

The Philippines schools project (Pt 2) March 2007

Throughout 2006, and with the good grace, kindness and generosity of our friends in racing and music, we raised funds and collected gifts.

All of this was sent on ahead of our next planned visit in January 2007. At the same time, we were in constant contact with the schools as they moved ahead with the plans in anticipation of our arrival. Our original idea was to make two rooms available, one for the Elementary (junior) school, and one for the High (secondary) school. As the funds and resources materialised it became apparent that we could make a shared library in one of the new rooms and upgrade an existing room for the computers of the Elementary school. The High school would use the second new room for its computers.

I think you can imagine how excited Jo and I were to actually visit the schools and see the progress for ourselves once we arrived in the Philippines.

When we arrived, the library was finished. The High school computer room just needed a ceiling and a



the library



The High school computer room

coat of paint inside and out. We went out and purchased the goods and the job was completed in 3 days!

Some of the parcels being opened at our house before delivering to the school. We managed to get a local waste merchant (a chap



Some of the computer stuff still in packing



The parcels in our kitchen

on a bicycle, actually) to take the bubble wrap away. Everything is re-usable in the Philippines!

Perhaps I should give you a little flavour of the school.

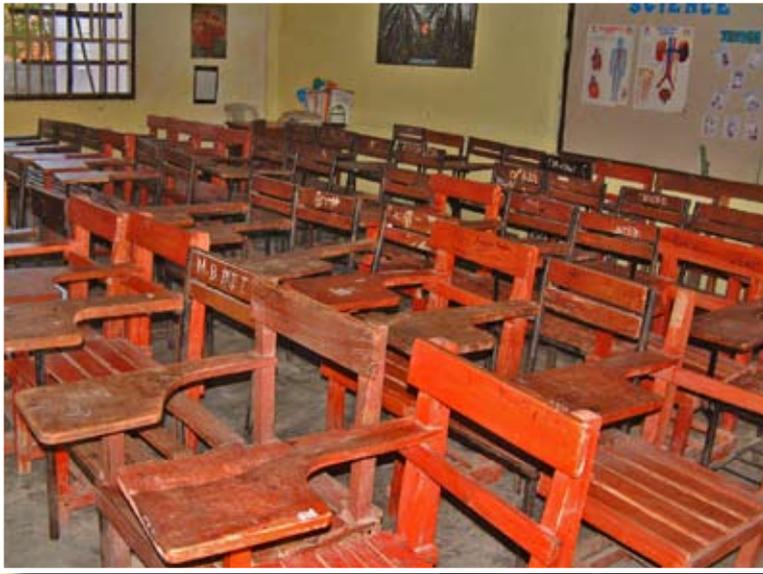


There are some old buildings.....



Outside classrooms.....





old chairs and some old equipment. On the day we arrived, this was the school's main method of writing to the outside world. It was also the weapon responsible for producing all term reports etc! I couldn't resist

this photo! You might notice that the "space" bar is actually the handle of a toothbrush. Remember carbon paper?



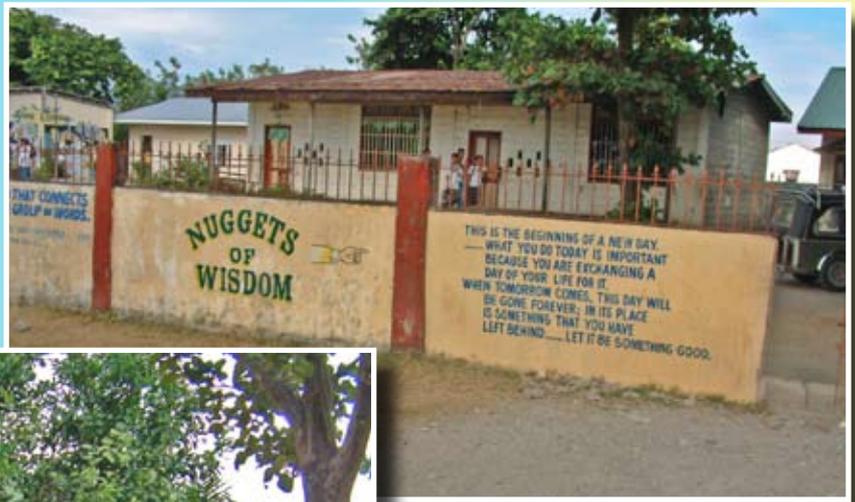
The town council room doubles as a meeting hall

There are a couple of new buildings, one just completed with regional funding and one via the local town council



The new regional building

General views of the school



The gardening and general upkeep is all part of the school curriculum and is done by the children

The play area is another new addition



The children's infectious spirit is everywhere



The computers for the Elementary school being delivered.....

and unwrapped.



In use for the first time.....

on a bench made in our back yard!



The sign says
it all!



For many it
is an excited
first time
to sit at a
computer. It's
still only four
PCs between
100 pupils
but they
patiently wait
their turn

We gave
them a
stack
of old
"floppy"
disks.
They could
hardly
contain
themselves



This is the library.



Here's some of the hand-built furniture you had made, with the books you supplied

We had the carpenters working nights in our back yard to make all the furniture in time!



You've seen
this room
before! It's the
school room
we set up last
year.



More
computers,
more books



More
smiling
faces



You can always see

lots of
smiling
faces

but they were
puzzled



when the
new teacher
arrived!



When most of the major projects were finished, we invited each of the teachers to select some books for their own classrooms.

So now each classroom



Has its own mini library, with books relevant to their grade.

Catering for the children is organised locally and they asked if we could help. This is after our shopping trip to the hardware store for the cooking stuff.



The home economics teacher (who also supervises the cooking at lunchtimes, done by the children) wanted her picture in front of all her new gear!

She insisted we also took a picture of her new cooker. She was actually a classmate of my wife, all those years ago. She became a teacher and had 12 children, my wife went to London.



This is our lunch being bbq'd while we were visiting one day!

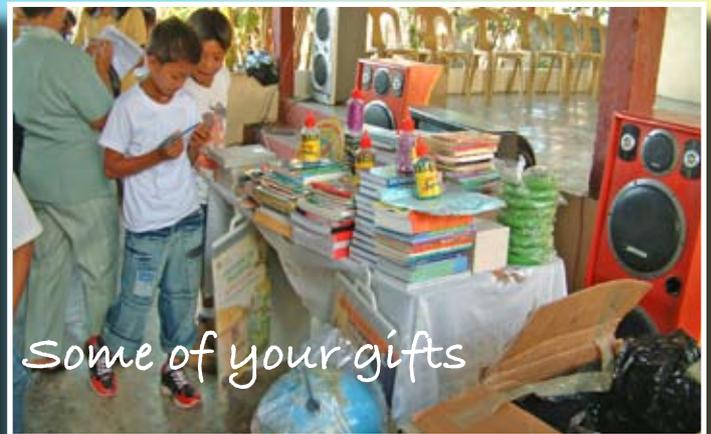
They insisted on putting a show on for us! The "Friends" on the sign are, of course, all the folk who made this possible - you!



A bit of a sing-song



A bit of prayer



Some of your gifts



Even "the birdie song"



A folk dance with sticks



You can't beat wellies with a tutu, I always say!



Even the teachers did a turn!



*This room is supported by Friends of the Botao Schools in England.
Here are some of your friends starting a race which will last for 24 hours*

There is one of these framed pictures in all four rooms. Without your help, none of this would have been possible.

For Jo and I, it is the realisation of a dream, a wish come true. We will never be able to thank you, no more than will the future generations of children who will pass through Botao Schools.

It took a year out of our lives, an incredible amount of running around, phoning, collecting, badgering and nagging. Needless to say, it was all more than worthwhile.

Wherever you look, you will always find more people needing help and I am sure we could continue with our endeavours for ever more, and hardly touch the surface of the needs and requirements of the young children of the Philippines. But our resources and time are finite.

We will continue to support these projects we've started, but we will start no more. So if you have any further gifts we will be happy to freight them out, if you have any loose change we will put it to good use. We will be confining our efforts towards the continued support of the Botao Schools.

A heartfelt **"thank you"** to you from Jo and me.