

SEPT 2006

MAMIE MARTIN FUND NEWS



'FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GIRLS' EDUCATION IN MALAWI'

New Administrators for MMF in Malawi & Scotland

Thanks to the Scottish Executive grant we announced in late 2005, Ms Isabelle Uny and Mr Macmin Mulaga have been appointed as Administrators for the Mamie Martin Fund in Scotland and Malawi respectively.

Isabelle took her post in April 06, after having worked for the Network for International Development Organisation in Scotland, and in the voluntary sector beforehand. She is working part-time whilst studying for an MSc at the International Institute for Health and Development at QMUC Edinburgh. She and her partner David, an environmentalist, live in Stirling. Upon her appointment Isa said " *I am honoured to have been chosen to work for MMF, I have been following their work and growth for a wee while, and I agree 100% with their Development ethics and their mission.*

Macmin took his post in 2006, after years of work for the Synod of

Livingstonia in Mzuzu and a long career as a Headteacher and in the National Examination Board of Malawi. He and his wife Ellen, a lecturer at the university, live in Mzuzu. Macmin welcomed his appointment by saying " *I am delighted to be working for MMF in Malawi. I have worked with them at the Synod for a number of years, and greatly appreciate the help they give to the girls in the CCAP secondary schools in Northern Malawi*".

Both Isabelle and Macmin work from home, and their primary function is to support the Scotland and Malawi Committees in their work by undertaking administrative tasks, setting up information systems, and facilitating communications. They also take part in the overall development of MMF's work (fundraising, media work, school exchanges, events organizing finance administration)



Macmin Mulaga, with his wife Ellen and son Chemwemwe. Above, Isa Uny in Malawi (2006)

MMF Schools Exchange project gets on the way !

In late 2005, the Mamie Martin Fund was allocated a sizeable grant by the Scottish Executive International Development Fund to increase its Hardship Fund, support the Malawi Schools infrastructure by building teachers houses, and importantly to set up links and exchanges in between 5 Scottish Secondary schools and the 5 Malawi schools it has been working with for the past 13 years.

After a few months, MMF is happy to announce that these schools partnerships are well on the way to being established. Thanks to the commitment of Nicola Jones, a teacher with intimate knowledge of Malawi- where she taught a while-, Robert Laws Secondary School (Embangweni) should enjoy a fruitful partnership with Balfron High. Thanks also to Ewan McKay a teacher with equal knowledge and experience of Malawi, Kinross High school should

be soon exchanging with Livingstonia Secondary School. Both schools are hoping to take teachers and pupils to Malawi in June 2007!! A link has also been established through Mariot Dallas between Falkirk High and Bandawe Girls Secondary School, and curriculum and fund-raising activities are already taking place. As for Karonga Girls Secondary Schools and Ekwendeni Girls Secondary School, partnership are still to be firmed up

but are likely to involve Belmont Academy (Ayr) and Williamwood High School in Glasgow. The Mamie Martin Fund envisions exchanges based on the curriculum, underpinned by mutual respect and understanding and engaging not only the schools but also their wider communities in both Scotland and Malawi. There is still so much Scotland can learn from Malawi and so much young people can exchange. This is by all means a fantastic start!

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Life at Bandawe Girls Secondary School



When Isa visited BAGSS in July 2006, the girls were preparing to return home at the end of Term 2, after taking their exams. They were busy washing their clothes, cleaning the hostels and studying. Bandawe is quite isolated and some of the 282 girls come from afar to study at this school. MMF supports 34 of them with a bursary and hopes to soon help build 2 new teachers houses at the school, which will mean more teachers will come to

teach and stay at BAGSS. The school, still young, lacks in infrastructures, it needs more houses, hostels, computers, material [pens, notebooks, photocopier]. Still, the girls are incredibly hard-working and the results are good. The school is becoming increasingly popular and is now double-streamed! The girls have recently won the District netball tournament, and are involved in activities with FAWEMA (the Forum for African Women Educators in Malawi) promoting girls'

education in other schools in the region through drama, dance and talks. For most of those girls however, poverty means that going to University or College remains but a dream.



Life at Ekwendeni Girls Secondary School

EGSS counts 337 girls, 32 of whom on MMF bursaries. The feeling at Ekwendeni is that of a closely knit together community with the adjoining hospital and primary. It is a vibrant school, where girls work hard to achieve their best. Although the infrastructure of the school is more developed, there are high costs and difficulties involved in maintaining buildings and material.

The girls at EGSS are also involved with FAWEMA, proud of their schools and thoroughly convinced –as they were singing for National Education Day– that ' *A girl-child can do what a boy-child can do, if only she's given a chance*'.

EGSS has won a regional theatre competition and in Sept 06, some will go to Lilongwe with their English teachers to perform at National level where there

is hope they may win first prize. EGSS has always had a very good reputation and shows impressive leadership and potential!



Life at Karonga Girls Secondary School

Karonga is a beautiful village by the Lake, but very far North and girls there come long distances to gain education. The school is still quite young, and lacks teachers houses at the school so it is difficult to retain teachers. MMF supports 41 of the 324 girls at KAGSS with bursaries and intends to help build 2 new teachers houses there to help with the shortage of staff accommodation. More hostels are needed at KAGSS and new pit

latrines to replace the existing ones which are filling up. But the girls, as ever, are focused, work hard and achieve great results against all odds, with the support of an extremely dedicated team of teachers. They are District champions at netball and football, and there is also a wildlife club in the school, an AIDS awareness club, and a drama club.

At the time of Isa's visit in July, the girls were taking their exams and revising outdoors and in the hostels, and as the Headteacher put

it, what seemed to prevail at KAGSS then was " *a sense of peace and harmony*". With only " *enough teachers, this school would be wonderful*" said the teachers at KAGSS. MMF will certainly support this effort!



Life at Livingstonia Secondary School

Livingstonia stands, beautiful, green and proud on top of the mountain, and is well worth the long journey on the arduous road! The community here is well knit, with the hospital, the College, the primary school, the University and the Secondary school so close together. LIVSS really looks like a campus! It actually feels like one too, with its near 500 students busying themselves with exams, hostel clearing and end of term preparation. MMF supports 28 of the 160 girls in this co-ed school, who

work hard and study hard. Most of them hope to become nurses. Although LIVSS has a better infrastructure and less need for the building of teachers houses, it has other needs: a study room for girls, help with the maintenance of such large grounds, and a good heavy duty photocopier. The students, boys and girls enjoy playing football, and netball, and as elsewhere in Malawi, balls are scarce and expensive.

At the school, there are drama, AIDS awareness,

and Wildlife Clubs.

LIVSS is a unique place but suffers from isolation, as it is so far from other towns and places. There are not many distractions there, and students have to be dedicated to learning!



Life at Robert Laws Secondary School

Embangweni was very animated when Isa arrived, for it was National Education Day and children had come in their hundreds from the neighbouring primary and secondary schools for a celebration on the theme of "Girls Education as a way to eradicate HIV/AIDS". When one visits ROLASS, one is struck by the sense of peace and harmony emanating from the school. The 291 students (104, 11 with MMF direct financial

support) studying under the shades of the tree, putting their things in order for going home at the end of the term. The school has its own gardens, maize mill and cattle for income generating and feeding. It was meant to be a university once upon a time, and the buildings are still strong though in need of maintenance. New chairs and desks are required, a good photocopier, and one more hostel, so that more girls can enroll and come to ROLASS to study. As in all the schools, studying is

serious here, ROLASS is quite isolated, and girls and boys come from afar to gain this education that will open the door to so many opportunities for the Development of their villages and of Malawi



Successful Fund-raising at MMF

At the Mamie Martin Fund, fund-raising is everyone's job, whether it means taking part in a car boot sale in Fife, writing an application for funding, organizing a talk at a Church fair or Rotary Club, or a fund-raising event in a school. The whole of Mamie Martin Fund is committed to raising as much money as possible to support the work of the schools in the Synod of Livingstonia.

This summer, as ever, the fund-raising team was busy, and a total of over £10000 raised that will make their way into supporting the building of a study room for girls at LIVSS and all the girls in the 5

schools for whom poverty is an obstacle to continuing education.

There are still many challenges ahead, and many reasons to raise more funds, but here we take pride and find our strength and motivation in the words of encouragement from the girls we support:

" Thank you, Mamie Martin, you are our mother, our savior, thank you for this education"

BAGSS Girls

" Before we needed everything, and we could not come here, now, we need nothing, thank you, Mamie Martin"

EGSS Girls

" Thanks to the Mamie Martin Fund, I have made it to Form 3, and I hope to be able to do well in my exams and to go to University, maybe to become a journalist"

Linvell, ROLASS [top of her class]

If you would like to help at events or donate to the Fund, please contact 01786448195, or email admin@mamiemartin.org

" If you educate a girl, then you have educated the whole nation"

Desiree Mhango

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Pictures, Music and Debt Relief

About 50 people attended an event on 29th June at Ladywell Church Hall (Stirling), which consisted of a slide show with pictures from the trip my son John (the photographer) and I made to Malawi in November 2005, music from the Alevare Duo and Gaelic and Scottish Folk Songs. The mix of music and pictures made for a relaxing and pleasant gathering. These events are important. They give us, the supporters of MMF, a chance to meet and talk about friendships old and new, about shared experience, about the great things that are happening between Scotland and Malawi. We are incredibly lucky to be involved so closely with our partners in Malawi at such an exciting time. And most exciting of all is the cancellation of Malawi's International Debt. I am sure it will be used wisely and for the benefit of the people in Malawi who need it most. Just so long as there are no nasty strings attached or conditions imposed by the international financial community.

Willie Sinclair, Convenor

Who was Mamie Martin?

Mamie Martin went out to Malawi in 1921 with her husband, Jack, a missionary. She was a graduate teacher and proud of it, she looked forward to sharing in Jack's work as a missionary. Wives of missionaries were not, however, encouraged to work and the mission council refused to grant funding for her to train girls as teachers. Jack's mother, back in Scotland, raised the money for the "boarder girls" who then returned to their villages to teach. Mamie died in Bandawe in 1928 but the Tonga women treasure her memory.

Why this fund?

Women in Malawi still have a struggle to be educated. Although Primary education is now free, secondary education is fee-paying, as a result, relatively few girls undertake secondary education. It is to support them, to ensure that those who are especially vulnerable or orphans are not forced by poverty to give up her secondary place in any of the five CCAP schools that this Fund was set up in 1993, in memory of Mamie Martin.

If you would like to support our work please contact 01786448195 or admin@mamiemartin.org

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY:

The Mamie Martin Fund 2006 **AGM** will take place at Ladywell Church Hall in Stirling on 21st October 2006.

COMMUNICATIONS: If you allow us to e-mail news to you then we can use the postage money more effectively. E-mail admin@mamiemartin.org

Last Words

This handsome newsletter will be going out to a wider constituency than ever before. It presents a clearer picture of our five schools than anything we have so far achieved. We have to thank the Scottish Executive International Development Fund who gave us money to appoint part-time admin workers, here and in Malawi, and the funds to allow Isa from Scotland to do a whirlwind journey round the five CCAP schools, and provided her with technology to do justice to her text.

As I read and enjoy what Isa has presented, I am acutely aware of all the people who have kept Mamie Martin Fund afloat over these thirteen years, some of whom I have not even met. This letter will go out to New Zealand, Switzerland, Ger-

many, Ohio, Oregon, Preston, London, Ayrshire, Berkhamsted, Aberdeenshire, Dundee, Inverness, although the main support has been from the Central Belt of Scotland. I have said it before and I want to say it again, we could not have reached this good place without you. The funding you have provided has enabled very many girls to reach the end of their schooling. We have even been able to provide infra-structure to help the girls Secondary Schools in Bandawe and Karonga, whose need was and still is the greatest.

The Scottish Executive grant has given us the opportunity to give further support for the infra-structure of all five schools and to embark on a programme of school partnerships.

The core of direct support to girl students however depends as ever on the generosity of individual and group donors.

MMF has always been grateful for the expertise of the Committee, a remarkable body of people, as such Committees often are. As this newsletter is being distributed more widely than before, we must give tribute to the work that has been done by those who have served and are still serving. All of them have day jobs or family commitments or both. Without the pool of their knowledge and expertise and wisdom we could not have got this far. We need what they have given and are giving to allow us to go forward.

Margaret Sinclair