



Marlborough Brandt Group

Linking people for a fairer world

May 2014 Newsletter

Death of Tim David

The month was marked by the terrible news of the sudden death of our past Chairman Tim David who for four years 2007-11 in that post gave his all to MBG including several visits to Gunjur where he was highly respected, and at the same effectively directing MBG. We were all extremely shocked and we send our deepest sympathies to Rosie and the children Piers and Isobel.

Tim joined us as Chair from a background in the Diplomatic Service including much time spent in Africa, not least as High Commissioner to Zambia. So he brought highly relevant experience, knowledge, wisdom and diplomacy with a strong sense of humour all of which played a vital role in the work of our small community based organisation in Wiltshire, linked to a Muslim community in West Africa.



Tim was Chair at a time when MBG did not have a Director and therefore his role was considerably broader and more time consuming. He, and of course by implication his family, showed extraordinary commitment to MBG which involved a minimum of weekly visits to the office, regular evening meetings and trips to The Gambia where Tim was held in great respect by our partners in TARUD and by the community members with whom he very quickly established a warm and effective relationship.

A major legacy that Tim left as a result of his time with MBG was ensuring that our policy documents were in order. He brought a professionalism to the organisation that was much needed. All of us in MBG feel a great sense of loss. Messages have come in from Gunjur expressing solidarity with Tim's family and with us in the office and the wider MBG membership. The Gunjur Community Link wrote "On behalf of the GCL and by extension the community of Gunjur, we would like to extend our condolences on the sudden death of Mr Tim David. Please accept our most heartfelt sympathies for the loss. As you grieve, know that we are remembering you and honouring the memory of Mr Tim David".

The Gambian Diaspora group the Kombo Sillah Association with headquarters in Bristol wrote "We have learnt with deep sorrow the passing of Mr Tim David who was your friend and professional colleague for the last decade or so in the work of peace building between the communities of the North and South. We equally feel the loss in that a man of his standing, understanding, vision and commitment to the cause of those less fortunate, and for the prospect of greater peace and understanding among the peoples and different faith groups must definitely be felt by any peace loving people of the world.

Even at the sunset of his life, he must have felt satisfied that he was on the good side of history and for human progress. To have his name associated with Marlborough Brandt Group/Gunjur Link is enough to assign and guarantee him a place of honour in history. We hope his family, friends and history would narrate a befitting epithet that would reflect a simple man whose abiding conviction and commitment in simple but profound things that are sure to guarantee universal peace and brotherhood amongst the people of the world.

We pray that the family finds it easy to cope with his absence, and may his good earthly work earn him a handsome reward. Once again please do accept our profound sympathy."

Good News! A Grant from the Arkleton Trust

During May we received some good news namely that we have been awarded a grant of £16,500 by the Arkleton Trust for a fascinating project devised by Wiltshire Global Education Centre, our educational wing run so effectively by Caroline Harmer, MBG and our partners in Gunjur. The project invites groups of sixth formers in Wiltshire schools to develop business proposals, appropriate to a semi rural community in The Gambia. They will do this following information workshops held in the schools, desk research and discussion with the Gambian diaspora.



Five of the proposals will be shortlisted and those five groups will present their proposals to a panel made up of WGEC, MBG, a Gambian from the Kombo Sillah Association and a Trustee of the Arkleton Trust. The team with the winning proposal will take that proposal to Gunjur. In the meantime, in groups of five, young people in Gunjur will be invited to submit business proposals which again will be judged by a panel. The winner will be given a loan to start the proposal. The runner up will meet with the winning group of young people from Wiltshire and together they will develop a joint proposal and the Gunjur group will again be given a loan to start up this joint proposal.

We are extremely grateful to the Arkleton Trust who have made it clear that they wish to be involved in the project and we look forward to working with them as the project develops.

Outcome of the meeting with Justine Greening

In the March/April Newsletter we drew attention to the meeting that BUILD, that in many ways grew out of the work of MBG, held with Justine Greening in the House of Commons. We were pleased to receive a warm letter from her following that meeting and in response to a summary of our discussions that we sent to her. In her letter she wrote:

“Community linking can build highly productive and life-changing relationships and encourage engagement in development (Don’t we know it! – Ed). I am grateful for BUILD’s commitment to supporting effective international community links. I hope that DFID and BUILD can continue to explore the future potential of community links and share lessons from existing community partnerships”.



**Justine Greening
Secretary of State
for International
Development**

You bet we can! And MBG has a few lessons that we have learnt along the way and can impart!!

King of Kora – Jaliba Kuyateh



Talking of music, Nick Maurice has had the extraordinary privilege bestowed on him of crowning Jaliba Kuyateh “King of Kora” in a ceremony to take place in Bristol at 1.00 am on Sunday 8 June!

Jaliba started playing the 21 stringed traditional West African instrument at the age of five and is recognised worldwide as the leading kora player.

Nick writes “This came to me “out of the blue” and I almost fainted on the spot when I read the letter of invitation from my friends and colleagues in the Kombo Sillah Association.

I have heard Jaliba when he has performed in Gunjur, fundraising for some of the initiatives in which we have been involved and I have always been hugely impressed by his technique, his musicianship and his extraordinary ability to connect with his audience.

It would be wrong to suggest the music of the kora is instantly appreciated by my Western ear, just as I am sure it is difficult for Africans (not to say some Europeans!) to adjust to the orchestral and choral music of Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, but of one thing I am sure; music is a universal language and can do so much to bring people of different cultures and faiths together. And so has Jaliba proved. Like all brilliant musicians he started playing the kora at a very young age - five. He has made many recordings and he has played to large audiences around the world including America, Europe and of course Africa. He has been chosen to be UNICEF Ambassador in recognition of his ability through his playing to bring peace and harmony. It is significant that one of his songs is entitled "Kaira Silo Mang jara fa" (the road to peace is never too long).

It is entirely appropriate that he should be crowned King of Kora.

If anyone is interested in attending the Coronation, please let us know info@mbg.org. It will be a unique experience which will never be repeated!

Max Ansell Summer Group Leader 2014

"Another summer has come around, which also means another summer visit for the 6th form students of Marlborough to head out to Gunjur for one more educational visit as have been happening for the past 28+ years. The selection of assistant leaders is always an important task, Alexandra Vyvan, went out with the summer group in 2012 and naturally stood out, and when approached, jumped at the opportunity.

This year has, as I am sure all previous years have, been full of challenges; first and foremost, the breakup of the Gunjur Link Committee. This meant that for the first time in a long time the summer trip was looking to be a no go. But as Gunjur has done many times, it bounced back with the formation of the GCL. All this confusion meant that the trip preparations occurred at a much later date to normal, starting around mid-January in comparison to normally October. This led to a rushed push in the schools causing a bit of lower up take than normal. A major problem of this being the lack of participation of Marlborough College and now this year's trip is the first visit without any Marlborough College students involved. With the smaller up take, thinking outside of the box was needed, and there was interest shown from students outside Marlborough, MBG thought it best we contact them and invite them on to the trip."

You can read Max's update on the summer visit in full on the MBG website www.mbg.org/blog.

Brilliant Young Pianists – Ben Schoeman

Ben Schoeman gave the final recital in our 2013-14 series of "Brilliant Young Pianists in St Peter's Church" and was brilliant. We have been so fortunate in the last two years to have had such extraordinary talent here in our small market town and talent that has come from as far away as China, USA, Azerbaijan, Russia via Germany, France via Thailand and Ben from South Africa.

As one member of the audience said afterwards "I have always assumed that the Liszt sonata that Ben played was so difficult that one never heard it live, only on recordings which could be doctored! He was out of this world"...he was!



Concert Katharine Gowers & Alasdair Beatson

And don't forget that we have another concert coming up in St Peter's Church on Sunday 22 June at 7.30 pm when **Katharine Gowers (violin)** is playing with **Alasdair Beatson (piano)** an amazing programme of music by Janacek, Szymanowski and Elgar. You will be amazed – we promise! Katharine has played almost every year for MBG since 1989 when she was a student at the Yehudi Menuhin School, since when she has played with all the major orchestras and in the major concert halls around the world. She is a star!

Dates for your Diary

- Katharine Gowers Violin & Alasdair Beatson Piano, St Peter's Church, Marlborough, Sunday 22 June, 7.30pm. Tickets £10 are available from the MBG website www.mbg.org/events, www.marlboroughboxoffice.co.uk, The White Horse Bookshop & Sound Knowledge.



Photos by Georgia Bertazzi