

MAKHAD TRUST

NEWSLETTER

Orchard and Community Wells project

New Wells Total To date the trust has enabled the restoration of **272 wells**. About half are orchard garden wells and the other half are community wells. Each well costs around £1300 to restore: most of this money comes from Trusts and other charities but we have had some very generous donations from individuals too. Donations of any size are useful. Small donations can help with a small repair or be joined with larger donations to make up a full well cost. At least one large community well is being restored in several stages and smaller sums would help this project to completion. One community well got filled in while they were restoring it so we need to find a bit extra for them. Can you help? Maybe you could send a small monthly standing order? If you are interested in sponsoring a well then do get in touch.



News from Sinai...

Part of the team has just returned from a very productive 2 weeks in Sinai. Michael Ratcliffe and Helen joined Sherif and Nora in Cairo for some business meetings before travelling to St Katherine's and to Sharm for more meetings. We learnt more about politics, government and democracy in Egypt and made more friends and supporters for the trust. More of this later.

Mahmoud and Michael greeting each other in Fox camp.





Future Journeys

If you would like to take part in our next working journey in May next year, led by Dick and Rachel, please contact Helen. The Journeys will include working on a dam, trekking in the mountains, and visiting St Katherine's Monastery Contact details:

Helen Cranston

Makhad Trust

Wolseley House

Oriel Road

Cheltenham

GL50 1TH

01242 544565

www.makhad.org

helencranston@makhad.org

enquiries@makhad.org

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@MakhadTrust

Don't forget to Like us on Facebook. You will find our latest news there.

The photo opposite is of the children at Nawamis School with Dr Mervat and Dr Abeer.

Egyptian Politics

The authorities are working hard to improve security in the Sinai and there was a greater army presence than usual. This may sound unnerving but it is all part of making the whole of South Sinai a safe area to visit. We are hopeful that the FCO will lift restrictions on travel very soon. Meanwhile some adventurous travellers continue to travel and trek in the area. We will be running a working journey next spring as usual. See the side panel for more details.

Meetings

During the trip Sherif arranged for us to meet a number of influential people whom we hope will further the aims of the trust. We met Dr Abeer Khamis who works at the University in Cairo as a lecturer in Communications and Development. She was so interested in what we are doing that she dropped all her plans to join us with just 24 hours notice. Dr Salah Arafa from the American University in Cairo joined us for breakfast with several others. He collected the original 1000 books to help the library get started and is keen to continue to support us. Mr Yusseff and his wife have previously supported us by sponsoring two wells and it was good to meet him. Dr Essam Khalifa, Dean of Mathematics was interested in our work too. He has just completed a massive project leading a team to revise all the A level grade syllabuses for Egyptian schools. He also brought his wife Dr Mervat El Dib who is currently working as chief advisor on Education to President Cisi. Dr Essam and Dr Mervat drove all the way from Cairo to join us in St Katherine's so they could see the projects we were involved in. They were particularly happy to visit the Nawamis School which is very unconventional by Egyptian standards. We had wide ranging



and inspiring conversations with everyone about world politics, education, development, the place of NGO's and future collaborations. We feel that we had a good meeting of minds and we hope that these good people will be able to help us in future.

The Wells project

This project continues to roll on successfully with the 'new Susie' i.e. Helen. It doesn't seem that the Bedouin have noticed a difference and Helen is often referred to as Susie - quite an honour she feels. During this latest trip, we started 4 new garden wells and 4 new community wells and completed 7 wells bringing the total to 272 completed

wells. There are still nearly 300 awaiting restoration, many of them urgent or desperate. One area we have yet to help is Igreyrat, a small remote community about 1 hour from a main road. At present the community of around 10 families has a little water from one well but are obliged to drive 10 km to the next nearest community along a dirt track to get water. They have many animals including goats and camels who also need water so the situation there is dire. The government water lorries can't even bring their bore hole water which some bedouin have to rely on even though it makes them sick. We assessed their two wells which were 1km from the community up a side wadi. It will be a challenge for them to restore these wells but there is not doubt they will be able to do so when we can find the funding.



More news from the library in St Katherine's



Since its inauguration in May, the library has been steadily building a loyal clientele - mostly children so far. Sherif and Nora from our Cairo office were able to provide lots more books for small children, plus books for the women on a range of subjects, and the British team brought some colouring books and crayons which were much appreciated. Farhana, the librarian is still full of enthusiasm to hold literacy classes for women, English classes for women and children and extra study for the older children. Farhana would also like to offer educational trips for the children, many of whom have never been

outside of the St Katherine's area. If you would like to help the library, donations towards books or library trips would be very welcome. Just get in touch with our office.



EU Project for Solar Panels

In 2008 an EU project funded and installed around 50 solar panels and pumps for wells in the Blue Mountains and in Wadi Gharba. We knew that many of them were not working anymore and wanted to find out why. A week ago, we were joined by Tad Czapski from the Cotswolds who knows a thing or two about solar power and pumps. He investigated the problem and discovered that none of the installations worked any more and that the fault is with the pumps. We hope to find a solution to the problem and get the panels and pumps working again. Most Bedouin have to use diesel generators which often leak oil and diesel into the ground causing lots of pollution. The obvious answer is to supply solar powered pumps instead. This is an ongoing project.

The Beekeeping Project

Mousa, Dr Ahmed's son has started the beekeeping course with 5 Bedouin from St Katherine's. He has built 60 new hives for them and started teaching them at his own hives. They will get their first bees in February when they have learnt the basics of bee husbandry. All the novice beekeepers seem to be very enthusiastic and are really enjoying their lessons. Every time we meet them, they have big smiles on their faces. They must have been camera shy on this occasion! Sinai honey is highly regarded and valued for its medicinal properties - the bees mainly collect herb pollen. We look forward to tasting some next year.



Bag Parties

We have brought back lots more bags made by Selema's ladies for you to hold bag parties in time for buying Christmas Presents. This is a great way to support the Makhad Trust as all proceeds go into the projects. We also have some bags in the office so let us know if you are interested in buying one. Anni can bring the bags to your party and a slide show of the making of the bags. Contact Anni on 01452 831003 or asummerj@gmail.com.



Friends of MT Functions

The next Friends event will be a winter walk and Sunday lunch, as we have done on the previous 2 winters. The date is likely to be early January. More details to follow.

As you can see there is lots of exciting things happening. If you are on Facebook you can find our page The Makhad Trust and keep up to date as events unfold. We are on Twitter too @MakhadTrust. There is also more news on the projects posted by Nora at our Cairo office on the Nawamis Society Facebook Page. Please find it and Like it.

We welcome suggestions, offers of help, donations, sponsorship, or participation in our journeys. Please get in touch with Helen at helencranston@makhad.org. We look forward to hearing from you!



STOP PRESS!!!

On Sunday Mahmoud reported that there was heavy rain in St Katherine's. Yesterday there were several videos posted on Facebook showing that there were very heavy floods. One video shows the road in and out of St Katherine's under more than 15 cm of water, in fact a raging torrent was flowing over it, just where it has recently been resurfaced.

The photos shows two of the dams in Wadi Shaq leading to Oda's Dam which were built last October.

There is bound to be a lot more water in the wells and in the dams now which is good for the gardens in the spring. However there is also concern that some wells may have been flood damaged and filled in. Helen's next journey to Sinai is during the last week of November and she is expecting to hear more. Fortunately all recent wells have been built with flood protection. We will post more news on Facebook when we have it.