

Makhad *Friends of*

People Spirit Environment

Dear Friends

Inside this issue:

<i>Two Carob Tree Dam</i>	2
<i>The One and Only Bedouin Museum</i>	2
<i>All out to complete Nawamis Desert School</i>	3
<i>Education for Women</i>	3
<i>Profile - Dr Sherif Samra</i>	3
<i>Forthcoming Journeys.</i>	4
<i>Friends News</i>	4

With the help of the Friends this year the Makhad Trust has been able to support a wide variety of projects in the Sinai, some of which are described in this issue.

The picture below shows garden owners signing contracts for the mountain garden renovation project. This has been a great success with 10 well improvement contracts now completed and a similar number underway. In addition dams are being built by our groups in key locations to preserve the scarce rainwater and assist the wells to re-fill.

The other large project at the moment is the construction of the Nawamis desert school. Several groups including

Ruskin Mill College have worked on the school alongside Danny Shmulevitch the Makhad Trust founder who is currently in the Sinai for an extended period, and this work is proceeding at a great pace.

Sandra Oakins too has had a productive year working on the Bedouin Museum at Fox Camp with Faraj the owner. On her trips to Sinai she is usually accompanied by Janie Prince, who is trained in sacrocranial massage and is hoping to teach some of the women to run their own clinics.

Some of you who were able to attend our delightful sponsors function at Tim and Tish

Rickards Bayton's Farm will have met Sherif Samra who is working with us from Cairo and who organized the CLE reading scheme for women (see page 3).

With more of us involved in the Makhad Trust including fundraising and sponsorship, our profile in the Sinai is improving and the range of our projects is increasing in scope and ambition.

Susie



Special points of interest:

- The Dam—strong enough?
- The story behind the 'notched' stick.
- Will the new reading scheme be taken up by the women?
- Materials for Nawamis School, can you help?
- Journeys for 2008.
- The Friends, from around and about.

Message from M Ratcliffe, MT Chairman

"I welcome this opportunity to thank all our supporters and employees, both here and in Sinai, for their wonderful contribution to the Makhad Trust this year. Your energy and enthusiasm has enabled the Trust to gradually extend its grassroots projects and build a solid reputation in the Sinai. More recently we have been given the opportunity to

team up with the Rotary International and the South Sinai Governate with a scheme which will greatly benefit the local community of St Katherine's. We are therefore looking forward to an exciting year ahead for the Trust and I do hope you will continue to give us your invaluable support and interest, thank you again."

Michael Ratcliffe.

Michael Ratcliffe (centre) Danny Shmulevitch (right), Susie (left) at the MT Sponsors function in September 2008



“Two Carob Tree Dam” - Johnny Devas



‘I don’t think I have ever built a landmark before’ Alexia remarked, as we looked back down the wadi towards this beautiful curved structure between the two carob trees.

It is certainly monumental: over 27 metres long, 2 metres high (not counting one section 1.5 metres below ground to reach the bed-rock) and 1.5 metres thick. Nearly 5 tons of camel-delivered cement making about 30 tons of hand-mixed concrete. We hope that its total weight of 400 tons will withstand the force of the flash floods for decades.

This particular site in Wadi Itlah was chosen as it is narrow with massif boulders that act as buttresses on either side. Unlike the previous dams, this site is not related to a particular garden but is

downstream of a large catchment area, fed from two wadis, and upstream of about 40 gardens. There is also a large area just upstream of the dam that contains a well that supplied the water for construction. The water was 6 metres below the ground and this gave us confidence that the area would provide a deep storage capacity.

After the initial enabling works to dig down to the bedrock, sweeping curves were marked out on the ground and we began to appreciate what a monster we were about to build. We settled down into days of mixing cement, rolling large boulders for the foundations and outer walls, and carrying endless car-tyre buckets of stones and cement. Twice we ‘ran out of stones’ and there was a welcome break as the team scrambled up the mountainside and sent boulders crashing down towards the foot of the dam.

Mahmoud’s site logistics were impeccable: camels brought a steady flow of cement, water was drawn from the well into a top holding tank of plastic sheets among the boulders and then siphoned down to a second tank by the cement

mixing area. Tea and dates were served in the shade of the carob tree for the mid-morning break and a delicious lunch was ready when we started to flag.

Mahmoud organized a sumptuous site lunch on the last day, inviting the garden owners to join us to celebrate the dam completion as we watched the clouds gathering in the sky, and hoping for rain, but not just yet—we want the cement to start the curing process before being battered by tons of water.



The dam sponsored by F James, D Stainer

It was deeply satisfying to be part of a multi-national, multi-cultural team building a large structure by hand in only nine days using local materials that will provide water reserves for generations to come.

The One and Only Bedouin Museum - Sandra Oakins



Sandra working outside the museum

Faraj’s collection which forms the Jebeliya museum at Fox Camp goes from strength to strength. This last working visit found security bars on the windows, now it is possible to have a window open and more light. Also he had collected new things - two carved acacia wood pieces from a camel saddle; a rough stone for ‘finishing’ weaving; hair combs made from part of the date palm

(polished with use); a water carrier made from goat skin; an ancient camel branding stone; many ironstones from the desert which would have been heated in the fire and used as a method of settling tribal disputes (the person whose tongue does not blister is telling the truth...) and a notched stick - ‘It’s a long story Sandra’ and yes he was right, it is a tool the Sheikh used to both assess and measure out payments to settle transgressions of the ‘Your camel eats my orchard’ kind. Several things had gone to Oda for repair; it would always have been done in this way i.e. by the tribe’s metal worker. Faraj has ‘retrieved’ the stolen dagger. He also agreed to extend the museum into the space at the end of the building.

This time the museum had a ‘makeover’

to create more space for the other things that he has, 176 items now catalogued and half this number again to come - and a ‘deep’ clean to get rid of the bugs which were taking hold.

There were more visitors, including M Ratcliffe, Chairman of MT, and fellow Rotarians from Egypt, among them Dr Hodder from the museum at Sharm el Sheikh: she was very positive about what has been achieved.

Editors Note: Sandra is experienced in the care and cataloguing of artefacts for Museums and has worked in the Fox Camp museum twice this year as a volunteer. Her support has encouraged Faraj to open the museum to more visitors and to the local school. This has inspired the children’s interest in the tribe’s ancient tools and customs.

All out to complete Nawamis School

Helen Cranston, Friends Secretary writes, "I have recently returned from a journey to the Sinai desert where I was able to visit Nawamis School nearby. It was due to be built by working parties on a couple of trips but has evolved into an ongoing project over the next three months. Anyone wanting to participate can join the project in their own time (subject to consultation with the Makhad Trust of-fice). If there is no school, families have to move to the town on the coast to educate their children and this breaks

up the community."



Karan Walsh, recently appointed as Makhad Trust administrator has just returned from a week's work on the school along with a group of friends organized by Serena Brabazon from Ireland. Also

with the group were Tom and Jack Rickard who remained in Sinai after working on the dam to help with the school. Karan reports that the all important 'birka' (water storage tank) has been completed along with its palm roof. The enclosing wall and the garden wall which are being constructed by Bedouin labour working alongside the group, are made of shaped boulders and are now partially built. The site's design will complement the historic Nawamis burial chamber nearby. Still to be constructed is a large

shaped shade shelter for teaching and a compost toilet, and we urgently need more funding for materials.



Water storage tank in background, garden wall under construction

Education for the women of St Katherines

Whenever women receive a reasonable education the increase in the overall health and wellbeing of the community is immediately apparent. Although Bedouin girls in St Katherines are able to attend a school it is difficult for them to go on to College, as it means living away from the village and significant funding. With its broad interest in edu-

cation the Makhad Trust has funded a literacy programme for the women of St Katherines. Initiated by Dr Sherif Samra the scheme is based on the CLE (Concentrated Language Encounter) programme which was developed in Australia in the 1970s. The effectiveness of this immersion learning has inspired the Rotary Foundation to initiate

programmes in several countries worldwide, including Egypt. A certified CLE instructor, Mrs Innas Ragheb began the first 3-day instruction in August. When the teachers are sufficiently prepared, literacy classes will be held in Fansina Craft Centre under the supervision of Selima Gebally Awad, founder and manager of the centre.

These classes, for women and girls will be 6-8 months long. We hope that they will inspire the women to continue with their education.



Dr Sherif Samra – Engineer, Businessman and Social Entrepreneur



The Makhad Trust is delighted that the well respected

international businessman, Dr Sherif Samra is now working on behalf of the Trust in Sinai. From his office in Cairo major efforts are being made to raise the Makhad Trust's profile with the introduction of health and educational projects which will benefit the Bedouin communities.

Sherif who has a sincere belief

in the importance of serving the community was introduced to the Makhad Trust through Rotary which both he and our Chairman, Michael Ratcliffe have long been members.

Having graduated from the faculty of Engineering in Cairo and worked for 8 years as a design engineer in England, Sherif is now the Chairman of

a construction company, The New Horizon Company for Project Management. He is also a philatelist, numismatist, historian and scuba diver.

"Achieving anything worthwhile often seems too large to attempt," Sherif told me at a recent Makhad Trust function, *"but I remind myself that the 1000 miles journey starts with a single step."*

Makhad Friends of

People Spirit Environment

Editor, Susie Drummond
West Cowden, Comrie, PH6 2HU, Scotland
T: 01764 679730 E: drumcomrie@aol.com

Secretary, Helen Cranston
T: 01453 755483 E: helencranston@toucansurf.com

Friends of Makhad was started in November 2006 to assist the charity Makhad Trust. If you would like to become a member, receive a Newsletter, or an invitation to a Friends function, please contact the Secretary.

Members are asked for a voluntary contribution to administration costs of £10 annually.

For the Makhad Trust Latest News go to www.makhad.info and also visit main web www.makhad.org

Makhad Journeys 2009

January onwards **Working on the Nawamis School with Danny** £45 per day + flight

Individuals are offered a chance to live in the desert and help to build the Nawamis desert school along with Danny and the local Bedouins. Dates arranged to suit.

22 - 29 Mar **Working Journey to build 'Amria's Dam'** 8 days, £560+ flight

Working journey in the mountains to build Amria's Dam followed by a visit to Fansina Craft Centre and a guided desert walk descending a stunning dune.

22 - 29 April **Gail's Sinai Experience with Gail Simmons** 8 days, £750 + flight

A walk through the mountains leading to Mount Sinai followed by a trek in the desert and a short stay in a Red Sea resort.

For Journey Details and booking form go to www.makhad.info or contact Karan at karanwalsh@makhad.org, 01242 544 546
Journey price includes all costs but excludes flights

Friends

Function: Christmas Makhad Friday 5th December at 7.30pm in the Makhad Trust Attic Office, Wolseley House, Oriel Road. Cheltenham

You are invited to a Christmas Makhad to met fellow travelers, to hear the latest news on our projects, find out about future journeys, enjoy seasonal cheer and to do some Christmas shopping. *Selema's decorative bags will be on sale.*

Please bring a friend and some food and drink to share. RSVP Ann Blagden at annblagden@yahoo.co.uk or 01242 544 546.

Around and About:

From May Hill to Mount Sinai with love - Anni Jame



May Hill community has been organizing some great events in order to sponsor a mountain garden. Our recent 1940s costume tea dance in September was well supported and we managed to raise the mighty sum of £320. The tea buffet which included spam sandwiches brought back many memories of those years as did the gramophone and piano music. We have now finished paying for this garden, the work has been completed and with further events planned we have taken on garden number 2. Our next event is a

New Year's Eve ball with a live band. For more information please contact Anni on 01452 831003.

From Wales Cath Barton now a veteran organizer of two working journeys to Sinai has already given 14 talks this year



to raise funds for her third garden. These talks are very popular and give a taste of Sinai and the work the Makhad Trust is doing.

The Wednesday Dance Group

Ann Blagden's belly dance enthusiasts and friends held a very successful hafla (party) last week, and in one evening with over 100 people raised enough funds to sponsor an additional garden. Ann and her friends are now sponsoring their fourth garden and Ann has been

out to Sinai to visit one of them .

Friends Secretary - Helen Cranston All this wonderful work described here is because you make it happen. It is due to Friends going out on journeys and sponsoring gardens and dams that is transforming the lives of many Bedouin people. Those of us who run the Friends committee and the newsletter want to keep you up to date with the projects you have been involved in and to entice you into getting involved with new ones. Do please send us your news from the Sinai so that we can share your inspiration further. afield."

Editor: Helen has raised over £1,500 towards Amria's dam by getting sponsorship for the half marathon she ran recently. Congratulations!

Janie Prince working in Sinai

