

### HARNESSING THE POWER OF THE SUN



St Luke's Hospital in southern Malawi is harnessing the power of the sun for its laboratory, paediatric and maternity units as well as a new operating theatre. Thanks to the generosity of the people of the parish of Kingston Bagpuize in Oxfordshire and in memory of Fiona Beer (Davidson) who had worked tirelessly to raise funds for Malawi, MACS has been able to fund this project. The prospect of clean, cheap electricity is a sign of hope for the future, offering a partial solution to Malawi's power crisis.

For the fortunate 10% of Malawians who have an electrical connection, power black-outs are now a daily occurrence, often

allowing only a few hours of power in a day. For homes and offices, power cuts are frustrating, for hospital and clinics it can be a matter of life and death.

Institutions that can afford to operate a back-up system using diesel generators but the price of diesel is rising rapidly and a reliable and cheap alternative is essential. The hope must be that solar power is the answer.

At present all electricity in Malawi is generated through hydro-electric schemes. However, a combination of last year's El Niño-caused drought and deforestation

all over the country has undermined the nation's already strained production of hydroelectricity.

The Minister of Natural Resources, Energy and Mining, Bright Msaka, stated recently that "Preliminary estimates, based on the 2015/16 Lake Malawi level profile, indicate that with the available flows, the available power plants will only be able to generate up to 50% from their capacity." Despite several weeks of good rains at the end of 2016 ESCOM has said that water levels in the lake have only increased by an insignificant 20 millimetres since the beginning of the rainy season. Blackouts are coming with full force again.

Poor rain in 2015-16 means no water in the rivers and no water in the rivers means nothing to drive the turbines in the power stations. So no water means no electricity – and people turn to charcoal.

Charcoal is produced by burning freshly felled wood without oxygen in dirt kilns. Freshly felled wood means fewer trees so the ground is less able to absorb water in the rainy season and to gradually surrender it during the rest of the year. The result is dried up rivers and no means of driving the turbines which produce the electricity



hence the demand for charcoal - and the vicious cycle is complete. Nearly all of the charcoal produced in Malawi is illegal. In several areas soldiers have been deployed in the forests to deter illegal charcoal producers but it continues to be sold openly along the roadside.

To reduce the pressure on the available power, the Government has procured two million Energy Saver Bulbs which are being distributed freely to households in high density areas.

In isolated rural schools where there is no electricity, MACS is distributing individual solar lanterns to teachers so that they can prepare lessons properly in a country where darkness falls around 6pm throughout the year. Our hope is that harnessing the power of the sun will make a real difference to teachers and pupils in remote rural areas as well as to the staff and patients at St Luke's.

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## TRUSTEE PROFILE: Tony Cable

Tony became a trustee in May 2016. He is a retired Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors who spent a good deal of his working life in south Essex where he acquired specialised knowledge and experience of residential building pathology and also construction quality on small building projects. As a regional director in one of the major surveying firms his hands-on experience included surveying property throughout the eastern region of the UK.

His interest in building projects in developing countries has developed from trips to Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka. Tony has taken part in short term missions with his

local church to Sri Lanka and the Navajo Nation in New Mexico.

Tony and his wife Simone also lead a ministry to new age and alternative spirituality seekers appearing several times a year at major shows in London and Birmingham.

He is looking forward to his first trip to Malawi in May this year.



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## PROJECT UPDATES

### A new kitchen and office for the Mothers' Union volunteers at Balaka Nursery

When MACS Project Officer Eileen Eggington visited in June 2016, the MU kitchen and offices only needed a few finishing touches; the building is now in full use. Mothers' Union volunteers were



cooking outside but now enjoy the spacious kitchen which shelters them from heavy rains and hot sun. Eileen was able to hand over a little money to two of the volunteer carers to help buy food for the children - a gift from her friend, 102 year old Catherine Freeman.

### Happy staff and children at Monkey Bay Primary School.

MACS has funded ten new pit latrines and privacy walls at the homes of ten teachers. The old ones were built many years ago and were no longer fit for use! Here is teacher James Kachemwe and teacher Chawinga Aliman with a few of the excited children.



### A strong church roof for St Steven's Makanjira

Archdeacon John Mchakama (far right) and the church committee at Makanjira, a small rural town near the eastern shore of Lake Malawi, are rightly proud of their new church roof, built with funds from MACS for the labour, roofing sheets and timber. Church members have raised their own funds to build the foundations and walls and will now need to continue fundraising to complete the windows, doors, flooring, plastering and painting. During the week the building will be used for a number of community activities.



### Four staff houses at Lulanga get a makeover and new solar panels

Trustee Brian Griffin meets the senior nurse midwife outside his newly refurbished house at Lulanga, a deeply rural health centre which is near to the eastern shore of Lake Malawi and close to the border with Mozambique. The poor houses contributed to staffing problems but now four nurse midwives are being comfortably accommodated and are likely to remain, despite its remote location.



## St Luke's Church Watford and St Laurence Abbots Langley continue their support for Nkasala Health Centre

St Luke's and St Laurence churches have shown huge financial and prayer commitment to the Health Centre in rural Nkasala, in the foothills of Zomba Mountain. They have provided funds, through MACS, for the building of a new maternity ward and, more recently, added beds and other equipment, plus a new placenta pit and incinerator. Mr Winasi Boma, Principal Administrator from St Luke's Hospital, who also manages five health centres, said, "We are so thankful for all these wonderful improvements. Now many more women are confident to come to Nkasala to give birth to their babies."



## MACS BRINGS FOOD TO THE HUNGRY

Floods and then drought have hit Malawi since the start of 2015. The result has been that crops have failed for the second year running and 6.5 million people are now in need of food aid. An appeal from the Anglican Council in Malawi for \$50,000 brought a grant of \$9,000 from MACS to add to gifts from USA and Britain.

The latest report from Malawi tells the story of Mphatso, a sixteen year old girl in Form 3 at a boarding community secondary school. Mphatso comes from a poor family. She is supposed to be in school but she is still at home because her parents have failed to raise her school fees. She said they can only eat porridge most of the time and if they eat a meal twice in a day then it's porridge in the morning and again for supper. She was thankful to the church for the maize given to her family because she said she will take half of the portion to school next week because there they have to cook for themselves. Mphatso said she wants to finish school so that she will be able to support her parents in future.



Mphatso prepares to take her precious 25kg bag of maize back to her parents

## CASH FOR OLD BOOKS



*Trustee Richard Davies writes:* Sadly Beryl's husband passed away in 2016. Shortly afterwards she was visiting her two sisters at the Church I attend. I happened to be speaking at the "Senior Moments" meeting about "Amazing Grace". In the introduction I talked about the amazing cricketer W. G. Grace. At the end of the meeting Beryl approached me and asked if I was interested in cricket; I confirmed that in my wife's eyes I love cricket more than her!

Beryl said that her husband had a collection of Wisden Almanacs, the cricket lover's

Bible, that she was going to give away to a charity shop and asked if I would like to look at them. I offered to not only look at them but to see if they were worth anything. The next week one of the sisters dropped off forty two copies of Wisden from the years 1914 to 1956 and added that Beryl had said, I could have half of any money I made from them. I could see that my wife feared that I wanted to keep them!

I took them to a dealer who looked them over and seemed very excited and immediately offered £3000 for them but I had already said I would give first refusal to a friend who I knew collected Wisdens. When I told him the dealer's offer he immediately wrote me a cheque for £4000 and left a very happy cricket fan.

Beryl was true to her word and I had £2000 to split between MACS and the Gideons. The proceeds of those forty two old books are now helping those in need in Malawi. Perhaps you have old books or other items that could be sold for MACS?

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## NON-UNIFORM DAY WITH A DIFFERENCE!

Although primary education in Malawi is free, students are required to purchase their own school uniform, pens, and notebooks, which many families find difficult. Most children own only one school uniform and in many schools, one day a week is a non-uniform day to enable parents to wash (and repair) the uniform. It is often the busiest day of the week in school because those parents who cannot afford any uniform will send their children to school on that one day when the lack of uniform is not noticed.



## NEW PROJECTS

**The following projects have been approved since the last Newsletter**

- Roofing St Anna Church, Chia Chilipa
- Remedial work on retaining walls at Malosa Secondary School hostels
- Repair of broken sewage pipe at Malosa
- Renovation of staff houses at Nkasala Health Centre
- Replacing a water pump at St Michael's Girls' School
- A new medical assistant's house at Nkope
- A teacher's house at Magomero
- Two classrooms at Kayoyo



**From the Gift List and mini projects**

Recent deliveries:

- £800 of equipment to Nkope School for Blind and low vision children

Recent orders:

- £800 Solar lamps for teachers who have no electricity
- 20 flip chart easels ordered from local craftsman

## THANKS TO YOU!



We know that people in Malawi are very grateful to all of you who support MACS with your gifts of time, specific items or money.

We would like to thank all of you who support MACS either by organising fundraising events, giving regularly by standing order, remembering MACS in your will, donating funds following memorial services, purchasing gifts from our Gift List or organising church collections.

## WHO'S WHO

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**Trustees:** Jane Arden, Gillian Barber,  
Richard Barton, Tony Cable, Richard Davies,  
Brian Griffin & Sally Huband

## SUPPORTERS' DAY & ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2017

**Saturday 23 September  
11:00 - 3:30pm**

**St Saviour's Hall, St George's Square  
Pimlico SW1V 3QW**

**11.00 AGM followed by Eucharist**

**Lunch**

**Afternoon Speakers**

**Please bring your lunch  
We will provide drinks!**

**Friends and  
family welcome!**

## ALTERNATIVE GIFT LIST NOT JUST FOR CHRISTMAS!

**Please support our work by buying alternative presents for  
birthdays and anniversaries**

**Gifts from £5-£60**

**Join our mailing list to receive a copy by email or post**