



## Friends of BOAT Spring 2023

This years Grizzly Run whose participants raised over £550 for BOAT.

### Chairman's Message

I am pleased to report that great progress is being made with the online training course being prepared with the assistance of Bicton College. Following the disruption of the pandemic, by the end of the year we plan to be in training mode again, with a pilot project in conjunction with Kulika, Uganda.

In the run-up to this, BOAT will have hosted a conference with TAA (South West) at Bicton on

May 3rd., Digital Information sharing and virtual training. Our thanks to Bicton College for the use of their facilities. A report will follow in the next issue.

May I also offer the Trust's thanks to our very loyal sponsors Kelsey Publishing and Vapormatic with whom we have recently reconfirmed our association. The post-covid mood among trustees is indeed buoyant.

On a sadder note, you will read elsewhere of the death of Fred Harper, a founder member and Chairman of BOAT. We are considering some form of Scholarship in his memory.

Thank you all for continuing to support BOAT.

*John Harris* (Chairman)

### INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TRAINING by Peter Reed

Whilst BOAT is exploring the possibilities and opportunities with some form of online delivery, I have been testing out the potential of hosting topical themed talks with farmers at Kulika, Uganda. This has proven popular with both Ugandan and UK farmers and the latest was delivery from New Zealand to Kulika. The 6 months between July to January, Darfield New Zealand became home for my wife Laura and I, where we were helping our friends on their dairy farm. I saw this as a great opportunity to link up with Kulika and 2 and half hours of myself talking live to farmers proved very popular, with excellent questions being asked. Moving forward, we are looking to develop a quarterly programme of themed talks to help all involve develop and learn off each other.



### Fred Harper

It is with a heavy heart that we mourn the passing of former Chairman Prof Fred Harper who died on Saturday 28th January 2023 after a long illness bravely and stoically endured.

Having been an active Trustee for several years he took on the role of Chairman in 2010. Fred's wealth of knowledge and experience in the management of agricultural training played a key role in developing the "Institutional Management and Business Planning. (International)" accredited course. BOAT is greatly indebted to Fred and together with Lesley and daughter Maisie have been very much in our thoughts.

Bill Vellacott MBE

### The Grizzly Run



Bill Vellacott thanking the Grizzly Run Marshals for the donation to BOAT

Thanks to our all-weather team of volunteer marshals at the Grizzly Run we are grateful to the Axe Vale Runners for their donation of £552.

The Grizzly is a multi-terrain race across the glorious East Devon coastline and countryside and the major event in the calendar of Axe Valley Runners. Through organising the Grizzly, the club has been able to raise thousands of pounds for local, national and international charities with donations since 1988 of more £425k. The event attracts runners from throughout the UK and across the world.

The Trustees would like to thank Vapormatic for producing this newsletter and to thank all its sponsors for their generous help.



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## Bicton College Delegate from the Gambia is Good Project at Concern Universal, Banjul, The Gambia

By Paul Joof, Songdeh Farm Enterprise, Sukuta, Jabang, The Gambia.

I am Paul Joof, from the Gambia in West Africa. I want to share my own story after the completion of my three months training course at Bicton College, Devon, UK in 2011. The year 2011 from now is actually 11 years after I was certified for completing the Business Planning and Management course at Bicton College.

I returned home with the inspiration to start a poultry farm in the Gambia. The little capital I had by then was used to purchase about 11 layers from Senegal to start with. I was inspired with what I saw in UK during the various poultry farm visits I had an encounter with.

Few months later, the layers started laying eggs after feeding them with the right feeding and give them medications according to the directives of the veterinary. With time, I was able to sell about thirty (30) trays of eggs to the neighbors around my community.

My hope started to elevate because the business trade lines motivated me to market on a large scale at the tourism industry but the required capital investments was a big challenge. However, there was already a potential opportunity in the tourism industry that pays more dividends as a result of the scarcity of supply of imported eggs during the peak of the tourism season prompted me to search for loan investments. More also, the chefs preferred purchasing local eggs than imported eggs during that period.

In the midst of the struggles to search for capital investments and partnership, unfortunately the poultry farm was attacked with a deadly disease that contaminated the feed and water which eventually killed all the layers. I was left with no choice of only to close down the trade to venture into another project.

Three (3) years later, in 2014, I instituted a football foundation call Songdehs Football Academy. The academy focuses on training football values to create an atmosphere where young people can access physical training programs on a weekly basis for two (2) hours only to promote wellness and sound health. Against this backdrop, we volunteered to give back to the community and help eradicate the anti-social practices such as drugs, unemployment, idleness, gangs, rape, etc.

Most of the youths in the Gambia had minimum or inadequate support from the Government which consequently lead majority of the youth exposed to life threatening issues in the society.

The youths had the only option of searching for greener pastures in Europe at the expense of their precious lives. They are bounded with the mind set to venture into perilous activities travelling via the Mediterranean Sea on local boats packed full with migrants and route through the borders of Libya were many of them became victim of sex slaves, got stranded, and even killed.

In light of the above, I felt engraved with the burdened to stop or curb these menaces which eventually led me to use the limited resources at my disposal again to start a football foundation with some committed and like-minded individuals using football as a catalyst to bring a radical change and transformation in the society. In addition, promoting social inclusion and education programs, peace building, decent lifestyle, and self reliance initiatives to boost the confident of the marginalized groups in the society at large. With time, a huge impact was achieved through this initiatives because some youths were trained on life skills courses such as Communications, effective time management, IT literacy, etc. to ensure that they acquire employable skills, whilst others have gotten professional career as footballers through our contacts and links in Senegal and beyond.

Almost, 10 players have make it as professionals whilst others are still aspiring to become one. Despite the achievements, we are still faced with challenges to secure durable partnerships with like minded institutions to continue the support and promotion of the course of the Academy. We seek any means of support from donors, philanthropists, football institutions or academies for possible collaborations and financial means of assistance to boost the status of Songdehs Football Academy – Gambia.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the BOAT TRUSTEES for the privilege accorded to me to do the study program. I do not regret receiving the training program at Bicton College because it has helped me in person to improve in many areas of my work life. Notwithstanding, it has helped to institute businesses and foundation to transform the mindsets of young people and bringing back to my community the values that exhibits decency, civilization, education, love and peace building, self-reliance for young people. It wouldn't have been possible if not the training I received at Bicton College. All thanks goes to the trustees of BOAT, lectures and Bicton College staffs.

For further information please click on the following link or scan the QR code.  
[https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=620618684677667&substory\\_index=8062801480459313&id=612572725482263&mibextid=Nif5oz](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=620618684677667&substory_index=8062801480459313&id=612572725482263&mibextid=Nif5oz)



## Book Sales



### African Anecdotes Edited by John Harris

Looking for some light summer reading, look no further – African Anecdotes compiled by John Harris on sale at £12.99 plus P&P £2.99, to order go to [www.boatagtrust.co.uk/news](http://www.boatagtrust.co.uk/news) or use this link to the online shop <https://bicton-overseas-agricultural-trust.sumupstore.com> and for the more tech savvy try the QR code.

The pandemic lockdowns' labour of love came to fruition in the last year, and we launched African Anecdotes on the Bicton College stand at the Devon County Show on 30th June.

Most of the 31 contributors are south-west-based members of the Tropical Agriculture Association and the Royal African Society. Their stories span 25 countries, covering everything from personalities to politicians, farming to folklore, snakes to security forces and weather to wildlife. Some are very short and none are too long! So far, the book has been very favourably received. I have enjoyed compiling it and I hope you enjoy reading it as much. Thank you for your support.

## New Donation Platform

Virgin Money Giving have withdrawn their giving platform, and BOAT has signed up with Evershare follow this QR code to make a donation or visit the BOAT Website and find the donation button/QR Code. Thank you.



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