



A Most Generous Response - Thank You!

We were all devastated to hear about the flooding which struck **Malawi** some weeks ago. Somehow it seems to be the way of the world that the poorest of the poor are most vulnerable to tragedy – and least able to recover from it.

It was only right, therefore, that the congregation decided to respond – of course, in our prayers – but practically as well. To that end, we're delighted to announce that a sum of over £10,000 was gifted through our retiring offering and two fundraisers. The folks of St. Andrew's know how to dig deep.

This emergency relief money complements our ongoing support, which is designed to be sustainable – meaning that the Malawians themselves will gradually become more self-sufficient and able to support themselves rather than relying on charity. That may not be about to happen anytime soon but every journey begins with a single step. What a privilege to be able to share in that journey with these, our brothers and sisters.



One of the houses destroyed by the rains and flooding. More pictures on the back page.



John and Kirsty Wilson

It was many years ago now when John Wilson first showed up at our **Havilah** Project – just another lost soul, a hopeless drug addict struggling to survive day to day, begging on the streets and looking to work every angle. But John wasn't just another lost cause (is anyone?)

After several attempts at rehab, John eventually got himself clean and straightened out. He ended up moving to Rotherham in Yorkshire to take up a new job with a Christian organisation - The Lighthouse. In that role, John works with young men in prison as they prepare to be released back into the community – many of them struggling with drug addiction like John himself in his old self. On top of

that, John is now married to a lovely Christian girl, Kirsty, and together they are moving on in faith and in their shared ministry. It all started at Havilah – a start that John remains hugely grateful for.

The great news is that John and Kirsty are coming to Arbroath over the first weekend in May and on the Sunday – morning and evening – they will share something of their own story and of what they are doing now in ministry. While John works in prison transition, Kirsty works to support those who have been trapped in the evil cycle of human trafficking.

What a day we have in store, to hear of what God has done and is continuing to do through John Wilson. With thanks, we'll celebrate that the turning point was the day he walked into Havilah – which is where St. Andrew's Church meets some of those who are most lost and offers them a chance to meet the One who is in the business of finding.

Polar Explorers!



As you'll all be aware, our **Easter Holiday Club** is coming up fast – taking place during the first week of the Easter school holidays, 6-10th April. Entitled Polar Explorers, this club promises to be better than ever – a fantastic week that

primary school-aged children will absolutely love! The hall is going to be transformed into an ice-cold, frozen waste; the children instantly transported into the land of Captain Scott... and penguins! With crafts and games, adventures and challenges, each daily session will whiz past with not a single child uttering the oft-heard, 'I'm bored!'

But mixed in with all of the fun and games, there will be

some excellent Christian teaching, pitched perfectly for those in the various stages of their primary school education. Exploring the great truths about God's love contained in the Bible will principally be how our week is spent. Given that lots of the children will have little or no church background, here we have a wonderful opportunity for sharing and outreach – demonstrating the truth that the Christian faith really is the way to go!

Along with all of the other bits and pieces of craft material that we need (detailed in last month's magazine) our main requirement is four-pint milk containers – five hundred of them to be precise! So get drinking! Then, rinse the containers out and store them at home until the word comes out that we're ready to accept them. It's going to be lots of fun and we can't wait to get started!

CHURCH OFFICE : 431135

ADMINISTRATOR

Linda Hunter

Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri : 9 -12noon

MINISTER

Rev Dr W Martin Fair, BA, BD

ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Rev Stuart Irvin, BD

SESSION CLERK

Jane Miller : 875235

TREASURER

Susan Godsall : 430862

FREEWILL ENVELOPES

Iain Robertson : 877519

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BOOKINGS / ROLLKEEPER

Linda Hunter : 431135

MAGAZINE EDITOR/CDs

Ken Miller : 875235

ST ANDREW'S ARBROATH

Parish Records

February 2015

Baptisms - Brandon ; son of Vicki and Trevor

Blessings - None

Weddings - None

Funerals - Nellie Young

IMPORTANT DATES

APRIL EDITION

Handwritten articles should be handed in to the **office** by the **first** date and **not** to the Editor.

Word Processed files, as attachments, can be sent **directly to the Editor** by the **second** date.

Please avoid embedding articles in an email as these then need additional formatting work.

Friday 20th March (Written/preferably typed)

Tuesday 24th March (Word-Processed file)

Malawi Fundraising

Sunday 8th March – **Soup Lunch**

Saturday 18th April – **Ceilidh Dinner Dance** with players of AFC at Meadowbank.

Saturday 25th April – **Bag pack** at Morrisons – Anyone able to backpack please speak to Sheila.

Sunday 10th May – **Soup Lunch**

Friday 15th May – **Murder Mystery** – Anyone willing to help with acting please speak

to Sheila.

Saturday 18th July – **Afternoon Tea and Wedding Dress Display** – Anyone with a wedding dress that they would be willing to display please speak to Linda Hunter.

August – **Family Fun Day**

Sunday 13th September – **Soup Lunch**

Friday 23rd October – **Beetle Drive**

Sunday 8th November – **Soup Lunch**

Friday 20th November – **Thanksgiving Meal**

Sunday 13th December – **Soup Lunch**

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Organisations will alert members when groups resume after holidays or when changes to venues are made.

SUNDAY

10.15 am – Gathering for prayer.

10.30 am – Choir practice.

11.00 am – Morning service (with short communion on the third Sunday of each month. Tea/coffee after. Creche – up to age 3. Infants – ages 3 to 5. Juniors – ages 8 and 9. Seniors – ages 10 and 11 Sunday Club – Elaine Fair (873238). Teen Scene – S1 to S2

7.30 to 9.00 pm – Youth Group

9.00 pm – Senior Youth Group

Monday to Friday - 11.00 am – Havilah : Drop-in Centre – Community Spirit (434088)

MONDAY

2.00 pm – Dorothy Dobson Over 50s Exercise Class

6.00 pm – Rainbow Guides – L Hadden (875379)

7.30 pm – St Andrew's Guild : Fortnightly – Shona Kemp (878526)

7.30 pm – Flower Club : Fortnightly – M McIntosh (876993)

TUESDAY

9.30 am – 3.00 pm - Mum and Me - K Marr (430505)

WEDNESDAY

10.30 am – Midweek Meeting Point – M Fair (873238)

6.15 pm – Brownies – Rosie Hill (07977 790528)

7.30 pm – Guides - Rosie Hill (07977 790528)

7.30 pm – Women's Group – first Wednesdays – Elaine Fair (873238)

THURSDAY

10.00 am – Parent and Toddler Group – L Clark (437758)

2.00 pm – Friends Club : first Thursdays – N Watson – B Gerrard, secretary (434821)

6.00 pm – Anchor Boys – S Jamieson (431942)

6.00 pm – BB Junior Section – W Ewart (876114)

7.30 pm – BB Company Section – M Clark (437758)

FRIDAY

9.30 am – Coffee morning

Intimations, changes of address, hall bookings etc., please contact the Church office, Monday to Friday, 9 am to noon and for 15 minutes after Sunday Service, telephone 431135.

Martin Fair

March 2015

Dear friends,

During March, I'll be leading a team charged with reviewing one of the Church of Scotland's New Charge Developments – this one in Ferguslie Park, Paisley. Conducting these reviews is one of my national church responsibilities – yes, something that eats into my time but, on the other hand, a great opportunity to see these fledgling churches coming into their own and to learn from their experiences.

Though not exclusively so, most of these new church plants have been set in the most deprived communities in Scotland; places where 'traditional' churches have all but disappeared. So trying to start churches from scratch is not easy work. On the contrary, it's exceedingly difficult work! But the commitment of those involved is never anything less than inspirational. Against what often seem to be insurmountable challenges, new churches gradually come into being. So I look forward to my few days in Paisley.

All the while, I'll be asking, 'What can I learn for our congregation?' Of course, we're a traditional church rather than a brand new one – not as traditional as most, perhaps, but traditional none-the-less in as much as our worship and patterns of church life are not markedly different from what has 'aye been.' And we're going to continue in that way.

But what we really need to be asking ourselves in these days is whether or not our traditional model is going to be enough as the years go on. Yes, we're doing not too badly but, even so, our age profile suggests that the vast majority of younger people – and those with no church background whatsoever – are not being attracted to 'join in' with what we're doing. More and more of the leading thinkers in the Christian world are talking now of the need for fresh expressions of church, to be planted where there is no viable church or to run in parallel with a traditional model.

Such thinking is now well and truly rooted in the Church of Scotland. We employ a specialist worker, David McCarthy, to head up this work and more and more fresh expressions are coming into being. Often these are models of church which would be unrecognisable to most of us and yet new life appears to be springing up all the same. The Church of England are well ahead of us on this journey and the latest statistics suggest that around 10% of those attending church in England are part of a new kind of Church. It may be that we'll look back in fifty or a hundred years time and see this period of time as being the beginning of a new beginning for the Christian Church – much as the Reformation was in the Sixteenth Century. Time will tell.

In the meantime, watch out for the term fresh expression – you'll be reading it more and more in the months and years ahead. It might be said that we've already put our collective toe in the water; Messy and Sweaty Church might rightly be considered to be prototypes of fresh expressions. Our thinking will progress though and where new opportunities present themselves, we'll seek wisdom and courage to take hold of them.

It's with all of this in mind that we've invited Doug Gay, Principal of Trinity College, Glasgow University, to be our guest at the beginning of September. Doug is most certainly one of these 'leading thinkers,' being a respected academic and with lots of experience in the 'real world!' Doug will preach at our Sunday morning service and will lead a conference session in the afternoon, following lunch. Here, then, is a fantastic opportunity for us to bring ourselves up to speed with current and probable future trends and patterns of church life.
6th September 2015. Don't even think about being anywhere else!

With every blessing,

Martin and Elaine and family

martin.fair@sky.com

The Easter Code

This year – during Holy Week – we'll be running the brilliant Easter Code programme for the third time. The exciting news is that it looks like we're going to be welcoming EYERY primary school in Arbroath and the surrounding countryside into the church for this event! All the town's ministers have signed up and, even now, we're working hard at the logistics to make sure it all fits together. Whatever happens,

it's going to be a hectic week – even more so than usual in the life of our Church!

But chiefly we're delighted that something which started as very much 'our' venture is looking like it's going to become something that all the churches share in. What a great witness of Christian unity! The churches in Arbroath have not always been very good at doing things together so this really is something of a breakthrough. Rejoice, and again I say rejoice!

Ask Theophilus

Question :

Recently while on holiday I heard a minister saying that she didn't believe in the angry God of the Old Testament. Instead she believed in the kind and loving God of the New Testament? Are there two completely different 'Gods' in our Bibles?

Theophilus answers :

That is a very false idea. In the New Testament, we find Jesus being very angry on occasions. Not only when he spoke sternly to the hypocrites of his day, telling them they were 'of their father the devil' (John 8:44), or when he turned over the money-changers tables and used a whip to drive the animals out of the temple courtyard, but also when with tears he predicted the terrible siege of Jerusalem in AD 68-70 and resultant slaughter (Luke 19:41-44). We also read in the New Testament that 'it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God', 'for our God is a consuming fire' (Hebrews 10:31; 12:29).

On the other hand, the Old Testament has a huge amount to say about the love, mercy, kindness and patience of God. The Psalms are full of this theme of overflowing grace. God gives his people the reason why they belong to him—it was not because of any merit in them, but simply because he loved them.

(Deuteronomy 7:7-8).

So how come this impression of an angry God? It is because human nature is fallen, and there is perversity, selfishness, disobedience and every kind of wickedness in the world. God extends his offer of grace unreservedly to all, but it is too often rejected. Through the unfolding story of human history, we see that God is constantly provoked. Therefore those writing the biblical accounts interpreted history's events as divine action against the persistent ongoing evil in men's hearts. However, the Bible is nevertheless an account of love—often spurned, refused and even mocked. Yet that love, ultimately perfectly revealed in Christ, will conquer and reign supreme. That is why Christians pray, 'Your will be done, your kingdom come...'

Guild

Winter is slowly passing and haven't we had some lovely sunshine! By the time this magazine comes out we will almost be at the end of our Guild year. We have a few meetings in March and end in April with our AGM.

As a Guild we were invited to join with other Guilds in the town in February. I, along with some other members enjoyed lovely haggis, neeps and tatties at Knox's Church, when we were entertained by Scottish music and readings. Some of us also attended an afternoon meeting at West Kirk where we heard an interesting talk on the work of Insight Counselling throughout our area. Such meetings give us the opportunity to liaise with other Christian women in the town.

Dates for March 2015

Monday 2nd We are to be joined by our church youth group who we hope will demonstrate their talents to us and perhaps some of our own members can show the young people that the Guild still have a few talents themselves!

Monday 16 March Project Night: Heart of Art (Dementia). This will probably be a joint meeting with other guilds.

Monday 30 March This meeting has still to be finalised.

"Whose we are and whom we serve"

Malawi Update

A huge THANK YOU to all who have donated to the Flood Crisis. So far we have raised over £10,000. (The Quiz Night raised £501 and the Soup & Pudding Lunch raised £538). In the short term this money will be used to provide maize relief and in the long term will be used to rebuild the damaged homes of the children under our care. The rains are unfortunately continuing so the rebuild work cannot start until they stop. Good news was the arrival of our container. It could not have arrived at a better time.

For the children their belated Christmas presents brought some excitement and all the extra clothes, blankets, medical supplies and water purification tablets have been put to good use. Thanks to all who donated both gifts for the sponsored children and also clothes, books, school equipment, medical supplies, knitted goods.....Everything has been gratefully received and will make a huge difference in Malawi.

Due to negative publicity about how much charities waste on admin or how money given to places like Africa only results in government officials lining their own pocket, many people are reluctant to donate to charities. We want to reassure everyone that all money given through the St Andrew's Church Malawi Project is channelled through Aquaid Lifeline – a charity headed up by John Searle – and is distributed at the point of need and does not go near any government officials. Aquaid appears on an independent website called Charity Choice that looks into charity finances and publishes what their money is spent on. They have reported that for every £1 raised by Aquaid Lifeline 99.6p is spent on charitable activities, 0.0p on raising income and 0.4p on running the charity and other costs. This is amazing and should be an encouragement that our money is being well used especially as we know that 100% of the money raised here is sent to our centres and none of our income is used on other costs.

Let us be encouraged at what we are achieving in Malawi and be spurred on to continue our efforts.

Clerk's Corner

In past editions of Quest, you have been able to read about the remits of the Core Groups and in 2014 we provided you with the names of the members of each group.

It is hard to believe that it is six years since we set up these structures which have now become so embedded in our organisational life.

In that amount of time, it is inevitable that things have changed, remits have had alterations and the membership of the groups has seen some changes.

In February, representatives of each group attended a meeting to discuss their remit and what plans were envisaged for 2015. The Havilah and Malawi Projects were also included in this process and so a total of eight meetings were held with Martin and me.

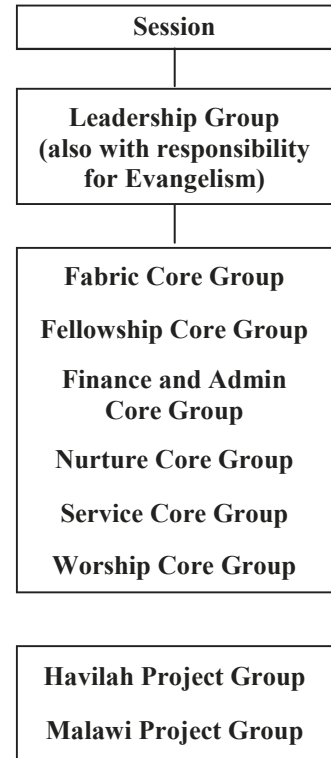
What a worthwhile exercise this was as each group was able to articu-

late what is felt about the various tasks they undertake and to consider the effectiveness of them. In some cases, the success means that they will be repeated, in others they may need tweaking and again in others, consideration will be given to adopting new ideas. In all of this process, the original remit was reviewed. This in itself was interesting as for some, the various tasks originally devised six years ago are still very relevant and in others not all are such a good fit with what is currently being done. The next stage will be for the remits to be revised where needed.

It was good to hear about the plans for the coming year and to realize that these groups are really alive and kicking.

Thank you to all of you who are members, who faithfully attend meetings and carry out tasks, to the leaders who chair the meetings, and to the people who write the minutes. You are all part of the very large band of people who volunteer their time to the vision of St Andrew's Church.

St Andrew's Church Structure



Forty Days With Jesus

First mentioned in last month's QUEST, we're delighted to commend once more the excellent resource, 'Forty Days with Jesus.' Here's a very readable book which focuses on all of the life-changing encounters which Jesus had with the people he met between the resurrection and his later ascension. Designed to be read between Easter and

Pentecost, the book is broken into forty chapters, each of them just a couple of pages in length. In other words, even for those who don't consider themselves to be very 'bookish,' here's something that is eminently accessible.

Orders, with £6 payment, are now being taken at the church office, with the deadline for ordering being Sunday 22nd March.

Presbytery Elder Report

Dear Fellow Elders and Members,

I feel privileged to have represented St Andrew's Church as your Presbytery Elder during this year. It has been an interesting experience and has given me an insight into the work of all the Churches within the Angus Presbytery.

I am a member of the World Church and Ecumenical Relations Committee. During this year we have been focusing on the remits of the General Assembly which included encouraging congregations to develop links and twinings with congregations and Presbyteries overseas particularly in Europe. We were also asked to encourage youth members of our congregations to consider a visit to the Taize Community. I have forwarded this information to our Youth Leader.

Various events will take place/have taken place to celebrate the Centenary of Mary Slessor:

3rd March - Dundee Arts Cafe event – "No Ordinary Missionary" a Biographical story, song and personal insight by Ruth Kirkpatrick to be held at the McManus Galleries, Dundee

5th March - Dundee Women's Festival at Dundee and An-

gus College, Dundee. There will be a guest lecture by the Mary Slessor Foundation

Mary Slessor Postcard competition – details have been sent to our Sunday Club leaders

Christian Aid Week will be held 10th – 16th May

Under the auspices of the Mission & Development Group a discussion on Disability Awareness within the Church will be held at the May meeting of the Presbytery and it is hoped that resources will be available for congregations for Disability Sunday (date to be confirmed).

Big Day Out 3 - Saturday 9th May in Arbroath St Andrew's Church and Arbroath Old and Abbey, Arbroath. The Keynote speaker is to be the Very Rev. Lorna Hood, Moderator of the 2013 General Assembly. Rev. Peter Gardiner of Renfield St Stephens, Glasgow will also be attending and will lead a session on Pilgrimage. Tickets are £10 (including lunch) and will be available from 1st March. Volunteers and Stewards will be required for that day.

Presbytery Training, which was previously led by the Mission and Discipleship Council, will now be arranged by local presbyteries.

Yours in Christ

Joan Hainsworth

Heart and Soul 2015

Once more, we'll be running a bus to Heart & Soul, the Church of Scotland's celebration day in Edinburgh. As always to coincide with the General Assembly, this year's event is happening on Sunday afternoon, 17th May. To allow for getting there in time for the start, our own morning service will begin at an earlier time on that day and there will be no evening worship service. The event is free of charge but obviously there will be a charge for the bus. Full details will be published shortly and booking will open after Easter.

Third Big Day Out

The Presbytery of Angus, of which we are a part, is delighted to announce the third Big Day Out, to take place on Saturday 9th May, in our own church and in Old & Abbey Church, as before. These have proved to be super occasions with inspirational speakers and a range of educational, stimulating seminars to choose from. Opening worship will take place in our own church and the keynote address will be given by the Very Rev. Lorna Hood, immediate past

Persecuted Church event

As you'll know, St. Andrew's Church has a particular commitment to pray for persecuted Christians – those who suffer because of their faith in Jesus. Though a fact that is rarely published, Christians are THE most persecuted people group in the world today. It is our duty to stand with them.

On Thursday 19th May, taking place in Central Baptist Church, Dundee, the organisation Open Doors is presenting an evening of worship, prayer, information and education about this crucial topic. We will be organising transport to this event and doubtless many of you will want to attend. Details will be published in the church bulletin and on our website.

Moderator of the Church of Scotland. Lorna never misses the mark and with a combination of humour and hard-hitting messages she is someone that everybody will benefit from hearing. The seminar programme is being published shortly but features church leaders and ministers from across Scotland, each of whom will bring a different perspective on the stepping out in faith theme.

Yet another 'put it in your diary' upcoming event!

Thank You From Lochaber

Dear All,

I am writing on behalf of Michael Smith, Treasurer of Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team, to acknowledge receipt of, and to thank you sincerely for, the cheque you sent to us recently for the sum of £769.23 as a donation from St Andrews Church, Arbroath.

As you may already be aware, the team is funded predominantly by public donation and financial support such as this is very much appreciated by the entire team. Please be assured that the money will be put to very good use.

Best wishes

Linda Gillespie
Book-keeper and Administrator for Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team

An "Eggcellent" Choice

Once again St Andrew's folk are choosing to buy Real Easter Eggs as gifts for their family, friends and neighbours. This is a great opportunity to share the good news of Easter, using the colourful booklet included with each egg which tells the story clearly and simply. The sharing goes further, as sales of eggs benefit thousands of cocoa and sugar farmers in Fair Trade co-operatives, and part of the profits are also donated to UK charity Baby Lifeline. So far more than £140,000 has been given.

Introduced in 2010, the Real Easter Egg was initially turned down by supermarkets as they were unsure that a 'faith egg' would work – what a sad irony that is! But they were wrong. Last year, in a national poll, it was voted the UK's favourite Fairtrade egg, and more than a million have been sold. They're available in Tesco, Morrisons and Wait-

rose, but the profit margin on the supermarket sales is very small, so buying at church will give more to charity.

The Latin name for the cocoa bean is Theobroma Cacao, which translates as "Bitter fruit of God". It seems right that at Easter we exchange eggs that contain both bitter cocoa and sweet sugar, for the Easter story is both bitter and sweet: Jesus suffered and died and Jesus came back to life, giving us hope that death is not the end.

There are 4 types of eggs this year, ranging from £1 to £10. You can order eggs in the hall after the Sunday morning service, or contact Linda McDonald – Email: lmcdonald.au@gmail.com or phone 551959.

LOOKING AHEAD

MARCH

Sunday 1
(Note - NO Traditional Service)
11 am - Holy Communion
Service with guest, Right Rev John Chalmers, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland
6.30 pm - Evening Worship

Sunday 8
11 am - Worship Service
4 pm - SWEATY CHURCH
6.30 pm - Evening Worship

Sunday 15
11 am - Worship Service;
Service followed by
Annual Stated Meeting
of the congregation
6.30 pm - Evening Worship

Sunday 22
11 am - Worship Service
6.30 pm - Evening Worship

Sunday 29
11 am - Palm Sunday Service
4 pm - MESSY CHURCH
6.30 pm - Evening Worship

APRIL

Sunday 5
8 am - Easter Sunrise Service
11 am - Easter Family Celebration, with all-age Communion
6.30 pm - Easter Evening Worship

Sunday 12
11 am - Worship Service
(with Holiday Club Finale)
4 pm - SWEATY CHURCH
6.30 pm - Evening Worship

Sunday 19
11 am - Worship Service
6.30 pm - Evening Worship

Sunday 26
11 am - Worship Service
4 pm - MESSY CHURCH
6.30 pm - Evening Worship in
Community Spirit

N.B. As well as the services above there is the following:

A 40 minute service every Wednesday morning at 10.30 am.

Malawi Letter

Hi everyone,

For those of you who were unable to attend our Malawi feedback evening, I will summarise and, to keep the rest of you reading, I will add some extra info!! There were 5 representatives out in Malawi over the summer, for a combined length of 5 months! We checked up on the centres, had interviews with each of the children and meetings with staff and local leaders.

Thyolo: We found Thyolo as always in great form. We found out what issues each child is facing, what their dreams, hopes and ambitions are and how we can best support them. We took the boarding children on a school trip to a safari park. - This was wonderful as it was amazing to see them so excited to see all the animals and enjoying themselves in such a beautiful part of their own country. Even Victoria and Stephen Moses, the house parents, were very excited to see these big animals for the first time and had dressed up for the occasion! We also played games with the children, taking them out a parachute and teaching them all sorts of games to play with it. A specific inter-Aquaid sports tournament was held but unfortunately the older Aquaid boarders at the main centre beat our young Thyolo boarders. The Thyolo crew really enjoyed themselves though and they were especially excited to try ice cream for the first time on their way home.

A meeting was held with all the staff, where all the happenings at the centre were discussed. These highlighted some issues and many great ideas were brought forward to the table. We are so lucky with the team of dedicated staff we have both at Thyolo and Kambilonjo - people who really care for our children and love them as their own children. We realised that we need to also support the staff as, although they are making a good living by Malawian standards, they are still very poor and a long way from the standard of living that we ourselves enjoy. We were able to chat to them and show our appreciation of their hard work.

Going forward at Thyolo we plan to build some staff accommodation so that our staff can be properly housed in decent housing. This will take time so we are looking at other short-term ways of giving them decent housing in the meantime. We are also looking to further the work of our extra classroom, which is currently being used for tutoring in the mornings and extra lessons in the afternoons. We have also arranged for vocational training in carpentry, tinsmith, sewing and knitting to be undertaken.

Kambilonjo: At Kambilonjo we have seen major improvements in the last year since the introduction of our new house parents Charles and Memory Lundu who have been incredible. They are very loving with the children, yet bring them good discipline and the house functions like clockwork with all the children being very happy. The children are given the best medical care, especially as some of the boarders have extra medical needs. Furthermore, they have managed to get the whole community on board and now the guardians and families from around are helping in the gardens which has allowed us to plant and harvest a bumper crop, far more than the requirements of the centre. This will allow us to give much of this maize back as relief to the surrounding villagers, many of whom are very poor themselves.

Here we also met individually with the children and took them on a safari trip (involving a raging elephant which scared the life out of the children and monkeys who were

stealing the picnic!) Many of these children had never been out of their village before, so to travel to see elephants, hippos, crocodiles, monkeys and many many antelopes, was very exciting for them. - They didn't sleep the whole night before!

At Kambilonjo we were more involved in the letter writing to all the sponsors (most of these children's English is much poorer as the standard of education here is low- so the letters were written and then translated for your benefit!). I was involved in the translating of one letter which described the young girl's joy at her parcel. She thanked her sponsor for making her feel important and for bringing her up in the world. She noted that she couldn't believe how lucky she had been - she had received a hat, Frisbee, pens, stickers AND sweets! Her sponsor must really love her! This girl is new to the centre and the sponsorship programme is also in its infancy at Kamibilonjo. This just shows the incredible gratitude of the children for everything that you are doing for them! It was a privilege to witness it! Thank-you!

Again we met with the staff and identified many difficulties that our staff face daily and have addressed these. We also noted that there was an extreme lack of healthcare in the area with the nearest clinic a full 2 hour walk away, and this clinic is private and very expensive (one villager had to sell all his pigs to get his wife out of the hospital after a difficult birth). We therefore met with local chiefs to discuss plans for a healthcare clinic, with the thought that we would fund the building and running of this, with children not paying for the service and adults paying a minor charge (to cover the cost of any medication they use) in order to make it as sustainable as possible. This is a major undertaking as clinics and medicine are so expensive and difficult to run in Malawi, but one that is badly needed in the area. The local chiefs have agreed to supply half of the bricks needed for this endeavour, free of charge and will supply the workers required to construct the clinic. We have also arranged a land swap and bought the land next to the centre where we will be able to build this clinic. Going forward at Kambilonjo, we will be constructing and beginning a clinic next to our centre with hopefully a progression involving an ambulance service to the nearest hospital which is just over an hour's drive away on a very bumpy road. We have also planned the building of a second classroom, much like at Thyolo where the older students can go for peaceful studying and further lessons. This will also include a library and a teacher's office. We are also planning on building a workshop for vocational training with teachers coming in to teach skills both to our students and the surrounding villagers as the drop-out rate from school is very high and the education level is extremely low.

At both centres we also have tutors who are previous students who have finished their secondary school education and are awaiting their results and the chance to go onto further study. We have sent a young person each year for the last 2 years to each centre to help with one to one tuition and also give them some useful employment while they await their results. This year we have sent a further 2 to each centre. One of those posted to Kambilonjo is my sponsor child Jean Maluwa whom I have supported since she was at Primary School. I am so proud of her to have achieved so much and worked so hard and hopefully she will have done well enough in her exams to pursue her career in Accountancy! There's a testament to the work of the St Andrew's Church sponsorship scheme!

Becky



More pictures from Malawi



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If you are watching catch-up on an iPad, then you might have to click on the YouTube icon at the bottom right corner, rather than the 'play' symbol in the centre.



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