



George Madzhadzi presents Sophie Martin with the Mashemong friendship award

IPB2715

Heartwarming project brings schools together

Runcorn pupils create new friendships in Africa

By Barbara Jordan

CHILDREN in Runcorn have made new friends almost 9,000 miles away.

Pupils at Astmoor Primary School have linked up with Mashemong Primary School in South Africa.

They have exchanged letters and hope to start talking to each other soon on a Skype computer link.

It is part of a British Council connecting classrooms project.

Head teacher Louisa Aldridge spent a week in the country's second largest township last year.

She joined staff from Moorfield and St Bede's in Widnes for the exchange.

George Madzhadzi, head teacher of Mashemong has just experienced life in Castlefields.

Mrs Aldridge said: "The children were singing in African for him when he arrived."

"I have been here 17 years and never felt such excitement."

"It has had a profound effect on the whole community, bringing us all together to celebrate something unique and special."

"He will take back ideas and teaching methods and has shared so much with us."

She described her visit to South Africa as 'life changing, heartwarming and uplifting'.

Mrs Aldridge said: "I was overwhelmed by the welcome."

"There is a lot of poverty but they were so excited about us being there."

She gave them a signed Widnes



Head teacher Louisa Aldridge and pupils say goodbye to George Madzhadzi

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Vikings shirt, uniform, books, skipping ropes and playground games.

She added: "It has opened up our children's minds, broken down racial barriers and helped them to understand differences and diversity."

"It has made them realise there is a whole world out there where life can be very different. We are genuinely learning from each other."

The two schools exchanged awards to give to pupils who epitomise friendship.

Sophie Martin, aged nine, won the Mashemong award.

Mrs Aldridge said: "She has shone out showing kindness, companionship and generosity."

"We have given them an Astmoor friendship trophy to award to one of their pupils. We have established a really strong link which we hope to carry on."

Cuts see turbine firm's future put in jeopardy

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Mr Twigg said: "This is a classic example of a company which could continue to grow and prosper."

"They have invested in new technology and provide good quality decently paid jobs and apprenticeships which are needed in Halton."

"They are a forward-thinking company, which we should be encouraging."

Hutchinson reached a turnover of £12m in 2012 and has established an international reputation for engineering excellence.

Mr Scrivener said: "We were on target to achieve £20m in the next two to three years. But this has put a halt to that progress."

He said the company is lobbying through its trade body, RenewableUK,

and meeting Mr Twigg again on Friday.

He added: "The government wants green energy but this is going backwards."

"We need renewable energy. We have burnt fossil fuels, oil and gas for the last 125 years. We are leaving nothing for the next generation."

"Onshore wind is the cheapest form."

"The huge question is: where will the industry go?"

"My gut feeling is that a lot of onshore wind turbines in the planning process will be scrapped because there won't be enough investment to continue."

"It's a real shame."

More than £800m of subsidies helped onshore wind generate five per cent of the UK's electricity last year, the Department of Energy and Climate Change confirmed.

Hospital hosts hundreds at open day event

AN OPEN day held at Halton Hospital attracted around 300 visitors on Sunday.

People went behind the scenes to see the new urgent care centre, endoscopy unit and operating theatres.

They discovered how drugs are made and also what goes on inside your bowels.

Mayor of Halton Cllr Ellen Cargill was on hand to have a go at resuscitation techniques, while Halton Stroke Association provided blood pressure checks.

Staff and partner organisations were there to offer information and advice at a range of stalls, with Runcorn performing arts group, Theatreworks, entertaining visitors.

Chris Horner, from the communications team at Warrington



Theatreworks' girls prepare prescriptions

and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said: "There was a fantastic buzz about the event and the tours proved extremely popular."

"It was great to see so many people come along and learn a bit more about their health and our services."

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It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes - not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director Alan Ball feels that it's all about service. "Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people

money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done. We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole."

Cloudy2Clear service the Warrington, St Helens, Runcorn & Widnes areas and Alan is finding that his approach

is a major factor in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people

I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated."

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