

Annual Report 2024/25

The LabAid Foundation

Registered charity no: 1168144

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In some ways, 2024/25 was LabAid's most successful year since it was started more than thirty years ago by the late Alan Welch, MBE. We sent out about 26 boxes of equipment per month, as against 17 per month the previous year, which in itself had been a 50% improvement on the year before. Between July 2024 and June 2025, we supplied 27 schools/colleges in 8 countries: Cameroon, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Uganda and Zimbabwe, sending out 313 boxes of equipment (206 boxes in 2023/24). This improvement was largely the result of newly-recruited volunteers which enabled us both to pack more quickly and to repair and sort our stock better. One volunteer who returned 252 working microscopes (plus some scrap metal) to our store in the whole of 2024 by the end of June 2025 had already returned 251, with the result that for the first time our stock of unchecked microscopes reached zero, although not for very long because more soon arrived via *The Entertainer*.



Mansen Senior High School, Ghana: a student using one of the microscopes we sent in September 2024.

Alan Welch, founder of LabAid, taught science to the young Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General, at a methodist school in Ghana in the 1950s.

We continue to be grateful to *The Entertainer* toy shop chain which transports boxes of apparatus from its shops around the country to their warehouse in Amersham., where our volunteers pick it up. We have also had help from CLEAPSS (through publicity in its *Bulletin* and on courses) in informing teachers and technicians about the ability of LabAid to accept school science equipment for which they no longer had a use. CLEAPSS is also helping with the disposal of hazardous waste. However, the publicity we used to have from the ASE in its journal *Education in Science* has disappeared now that ASE has become an entirely virtual organisation and ceased to publish that journal.

As a result of the increased distribution, our stock has reduced at a time when equipment donations seem to be declining. It is hardly surprising that schools are not replacing equipment so often, given the economic situation. It has also proved difficult sometimes to arrange collection of packed boxes, which has resulted in clogged packing areas. We rely on former science teachers/technicians to select suitable items to send out (and, occasionally, decide what to buy) and such volunteers are in short supply. Advancing years are having an effect on our trustees but the newer volunteers are reluctant to become trustees.

We are grateful to the Amersham Free Church for financial donations and allowing us to store our stocks of

equipment in their Sycamore Hall. However, they are concerned about the increasing costs of maintaining this dilapidated building and have replaced our 5-year licence to use the building by a rolling 1-year licence. We have started to look for alternatives but so far without success. Accommodation is available but at a price which means we would have to become a fund-raising charity, for which there is little appetite amongst the trustees, so we have started to think about the long-term future of LabAid. The Royal Society of Chemistry again made a significant, but reduced, donation to support our work. We also had a useful donation from a charity associated with the NATO base at Northwood. Donations totalled just over £3000 and these supplement what we are able to raise by selling unsuitable or broken equipment as scrap metal, at car boot sales or by auction. These sales totalled £1450. We need the money not only to cover administrative costs but also to purchase those items of equipment we are rarely given, for example burettes, and, this year, to pay for the disposal of hazardous waste in the form of a large number of unsuitable mercury thermometers.

Dr Peter Borrowes (*Chair of the Trustees of the LabAid Foundation*).

LabAid Foundation Financial Report 1July 2024 - 30 June 2025

Starting Balance	£1550.06
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Receipts

Donations	£3016.25
Auctions	£635.12
Internet sales	£640.00
Car Boot sales	£74.00
Scrap sales	£101.21

Total Receipts	£4466.58
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Expenditure

Purchase of stock	£2225.01
Insurance	£313.15
Other	£694.02

Total Expenditure	£3232.18
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End Balance	£2784.46
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