

# Welcome to Africa Unplugged

Promoting greater awareness and understanding through communication and education



AUGUST 2009 UK NEWSLETTER

## Africa Unplugged celebrates a wedding

Congratulations to aup members Phil and Liz who were finally married in the small village church of St. Mary the Virgin in the Oxfordshire village of Longcot. Saturday 13th June was a beautiful day and it was indeed a beautiful wedding. Over a hundred guests attended. The reception was held nearby in the 13th-century stone barn at Great Coxwell. aup founder Chris was best man.

aup Malawi sent their blessings including photographs of a special celebratory drama which was enacted in Siliva Village Church.

Special thanks are due to Phil and Liz because, as well as getting married, they managed to raise £500 for aup. The money will go towards a new bee-keeping project. Training for a few lucky people will be arranged at the local Bee Keepers Development and



Blessings from aup Malawi

Research Association in Nkhata Bay, and an investment will be made in equipment such as hives, suits and smokers. More information in our next newsletter.

### REGIONAL NEWS

Malawi's President Bingu wa Mutharika was recently re-elected for a second 5 year term. He is also president of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Almost 6 million people voted. 2.7 million voted for the president, while 1.2 million voted for John Tembo his nearest rival. The election was peaceful and had a high voter turn-out.

A reported border skirmish in Niassa province Mozambique recently threatened the normally good relations with neighbours Malawi. It is believed that persons wearing Malawian

Border Guard uniforms stormed the local barracks using tear gas and firing shots. The apparent cause was to retrieve a bicycle that had been confiscated from an illegal immigrant. The Mozambican authorities recently strengthened border vigilance to prevent illegal migration and contraband, particularly of maize.

Once again violence has raised its ugly head in the townships in South Africa. Police have fired rubber bullets at demonstrators in a number of different areas. Protests about the lack of basic

services such as water, electricity and housing highlight the huge economic and social challenges facing recently elected President Jacob Zuma.

The first undersea cable to bring high-speed internet access to East Africa has gone live connecting South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda to Europe and Asia. But whether or not this revolution will ever reach the towns and villages of Malawi is a moot point as many still struggle to access reliable electricity.

# Cassava and water

Cassava, a woody shrub, is an important source of food in Malawi, especially for small subsistence farmers. The soft-boiled root can replace boiled potatoes in many uses and cassava flour (also called tapioca) is often used in place of wheat flour. But beware, cassava roots and leaves cannot be consumed raw because they are poisonous; they contain cyanide. To eliminate toxic substances cassava is soaked in water for up to 4 days. Unfortunately, this can create a breeding ground for mosquitoes amongst other things.

As part of their recent cholera awareness campaign, aup Malawi visited many poor areas, including Chisu and Jalawe, where fetching water for many families is a routine daily chore.

When the water holes begin to dry fetching water becomes an even more arduous and un-hygienic task. Our photo top right shows two ladies collecting water near the village of Kambali. The bottom photo shows the large earth pots that are being used to replace stagnant water pools. The pots are also used to soak cassava.

The young lady in the second photo is Elicah Salima. Each morning she wakes at 6 am to look for water in the forests. She said 'it is a tiresome job to fetch water for everyone in the family. Sometimes it can be dangerous because of wild animals or people 'interfering'. And when the water sources dry up there is more time to wait. But as you can see, despite the daily challenges, Elicah is still smiling.

Mbayija Nthali explains that 'cassava is dried on flat rocks, a process which can take up to 4 days. Sometimes, instead of rocks, ladies use reeds placed over poles which are then tied up with string in a pattern (see photo with pots) and the cassava is then put on top'.



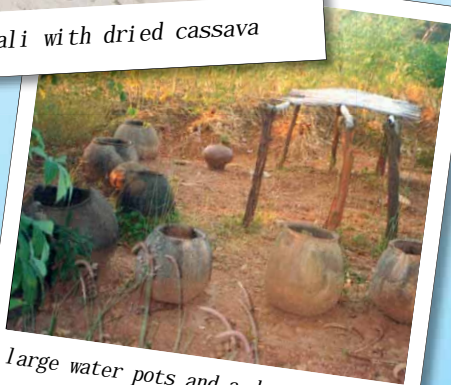
*ladies collecting water near Kambali*



*Elicah Salima carrying water home*



*Mbayija Nthali with dried cassava*



*large water pots and a drying frame*

# Introducing Miss Tryness

Tryness Mangwe joined aup Malawi at the end of 2007 as an assistant in the information and learning centre but now spends part of her time supervising and teaching the children in the Childrens Shelter. Tryness has become a really important member of the team and is well liked and respected.

She is just 24 years old and was born in the nearby village of Usisya but lives locally with her brother. Tryness is a very active person and enjoys playing netball. One day she hopes to have a hair salon.

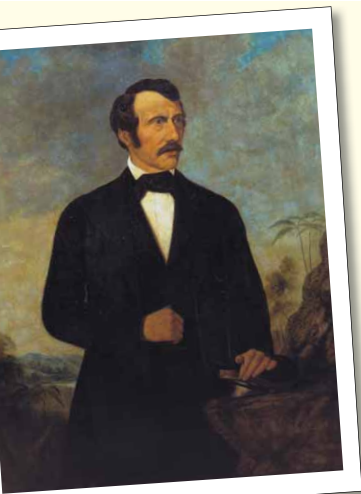


## Hello from the Chikale widows

Recently the Widows found themselves without a show room for their goods as Mama Malawi had temporarily closed. aup came to the rescue and offered the use of the office as a 'sales room' until alternative arrangements could be made. To the left of Mr Happy is Majawi the group treasurer and then chair lady Annie.



*Chikale widows in the aup office*



## 'Dr Livingstone I Presume'

Stanley's famous greeting on finding the 'lost' hero must be engraved on the heart and mind of many school children past and present. Dr Livingstone (1813-1873) was a Scottish missionary and anti-slavery campaigner who became one of the greatest European explorers of Africa. He was perhaps the first European to discover Malawi, where he

is held in high esteem and associations abound. The city of Blantyre is named after his birth place and the northern town of Livingstonia also commemorates his achievements. Livingstone's portrait is reproduced by kind permission of the © Royal Geographical Society with IGB. Want to know more then please visit their website [www.rgs.org](http://www.rgs.org)

# Time for gardening

Now the rainy season is over it is time for gardening. Aup has always been keen support the creation of local vegetable gardens, particularly if they are associated with nursery schools, because they can provide an important nutritional source as well as supplementing the staple foods such as maize, cassava and rice. Over the years we have helped and encouraged the creation of gardens in places as far apart as Mbeya in Tanzania, Cobue in Mozambique and Likoma Island as well as with our friends in Nkhata Bay.

Our photo shows a group of children (students) at Mr Happy's garden in Siliva village where they are being taught the names of the various plants.

Jomoh is in charge of garden projects. There is already a garden at Salawee nursery school and plans are underway to create gardens at both Lakeside and the Blind Hostel.



*Siliva village garden*

## Youth Club begins to gROW

For some months now we have been encouraging our friends in Malawi to set up a youth club for boys and girls under 15 years of age. It is hoped that, as well as playing football and netball, the youngsters can be encouraged to take part in a range of community support activities. Jomoh is taking the lead and our photo shows him 'posing' with the girls football team. We hope to feature the activities of the club in our next issue.





# Celebrating Independence

On 4th July Chris, Phil and Rachel jumped aboard Phil's 'bus' to Nottingham for a show to mark the 45th Independence celebrations for Malawi. Taking part was Malawian music icon Lucius Banda and his Zembani Band. The show also included a Miss Malawi UK pageant which was won by the delightful 18 year old Rudo Minofu.



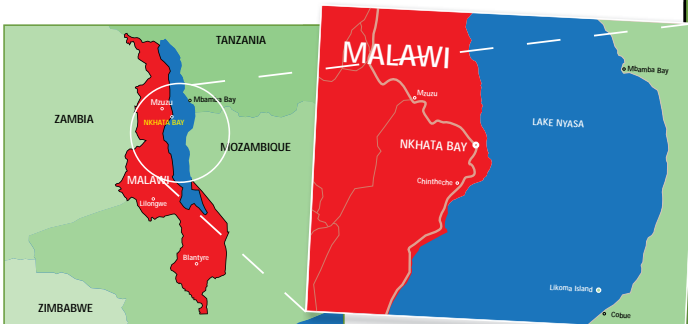
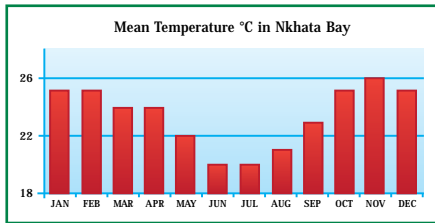
founder Chris with Rudo

## Weather in Nkhata Bay

The weather in Nkhata Bay is generally very pleasant at this time of year. Temperatures hover around 20°C and there is very little rain. There is often cool breeze off the lake and relative humidity has been falling since April.

If you wish to travel further afield remember that the mountainous regions in the north and south can be very wet. In the capital Lilongwe the temperature is rarely uncomfortable.

Conditions in the Shire Valley are typically tropical, but the lowlands in the south are considered unhealthy.



If you would like to know more about any of the projects that we have mentioned or you would like to help in any way please contact:

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Any donations would be very welcome.

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