



# MAMIE MARTIN FUND



## SUMMER 2013 NEWSLETTER

FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GIRLS' EDUCATION

As you will read in the article on the next page our Malawi Admin Officer Paul Thole lost his fight for life in January. Paul was a thoroughly nice man, whose impressive credentials included being the grandson of Rev Peter Thole, a friend and colleague of Jack and Mamie Martin. Peter Thole was known as "the sweet singer of the Ngoni" and features in "Salt and Light", the book written by my mother Margaret Sinclair (Mamie Martin's daughter) using material from Jack and Mamie's letters to and from their various postings and home. Paul and I shared this connection that transcended distance and generation. I miss his dignified "virtual" presence, and am proud to have known him.

Our new Malawi Admin Officer has been appointed by our CCAP Partners at the Synod of Livingstonia, Mzuzu. She is Mrs Unious Lomdaka Jenda, a recently retired teacher with a wealth of experience teaching in a variety of both primary and secondary schools over 35 years. We welcome her talent and experience and look forward to developing a long and happy working relationship with her.

This year, 2013, many organisations are celebrating the bicentenary of the birth of David Livingstone. This year also marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the inaugural Annual General Meeting of the Mamie Martin Fund. Our celebrations are understandably smaller and less newsworthy. However we hope not to be eclipsed by the larger events. Details of the fundraising initiatives which we have designated as our current priority, are to be found elsewhere in this newsletter and on our website ([www.mamiemartin.org](http://www.mamiemartin.org)) and in various social media (Facebook and Twitter, I think).

If, like me, you have been enticed into a workplace Lottery Syndicate, persuaded by the argument that a proportion of your pound goes to good causes, then I have an alternative proposition. I will use my own experience as an example as I believe it is a common one. Our syndicate consisted of about a dozen people. Each person paid £2 per week. Half of the money was used to buy lottery tickets; half was kept in reserve. At the end of the year the money consisting of any "winnings" plus the "reserve" was divided up and distributed to each of the members of the syndicate. This apparent gain was an illusion and in reality the net gain was actually a loss. If the members of the syndicate put half of their money in a piggy-bank and send the other half (as a regular Gift-Aid donation) to Mamie Martin Fund (for example!) then the net result is essentially the same and 100% of their charitable donation actually goes to the charity.

In this example £12 per week = £624 per year and boosted by gift-aid to approximately £750 which is two and a half girls' fees paid for a year.

Convenor – Willie Sinclair

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

**PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESS**

6 Dewar Street, Dollar FK14 7EP Tel: 0785 231 7825 or 01259 742827

E-mail: [admin@mamiemartin.org](mailto:admin@mamiemartin.org) Website: [www.mamiemartin.org](http://www.mamiemartin.org)

## PAUL THOLE

Paul was appointed as the Mamie Martin Fund's Administrator in Malawi in February 2008 and worked for the Fund until his death on January 17th 2013. Paul was the second son of the late Reverend Titus A Thole who was a World War II chaplain. As a child Paul attended four primary schools in the north of Malawi. When his father died Paul was supported in his school education by his elder brother and sister and when he was older he also received assistance from his local church. Paul was married and had three sons and a daughter all of whom have graduated from school. Paul studied English at the University of Malawi and then went on to teach English and History for more than 20 years at secondary schools in both private and government sectors. Many of the schools Paul taught in are in the north of Malawi where the Mamie Martin Fund is active.

In addition to his MMF role, Paul continued to work for the Domasi College of Education on its distance education programme. During this work he observed teachers at Community Day Secondary Schools undertaking teaching practice and through the DCE he supported teacher-learners as they move from teaching in primary schools to teaching in secondary schools. Paul paid regular visits to the schools where MMF operates and was very supportive of the whole ethos of the Mamie Martin Fund.



The photograph above was taken in the Summer of 2012 - Paul (extreme left on the back row) is pictured at Karonga Girls Secondary School with pupils who are MMF beneficiaries together with their headteacher.

Paul was a helpful, creative and good natured colleague and is missed very much. Rhiannon McIntyre, the MMF treasurer, spent time with Paul during a visit to Malawi in the Spring of 2009 and in the Autumn of that year he visited Scotland together with Naomi Ngwira who at that time was the headteacher at Karonga.

Paul's wife Lucy and their family continue to live in Mzuzu where Paul was an Elder in the congregation of Viyele and Lucy is a Deaconess.

## News of Former Pupils

In April we heard from **Maclina Kumwenda** who went to school in Elangeni before she moved to Kaluluma to finish her schooling. Maclina would like to become a medical doctor and is currently applying for scholarships which would enable her to pursue her studies. Below is an extract from her letter to the Mamie Martin Fund

*I would like to thank you for the work which you did from 2009 to 2011. Really without your help I would be have been nothing. You have contributed to make my future bright. Still more as you told me that you don't fund schools which are not managed by Livingstonia Synod in Mzuzu. I want to notice you about my result which I made at my new school. I passed 20 points, whereby I have 1 distinction, and 6 strong credits. I know that for me to pass these points it's not that I was at new school, but it's one of your contribution which you contributed at my previous school. I really thank you for what you have done to my life.*

Then in May there was an email from **Mwawi Mlomboji** to Margaret Sinclair. Mwawi is a former pupil from Ekwendeni – her teacher at the Ekwendeni Girls Secondary School was Anne Dawson who linked her to MMF in the first place. Mwawi is now working with CARE International in Malawi, and in 2011 visited London for the first time saying in her email that “It was great”. Anne has been an energetic and stalwart supporter of the Mamie Martin Fund since its inception.

**Elvas Singini** continues to do exceptionally well at TATCOT (Tanzania Training Centre for Orthopaedic Technologies) as she comes to the end of her third and final year – her exams finished on July 26<sup>th</sup>.

## Fundraising

The Mamie Martin Fund continues to be supported by a band of loyal donors. Without their generosity it would not be possible for the work that we do to continue. In addition this year - 2013 – in order to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of MMF's existence - we have started a fundraising programme called “The Pledge” where individuals pledge to raise funds by aiming to achieve something with the number “20” involved – for example, walking 20 miles, losing 20 lbs of weight, crossing 20 bridges by bicycle ... one individual is faithfully sending MMF a cheque for £20 each month for 10 months and interest has been expressed by a local church who want to make a commitment to pupil sponsorship. The STUC generously agreed to there being a “bucket collection” at their Congress in Perth in April and trade unionists contributed £330 on the day itself and there were promises of more support from individual union delegates. Frequently there are spontaneous acts of generosity - £300 was received just the other day from a Committee member's work colleague.

## .....Stop Press: School Fees Increase.....

Recent news from our partners in Malawi that Government grants to CCAP schools has been frozen (due to the economic situation) has put extra strain on our funds.

In a letter Rev Timothy Nyasulu, Moderator, CCAP Synod of Livingstonia, Mzuzu explains:

“The effects of the rise of the fees is a big concern. The effects are very negative, especially when Malawi is already struggling in many respects. Many parents and guardians are already concerned and doubtful if they will be able to pay for their children and wards.

The reduction of support of the number of girls . . . . will likely affect the education of girls in our schools and Malawi as a nation very much. Already, there are many girls who are not in schools because of the fees problem. What MMF does in supporting girls in our schools is very important. It is making a very big impact and it does reduce the illiteracy rate in Malawi as a whole. You can just imagine how many girls have finished their secondary education well, went to college and got employed from the time MMF started supporting Girls’ Education. MMF is playing a very important role in Girls’ education. We are prayerful that our efforts (you and us) be answered. I am so thankful that you are trying all that you can to help to reduce the effect of the problem.

The reason for increasing the fees from MK35,000 (approximately £70) to MK50,000 (£100) (**PER TERM**) in government aided schools is basically because the economic situation is still very unstable. Prices of commodities rise almost every day. For the past academic year, each term the schools were experiencing rise in prices in the most basic and essential commodities. For example within a term a bag of maize or rice would rise more than three times. As a result most schools have ended with deficits from last academic year. When the kwacha had gained some power in April, prices in markets remained the same. When we project the new academic year, the situation will not change. It may go even worse.

In the new budget the government has not injected more money in the Education Sector compared to last year. It has put more money in agriculture sector hoping that if the agriculture sector performs well, there might be some economic improvement. Probably, this should be the reason the government thought the school fees be revised upwards.“

These are powerful words which highlight

- the pressure that the CCAP is under in their Educational work in Malawi
- the impact of decisions made by remote financial institutions on the day-to-day lives of ordinary people
- the positive effect of relatively small donations made here to families in Malawi.

In Malawi and in Scotland we are joined in the struggle to ensure that girls who have earned their place in secondary school are not denied that life-changing opportunity for reasons of poverty. The struggle continues and the struggle gets no easier.

## Dates for diaries ...

**The 2013 Mamie Martin Fund AGM will be held on Saturday October 26<sup>th</sup> 2013 from 12.30 until 16.00 at Ladywell Church Hall, Bannockburn.**

2013 marks the bicentennial of David Livingstone's birth. There are many events planned to take place during the year throughout Scotland to mark the occasion. Information on events is detailed on the Scotland Malawi Partnership website [www.scotland-malawipartnership.org](http://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org)

2013 is also the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Mamie Martin Fund which was set up in 1993 by Margaret and John Sinclair in memory of Margaret's mother.

In order to attract new donors and provide information to existing donors the following history of MMF has been written.

## Mamie Martin Fund

*Supporting the education of girls in northern Malawi since 1993*

### **What do we do?**

We are an established Scottish charity with family links to northern Malawi where we work with our partners to ensure that no girl is denied secondary education through poverty. We pay the costs of girls who have a place at school but are not able to find the annual fees, currently £300. Without secondary education, opportunities for girls in Malawi are limited. With education, their chances of good employment are vastly improved and it is more likely that their own children will be educated and healthy.

### **Where did it all begin?**

Margaret Sinclair was born in Malawi (then Nyasaland) in 1927, the daughter of Scottish parents Jack and Mamie Martin. Jack was a Church of Scotland missionary and Mamie was a teacher. As a missionary's wife she became aware of the need for the girls and women to have access to education and she set about establishing classes and preparing her pupils for exams. Jack and Mamie's story can be found in their own words in the book 'Salt and Light', based on their letters and Mamie's diaries.

Sadly, Mamie's family only knew her through her writing, as she died in 1928, giving birth to her second child.

In 1991, Margaret and John Sinclair travelled to Malawi and found that the Martin house was still there, that the memorial church was still in use and that people in Bandawe still remembered the story of Jack and Mamie Martin. The idea of doing something for the Malawians in memory of Mamie was born during this trip and in 1993 the charity was set up with a group of family and friends from Ladywell Church, Stirling. From the beginning, we worked in partnership with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, CCAP Synod of Livingstonia, in Mzuzu. The Rev Maxwell Banda, then CCAP Education Secretary, and his wife Liz Banda both had a family connection with the Martins.

Over the years about 1,500 girls have been helped through our fund. We know, because they tell us, that this financial assistance through secondary school has led to young women taking their place in Malawian society as teachers, lawyers, nurses, entrepreneurs and that the benefits of their education pass on to the next generation.

Scotland has a strong bond with Malawi. We are family to them. The Scottish Government supports this relationship in many ways, including the establishment of schools partnerships and reciprocal visits.

### **Why become a donor?**

Malawi is a young country and there is great need. In northern Malawi, education is valued and pupils in school are motivated and successful despite the problems they face. £300 a year makes a significant difference to a young woman's chances for health and success.

We are still a small charity and we have personal links with our partners in Malawi. We know where the money goes. There are regular governance visits to see the impact of funding and to discuss next steps.

Partnership is at the heart of how we work. There are management committees in both Malawi and Scotland to administer our fund. We employ two part-time admin workers, one in Malawi and one in Scotland. We are active in the Scotland Malawi Partnership and support our linked schools.

### **Who are we?**

Margaret and John Sinclair stepped down from an active role in the Fund in 2007 and the work is being taken on by the next generations. Willie Sinclair is our Convenor. He and his wife Eileen are vets in Irvine. Their daughter Rhiannon McIntyre is our Treasurer, based in Aviemore. Rhiannon has a background in events management. One of Willie's sisters, Mariot Dallas, is Vice-Convenor and has been active in establishing a schools partnership between Bandawe Girls Secondary School and Falkirk High School.

Some Trustees have worked for the Fund since the beginning 20 years ago, while others are relative newcomers. Being a Trustee is a challenge, especially in this time of financial hardship, but we remain optimistic, sustained by the truly inspirational contact with our Malawian friends and colleagues.

Our donors are spread throughout Scotland and beyond. Many choose to give regularly and to make a Gift Aid declaration and we very much appreciate their support.

Find out more on [www.mamiemartin.org.uk](http://www.mamiemartin.org.uk), also on Facebook



Mamie  
Martin  
Memorial  
Church  
Bandawe  
Malawi

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