

# NEWSLETTER

## SPRING 2023

### 2022 APPEAL

Thanks to your generosity, we have now raised over £30,000 for the 2022 Appeal, in aid of putting a solar-powered back-up electrical system into St Michael's School, Malindi. As you will recall, this is a girls' boarding school, so we were particularly pleased to have been able to provide reliable electricity both to the classroom block, where they study in the evenings, and to the dormitories.



*Before .....*

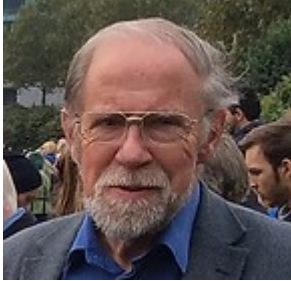


*.....and after*

Following a tender process, MACS awarded the contract to Powerplus, a supplier we have used before. Installation began in August, and was completed in September. We have used high quality lithium batteries, which require less maintenance, and have installed low power LED bulbs, to make the power go further. The system can be charged either from the solar panels, or the mains, and should give the girls and their teachers reliable power for their evening studies, and light for convenience and security in their dormitories.

“Zikomo Kwambiri!”

# REFLECTIONS



On January 1<sup>st</sup> 2023, **Tony Cox** retired as Chairman of MACS, having taken up the post in September 2016. In that time, he has guided MACS through a tumultuous time, overseeing some far-reaching achievements.

These include:

- securing our governance, to ensure that we meet stringent Charity Commission requirements.
- closing MACS original charity and transferring to a CIO.
- steering us through Covid and managing Zoom meetings and Zoom Supporters' Day all the while keeping us on the right path as trustees.
- instituting major appeals which have funded the new operating theatre at St. Luke's and solar lighting at St. Michael's Girls School, Malindi, and at seven health centres
- funding primary school classrooms

Martin Herrick, our incoming chairman, asked Tony to reflect on the last six and a half years.

## What have been the most satisfying achievements?

My twelve years working in Malawi taught me that people are so much more important than buildings. So, it is helping the ordinary people of Malawi that has given me most satisfaction.

300 patients have been helped by having a second operating theatre at St. Luke's Hospital over the two years since the new, **two theatre, operating suite** opened. These have mostly been women needing caesarean sections. Having two theatres means emergency births can be dealt with faster with no wait for the other theatre to be clear.

600 girls at St. Michael's Girls' Secondary School, Malindi can now study after dark as never before thanks to the new **solar panels** in study rooms and hostels.

**Eight classroom blocks** in the Diocese of Lake Malawi have allowed more than 500 primary school pupils to be educated out of the rain.

Over 200 students at St. Michael's Girls' Secondary School and Malosa Secondary School have been assisted by **bursaries**. Even if just one of these students has gone on to change lives for the better in their community, then that money will have been well spent.

And most recently we have been able to double the number of women from rural communities attending the **six-month home-craft management course** at the Chilema Ecumenical Lay Training Centre. For these women training in later life has enabled them to become a significant support for their communities.

### **What has been your favourite project?**

The new operating theatre suite at St. Luke's. To some extent, this is because it was my local hospital while I was headmaster at Malosa and my wife served as a doctor there in the 1970s. This was also MACS' first major formal appeal, and our biggest ever project. But most importantly, it has helped, and will continue to help, so many people. The only qualification required to guarantee priority is to be pregnant and have a difficult labour!

### **What has been your biggest challenge?**

It has been difficult to balance the competing needs and requests from partners in Malawi - education vs. medicine vs. parishes - as different trustees understandably promote the areas of work for which they are responsible.

The other major challenge has been converting MACS to become a CIO. This was necessary in order to ensure that trustees were not held liable for errors made 5,000 miles away. It was also important to make our constitution more precise - for instance, the old constitution was very vague on how to define a 'member'.

### **Any regrets about ideas you have not been able to realise?**

It has been difficult to generate fresh ideas. I believe that we need a flow of new trustees as more long-serving ones reach the end of their time. That will be the biggest challenge for the new chairman.

Tony will remain as a trustee. However, we owe Tony an enormous debt of gratitude for what he has already achieved. He leaves huge boots to fill!



This challenge has been taken up by **Martin Herrick**. Martin has been a trustee for five and a half years and has experience of working at both St Luke's and St Anne's. He will be visiting Malawi with the Project Officer later this year and we will hear more from him in the next newsletter.

## EQUIPMENT FOR ST. ANNE'S MATERNITY UNIT

Using the final funds from the bequest of a former supporter who was once a midwife at St. Anne's Mission Hospital, Nkhotakota, MACS has purchased equipment for use by midwives and doctors for pregnant women and newborn infants that need extra help after birth. These items were chosen by the staff of St. Anne's now that the renovated Maternity Unit and Operating Theatre are up and running. Women often choose St. Anne's even though small fees are payable, and numbers attending are increasing rapidly.

The Nursing Officer and Maternity Ward In-charge, Charles Muonja, had this to say when thanking MACS and supporters: *"With this equipment you donated to St. Anne's Hospital, many lives of newly born babies are (being) and will be saved".*



**The Radiant Warmer** (pictured above) is an important piece of equipment for newborn babies born prematurely or having other problems at birth such as labour complications or being born smaller than normal, perhaps because the mother was unwell or malnourished. Why the need for heat in Africa? Babies cool down very fast after birth even in high ambient temperatures and reliable warmth is important, especially as extra energy and oxygen is used up just to keep warm, and small and premature babies are less able to regulate their own body temperature. This can be provided by the mother's warm body and being dried quickly, but this is not always enough. Drying, warming, and ensuring the airway is clear and oxygen reaches the baby's

lungs can all be done without a radiant warmer. However it is so much easier with the radiant warmer providing heat while the staff help in other ways on the mattress under the heater. The warmer also has suction apparatus and an oxygen cylinder so the equipment enables staff to provide care more quickly.



**Obstetric delivery bed.** Women can safely give birth anywhere and in any position with good care but specialised beds are really helpful when women encounter difficulties in labour and birth. These beds can be configured so that midwives and doctors can better provide the care needed, including complicated and operative births if necessary. Assisting women at the birth with a saggy old bed is not an easy task!

**The Blood Analyser** (pictured below) is a very complex and expensive piece of equipment that enables St. Anne's staff to analyse the components of blood taken from women and babies. The staff can then better understand what is happening to them and how problems can be put right. Without an up-to-date analyser, and the knowledge to use and maintain it, blood samples have to be sent elsewhere which can cause significant delays.



For the technically-minded amongst you, Mr. Muonja explains that the Haematology Analyser is used to carry out complete blood counts, analyse individual blood components of the mother and baby, and test how well blood coagulates.

Such a complex piece of equipment has also to be accompanied by training in maintenance and repair, with access to these services and parts. So often donated equipment has to be abandoned when these are lacking.

And finally, from Jesman Seva of the Dept. of Education and Health at the Diocese of Lake Malawi, Acting Hospital Administrator at St. Anne's Mission Hospital – and Head Teacher of Bishop Mtekateka Secondary School:

*“The face of the hospital has greatly changed. The equipment was really lacking – and thanks for coming to our immediate rescue. We don't take this donation for granted. You have given a special gift to the people of Nkhotakota and the surrounding district. MACS has lifted the hospital to greater heights. God bless you all”.*

## **NEW PROJECTS approved since last newsletter**

A combination of severely reduced income and fewer applications from Malawi has resulted in our approving very few projects since the last newsletter. It is hoped that the Project Officer's forthcoming trip to Malawi in May will result in more applications, possibly for smaller projects in the current economic climate.

The following have been approved:

- Refurbishment of an existing storeroom at Chilema Ecumenical Lay Training Centre to provide a temporary library.
- £10,000 to St Anne's Hospital, Nkhotakota, to buy neo-natal equipment, a delivery bed and a blood analyser.
- A double classroom block at Nthumbo FP school in Namachete Parish DLM.
- A review of the bursary scheme funds in order to take into account the significant increase in fees this



## MACS BURSARY SCHEME

In light of a significant rise in school fees, after a similar increase in 2021/22 year, trustees have had to take the difficult decision to reduce the number of bursaries offered at Malosa Secondary School and St Michael's Girls' School, Malindi, from four new bursars each year to two in the 2022/23 academic year. As each bursary covers a student's full four years at secondary school, future fee rises have to be anticipated. This will be reviewed again in September when a decision has to be made concerning how many students we can support in 2023/24.

MACS currently supports ten students at St Michael's and seven at Malosa from general funds while further students are supported through the Bishop Donald Arden fund and by the Bishop Ramsey School.

These bursaries are a lifeline without which some of the brightest students in the country, who have been selected through National examinations to attend Malosa and St Michael's. Without this support they might not be able to complete their secondary education. Here are some extracts from their letters:

*'It is my pleasure to have people like you in my life to shower me with love through paying my school fees. I am very thankful to you for giving me the opportunity to continue my education, which would not otherwise have been possible. I would also like to give you a special thanks for holding my hand from Form 1 up to form 4.'*

*'I am in form 4 and am 18 years old. I am the first born daughter in my family. My parents do their best to fulfil their responsibility to me but are poor and cannot pay my school fees. You stepped in and gave me the opportunity to continue with my education. For this I say thank you. After leaving school I want to go on to college and become a nurse.'*

*'I would like to thank you for what you have been doing for me since form 1 in terms of paying my school fees. I really appreciate this and do not take it for granted. Without your help I could never have been at this school. It is my fourth year now. It has been a long journey since form 1 up to this point but you are still together with me assisting with my future.'*

*'I am 17 years of age and now in form 4. I have three siblings and my family rely on farming for consumption only. They could not afford to pay my school fees. I am very glad that I am now finishing my secondary education with your help, which I really appreciate. I look forward to this helping me to achieve my dream of becoming a doctor.'*

*'It is not easy for me to be at school. I want to say thank you for your support as without this I would have to drop out of school. I promise to work hard to show my appreciation for the bursary.'*



## **2023 MACS Supporters' Day** **10.30 Saturday September 23<sup>rd</sup>**



**To include interviews with  
Grafiud Tione, our Malawi Representative,  
and other partners in Malawi.**

**Join us on Zoom by contacting the Secretary  
at [info@malawimacs.org](mailto:info@malawimacs.org)**

*Then, in the week beginning Monday 18th September you will be sent an invitation to the Zoom meeting by email, along with an electronic copy of any papers for the meeting.*

### **MACS WHO'S WHO**

**Patron:** Jane Arden, MBE

**Chairman:** Martin Herrick

email: [chairman@malawimacs.org](mailto:chairman@malawimacs.org)

**Secretary:** Julie Lupton

The Cottage, 72 North Street, Biddenden, Kent, TN27 8AS

Tel: 01580 291 658 email: [info@malawimacs.org](mailto:info@malawimacs.org)

**Treasurer:** Colin Gardner

217 Main Road, Hawkwell, Essex, SS5 4EQ

Tel: 01268 920 052 email: [treasurer@malawimacs.org](mailto:treasurer@malawimacs.org)

**Projects:** Eileen Eggington

Tel: 07771 870424 email: [projectofficer@malawimacs.org](mailto:projectofficer@malawimacs.org)

**Trustees:** Gillian Barber, Adrian Brown, Margaret Campbell,  
Tony Cox, Richard Davies, Brian Griffin, Janice Price.

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