



# The Mary Wood Trust Newsletter

Charity Number 1144311

## MAY 2020

This newsletter is being compiled during the coronavirus lockdown, when many people are struggling to cope with self-isolation, safe distancing, limited time outdoors, changes to working environments and even loss of jobs. We are however very fortunate here in the UK to have a National Health Service that is now able to cope with both Covid-19 cases as well as the regular health problems that affect us daily. Oliver and I returned from a 3-week trip to Uganda towards the end of March, flying out on the last KLM flight from Entebbe Airport, before it closed. By then all schools, universities, churches, markets, and most public transport were closed. As I write this the number of confirmed Covid-19 cases in Uganda has reached 116. This seems incredibly low but then one should remember that testing is very limited, and as travelling is limited so the statistics of those affected is possibly not being reported very well. We understand that there is also a lot of suffering due to food shortages, and within the church many church workers are not getting any money as they rely on weekly church congregations for their salaries. Life is not easy at all and on top of all that an expected swarm of locusts is also threatening to devastate the crops of many of the peasant farmers in Kinkiizi Diocese. We thank you all for your continued love and support for the poor and needy in Kanungu District.

### NYAKABUNGO GIRLS' SECONDARY SCHOOL

The school has seen an increase in the number of students this year, with 192 registering for the first term in February. I am always surprised by the way the students just drift back over the first few weeks of the term, which is very different to any boarding schools in the UK. But in all honesty, it is not surprising at all when you consider the geographical remoteness of the school, the terrible travel conditions to get to the school and of course the impoverished backgrounds of many of the girls which means that they often cannot afford the essential items needed when reporting back at school.

The much-improved O and A level results at the end of 2019 were a great cause for celebration and I am sure helped the school to attract more students. We must thank the head teacher and the staff for their dedication and good leadership and congratulate three Mary Wood Trust girls - Agnes, Shyne, and Precious, who all achieved Division 1 in their O levels. We trust that they will continue to work hard in the 6<sup>th</sup> form and get good results.

### Mary Wood Day

Each year, on March 8<sup>th</sup>, Mary Wood Day is celebrated along with International Women's Day. It is a great way to give thanks for the lives of strong and influential women everywhere and also to remember the vision that Mary Wood and Bishop John Ntegyereize had for the school in the year 2000. Since those days the school has had many challenges but the Mary Wood Trust has helped the school to become what it is today. There is still much that could be done, especially regarding structural maintenance work, but considering the background challenges that the students face it always surprises me what they do achieve.

It was so good to be able to attend these special celebrations this year although giving a sermon in my dark prescription sunglasses (I had left my ordinary reading glasses behind) might have sparked more interest and intrigue than the actual words of my message! After the service and formal speeches, the girls were then allowed to have fun – local Rukiga dancing, musical chairs, races, a fashion show and a dance competition. As well as everyone having a great time, it was also wonderful to see the new music/PA system in use. You may all remember the I Stand bag project which Jessica and Emily set up after their visit with us to Uganda last summer. Well, all the lovely cotton bags made by the girls at the school were sold, mostly in the UK. The profits from these sales are what has bought this music system. A great achievement - by both the sewers and the sellers!

I will say more about the next phase in the sewing project below.



The New Music System



Molly and Clare Cutting the Celebratory Cake



**Some of the mothers joining in with the dancing**

**Fine Arts**

It is the first time for many years that I have had a look around the Fine Arts room. I was both amazed and saddened. Amazed at some of the artistic skills but also saddened by the lack of equipment. This subject is offered at both O and A Level and yet there were no paints, felt tip pens, paper, charcoal and shading pencils. The teacher is very enthusiastic but he has very little to work with. It would be so great if we could help them provide some of essential equipment that they so desperately need.



**BAGS BAGS BAGS**

The Cliff Smith Sewing Room is proving to be a wonderful asset to the school and as mentioned above, we now have 80 cotton bags for sale (and a few "mats"), made by the girls at NGSS, they are all individual! Some of them have outside front pockets and a few with zips. The sizes do vary a little and as you can see the materials used are very bright and very African. The price of the bags ranges from £8 to £10. We hope that the proceeds from selling this next consignment of bags will be enough for the school to buy more sewing machines, plus an overlocking machine. Sewing and tailoring is now being studied as a new O-level and, so far, 13 girls have registered for this. The school now needs to purchase 5 more machines so that each O level student has a machine to work at. It is very exciting to see how much the girls are enjoying learning this new skill, which will provide them with very useful skills for their future lives.

If you would like to purchase a bag or bags, please do get in touch for more details. Any purchase you make will not only help the girls but also help the environment!



## RUTH MEMORIAL NURSERY SCHOOL

It is always a joy to visit Ruth Memorial Nursery School and this year was no exception. The children are well trained by their teachers and love to sing and dance for visitors. It was obvious that more children are now wearing a uniform and I got the sense that there is a bit more structure now in place at the nursery school. The new verandahs and classroom floors are a vast improvement and make it much easier to keep the place clean. The new office table and chairs are a great asset as well as the new double desks. It is great to see the children enjoying the outdoor play equipment but as with most children's toys, they don't last forever, especially when being used by so many. Ephraim showed us a broken see-saw and the torn footballs. Before we left Uganda, we bought new balls for the school and replenished the supply of paint and brushes, so that the children could continue to enjoy these. We hope eventually to be able to provide more slides and see-saws when funds allow.

We are so grateful to those who support Ruth Memorial Nursery School, which provides a safe learning environment for some of the most needy children in the area. Ephraim honestly admits that without our help the school would not be able to function.



New Desks



Children enjoying eggs, biscuits and juice



New table and chairs for the office



Wall posters

## UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

We now have several students at Bishop Barham College, which is part of the Uganda Christian University. These are all girls that we have sponsored through Nyakabungo Girls Secondary School. and it is wonderful that we can help them on this next rung of the educational ladder. Some are studying for degrees and some for diplomas. They gave us a wonderful guided tour around the college, and we were impressed by the hostels and other facilities, especially the library. It is housed in an old church, stocks over 40,000 books, and is quite amazing.

Our girls seem very happy there although I think sometime the food has much to be desired. This is perhaps no different from many other institutions.

After much chatting and girly excitement, we then went to a restaurant in town for a buffet lunch. There was no doubt that everyone enjoyed themselves. And I felt very proud of the lovely young women that the NGSS 'old girls' are maturing into.



## NYAKATARE HEALTH CENTRE

There have been a number of changes at Nyakatare Health Centre since Christmas. The administrator, Ritah Katumbah, felt that after 10 years in the post, away from her family, she would like to go home. She has done a wonderful job being in charge of NHC and she will be greatly missed by the diocese, by her staff, by the people she has served and also by us. Nexon Tusiime is now 'acting in charge' and he is doing his best to keep the place running smoothly. We also heard that the dentist, Peter Muhenda has also left. This really does leave a huge void in the facilities offered by the health centre and we hope that a replacement will be found before too long. As I have mentioned before, this whole area of Kanungi District is quite remote, far away from big towns and cities, and it can be very difficult indeed to find dedicated and committed people to take up these posts.

We handed over toothbrushes that had generously been given by our local dentist and we were pleased to see a baby and infant clinic in progress and handed out a few baby clothes where needed.



## TREASURER'S REPORT

The Mary Wood Trust has continued to be truly blessed by a committed and growing group of supporters. We are very grateful for this as we continue to support and enable the education of needy young girls at Nyakabungo Girls Secondary School, and boys and girls at Ruth Memorial Nursery School, and continue to support several "Old-Girls" from NGSS into Further Education. This last year we have seen both our income and expenditure continue to increase. This is due mainly to the increased number of Further Education students who we now support. Details are in the table below:

INCOME		EXPENDITURE - excluding building project	
2017 - 2018	£32,949	2017 - 2018	£22,419
2018 - 2019	£37,506	2018 - 2019	£24,992
2019 - 2020	£45,932	2019 - 2020	£32,518

In the year 2018 – 2019, we also spent an additional £46,973 on the various building projects that were completed during that time.

Personal Donations direct to bank account	£29,918
HMRC Gift Aid refunds	£4,543
Personal Donations via Stewardship	£3,702
Churches/Trusts	£3,335
Personal Donations via PayPal	£1,898
Other Income	£1,605
eBay Sales	£1,254
Legacy	£467

We receive donations from several different sources and the table to the left details these for the financial year 2019 - 2020:

Reserve Funds	£30,000
NGSS Student Sponsorship Fund	£7,100
NGSS Building incl. New Kitchen	£18,700
Further Education Sponsorship Fund	£12,600
General Fund	£5,577
Everything else – 14 different funds	£8,907

We ended last financial year with a balance of £82,884, of which all is allocated to our various ongoing projects, apart from our General Fund (£5,577). This allows us to run the charity and give when asked towards extra projects that arise through the year. £30,000 is reserved, as recommended by the Charity Commission, in the event of having to close the charity, and yet still be able to fulfil our commitments. Details of our allocated funds are as follows to the nearest £100, at 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020

In general, personal donations cover regular expenditure and building projects are covered by specific donations or fundraising activities.

We are truly thankful for this generous support that you are part of. Without it the Trust would be unable to support the education of these young children and young adults in this way.

Thanks to your generous giving we were once again able to hand out sanitary towels and toilet paper to all the girls at the school.



### Latest News at NGSS

#### **Water**

At long last, we have heard that the water situation at the school is being resolved. The MWT were able to give the water charity, [Watsan](#), who work in SW Uganda, £2,500 from our general fund, towards this work. Watsan are in the process of protecting the community spring and hopefully this will mean that in the dry season, the girls will no longer have to walk some kilometres to collect water.

#### **New Kitchen and Store**

It has been agreed the MWT will build a new kitchen and store at the school, to replace the old and leaking building that they have at present. This will include new 3 cooking ovens, a secure place to store dry goods, a drying area and a covered outside cooking space.

Work will begin on this project as soon as the Covid-19 lockdown is lifted.

We are so grateful for the support towards this project, including a private donation and a gift from a charitable trust. Thank you.

From Trustees:

**Clare, Peter, Kath, Ann and Pippa**

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