



OUNDLE

School

November 2009

Dear Parents

I am writing to you with the latest news of the July 2010 Mozambique trip. Your sons and daughters have made a very positive and enthusiastic start to fund-raising and we have a range of initiatives on the go. We have raised over £12 000 so far and are well on course to set up our three projects:

- A bridge over part of a mangrove swamp that will improve access to the clinic which we completed in 2008.
- A women's sewing collective, to provide a sustainable source of income.
- A men's fishing collective, to provide a sustainable source of income and foster environmentally sustainable fishing practices.

If you would like to see what some of the fund-raising groups are doing and how much money they are raising, have a look at our online fund-raising page:

<http://www.justgiving.com/oundleschoolafricalink>

There have been various hiccoughs with the planning of the trip, but I am pleased that numbers, dates and itinerary have now been finalised. There will be 30 pupils on the trip, myself and Ali Dean and a doctor. This is the itinerary:

- Sun 11th July 1900 Fly Heathrow to Johannesburg night flight
- Mon 12th July Drive to Kruger Park, overnight camp Tamboti Camp
- Tues 13th July Game-viewing and overnight camp at Letaba Camp
- Wed 14th July Game-viewing and overnight camp at Letaba Camp
- Thurs 15th July Drive to Mozambique, overnight at Camp Laguna, Bilene
- Fri 16th July Drive to Pomene Lodge - stay at Pomene, working on Project until
- Sun 25th July – Drive to Inhambane and fly to Johannesburg then to Heathrow
- Mon 26th July - arrive Heathrow 0655

Your son or daughter will need a passport valid for at least six months beyond the end date of the trip. It will be most practical for you to arrange your own children's visas. This can be done reasonably quickly and efficiently through the post. All the information about this can be found on the website of the Mozambique High Commission at

http://www.mozambiquehighcommission.org.uk/?id_w=3&id_w1=16

I shall send you by email an exemplar of how the form should be filled in, apart from the personal details. It can be downloaded from the website. Please do not put anything in it about volunteer

Andrew Martens Oundle Africalink Community Aid Project Mozambique July 2010

36 South Road, Oundle, Peterborough, PE8 4BU Tel 01832 272934 Fax 01832 277123 adm@oundleschool.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 309921

work – it doesn't really apply to us, and would lead to complications. Make sure you include two photos, a cheque for £40, copies of flights and accommodation confirmation and a self-addressed stamped envelope. It is essential to use registered delivery. In due course I will email you the documents which confirm the flights and accommodation. Let me know if you have any problems with this.

Health

We will be in the very fortunate position of having a doctor with us on the trip. Cain Hunt is the father of David, who is also coming on the trip. Cain is a GP and has a special medical interest in scuba diving, and will be carrying a well-stocked medical bag. In the event of serious injury or illness, there is a hospital in Massinga, 60kms from Pomene Lodge. In the event of an emergency, Pomene Lodge would provide medical evacuation by plane to Johannesburg via Inhambane. Oundle insurance would cover treatment in a private hospital in Johannesburg, as well as evacuation to the UK. We have taken whatever medical precautions we can, but it should be accepted that at Pomene we will be in a remote rural area where sophisticated medical care is not close at hand.

In due course vaccinations and malaria prophylaxis should be arranged. For boarders this will be done through the school doctor. Day pupils will need to consult their GPs. Early in the Trinity Quarter I shall send out reminders about this. Malaria is a serious illness, endemic in Mozambique and pupils must ensure that they take their prescribed prophylaxis, these days most commonly Malarone. We will check on a daily basis that they are doing so on the trip. They will be encouraged to cover up at night, to use repellents and to use the mosquito nets provided.

All our accommodation on the trip will have clean, treated water, so water-borne diseases are not a concern. Bottled water will be available. Sunburn is a concern, so pupils will be strongly advised to wear hats and use sunscreen with a high protection factor.

Crime and general security

Despite its recent history of civil war, Mozambique is now a peaceful, stable, democratic country. Pomene Lodge has occasionally experienced petty theft, but never violent crime. Wherever possible we will check that room doors are locked, and pupils will be advised not to wander about after dark. Away from the lodge, pupils will always be accompanied by staff. At the lodge, pupils will always be in groups of four or more on the beach. Wandering beyond the boundaries of the resort will not be permitted.

Road and Air Transport

We are using airlines with a good reputation and safety record, South African Airlines between London and Johannesburg and Linhas Aereas de Moçambique from Inhambane to Johannesburg. We will not be going into the city of Johannesburg at all. The safari company which will be taking us to the Kruger Park and then up to Mozambique is Bundu Safaris, the same one we used in 2006 and 2008. We will be picked up at Massinga by Pomene Lodge transport for the last leg of the trip to Pomene, and will also be transported by them on short outings, across the estuary to project on ferry boats and back to Inhambane airport. I will not pretend that their vehicles are brand new, but the roads are very quiet and they do have a 100% safety record.

Dangerous Animals

In the Kruger Park the campsites are securely fenced. Visitors are only allowed out of vehicles in designated fenced picnic areas. Optional walking safaris are accompanied by armed and experienced guides. Snakes, scorpions and spiders do occur, but not commonly. Nevertheless, pupils will be advised to be vigilant and cautious. There are very few sharks off the Mozambique coast and there is no record of any attacks in the past. There are venomous fish, but they are not aggressive and divers are warned about these and instructed not to touch any marine life.

Adventure Activities

It must be accepted that there is a significant level of risk associated with these optional activities at Pomene Lodge. In the Parental Consent and Medical Information form you will notice that you are required to give written permission for your children to participate in specific activities. The normal Oundle insurance does not cover scuba diving, but I shall arrange extra cover for this if your son or daughter would like to dive. There will be no life guards on the beach. Swimming (with parental consent) will only be permitted in groups of four or more, with at least one person keeping watch on the beach. Pupils will be warned not to go in further than standing depth. Due to off-shore reefs, waves are generally small and there are no dangerous tides or currents. All boat trips and dives will be supervised by qualified and experienced Pomene Lodge instructors and staff, with life jackets as appropriate. The dive school is well-equipped and has an excellent safety record. I have dived there myself and it is a wonderful experience. It is possible for beginners to do the PADI Resort Course, or even the Open Water Diver qualifications. There are also more advanced courses for experienced divers. Other optional activities possibly available will be snorkelling, boat trips, quad bike excursions and horse riding on the beach. All of these activities do carry a significant level of risk, although the lodge has not had any serious accidents.

General Conduct

We will be representing Oundle School and will obviously expect good behaviour and adherence to the Oundle code at all times during the trip. School rules with regard to alcohol will apply, i.e. pupils of 16 and over will be allowed beer or wine in moderation with a meal and in the company of adults.

What to take

Pupils will experience a range of temperatures. Evenings and early mornings in the Kruger Park will be chilly, so it is important to take some warm clothes. The day starts very early with game drives at the crack of dawn. It does tend to warm up quickly during the day. Mozambique will be a lot warmer and shorts and t-shirts will be the common choice, although when working on the project and visiting the village, girls especially must dress modestly out of cultural sensitivity; legs *must* be covered to the knees. The lodge does have a laundry service (sunshine permitting). Pupils will have to pay for their own laundry. It does not usually rain at this time of year, but there can sometimes be showers at the coast, so a light waterproof jacket would be a good idea. A reliable torch will be needed as electricity at Pomene is provided by a generator which is turned off around 10 pm. Night time can be very dark! South African adapters will be needed for chargers and appliances. What minor injuries we have incurred on past trips have been mostly to the feet of pupils who have chosen to go barefoot. Apart from thorns and branches concealed in the beach sand, pupils will also have to contend with spiky things under the ooze when they wade through the mangrove swamp. Please could parents ensure that all pupils have a strong pair of waterproof sandals – these are by far the most practical footwear for the trip. A pair of trainers would also be

useful. Heavy hiking boots should be discouraged. Pupils should bring a hat, preferably with a good brim and high protection factor sunscreen. As we are camping in the Kruger park, a lightweight towel would be useful, which can then be used as a beach towel in Mozambique.

All meals will be provided apart from lunches on the first and last days, which pupils will be able to buy at a roadside food court and at the airport. Pupils may wish to bring some spending money to buy drinks, snacks, souvenirs and so on. Please note also that pupils will have to pay for whatever activities they choose to do. In the Kruger Park only SA Rands or Visa cards are accepted. Pomene Lodge accepts visa cards as well as cash in Sterling, Mozambique Metecais or SA Rand. There will be ATMs at Johannesburg Airport and at our first lunch stop, but not thereafter. It is possible to cash travellers cheques at Johannesburg airport, but this can be time-consuming, so I would advise against traveller's cheques. Pomene lodge definitely does not accept traveller's cheques. My suggestion is either a visa/debit card or cash in SA rand. Prices are reasonable by UK standards, so we are not talking about large sums. Pupils will be allowed to set up a tab and pay at the end. Closer to the time I will obtain a price list for the various activities.

General

There will be mobile phone coverage in South Africa and parts of Mozambique. Pupils should check whether their networks are compatible. Pomene did not have mobile reception when I was last there in August, and this is likely to be the case next year. I will have a satellite phone with me for emergencies. I will write to you again closer to the trip to give more detailed advice and reminders.

Do get in touch if you have any questions. Please complete the parental consent forms and return them to me as soon as you can, along with a copy of the photo page of your child's passport. For the sake of saving a few trees, I would be happy to receive these as Word or PDF attachments, but if you would prefer to post hard copies, please send them to me at 36 South Road, Oundle, Peterborough, PE8 4BU.

Please note also that the final payment of £1150 will be on the end of term bill.

With best wishes
Andrew Martens