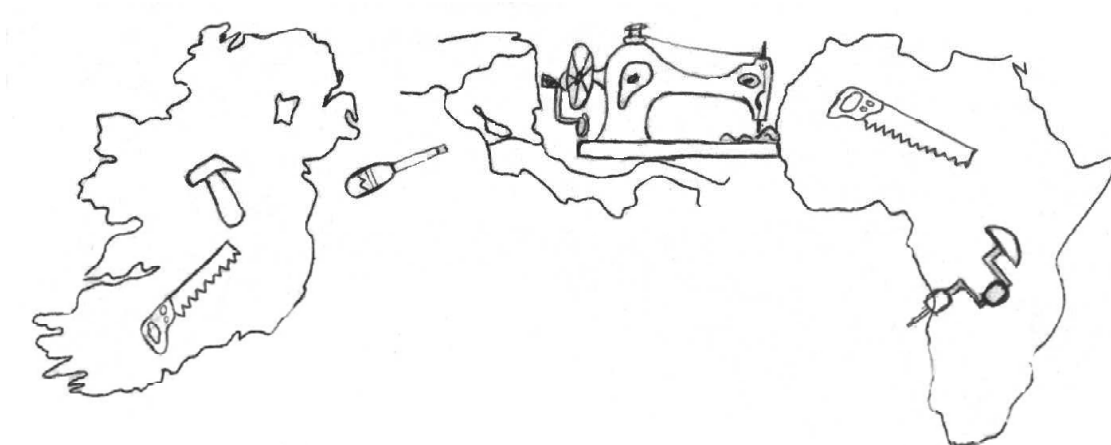




NEWSLETTER

of Tools For Solidarity

Give a new life to your old tools!



October 2010 **SOLIDARITY** NO. 26

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NEWS (AND OTHER THINGS)

Special Visitor to Belfast

We were delighted to finally welcome John Alibankoha to our workshop.

After threatening to visit this summer John, the co-founder of RUPAD – Rural People in Action For Development and school finally made it over to NI. It was great to meet him and here of his work in Uganda.

He was able to see the kits of tools and sewing machines that have been refurbished in Downpatrick and Belfast and are now ready to leave. These will go to vocational training colleges and a prison where young people can learn artisan skills and give themselves a greater chance in life of earning an income.



Our Volunteers with our visitors

During his visit we also welcomed Hugh and John from the Combined Services Third World Fund – an Irish Trade Union body – that have provided funds for this programme.

One of our volunteers – Johannes – is already on route to western Uganda where he will work with RUPAD, teaching English and repairing sewing machines. We hope that he will be able to provide sewing machine maintenance and operational training to the groups we are supporting.

OUR NEXT SHIPMENT

Our next shipment will be for Uganda in November and to Tanzania in December.

The total number of tools, which we are sending to Uganda, is 473.

These make up 10 carpentry kits, 10 tailor kits and 1 mechanic kit. These kits will go to vocational training colleges and a prison in Uganda.

Our sewing-machine shipment includes about 300 machines this time. So we are very happy to see that our project needs every time more sewing machines in Mwanza.

We will send about 150 straight-stitch-machines and about 150 zig-zag-machines to Tanzania.

Thanks to everyone, who help to prepare our next shipment.

It was and it is a lot of work, but it is good to know that we don't forget the fun by the labour.

Maike

MSTC- 2 YEARS ON

It is hard to believe that the project has been going for over 2 years. In that period we have sent 4 containers with over 1,200 sewing machines and many other resources.

This trip was to evaluate how the project had developed from the last visit and to see if they were delivering the core elements of the project. This trip was going to be a little different for me as it was the first time since the project started to go and see the groups who had received the machines. I can clearly remember the last time I had done this over 4 years ago and had been some what disappointed by what I had found.

As with many projects there were successes as well as difficulties. The project had improved in 3 core elements since the visit 10 months ago:

1. More machines were being sold – thus increasing the projects income
2. The project was now operating in new regions within Tanzania
3. New treadles were being produced that were of extremely high quality

The areas where it was doing less well was in:

1. Planning and implementation – this resulted in overspend in certain areas costing the project. The plus side is that the manager has learnt from the experience and this is less likely to occur in future.
2. Training of artisans in dress and embroidery design

The lack of training is a problem that does not appear to have a simple resolution. Tailors want to have training but list transport and accommodation costs as a barrier. However given the cost of accommodation it is beyond the income of the centre to offer this free. While we were there we looked at alternative ways to move this issue forward. The project has now brought in support to assist tailors with transport. Another idea is to identify or train up people to do the training at a local level. We are in contact with the manager and our partner to try and come up with more flexible ways to make training happen.

Visit to Groups

Over 2 days we visited about 16 tailors and I was very impressed by the impact the project was having. Not only were people happy and using their machines but they were happy with the money they had to spend to get the machine. It really did make 4 years ago seem very distant and put in perspective the big changes that TFS have brought about.



Ester Muganga
 Town: Geita
 MSTC machine: Brother ZZ elec.
 (got in October 2009)
 Before receiving the machine she was going to another shop to make embroidery – costing her around 1500 Tshs per week (75p)
 Able to make more embroidery since she got the machine

Treadle – what a spin off

This has been one of the biggest benefits of the project in Tanzania, apart from getting

- ~ More sewing machines to people
- ~ Skill transfer
- ~ Intensive course for mechanics
- ~ Training tailors in operation and maintenance

Has been the local production of treadles. Instead of £9,000 going out to purchase treadles in China the money is now spent on local production. The quality of some of the treadle isn't great but is improving, at the same time one of the producers has been producing a very high quality treadle and we will be looking to support this producer by sending specialised machinery in the next shipment.



Treadles produced by Joshua.

He uses a jig and formwork to produce a much superior treadle

John

MALAWI FIELD TRIP - A NEW PARTNER??

This year we started the process of looking for a new partner with which TFS can co-operate to help provide tools, sewing machines and other sources. The first of these visits was to Malawi, to an organisation, called MEDI, working in entrepreneurial development. The trip took place between the 24th to the 30th June.

Some Background on Malawi

To reach Malawi we travelled by bus from Dar Es Salaam. The journey took 2 days with an overnight stop at the border. The border closes at 6:00pm and does not open until 6:00 the following morning, which meant an overnight stop at a small hotel.

The currency is the Malawian Kwacha (250MK to £1), which we had to exchange at the border: there was no visa entry charge – if you had an Irish or American passport you had to pay. The road infrastructure is much better than Tanzania; though there was much less traffic. The northern part seemed economically poorer than Tanzania with much less commerce and less visible artisan activity. When we arrived in Lilongwe, at the bus station (about 7:00pm) it was very quiet. It is a very strange city, very planned with districts and walls everywhere

The economy is heavily dependant on tobacco and aid money. Prices in the shops seem as high if not higher than Tanzania. The impression is that money is there but not within the rural areas. People are more reserved and polite, no pushing people into buses or running them off the road.

Who is MEDI?

MEDI (Malawi Entrepreneurial Training Institutes) has over 100 employed personnel, some of whom are employed in direct income generation for MEDI. This is through the accommodation venture (running or facilitating courses, meetings, etc), petrol station and

various economic outlets. They have a fleet of 12 vehicles and their main activity seems to be around training and promoting entrepreneurship. They have a large compound with several large buildings including a carpentry and metal working workshops. They make furniture to order and the metal working section seems under utilised.



The buildings at MEDI

Discussions on Partnership

The visit was very short and it is difficult to fully assess the scope, need and all the issues. Having said that you can discover much more about prospective partner organisation in a short visit than weeks or months of communication can ever reveal. In this case we discovered that the focus of MEDI had shifted considerably and they no longer had such a focus on artisan support. This meant that although they wanted to establish a project based on sewing machines there was no structure or network into which a project could be established.

While this is a set back to TFS and its search for a new partner we learnt a lot of useful information and gained a better understanding of the complexity involved in developing future contacts. The search for a new partner will have to be a higher priority within TFS in the next year and I would watch out for new developments in the next newsletter.

MOURNE GRANGE

Chris and Elodie are going once a month to Mourne Grange.

“What’s Mourne Grange?”

⇒ It’s a Camp hill Community, a little charming village close to Kilkeel and Newcastle.

“What’s a Camp hill Community”.

⇒ “The innovative communities that make up the Camp hill movement have, for almost 70 years, been creating new ways of supporting people with learning disabilities and other special needs so that their full potential can find expression”.

The homepage of mourne grange is www.mournegrange.org. So when you want further information you could search on this website.

TFS supported Mourne Grange to open their tools workshop.



We started at the end of June to organize the workshop. We taught the machine operations and the refurbishing of a small number of tools to start with.

Above all we met very friendly people. It’s a pleasure to go there.

Elodie and Chris

GREEN LIVING FAIR

From the 11th to the 12th of September TFS presented themselves on the Green Living Fair in Castle Espie.

Maike and Emilie had the responsibility for this event.

For both of them it was a new experience and also for TFS, because the organizers of the fair asked us to make some demonstrations. This was the condition to get the stall for free. So we were sitting together and asked ourselves what we can demonstrate and what would be interesting.

Our ideas-box John gave us some ideas. For example, we had a demonstration about how you could re-shaft a hammer, check a level or do embroidery.

With this “preparation” we arrived at Castle Espie, with, in our car boot, the best stall the world had ever seen .



Emilie next to our stall

All in all the fair was a good opportunity to show people what TFS is and on the other hand, where they could bring their old tools to have a Yes-I-have-done-something-for-development-feeling.

The idea of doing demonstrations proved not to be the best
The reason is that our demonstrations were about special themes, like

“common problems with old sewing-machines”, and the most people do not have problems with old sewing machines, as they have already donated them to us! Only the demonstration about the sewing-art (Embroidery) drew a crowd, but Maike forgot to fill the bobbin...

Emilie and Maike

DOWNPATRICK

“New Boss is Better” – says Jim

Downpatrick has a new manager/co-ordinator. And according to Jim he is the bees knees. Or so he says behind my back!

Me and Nancy finally moved from Ballyhornan at the end of June. To save me commuting daily from Belfast Chris kindly offered to take up the reins with continued support from TFS Belfast. He is doing a ‘smashing service’ and has opened the workshop an extra day a week on Thursdays.



The workshop remains extremely busy most days with the regulars being joined by a stream of young people on placement. Ardmore school are back after their summer break, filling the workshop with sounds of enthusiasm and hard work.

Our volunteers have taken on a number of different tasks including completing the kits for RUPAD – see main news – making boxes for the Fundi training in Mwanza and preparing the tools for this

training. We continue to support the MSTC by sanding and oiling treadle bases. Well done to all those involved!!

Our next big project is in the workshop itself with the installation of heating – joy Oh joy. The volunteers are itching to start work partitioning the workshop and connecting up the boiler and radiations. Hopefully come November we will be working again in shorts and t-shirts.

Many thanks to all our volunteers and the placement organisations that provide them with support. Special thanks to Chris for his hard work, dedication and sense of calm that prevails the workshop and to the team from Belfast who support him – Elodie, Emilie and Maike.

Stephen

ABOUT OUR BIG FAMILY!

Since the last newsletter, many volunteers have sadly left our team.

Jessica and Fabian went back to Germany in July, heavy heart but strongly motivated for the years of studies waiting for them. Germain is back to Belgium since August; he reluctantly left Belfast but with a light of hope in the eyes, as he found the path leading to his ideals. Emanuele is since August an accountant and businessman again, in Italy!

Meanwhile, our family hosted a lot of jolly pilgrims.

Romy and Jörg, from Germany, came over for one month in May. Unfortunately, as Romy had to leave us early we didn't have the chance to know her very well but together with Jörg, she had time to build loads of boxes for tools and industrial sewing machines. Jörg, friendly reggae lover mate, also helped a lot in all kind of tasks needed, always smiling, and fell in love with TFS.

Then, Nihan arrived in July and stayed one month with us, squashed her toe (nothing serious) and brought a lot of energy and happiness!

First experience of this kind, TFS trained an Eirene volunteer on sewing machines refurbishment to prepare him for a one-year project in Uganda. Johannes stayed 2 months with us to learn and bring this knowledge to Uganda, where he will volunteer in the organisation Rural People in Action for Development. He was our "fire maker". He left us recently. We will miss the warm evenings around the fire...

And finally, many thanks to Vanessa for her few days volunteering and for her friendly temperament.

Still with us, Lorette, the Doyen of the European volunteers, who taught us all what we know about sewing machines. TFS will regret and miss her a lot when she will go back to France in December.

Emilie, the Belgian from France, will have to let her tools' boxes find a new keeper and leave her hammer friends at the end of October (she might bring a box of ball peen hammers in her handbag!).

For Elodie, the rock'n'roll French, chisels and planes have no longer any secrets, she must have sharpened thousands of them! Still with us for 5 months, she goes once a month to Mourne Grange Camphill to train them on tools refurbishment. On her free time? Concerts, concerts, concerts!

Clement, the French islander, and our computer programmer, has put his hand in the dough (French expression) and has made some few boxes for the tough manager Emilie, a few but perfect! He also is a very good organiser of the wood storage as we can now lift a plank without getting squashed by all the pile!

But now, let's welcome the new team!

Selim and Maike arrived in July and will stay one year. They already took over the sewing machine section!

Selim, from Turkey, is now the new guardian of the sewing machines' cemetery and joined the fundraising group. Yes ladies and gentlemen, it is official we have a new fundraiser member! He is also very famous for his gardening skills... , and if you want to go out on the weekend, he is always up to party!!!

Maike, our wee German meerkat because she is always active and excited, became the Lord of the sewing machines, the master of the operations! She is responsible for the shipment and the sewing machine area in the workshop, and also the new trainer. Forget to tight a screw, Maike will find it! Very curious, she is always ready for cultural activities and meeting new friends.

And to complete this international team, Daniel from Sweden, Alba from Basque Country and Héctor from Spain joined us in September. All on the EVS program, Daniel and Héctor will stay one year, Alba 6 months.

Daniel and Alba started their training about sewing machines, reinforcing the troops for a team bigger than ever!

Héctor is trained on tools checking, by Elodie and Emilie. Soon, he will know everything about hacksaws, coping saws, fret saws... and more!

This big wave of volunteers brought a new breath to the workshop and the atmosphere is now very happy thanks to the friendly relations between local and European volunteers.

About Norn Iron people...

We are very happy to have Liam and Gary back, fully recovered from their health concerns and strong again to work with us. We missed Liam's singing talent and Gary's conversations!

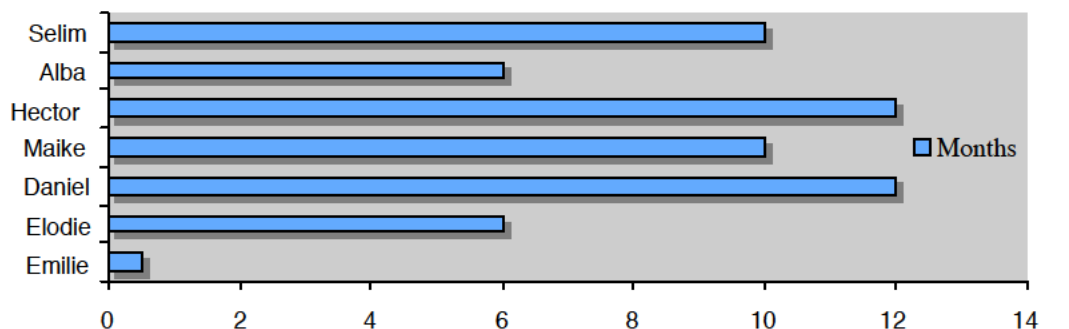
Barnsley who worked with us for a month, Sheldon who was with us since a long time, and Paul who was coming one hour a week, unfortunately left the workshop... We hope to see them again very soon!

But fortunately, Brendan the thinker, Brian "our mother-hen", Gary the golfer, Henry the carpenter-joiner, Liam the Boss!, Paul the novelist, Paul the joker, Peter the anti-green-vegetables, Peter the intellectual-engineer, Richard the smiley and Roger the traveller are still working hard for a better world!

And last but not least, our leaders John and Stephen will always be here to motivate us and bring the organisation to the top! Special thanks to them for being so patient, understanding and helpful.

Emilie

Chart of our international Volunteers-stay (from the beginning of September)



MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

“In 2000 world leaders met at the United Nations Millennium Summit in New York. On this occasion, 189 heads of state and government made a historic promise to end poverty by 2015. Signing the Millennium Declaration, they agreed to work together to improve the lives of the world’s poorest people. Out of this declaration came the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHhJSz6yk6U&feature=player_embedded): 8 development objectives offering a roadmap to halve global poverty and hunger, ensure universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, halt and reverse the spread of HIV/ AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensure



environmental sustainability, and create a global partnership for development. For the first time, rich and poor countries alike recognized their shared responsibility to end poverty and its root causes. While developing countries took the primary responsibility for achieving the first seven Goals, donor countries took responsibility for the eighth Goal – establish a

global partnership for development. This meant they would deliver more aid, improve its effectiveness and provide more and better trade opportunities to developing countries so they could lift themselves out of poverty. Ten years down the road, the world has indeed witnessed notable success stories even in some of the poorest countries. However, progress is uneven between and within regions as well as countries, and is often too slow to meet the 2015 deadline. Global development challenges such as climate change, food and energy insecurity, and natural disasters have compounded the existing fragile situation in many developing countries. In addition, the recent global economic recession has slowed - and in some cases reversed - progress on the MDGs. Some two billion people still live on less than two dollars a day. Global hunger stands at record levels with almost one billion people currently undernourished.

The United Nations Millennium Campaign firmly believes that the MDGs can be achieved, even in the poorest countries, provided that developing countries own their

development processes, good policies exist, and commitments are backed by predictable and adequate resources. The Campaign is a UN inter-agency initiative set up in 2002 by former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, to support citizens' efforts to hold their governments accountable for achieving the MDGs.

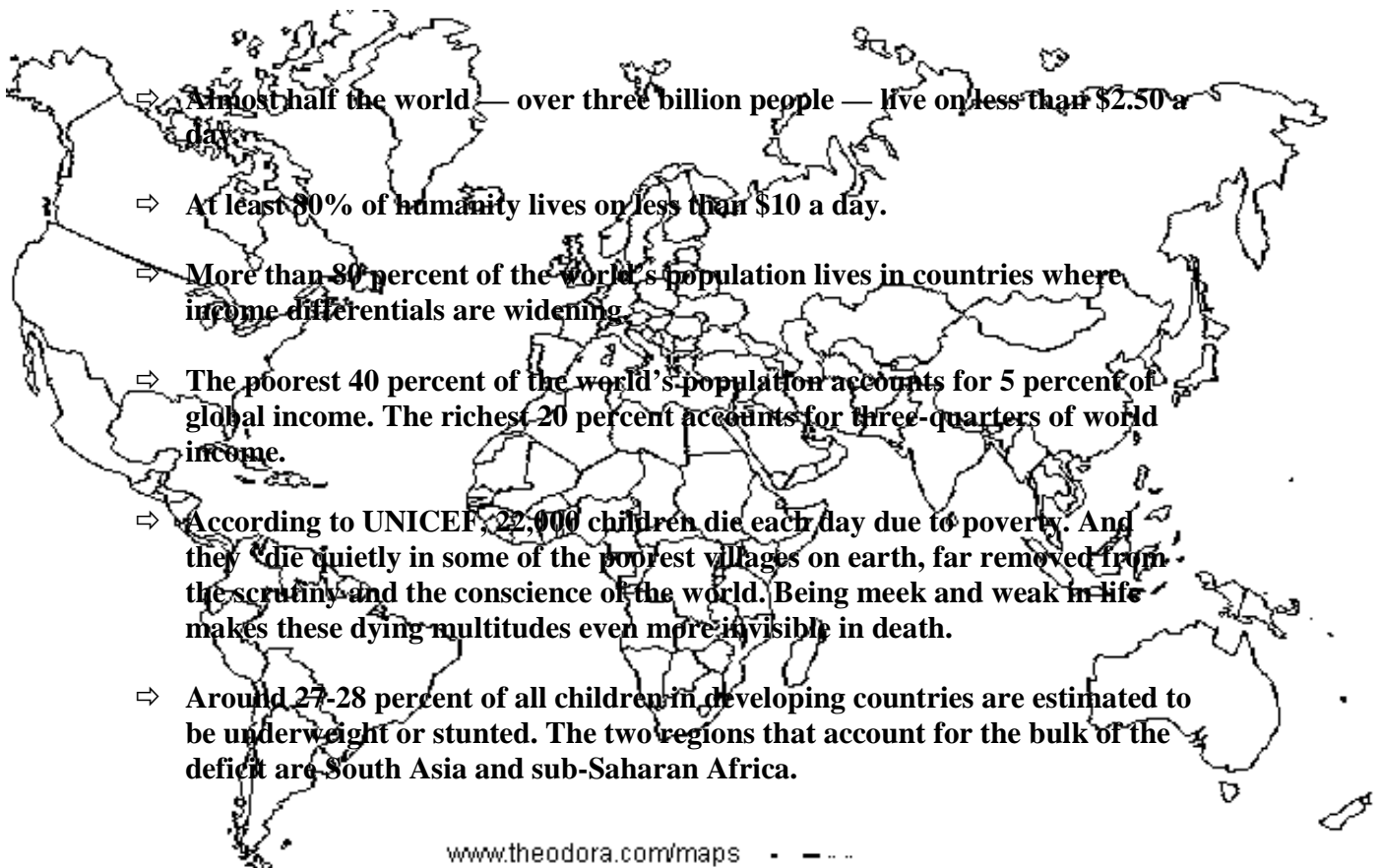
Urgent Action is needed: there are simply no excuses.

Patrizia Labella, Policy Adviser, UN Millennium Campaign Europe

<http://www.endpoverty2015.org/>

At the meeting in New York donor countries, foundations and corporations pledged \$11.7 billion over 3 years to fight aids and over \$40 billion over 5 years to accelerate progress on women's and children's health. Sounds impressive but the US spends \$711 annually on defence.”

HOW BAD IS THE WORLD REALLY???



- ⇒ **If current trends continue, the Millennium Development Goals target of halving the proportion of underweight children will be missed by 30 million children, largely because of slow progress in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.**
- ⇒ **Based on enrolment data, about 72 million children of primary school age in the developing world were not in school in 2005; 57 per cent of them were girls. And these are regarded as optimistic numbers.**
- ⇒ **Nearly a billion people entered the 21st century unable to read a book or sign their names.**
- ⇒ **Less than one per cent of what the world spent every year on weapons was needed to put every child into school by the year 2000 and yet it didn't happen.**

SECOND HAND CLOTHES

From Riches to Rags by Neville Loudon

The issue of second hand clothes exports (dumping) from Europe to sub Sahara Africa is one that has featured in previous editions of Solidarity. The trade worth an estimated \$ 2.2 billion annually is one where TFS has raised fundamental questions over its sustainability and appropriateness for years.

Put simply we in the west massively over-consume in terms of clothes we purchase. Each year the UK alone produces millions of tons of clothes waste. The vast bulk of the waste is resold in African markets.

This has a number of consequences – from the destruction of indigenous manufacturing to the import of western dress fashion. For TFS this trade - like most others – is not concerned with its environmental, cultural or developmental consequences. It is only concerned with the bottom dollar.

What makes it so galling is that so many development organisations not only condone the trade, they actively participate in it and profit from it.

It is an issue that TFS would love to campaign on but we are just too busy to take this up. What we have done is ask the Science Shop at Queens to find students to research the issue.

The first student to take up the challenge is Neville Loudon who has written an impressive report – Riches to Rags. Unfortunately for TFS the main focus of Neville's report is on people's attitudes in NI to donating clothes to charities. Neville did do some

useful research on the literature covering this field and he makes a fair point that much more research is needed in the impact this trade has on developing countries and the whole issue of its sustainability and environmental impact.

There is now a new group of students from the Science Shop who are looking at the trade from a policy perspective. They want to know what policies governments – be they local, national or international – have on the export of second hand clothes. What is most interesting from the TFS point of view is they are also asking local NGOs what policies they have... Can't wait for the answer.

If anyone would like to read Neville's report please contact the workshop.

WHO WANTS TO BE CORE AT THE CORE? TFS SEEKS NEW CORE VOLUNTEER!!

TFS is seeking a brave soul to join us as a core volunteer. This is a minimum 2 year post. It will be demanding and lots of hard work but the rewards..... Anyone interested – or could help advertise the job - in applying please contact the workshop.

AND IN THE END

...something to think about:

“I sit on a man's back, choking him and making him carry me, and yet assure myself and others that I am very sorry for him and wish to ease his lot by all possible means - except by getting off his back.”

Leo Tolsty

Take care





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