

Yesterday afternoon I was very honoured to meet the mayor of Arba Minch. We were filmed for an Ethiopian TV programme which was rather fun. I also went shopping to the market with the other English teachers. We decided to have a ride there on the back of a donkey and cart. The Ethiopian people we passed thought we were the funniest sight they had ever seen. For a start the carts aren't really meant for people and the fact that we were four Europeans with white skin was also a surprise for them as there are not that many Western visitors to Arba Minch. The market was bustling with people. We were followed by lots of children and had to weave in and out of all the goats and cows too! There was so much to see - a boy making a wooden bed, children carrying containers of water, women selling bananas on blankets on the floor and lots of stalls selling kitchen equipment, clothes and flip flops. I bought an Ethiopian costume for some of you to try on when I get back. It's so colourful! I will be visiting the market again on Thursday for more outfits and objects to show you.

In the evening I had a meal with some of the directors (Head teachers) from the Ethiopian schools and the other visiting teachers from Blackpool and Botswana.

I hear it has been snowing in Cambridge quite a lot. It is hard for me to imagine snow as it is so hot here. It rained in the night last night quite heavily here but there was no sign of it this morning when I woke up. The ground had just soaked it up. Just before I went to sleep last night I got a knock on my door from Jane, one of the other teachers. She said there was a spider the size of her hand on the wall over her bed. She wanted me to help her catch it. I don't like spiders so I got another teacher called Russell to get it. They had quite a job as it kept running away and they couldn't find a big enough bowl to catch it in. I tucked my mosquito net in very tight around my bed last night so I didn't get a visit!!!

This morning we all went to visit Chamo Secondary School and were treated to the most wonderful cultural display from the students. Their dancing and costumes were amazing. They also gave us coffee in a coffee ceremony. This consists of roasting the coffee and serving it black and thick with sugar. Served with it are delicious home made bread, roasted grains and pop corn. Coffee is very important to Ethiopian's for entertaining and enjoying with their family and friends.

What struck me most about my visit to Chamo school was the generosity of the staff and pupils. They have so little at their school but really work hard to give their children a very good education. They had no computers and very few books in the library, most of which were very old. The children were however very happy, learning well and had a good grasp of English. I felt very touched by the whole experience. As visitors we were given the warmest welcome. We walked up to the school along a path lined with pupils chanting 'Welcome UK, Welcome Botswana'. It was lovely. We were presented with flowers by a girl called Bethlehem. I am really looking forward to my visit to the primary school this afternoon. I have lots of books to give them that I collected from the Book Sale we had at Milton Road. The children around Arba Minch and in the schools are still really enjoying receiving your pens and other stationery so thanks for that on their behalf.

Well I think that's enough from me today. More tomorrow! Have fun and take care in the snow.

Miss Gane x