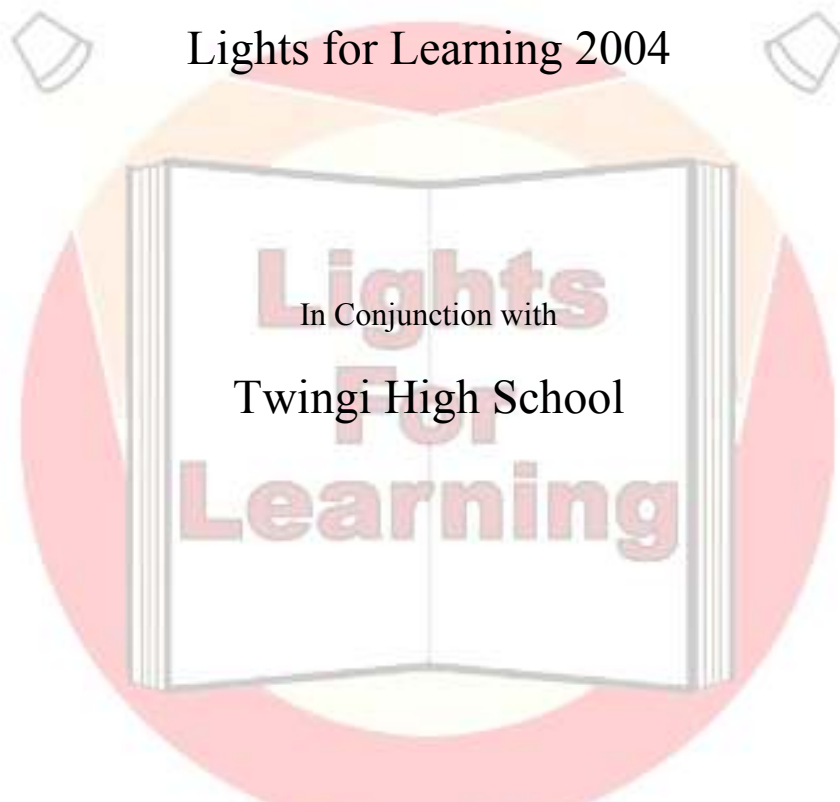




Lights for Learning 2004



Zambia Trip 2006

Post Trip Report

By  
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Lights for Learning 2004

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## Forward



### Lights for Learning 2004

Back in 2002 I suddenly found myself in the totally unexpected situation of being disabled and being told that I would never be able to hold down full time employment again, not very good for a 'young man' of fifty three. We had previously taken a couple of holidays in Kenya and had befriended a young man named Chirea, We had started to help him with the cost of educating his family, and on the last occasion that we had visited the family one of the little ones had been badly burned. This in effect brought about the birth of Lights for Learning.

Not being in my nature to sit back and feel sorry for myself; after the initial shock and 'depression' of my illness I decided that I would try to make up some kind of lighting system to help 'our Kenyan Family' and started looking on the internet for something that would be suitable for the building that he lived in, but would also be cheap to use.

After having installed the lights and having them running for a while we realised that we were hitting problems with things like humidity, them moving their cooking area underneath the light and creating a thick coat of soot on the cover! Etc.

The lights were developing every time that we hit a problem, and we suddenly realised that the system that we had could be so advantageous to so many youngsters that were trying to carry out their studies by the light from the fire or kerosene lamps, both not very good lighting and extremely hazardous to health. A friend of ours was following the development of the lighting system and agreed to help us get the project registered as a charity. We had looked at this previously but gave up when we became engulfed in bureaucracy and numerous forms.

Lights for Learning eventually became registered in 2004 and since then we have made great friends with so many people that we had never heard of before, and without whom we would never be where we are today in our achievements with the charity.

## Overview

Lights for Learning is a registered charity based in Cricklade Wiltshire, working in the developing countries of the world wherever we are given the opportunity to go.

Since becoming registered in 2004 we have worked very closely with Project Albert, a charity based at RAF Lyneham in Wiltshire, who work in Kenya with an organisation called Africa Exchange and a charity based in that country called Bridging the Gap. Alongside these charities we have provided lights for a school in Kibera, one of the slums of Nairobi, and two schools on the Massai Mara.

We have also given a set of twenty lights to the Lions Club of Mombasa and they have had them fitted into an educational centre where young people are being taught trades.

In March we took lights over to Kenya to fit into a clinic and two schools. This was arranged through the Rotary Club of Mombasa.

We started working on this project in Zambia at the beginning of 2005. We were approached by a lady that has helped us out a lot with the charity, and whose family originates from Zambia. She requested that we look to fit lights into a Catholic school in this country where there are 800 pupils. After assessing the project we decided that we would do our best to carry out the work, but considered that it would be some time before we were able to raise the money to pay for it. We estimated the cost of the components for the lighting to be approximately £8000.00. Since taking on this project we have been very fortunate in being selected by Immanuel United Reform Church in Swindon as the charity to benefit from their Harvest appeal in 2005. They raised over £3000 toward the project! We have had a few other small fundraising events helping toward the final sum, and in the last couple of months we received a matching grant to finish the project from International Power. We were all thrilled to bits and planned to make the trip to Zambia at the end of July/beginning of August this year. I would like to say that everyone going on the fitting of this project will be self funding as was the majority of the last trip to Kenya. We are very fortunate in this area where we have lots of people that really want to become involved in our work, and for this we are grateful

*The team*



*Jean and Roger Mugridge*



*Laurence Cole*



*Mike Noble*



*Sue Larking*



*Chris Larking*



*Adam Larking*



*Arriving at Lusaka airport and meeting the deputy head master  
And the Education Minister*

## *The Zambian trip*

### ***Day 1 Wednesday October 25<sup>th</sup>***

After giving out extra bags of bits and pieces for everyone to put into their luggage we all met at 1pm at Chris's because his neighbour was taking all 7 of us to the airport in his van that almost had enough seats in it! (one person had to sit on the luggage in the back!), we set off at 1.30pm for a two hour run, not bad.

We arrived at Heathrow airport where we were met by Catharine who was the instigator of this trip and who had come to see us off (or make sure we went). Adam did an interview with her on how she was feeling now that we were actually leaving to do work on the project, When we checked in we were way over weight. One of the reasons was that Laurence had brought along a box of Army rations which weighed 32 kg!, but by sweet-talking the girl booking us in, she let it go through without paying extra because of the work that we were going to do as a charity in Zambia. The 10 hour flight was ok. Most of us managed to get some sleep being an over night flight. We arrived next morning at 6.15 am, picked up our bags, and got through customs without any problems.

### ***Day 2 Thursday October 26<sup>th</sup>***

The first thing that hit us on leaving Lusaka air port was the heat (blooming hot!) There to meet us was Catharine's daughter, the deputy head master of Twingi High School, and the man from the shipping agents and, to our big surprise, there was a minister from the Education Department who had got up at 4.00am to come to meet us, The first thing we had to do was to pick up the 8 boxes that we had sent out three weeks before and all were in good order! From there we had to go and get some cash to pay for the batteries and food. The minister asked if Roger would ride with him and tell him more about the charity and what it dose. We went to buy 18 car batteries from Motor Mark, and from there we went to the Ministry of Education Offices to meet more people including the Deputy Administrator for Education who gave us an official welcome. From there, with Roger now on the bus, we went to the supermarket to pick up the food and water (230 litres!). With the water and food there were 6 trolleys full. We set off from Lusaka at 12.30 pm, all of the batteries and the 8 boxes were put into a pickup, and all of the water, food, and our luggage was put into the bus plus the 7 of us, the deputy head and two drivers.

The long journey began, 800 km on tarmac roads and 100km on dirt roads. On the way there were lots of police road checks. At one check a man was in handcuffs and they were looking for his accomplice. The Deputy Head managed to explain who we were and we quickly set off on our journey. A little way past this stop we bought some tomatoes from some women who were selling them on the side of the road. We had to skirt the border of the Congo because it was not safe for us to go through, so this made our journey quite a bit longer. By the time we got to the last 100K which was a dirt road it was dark, and after about an hour we realised that the pickup was no longer following so we turned round and went back to look for it. When we did find it they had run out of petrol so we had to put all 8 boxes and the batteries into the bus; very tight fit! It was about 1.30am when we arrived at the School **13 Hours** on the bus. We put all the kit into a store room and were then showed to our accommodation. When we saw the dinning room and kitchen it was moving with cockroaches. The bed rooms were not too bad so we just went to bed shattered.

### ***Day 3 Friday October 27<sup>th</sup>***

Up at 7.00am and start unpacking the boxes. Mike and Laurie went and put the first solar panels up (it has to be done before 9.00am because the roof gets too hot to get onto after that). About 10.00am we all went down to the first 5 classroom block that we had planned to fit that day. Roger showed everyone how to fit the lights and do the wiring. Chris and Adam started drilling the walls and Jean and Sue went behind stringing and putting the light boxes and bulbs on. By now it was in the high 90s Mike and Laurie then started the wiring.



***Solar panel going up***



***Wall drilled and strong***



### ***Wiring the lights up***

We stopped for a half hour lunch break, then got back to work. We finished the 5 classrooms at 6.00pm just before it got dark. We went back to where we were staying with the Priests who had given up their rooms for us. The cook had made us some dinner for which we were all grateful. There was a 'round house' in the grounds and we went out to sit and have a drink. During the evening we could hear some singing out in the school grounds. We decided to go and find the 'choir'. We headed toward the voices in the dark. We soon came upon a group of pupils singing beautifully. We stood for about 45 minutes listening to 'the silhouettes' in the darkness – it was awesome! We eventually went back to our beds to get some well earned rest.

## **Day 4 Saturday October 28<sup>th</sup>.**

Mike and Laurie were up at 6.00am to get out early to fit the solar panels planned for that day.



*Early morning start*

We went into teams with Chris and Adam drilling the walls and running the cord with the light boxes on, then Laurie and Mike doing the wiring, Roger Jean and Sue were doing classroom complete plus Roger was 'on call' to sort out any problems that occurred. We managed to finish 8 class rooms by 6.00pm, a very good day. We went and sat in the round house and had a drink before dinner.



*Well earned drink and rest*

During the day we had started training some of the older pupils and one of the teachers how to fit the lights and explain how they worked. After dinner, army rations, a couple that lived close by (their names are Kelvin and Susan) came round to share some time with us and to chat about their lives and to hear about ours.

## **Day 5 Sunday October 29<sup>th</sup>.**

Another early start for Mike and Laurie, they went and put the solar panels onto the boy's and girl's dormitories with their helper, the teacher, Tchembo (Mr mad). When they had finished we had a quick cup of tea and we were all off again. Laurie, Mike and Chris went to fit the boy's dorms while Jean, Sue, Adam and Roger went off to fit the girl's dorms. We had set ourselves the rule of always making sure that one of the women was in the girls dorms at all times that the lights were being fitted for obvious reasons. Here are some pictures of the dorms.



Many of the girls stay in the dorms at night to study for safety reasons, so we put a light over each bed to make it easier for them to see. Before the lights were installed they all used either a candle or kerosene lamps, if they had the money to pay for them, very dangerous with all of the material that was draped round their beds! That day we fitted 2 dorms (4 rooms) which left one remaining to do. The other group had completed the same at the boys' dorms by the time we packed up for the day at about 6pm. We went back and cooked dinner and decided to go and have a walk round to see if any of the lights were being used yet, so at 8.30pm we went out and the first thing we could see was the dining hall lit up, and some of the children in there studying. The library was full of light; it was a great sight to see. When we went around the corner and down to where the classrooms were all we could see was light shining out of all the classrooms! It was a fantastic sight! We were all very emotional and all of us had tears in our eyes! When we went into the classrooms, the children were studying; we spoke to some of them and they all said how good the lights were. One of the comments from a lad sums up what Lights for learning is all about it was ***“Before we had the lights I missed words and figures because with a candle or kerosene lamp it flickered and that’s when you miss things, but now there is no flickering and I can see it all!”*** Hopefully he will now do well in his exams. As we looked all around it look like a small village lit up. The deputy head master was with us and he could not believe it either, the place was buzzing with life and excitement, a fantastic atmosphere. It was a night we will never, ever forget. Then it was back to the round house where we met with Kelvin and Susan again, they had done some chicken on their brazier for us; a good way to finish the night off.

### ***Day 6 Monday October 30<sup>th</sup>***

A late start for Laurie and Mike 6.15am, they went and put the solar panels on the roof of all except 4 of the teachers houses. Back for breakfast; then we went to finish the girl's dorms and Mike and Laurie went to finish the boy's. When Mike and Laurie had finished they started the houses when we finished we went and fitted some lights into an office which the teachers used for meetings with the local government officers.

In the afternoon the children had arranged a ceremony for us all by themselves. They wrote a song called The Lighting Team and a poem, then they did a traditional dance for us; after that we went back to work while Adam did some interviews' with the deputy head and other teachers. We finished at 5.30pm Mike and Laurie cooked, see the photographs!.



***Up to date kitchen!  
Day 7 Tuesday October 31<sup>st</sup>.***

***Only one day left***

Last day, again an early start, last 4 solar panels to go onto the last 4 teachers' houses. Two of them had to have brackets made because the roofs were made of asbestos so we had to be very careful.



We all went to do these houses; when we had just finished what we thought was the last one someone came over and told us we had missed one house out; it was the teacher that drawn the map of the school to send us at the beginning of the planning at home. We all went to work on the very last house. We had just about enough cable left to do this one so that had to be the final fit. 3.00pm and we had ***Finished. We made our way back to the round house for a celebratory drink – the whole project was complete!***

In the evening the headmaster, deputy head and some other teachers as well as the priests had arranged a presentation for us. They had previously presented some 'flapping' chickens to us and then killed them in our honour! They also made a local brew from maize of which we were asked to partake! See pictures!



***Local brew***



***Laurie having a drink***

### ***Day 8 Wednesday November 1<sup>st</sup>***

After the party Tuesday evening finished, (midnight!), we loaded the bus and set off at 12.30am for Lusaka. The first 100km was on the dirt road again it was a rough and dusty ride! We were booked into a youth hostel for the night ready for an early flight home but after an 11 hours bus ride we pulled into a hotel called Pre Cem. We were told that the Government were picking up the bill for the hotel and all our food, not only that we had a meeting at the Ministry of Education that afternoon. There we met with the Permanent Secretary, the Health Minister and eight other ministers. They asked us to explain about the charity and what we do, then they wanted to know how they could help us. We asked if there was a possibility of exemption on import duty, import tax and visa for going into the county, and out as well. Their reply was that they will give us all of that as well as a workshop as and when they are required. They also said that they would help with transportation on any future visits to Zambia. It was also agreed that they would locate the schools that would benefit from the installation of our lighting system, and ensure that the buildings receiving lights were secure. We all left feeling that the meeting had been very productive.

We returned to the hotel for a rest, and later that afternoon the education minister came to the hotel to talk some more about the lights and to see some of the photographs that we had taken at Twingi. We were all grateful to have a good meal in the evening and a good nights rest.

### ***Day 9 Thursday November 2<sup>nd</sup>***

Once again up early for breakfast and to get to the airport for the flight home. We arrived back at Heathrow at 5.30pm. Our chauffeur, Terry was ready and waiting for us when we landed, thank God, because it was freezing! We arrived back at Cricklade at 8.00pm – the end of an eventful, successful and extremely satisfying trip!

Here are some photographs of the School



*Helpers in one of the classrooms*



*One of the dormitories*



*An up to date ladder!*



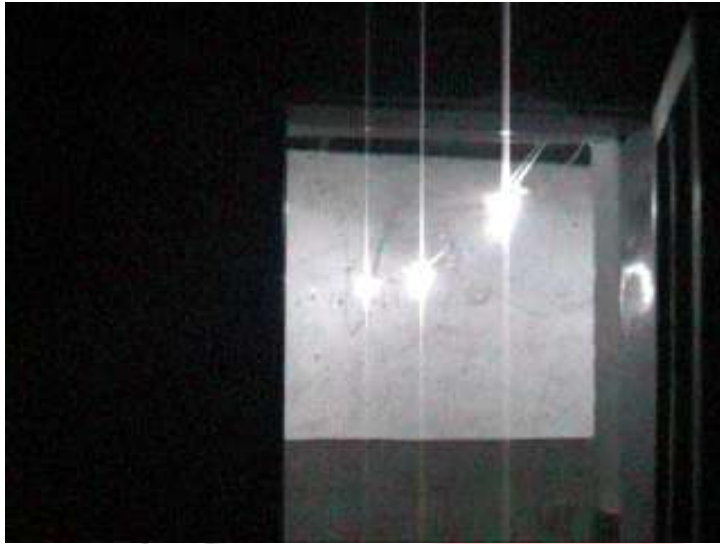
*Solar panel going onto a classroom*



*The team at the children's presentation*



*The lights working!*



*A student at work 8.30 at night*



*Meeting the Government*  
*13*



We have had lots of encouragement from Companies that are supporting our work with brilliant discounts on the components that we use to make up the light boxes etc, and without their help we wouldn't have been able to complete half of the projects that we have.

We have great friends who give us their time with no thought of charge. The person that designed and regularly updates our web site has been great. Through the web site we have received fabulous donations from people all over the world. We even have a lady in the States that is at present setting up a group of supporters that she is calling 'The Light Brigade'; we call her our main beam!

Chris, who lives close by us is invaluable, and spends hours helping with the making up of the light units. He is also looking ahead to when we can start setting up workshops in these countries, and is making up jigs to make the process easier for all concerned. We sometimes have a laugh with him by saying "make a jig Chris" but without his dedication and hard work we would be lost, and we are grateful to have him with us. I must also say that we are grateful to his wife Sue who 'lets' him give so much of his time to the Charity.

We also have many good friends out there who regularly make direct donations to the Charities bank account – for this we are eternally grateful. It is wonderful to know that we have so many faithful supporters behind us. This is an area of the Charity that we need to develop and this will be one of our goals this year. It is very nice to get big, one off donations from companies etc. but it is more comforting to know that month after month regularly there is a sum going into the account to allow us to continue with this work. We cannot thank you enough for your faith in what we are doing – THANK YOU.

