



Malawi Association for Christian Support

www.malawimacs.org

Charity No. 1025616

NEWSLETTER - Winter 2009

LIFELONG IMPREGNATED MOSQUITO NETS

Nets have been on MACS Gift List for several years and we steadily raise money for them. We are in touch with the *Against Malaria Foundation*, which sends containers to Malawi holding 20,000 long-life nets. To take advantage of this bulk buying, which reduces the price to £2.50 a net, the nets have to be bought in lots of 5,000.

We are trying to reach the goal of £12,500 for one lot of 5,000 nets and every little helps. "If you think you are too small to be effective, you have never been in bed with a mosquito."

Over a million people in the world die from malaria each year, 80% of whom are in Sub-Saharan Africa. Jeffrey Sachs, the pre-eminent economist and adviser to the Secretary General of the United Nations, says "Malaria and poverty are intimately connected."

A poster seen throughout Malawi ¹



In a *Time* magazine editorial in 2007, he wrote "Not only does malaria sap worker productivity and scare away business investment, but it also, paradoxically, increases the rate of population growth. Instead of having two or three children, couples in a malarial region often choose to have six or seven – unsure how many will survive." State pensions are virtually non-existent in Sub-Saharan Africa – children are your pension. In Malawi the Government spends £18 million every year fighting malaria. At present, 21% of patients admitted to hospital are suffering from malaria, which causes the death of 1 in 4 children.

¹ Translation: "Pregnant mother. Always sleep under a dipped/treated mosquito net to avoid fever"

One of the reasons for this high mortality rate amongst children is that only 23% are able to sleep under impregnated nets. Many of the children who survive malaria suffer from brain damage or learning disabilities.

Pregnant women are at increased risk from malaria as their immunity is reduced. Also, their increased body heat attracts mosquitoes. Their risk of illness is increased four times.

In recent years malaria has become increasingly resistant to previous treatments. Lifelong impregnated nets are by far the most effective preventive measure for poor communities.

Contributions can be sent via www.againstmalaria.com/MACSNets or by cheque to the Hon Treasurer (see back page). Please add Gift Aid if possible.

MACS VISITS TO MALAWI

2010 – 24th July to 9th August

Later dates for next year will make it easier for teachers and students to take part. Itinerary includes visits to MACS projects, hands-on work at Nkope school for the Blind, primary school and health centre, plus visit to a game reserve. More details on the flyer enclosed with this NL and on www.malawimacs.org. Contact Bazil on 07775 913 932 or Eileen on 07771 870 424 before 31st December if you want a place.



2009 – 28th June to 12th July

Twenty travellers made the most of their two weeks in Malawi. They started in the Central Region by visiting parishes, orphan care projects, St Anne's Hospital and the embryo secondary school in Nkhotakota.

The main objective of the visit was to return to Nkope, a very poor lakeshore community with a health clinic, nutrition centre, primary school with a unit for blind children and a secondary school. They were pleased to see the four Braille machines sent by MACS being well used.

Clara and Braille machine at Nkope

Comments from some of the 2009 travellers

- Good value ... well organised. Just the kind of thing I'd been looking for. A good mixture of useful work and thought-provoking visits with relaxation at the end.
- Meeting and being involved with Malawian people was an amazing experience and one I shall not easily forget.
- Good charity work and support given to the people who need it most... saw with our own eyes that the projects are supervised.
- It was lovely to work with people that share a common purpose and we hope we have made a small difference to people's lives.
- Really good to see the variety and intensity of projects MACS is supporting.
- The projects have the right balance of aid and trying to help the local people to become self-supporting.
- The poverty and lack of resources are heart-rending and I think we were all touched in different ways.

STEPPING OUT FOR MALAWI



From Cambridge to Haslingfield

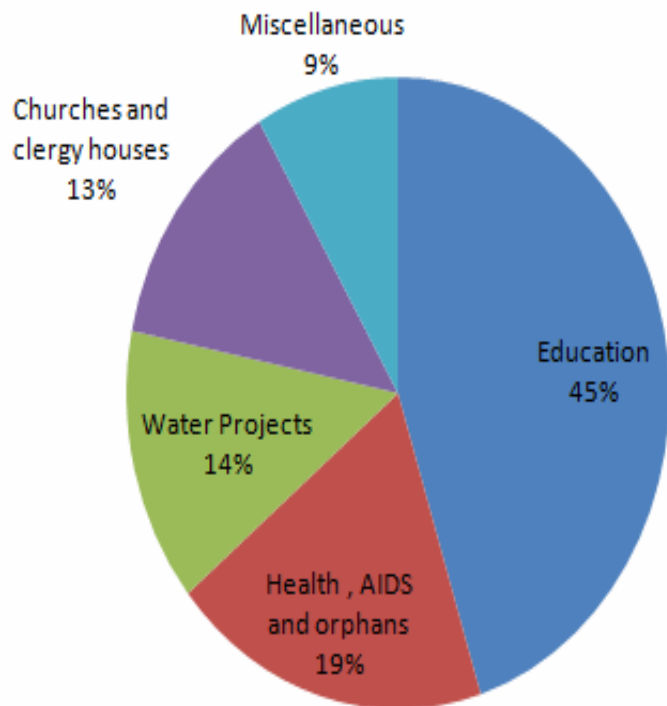
Twenty-three people of varying ages set out from Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, on Saturday 26 September. They were following in the footsteps of Charles Mackenzie, who, over 150 years earlier, as a curate living in Cambridge, walked five miles on Sundays to lead services in All Saints' Church in the village of Haslingfield, and then walked back again. He did this for three years. In 1860 he became the first Bishop of Nyasaland.

ANY MORE IDEAS?

MACS, like most other charities, is experiencing reduced income as a result of the worldwide financial situation. The effect on Malawi, and similar countries where prices continue to rise steeply, is made worse by the devaluation of the £. In 2008 £1 = MK280. Now £1 = approximately MK230. These facts mean MACS is unable to respond to requests for support for good and worthwhile projects.

MACS, and people in Malawi, are deeply grateful to the Haslingfield Walkers, and others like them who work hard to send donations. Particular thanks to the energetic cyclists described in the Summer Newsletter, who raised an amazing £18,971. Also to the travellers who took part in the MACS working visit in July, for their magnificent £10,136.

MACS expenditure - 2008/9



Below are some of the ways you might like to help. Other ideas would be most welcome.

- **Legacy** – Including MACS in your will is another way of providing basic needs for people in Malawi. A recent legacy received by MACS has transformed the lives of many Malawians. If you would like help with suggested wording, please contact the Hon Treasurer, Colin Gardner, 83 High Street, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 7EJ tel: 01268 774 337 email: colin@cjgardner.co.uk
- **Gift Lists** were mailed to you in September, together with cards. Last year this raised more than £8,000. If you would like a List or more cards, please contact Sally Huband, 2 Ashurst Cottages, Plumpton, Lewes, BN7 3AP tel: 01273 890 155 email: sally.huband@tinyworld.co.uk
- **Shopping on the web** – can provide 2-12% to MACS at no cost to you if you go through our website at <http://buy.at/malawimacs>
- **Buying Canon George Ndomondo's** fascinating life story from guerilla general to priest makes a good Christmas present and would boost MACS funds. £7.50 post free, from Rachel Eaton, Moorcopse, 21 Church Road, Tadley, Hants, RG26 3AX tel: 01189 814 287 email: mrsracheleaton@googlemail.com
- **Website** – donations can be made securely via www.malawimacs.org
- **Ebay** buying and selling can raise funds for MACS – details on the website or email us on malawimacs@gmail.com
- **Recycle** – Ask Recycle4Charity.co.uk to send you an envelope in which to return your old inkjet cartridges and mobile phones, from which a % of proceeds go to MACS.



SCHOOLS IN MALAWI

Primary education in Malawi is free for children aged 6 to 13. However, there is a chronic shortage of trained teachers, frequently resulting in classes of over 100. Text books are few and often available only to the teacher.

**A renovated teacher's house
at Likwenu**



Sometimes a child has a precious exercise book. This will often provide for four subjects by being cut in half, with one subject at the front and another at the back of each half.

In rural areas, where MACS mostly works, it is difficult to employ teachers as few reasonable houses are available. After local people have provided bricks and sand, MACS helps with cement, door and window frames and the roof. All secondary schools are fee-paying, resulting in only 22.8% of girls of secondary school age achieving this treasured goal and 25% of boys. (UNESCO 2007). Fees are approximately £80 a year. A number of students who start at secondary school, drop out as they are unable to raise the fees. MACS provides bursaries for secondary school students and, where possible, assists with buildings. The photograph taken in Nkhotakota shows classrooms provided by MACS for a new secondary school being built on land at the Lay Training Centre.



Secondary school classrooms Nkhotakota

PROJECTS COMPLETED

The following projects have been completed recently:

- completion of a church at Namitete, with much self-help
- funding for St Agnes Guild for young girls
- 2 classrooms at Chimwera primary school
- provision of uniforms for cleaners at hospitals and health centres



Smart uniforms for cleaners

- mobile dispensary in Northern Malawi
- teachers' houses at Nansenga and Mponda's Community Day Secondary Schools
- upgrading of anaesthetic machines at St Martin's and St Luke's hospitals
- incinerator at Nkasala Health Centre



Incinerator at Nkasala

ON TIME AND WITHIN BUDGET which is more than can be said for many projects in the UK! The extensive upgrading of the water supply at Malosa and Chilema has been well planned and managed by Willy & Partners Engineering Services, whose Managing Director is Mr Willy Mandowa.

According to an adviser of the charity *Water Aid*, over 3,000 people should now have a reliable water supply for the next fifty years. As well as much work on the dam and pipes, twelve tanks have been repaired or replaced. A large sedimentation tank, pictured here, will stop brown water coming out of taps.

New sedimentation tank



The institutions now receiving clean water are, Malosa Secondary and Likwenu Primary schools, Chilema Ecumenical Lay Training Centre, Diocesan Headquarters, St Luke's College of Nursing and St Luke's Hospital. Each institution has a new meter for measuring the amount of water used. A generous legacy made this work possible.

Protecting the Likwenu River catchment area on Malosa mountain from deforestation is an ongoing challenge. Local chiefs, the seven institutions and Forestry Department are struggling to reduce the numbers of people cutting firewood and making charcoal. Much needs to be done to encourage the use of earth ovens that need less wood, as used in Uganda.

PROJECT OFFICER / FILMING VISIT

Eileen Eggington, MACS Project Officer, accompanied by her nephew Alex Munslow, a professional cameraman, and Grafiud Tione, MACS Representative in Malawi, spent 18 days in August and September visiting 29 MACS projects, during which they covered 2,807 Kilometres.

Alex has 20 hours of film, which includes interviews with many people. After editing the film, he will produce a DVD that will be available to anyone who wishes to see it. Details in the New Year.



Eileen Eggington and Grafiud Tione

In the Northern Region they travelled with the Vicar General, James Chifisi, who had previously been a Senior Medical Assistant, to the remote rural centres where he runs regular mobile clinics, funded by MACS. As they left, just before dusk, they watched James Chifisi wearily packing up after seven hours non-stop work – his nsima and relish lunch left untouched beside him.

At Nkhotakota, in the Central Region, their time was both poignant and encouraging. In the new secondary school, watching Form 4 students sitting on the floor in a narrow, dimly lit classroom, made them grateful that the new classrooms provided by MACS are almost complete. From there to the Chididi Orphan Care Centre where 240 orphans are cared for and given a meal each day.

The highlight of their visit in the Southern Region was the time spent with MACOBO volunteers, who help people with AIDS in the villages around Malosa. Particularly touched by a blind lady, whose lovely teenage daughter is severely disabled through meningitis. Her wish was to have a wheelchair so she could go to school, some soap, and to be able to choose what to eat and what to wear.

INFORMATION LEAFLETS describing what MACS does, for distribution at meetings, available from the Secretary.

DON'T MISS THE ANNUAL MEETING 2010

Saturday 25th September 10.30am – 3.30pm
St Saviour's Hall, St George's Square, Pimlico, London SW1V 3QW

WHO'S WHO

Patron: Bishop Donald Arden CBE

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Christine Matthews, Margaret Parr