office and Peter Pickett was elected Chairman and Maggie Griffiths elected Secretary. Patricia Burnell, who has been associated with the Charity from the beginning also stepped down. FoTGA wishes to thank her for all her valuable work for the Charity.

The committee also welcomed Naomi Beal back onto the committee after some years out of the country.

The opportunity was taken to introduce the new sponsorship scheme and to answer questions from members.

## Kim's Recipes for Life

A collection of Gambia and European dishes

Compiled and Edited by Rob and Margaret Isdale

In memory of their daughter Kim who died on 29th July 2005

Donations given in response to this book will go to "The Friends of The Gambia Association" to assist with the cost of running the health care unit at Kerr Serign in The Gambia in memory of Kim

Suggested minimum donation £2

Contact: Rob Isdale—contact details opposite

## Post

As most of you know there is no mail delivery service in The Gambia, mail is held at various post offices until collected by the box holder. FoTGA Sponsors can send letters and gifts via the Charity's box PMB310, but are requested to contact UK when sending to the box number to allow us to monitor progress. Any mail for sponsored students will be held at the office for collection when the family next visits the office – usually to collect money for fees. Some items, especially those for up country may take some time to be collected.

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NINA's welding workshop. Keeps busy making small heating burners used for making tea. Most of the larger work including steel trusses, iron gates and windows is done outside.



The Alkalo and vice Alkalo at Niro checking the ground is ready for the Garden Project

