

A SHARED DREAM

THE STORY OF A CULTURAL EXCHANGE
BETWEEN TWO MUSEUMS

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ACTON SCOTT HISTORIC WORKING FARM
SHROPSHIRE, ENGLAND

.....
TANJE VILLAGE MUSEUM
THE GAMBIA, WEST AFRICA

THE GAMBIA EXCHANGE PROJECT



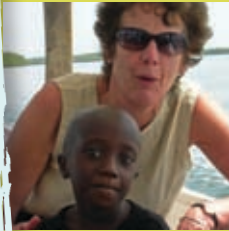
Introduction

SOMETIMES I DON'T KNOW HOW IT ALL STARTED – I ASKED TIDE- GLOBAL LEARNING, A TEACHERS' NETWORK WITH A PARTICULAR COMMITMENT TO WORK ON GLOBAL DIMENSIONS IN EDUCATION, FOR ADVICE ON AN EXHIBITION I WAS PLANNING ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE. AND THE NEXT THING I WAS ON A PLANE FOR BANJUL IN THE GAMBIA WITH A GROUP OF EXPERIENCED TEACHERS ON A STUDY TOUR, LOOKING AT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES AND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS...

9.2.07

I love my hut – it's round and large with a rattan straw ceiling under a tin roof. Outside is a baobab tree with huge fruits that drop at any time. It's so dry and the palm leaves rustle on the roof like rain... Am I really in Africa? Very tired but we sat up late because it is my birthday!

And then I visited Tanje Village Museum in the Gambia and I was struck by the similarities between this village museum that depicts traditional Gambian life and customs and one of our sites in Shropshire – Acton Scott Historic Working Farm.



So I came back, used the first hand evidence I had collected of the effects of climate change on a small West African country in the Museum on the Move exhibition, and started the long process of putting together a proposal for funding for an exchange programme. I kept in close contact with Tanje Village Museum and experienced highs when the funding came through from MLA West Midlands and lows when the team selected to travel began to fragment.

I had many aims for the exchange, from a sharing of common experience between two similar museums, to the development of a new programme for schools at Acton Scott Historic Working Farm. I wanted to use the farm as an example of sustainable farming in the past and at the same time look at issues of sustainability in The Gambia. The programme would build on the lessons of the climate change exhibition and set challenges for the children that could help them think about living in a globalised society.

Sarah Griffiths

Dear Sarah

Real developmental work doesn't have integrity if it doesn't have the freedom to go wrong sometimes. What we want to enable is for you to try it out... to push your own and our sector's boundaries, to document and evaluate so we can demonstrate what works and what doesn't. Take your time.

All best wishes

Michael

Michael Peter Cooke, Director: Learning and Social Policy (ex Museums Domain Lead),
MLA West Midlands: the regional council for museums, libraries and archives.



Dear Sarah,

What a good news, congratulations for this great development Sarah. We are very please indeed and are sure that our dreams are becoming a reality. We are sure that we are ever ready to work with you and we are sure that things will work as expected for our mutual benefit.

We will start working on the time, cost and when we should be visiting each other. We will send you the proposal when completed for your comments. Thanks once again Sarah you did a good work.

Best regards,
Ousman

Dear Sarah,

How are you and your family? I wish you all the best in what you are doing and your dreams. I discussed with Mr. Bayo about your visit to Tanje and this is what we have arranged. Accommodations that we have at the museum are built in traditional round huts for visitors to experience Gambian way of life, sleep under candle light, use mosquito nets and showers and toilets are out side with running water from a well in the museum.

I hope as museum professionals you would not mind such arrangements...
Ousman



OUSMAN AND HIS SON ALASANA

OUR HOME AT TANJE



11.2.07

Ousman Jadama, the head guide at Tanje Village Museum came to see me last night – it was such a surprise... he wanted to talk about museums. He had been apprenticed to Abdoulie Bayo, the director of the museum and had learnt everything from him – he loves his job like me. I keep thinking about an exchange...

Tuesday

Aims of the Exchange:

- To develop a new sustainable schools programme to encourage more visits to both sites
- To share a vision for the preservation of traditional skills and craftsmanship on both sites
- To promote good practice in caring for artefacts and specimens on an outdoor site.
- To encourage professional and personal development for all exchange participants

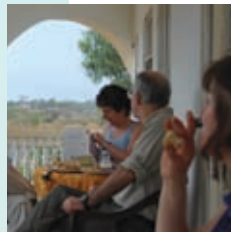
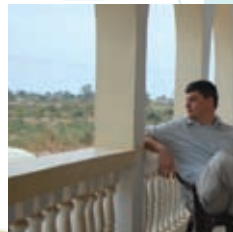
Lunch along the road at a cafe, omlette and chips.

We visited the women's gardens, very large field. Tomatoes, peppers, aubergines, banana + casava trees, cashew nut trees, lovely lines of blue cabbages, carrots, radachio, melons, chillies. Concrete tanks dotted around with pipes between for watering. Met some children – just girls very interested in us, wanting to talk.

On way back visited craft market – everything same, hard wood carvings being sanded off, stained + polished with shoe polish.

Another huge vegetable evening meal by candlelight.

Anita White



- Meeting with Tanje staff to discuss Aims of Project
- Visit Tanje museum itself; see the craftsmen at work
- Visit the National Museum
- Women's Garden
- Brikama to see woodwork and craft market



SAY RADACHIO!



ANITA MAKES FRIENDS IN THE WOMEN'S GARDEN

Wednesday

Another shower in the night and the call to prayer in the morning were the only things that stir my sleep. Breakfast is honey and bread with coffee and fruit and set us up quite well for the serious task of counting lorries carrying sand from the beaches to be used in construction.

Our first stop is the crop protection unit, close to the Women's garden. Here their mission is to advise others on how to combat crop pests.

They advise both government and farmers alike and I am shown their collections in store. A row of familiar looking wooden collector's cupboards along one wall of the room. There is air conditioning in this room, which shows it must be funded to some extent. It becomes clear that they still lack enough staff and resources to do as much as they feel needs doing.



DANIEL

- Crop protection unit
- Visit to Makasutu – Gardens for Life
- Collect evidence
- Tide- group joined us for dinner (late night with lots of dancing and music)

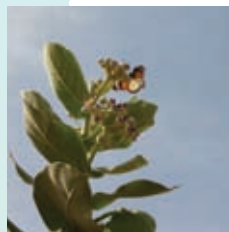
They show me butterflies and beetles, many of which we have at Ludlow and I learn how the Citrus Swallowtail can be a pest to citrus crops in years when numbers are high.

The staff follow natural methods of managing pests, in part this is because they are too few to be able to train people to use pesticides safely, and in part because they feel it's better for the environment not to use chemicals when something more natural will do! You can't argue with that.

Their work is clearly challenging but equally they seem to enjoy it and we hope they can work with Tanje museum to help provide display specimens or material to educate young Gambians in their biodiversity.

Daniel Lockett





Thursday

What a day. I taught in a Gambian classroom. It was amazing! What the children thought of it, I don't know. I came armed with maps and post its and left them with a writing assignment. We also visited the Nursery across the road, it was fabulous, it was so vibrant and colourful, a great learning environment.

We walked to the beach to watch the catch being brought in. Ousman took us to a meeting of the village council. We have been made honorary members of Tanje village. I feel so humbled.

After the beach we visited Ousman and his wife, Mariama at their home. Mariama had made a drink from Boabob fruit and banana, it was delicious. We stayed and chatted and had photos together. It was the perfect end to a very diverse day.

I think the memories of today will stay with me for a very long time. I feel so contented in Tanje. The place and the people are amazing.

Lezli Howarth

- Visit the primary school at Tanje - Lezli taught a lesson!
- Also visited local nursery school
- Walked there and back from Tanje Museum
- Walked to fishing port and beach in evening



LEZLI TEACHES AT TANJE LOWER BASIC SCHOOL

Friday

In Britain gardens are for flowers and beauty, while in the Gambia they are communal and represent food and security. The concept of the scheme is that schools create their own garden and through this children will interact and become global citizens.

The first school was way out in the country, to get there we passed through areas of scrub, savannah and even a small area of swamp, travelling along red sand roads, which must be a nightmare in the rainy season, and past huge red termite mounds the size of houses. Wherever we passed children ran from their compounds to wave - clearly not much traffic passed this way!

The school, a one roomed building accommodated about 65 children and one teacher but no other resources. Nor did it look as if anything would grow here, just a few scrubby bits of grass. The Headman of the village also appeared to have reservations and a long, loud and animated conversation took place. It transpired that he needed some money to fence the area, without which livestock would eat anything they grew. Makasutu Wildlife Trust has no money but they thought they knew where some wire could be had and the promise was made.

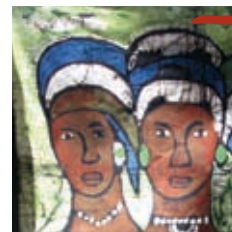
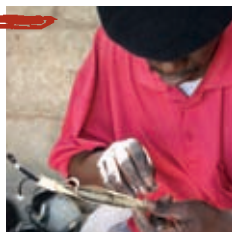
- Collect Ousman Bah and Samba Leigh from Makasutu Wildlife Trust
- Drive into country to visit two schools involved in Gardens for Life
- Meeting with Tanje Museum about Anita's teaching resources as well as observations from week so far.

For me the best snapshot of this visit was Ian being mobbed by 65 excited children who wanted to see their picture on his digital camera. Laughing Anita went to take a picture of him and she too was instantly surrounded.

The second school, Makumbaya Primary, had a well established garden which had been started in 1992. Each child was given a plant to propagate and then care for, these were then sold at a low price and any profit used to buy books. At the end of primary school the children were given a banana sucker to plant in their own compound, a bit like our children get a leavers photo or pen. The garden had a substantial concrete wall to keep out "animal invaders"!

Fran Yarroll





Saturday

Survived a chilly night... A car journey today, not the normal minibus with Bob Marley music all the way. We are heading into the batik production centre of Banjul to meet the people involved in the process that brings much needed income into The Gambia.

Lots of people walking and carrying things on their heads, firewood, pots. No wonder they all look so fit, upright, confident and proud. Numerous shops displaying their wares, we stop and I'm pleased to walk.

I round a corner and suddenly a blaze of colour from batik sheets hanging out to dry on lines and tree branches.

Two men sat at a large table drawing freehand the designs onto the linen sheets, they were very helpful and prepared to explain in detail the processes and techniques involved. I'm glad Daniel is here to tackle the complexities and interactive protocols. I'll do the photography.

Managed to discover the source of constant drumming noise that had been going on since we arrived. Sat on the floor hidden from the sun's heat inside a small hut were two men beating the finished cloth with wooden

- Daniel, Ian & Abdoulie visit batik and tie-dye workshops to record traditional skills for future exhibition at TVM
- Mucktarr Darboe, Education Officer for Science & Technology visits Sarah & Lezli at Tanje
- Sarah finalises plans with Abdoulie and Ousman for the visit to Shropshire

mallets. This is the ironing process where they use mallets made from the orange tree to rhythmically beat the cloth onto a half log of mahogany to produce a wonderful finish that is easily as smooth as that produced by our electric steam irons. More physically strenuous but very eco friendly.

Having watched so much work I have developed a thirst and hope to get back and sample some cool beer. Brewed in Branjul's own brewery... another surprise.

Ian Wall



IAN PLAYS HIS FAREWELL SONG

Reflections

by Sarah

18.2.08

We've just taken off for Manchester – I'm crying silently, not because I'm sad but a huge sense of relief that we've achieved so much in such a short time. We left money for the teachers' inset day we planned together and for the sixty children that Lezli taught at Tanje Lower Basic to visit Tanje Village Museum. We are going to bring sixty children from Lezli's Chandos School in Birmingham to visit Acton Scott Historic Working Farm in the summer to complete the circle.

Last night Ian played a farewell concert with the musicians at Tanje. We sang and danced together for the last time and made our final goodbyes. The musicians played as we left this morning and we took photos under the welcoming arch.

What a journey! It felt as if every day, one of the group was the natural leader – they shared their experience and expertise with our hosts in The Gambia. And we learnt so much from them, met people whose generosity was humbling, were cared for and welcomed where ever we went. Ideas began to form, things began to fit together and new opportunities arose that we didn't expect.



WHERE'S SARAH?



MAKASUTU WILDLIFE TRUST

Dear Ousman
It's hard to know how to even start to say thank you for everything you did for us all during our visit. It has been such an amazing and wonderful week and we all learnt so much and did so much and I just can't stop smiling when I think about the music and all the people we met. I felt that we achieved a great deal in just one week and somehow it all worked out and everything came together. And I'm sure that it was because you looked after us and took care of us so we had the freedom to think and explore without fear or restriction.
Sarah

MUSEUM ON THE MOVE

MUSEUM ON THE MOVE IS A PURPOSE BUILT, FULLY ACCESSIBLE MOBILE MUSEUM, DESIGNED TO TAKE CHALLENGING EXHIBITIONS OUT INTO THE COMMUNITY, PARTICULARLY AIMED AT THOSE HARD TO REACH GROUPS LIVING IN RURAL AND URBAN ISOLATION.

Visits are made to schools, residential and nursing homes, day care centres, hospices and hospitals, traveller sites, town centres, county shows and many other venues across the county. 8,099 people of all ages visited Museum on the Move in Shropshire last year to see the Climate Change exhibition.

CLIMATE CHANGE

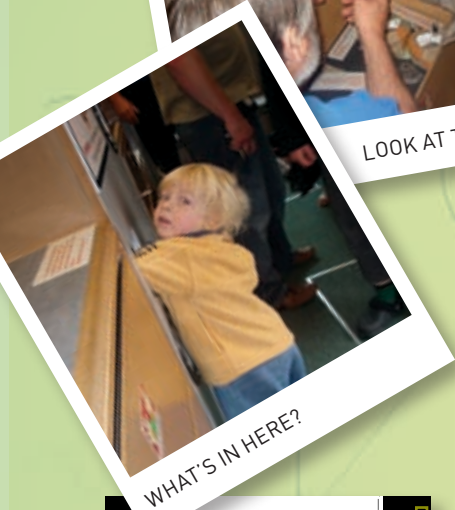
Using specimens and artefacts from the museum collections, the exhibition explores climatic changes from the Silurian period 425 million years ago to the Little Ice Age, just 300 years ago.

Climate change has the potential to affect us all. The Gambia is one of ten countries in the world most vulnerable to rising sea level. Visitors can explore the rich cultural and social heritage of this small country in West Africa currently threatened by climate change.

Because climate change is happening all over the world, it means we are all in it together. The exhibition suggests simple changes we can all make to help reduce the amount of energy we use.



LOOK AT THIS...



WHAT'S IN HERE?



'I will always remember Museum on the Move because it came to my school and I had a brilliant experience.' Sam aged 10

MODULE 2: CARBONIFEROUS FORESTS

- Half height panel + 2 x drawer units
- Fossils of the Silurian and Carboniferous periods set into plastazote scenes of the periods
- Interactive game on top of unit



'I remember how I pledged to save the environment. And also what anyone could do to make a difference' Anna Aged 10

MODULE 6: UNDER THE MANGO TREE

- 3 dimensional tree with seat built round it – room for two people to sit.
- Warm lighting.
- Listen to sounds of the Gambia – music, bird song, call to prayer, voices.
- Smells of The Gambia.
- Artefacts to handle

'I enjoyed learning about stuff I tend not to really think about' Amy aged 14



'I remember the giant fleas, The Black Death and the Ice Age. It was very interesting' Elliott Aged 9

Very very good, fun and interesting

MODULE 8: THE BALANCE OF NATURE

- Half height panel and unit
- drawers containing butterfly species that have been affected by recent climate changes, both in UK and The Gambia.
- Interactive painted jigsaw

Museum on the Move is amazing



TODAY I AM GOING TO...



I remember just how at risk The Gambia is

Saturday and Sunday

GETTING VISAS FOR THE RETURN VISIT OF OUR COLLEAGUES FROM THE GAMBIA PROVED AN ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TASK, BUT FINALLY THE NEWS ARRIVED, THE VISAS HAD BEEN GRANTED AND PREPARATIONS BEGAN FOR THE SECOND PHASE OF THE PROJECT.

- Arrive Gatwick. Breakfast with Sarah & Mark at home in Culmington
- Staying at Acton Scott Farm for one night. Evening meal arranged with Mrs Jones

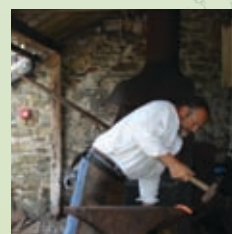
- Sarah to collect guests and drive to Ironbridge, arriving at 11.30 at Blists Hill car park
- Please bring picnic lunch – there is a pub nearby if it is really wet
- Take guests back to Church Stretton to guest house
- Anita will provide evening meal

Never have I seen such an interesting place like Blist Hill where the past has been put under one roof for students and people from different walks of life to learn and enjoy. The way and manner in which the past is preserved and presented is amazing and undoubtedly brought people closer to their roots.

The creation of Blists Hill is a good testimony that learning and recreation go hand in hand and could be done outside classroom settings. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

It is therefore important that museums and related institutions would emulate the good example of Blist Hill in order to have a greater impact on their Visitors.

Mr. Abdoulie Bayo, Director, Tanje Village Museum



Monday

- Shrewsbury Museum Service & tour arranged at Shropshire Archives
- Fran takes group to Bishops Castle for arranged tour of House on Crutches with Ian
- Evening meal in Bishops Castle



OUSMAN, ALASANA, SARAH & LAMIN POSE FOR THE CAMERA

ABDOULIE & ANITA

During my visit to England on behalf of Tanje Village Museum, I visited Archives at Shrewsbury. I was very impressed with the system they adopted in preserving and retrieving of records.

It is an important institute in The Country of Shropshire and Telford in terms of history and the heritage of Shropshire that entails great impact for the younger generation.

As the saying, "If you don't know where you are from, you will not know where you are going to". It is also very instrumental in educational aspect, as it offers greater services to the learning institutions such as Schools, Colleges and Universities and Organisations for their researches.

In The Gambia, we base our researches mainly on Oral Traditions; with the help of Shropshire Archives this vital information could be better preserved. Therefore we hope to emulate your good system with your assistance.

During my visit to Bishop's Castle, I was fascinated to see all the indigenous craft under one roof. This is very similar to what Tanje Village Museum has done. The House on Crutches Museum is unique and built in ancient style.

Lamin Janneh

Tuesday

- Day at Ludlow Museum Resource Centre with Daniel working on care of collections and natural history display. Adrian Miles, butterfly and moth expert, will join Daniel
- See educational resources at LMRC with Sarah & Anita. Meet everyone
- Evening meal in Ludlow before return to guest house

When I visited Acton Scott in this summer, it gave me a memorable learning experience to help us make sense of the world around us by making this link between both institutions positive, so that we can achieve through a powerful sharing of ideas and learn from each other. I would like the management to consider this an important historic institution and to stand firm and put their ideas and experience to keep this place for the younger generations.

The most interesting education centre for the schools and the community is the Ludlow Museum Resource Centre. I suggest Shropshire county could build few small resource centres at small museums within the

county, so that small museum much like Tanje Village Museum, can share ideas and experience. When we have small resource centres around us it will make things easier – as not everything will be in one place.

We have to join our hands together for small institutions through exchange projects, workshops and staff training so that we can build a better future for the young people.

Ousman Jadama



ADRIAN AND OUSMAN
EXCHANGE VIEWS



ABDOULIE BAYO VISITS
THE SHROPSHIRE HILLS
DISCOVERY CENTRE



Wednesday and Thursday

My visit to the UK and Shropshire was very important and educative. Especially in Birmingham where we visited some parts of the city and took a walk around which I enjoyed. It looks nice and clean. We also walk to the shopping centre which is fantastic, although everybody look so busy but by looking at the traffic I can really see difference especially from the Gambia.

We visited Chandos primary school, which is a fine, interesting organisation. The students are clever – they ask a lot of questions about the Gambia. We also visited TIDE at Millennium Point; a global learning established which promotes a wide range of projects and partnerships between other institutions.

Alasana Glibba

- Morning at Ludlow with Anita and Sarah working on museum education plans for Tanje Village Museum
- Final visit to Acton Scott to spend afternoon on site and say goodbye



WE ARRIVE AT CHANDOS
SCHOOL

School visits

60 children from Tanje Lower Basic School visited Tanje Village Museum



How many types of butterflies do we have in The Gambia?

What is the biggest tree in The Gambia?

FEEL THE BARK

Why do people light a fire under the grain store?

The teachers inset day at Tanje took place and worksheets were developed for visiting schools

BY THE BANTABA

TEACHERS AT WORK

'I really don't want to leave'
Amari

WHO KNOWS THE ANSWER?

'I can't believe that people used to work like this - it's so much nicer than today'
Chantelle

What happens to the muck heap in the middle of the farm yard?

MALCOLM THE GARDENER

A CHANDOS SMILE

IAN DEMONSTRATES BODGING

'I loved that day so much'
Omari

60 children from Chandos visited Acton Scott to pilot the new programme on sustainability that was developed as part of the project



Why do you keep lots of different animals on the farm?

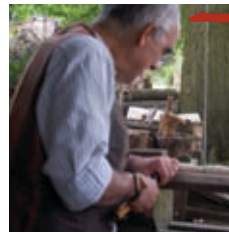
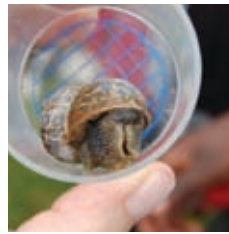
What energy source is needed to make the butter?

A WILLING APPRENTICE

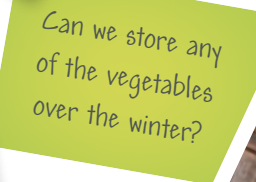
'I'm going to keep all the things I collected to show my mum' Owen

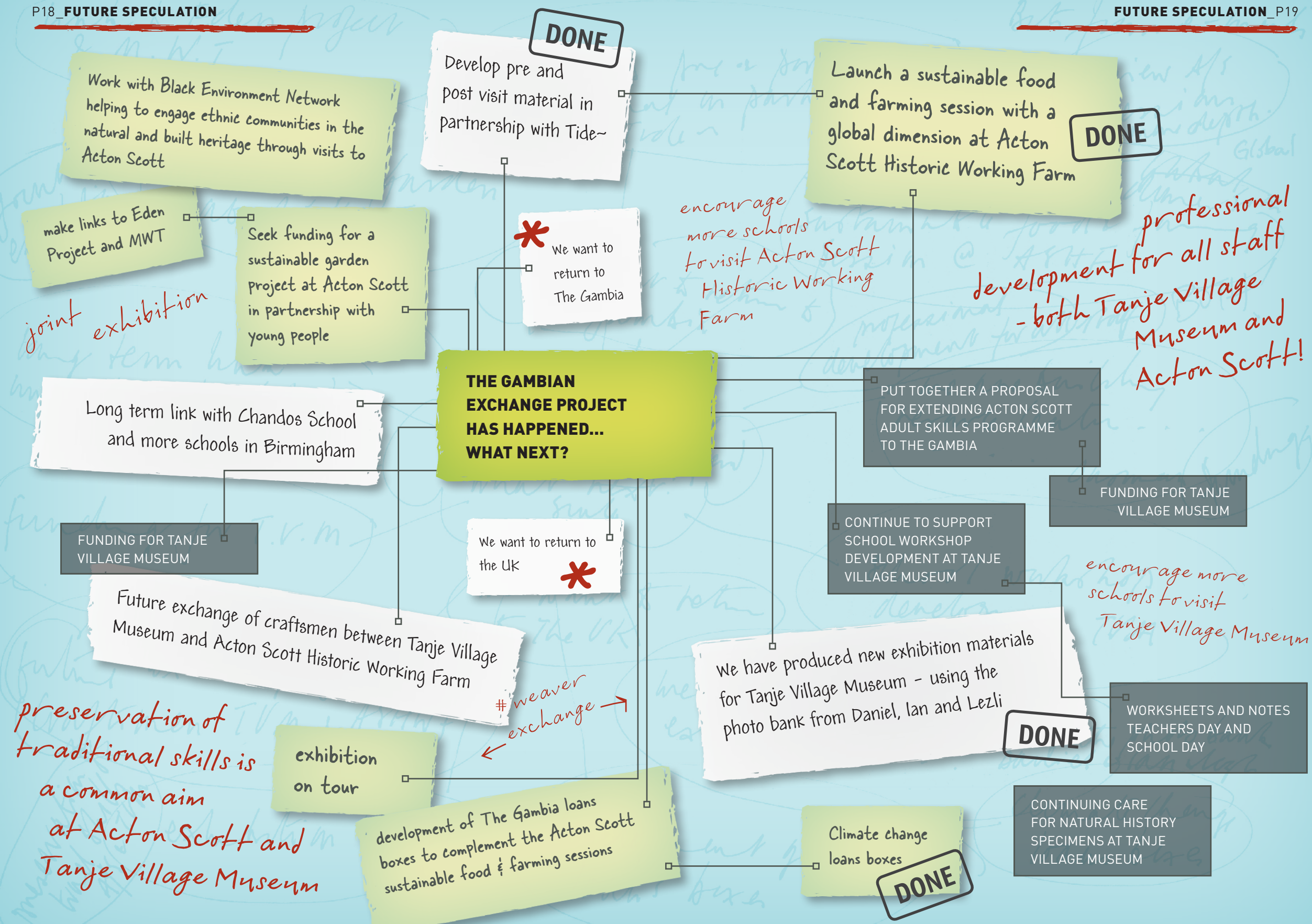
Can we store any of the vegetables over the winter?

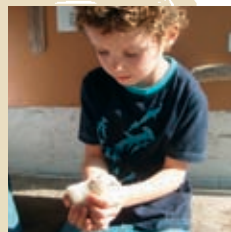
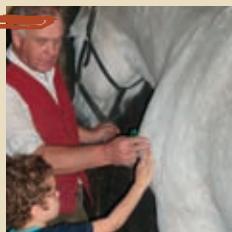
WE LOVE OUR TEACHER



FIRST VISIT TO TANJE VILLAGE MUSEUM







Sustainable Day

at Acton Scott

ACTON SCOTT HISTORIC WORKING FARM IS A UNIQUE PLACE -
A SITE OF PEACE AND QUIET BEAUTY WHERE TIME HAS STOOD STILL.
PEOPLE OF ALL AGES ARE CAPTIVATED BY ITS ATMOSPHERE.

However, like the farm, the education service to visiting schools had become locked in the past. I felt that we should be making more of the short time children spent with us, giving them a richer and deeper experience that would help them think about the past in a more meaningful way.

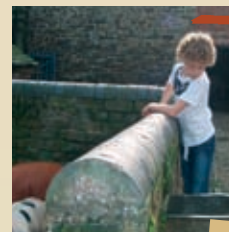
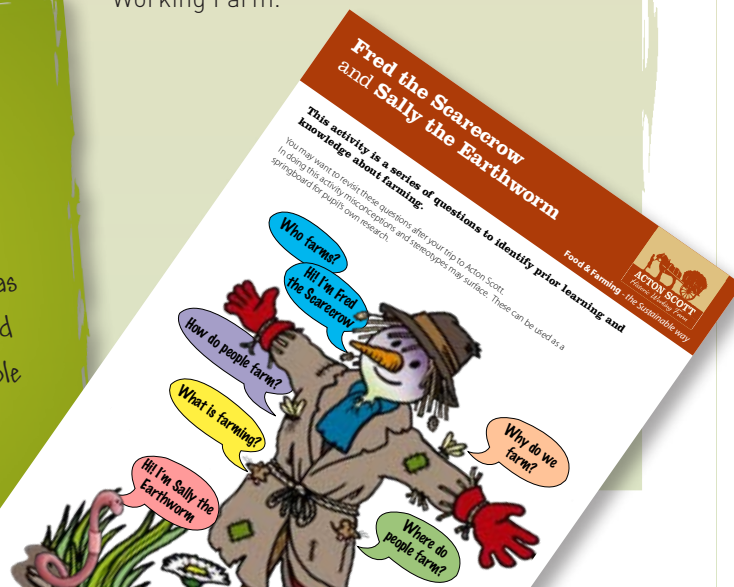
The impact of the two visits to The Gambia and the time spent with Tide~global learning, the staff at Tanje Village Museum and Makasuta Wildlife Trust changed the way I saw the future of the farm...

I began to see that we could use the site, not only to look at how farming was practiced 100 years ago, but also to question the sustainability of that practice. And at the same time we could look at issues of sustainability in modern farming both in the UK and across the world.

And so this year we launch 'Food & Farming – the Sustainable Way, a sustainable challenge with a global dimension', a session now offered to schools at Acton Scott Historic Working Farm.

Lezli and I are working on a new session for schools at Acton Scott Historic Working Farm – it's about looking for evidence of sustainable practice on the farm and in The Gambia. We ran a pilot last summer with 60 children from Chandos. I would like to produce a pack of ideas and activities that schools could use before and after the visit. Then I thought of you, the people I would most like to ask to help with this idea.

Sarah



Tanje Village Museum is also moving forward following our time together:

Schools have started visiting us, as I am visiting schools with the advertising board that was given to us during our visit. The educational question papers are finished now too. This exchange project was very educative, we should join ideas and share experiences more. Since we left Shropshire we are trying to do many things that will help us to develop Tanje Village Museum.

Ousman

Museums are unique institutions – we speak an international language with the same passion for what we do across the world, regardless of race, religion or politics. A partnership such as ours with Tanje Village Museum is a powerful way to bring people together to share a common goal, to learn collectively on an equal basis and to talk together in a safe space.

Sarah Griffiths



ACTON SCOTT
Historic Working Farm

Food & Farming The Sustainable Way

**A SUSTAINABLE CHALLENGE
WITH A GLOBAL DIMENSION**

An enhanced teaching and learning experience developed in partnership with Tide~ global learning and Tanje Village Museum in The Gambia.

During the visit, children are set a series of challenges that help them look for evidence of sustainable farming and food production on the historic working farm. They discover how the farmer worked with the land and the animals, the impact of farming on the environment and learn how the farm relied on both horse and human energy to survive.

In the second session, children spend time in the Acton Scott garden, discovering through practical activities that sustainable gardening is kind to the land and the insects that are part of it.

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Who was involved?

SHROPSHIRE MUSEUM SERVICE

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DANIEL LOCKET

CURATOR OF NATURAL SCIENCES

ANITA WHITE

ASSISTANT MUSEUM EDUCATION OFFICER

IAN WALL - ACTON SCOTT HISTORIC WORKING
FARM DEMONSTRATOR AND MUSICIAN

FRAN YARROLL - MUSEUM EDUCATOR

LEZLI HOWARTH - HUMANITIES LEADER,
CHANDOS PRIMARY SCHOOL, BIRMINGHAM

TANJE VILLAGE MUSEUM

ABDOULIE BAYO - DIRECTOR

OUSMAN JADAMA - ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

LAMIN JANNEH

ALASANA BADJIE

TIDE~ GLOBAL LEARNING

BEN BALLIN - PROJECTS TEAM

MLA WEST MIDLANDS

MICHAEL COOK

LEARNING AND SOCIAL POLICY DIRECTOR

ANNIE BRIERLEY

JENNY BONE

CULTURAL ENTITLEMENT OFFICER

JULIE KENDALL

LINDA DEVLIN - RESEARCH COORDINATOR,
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON

MAKASUTU WILDLIFE TRUST

MALANG D.K. JAMBANG

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

EXCHANGE FRIENDS

JILL HODGKINSON - BISHOPS CASTLE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE.

JAMES FRIEL

BLACK ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

MUCKTARR DARBOE - EDUCATION OFFICER,
DIRECTORATE OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
EDUCATION, THE GAMBIA

OUSMAN SARR

WEAVER AT TANJE VILLAGE MUSEUM

STEVE ROGERS - LEA ADVISOR

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & THANK YOUS

LINDA PARRY

FINANCE TEAM, SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

BEN DRISCOLL

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FOR OUSMAN AND LEZLI

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THE GAMBIA EXCHANGE PROJECT

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