Convenors’ Message

Greetings to all our supporters from the Board and from Hazel and Mercy. Our busy times have continued over the summer with the highlight of the year being Mercy’s visit to Scotland. You can read about that in this newsletter, about our other news and our future plans.

Coming up to Christmas you will want to know that we now have gift cards which you can buy to support the particular needs of our Malawian girls, like uniforms and sanitary wear. If you are in shopping mode, you’ll also want to explore our online Auction of Promises.

The Mamie Martin Fund would not exist, far less thrive, without your on-going, generous and steadfast support. Thanks – it makes a huge difference to our girls and their families.

Mariot and Willie

Khirisimasi yokondwa ndi Chaka Chatsopano Chokondweretsa!

Happy Christmas and Greetings for the New Year!

How you can help (even more)?

- Become a regular donor, for even a small amount
- Remember us in your will
- Support our online Auction of Promises with a promise or a bid
- Think about volunteering as a Trustee
Governance

**AGM and 25th Anniversary Party** – in September we held a very special occasion – the 25th Anniversary of the formal establishment of the Mamie Martin Fund. In 1991 Margaret and her husband John visited Malawi and as a consequence of renewing friendships with the people they met there together with the amazing welcome they received in Bandawe the Mamie Martin Fund was established in 1993. On this very special occasion Mercy Sibande, our Malawi Manager, joined us in Edinburgh.

The AGM agreed some changes to the Mamie Martin Fund constitution which will allow the Fund to operate in schools other than those managed by CCAP Synod of Livingstonia, which remains, of course, our primary partner in Malawi. The up-to-date Constitution can be found in the Governance folder on the MMF website – [here](#).

At a Trustee meeting following the AGM the following office bearers were elected:

- Co-Convenors: Willie Sinclair and Mariot Dallas
- Vice Convenor: Angie Wynn
- Treasurer: Lynsey Shepherd
- Secretary: Eileen Sinclair
- Other trustees on the Board: Moira Dunworth, Brian Kerr

**Scottish Patron**: Alison Cameron will continue to fulfil this role.

**Book-keeper post** – We are delighted to welcome Alistair Christie as a book-keeper for MMF. Our increasingly complex funding streams require us to enlist Alistair’s professional help. He is a recently-retired accountant and we are grateful that he has agreed to give us some of his time.

**Volunteers** - The Mamie Martin Fund benefits from having many active and enthusiastic volunteers – for example, Jean Gordon, a Trustee since 2016, has left the Board but is continuing to take responsibility for the website – which demands constant and considerable attention! Jean’s help is invaluable as is that of Gill and Ron McIlwaine, long-standing and generous donors and supporters, who open the doors of their home to the Board for its bi-monthly meetings.

**Outreach** – during Mercy’s visit she met with donors in Insch and Dalgety Bay on very happy and successful occasions - we are always keen to meet as many donors as possible – especially those who live too far away to ever get to an AGM or similar event. Over the past year Trustees have also visited Liverpool, Bannockburn, Berwick on Tweed, meeting up with people interested in the Mamie Martin Fund. Please get in touch with Hazel [admin@mamiemartin.org](mailto:admin@mamiemartin.org) if you would like a visit
arranged – there are Trustees who are keen to visit you and share information about our work and stories from Malawi!

Website – [www.mamiemartin.org](http://www.mamiemartin.org) - the Mamie Martin Fund website is well worth a visit – there is lots of information there, together with fundraising materials and downloadable documents. The website gives various donation options and if anyone wants any information that is not there please do not hesitate to contact Hazel on admin@mamiemartin.org or 01259 742827.

**Trustee visit to Malawi 2018**

Moira Dunworth and Mariot Dallas went to Malawi at the end of September. This annual trip is important in supporting Mercy in her work there, in maintaining our relationships, particularly with partners, and in making new connections and plans.

By a lovely coincidence Moira and Mariot were scheduled to be in Lilongwe on the day of a high-level Malawi-Scotland Conference run by the Malawi-Scotland Partnership (MaSP). They represented MMF there, met an ex-beneficiary, Handy Kamanga, and learnt a great deal about the perspectives of the Malawian NGOs working across sectors.

Moira and Mariot visited Bandawe Girls’ Secondary School together and saw first-hand how hard life is for the girls there. Our fees help a great deal, of course, and we have now added a small amount of money (about £1.20 per term) to our support to enable the MMF girls to access health care at the new health centre nearby. A highlight of the trip was the visit to Mchengautuba Community Day Secondary School to sign a new partnership agreement. This is our first partnership with a Community school and it was clear that our support will make a big impact in this very poor area, where many of the children are the heads of their families, as the eldest siblings. Moira went on, with Mercy, to visit all of the other schools which we support. In addition, they visited St Mary’s Karonga, run by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Karonga. We will support six pupils at this school from September 2019 through the second Cameron Endowment funding.

So Mariot and Moira were able to strengthen old friendships and partnerships and embark on new ones, enhancing the impact that your support has on girls and their families in North Malawi.

You might enjoy this picture of three Bandawe girls on their way to a domestic science class. The school rears their own chickens – an important food source there.
Mercy arrived at Edinburgh airport a little bemused. She was amazed when her luggage, tiny though it was, didn’t arrive and was even more surprised that everyone she met had a lost-luggage story. It eventually turned up two days later, by which time she had been taken shopping for essential clothing and a pair of shoes – she arrived in Malawian sandals which were not quite suitable in Scotland in September.

Mercy visited Easter Carmuirs School in Falkirk, Carrbridge Primary School and Kingussie High School during her visit. The pupils and teachers loved meeting her and hearing about her work. They were full of questions and chat. In Edinburgh, Mercy met Olivia Giles of 500 Miles, who employ an MMF beneficiary in Mzuzu. She visited the Scotland Malawi Partnership, the One World Shop and the Scottish Parliament. On a visit to The Alliance, she was interviewed about her work and the resulting videos are very useful resources for us to have.

She was the guest of honour at our AGM and 25th Anniversary Party and at the Cross-Party Group on Malawi at the Scottish Parliament.

During her stay she attended Strathendrick Baptist Church, whose congregation are regular MMF supporters.

Mercy was taken on a trip up north and visited Carrbridge Primary School and Kingussie Secondary School; the latter have an exchange programme with a Malawian school and asked Mercy lots of questions about their forthcoming trip.

After a couple of nights in Carrbridge, where Mercy was fascinated by the changing colours of the trees, she met the Insch, Leslie, Premay and Oyne Guild and other friends in Aberdeenshire. As always people were welcoming and kind and Mercy was touched by their on-going generosity.

Mercy met Angus and Jill McLeod of the Ascent Trust when she spent some time in Dollar. The Ascent Trust is sponsoring 6 girls over a period of 4 years schooling. Angus and Jill were not long back from a trip to Malawi themselves so there was a lot of interesting discussion! The following day Mercy found herself on the beach at St Andrews – collecting sea-shells and watching the land-surfers moving swiftly.
along the sand. Alan Laverock of the Banana Box Trust – which is involved in various kinds of work in Malawi - travelled down from Dundee to meet Mercy and Hazel.

Mercy also attended an MMF Board meeting which was preceded by lunch with Gill and Ron McIlwaine – long-time supporters and donors – who welcome Trustees to their house every two months to meet there – it is a great kindness that has been given very freely and generously over many years and is much appreciated.

Mercy met the Fairtrade Group at Dalgety Parish Church and visited Brodies at Musselburgh. She also spent some time with Lindsay Graham of The Soko Fund and was able to catch up in person, rather than over the dodgy connection that is internet in Malawi.

Mercy was invited to meet Ian Nicol, of the International Development Department at Scottish Government. It was lovely to take her there and for her to see first-hand how interested the Government are in our work. Ian was clearly very pleased to meet Mercy and to hear directly from her about some of the challenges faced by our girls in Malawi.

On her final day, Mercy did some last-minute shopping and then headed to the airport. She was more apprehensive about the return journey, now that she knew how hard it was. Happily, her luggage arrived with her in Lilongwe!

Mercy covered a lot of ground during her visit. She enjoyed meeting so many people in Scotland and feels more connected to us all now. She had a packed programme but insisted that it was not too exhausting! Given the benefits to her and to us, we hope to arrange another visit in the next couple of years. We anticipate getting funding for that future trip, as we did for this one.

### Fundraising

We’ve had an energetic fundraising year so far, which people walking, cycling and hoolahooping their way to donations for our work. We are pleased to have an MMF
tree in the Christmas Tree Festival at St Andrew’s and St George’s West Church in Edinburgh in December. Do pop in and admire it.

We have opened an online Auction of Promises at https://auctionofpromises.com/MMFAuction. You will see that we already have a number of promises on which you can bid. These range from cycle trips (of course) to dog-sitting, tours, knitting and short breaks. Can you offer a promise? This could be an activity or a ‘thing’. A tour of somewhere interesting in your area? Live music for an occasion? A guided hill-walk? Yoga/Pilates/Reiki sessions? You can offer those directly on the auction site or contact Hazel with details. Thanks for the promises that have been offered and we look forward to seeing how the bidding goes. The auction will close at noon on Friday, February 1st 2019.

School fees in Malawi – update

The Malawian government recently (September 2018) announced that they will be meeting the cost of tuition fees for secondary school in future. This is a tiny fraction of school fees, even in government schools; it is the equivalent of 50p per term, so this announcement makes no difference to the need for our work. Furthermore, that small change is only applicable to government schools and not to grant-aided schools, which form the majority of the schools we support.

Schools and numbers - Following changes to the MMF constitution at the 2018 AGM we have extended the schools at which we support girls.

In total we support 112 girls at 4 CCAP boarding schools and 1 Community Day School - plus 23 girls who receive an ‘Alison Cameron’ scholarship (see details below).

Thompson Scholarships

Dr Jack Thompson and his wife, Phyllis, were very well-known, respected, and much-loved supporters of all things Malawian. Jack died in 2017 and Phyllis died last August. A fund to celebrate their lives was established through the Scotland Malawi Partnership of which Jack was a founder member. This fund has taken the form of school scholarships and the Mamie Martin Fund has been asked to manage them. The scholarships will begin in September 2019. The crowd funding page is here - https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/thompsonscholarships

Alison Cameron Scholarships

The First Cameron Endowment given to the Mamie Martin Fund by the Scottish Government in honour of Colin and Alison Cameron’s work in Malawi over the last 60 years is being well used. Twenty three girls are being supported through four years of secondary schooling by the Mamie Martin Fund and two girls at university for three years through the Soko Fund. They began their secondary education in
September 2017. To our huge delight there is now a Second Cameron Endowment that the Mamie Martin Fund has been asked to manage. By great good fortune two Trustees – Moira Dunworth and Mariot Dallas – were visiting Malawi and were able to attend the conference where this was announced. These new scholarships will allow for a further 22 girls to begin four years of secondary schooling in September 2019. The Cameron Endowments will therefore educate a total of 45 at secondary school and allow for 4 other girls to receive funding for their 4 years of tertiary education. As a result of both these endowments we have been able to increase Mercy’s time in Malawi to support these extra girls and to manage the additional reporting and management activities associated with the funding.

The Soko Fund

The partnership with the Soko Fund is going well. At any one time the Soko Fund supports at least five girls who were MMF beneficiaries and who have applied for support at university through Mercy. The Chair of the Soko Fund is a Mamie Martin Fund Trustee and the partnership between the two is mutually supportive and is of great benefit to both organisations.

Gift Cards – the perfect Christmas gift

In the last school year we re-established the practice of having some funds available for particular needs of our girls, such as uniforms, notebooks and pencils and reusable sanitary products for the poorest girls. This is managed very carefully by Mercy and has been warmly welcomed by the girls and the teachers. Her reports of the amounts spent on each girl are humbling in terms of what can be achieved with just a little money. As a result of Mercy’s reports we have created gift cards which you, our supporters, can buy to ‘give’ a uniform (£16.00), notebooks and pens (£5.00), sanitary products (£10.00) or school fees for a month (£25.00) as a gift to your family and friends instead of a more conventional present. One of the cards, pictured, is ‘Christmassy’ and can be purchased for a donation of any amount.

Please contact Hazel on admin@mamiemartin.org or 01259 742827 at any time of the year. For Christmas please make any orders before December 10th – these will be posted to you and there is time then to mail them to family and friends before Christmas.
Case-study – ‘Elena’

‘Elena’ (not her real name) was found in the mountains by a pastor’s wife, Patricia Mzumara, who regularly walked a wide area around Karonga in search of people who needed help. Elena’s mother had died and her father was not able to look after her - the pictures of the situation, which Patricia took, suggested serious poverty. The father allowed Patricia to take his daughter to Karonga, where she was brought to Karonga Girls’ secondary school. Passing the entrance exam, she was given a place at the school and was also awarded an MMF bursary. She was a shy and quiet child who looked neglected. It was wonderful to see her appearance and demeanour changing over the next couple of years and she became strong and cheerful. However, her father remarried and, during the summer holiday after Elena’s second year at school, her step-mother and brother tried to give her away in marriage. Child marriage, though unlawful, continues to be a real threat to children in rural areas, particularly in the north of Malawi.

Refusing to be married off had no effect on her family so Elena, now aged 14, escaped from the home and ran away. She travelled alone for nearly 100 Kms, asking strangers for help with transport, till she arrived at Patricia’s home. Patricia took her into her own home where she is now safe and loved. She continues at school, supported by MMF in terms of fees, uniform and other smaller needs. Without Patricia and MMF, her future would be bleak but it is now full of hope.

Data Protection Regulation

Thank you to everyone who has completed and returned a Data Consent Form to the Mamie Martin Fund. Should you know of anyone interested and who wants to get in touch please ask them to contact Hazel on admin@mamiemartin.org or 01259 742827. Permission for contact can be withdrawn at any time.

This newsletter is available by email so if you wish to receive it electronically please let us have your email address. Please let us know of any change to your contact details by emailing admin@mamiemartin.org or telephoning 01259 742827 – thank you for your help.

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