

Salam Everybody!

That's Ethiopian for 'Hello'. It means 'Peace be with you'. I'm sorry I didn't get to write to you yesterday but I had a very busy day and was not near the internet. This does mean however that I have lots to tell you.

Yesterday morning I had to get up at 4.30am to go to the Nar sech National Park. We went in a 4x4 car but it was the bumpiest journey I have ever had. My teeth were chattering! There were no proper roads, just tracks, some of which had been flooded so we had to drive through huge pools of water. We were heading for Lake Abaya and when we got there it was very beautiful. We saw hippos wallowing in the water. You could just see their eyes and the tops of their heads. Hippos prefer to be underwater in the heat of the day. We also saw Zebras, gazelles, baboons and a whole variety of birds on the beautiful plains. We saw lots of Acacia trees against the stunning backdrop of the mountains of the Rift Valley. It was just like the Africa you would see in The Lion King, except there are no lions here!

After an afternoon sleep (it's too hot to do anything else in the early afternoon) we headed out to Lake Chamo for a sunset cruise on a little boat. This lake was just as beautiful but filled with crocodiles. I didn't put my hands over the side as there were crocs everywhere. You could just see their eyes and scaly backs. It was hard to tell if they were a stick or a croc. Amazingly the local people just carried on fishing around them, wading into the waters with their nets. Very dangerous work but essential to catch the fish. Only last week a person was bitten by a crocodile so it is a very real danger.

As well as crocodiles there were hippos playing in the water and the most amazing water birds. They were huge. I need to check their names when I get home but I was told they were storks, pelicans and black flamingos. I also saw a kingfisher. The sunset at the lake was beautiful. I have lots of photos and videos to show you.

Finally I have not told you about my visit to Arba Minch Primary School. There are over 1000 children at the school and they all wanted to meet us so it was quite chaotic. Lots of the children were learning and playing outside, doing volleyball, football, dancing and singing. We went into the classrooms and I taught a short lesson with the Blackpool teachers. We acted out the story of The Three Bears and sang the song which goes with it. We also sang Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes. The children loved all your gifts.

Well I must rush now as we are visiting the traditional Dorze village this afternoon to see the weavers.

Speak to you tomorrow.

Miss Gane x