



Dear Friends - Enkwanaderasachu -  
(Holiday greeting in Amharic)

Welcome to the 21st century in Ethiopia. For those of you who missed the hype, the Ethiopian Calendar moved to 01/01/2000 on 12th September this year.

The new millennium has began in a positive way for the community tourism enterprises with demand for bookings already outstripping supply. It looks set to be another record breaking year for the communities.



View from Mequat Mariam (courtesy of Alison Judd)

Last season (July'06-June'07) the Meket Community Tourism Enterprises (CTEs) made significant profits -Mequat Mariam 21,644birr (over \$2,500US), Wajela 18,143birr, Aterow 10,609birr and Yadukulay which hosted its first guests in June'07 made 524birr after covering its costs. (More details on Page 3).

Recognition of TESFA's work was once again highlighted in the media with a big article in the UK Guardian on 1st September. This follows one in the Times in April.

The trained guides - Kidanemariam and Mulugeta will be joined by additional staff this season who will start guiding once trained. One of these will be Mihret who has just started training as booking coordinator and assistant guide in Lalibela. She will be the first woman guiding for TESFA!



Sunrise at Mequat Mariam - courtesy of Alison Judd

You may notice lots of the photos are taken by **Alison Judd**, she also laid out the photographs & helped design the calendar. She and her husband **Malcolm** did the trek three times, once with their children. They left Ethiopia in July. TESFA thanks you for all the support and hopes to see you back here again before too long.

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### News Update

The **Great Ethiopian Run** was postponed by the authorities and will now take place on Sunday 25th November (see <http://www.ethiopianrun.org>). Two participants from each community site will be entered in the race - although the Guides will be busy guiding and so sadly will be unlikely to be able to run.

A big thank you to **Save the Children UK** (TESFA's original donor) who have agreed to provide TESFA with additional bi-lateral funds to continue work in Meket for another 4-6 months which will allow us to work with another community on a 5th site.

This month TESFA held a workshop with government stakeholders who enthusiastically agreed to continue support for TESFA's work in Meket & proposed work on **Abuna Yoseph**. There are complications on Abuna Yoseph with some Lalibela guides trying to set up a private lodge on the mountain. TESFA hopes to solve the problems from this over the coming month.

Plans are also moving forward to start work in **Wof Washa Forest** (see last issue), and TESFA hope to be able to begin in the first few months of 2008.

Look out for a new British Council publication coming out in November: **Perspectives Ethiopia & Britain** with a section about the TESFA work.



Meket farmers with Olive wood pitch fork (Alison Judd)

#### Advise on bookings for this season ...

TESFA has been receiving a larger number of bookings than before and dates are getting filled quicker and further in advance than ever before. To avoid disappointment please let us know as soon as possible if you plan to visit Meket.

Also Ethiopian Airlines services seem to be more booked up than in past years. We have already had cancellations due to guests being unable to get flights to Lalibela despite being flexible about the exact date of travel.

Likewise we expect Lalibela's good accommodation to get booked up for the peak season quicker than before - although there are more rooms available than this time last year.

So the message is plan and book early!



The endemic Abyssinian Wattled Ibis - in Meket (Alison Judd)

**Mark will organise a few groups to spend millennium Timkat (Jan '08) with the participating Meket communities. Book your place quickly as places are limited and will fill up fast.**



Experience the Real Ethiopia

**Community Tourism making a real impact**

TESFA has just conducted a series of impact assessments to see how the CbT income is benefiting individuals. One person interviewed was Muluye Abebe, a cook and housekeeper at Wajela, aged 32 married with 3 young children. As with most of her community she is illiterate.

"I am a cook at Wajela and earn 5 birr a day. With this amount I purchased items for household consumption (eg: spices, salt, coffee, vegetables such as onions and garlic, and grain) and clothes for me and my children. This is my third training in food preparation and hygiene. As a result I have not had to sell property from my home such as sheep, oxen and goats. This is a good progress from the previous time as I can now cover the shortage in foods for consumption in the home. This has been a big change for me and my family."

When asked about what from her training she has implemented at home she stated that she has cooked: "Cabbage, potatoes and chicken in ways learned from the cooking training, but not spaghetti and rice due to their price." She also said that she now practices the hygiene she learned washing herself and the children.



Muluye (by Sarah Woodrow)

**Summary of bookings & community incomes from Jul 06 - Jun 07**

| Period / Quarter   | tll<br>gst                  | ni-<br>ghts | gst<br>nts | Total Fee | Total In-come | Total Ex-pend | CTE Total<br>Profit | 25% CTGE | 15% TSU |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|---------------------|----------|---------|
| Total for Q3 06    | <b>No bookings (Krempt)</b> |             |            |           |               |               |                     |          |         |
| Total for Q4 06    | 63                          | 58          | 151        | 39,960    | 25,442        | 9,305         | 16,137              | 9,225    | 5,535   |
| Total for Q1 07    | 66                          | 63          | 137        | 41,700    | 25,995        | 9,194         | 16,801              | 10,425   | 6,255   |
| Total for Q2 07    | 72                          | 86          | 174        | 51,280    | 32,614        | 14,532        | 18,082              | 12,450   | 7,470   |
| <b>Grand Total</b> | 201                         | 207         | 462        | 132,940   | 84,051        | 33,031        | 51,020              | 32,100   | 19,260  |

**Bookings and income for year ending June 06**

The table above gives an indication of the success the Meket Community Tourism enjoyed over the past year. Over 200 guests visited Meket spending a total of 462 guest nights. From this the communities earned over 50,000birr profit. Of their expenditure 40-55% is spent on salaries and more again on local produce bought for the treks. So around another 20,000birr is also going to the communities.



Judith with other board members & TESFA staff at Mequat.

**Hey Jude ...a very big hug and thank you from us all.**

One of the biggest contributors to TESFA - Judith Sandford - is leaving Ethiopia after 7 years. Judith has worked for SOS Sahel, Save the Children UK and USAID, and in each role has played a major part in supporting and shaping the community tourism development in Meket, and TESFA itself. Most recently she energetically took over at the helm as chair of TESFA's board. (We will provide details of new board members in the next issue.) Judith will be sorely missed by many many people in Ethiopia. However she will continue to support TESFA and Ethiopia from the UK and will also (we feel sure) be back before long.

**We will all drink to your speedy return.**





Experience the Real Ethiopia



Meket Community staff meeting with Silvio the owner of Gheralta Lodge

Experience sharing visit to private lodge in Tigray

Meket community staff from all four sites visited the new Gheralta Lodge. This is a well run private lodge 2 hours north of Mekele, with wonderful mountains around with numerous rock hewn churches excavated near their summits. Thanks to the Gheralta Lodge owner and staff for their cooperation and hospitality. See [www.gheraltalodgetigrai.com](http://www.gheraltalodgetigrai.com)

The community staff learned about the way a private business is run and the emphasis on cleanliness and service. This was followed by visits to many of Lalibela's hotels.



Meket staff outside a Rock church in Tigray

At the same time all 12 cooks from Meket visited two female entrepreneurs (*our thanks to Serke and Sophie*) in Lalibela to learn how strong women are successfully competing in a man's world.

TESFA's Millennium Calendar

Many have now received our calendars, giving them the information on the Ethiopian Calendar, with its many saints' days, alongside western calendar dates.

If you would like to make a donation and receive a calendar just let us know ...



***We at TESFA, and the communities we work with, wish to thank our donors for their invaluable support over the last year: Irish Aid, Save the Children UK, British Embassy, German Embassy, Tresillian Trust, Responsibletravel.com and a number of private individuals.***



Donkey at Mequat Mariam - thanks Arielle & Nate

What the Meket Guests are saying about their experience with the communities:

*"I'm back at my desk today and it feels quite foreign sitting here after my brief visit to Ethiopia.*

*I have to say that the TESFA trekking was without doubt the highlight of our trip.*

*Everything went very smoothly, our village hosts and our guide were great."*

Extract from an email from Chris Bannon, 8th Oct '07

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