



# KEP GARDENS NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2014

Happy Khmer New Year  
to all our friends and  
Kep Gardens' supporters

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> New Year for 2014 but that's it for now so we can get on with the rest of the year at last!!

It is very hot at the moment, the nasty part of the year. It is very dry and dusty. We have had a little rain but if nothing else the pineapples were watered. The dam is very low. In fact, this year we have fruit growing everywhere at the moment. After 3-4 years of planting, trees are finally starting to bear fruit.



Guava



Banana

Still haven't seen any oranges or limes yet. Hoping next year will be the year.

## Volunteers

Since the last newsletter we've seen Arie and Dinie return for the second year to Kep Gardens. They were our first volunteers and it was heartening to hear from them that they saw a big improvement, particularly in the older students. This proves how valuable the volunteers are to Kep Gardens enabling us to run the Reading and Conversation Programmes. Thank you all. You do a great job, working very hard to prepare your topic week.



Jack fruit



Mango



Pineapple



Passionfruit



Coconut



Jack fruit



Arie and Dinie



Annemarie



Katinka



Veronique and Maarten

*Working at Kep Gardens is nothing like a holiday, but nonetheless a "once-in-a-lifetime" experience. It's great to see the dedication Janine and Andrew have and all the efforts they put into the English school, the*

construction work, and all the other activities Kep Gardens offers to the Cambodian community. Living at Kep Gardens is not always as comfortable as staying in a guesthouse, but it does make you feel part of the family. With the great food Choun puts in front of you every day, you'll for sure have enough fuel to get through the working hours, and Kimsy is always willing to help you out with whatever query you may have.

When being part of the Kep Gardens project, you get to learn a lot about the people who call this part of Cambodia their home. We were very lucky to be invited to a wedding of an old Kep Gardens' student. We felt very welcome, and it was a pleasure to experience that all the other Kep Gardens students who were present, could talk to us in very good English! They all spoke with great respect and love about Janine and Andrew.

We will cherish our memories of all the Kep Gardens' children we got to teach every day. The smaller kids really are lots of fun, and it was very pleasant and interesting to get to learn more about the lives of the older English students.

The 6 weeks we spent at Kep Gardens were fun, challenging, hot, interesting....all in all a great experience we for sure will never forget.

Veronique and Maarten

### **Parent Information Morning**

The health checks showed that many of the younger children were undernourished. They were all issued with a powdered nutritional protein food but once this ran out what then? Kimsy learnt from the nurses what food was available around the village and cheaply from the local market that the children should be eating. She wrote this in Khmer on an information sheet and we invited the parents to attend one morning for an information session. It was pleasing to see that the majority of parents, mainly mothers but some fathers, attended. Kimsy said they were all very interested. They took the information sheet home so hopefully when these children are checked again next year their statistics will have improved.



### **Driver Safety**



With Khmer New Year coming up, lots of parties and many people on the roads visiting families, we wanted to talk, particularly to the older classes, about driver safety before the festivities began. The Government has a list of 7 or 8 things they want people to know about to keep themselves safe, driving only being 1 of these topics. A local military police representative came and spoke about drugs, "gangsters" and other safety issues. We had acquired a few posters on road rules so he went through these as well. Even if it makes 1 of the kids think twice before speeding and drink driving it will be worth it.

### **Nursing Students**

We told you in the last newsletter that the 3 nursing students had passed their entrance exam. A week or so after their exam Andrew and I took them to Life University and got them settled into their rooms ready for school the next day.



They have settled in very well. All 4 came home for Khmer New Year and came to see us. We had a very happy afternoon hearing all their stories. They are doing well in all the assignments, quizzes and exams they seem to

have. We are confident that they are all working hard at their studies but also enjoying their spare time, making new friends, widening their horizons but most important of all becoming confident, mature, young adults. A lot of this comes of course from leaving home. They all miss home but are not homesick. It was great to see the change in quite a short period of time and we look forward to following their personal growth over the next few years.

### **Trades Section**

Andrew and our apprentices haven't been around Kep Gardens much over the last couple of months. They took down a Khmer wooden house that the people said had ghosts so they wanted to sell it. They have been building a fence and doing the foundations and soon this house will be rebuilt in a different place for a different owner.



### **World Challenge**

Three school groups from England will be camping at Kep Gardens during the months July/August. They are groups of 20 or so and will each be staying for 6 days. From October we start to host similar school groups from Australia. We are busy planning how this will all work: extra staff we will need, projects they will work on, how we can give them the maximum exposure to the Cambodian people and life in rural Cambodia that is possible during their stay. Looking forward to these visits. We are going to sit back and enjoy it and leave it to Kimsy and Sopheak to see to the smooth running. They already have lots of good ideas to offer so should be fun and a good life experience for the visitors and learning experience for us and our staff.



A big old house with some lovely wood inside. It should come up a treat after renovating.

### **Return Hospital Visits**

The last couple of months we have been taking various students back to the hospital for follow-ups. Only one left now and he is a boy who has juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. He has to go back every month for the next 6 months or so to monitor the drugs he is taking and their effect on the rest of his body.

### **Mobile Dental Clinic**

The mobile dental clinic has been booked for June. They will spend a week here at Kep Gardens treating not only our students but students from the Buddhist for Life Development which is run by monks and former monks and is situated a few kilometres away from Kep Gardens. All the monks from the local pagoda will be checked and treated as well. Good to work together to gain the maximum benefit for children in this area while the dental clinic is in our vicinity.



They have been camping at Kampot, a couple of them coming home for a night to see families once a week or so and to pump water at Kep Gardens, service the generator and all the little jobs that they usually do on a regular basis.

### **Wedding of Hospitality Student**

The third of our hospitality students was married a couple of weeks ago. He married a girl he has

been going with for years (this is an unusual occurrence in Cambodia). Had a good time but the best thing about the wedding was that there were many old students who attended. It was great to catch up with them and find out what they are doing now. One more to go and I think he is getting married in November. All will then be married and so far there is one child, a little girl, Sopheak's daughter.

### Kittens, kittens, kittens

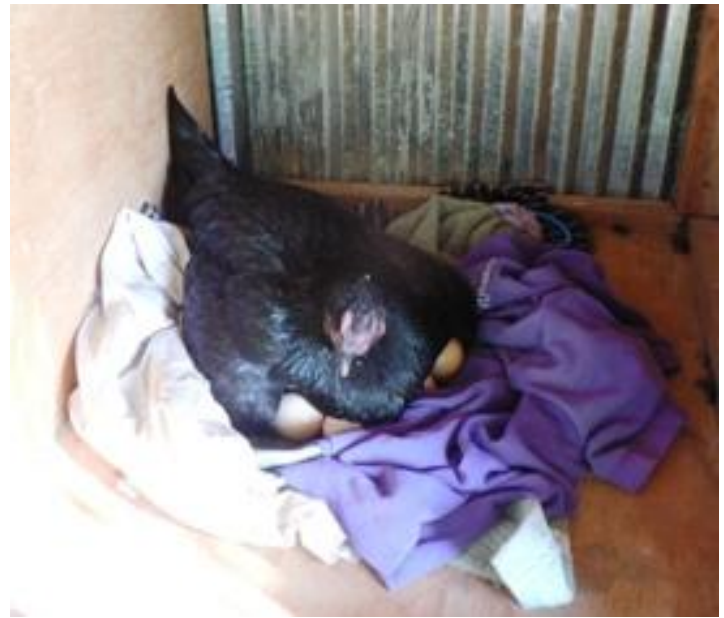
Overrun at the moment. Five from the usual mum who are nearly ready to leave home (thank goodness), three were born yesterday from a young mum and the father of them all who I thought was lost forever turned up last night out of the blue. All in all 13 cats!!!!!! Far out!! Too many, too many.



### New puppies

Fido, our dog, has decided to move out of home and only comes back every couple of days for a feed and to say hallo and off he trots back to his "wife" and family again. Consequently, one of the older students was concerned that we didn't have a dog and so is giving us a girl and a boy puppy whose parents are supposed to be good at catching snakes and scorpions around the place. What can you say? – hard to say no after such a glowing report!! About a month to go before they move in. Hope we have given away most of the kittens by then.

Hope you are all enjoying life.  
Cheers,  
Janine and Andrew



What with the geese living on our doorstep, the chickens roosting in the ceiling of the bar and nesting in the bar itself, and now all the kittens and soon puppies, it is like a menagerie at Kep Gardens.

### Possibly the best cartoon of this century



I personally would suggest government. They never go to jail.



Young class made dolls with clothes when they did the topic "clothing" with Veronique.