

ROTARY CLUB OF SHERBORNE CASTLES

Milo River Bridge Project and others - Malawi

Email from Marjorie and David Pearson dated 16.02.13

Dear Everyone

Apologies for sending a "community letter" but it is the only way we can let everyone know our news when communication is so difficult in Malawi. We have to take advantage of the system working at the moment.

We arrived here on the 2nd of Feb and we had 3 days of sunshine, since then we have had torrential rain and thunder and lightning both day and night. Even the Malawians say "this is too much"

The projects we are working on are moving very slowly as driving and walking on the muddy roads is extremely difficult. Even the Joshua 4x4 struggles at times.

The bridge has been completed and we saw it just before the rains started. It is amazing to see the difference it has made to the community and the children being able to cross the river to go to school safely, especially during these last weeks. There was much excitement from the ladies who carry large bags of maize and the children who carry the maize to the feeding centre across the river. We have not been able to see the river in full flood as it is impossible to take the vehicle there.

We saw the maize mill machinery at the manufacturers yesterday. All we need now is a vehicle which will transport the machinery to the village up and down the muddy 1 in 3 roads. Marjorie has been walking on these roads to school and has been slipping and sliding down the hills. The journey usually takes her about 3/4 hour this week it has taken about 1 1/4 hours.

The electrician is working hard to complete the fittings at the hospital and the maize mill so it will not be too long before the big switch on. The people who will run the mill have been appointed today so the villagers know that things are moving on

The sewing group is doing well. We hope that they will be able to produce the uniforms for Joshua Sponsored Students. They have 7 fully qualified tailors now. Renford, who is the machine mechanic, is so looking forward to making the electric machines work. There are no sockets in the sewing room at the moment !

The school continues to progress. Although with most of the money coming from sponsored students we must ensure a good pass rate from them or the finances from the UK could dry up. Many of the sponsored students have very difficult lives at home and find it hard to study whilst looking after siblings or sick mothers and fathers and they have very little food. The training of teachers continues. Most of them are unqualified but "upwards and onwards" as they say. We can only do our best.

Marjorie spent some time with a doctor at a Joshua feeding centre. The doctor was monitoring the health of the children. About 40% were HIV positive and need the special drugs which are difficult to obtain in Malawi. Most were suffering from malnutrition and were underweight. The work of the feeding centre is so important as the children have one meal of porridge from here every day

David is once again spending his time with government officials, building contractors, electricians, etc. The only man who constantly avoids him is the Director of Public works. But little does he know David and before the month is out he WILL discuss the state of the road from Manyowe to the village of Pensulo where the mill is to be installed.

Sylvia the Trust Director is in the UK at the moment and we are house sitting. We have 4 staff and 3 dogs to look after. We need to learn Chichewa very quickly. Another challenge. In fact it really is much quicker to do the job yourself.

We are very well and we are enjoying working with our Malawian friends. They are so relaxed and enjoy life although they have very little of this worlds goods.

Our planned date to return to the UK was early March but this could be delayed if the weather does not improve

Hope all is well with you and your families.

Take Care and keep in touch.

See you all very soon.

Love

David and Marjorie

PS. It is still raining !! and David is wearing his pullover and we have a blanket on the bed.