

SUMMER 2008

MAMIE MARTIN FUND

NEWS



'FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GIRLS' EDUCATION IN MALAWI'



5th Partnership Karonga and Alva

It has taken a while to organise a partnership between a school in Scotland with Karonga Girls Secondary School—this delay has been very disappointing but is due to change over the Summer. Discussions have been underway with Alva Academy for some time and there has now been contact between the schools and there are plans for a visit by teachers from Alva to the school in Karonga. Alva Academy is located in the central belt in Scotland and pupils are currently waiting to move into a new school which is being built at the edge of the east side of the town.

The lead teacher at Alva is Jane Smith and at Karonga Mr Phiri is the Head Teacher.

The Schools Partnerships are being active over this Summer

...a group of teachers and pupils from ROLASS is visiting Balforn High School, a party from Livingstonia Secondary School is visiting Kinross High School and Falkirk High School is sending out a group of teachers and pupils in July to Bandawe.

Mwawi Mlombi Mkandawire is one of MMF's success stories. After supporting her through Secondary School at Ekwendeni the Mamie Martin Fund supplemented her grant while she studied at Chancellor College at the University of Malawi.

Mwawi was in touch with Margaret Sinclair but they lost contact as time went by. Very recently Margaret heard from Mrs Chibaka, head teacher at Ekwendeni Girls Secondary School, that Mwawi is now living in Lilongwe with her husband Mr Mbendera. Mwawi graduated and is now a teacher. Margaret was absolutely delighted with this news and wanted supporters of MMF to share her delight at hearing of this happy outcome.

Falkirk High School was delighted to welcome **Thomas Kamanga**, who teaches Maths at Bandawe Secondary School, when he visited Scotland in March. Read about his visit on Pages 4 and 5.



The Volunteer Centre in Stirling, in its annual awards ceremony, gave Nicola Jones an award for her outstanding contribution to the work of the Mamie Martin Fund. Nicola, who teaches at Balforn High School, has been a member of the Management Committee for four years and has given a huge amount of time, energy and enthusiasm to the series of partnerships between Malawian and Scottish Secondary Schools—of which Robert Laws Secondary School in Embagweni and Balforn High School is one.

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NEW FACES!

Scottish Administrator

Isabelle Uny, who has been working for the Mamie Martin Fund since February 2006, gave birth to a baby girl in February in Stirling and both were home within a few days.



Best wishes to Isa, David and their daughter Bryony. The picture above shows Isa with a two-month old Bryony.

Isa plans to return to work for the Mamie Martin Fund in December. Whilst Isa is on maternity leave her work is being covered by Hazel Dawson.

Hazel has worked for the voluntary sector in Scotland over many years and is delighted to be working with MMF for the next few months. She looks forward to contact with all colleagues in Malawi. Contact details remain the same as before with mail and telephone calls are being forwarded from Isa to Hazel.

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Malawi Administrator

Following the sad death of Macmin Mulaga last year the post of Administrator with the Mamie Martin Fund in Malawi has been taken by Paul Thole who started working for MMF in February 2008.

Paul is the second son of the late Rev. Titus A Thole who was a World War II chaplain. As a child he 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 is married and has three sons and a daughter. His eldest three children have graduated from school and his youngest child, Muza, is still in his second year of secondary 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 continues to work for Domasi College of Education (DCE) on its distance education programme. During this work he observes teachers at Community Day Secondary Schools undertaking teaching practice and through the DCE he supports 50 teacher-learners as they move from teaching in primary schools to teaching in secondary schools.

Paul and his wife Lucy and their family live in Mzuzu where he is an Elder in the congregation of Viyele and Lucy is a Deaconess.

The Mamie Martin Fund is delighted that Paul, with so many skills and so much experience, has been able to join MMF and looks forward to his involvement with the whole Malawi/Scotland schools partnership programme and to strengthening the bonds with Scotland that have been established over the years.

Contact can be made with Paul via the MMF Administrator in Scotland (admin@mamiemartin.org)

Thanks to Anne Dawson

It is so good to have more and more Malawians finding their way to Scotland these days and the question we can be sure many of those from the North will ask is "Where is Dawson? She was my teacher. I must see her." Anne taught in Malawi for 23 years. Mamie Martin Fund is fortunate to have had Anne's advice and guidance from the time when it was only a vague idea without form or direction. We could have been confined to the role of merely organising handouts but for Anne's vision of what was needed to support girls who were at risk of having to give up their education because of poverty and her advice on the appropriate way to deliver support. She was always anxious to keep the family in the picture in order to maintain their self-respect.

Anne has now officially resigned from the Committee which she served for a decade, first as Treasurer and always as an oracle. "We must ask Anne" "Anne will know". She combines sharp realism with humour and affection for girls and their families and teachers and even the governing bodies here and in Malawi. Her understanding of Malawi comes not only from her work. When she is among Malawians she is at home.

I have a collection of her letters which not only gave practical advice but gave us a vivid and often amusing picture of her life as a head teacher with its frustrations and triumph and great photos. She was also enthusiastic about growing vegetables as well as her wonderful flower garden and she is an expert on dry loos.

I was relieved to find that MMF has not lost Anne as she and Tricia Cooke have been sorting out and packing, to send to "our girls", the valuable but unwanted resources of local schools that are moving to new premises. Tricia has found her advice about what is and is not useful invaluable. This is the sort of practical work Anne relishes and we hope she can continue to give MMF the advice they will need for some time to come.

We cannot ever thank Anne adequately for what she has contributed over the years and it is just fine that she is continuing with this support, without which—where would we be?

Article by Margaret E Sinclair

Letters from Malawi

From a pupil at Ekwendeni ...

Dear Friends - Firstly I would like to know your life there in Scotland. To me nothing wrong only being busy with books.

The main point is to thank you for your kindness and love which you show to me. I'm learning now because of your support in school fees. Some things do really come as manna from heaven. Who knew that I will be here at Ekwendeni Secondary School and being paid fees by generous people like you? I hope nobody knew except God the almighty and I don't take it for granted because of his mercy and grace.

May the almighty God bless you abundantly, in the name of Jesus Christ so that you can continue helping even other people. You know what? It is not easy for somebody to take money from his/her pocket and give to others. There are few people who help the needy people and it is my prayer that people should learn a good example from you. I really hope that by your assistance of school fees, I will one day become independent, able to support myself and other needy people. I'm saying this because I have confidence and faith. I believe that God is my guider in everything. No matter how the situation may be Jesus will never leave me alone as Psalms 27 vs 1 says.

As of now, I'm in Form 3 and this is the third year to being paid school fees by your fund. Since form one I always work hard in class and try my best to concentrate on my education. I don't want to be taken away by these pressures of the world but instead of this, am always aiming higher by putting Jesus first before everything and hoping to achieve something in my life. I always make sure that I am on top ten of the class each and every term since form one.

Last year I wrote my Junior Certificate Examinations and I passed all 10 subjects very well. I have 7 Bs and 3 Cs and I obtained as follows: English B, Biology B, Mathematics B, Agriculture C, French C, Social Studies B, History B, Chichewa B, Physical Science C and Geography C. I was on position 9 during Junior Certificate March Exams.

.....

I have not enjoyed this term's exams because I was sick but I hope next term I will do well. I will try my best to concentrate on my studies so that I can improve my points. I know that I'm here to learn and don't want to spoil this chance.

.....

Greetings should go to all members of the Mamie Martin Fund.

Thanks

your daughter Ethel Mwangosi

And from a former pupil ...

Dear Madam

Thank you for the support. I would like to thank for the support I have from you.

I am 19 year old girl and single. I attended School at Ekwendeni Girls Secondary School from 2004-2007. I have passed my M.S.C.E with good grades. Agriculture 6,m B/knowledge 4, Biology 7, Chichawa 4, History 4, English 5, Mathematics 2 and Physical Science 5.

Thank you very much and continue doing this to others.

Yours faithfully Elvas Singina

Mr Thomas Manoah Kamanga's visit to Falkirk High School

as part of MaScoTT, March 2008.

This article was written by Mariot Dallas — Faculty Head, Creative and Aesthetic, at Falkirk High School — who was instrumental in arranging the visit by Tommy Kamanga.

There is a sense of loss now and a distinct lack of energy and vibrancy, as Tommy has returned to Bandawe. Time to reflect and to record how this first MaScoTT visit went...

Preparation

Tommy was the extra teacher nominated by Mrs Msowoya and the original plan was that we would fundraise for his expenses, as Mr Chimaliro was the MaScoTT teacher. As it turned out, Mr Chimaliro got a University place while they were awaiting visas, so Tommy came alone. (The new President in Malawi wants all promoted teachers to have degrees, so it's very important for teachers to take the chance of upgrading their diplomas if they want to further their career)

I've made notes on the visa process elsewhere. It's slow and unpredictable. Tommy was told that his was turned down as he was unmarried, and his salary was so low, it was believed he would try to stay here. We are very grateful to Colin and Alison Cameron for intervening and helping us with the visa at the 11th hour.

If we had been more certain when he would actually arrive, we could have made more plans for Tommy's time here, and perhaps organised more whole school events. As it was, until he

was in the building, I didn't believe it was happening.

Accommodation

We booked a very pleasant B&B in Camelon and they invoiced the school so we could pay by cheque and keep everything open and accountable.

I am very grateful to our Rector and our Resources Manager, for advising on all this beforehand and for keeping Tommy afloat with pocket money. If I were doing it again, I might not use a touristy B&B at £35 a night, as it was rather quiet and dull being off-season. It was also a bit overpriced so he ended up having a few nights away gallivanting. So, the Travel Lodge might have been just as good.

Tommy's programme of activities

This was rather fluid, as we weren't sure how tired he would be and how much he could cram into two weeks. In the event, he did loads and did indeed become part of the school and the community. In school, he observed most subjects and a good range of levels. While he was here, we finalised arrangements for the literacy project, based on images of Malawian and Scottish landscapes, and the joint Maths Challenge. He talked to many groups of pupils, including at two of our associated primaries. We held a reflecting and round-ing-off meeting with some staff and pupils and tried to gather together some of our observations of the process. The main differences he was struck by were the use of ICT, the class sizes and the use of co-operative teaching in Support for Learning. He was also astounded that our school building is about to be replaced.

Tommy spent some time on the internet, gathering useful resources to take back to BAGSS. He also learned to cook!

He spent an afternoon with Margaret and John Sinclair and another afternoon with Willie Sinclair (MMF Scotland Convenor), his wife Eileen and daughter Rhiannon (MMF Scotland Treasurer), when he formally thanked MMF for his trip here and for the ongoing support in BAGSS.

What went well?

- Tommy approached all suggestions of activities with enthusiasm, saying 'I'm here to learn!'
- Most of the school community met him, talked to him and are now better informed about Malawi.
- The parent group for our trip in July really enjoyed meeting him and hearing at first hand about Bandawe.
- The weather wasn't an issue, as he acclimatised very quickly and even shed his fleece after a few days.
- He was showered with gifts, including a brand new laptop from Stirling University students, organised by two students on a placement in FHS. A new friend at school organised an eye test at Specsavers and he was fitted with glasses to help with his distance vision.

What could have gone better?

- The preparations would have been so much easier without the visa hassle.
- We could have programmed more whole staff events if we'd been

100% certain he would actually get here! We did hold a staff coffee morning on his penultimate day.

- I feel we missed opportunities for more in-depth discussions teacher to teacher, and many in school still see this as a charitable project. Unfortunately, his visit coincided with SQA exams in Music, so it was difficult to give enough time to setting things up for Tommy and the school staff.

What happens next?

Within the next year we will run the literacy project and produce a joint booklet of pupil writing. We will also run the joint Maths Challenge and award prizes. The Maths Challenge could become an annual event.

In May we will hold another Malawi week in school, with a week of Malawi-themed lessons for S1.

In early July a party of 12 pupils and 4 staff will set off for Bandawe. On their return, the pupils who have been out to Malawi will be available to lead discussions and give presentations to other pupils and in the community.

The school charity group will continue to fund-raise, galvanised by first-hand experience of meeting Mr Kamanga and hearing about BAGSS at first hand.

Some time in the future we would very much hope to host a party of BAGSS girls visiting here. We look forward to hearing about the Balfron experience.

Tommy Kamanga plans to be at Lilongwe to meet the group from Falkirk High School when they travel to Malawi in July.

In the next issue of the Mamie Martin Fund Newsletter you will be able to read about:

- A group of Teachers from Livingstonia Secondary School visiting Kinross High School in the summer of 2008.
- A group of four staff and six pupils from Robert Laws Secondary School (ROLASS) and their visit to Balfron High School in June 2008.
- The progress of plans for a visit by staff from Ekwendeni Girls Secondary School to Williamwood High School.
- More details of the partnership between Alva Academy and Karonga Girls Secondary School.
- A visit by teachers and pupils from Falkirk High School to Bandawe In July 2008.

A group from Ayr Presbytery is visiting Bandawe for three weeks this Summer. This visit is part of an ongoing link with the church



community in Bandawe.

This photograph shows Mr H Gondwe with the agent of a transport company taking delivery of boxes of materials from Ayr.

Livingstonia Girls' Study Room

which was funded through a grant from the Lloyds TSB Foundation to the Mamie Martin Fund, is almost complete. Roofing work is now complete and the contractor is carrying out minor finishing and some electrical works.

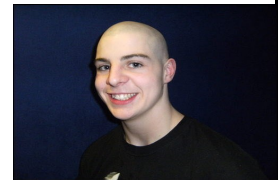


Mr Mzumara, the Head Teacher at Livingstonia, was happy to report that the Study Room would be available for use by the girls this Summer term and that it would give them space and peace to carry out their studies. Extended study time, particularly in mathematics and science, will help their academic performance improve. He feels that if the girls had adequate study time, their performance would be on a par with boys. For their own security, girls stay inside their hostels at the school and cannot come outside after the evening study periods which end at 8.30 pm. Up until now the girls have undertaken their studies in the morning. Use of the Study Room, which is within the girls' hostel compound, will mean that the girls now have the same amount of regular study time as male pupils.

Fundraising

Thanks to

Andrew Kimmitt — son of MMF Committee member Alan Kimmitt — who raised over £500 with a sponsored head shaving!



TO ALL OUR DONORS AND SUPPORTERS, A WARM THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

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

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