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The Friends of Urambo & Mwanhala



Friends of Urambo & Mwanhala

Linking the Tabora Region of Tanzania with the UK



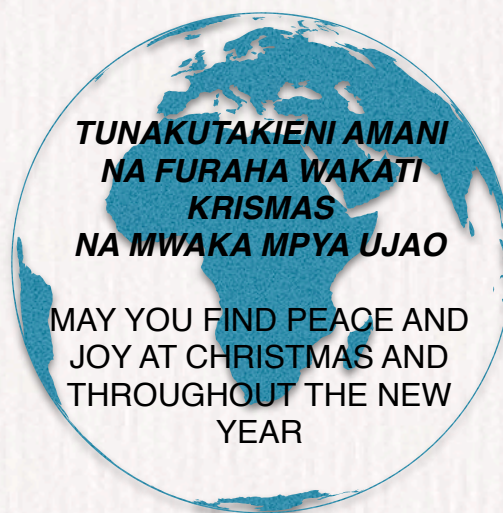
A Message from the Honorary Secretary

Dear Friends

The busy Christmas season is nearly upon us, while in Tanzania our friends are looking forward to the start of the rains. The year is coming to an end and what an unusual year it has been here in the UK with the weather departing from the normal pattern.

The long forecast climate change seems now to be hitting the UK and we seem to be moving into a pattern of mild, wet winters and dry, hot summers. In Tanzania temperatures are rising, bringing a higher likelihood of intense rainfall events (resulting in flooding) and of dry spells (resulting in droughts) and affecting the natural environment as well as the residents. Protection of the country's forests are a way of mitigating the effects, as can be seen in the report of the Uhuru torch visit to Sikonge FDC. One policy is to reduce the pressure on the forests by introducing more efficient cooking methods, a policy Sikonge FDC is promoting.

There have been successes with our projects in Tabora Region which you will read about in this newsletter. There has been a



reshuffle of FDC Principals and we have a new liaison officer in Urambo; Charles Mwisima has been transferred and has been replaced as liaison officer by Mr Marandu who is the District Planning Officer. We are very pleased that he will be overseeing

our projects in Urambo and Kaliua Districts. Lucky Mgeni continues his wonderfully effective work in the villages and Venance Gomegwa fills a similar role in Nzega District where we are helped by our liaison officer Michael Mayamba. FUM is able to operate effectively only because of the support we receive at all levels in the District.

As always, what we can do depends on the funds we have available so we must all be grateful to those intrepid walkers in Surrey and Devon who have raised well in excess of £10,000 through their efforts. From the photos you can see just how much they enjoyed their walk so those of you who can, do consider joining them next year.

The highlight to report since the last newsletter is the opening of



the new maternity unit in Mwasala, Nzega District. Simon has given details in the report later in this newsletter but for me, it is the standard of the building which is so pleasing. All our projects are ones requested by the local government and are built to government specifications. I have seen buildings put up for about 40 years now and the quality of the finish is so much higher than in years past. We have to thank Gomegwa who supervised the

Mwasala building and Lucky who oversees the Urambo constructions. Both give their time and expertise voluntarily; without them things would be so much more difficult. A Christmas message from Venance Gomegwa is included below.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter. I thought you might like to read a bit of detail about the origins of FUM and so include a short account, and Nick has

chimed in with an analysis of our expenditure over the last two decades. From that it can be gleaned just how effective we have been over the years, but complacency has no place here. To continue helping our friends in Tabora Region we need to maintain our income, so please do all you can to boost your donations.

Thank You.

Rod Smith



A Short Christmas Message from Venance Gomegwa

This year we have done commendable work in Nzega district. I am sure those living in the villages where we have worked are very happy. In February we constructed toilets for children with disabilities at Iyombo primary school in Iyombo village. The District Education Officer made a good speech at the handing over occasion. Two disabled children were lucky enough to be provided with wheelchairs.

The work was immediately followed by a big project of constructing a maternity unit at Mwasala village where it was highly needed as there was one small building which was being used as a dispensary and as a maternity ward. This building was constructed in three months and was opened by the District Commissioner. Villagers, District Officers and Journalists participated in the ceremony. The completion of the maternity unit was followed by the rehabilitation of two health facilities at Isagenhe village. This project is also finished.

In Nzega district we have decided that from now on every building constructed with FUM money must have the FUM logo and so the cost for this will always be included in the bills of quantities.

Wishing FUM Officers a very happy Christmas and a very happy New Year.

V. Gomegwa.



Venance Gomegwa

FUM Origins

by Rod Smith

What are the origins of The Friends of Urambo and Mwanhala?

Many readers of this newsletter will have been staunch supporters of FUM for many years, but for those of you who have become supporters more recently, I thought it might be worth outlining our origin.

In 1974, at a meeting held at the University of Exeter, the Friends of Urambo and Mwanhala

came into being. It was founded as a follow on to the efforts of the County of Devon in the Freedom of Hunger Campaign in which money had been raised which was sufficient to support the establishment of two Rural Training Centres, now known as FDCs, first at Urambo, then at Mwanhala. With the end of

the Freedom From Hunger Campaign, the body of dedicated enthusiasts felt that they should continue their support to the two Folk Development Colleges. Accordingly, The Friends of Urambo and Mwanhala came into being with a constitution being adopted which stated:

Objects of the Organisation are:-

THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE EDUCATION, THE PROTECTION OF HEALTH AND THE RELIEF OF POVERTY OF THE PEOPLE OF TANZANIA, INCLUDING:

- a) The offering of all possible assistance, facilitated by personal contact, to the Urambo and Mwanhala training centres and to villages in the surrounding districts of Urambo, Nzega, in the task of raising living standards.
- b) The fostering of a continuing mutual friendship link between the people of Tabora Region and the people of the UK, particularly those of Devon and Cornwall.



Professor David Walker

The registered charity (Number 265345) was led by Professor David Walker (Chairman), John Gillett (Secretary), John Darnell (Treasurer), John Walker (Press Officer), Martin Gilbert (Technical Officer) and others. Sadly 50 years on and those founder members are no longer with us, but the Charity is still running successfully even though the strong link with Devon and Cornwall has lessened. In 2006, Sikonge FDC and the districts of Kaliua and Sikonge and the Sikonge training centre were added to our Objects. The influence of Professor and Joan Walker and



John Gillett

particularly of John and Priscilla Gillett, was huge and determined the way we operated then and still do now. Circumstances have changed in Tanzania but the needs are much the same. We continue to have a close relationship with the Districts which have assigned us liaison officers who oversee projects on our behalf,

ensuring that supporters' money is well used. Our projects are chosen by us from a list of requests sent by the districts. We are limited only by the funds we have available.

Those interested can visit the Charity Commission website and look up our entry. There you can inspect our annual

return and accounts and, more interesting, I think, is the evolution of our income and expenditure since 2020. I hope that this might encourage you to continue your valuable support and maybe encourage friends and family to support us too.

FUM Spending Over the Last 25 Years by Nick Vinall

FUM has been in existence for over 50 years, nearly half of them in this century from 2000 - 2025. I thought it would be interesting to see how much FUM members have contributed to the people of Tabora Region over the past 25 years, so I went through the accounts for each year.

The grand total comes to **£908,000**

This is an amazing sum for a relatively small charity and it's entirely thanks to the generosity of our members.

What has the money been spent on? In broad terms various aspects of Health, Water and Education have been the main beneficiaries.

1. Health has included the building, refurbishment and annual support for 15 mother-and-child clinics in rural villages and more recently 4-bed maternity units and the Nutritional Flour project.

2. A ready supply of good quality water is obviously a major contributor to good health. Climate change has meant that shallow wells are now unreliable so our focus has switched to deeper boreholes and rain-water harvesting projects.

3. For many years a major focus for education has been vocational training at three rural colleges (FDCs). We help poor students with bursaries for the fees and have provided some help with the college water supplies.



The Friends of Urambo and Mwanhala

62nd Annual General Meeting

The Date of the 62nd AGM is set provisionally for the 14th March 2026.

It will be held on Zoom. A link to the Zoom meeting will be posted on the website and sent to those on the email list.

News of the FDCs

by Di Cooper

We received some surprising news from our FDC in Mwanhala. The Principal there, Mr Mwadua, had been away from the FDC on various professional visits to different educational institutions - in Malawi, and Zambia, and then he attended a short management course in Canada. His latest visit had been to Uganda.

I was in touch with Mwadua in early August then later in the month we learned from Mr Joseph, the Principal at Sikonge, that he was being moved to Mwanhala while Mwadua was moving to Kilosa FDC.

We wrote and congratulated Mwadua for his successful time at Mwanhala. He had been at Mwanhala for ten years.

There is a new Principal at Sikonge, Gaston Chiwalanga, previously Principal at Mwanva

FDC in Shinyanga District, an electrical engineer by training. We hope that we can quickly establish a good working relationship with him.

Before Joseph left Sikonge, the College had the honour of



Elias Niima,
Principal of
Urambo FDC

Henry Lyoba ,
Principal of
Kihinga FDC

Enock Joseph
Lalida, former
Principal of
Sikonge FDC, now
at Urambo

Fridegarda
Mukyanuzi, Principal
of Kasulu FDC

Gaston Chiwalanga,
former Principal of
Mwanva FDC, now
at Sikonge

Basili Ngoloka,
Principal of Baridi
FDC

hosting/welcoming the Uhuru Torch which was travelling the country to inspect and inaugurate development projects: the College was being recognised for its implementation of clean cooking energy.

During Joseph's time at the College there have been various Ministry/Government schemes introduced which would appear to recognise his initiative and wish to improve the quality of facilities and training in his institution. So it is good that Mwanhala will now benefit from his leadership.

Readers of recent newsletters will remember that we had helped Sikonge by paying for the repair of rainwater harvesting facilities at the FDC and the Government added further to the college's water infrastructure so, hopefully, solving the FDC's long-standing water supply problems. Before leaving, Joseph had advised us that so far it has not been possible to put the new facilities into use as rainfall had been so poor. We have put a lot of thought, effort and funds into solving the water problem at the college and now, with the rainy season due to start soon, we hope to hear good news by Christmas.



Mr Joseph, Principal of Mwanhala FDC

Since his arrival at Mwanhala FDC, Joseph has maintained his regular contact with FUM Officers. We hope our local representative in Nzega District, Michael Myamba, will soon have the opportunity to visit the College to introduce himself.

Our communications with Urambo FDC tend to be less frequent but we do know that twelve students attending the

college receive FUM bursary funds. In August, Mr Gulmay, the Principal informed us that Murro had been moved to Ikwiriri FDC in Rufuji District. She has worked at Urambo FDC for very many years and many visitors from England will remember her with great affection as she always offered efficient and warm hospitality during their stay. Over the last few years she also took on the role of acting accountant to the FDC, a role now filled by the assistant electrician tutor.

There has been a recent increase in fees charged by the Ministry to FDC students, the cost rising from 250,000 Tshs to 445,000/455,000 Tshs. This is a considerable increase and we wonder what the effect on students will be. We have increased our

contributions to the FDCs by 10% and are pondering the situation; together with our Liaison Officers and the FDC Principals, we will decide how we can best respond.

Both Joseph and Gulmay extend their thanks to the Committee and FUM members for the continuing support to their Colleges, thank you I am sure Mr Chiwalanga echoes.

Mwenge wa Uhuru - The Uhuru Freedom Torch

by Rod Smith and Mr Joseph

A report on the arrival of the Uhuru Torch on 29th July 2025 at Sikonge Folk Development College

This symbol of Independence was first lit at the top of Kilimanjaro on 9th December 1961 by Alexander Donald Gwebe-Nyirenda. It symbolically shines on the country and across the borders to bring hope where there is despair, love where there is enmity and respect where there is hatred.

Each year the torch tours the country, celebrating development and environmental successes and this year Sikonge FDC had the honour of receiving a visit from the torch. Here is the Principal, Mr Joseph's account of the visit: 'I am honored to present this report concerning the arrival of the Uhuru Torch at Sikonge Folk Development College on 29th July 2025, led by the National Uhuru Torch Race Leader for 2025, Mr. Ismail Ali Ussi. This visit was part of the national schedule for inspecting development projects and promoting social, economic, and environmental activities among the youth and the general public.

Upon arrival at Sikonge Folk Development College, the Uhuru Torch was officially received by the college leadership and local government officials. The National Uhuru Torch Race Leader inspected the clean and



safe cooking energy infrastructure that had been constructed and renovated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. The Leader expressed his satisfaction with the level of implementation of the project, as well as the major renovations of the college's buildings and the overall environment. In addition, he conveyed his sincere congratulations to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology for their great efforts in improving the teaching and learning environment.

In his speech, Mr. Ismail Ali Ussi emphasized the following points: a) Commendation to the Government and the Ministry for improving the

college environment and establishing a clean energy cooking system. b) The importance of maintaining this infrastructure so that it continues to benefit both the community and students. c) A call for students to work harder in their studies in order to make the best use of the opportunities brought about by the improved infrastructure. d) An emphasis on environmental conservation, noting that the use of gas instead of firewood is an important step in reducing environmental degradation, especially deforestation.

On behalf of the leadership of Sikonge Folk Development College, we extend our sincere gratitude to the Sixth-Phase Government under the leadership of Her Excellency Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan for providing funds and enabling the implementation of this important clean cooking energy project. We also thank the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology for the supervision, guidance, and close support that made this achievement possible. We commit to continue maintaining this infrastructure professionally and to ensure that it provides quality services for a long time to the benefit of students and the surrounding community.'

Medical Matters

by Jo Taylor



FUM supports fifteen village clinics in Tabora Region and each of these receives a grant of Tsh750,000 annually, paid in May. They use this money to make small purchases of equipment they cannot source through usual channels; it is always interesting to learn how they use our money, as this reflects what their priorities are.

This year, purchases included: installing a solar-powered system in a staff house, new ceiling boards to replace the vaccination room ceiling where damage from bats in the roof had rotted the ceiling, office furniture including a table, chairs and benches for patients, refilling gas bottles to run the gas powered fridges needed to store vaccines and medication, other medical equipment, while several clinics bought stationery for keeping mandatory patient records as it

seems the government supplies are not sufficient. All purchases are audited by Michael, the FUM Liaison Officer in Nzega.

Lucky, our friend in Urambo, also sent me confirmation that all the purchases had been made in his area and additionally asked the Medical Officers at the three clinics in Urambo District and the five in Kaliua District to send me a message confirming this. Following are some of their comments:

Nyasa clinic, Kaliua - We received Tsh 750,000 which we used to buy medical stationery, 8 Mtuha books, 2 baby register books, 3 Out Patient Dept register books and 1 Epsom printer 3210S. Thank you very much for your support. God bless you.

Usimba clinic, Kaliua - We continue thanking you so much for your support to our clinics in the Tabora Region. In Usimba we made purchases of medical

equipment (penguin sucker and delivery kit) and stationery (Mtuba books).

Kamalendi clinic, Urambo - You sent us Tsh 750,000. We used that to buy 4 wooden chairs, 2 wooden tables and 3 wooden benches. We appreciate your support. Asante sana.

Usisya clinic, Urambo - The purchase items include a neonatal ambu bag, two penguin suckers, and one

delivery set. These items were procured to support delivery service at the clinic.

Two of the clinics took the opportunity to ask for help in building a new maternity ward as the facilities are no longer large enough. Consideration of these requests will be added to the long list we have.

Earlier this year, a group of FUM supporters donated the cost of a special course on the building and operation of a

new design of clinic incinerator, The De Montfort design. Lucky Mgeni was able to attend this and is now fully briefed in the new design. The medical officer in Kamalendi has told us their new De Montford Incinerator, which was financed and supplied by the government, is working well, much better than the old one. It seems this purchase was made partly because of the new maternity ward financed by FUM, is now functioning.



Nyasa Clinic

Sponsored Walks

Surrey Sponsored Walk 2025 by Isabel Heycock



This was our 11th year of FUM sponsored walks. We usually walk on the South Downs but this year we did a 15 mile walk starting and ending at Guildford train station.

Eleven of us enjoyed a very pleasant walk through the Surrey countryside following footpaths, including parts of the Wey Navigation, the North Downs Way and the Downs Link. Rain was forecast but luckily this amounted to no more than two brief showers.

Thanks to everyone who joined the walk and to all our generous sponsors. The two walks this year will have raised nearly £10,000.

Devon Sponsored Walk 2025 by Julie Overnell

On the 1st November, 8 local supporters of FUM set out and completed a lovely 10.5 mile walk from Princetown on Dartmoor, across open moorland to finish at Yelverton. The weather was ok for November with a heavy cold shower just after our lunch stop. Beautiful, remote countryside with far reaching views when not raining.

So far a fantastic £910 raised towards the Uhindi maternity ward.



Projects Update

by Simon Headington

Building for Safer Births: Mwasala’s New Maternity Unit and Isegenhe’s Repairs



The new maternity building at Mwasala

Water collection and storage

2025 has seen another year of steady progress for FUM’s projects in the Tabora Region, with a particularly satisfying success at Mwasala village in Nzega District.

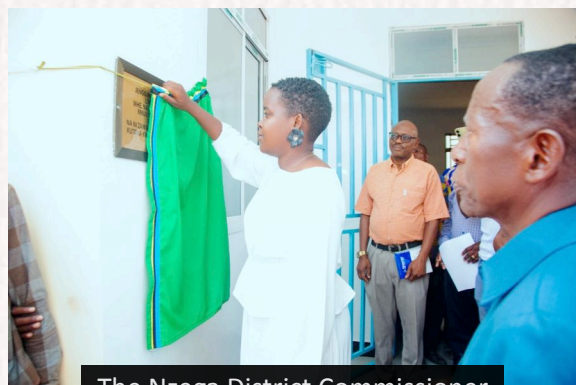
The new maternity building at Mwasala was completed in September and formally opened by The Hon. Naitapwaki Lemeya Tukai, the Nzega District Commissioner, on 11th October. The project has a special place in FUM’s history: the original dispensary was built 29 years ago with funds from FUM and Cranbrook School, whose students took part in the construction. Over the years the village has continued to receive FUM support, including a staff house and, more recently, a new borehole funded by the Friends of Nzega.

Unfortunately, the sandy soil beneath the old clinic caused the foundations to fail, and despite several FUM funded repair attempts including a repeat visit by Cranbrook School pupils, led by Angela Daley, Headteacher, by early 2024 the building had

collapsed. Health services were moved temporarily to the office of the Village Executive Officer while the District authorities began planning a replacement.

FUM agreed to fund a new maternity building to stand alongside the District’s replacement clinic. Construction began at the start of the 2025 dry season under the management of Venance Gomegwa, and the work proceeded

quickly. The new building, solidly constructed and light inside, will make a real difference to mothers who previously faced long journeys to reach safe delivery facilities.

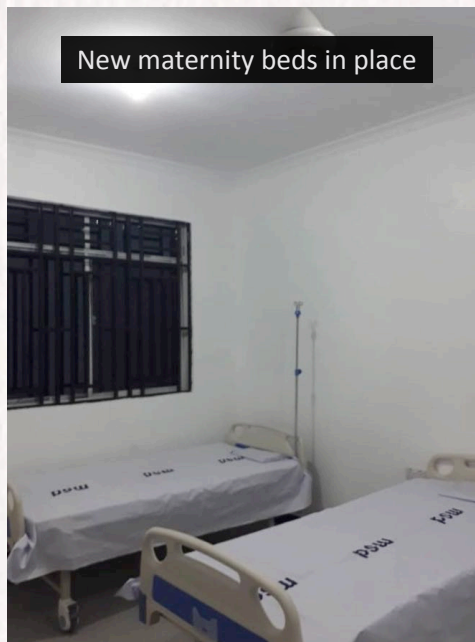


The Nzega District Commissioner opens Mwasala Clinic



Meanwhile, some 50 miles to the west, work has begun at Isegenhe, one of the earliest clinics supported by FUM. Both the maternity building and the main dispensary had deteriorated badly, with leaking roofs, cracked walls and worn-out doors and windows. Refurbishment work started in October and includes new roofing, ceilings, locks and painting throughout. Once completed, both buildings will be in good order again and ready to serve the community for many years to come.

As always, these improvements rely on the careful cooperation between our Tanzanian team, the district authorities and the local villagers. FUM's approach - responding to community requests and working through trusted local supervisors - ensures that modest funds are used to maximum effect.



Looking ahead, the plan for 2026 is to focus on a new maternity building at Uhindi (Uyowa Ward) in Kaliua District. The local dispensary there serves a wide area, with as many as 100 births a month, yet the existing facilities are wholly inadequate. Funding from this year's sponsored walks, together with a legacy now

awaited, will allow work to begin early in the next dry season.

In parallel, FUM hopes to complete the final phase of the Kiloleni water project, extending the network to the primary school and village centre and installing a simple electronic payment system to help maintain the supply.

Although we can rarely meet all the requests we receive, it is encouraging to see how each year's projects add up to a tangible improvement in healthcare and living standards across our linked districts. The new buildings at Mwasala and Isegenhe are a reminder that, even with limited resources, steady progress continues - thanks to the generosity of our supporters and the commitment of our colleagues in Tanzania.



Easy Fundraising

Some supporters will know of Easy Fundraising already and may be registered to give their support to other charities. Those of you who aren't, please consider joining and nominating The Friends of Urambo and Mwanhala as your supported charity. Then, each time you make a purchase from one of the participating retailers, Easy Fundraising will pass a small donation to FUM.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk>

The Nutritional Flour Project

an update by Mary Kenway

There have been some developments with the project over the last few months and whilst not all have been positive, we are pleased to report that the project is now close to being up and running again and we are delighted about this.

The main reason why the project has faltered this year is that Dr Mary, who has supervised it so professionally over the last few years, has been posted. She is now a long way from Nzega and therefore finds it very difficult to continue overseeing the project. One of the consequences of this is that some of the patients have not been receiving their full quota of flour. We think that the main reason for this is that the dispensaries have been giving out one bag of flour initially and then relying upon patients to return to get the rest of their allocation. Unfortunately, not all have done so, perhaps because they have felt too poorly or they have had transport issues. The good news is that FUM Liaison Officer, Michael Myamba, has stepped in to offer his support to help us get things working properly again. One of Michael's first moves was to follow up on the project so far by meeting with some of the beneficiaries of the flour over the years. He visited all but one of the villages and

managed to track down 14 ladies who had received the flour when they were pregnant. Michael compiled a very thorough report based upon some questionnaires we gave him. It was so useful for us to

were also doing well. All of the women had been told by the medical staff at the dispensaries about the importance of having a balanced diet during their antiretroviral therapy (ART), but

many were 'not able to afford the cost' according to Michael. They therefore found the nutritional flour intervention programme very beneficial. We were happy to hear that 100% of the women found the flour helped them to withstand their ART and many would have liked to have had more of it throughout their pregnancy! All but one lady said that they and their baby were doing well. The one baby that was not thriving belonged to a family who had traditional beliefs and were very wary of the nutritional flour bags. I am

pleased to say that Michael made sure that a district nutritional officer would follow up on the baby and we hope they are now doing much better.



Mother and baby at Malilita Clinic who have been beneficiaries of the project

see the impact the project has had, notwithstanding the recent glitches.

It was wonderful for us to see photos of some of the healthy babies that had been born, and good to hear that the mums



More happy recipients of the nutritional flour

One thing we noticed was that 11 out of the 14 women admitted to sharing the porridge made from the nutritional flour with other close family members or friends. We hope that in the next round of deliveries, the staff at the dispensaries will encourage patients to use the porridge (made from the flour) only for their own benefit. However, we recognise the difficulties of applying such a rule to very undernourished families. Hopefully having their full quota of five bags will help to mitigate against this too. Thanks to Dr Mary's initiative of instructing patients on how to make their own version of the flour, we were delighted to hear that all 14 ladies said that it was or would be useful to learn how to make their own flour at harvest time. In fact, Michael was amazed that one lady he met in Malilita (pictured on previous page) had re-filled the old plastic bags from the nutritional flour with her own flour. He and Dr Mary

were so pleased with her that they have now asked her to instruct other women in the village on how to do this themselves.

HIV is a very private and sensitive matter, and we are so grateful to these brave women for coming forward and speaking so honestly to Michael. Understandably, most of the ladies preferred to

remain anonymous and not many wanted us to publish their photos. However, we are so pleased to be able to share those that did give permission.

Finally we would like to share with you what Michael Myamba said at the end of his report:

"This project is very effective and important to the beneficiaries since

1. It generates knowledge to beneficiaries that can help them to boost their economic status
2. It helps them to become healthier and stronger
3. It brings hope for the beneficiaries
4. It strengthens the relationship among the beneficiaries and health care providers."

We remain grateful to Dr Mary for all the hard work she has done to launch this project, and we thank Michael for helping us to continue it.



Michael Myamba on his 106km journey from Semembela to Mbooga

Fundraising Cake Sale

On the 25th June 2025, around 30 residents from Liskeard, Callington, Saltash and Plymouth gathered again in Liskeard to raise funds for the Nutritional Flour Project.

A record amount (of well over £600) was raised through the sale of coffee, cakes and raffle tickets. We are very grateful to everyone who came along or sent donations if they couldn't make it. A shout out too to our invaluable helpers: Mary Bamsey, Elaine Cooper, Sophie Kenway and Will Appleby, who welcomed guests, sold raffle tickets, baked cakes, served coffees and parked cars, as well as a host of other duties!

Our thanks also to all who gave such generous raffle prizes, including the Co-Op, Liskeard (who have donated a bag of Fairtrade items every single year), and to Malcolm Barnecutt Bakery, who once again donated a generous voucher.

In order to deliver this life saving flour to our seven clinics, it costs in the region of £300. We are therefore totally reliant upon this annual injection of funds to keep the project going. If you would like to make a small donation this Christmas, you can do so by following this link: cafdonate.cafonline.org/22108 Thank you.



Tucking in



A tempting spread



Generously donated raffle prizes

FUM Officers

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Keep up to date on the FUM Website

If you haven't visited our website recently, why not take a look?
www.fum.org.uk



62nd Annual General Meeting

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It will be held on Zoom. A link to the Zoom meeting will be posted on the website and sent to those on the email list.



The Final Word

As always, what we can do depends on the funds we have available so we must all be grateful to those intrepid walkers in Surrey and Devon who have raised well in excess of £10,000 through their efforts. Do consider joining them next year.

TUNAKUTAKIENI AMANI NA FURAHA WAKATI KRISMAS NA MWAKA MPYA UJAO

Rod Smith