



SPRING 2009 NEWSLETTER MAMIE MARTIN FUND



'FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GIRLS' EDUCATION IN MALAWI'

It's ironic, but inevitable I suppose, as we near the end of the Scottish Government's International Development Fund grant term that there are good and compelling reasons for needing more of the same.

The intention was always that the project and the connections made as result of it would be self sustaining. The result is that there are now well-established partnerships between Balfron High School and Robert Laws Secondary School and between Falkirk High School and Bandawe Girls Secondary School, Alva Academy and Karonga Girls Secondary School, and Williamwood High School and Ekwendeni Girls Secondary School.

But the link between Kinross High School and Livingstonia Secondary School, although strong, is suffering at the moment. There is a new University at Livingstonia which is on the brink of achieving government accreditation. As a consequence some of the Livingstonia Secondary School buildings are being reassigned for use by the University. The problem is that the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia, whose project the University is, don't have the resources to fund new buildings for both these academic institutions, and have taken the decision to close the school. This is to be a gradual process and not intended to be permanent, but it is to be fervently hoped for that a funding solution will be found in the near future.

Unfortunately the links forged between the schools and especially between the communities of Kinross and Livingstonia are in danger of foundering. So, if anyone reading this thinks they might have influence in any quarter where a solution might be found, then I'm sure CCAP would be delighted to hear from you.

While we're on the subject of funding, it won't have escaped your notice that there has been

talk of a credit crunch/recession/depression in the media worldwide. There have been changes in the exchange rate between the Sterling pound and the Malawi Kwacha that mean our core fund, the money donated by our regular long-time supporters, is not achieving as much. In other words, where we were able to support the educational financial needs of 166 pupils last year at a cost of £12,500 the same level of support this coming year is more likely to cost £18,000.

If you haven't made a commitment to donate regularly I would urge you to do so now.

If you are a regular contributor but haven't signed a Gift-Aid declaration please, please do so NOW.

If you have an idea for a fund-raising event in your area, let us know. Collectively we have:

- experience in organising events
- audiovisual resources that might be of use to you
- website and email access to spread the word and get some support

Let's not let the financial follies of the big institutions grind the rest of us into the dust. And let's, in partnership, do our core work and ensure that no girl who succeeds in gaining a place in a CCAP Synod of Livingstonia secondary school has to give up due to poverty.

William Sinclair

Convenor

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO DONATE, SUPPORT US, OR SIMPLY NEED MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE AT:

**11 Harviestoun Road, Dollar
FK14 7HG**

Phone: 0785 231 7825 or 01259 742827

E-mail: admin@mamiemartin.org

Web: www.mamiemartin.org

THE Mamie Martin Fund is managed by a Committee in Scotland together with a Committee in Malawi. Meetings take place every 2 months and handle such matters as the school partnerships, the Hardship Fund for pupils, overseeing any building works and managing the funding of these projects. The Committees have signed a Letter of Understanding with CCAP Synod of Livingstonia, which manages the schools at Bandawe, Karonga, Livingstonia, Ekwendeni and Embagweni and there is also a written Partnership Agreement.

Future work will partly depend on funding. Pupils will continue to be supported, as they have for many years, by donations to the Mamie Martin Fund from its many supporters. The school partnerships which were planned three years ago are at various stages of development - 3 are well established with Alva and Karonga and Willliamwood and Ekwendeni at the stage of planning first visits for early Summer this year.

Farewell from Balfron

Tears and ties with Malawi for

Balfron Pupils

During the last week of the summer term of 2008 Balfron High School pupils and staff bid farewell to new friends from Robert Laws Secondary School. These friends had been in Balfron for three weeks on the return leg of the exchange programme between the two schools. The pupils from ROLASS lived in the homes of Balfron pupils and attended classes with buddies.

“Having a guest like Madalitso has been a great experience for not only him but us too. I am very glad that my parents volunteered us to be a host family as I cannot even begin to describe how amazing it has been.”

Balfron Pupil.

For Balfron pupils the visit provided an opportunity to learn about the culture of Malawi and the similarities between themselves and pupils from other parts of the world. Staff were able to share ideas about learning and teaching and approaches to managing pupil behaviour.

During the exchange pupils and teachers from both schools took part in an adventure weekend gifted by Ardmay house where all participants were able to enjoy activities such as canoeing, weazling and abseiling—all very new experiences for the Malawian



Everyone at Ardmay

visitors. This weekend provided an opportunity for friendships to be built at an even deeper level. Other excursions involved trips to the Glasgow Science Centre and Edinburgh Castle along with the popular David Livingstone centre (a well known character in Malawi).

The ROLASS pupils were able to build friendships, experience new subjects and teaching styles as well as unusual cultural practices such as “fathers preparing food for families”! It did however take our Malawian friends some time to get used to the timekeeping required in our society as well as the number of stairs required to be climbed each day.

Our partnership has continued this year as new curriculum links are made and embedded throughout both schools. ROLASS now has access to the internet and we hope to make use of



“I was very moved by the send off from our children – it was a moment of true joy and blessing, even if I was terrified that the balconies hadn’t been designed to withstand such an event!”

Senior Manager Balforn High School

this to develop cross-school projects particularly in the are of eco-schools and agriculture.

The most memorable part of the visit for many was our friends departure on the final day being waved off by Balforn pupils on the school balconies. The impact on all those involved has been much greater than expected. Balforn pupils were particularly surprised by how friendly the Malawians were and wanted the exchange to go on for longer.

Nicola Jones



Before going “weazling”!

Report by Tricia Cooke on the shipment of school materials from Scotland to Malawi in July 2008

I knew that there had been discussions some time back at an MMF Committee Meeting that useful equipment might be available when the old Stirling High Schools and Primary Schools were moved to new buildings. John Challis of the Raven Trust gave me an immense amount of support and encouragement and also gave me a 'wish list' for projects with which he is involved. He also agreed to set up all the documentation necessary for the container shipment and arrange its transit.

It costs £7000 door to door for a 40 cubic metre container including all insurance and customs dues. We needed £4,500 to cover goods scheduled for the MMF schools. An appeal in the local newspaper yielded £160 then the Holy Rude Church's Mary Hodge Trust came to the rescue. A very generous £3000 donation was added to by three local Rotary clubs to achieve our target. I was so very grateful for all this financial assistance.

The shipment arrived safely in October 2008! Thanks to all who helped in any way—Alan Kimmitt and his sons, Anne Dawson, Judy Fairley, my own family, Stirling Council staff, John Challis and all the many willing volunteers.



Walking the West Highland Way



Helen Dallas and Stephen Robbie raised £ 420 for the Mamie Martin Fund in sponsorship when they walked the 95 mile long West Highland Way in the Summer of 2008. Helen and Stephen are pictured above at the end of the walk which had lasted 9 days. The picture below is of Ben Nevis and the photograph was taken from the campsite.

Helen is one of Mamie Martin's great-granddaughters and is now studying music at Napier University.



Ben Nevis

Donations to the Mamie Martin Fund over the last few months have totalled over £2,000—thanks to all the generous support received from both longstanding and new donors.



ALVA and KAGSS

Pupils and teachers at Alva Academy held an "Africa Week" in December 2008 as part of their planning towards partnering with Karonga Girls Secondary School. Events from the week were opened by Keith Brown, the local Member of the Scottish Parliament, who is pictured above with some pupils.

It is planned that the headteacher from Karonga will visit Alva in the Summer of 2009, by which time the school will have moved from the west end of the town to a new building at the east end of Alva.

FUNDRAISING and PUBLICITY

The Fundraising Team of Gill McIlwaine, Isabel Piper and Pat Graham would be delighted to be contacted by anyone who wishes to join their group or who has a suggestion for fundraising. Contact can be made with group members by getting in touch with the Administrator Hazel Dawson using the contact details at the front of this newsletter.

If anyone wishes to have a Mamie Martin Fund Committee Member speak to a group or obtain some publicity material please contact Hazel Dawson.

The following are extracts from two letters enclosing donations which the Mamie Martin Fund received recently :

"In June and July of 2008, alongside some of my peers and teachers I travelled to Malawithe experience was truly amazing and completely challenged my outlook on life.....My two weeks in Malawi proved to be two of the best weeks in my life and of course this was only as a result of the wonderful people that I met and your work with them ..."

"I recently attended ameeting as part of my job and was most impressed and very touched by two of the speakers.....who had been to Malawi on a visit. The information about the widows' group who tried to put a few pence away each week to help each other when times were even harder than normal, has been in my thoughts off and on since then."

MMF "GIRLS"

GAIN UNIVERSITY PLACES

The Local Committee in Malawi forwarded the following information about pupils from the schools which the Mamie Martin Fund supports.

- *One student from EGSS is beginning studies towards a BSc*
- *Three students from LIVSS, BAGSS and ROLASS are embarking on studies which will lead to a nursing qualification.*

Scottish Charity Number SC 021483

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