

# SAHARA RUNNERS TO FACE 49 DEGREE HEAT

**Dr Tim Wood from Gillingham and Alan Geal from Motcombe are preparing to take part in the Marathon Des Sables, the toughest foot race on earth, to raise funds for Msaada and two other charities.**

During the ordeal they will run the risk of dehydration, scorpion stings, heat exhaustion, sunburn, camel spiders, blisters and getting lost.

“We were looking for a tough personal challenge,” Mr Geal told us. “We thought of rowing the Atlantic, but it proved to be too complicated. We decided instead on the Marathon Des Sables.”

“When we realised we could not be cold and wet for three months in a boat,” Dr Wood stated, “we looked for the next toughest challenge and decided on running the equivalent of six marathons in six days across the Sahara.

“Once we decided on the challenge, we then wanted to raise money for charities. We picked Msaada, a charity that helps survivors of the Rwandan genocide; Cancer Research and Dorset and Somerset Air ambulance.”

Donations will be divided equally between the three charities.

The men will be running a grueling 151 miles across the Sahara in April, carrying backpacks weighing about 30 pounds each. They will carry 4.5 litres of water each day, six days food and cooking equipment, a sleeping bag and mat, clothes and a first aid kit which includes an anti venom kit, which Dr Wood received as a Christmas present.

In the course of their 151 miles they will have to endure an exhausting 45



**Alan Geal and Dr Tim Wood brave the snow-covered Dorset countryside last January during their preparation for the 151-mile marathon in the baking heat of the Sahara**

to 50-mile leg on day four, followed by a full marathon on day five.

This will be in temperatures of up to 49 degrees Celcius in the midday sun across sand dunes and uneven stony rocky ground. They will be sleeping, alongside the 700 other competitors, under canvas.

Dr Wood and Mr Geal have been training for the past 18 months. Their training has included nine marathons, one ultra marathon of 33 miles, and two ultra trail marathons covering 78 miles in three days.

To make a donation log onto: <http://www.justgiving.com/Tim-WOOD0>

# Shaftesbury students strengthen friendship

**My Rwanda visit was one of the most overwhelming, yet rewarding experiences of my life.**

This journey was definitely one of discovery for me, not only in the sense of meeting new people and visiting another continent, but also in the vast range of emotions I experienced whilst I was there.

We arrived at the Avega Centre, tired from our travels and a little apprehensive, but we were soon welcomed by Odette and her team of fantastic ladies, who took care of us so well throughout our stay.

Visits to the Excel Bilingual School in Rwamagana were absolutely amazing and I loved every minute of my time there with the

Six Shaftesbury students and two staff have returned from their school's third visit to Rwanda. Here, student Lucy Hull gives her first hand account of the visit

children and teachers. Whilst it bore little resemblance to schools in England, the happy children and their desire to learn and be educated was truly inspirational. It made me realise how fortunate I am to have so many opportunities and resources available to use. The lesson prepared by myself and Keiha was a music lesson, where the children got to make shakers and other instruments. This turned out to be very noisy! But it was immediately apparent by all the smiling faces that the children were

enjoying themselves.

The Rwandan people, whom I met during my visit, are truly resilient people who have experienced traumatic situations and loss, yet have the biggest hearts, the kindest dispositions and the strength to move on from the effects of the genocide. We saw evidence of these atrocities when we visited the Memorial Centre in Kigali and Nyarabuye Church. Having already met the widows and children of Rwanda, these visits moved me to tears to think that these people had experienced such

awful events, less than twenty years ago.

We shared so many happy times and lots of **laughter, both with the Rwandan people and within our group from Shaftesbury School** – dancing, singing, sharing meals and generally having a good time together. It was clear to see that the funds raised and the hard work that stems from Msaada is improving the lives, education and opportunities for many Rwandan people. It was a true honour for me to be selected for this visit, not only to see the work of Msaada, but for those ten days, just to be a tiny part of it.

I encourage anyone, who has a passion for life and a big heart to follow in our footsteps and make the visit to Rwanda if the opportunity comes your way.



Students and staff from Shaftesbury School with teachers at the Excel Bilingual School in Rwamagana

## Mobile phones help isolated widows to keep in contact



Mobile phones donated to Msaada by Ken Lockwood of Practical Refrigeration Ltd, Unit 15, Bourne Industrial Park, Crayford, DA1 4BZ, and Martin Cawley, Devonshire Wealth Management Ltd, 76 New Cavendish Street, London, W1G 9TB, have helped widows in remote parts of eastern Rwanda to keep in touch with the AVEGA Est office, giving them great peace of mind.

Widows in remote areas of Rwanda occasionally feel threatened by former killers in areas where there is not a strong police presence. The gift of a phone means that if they encounter any difficulties they can make contact immediately and help can be sent.

The phones were serviced before shipment by Phone-In Ltd, East Street, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1JE.

# Paint Ball raises over £8,000

Msaada recently gave out over 100 canvases and paints to local people. Some were professionals, most were amateurs – but all wanted to help Msaada’s work in Rwanda by painting a picture.

The paintings were then viewed by art historian, Philippa Bell, and Surveyor of the Queen’s Paintings, Desmond Shawe-Taylor, who said of the standard: “We were overwhelmed by their quality, scope and imagination.”

Twelve of the amateurs’ paintings were selected for auction at The Paint Ball held in the fabulous Rye Hill Barn.

Prior to the ball, First-View Gallery at Stourhead staged an exhibition of the paintings at which many were sold. More were sold at the ball, and the 12 selected works were



Jane Parfit, First-View Gallery, Stourhead, with Sally Page, organiser of the Paint Ball, at the exhibition of paintings at First-View

auctioned. To date 92 paintings have been sold. There are still some to sell so the total amount raised by the events has not been finalised,

however, so far over £8,000 has been raised. Particular thanks to the local restaurants who contributed to the success by providing food and

bubbly: The Angel Inn at Hindon, The Bell and Crown at Zeals and The Lamb at Hindon. Also thanks to Don Smith of Stalbridge Laundry.



Martyn Jose, Msaada trustee, and Michelle Pike at the ball



Nigel Potheary and Robin Yapp at the paint ball

# Gourmet food for thought

Msaada trustee Martyn Jose organised a brain-teasing, mouth-watering gourmet food quiz night at Cucklington Village Hall that raised over £1,200. The five-course meal was cooked by local

celebrity chefs and the proceeds went towards the Msaada catering project in Rwamagana. The chefs who prepared the sumptuous meal were Helen Pothecary, Dom Aviss, Jim Edmondson and Jo Michelwright.

Msaada was established with the support of journalist and broadcaster



Fergal Keane

## OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

CHAIRMAN: Chris Brickell, TREASURER: David Zackheim, DIRECTOR: Billy Kelly, TRUSTEES: Jim Farrand, Martyn Jose, Mike Hayes

9 Leddington Way, Gillingham, Dorset, SP8 4FF  
Telephone: 01747 823690  
e-mail: [msaadarwanda@yahoo.com](mailto:msaadarwanda@yahoo.com)

[www.msaada.org](http://www.msaada.org)

Msaada is a UK Registered Charity Number 1111819

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I want Msaada to treat the enclosed donation of  
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Please make cheques payable to Msaada

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Odette Kayirere from Rwanda receives a cheque to support her work from Candice Sheppard of the Coppleridge Inn, Motcombe



Alex Best with Msaada treasurer, David Zackheim, and trustee, Jim Farrand, at the VPs' lunch at the Angel Inn, Hindon



Odette Kayirere receives a donation towards her work with widows and orphans in Rwanda during her visit to Dorset from Felicity Ward, Silton, Gillingham. Included are Charlotte Ward, Silton; Simon Barfoot, Blackmore Computers Ltd, Chitterne, and Michael Ward, Silton

Total funds sent to projects to date:

**£186,564**