

PARISH PARTNERSHIP

Wivelsfield's link with St Matthew's Aberdeen, Sierra Leone **BETTER TOGETHER**

NEWSLETTER 71

MARCH 2022

SHIDA'S PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Just after we sent you our last Newsletter in January we had a long e-mail from its proprietor, Palmsy George, and we are happy to share with you some of his news – some good and some not quite so good.

First, the not-so-good. Covid was something that they were coping with but some of the staff had health issues, mostly with malaria and typhoid. Palmsy himself had a problem with his blood pressure in late January (205/123) but, in his own words “it is normalizing gradually”. In addition his son, (Richmond) who, as we reported in the last Newsletter, had been diagnosed with diabetes, is still on medication but seems to be holding his own.

Another problem has been the shortage of water which, at his time of writing, was an issue for the whole of Freetown. Apparently this was even a problem for St Matthew's church despite the fact that it has its own storage tank. Shida does not have storage facilities and to quote Palmsy “Most times, especially on Saturdays, we have to scavenge for water until the early hours of Sunday morning”. He also told us that St. Matthew's vicar, Rev. Georgiana Scott (who has moved from Freetown to live nearer the church) has similar problems.

But, again as Palmsy puts it, “there is so much to be thankful to God for. Shida continues to go from strength to strength. They now even have a TV which they can use in some of their lessons.

They have also been fortunate to receive a donation of toys and books from an American philanthropist, Mrs. Saffie Thomas, who was in Sierra Leone helping schools. She had never heard of Shida but, when she heard of the enormous progress it had made and the sort of things it was achieving, decided to support it. Moreover, she has pledged to help in the future. Testimony, indeed, to all the hard work Palmsy has put into the school.

Palmsy also told us that Shida was to hold an Inter-House athletics meeting on March 5th. We have actually received some film of this and it is a joy to behold. As and when we can get some still pictures we will pass them on. He also mentioned that they were to have their annual Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, March 27th. You might like to hold this in your thoughts in a week's time.

Reading the information we receive it brings home how lucky we are in our country compared to the situation in the parish we support.

KUSH

Continuing on that theme, there was recently a TV documentary on a new scourge that is growing in Sierra Leone, although we have no report of its affects (if any) in our adopted parish.

Kush (or Spice) is a potentially lethal drug made from crushed leaves and sprayed with chemicals. Many young people are using it and it has caused many fatalities.

SPONSORED STUDENTS

They seem to be doing well although, again, there is some sad news.

One of our Muslim students, Nathan Max Macarthy recently died. He was 14 and was due to take his exams which, if he had passed, would have enabled him to move up from Junior School to Senior School.

We do not know the cause of his death but we have sent our condolences via Rev. Georgiana.

BISHOP'S VISIT

In February 2015 the Bishop of Freetown, Rev. Thomas Wilson, was in Britain attending the Anglican Church's Lambeth Conference. During his visit he visited Wivelsfield and preached at both Otehall Chapel and at the Parish Church. Apart from the hospitality we were able to offer, an abiding memory was finding thick coats for him to keep out the cold!

Covid has prevented his attendance at subsequent conferences but we have heard that he plans to come to our country again this year at the end of July and the beginning of August. Being used to the sort of temperatures they are used to in Sierra Leone finding him a coat may not be a problem.

Apart from attending the conference he has expressed a desire to travel a bit in this country and we expect that he will want to include Wivelsfield in his itinerary. This being so we will, as last time, be looking for people to offer hospitality and we will doubtless want to organize a few "events". Last time he very much enjoyed visiting the Cock Inn.

More of that anon.

FEEDBACK

As always, we are always happy to hear from you if you have any observations or questions. I am contactable on 01444 471336 or pssjwelch@gmail.com

Unfortunately my printer is out of action at the moment so those of you who receive this other than by email won't get it until after the date below.

Apologies!

Paul Welch
19/3/22