



Mpika Relief Fund

Working for the relief of hunger and suffering in the heart of Africa

Registered charity No: 1106841

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The Story of our Trip to Zambia 2010

Friday 29/04/10

We arrived in Zambia 10.00 am. The visa was much easier to obtain at airport. We were greeted by Jenny, Fr Stephen and Moses. After a warm welcome and a trip for some provisions, we set off on the long journey to Mpika which is about 450 miles. It was baking hot in Lusaka, the journey was very hard and the road deteriorated to a state that was ridiculous. What were once potholes had become ditches and Moses had to drive slowly and sometimes off road. We arrived at about 9:30 in pain but in high spirits. During the journey we had a chance to have a long talk about plans, difficulties and many other things. Although it was very dark when we arrived we could already see there were new buildings.

Saturday 30/04/10



We awoke early to heavy rainfall, something we had not yet seen here. This is a worry for Jenny as it could ruin the maize crop which is thriving. We were shown around the orphanage and grounds. We were astounded by the amount of new buildings that have appeared since our last visit, including a large hall, sewing and knitting rooms, a garage, several new classrooms, a new bedroom and miraculously a water bore hole. We discussed ways to pump water round the complex. Jenny told how she has managed to find funds for all these new developments. Pete and I discussed what we could do whilst we were here and decided that as a practical project we could give the main babies room a makeover.

Also undergoing completion were three speed bumps, painted black and white, the first zebra crossing in Mpika!, it seems Jenny thinks of everything.

We were introduced to Suzanne a German volunteer who was here for a year funded by the German government. She had apparently caused a lot of problems for Jenny at first, but after a thorough roasting and lecture on Zambian culture, she had become wonderful helper.

Sunday 01/05/10

We had breakfast and discussed many things including sponsorship. Jenny told us of the difficulties she has had. She had not been informed of which children had been sponsored. She also told us of the difficulties of some children being sponsored and not others, of some receiving gifts while others didn't. In particular we discussed one sponsor's involvement, how it went wrong and how it has deeply affected one child. We concluded that no-one was really to blame for this, we are all doing our best and it is a steep learning curve for us all. We discussed how we could best improve things from both sides.

We also discussed the container. I was puzzled when Jenny said that she not received all the things she should have. It works out that all things sent from the shop which were clearly labelled MP1 ext, were used for the orphanage, but 2/3 of the container which was loaded at CART, and Rev Mulenga who was supposed to share the container insisted that all that was not labelled was hers (for a mission church). There was also difficulty unloading but now she will know what to do.

We persuaded some men who were welding to repair the broken swings. We were about to go for a trip to the local market when Jenny received a phone call. The man was coming to raise the container (which is now used for storage of grain and other things) off the ground (as the floor is made of wooden planks). This is not easy in Mpika and it was done with the aid of



a 15 ton bottle jack. This took a long time during which period we began to sketch a plan of the buildings within the orphanage grounds. The plan was to show by colour coding those structures here initially, those here on our second visit, those completed by the third visit and those under construction.

We sat down to supper and Jenny told us some of what had been going on including the small miracle of the baby milk (which I can tell in full).

This took place the previous year when we were having trouble sending money through the bank. The monthly payment had not arrived, so when food supplies were getting low Jenny contacted me. I sent some money by Western Union, but



unfortunately the local Post Office had not enough money to pay her out. She went to the bank where our regular payments are sent and explained her problem, they would not help, Jenny even texted me in England and I rang the bank manager and pleaded with him but he would not budge, she even went round the local shops who sometimes give her credit but to no avail. Poor Jenny was getting distressed, back at the orphanage they were running out of baby milk, only one tin left and five babies to feed. She instructed the helpers to give the babies water during the day and to save the milk for night feeds. She went to her room and deep in thought she could think of nothing else that she could do, she sighed and left it in God's hands. Some time after a Pastor came by; he saw the orphanage and was curious to know more about it. Jenny showed him around and he was very impressed. When they reached the nursery, many of the babies were crying, so the pastor asked why. Jenny explained about the milk shortage and finished by saying 'don't worry somehow God will

provide'. The pastor left, and Jenny returned to her duties. About one hour later the pastor returned with his wife and family and a whole pallet of baby milk. Jenny said in her words, 'June, I cried like a fool, I couldn't stop'. In the end the pastor, his wife all the workers and all the children started crying!

That evening we also talked of those sponsored for schooling initially by another sponsor, and how this had had to be re-directed to other children because of a corrupt head tribesman.

Monday 02/06/10

We had breakfast then after one hour we were looking for Jenny. This place was now so big now you could easily lose people in it. Eventually I rang her mobile phone. She had been summoned to her mother's house, Memory, Sheila and Alice accompanied us there, and we were greeted with a warm welcome. It turned out Jenny was in trouble for not taking us to her mother's house; she wanted to see us and thanked us warmly for the commode and walking stick we had sent on the container. The children love to visit grandma's house.

We had a lovely meal with peppers, sweet potatoes and pumpkin all grown on the farm.

In the evening we continued our conversation about sponsorship, resettling children with relatives when possible and contributing to their education in order to make space for more vulnerable children. Also the children who can be placed with relatives during the holidays do so to take the pressure off staff, some children who have no safe place to go and stay at the orphanage.

We were gradually introduced to the school and orphanage staff. Now there are so many it is taking some time to remember all their names.

Mary is funny, very bright, she kept trying to teach us Bemba (their language) but we were pretty hopeless.

Many people thank us for things on the container, and also it is great to see them all in use all over the place. In particular the hot water boiler is now in the bathroom and saves Catherine carrying boiling water from the charcoal burners outside. The washing machine (that only worked when the electricity was strong enough) was now caput! A power surge finished it off. The electric cooker still works (when there is electricity).

We went on the internet to look at emails, it was also playing up. We managed but it was slow. Jenny also explained that many of the computers we sent cannot

connect to the internet as they have no modems. I wanted to show Jenny a video online of Pump Aid. But even when we tried at the internet café in the village, it still would not play there. **THIS IS THE THIRD WORLD** and being here is the only thing that helps you to understand Jenny's frustrations.

We had been to the sewing room in the orphanage where there are two lady tailors and one man. They make a living and money for the orphanage by creating clothes to sell at school and beyond, they even get orders from other schools. The clothes are beautifully made, and I asked if they could make some African suites for me and Kyah my granddaughter. Nancy took measurements and told me how much cloth to buy. I returned at about 3 o'clock with the cloth and my suite was finished by 6



o'clock.

During the night I had diarrhoea and was violently sick. I must have gone to the loo 20 times!

Tuesday 03/06/10

Jenny called Dr. Tuesday as there were also two sick children. What a relief to have a doctor on call. We concluded I must have drunk some tap water. I was pretty poorly all day but the tablets and the rehydration salts seemed to work.

The poorly children, Beauty and John also had a blood test and tested positive for malaria. Treatment commenced with Demal (a homeopathic anti-malaria treatment brought from England) and they were soon vastly improved. Jenny and Dr. Tuesday both think the Demal is wonderful. Pete, who is suffering a lot from bad headaches and was diagnosed with high blood pressure, should follow it up when we get home.

We are supposed to have gone to Kasama today to take John and Abraham to school (which starts next week) but I was just too ill and we will set off tomorrow (150 miles). We will also take the car for a road fitness test, the equivalent of our MOT.

Wednesday 04/06/10

During the night I had developed a terrible rash. My back, arms and feet in particular were covered in red itchy spots. I gathered it must be an allergic reaction to the drug Dr. Tuesday had given me for diarrhoea

I decided that I did not want to worry Jenny or let Abraham and John down so I hid my rash and braved it. The boys would stay at Jenny's sister's house, Maureen, in Kasama until school opens next Monday.

We stayed overnight in a nice guest house, and had a nice meal. We heard on the news about airport closures in Ireland, Scotland and Wales because of the Icelandic volcano.

The strangest news, teachers in government schools are not going to be paid until the 18th of the month as the government had spent the money on its election campaign. You can't believe it. The impact on everyone is huge, government employment accounts for ¾ of all paid work in Zambia so that means no-one has any money to buy groceries, pay school fees or anything else, unbelievable. We went to bed early as we were both ill.

Thursday 04/06/10

The following morning we headed back to Mpika. Unfortunately we were now so ill that we had to cut short the trip. We had a programme to visit Abraham and John's school and the farm. We were relieved to be back. Two more children had been to the clinic and tested positive for malaria, so treatment started.

Poor Jenny, no wonder she was looking forward to a break for she hardly gets a minute's peace and quiet, there is always someone seeking advice, money or help. The next thing we knew she all the children in the hall. There had been some quarrelling and a small fight. Fighting is strictly forbidden and they had a right roasting!

There are a few children who also board at the orphanage. They are from distant places where there isn't a good school, so they pay to stay but there is a strict rule that they are all equal and must treat each other like brothers and sisters.

Jenny was also worried about Given who has not returned from the bush, where she had spent the school holiday.

It is apparently part of the law of the country that orphans should visit their community (this has apparently become stricter since the Madonna incident). Also adoption laws have been tightened due to some NGOs trafficking children.

Freeman also had not returned, but he had expressed a desire to stay with his sister on a permanent basis. His sister is now a teacher and is capable of supporting him and caring for him, but with the support still in place for schooling.

Jenny went with Clement the head teacher to fetch Given. She came back frustrated, more worried. Given had apparently got an eye infection and instead of sending her back to the orphanage where she could get treatment, fearing his own children would catch it her uncle had sent back to the bush (where Jenny cannot reach). She planned to return another day and request that someone fetches her; if the polite request doesn't work she will threaten them with the school board.

The girls were all singing in the cooking house. They sounded lovely.

Friday 07/06/10

We awoke early to the noise. Pete had kidney pain but was bearing up. I was worried more about him than myself.



Jenny came to see us, worried. I said I was sorry to have been more of a worry and a burden to her than a help. Jenny sat and chatted she talked about how he sometimes felt frustrated by demands made upon her, things are just so much more difficult here, water fails, electricity fails, internet fails and government fails to pay wages. This all impacts on her, as her paying pupils, can't pay until they get paid. Jenny also told us that she had managed raise enough money for a borehole which is massively important in creating a safe secure water supply. Pump, storage and piping are now needed to complete.

Later that day we went to visit Jenny's mum and took her some birthday cake and sugar. She had a sweet tooth. She was very grateful. On the way back we visited a lady called

Mary. Her husband had died six months previously and she was struggling. She had introduced her Dutch friends to the

orphanage and they had helped us. We chatted and bought rulers and pencils and sweets for the children. She was so grateful and said that she would now go to buy food for her parents.

By now I am beginning to feel better.

That afternoon we met two young men who helped repair the computers and asked them what they most needed. They said they would write a list, software is one of the big problems.

We cooked dinner. Afterwards we met a man from ZNBC who had come to collect the TV license fee for their one channel. He laughed and joked with us about how you can pay a license fee for only one channel. We pulled his leg! Jenny asked about why they didn't make a documentary about the orphanage since they were so impressed by with the project. He said we would have to pay. I asked (having heard from Helen that he might know someone who would accompany her to Zambia to make one). If we made our own documentary would you it on ZNBC. He said they would if it was properly edited and well made. He left with a smile and his contact details. I made a homeopathic antidote for my rash. Pete thought I was going nuts, as it involves using a tiny amount of the substance that caused the problem, which is then diluted tapped many times and diluted again, this process is repeated 6 times. Pete was shaking his head in disbelief and laughing at me ' you've lost the plot there is nothing in it' he said, 'but homeopathy works on a vibration I said' He remained a sceptic.

Saturday 08/06/2010

We rose early. Pete was still very ill but determined to stick it out.

After breakfast we set off to see two sites, the first was land secured for a boarding school. The government states that boarding schools should be in a remote area. The site was about a 15 minute drive and 10 minute walk away. Clement, the head teacher and Jenny accompanied us. It was a huge area between some big hills, very nice, but as yet no good road to it which would therefore mean that a road would have to be made before any serious development could take place. We have had rights to this land for two years but if no serious development has started by this time the land can be taken back.

Next we passed by a small site on which two teacher's houses have been built and occupied and a third is under construction. It was pretty basic but nice. There is also a legal requirement that you attempt to provide some accommodation for teachers.

Next we headed for the big farm which is approximately 20 miles from the orphanage. This was a long way off the main road through mountains. This was a very large area which we have gained rights to develop a farm. The area is approximately a square mile and includes a large hill and a river. There are already farm workers living there and a small area has been cleared, cultivated and irrigated

by the river. Crops growing were onions, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, garlic, maize and ground nuts. The soil is rich and totally unpolluted. There were two large stacks where they made and fired bricks.

By the time we headed for home Pete was drip white with pain from his kidneys. I was beetroot red from the heat and exertion. When we arrived back at the orphanage it was very lively. Cars were arriving. Jenny had apparently hired out the school hall for a wedding shower (the equivalent of a wedding reception). This was another clever way of gaining revenue.

We were still very worried about Given. Jenny said if she had not been returned by Sunday night, she would return to her uncle's Monday morning and threaten him with Social Welfare and the School Board.

I was also very worried about Pete so decided to try rubbing tea tree oil on his kidney area to see if it could be absorbed and kill the infection, as he was now very wary of taking any medicine from the doctor (after my reaction).

I did my washing the hard way. Thank god for washing machines!!!

Sunday 09/06/10

It was a bit cooler that morning. Jenny went to church for the early service. We had breakfast. We spent most of the day playing with the kids and cooking. Then to our great joy Given arrived, escorted by a much older brother. We thanked him profusely for bringing her back. He was a nice young man and had walked a long way to borrow a bicycle to bring her back. He said his uncle had refused to feed her and sent her to the village. He hadn't liked what had happened to her or the way she was looking so he brought her back. The other girls were happy to see her. We were all very relieved. We gave the young man some money to buy some provisions for his family that were very poor.

Later that day Jenny went to meet a man at Tazala railway station to buy a large amount of dried fish. She bargains where she can to get a wholesale price.

Afterwards she and Clement went to check on Freeman. Apparently he seems to be ok. Jenny advised his sister to go to the social services and to fill out the necessary paperwork to take over caring for Freeman. Jenny told her to also let us know his requirements. We helped to clear the hall ready for school.



Monday 10/06/10

We got up about 8am by which time the babies were fed, bathed and the rest of the children also. School was already filling up with lots of cars pulling in. It's a popular school and lots of local police/shop owners and professionals want their children to come here. It is regarded as the best school in the area, because of its facilities and English speaking (only English is allowed to be spoken in school, apart from Bemba lessons). After breakfast we went with Jenny to the water board to pay the bill, then to the village to buy supplies and some extra baby formula from the charity.

Jenny was under a lot of demand so in the afternoon we played with the babies for a while and went to see Mary opposite. She has also brought up orphans herself when family members have passed away. Her husband died from prostate cancer which was excruciatingly painful, now her father is ill in hospital and her mother with a broken hip was in a wheelchair. Life is harsh out here, very harsh, you would wish to help everyone but you can't.

Sometime after this we were back at the orphanage. Edward, one of the farm workers had come as we had promised to try and get him some boots. We gave him the money and asked for a receipt, but it turned out he had been trying to get extra money out of us. He also asked us for a contribution towards his daughter's school fees. We said to ask Jenny. Jenny was so disappointed when she found out (as she already supports his daughters schooling,

she has now lost her trust in him. It made her really unsettled as she had already tipped off that one of the workers was selling vegetables. I think she will probably sack him.

During that evening and the next morning we talked a lot about the charity and support from England. We concluded that one of the biggest misconceptions had been that we had to support the entire project from the UK and that requests to limit the number of children etc. had been based on that misconception.

That evening we met with Jenny, she looked fed up. The kids had been in the hall doing their homework but instead she found them jumping on tables and skidding up and down the floor. Aunty K (Catherine) had an amused look on her face, these are kids. These are

the sort of things they do when not supervised. I interjected that maybe we missed the presence of Abraham and John who tended to keep the rest in order when they were around. Jenny joked that one day we would find her in a mental institution.

Tuesday 11/06/2010

Jenny looking worried, still one remaining child has not been returned, Brenda. Jenny is so worried. She was taken for a holiday by her sister but she is out of our reach, and also beyond where there is any network. She considers reporting the matter to the Social Services.

We made breakfast; Jenny has appreciated us making meals for her as she often gets so busy she forgets to eat.

I redrew the layout of the orphanage as the first drawing was not very good and I lost the pad somewhere. I made a key to show how it had developed.

We cooked tea on the charcoal stove, which Pete had now become an expert at.

Wednesday 12/06/2010

We got up at 8 o'clock and made breakfast for all. Brenda had been returned this morning to Jenny's relief though she was looking worse for her holiday.

Apparently the sister had fallen ill and been unable to return her on time.

Breakfast was interrupted by a visit from a nurse. It was international Nurses day which is a celebration of Florence Nightingale the founder of nursing. We went out to watch the parade. It was loud and colourful and we took some photos. The procession had stopped outside the orphanage to honour Jenny, who had a long career in nursing and midwifery.

Later we had noticed that Victor the gardener's boots had large holes and were nearly falling apart. Pete offered to buy him some and asked his size.

We went to the market for them. Upon our return Jenny had a man to interview for a teaching job, he is a retired teacher. Anna was sent for; she is experienced at such things.

We sat and wrote a list of staff and children who are to receive parcels.

Later on we greeted Jennifer and Clement who were having a discussion. It seemed that the two farmers we were to receive their notice as they are not trustworthy. I asked if the man being interviewed was suitable but he was not.

Jenny also explained that she is paying less than minimum wage and has to pay national insurance contributions for all her



workers (then pay half, she pays half). This is to be paid in January along with the equivalent of Council Tax and employer's liability making January a difficult month.

I said that I think she needs at least two, possibly three more nursery staff. At present they are paid K400,000 per month (£55). I also said if we can work out the extra she needs we should be able to increase the payment for January.

Thursday 13/06/10

Jenny is worried about Hazel who was being sick. She also had a lot of blood in her stool so she on anti-dysentery medication and staff are to keep hygiene rules with her.

We go to the bank to get the money for the iron sheets and top ups with petrol in readiness for our trip to the other farm on Saturday. Co-op card was declined. I realised I should have contacted them before setting off to Zambia. So I withdrew from our personal account. Jenny was delighted that she could now continue work on the buildings that had temporarily come to a standstill because of a shortage of funds. Within an hour of returning a truck had arrived with the tin sheets on, the rest are on credit but here they are grateful for any business and know that that Jenny will pay, even if it is in dribs and drabs.

Shortly afterwards an Uncle arrives. He lives near the farm where the workers are in question. Unknown to Jenny and the workers he has been monitoring the workers' activities. It seems they had been absent a lot and had also spent more time cultivating their own patches than the orphanage's. Jenny was sad and disappointed; she had trusted the men, especially the older one so much. He had let her down big style. They are sacked of course, always problems, now she will have to find replacements.

Little Brenda had returned with head sores so we made some ointment with aloe vera gel, lavender oil and tea tree.

We had been given a cockerel as a gift. Instead of eating it Pete decided to buy it two hens to see if we could re-establish egg-laying. The guys sold us two cockerels! Aunty K returned them and came back with two hens. They are going to build a coop under the container.

Friday 14/06/10

We were invited to a special assembly in our honour. Starting with an opening prayer, then all the classes, starting with the baby class, sang and performed plays for us.

They did very well and had a lot of fun.

When we came out some large bags of maize had arrived. Some men were also raising the other side of the container and others are busy finishing the roof with tin sheets.

I decided to try and pick up Helen's emails. Could we connect to the internet, no! We tried three different ways. Eventually Jenny sent her friend who repairs computers.

She explained how much time and money is spent on it.

The water was off all day today! No power cuts yet!

We inquired about mosquito nets but as yet didn't know when we would have any money. The soak away was nearly finished.

Baby Hazel was much better. We measured container for the truck that we were going to purchase, it was 7½ foot wide.



Saturday 15/06/2010

We woke early and got up. Pete had hardly slept with pain and nightmares. Jenny also looked exhausted. She had been awake all night with a poor knee. She has had this a long time but there is no chance of any operation as there are no facilities. There is not even a dentist, correction, Dr. Tuesday is a dentist but has no equipment etc.

Breakfast is interrupted by the first lecture of the day; the girls have left their room in a tip! Jenny gives them a right telling off.

Next it's the boys turn. The other day they were found with toy guns. The father of one of the children who boards here had left them. They had been confiscated but now they were running around with pretend guns some very sharp. Jenny sat them down in a line and lectured them on how guns are not nice and not toys.

Shortly after this we set off to the other farm. Clement drives. It is 60 miles from Mpika, and then 4 miles off the main road down a track. We prayed for the car to make it. We could see now why a 4x4 is needed, in the rainy season it is impassable by car.

We eventually arrived at a clearing and parked up. We walked to where there are some mud huts and some brick, four men, one lady and a child.

We were shown around. There are large areas cleaned and planted. Some partly harvested sweet potatoes, cassava, maize and groundnuts. This is a very large area bigger than the first that we saw, the only problem here is the water was not fast-flowing like the other place and did not look fit to drink.

There was an elderly man there that Jenny has known for some time. She is negotiating with him for demarcation of the land. This has to be done by



someone approved by the government (and this man is). It had already been done some years ago but now the boundaries had become unclear. This has to be done to apply for a secure ownership. They were also planning irrigation from a nearby river. It was probably going to be expensive as a lot of labour is involved. The man is preparing an estimate.

The men are going to need external labourers to help with the harvest and also they will need to hire a truck to bring the harvest back to Mpika.

The little boy I am told was sick and probably has malaria. You feel so bad; you wish you can help everyone. All I could do is leave paracetamol and the remains of my bottled water.

We head back to the orphanage, Pete looking pale and sickly and Jenny nodding off in the front of the car.

Late that evening a truck arrives with large bundles of charcoal. This is still the main means of cooking here. The cooking pots have seen better days, the ones from England being much stronger than the local ones.

Sun 16/06/2010

This morning no water then no electric! By midday the electric is back. Jenny and Catherine cooked a traditional meal.

We heard on Sky news there were further disruptions at UK airports, and were hoping this would not affect us.

Helped to feed the babies and took some more photographs. Jenny was feeling ill in evening.

Monday 17/06/10

Jenny is working with Clement the headmaster. They have been asked by the Ministry of Education to form a five year plan for the school.



Dr. Tuesday arrives. He has come to take us to meet the local heads of agriculture planning and director of the local council. We talked about our project and the need for clean water at the farm. They mentioned Irish Aid sponsors a lot of their water projects.

The head of planning talked about the need to pay for the title deeds for the orphanage to secure it permanently. He said the main cost of this was for a surveyor and this would cost about 4 million K (about £470).

All were full of praise for the work we are doing and blessed us and asked us to continue. We explained our position that we were only a small organisation that they needed to help as well. I could tell some of them felt guilty but we will have to see if they will do anything to help. The man from the agriculture department suggested that Irish Aid might help with the water borehole for the farm.

We set up the computer and scanner to copy some school reports for our children to take home with us.

Tuesday 18/06/10

We went shopping in the village and counted the mosquito nets needed. We called to see the shopkeeper who said he could get them for K15,000 each (£2.20) so we ordered 30.

We went back to the orphanage, helped to search for a missing key. We couldn't do the remainder of the reports until it's found. There is no water today. Pete was in a lot of pain from his shoulder.

The gate first put on needed repairing today. The men have spent some hours fixing it with some dodgy looking apparatus.

We spent much of the afternoon playing and talking to the girls. Marianna was dancing for us.

Jenny seems frustrated. This five year plan requested for Friday is taking up all her time, along with other problems.

Wednesday 19/06/2010

We went to the internet café to check mail and see if the bank transfer had gone through. We went to see the man about the mosquito nets and, arranged to pick them up the next day. We bought a light bulb and did some small repairs.

Went to help with the babies and discussed with Susannah improvements that could be made to the nursery. We took Jenny for a meal and went to visit Dr. Tuesday's surgery. He told us how good the nurses from Liverpool had been.

That evening the boys are in trouble again. Jenny is lecturing them; even the 15 year old Assa who is usually quite good was involved. We are really missing Abraham and John. Jenny was unsure what to do. She was thinking of asking a relative to watch over them. I drew a plan to improve the nursery.

Thursday 20/06/2010

We went to the cash point, then to get the mosquito nets. The man at the shop said that his supplier had misinformed him of the price and they were K25,000. We said we could not pay and he settled at K20,000 (which is still cheap). We did not know whether to believe him or whether he was charging us more because we are Muzungu's (white people!)

Jenny and Clement were still busy with the five year plan. They had already submitted it to the education authority but they were not satisfied. The roof on the second building is almost finished now.

We went to the bank to enquire about a moneygram. This you can apparently send in the same way as Western Union but it

goes straight to the bank. We planned have to make enquiries as to the cost when we get home.

I helped to make some covers for art books, on the computer. Jenny returned from a visit to Zesco to pay the electric bill. During the time she was out Catherine had phoned to say one of the children who boarded here had an epileptic fit. She was really mad as all parents have to fill out a questionnaire about their child when they are admitted which asks about any illnesses and they had stated none. The parents could not be reached by phone so an Aunt was contacted and came to collect the little girl and her older sister.

Later that evening Father Stephen came to see us all. We were so glad to see him, having had to cut short our journey to Kasama, when we were supposed to visit him. We spent a long time talking. Life is very difficult for him. He has a nice house to stay in, but relies on a poor congregation to sustain him. We had a power cut, so after a search for candles and torches we went to bed.

Friday 21/06/2010

We went shopping. Pete cooked breakfast for all on the charcoal burner just like a Zambian. Father Stephen arrived just in time to share breakfast. Jenny tells us some stories of when she was a child – she was very mischievous.

We helped fill the water butt for the school. The kids all wanted to talk to us and shake hands. They were fascinated with my hair and Pete's tattoos!

We helped with the babies for a while and later I formulated a plan for sponsorship to which Jenny agreed.

Later we had a lovely meal with a local dish made from grass roots (like tiny potatoes) and peanuts; pounded and baked it was delicious, with chicken and vegetables. I had a long talk to Jenny about her problems, one of the biggest being paying sufficient staff.

Father Stephen had brought lots of Papaya and Guavas and oranges to share with the children.



Saturday 22/06/2010

Last day here – many of the staff and older children had set off early to the farm to harvest ground nuts. We spent the day helping to clean the store room and playing with the little ones.

We helped Clement who was having trouble with the computer and printer we helped him to get it going and to write his report. We helped to prepare the car for the journey home, checking tyre pressure, oil and water and fuelling up for the early start to Lusaka.

Later the children all gathered for a goodbye party, taking it in turns to dance in pairs. We handed out some small gifts that we had brought with us. The kids had lots of fun, they love music and dancing.

Sunday 23/06/2010

Sunday morning we set off at 5am before it starts getting too hot. We said goodbye to Catherine and fought back the tears.

This time Clement and Jennifer accompany us, we have to set off a day early as the flight is in the morning. The journey went well; we stopped on the way to buy some natural honey to take home.

We finally arrived at a local guest house which Jenny used when ever she visited Mpika, particularly because it was cheap, clean and safe. We spent a pleasant evening though we were all tired and discussed the merits of a lorry or 4x4 and trailer and decided the later would be more useful as it could also be used to go deep into the bush should she need to. Also, that if this all went well she would be able to sell her other car to help raise funds for the water project, or to finish the buildings.

Monday 24/06/2010

We were up early had breakfast and set off to the airport, work was not finished yet as we had discussed Jenny was to visit the mail depot near the airport to see why they had confiscated some medicines that were sent through the post, It turned out that it had not had batch numbers on or date.

As the car pulled up to the airport, appropriately the song 'When will I see you again' came on the air, I gave Jenny a reassuring hug and promised that we would.