

NEWSLETTER



Sunset over beautiful Lake Malawi

DECEMBER 2016

Date for your diary:

JUMBLE SALE

11th MARCH 2017

Please note the different date!!

Killearn Kirk Hall

Friday 10th March:

Hall open for contributions from 5-8pm

Saturday 11th March :

Doors open from 10am till 1pm

We would like to thank all our Friends for their support during 2016 & wish you a happy Christmas and best wishes for 2017

KEN ALLEN'S TRIP TO MALAWI

I had an amazing trip to Malawi for over 2 weeks in September/October, travelling well over 1000 miles from Nsanje District in the extreme south to Mzuzu in the north. I was able to visit many of the projects which KMG has been involved with and discuss possible future projects with local people. I was based in Blantyre, staying with Kondwani Chidziwisano and his family, and Kondwani travelled with me. I am very grateful to him and his brother Victor for their hospitality, for the time they gave me, and for the use of their vehicles.

Nsanje District

It was a really rough journey on the unsurfaced main road from Nsanje Town to the southern border where Chitomeni and Muyang'anira villages are. We met the Veterinary Assistant who has administered the KMG goats scheme and he took us to meet



Meeting with Chief Muyang'anira and the Village Development Group

some of the families who had received goats, following the floods in 2015, and the drought in 2016. Chitomeni village has been abandoned, and the people are dispersed in neighbouring villages. There is desperate need and real hardship here, and people are dependent on food distributed by international NGOs, eg Christian Aid, who have put out major appeals.

In Muyang'anira, I had a very productive meeting with Chief Muyang'anira and the Village Development Committee, aided by Victor Chidziwisano acting as translator. They expressed their gratitude for the borehole we had financed, which has really improved people's lives, and for the goats which have helped some of the most needy



Dave from Chitomeni with his goats

who have suffered in the drought which devastated the crops last season. We discussed the development needs of the village, and they were really pleased at the thought of working in partnership with KMG. We also discussed the sustainability of possible projects, for example, a nursery for the younger children who just hang about the village.

The following day saw me at Nkhande Community Day Secondary School, near Muyang'anira. The school of 200 students has only 4 classrooms, and does not have a library, science or computing block. I discussed a number of issues with the Head

Teacher and his Deputy. I had not realised that he is sight impaired until he told me! He talked frankly about the problems girls face, and how there is a real need for a girls' hostel. I also met members of the Community Council who have financed the school buildings.

At a school assembly outside under the trees, we presented the school with 60 chairs which KMG had provided funds for, and were bought in Blantyre by Victor and Kondwani. The students, who only have old primary school desks, which are much too small for them, were absolutely delighted. We met the recipients of the Killearn-Regson Scholarships, and Gombeza, the Head Boy, told me that he would not have been able to continue at school if he had not received the scholarship. The solar lamps we bought were a great help for his studies, he added.



Head Boy



Students at Nkhande School with their new chairs!

NEWSLETTER

Malawi Trip Continued

When we reached Mzuzu in the north, we stayed at Jamieson House, which KMG commissioned with funds bequeathed by the Jamieson sisters. It is a 4-bedroom house which is used as a base by volunteers who are visiting Malawi to work on various projects, for example dentists or opticians, and is very much valued by them.



Kondwani relaxing in Jamieson House

We met members of the Raven Trust there, and visited the projects we have been involved in. We saw the bridge/walkway which John Challis has been working on; this was his final visit to Malawi as he has now retired from the Raven Trust. We also saw a well which we have helped to repair, and an agricultural project using bullocks and



John Challis at the bridge

ploughs, still unusual in Malawi.

I visited Ekwendeni Mission, with its hospital, School of Nursing and Theological College. This is a Scottish Mission established in the 1890s, now run by the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP).

I was very warmly welcomed in Mzuzu by the Rev Levi Nyondo, the Secretary of the Livingstonia Synod, who is well known in Killearn. At a service (7.30am-10am!) in St Andrews CCAP Church, Mzuzu, in front of a congregation of 1500, I was presented with a Malawian shirt as a token of the thanks from the Synod to the people of Killearn Kirk and KMG for the great support they have given to the congregations of the Synod over many years. This was a complete surprise to me, and somewhat embarrassing, as I was not aware of the full extent of the contacts! But it was a very moving gesture.

I also visited the Kileni (the Malawian version of Killearn!) Craft Centre, Nursery and Primary School, run by Rev Levi and his wife Ruth. I saw the distribution to orphans and their carers of bundles with clothes sent out from Killearn, which had arrived in Mzuzu just a few days before. And I saw the work of the ladies of the Craft Centre, which started the whole project, and bought a mat made with wool sent from Scotland.



Distribution of bundles

I was also able to hand over to Ruth materials for the nursery school which had been donated by the Mulberry Bush Nursery in Killearn. The nursery which we have largely financed, is very attractive, and seems well run, with young, enthusiastic staff. Some of the children were wearing jerseys knitted by expert Killearn knitters!



Spot the Killearn jerseys!

ers!

As you can gather, this was a very busy trip, and there were other visits which I haven't mentioned, eg to Ripple Africa (www.rippleafrica.org). I did manage to have a few days' rest with Kondwani and his family at Lake Malawi, which was as ever incredibly beautiful.

NEWS FROM THE COMMITTEE

At the Committee meeting on 19th November, Jenifer Barrett intimated her decision to retire as Chairperson of KMG. The Committee therefore appointed Ken Allen as Chairperson, who accepted with a limit of 3 years.

Ken paid tribute to the huge contribution which Jenifer has made to KMG. She had set it up, and has been the driving force and heart of the Committee since its inception, and the work which it has achieved over the years can be very much attributed to her enthusiasm and hard work. The Committee wholeheartedly agreed with this. We are also very pleased, and relieved, that Jenifer is remaining as a member of the Committee, as her knowledge and experience are very much appreciated.

Hilary McGregor also intimated her resignation as Secretary, and Ken thanked her for the work she had done over the previous year, in what is often a thankless task. Hilary is also willing to remain on the Committee. The Committee is now looking to appoint a new Secretary, hopefully by the time of the next Committee meeting on February 2nd.

KMG Committee:

Chairperson: Ken Allen

Treasurer: Sue Beck

Secretary: Vacant

Members: Jenifer Barratt, Shona Kelday, Hilary McGregor, Helen Mailer, John Shaw, Doreen Snadden, Jenny Wilks

NEWSLETTER

KILIMANJARO

Ken talks about his expedition to climb Kilimanjaro, Tanzania

This was the toughest expedition I have ever attempted, a 6 day ascent and descent of the highest mountain in Africa, mighty Kilimanjaro, 5,858m (19,341ft) high. I was one of a group of 3 including my brother, Alistair, and a friend, Denis, both of whom live in Ireland. To support us, we had a team of 2 guides, a cook, a waiter and 9 porters. We ascended by the Machame route, longer and harder than other routes, which involved camping. The tents, including a mess tent and a table and chairs, our gear and all the food and cooking equipment were carried by the porters, who were very heavily laden.

I had trained hard for the trip in the month before going, climbing all of the mountains and hills around Killearn, often many times; I climbed Ben Lomond 4 times!

The ascent started very well, and I found the first 2 days, ascending 1000m each day, not too bad, and felt no ill effects as we reached 3900m. The nights, which were clear, were freezing, and my winter sleeping bag was definitely needed! The next day was tough, and I began to feel the effects of the altitude, even though I was taking medication to counteract this. The 4th day was really hard, however, as we went up the Baranco wall, then down and up, about 1400m ascent over the day, till we reached the final camp at 4600m (15,000ft).

We started our final ascent in the dark at 1am, walking by the light of head torches up the rocky, ashy surface. The sunrise over the rocky ridge of Mawenzi was spectacular. Soon after, at around the 5300m mark, the effects of altitude hit me, and I could not get a breath. After struggling on, I realised that it would be dangerous to continue, and decided to go back down. I was going blue, apparently!

I'm pleased that my brother, at 70 the oldest person on the mountain, reached Stella Point on the rim of the volcanic crater, and Denis, who is a marathon runner, made it to Uhuru, the summit.

It was a great disappointment to get so far, but miss out on the summit. However, I was very glad that I made the attempt, and can never forget the astonishing variety of the terrain we climbed through, from tropical cloud forest to bleak volcanic desert, with glaciers. And I can never forget the great support we had from our Tanzanian team, headed by Bazil.

I'm very grateful to all who have contributed to the VirginMoneyGiving site, which will help with the projects we are working on or are planning; for example, we are going ahead with the building of the Science/Library/Computing block at Nkhande Secondary School, and are looking to have desks made for them. To date we have raised £1421.25 (including Gift Aid).

The good news is that the site is still open for contributions!



My first view of Kilimanjaro



Ken, Denis and Alistair



The complete team: with Bazil on Alistair's left



Denis with a porter in the cloud forest



Climbing the Baranco wall



Ken near the summit



Sunrise over Mawenzi

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/kenkilimanjaro>

or contact: killearnmalawi@gmail.com

**REMEMBER
JUMBLE SALE
SATURDAY 11TH MARCH 2017
KILLEARN KIRK HALL
10am—12am**