

Dear Readers

So far have things evolved in Tanzania that we have come to rely on electronic transmission for our information from Kindwitwi. When this fails, as it did for the present Newsletter, we were left with insufficient time to produce the material and wish you Merry Christmas; however, it comes with our sincere greetings and we hope that

All our Readers have a prosperous and peaceful New Year!

As the New Year approaches, we are delighted to tell you that RLT has been able to catch up with modernity. Our website is now up and running! You can access it at:

www.RufijiLeprosyTrust.org

Of course, the capital letters are not needed but we find it easier to check the typing if they are included. There are still some bugs in the system but they will be ironed out soon and if you have any suggestions for improvements or you want us to add your personal observations, please let us know by emailing: valeriemead@hotmail.com.

School link between Utete and Devon

In October Kindwitwi was pleased to host Catherine Banks and her colleague, Robert Logan. They are teachers from a school in Devon, the Queen Elizabeth Community College, and came to visit the local secondary school in Utete, where our successful students study. The visit is to be the first of many because, with the help of the British Council, the two Schools are forming a partnership link. Catherine wrote:

At Utete, we received the warmest of welcomes. Both Robert and I feel it is such a privilege for us to have Utete Secondary as our Global Partnership School. ... We met the staff and discussed our new friendship and how we would enjoy equal but different gains from the link ... Both QE and Utete see their partnership as a long-term, reciprocal relationship in which we share educational ideas and exchange work between students.

You can read Catherine's report on the website, under 'News'.

Clinical Officer

In the June Newsletter, we welcomed Mr Duma to Kindwitwi as the new Clinical Officer. We can now tell you a little more about him. He has a government-funded post and will be in charge of the Polack Dispensary. His work involves looking after the general health of the leprosy patients in addition to that of the villagers in Kindwitwi, Nyanda and Katundu. He will be living in the village and has already moved his satellite dish from Utete to his new home in Kindwitwi! RLT has agreed to upgrade his living quarters by funding the construction of a new latrine. Mr Duma is originally from Dar es Salaam and was working as a clinical officer at Utete hospital prior to moving to Kindwitwi.



Mr Hamisi Duma

New skills, new techniques and new facilities:

Readers of this newsletter are already aware that the infectious diseases ward at Utete hospital is being upgraded with the aid of a generous grant from the Society of St Lazarus.

Once the refurbishment is complete, leprosy patients will be able to have specialist surgery that treat ulcers and then makes skin grafts. Until recently patients had to travel to Dar es Salaam to have this surgery, but Dr Mwinge, Medical Superintendent at the hospital has undertaken specialist surgical training for the procedure and patients can now be treated locally.



Dr Mwinge

As you can see, work is well under way:



In need of refurbishment



Being refurbished

A spin-off from this refurbishment is that it has created work for local craftsmen in the area.

Outreach Work

So far our news has been about work based at either the Kindwitwi Leprosy Centre or at Utege Hospital, but every quarter the Centre staff get organised to go out for days at a time on 'Outreach' work. The Team comprises the medical staff, shoe-maker and driver. Their tasks are:

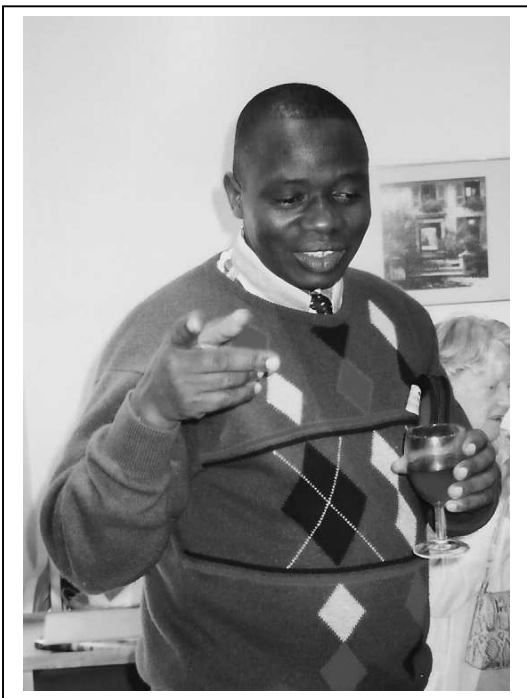
- A. To find new patients, decide on the best course of treatment for each one and, most importantly, help the patient to understand what is involved in the treatment.
- B. To check up on current patients, i.e. those already on medication to ensure that they are progressing as they should. Sometimes patients have an adverse reaction to the anti-leprosy drugs and this, too, has to be treated.
- C. To help patients who have lost the feeling in their hands or feet to protect themselves from injuries because loss of sensation means that these patients do not pay attention to their wounds and then they become infected. This is where the Shoemaker's work comes in: he ensures that the right shoes are issued, some of which he makes specially.
- D. To refer patients for further treatment. For instance, leprosy can cause eye complications and the Team identify those who can be treated more locally in Ikwiriri and others who have to be sent further afield to Dar es Salaam.
- E. To identify patients needing hospital treatment, such as skin grafts, for their wounds; to identify those patients who need the more intensive training in coping with their disabilities and dressings that Kindwitwi Centre can provide. Transport is then arranged for them.
- F. To hold training workshops for local Community Leaders. These encourage leaders to be proactive in persuading their people that modern treatment is better than the traditional methods.

In the last Newsletter we promised to tell you more about our two new Trustees, Burchard Rwamtoga and Stephen Plant.

Both Burchard and Stephen are no strangers to the Rufiji Leprosy Trust. Burchard was Centre Manager for many years and Stephen visited Kindwitwi over twenty years ago and on his return did a spell as Secretary. Here are more details about them:

Burchard Rwamtoga

Burchard worked as the Administrator of Kindwitwi Leprosy Care Centre for 14 years. He was responsible not only for the day-to-day running of the Ward, the Clinic and Dispensary and the Outreach team but also for shepherding the whole Village towards independence and self-sufficiency. He left in 2005 to develop his own career and, having obtained an MA in micro-finance, he is now a consultant with a particular interest in providing micro-credit for people with disabilities.



This photo is of Burchard at the Million Party in London in 2003. This was the occasion when we celebrated raising the millionth pound and no one who had the good fortune to be there will ever forget Burchard's speech!

Stephen Plant

Stephen Plant worked as a volunteer in Kindwitwi from 1986-7 and was also briefly the RLT Secretary. He is a Methodist minister and has worked in ministry in west London, and as Europe Secretary of the British Methodist Church. He is currently Senior Tutor at Wesley House, the Methodist Theological College in Cambridge. He teaches theology and ethics in the Cambridge Theological Federation (a unique ecumenical cooperation of eleven Colleges and training courses in south east England), and in the University of Cambridge Faculty of Divinity. He is a Senior Member of St Edmund's College Cambridge and a Research Associate in the Von Hugel Institute. He has published several books and articles on twentieth century theology, particularly on theological responses to Nazism. He has also written extensively on the theology of international development, on which he is currently completing a book. He is a regular contributor to The Times.



We consider that we are very fortunate to have secured their involvement and extend a very warm welcome to them both.

The Editors