

Newsletter January 2014

BUILT AT LAST!

BY EILEEN EGGINGTON, Project Officer



The hostel for blind and low-vision girls at Nkope is all but finished; there are just a few snagging issues for the contractor to sort out before his team leave the site.

The bunk beds and mattresses have been delivered and very soon the girls and their matron will be able to move into their lovely new home. There are currently a dozen girls and so an additional eight can now be recruited to fill the twenty bedded hostel.

We are about to seek tenders for an identical hostel for the boys! Funds have already been raised and hopefully work will start at the end of the rainy season in April.

We see the hostels as being the first major steps in making Nkope Primary School a centre of excellence for the education of blind and low-vision children.

A PRAYER

BY TONY COX, Trustee

We were saying grace in a small brick-built house by the shores of Lake Malawi. It took time for our eyes to adjust from the brightness of the tropical sun to the shade of the room. The cement floor was cool after the noonday heat and Dr Sankhani's welcome was warm. He had just completed a five hour session on the wards and clinics of the sixty bed hospital in Malindi, Malawi and he wanted to make us feel at home. He invited us to join him in a drink of cocoa and a slice of bread and margarine. His wife brought us a bowl of water in which to wash our hands and we settled to our meal - but not until we had shared his prayer of thanks, his grace. It was simply a list of the many things for which he was grateful.

In Britain we have just been through the time when we all make lists - not of the things for which we are thankful but of the things that we hoped for at Christmas. The newspapers tell us that the "average" child in Britain will have received presents to the value of £135 while each adult will have spent around £450. Dr Sankhani expects to receive just £250 in salary this month and every month to feed himself and his family and yet several times a day he thanks God for the little he has. Perhaps we would be much, much happier if we too began to make a list of all the good things that God has given to us - and then show our thanks by our generosity towards those in real need here and around the world.

Dr Sankhani's Grace

**Almighty God,
We thank you for our visitors,
we thank you for their safe journey here today.
We thank you for all that they have done
to help our hospital and all our patients.
We thank you for the houses they have built
for our nurses
and the medicines that they have brought
for the sick.
Thank you also for our families,
for the good health that we enjoy
and for the food we share today. Amen.**

A message of thanks to all our supporters. Whether you made a donation, large or small, bought something from our Gift List, organised an event, knitted baby clothes and blankets, did a sponsored walk, run or cycle, sold jam or plants in aid of MACS, donated spectacles or supported MACS in any other way, **ZIKOMO KWAMBIRI!**

THE WARM HEART OF AFRICA

BY ZOE ARDEN

Last August, a group of 12 of us, ages 14 to 74, set off for a two week trip to Malawi with MACS. It was undoubtedly a life-changing experience.

The overwhelming sense that we all got was the heart to heart connection that we quickly established with so many people, particularly the children. The warm, playful character of so many Malawians helped us open up quickly as well, even the younger, less confident group members.

We were humbled by the generosity of people who had so little, like the Mothers' Union ladies who cooked and shared nsima with us. On the first stop of day one, we were deeply moved by a gang of boys we encountered playing football with a ball made out of plastic bags and their whoops of joy when they were given a real one.

We were struck not only by the positive contribution we could make in just a few

days in Nkope but also by the massive cumulative benefits MACS has provided over many years with its local trusted partnerships, particularly in the poorest



and most rural parts of the country. It was great to see Malawians of different backgrounds and faiths working together in partnership with MACS.

There were also frustrations and low points. Faced with the reality of the grinding poverty brought us to tears at times such as when we talked to the woodcutters on Zomba Mountain who get up at 3 a.m. every day to bring wood to market.

The MACS 2014 Trip is fully booked.
If you are interested in joining the 2015 Trip please contact
Richard Barton
chairman@malawimacs.org

LULANGA MATERNAL WAITING HOME ALMOST FINISHED!

BY EILEEN EGGINGTON, Project Officer

Lulanga lies on the eastern shore of Lake Malawi near the border with Mozambique. It takes three hours to get there along bumpy roads from the nearest hospital in Malindi. The small medical centre at Lulanga was built forty years ago. It is powered by rudimentary solar lighting and there is intermittent mobile phone connection with St Martin's Hospital in Malindi. There is no public transport.



Many mothers and/or their babies die because they have to walk, often several miles, and leave it too late to get to the health centre in time *because there is nowhere for them to wait for the birth of their child.*

The new Waiting Home is a simple construction with two rooms where mothers and accompanying family

members can rest on sleeping mats. A kitchen shelter for the family to prepare food, a wash room and two eco-friendly pit latrines are part of the project. Once these are in place, the health centre will

be able to sign a Service Level Agreement with the Ministry of Health and receive funding from the government for all their maternity cases. Construction Manager, Dunstan Mzokomera, reports that twenty eight Village Headmen and

the local Chief came to inspect the new building and were very impressed. Dunstan has also managed the Nkope Hostel construction. Having checked the hostel, he was due back in Lulanga but the river was so full no vehicle could pass. He had to sleep at Makanjila and the next morning was carried across the river on people's shoulders!



Charlie Watson cycling across the country

The following five events raised over two thirds of the funds needed to build the Maternal Waiting Home in the space of just six months!



FILM NIGHT and TALK

Dr Mike Vaille and his wife Cally raised a big crowd and £3238 in June 2013. They organised supper and a showing of 'The African Queen' at Sandwich Cinema and Richard Barton spoke to the audience before the film.

DR OLIVER SMITH MEMORIAL CONCERT

Oliver Smith, former Head Boy at the John Lyon School in Harrow, trained as a doctor, with ambitions to become an urologist. Ollie lost his life to bowel cancer which had spread to his liver and lungs. His mother Sheila said, "Ollie would have been so proud to be associated with the Lulanga Maternal Waiting Home. I'm thrilled that money raised will be going to this wonderful project." The concert of music for Advent given by the Anselm Singers and Calico Consort, directed by John Barnard raised £3100.



REEPHAM SINGS OUT AT CHRISTMAS

On December 16th the Gentlemen from Norwich Cathedral and Friends entertained an appreciative audience with Christmas Carols for Choir and Strings, directed by David Manners. The concert, organised by Daniel & Kristina Bartlette, raised £1600.

DITCHLING CHURCH INSPIRED

Richard Barton spoke about Lulanga during the morning service at Ditchling Church on Advent Sunday. The congregation contributed very generously and donated £1012.

SCHOOL BOY CYCLES FOR LULANGA

Congratulations to Charlie Watson, a pupil at the Junior King's School who cycled 400 miles from Penzance to Canterbury. This was Charlie's second ride in aid of MACS. Charlie actually had a fall as he was nearing Canterbury and was taken home to recover. However, the next morning he insisted on being taken back to the place where he had fallen so he could complete the distance! Charlie raised £400.

A GIFT OF TIME

To continue its work a charity needs gifts, not just of money but also of time. Perhaps it is just the two minutes that it takes to suggest that your church might think of supporting MACS. It might involve arranging an event, be it coffee morning or concert, that tells new people about our work. We will willingly lend a hand by providing a speaker or our information leaflets.

Perhaps you have skills that would strengthen our fundraising committee, a group that meets by email rather than by travelling. Or perhaps you would like to take an active role in the future of MACS by becoming a trustee. In any event, please take just a moment to consider how you can help to make MACS known among the other groups and communities of which you are a member - and share your plan with us.



Mr James Mawenda (clinical officer) with an expectant mother



Lulanga Kitchen (before)



Lulanga Kitchen (after)



<http://www.facebook.com/malawimacscharity>

DELIVERED BY POST? WHY NOT TRY EMAIL?

We are always delighted to send out single copies of our Newsletter and Gift List to individual supporters and we are pleased to continue to do so. **BUT** printing and postage for these single copies costs MACS over £1,000 each year. That sum of money would pay for three years' education for a girl at Malindi or Malosa Secondary Schools or eight bicycle ambulance trailers for use at lakeshore health centres or hospital mattresses for a whole ward at St Luke's Hospital, Malosa. If you receive a single copy, please consider whether you could help us by opting to have your copy of the Newsletter by email. Just contact mailinglist@malawimacs.org and we will arrange to use email in future.



We are especially pleased to send bulk mailings of many copies to supporters who distribute Newsletters in church services, fundraising concerts, in classrooms or waiting-rooms. If that is how you received this Newsletter, please make no change.

NEW PROJECTS

The following projects have been approved since the last Newsletter:

- New maternity ward at Nkasala
- Maternal Waiting Home at Lulanga
- Renovation and extension of nurses' hostel at St Luke's
- Renovation of 4 private rooms at St Luke's
- 2 days' training of maintenance staff at St Luke's and St Martin's
- double classroom block at Mpinganjira
- Double classroom block at Chimera
- Double classroom block at Mitengwe
- Completion of church at St Joseph's, Kamphoyo
- Refurbishment of teacher's house at Linga Primary School
- MACOBO training for volunteer nursery teachers
- Homecraft skills training for 30 people at Msalawatha Village
- Roofing at St Michael's and All Angels, Masasa Bay
- Funds towards equipment for St Martin's and Health Centres at Nkope and Lulanga
- Iford Church's funds for Chilema Women's Course equipment
- Continued flood prevention work around Kaphiridzinja cottage
- Repairs to house at Malosa burned in a fire.

MACS IS 21 THIS YEAR

It is 21 years since MACS was formally set up as a charity.

On Saturday 27th September at our AGM we plan to review and celebrate the achievements of the last 21 years. We hope to announce a new major project.

If you have any interesting material relating to MACS projects in the past, photographs or special memories we would love to hear from you. Please contact the Secretary.

We hope to make this a very special afternoon so make sure the date is in your diaries now.

WHO'S WHO

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- Trustees: Jane Arden, Tony Cox, Richard Davies, Anthea Griggs, Sally Huband, Susannah Woodd

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2014

Saturday 27th September 10.30 – 3.30
St Saviour's Hall, St George's Square, Pimlico, SW1V 3QW
Bring interested friends!

Thank You!

MACS shoppers have raised £393.69 so far. Please easyfundraising.org.uk
sign up today, it's EASY!

easyfundraising

[.org.uk](http://easyfundraising.org.uk)