

## Gambia, 'The Smiling Coast'

### Introduction;

Members of the Rutland Osprey team have been privileged to visit the small West African country called The Gambia several times. As part of learning more about the osprey and its life we have visited the areas where they spend the European winter. We have found the people to be warm, friendly and genuinely welcoming, it is not difficult to see why The Gambia has been nicknamed 'The Smiling Coast'. One of the Osprey team from Rutland water , visiting The Gambia said...

*"The phrases 'How are you' and 'welcome to our country' were heard daily and did not sound like the 'have a nice day 'that we have all experienced in our coffee shops and burger chains, but instead it is a genuine welcome from a people who are pleased that we are visiting their country."*

The relationship between Europe, the US and the countries of West Africa, has not however always been so harmonious. Today visitors to The Gambia are there to watch the wildlife or to take advantage of warm sun on a beach, in the past however this area was a centre for one of the most shameful parts of our history, the slave trade.

*"As you can imagine it is not a topic we particularly wanted to bring up with our hosts, however on visiting the town of Janjanbureh (older maps will have this labelled with its colonial name of Georgetown) we were forced to confront it. Standing outside the Slave Museum I chatted with a local and we discussed the graphic paintings on the side of the museum walls. During that conversation I heard a phrase which I heard several more times during our stay in the town (clearly it is a quote but always attributed to someone different)."*

**'You are welcome to our country, you are our brothers and sisters, we forgive you for the past, but we will never forget'.**



The Slave Museum in Janjanbureh

## Gambia, 'The Smiling Coast' - cont.

### Ideas for class activities/discussion

1. Study the photograph of the painting on the side of the slave museum in Janjanbureh. What does it show about the way that the slaves were treated?
2. Discuss the quote above about forgiving but not forgetting. How would individuals in the class feel about this?
3. Research the slave routes and purpose of this most disgusting of trades. When was it practised, when and how was it finally stopped and by whom?

