



Charity no. 1138863

Newsletter – No. 27



## **Change of Trustees**

All change at the School

**South African evening in Alrewas**  
Coast to Coast fundraising

## Chairman's Letter

**A BIG Thank you.** As you begin to read of many aspects of our trust, may I first say a big thank you for your continued support. We have been extremely busy over the last nine months and, for some of you, we have not been keeping you informed. This Newsletter will redress that, with a commitment to produce a Newsletter 3 times a year. So, what has been happening over this long period?

- We have had a change of Trustees, which I will explain later
- There has been a lot of positive activity at the school (pictures and report in this Newsletter)
- We have reported our annual accounts to the Charity Commission (John, our Treasurer, reports later)
- An exciting South African evening was held in Alrewas and Patrick and Susan have provided a report of the great time they had
- Anita and I are walking the first 100 miles of the Wainwright Coast to Coast walk in July, having walked the second 100 miles in 2007, raising funds for Action Udobo
- We have now registered with MyDonate, the BT sponsored website, so that supporters can post their fundraising activities on the site and encourage their friends to raise funds for Action Udobo.

## Trustee Changes

**Retiring Trustee – Peter Cannell.** It is with sadness that we report the resignation of Peter Cannell as a Trustee of Action Udobo. As many of you know, Peter has been involved with Udobo and Emakhosini before that for the last 10 years. In his resignation letter Peter looks back at the beginnings of the relationship that we have with Durban: “The Emakhosini project was started to provide houses for six unhoused and destitute families of orphaned children – twenty children in all – in a village about 100km from Durban. We soon realised that it needed more resources than we could properly provide at the small village church at Norton and so invited several friends at Central to join in, which they willingly and generously did. We finally secured nearly £3,000 and the project was successfully concluded by mid 2004. As that project was being completed, we were then introduced by the mother of Jenny Victor [Action Udobo Secretary] to the Montclair Methodist Church which was then just starting a new project to provide a pre-school education and care for very deprived children aged four to six years in the Montclair area of Durban. That project started with three children and one teacher in April 2004. By the end of 2005 it had one class of twenty five children with two teachers and progressed from there to the present school of about ninety children in four classes.” Peter then speaks of the financial giving from the UK: “By August 2005 we had raised £2,700 for the Emakhosini project and a further £1,000 for the Udobo School. In the next year, by August 2006, we had raised and sent another £4,000 and the appeal took off from there. By the end of August 2012 when we closed the Friends of Udobo account, we had raised and sent from the account to the School a total of over £125,000 in addition to that sent to Emakhosini and I would like to take this opportunity to thank most sincerely all those many friends who have contributed so generously and consistently over the last ten or so years – and who continue

to contribute.” We want to thank Peter most sincerely for all his support, generosity of time, encouragement, cajoling and tenacity since 2002 and wish him well as he looks at the next stage in his Christian life.

Peter closes his letter by looking to the future: “I will, of course, continue to wholeheartedly support Action Udobo and, in closing, send my greetings and thanks to all those good folk both in the UK and in South Africa, who I would never have known but for the School, to all local and UK friends who I have known for a considerable time and, above all, to the Action Udobo Trustees whose much hard work has created such a force for good. I believe that it is now time for me to bow out as a Trustee with the suggestion that a new Trustee or Trustees should be brought in, following my departure, to bring in fresh ideas and initiatives.”

**New Trustee – Peter Lang.** With Peter’s words ringing in our ears, the Trustees prayed for guidance as to who might fill the rather large shoes left by Peter’s departure and God guided us in the direction of Peter Lang, a long-time supporter of the Udobo School. Peter was delighted to accept our invitation and we believe we have a new Trustee with a real heart for children. Peter has been involved in education in the UK for a long time; more years than he would want to remember, was for many years a member at Central Methodist Church in Letchworth GC and now lives in St. Neots. This brings a new dimension to the geography of our Trustees with two in Letchworth GC, two in Alrewas, one in North London and now one in Cambridgeshire. We warmly welcome Peter to our group of Trustees and know that, as the retiring Peter has said, the new Peter will bring in fresh ideas and initiatives.

## Finances

**Financial corner.** Earlier this year, our discussions to help create a library for the school mushroomed and we embarked on financing a much larger project to create a new Resource Centre. This involved relocating the school office, to create additional space, knocking down walls, with all the associated work of electricians, plasterers and carpenters, to provide more suitable facilities fit for purpose. The past six months have, therefore, been particularly busy at the school, managing the project to fruition, with the 'official' opening scheduled for 27th July 2013. The overall budget was for ZAR 100,000, equivalent to approximately £8,000, which we have sought to finance over and above our regular monthly grant towards teaching salaries. As many will be aware, the regular giving of our supporters broadly finances this monthly grant, with additional fundraising providing capital items. In recent months these have included tables and chairs, puzzles, a new computer and refurbishment of the 'Jungle Gym'. Financing the Resource Centre has been made possible by a generous single donation and various fundraising events supplemented by the annual Gift Aid tax rebate. Having now enhanced the teaching facilities there is a desire to maximise the benefit and ensure adequate staff are recruited and retained. This requires additional financial support and the Trustees have taken a step forward in faith by committing to increase our monthly grant by 50% to help ensure the school functions as well as possible. We will, therefore, be dependent on increasing our regular income to meet this commitment and hope that all supporters will become ambassadors for the school, raising awareness and recruiting additional supporters wherever possible. Thank you for your continued support.

**John Sharman**

## South Africa

### **News from Udobo School.**

From the beginning of this year the news has been coming thick and fast from Rev. Ansie Liebenberg regarding changes at the school, most of which have been possible through your generosity of financial giving. Firstly, The Montclair Methodist Church Quarterly Meeting agreed that the 4 bedroomed flat next to the School should become the new Administration Centre for Udobo School. This would ensure that the Principal (Anne Snyders) and her Secretary would be next to each other and not on opposite sides of the School, with a waiting room for parents coming to the school, a staff tea room and a good storeroom for all the valuable stationery. Because of these moves, the School could then invest in a new Resource Centre from the vacated space in the School. Ansie comments on looking forward by saying "Our School is full, I know there will be a run on places in the

new year but each class is filled to capacity and for the first time ever the teachers received class lists before break-up day. We do not know what the future holds but we do know Who holds the future and therefore go into the new year believing that God will continue to be the miracle which keeps Udobo alive."

Fairly soon afterwards we received this ecstatic email from the Principal, "Hi Pastor Ansie, announcing with joy and gratitude and excitement and 'overwhelmedness' the arrival of my computer and printer! I am delighted to say the least everything is so new, never had such a new 'out-of-box' feel beneath my fingers and the printer glides out the copies... bliss. Thank you so much for initiating this wonderful gift, it is going to make my work such a pleasure! God bless, Annie." It is when we read notes like this that we can feel some of the joy that your giving means to all of the staff and children at Udobo.

In March of this year we



A few photographs of life before the move. There was a need to do some internal re-building and everybody lent a hand.

started to receive photos of the progress on the redesign and rebuild of rooms at the School. Udobo were helped greatly by the New Forest High schools rugby team, who moved boxes and equipment from one area to another.



**Brian Deats - the Demolisher!**



**Boxes being moved past the Jo-Jo water tank**



**Job done!!**



With internal walls demolished and boxes moved, work could begin on the building of the Resource Centre, with the carpenters using their skills in the new area.



The work could then begin to 'fill' the Centre with learning aids for the children.



Amongst all the joy and busyness of making positive changes to the structure of the School, we were advised

of some sadness with teachers and staff. Miriam, who some will remember from her visit to the UK with Kathy some years ago, contracted TB and has had to retire. Two other educators had had illness, Edna with an eye disease that needed laser treatment and Cindy who had the flu. With Miriam's diagnosis, the children were checked for TB and it was discovered that 5 of the children tested positive for TB! There have also been more children with severe learning difficulties and behaviour problems, a trying time for the School, amongst the positive changes.

Whilst the work has been progressing at the School, compounded by the difficulties with staff and children, Montclair Church has been hosting the 43rd Natal Coastal District Synod. This meant a lot of work for Rev. Ansie and Willie Liebenberg, but also an opportunity to promote the work of the School. This was especially pertinent as there was a delegation, including



the Bishop of Buluwayo East District, Zimbabwe. A large percentage of the children attending Udobo are from the refugees from Zimbabwe. The meetings were an opportunity to establish links with this area. Ansie writes that “In Zimbabwe they are currently facing severe droughts and more Zimbabweans are flocking to our city on a daily basis. Ironically our other neighbour Mozambique is trying to recover from severe flooding! From one extreme to the other!” It is helpful for us to appreciate some of the wider political, geographical and social implications faced by the School as they continue to educate the children from their area.



The Bishop of Buluwayo East District, presented with Udobo mugs.



How many of these animals do you recognise?

Another aspect of School life that needs your prayer is the long process of ‘fast-tracking’ the registration of the School with the South African government. Registration brings with it government funding for educational activities. As and when this happens, it will lessen the School’s dependence on Action Udobo for a lot of its running expenses and we, as a Trust, can focus again on funding for projects as they arise. The story of the ‘fast-tracking’ started when Ansie joined Udobo School in 2011 and has been far from fast since that time. The School were inspected in 2012, training activities taking place in the early part of 2013, signing of

financial application forms at the end of February 2013 and with follow up calls in April and June has identified that the registration process is still in Phase 1 and still required two signatures from local government

officials before it can be progressed further. Please include these processes in your prayers with a desire to see registration approved shortly and funding released from the South African government.



Happy faces after progress on the Resource Centre, which is to be named 'Action Udobo Resource Centre'.

## Fundraising Activities

**South African evening 2nd February at Alrewas.** On a crisp, frosty evening, we could almost feel the welcoming warmth and delights of South Africa. The event was held in Alrewas Village Hall and was organised jointly by All Saints Parish Church, Alrewas and Alrewas Methodist Church. On arrival we sampled some of the delicious South African food, which included piri piri chicken, boerworse, beef bredie and bunny chow all served with rice and peas, roasted butternut squash and yam. We watched a short audio visual presentation about Udobo School and how the project has developed.

After the food we had a demonstration of Zumba dancing and an opportunity to join in, and then the Go Crazy Ukulele Orchestra, based in Alrewas, entertained us with their music, and again we all joined in singing the songs. There was a very warm and friendly atmosphere and people of all ages supported this event, which with donations, raised £1079.77 for the school.

Our grateful thanks go to everyone who contributed to make this great event possible.

Sue and Patrick Hughes

**Coast to Coast Walk.** By the time you read this Anita and I will probably have completed our 100 mile sponsored walk along one half of the route known as 'Wainwright's Coast to Coast. I say 'probably', not because we might not complete the walk, but your copy of this Newsletter will be in your hands after 14th July, our planned finish date. In 2007, one year after my triple by-pass graft surgery, we set off with a number of friends from our previous church in Hoddesdon to raise money for Friends of Udobo. On that occasion we raised about £1,000. We walked from Keld in Yorkshire to Robin Hood's Bay on the east coast of England and therefore completed a 100 mile walk and the second half of the total Coast to Coast walk. With busy lives of all those involved,

the opportunity to complete the rest of the walk had eluded us until now and, as I write this in the rainy summer that we always seem to enjoy in England, we are preparing to walk from St. Bees Head in Cumbria to Keld! Our sponsorship is going well with a similar figure to 2007 and is encouraging us to ensure we complete the walk, come rain or shine. We will let you know how the walk progressed and how much money we have raised in the next Newsletter.

David Latter

**MyDonate fundraising opportunities.** Driven by the thought of being able to raise sponsorship from distant friends without meeting them face to face [that includes Facebook friends in New Zealand, Canada, Thailand, South Africa and USA, as well as the UK], the Chair of Trustees investigated the possibility of using a web based charity giving website. We can now advise that through BT's MyDonate website, there is opportunity for any supporter to have a fundraising page and encourage your friends to give to Action Udobo for your fundraising activity.

The Coast to Coast walk is listed and you could use the website for your sponsored 'baked beans bath', sponsored 24 hour silence, a Trashion Show (mirroring the Udobo School activity) or any fundraising idea that you would like to publicise through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, your Church Newsletter or any method you have of contacting friends and family in a wider audience!

If you would like to utilise this facility, please contact the Chair of Trustees via email [andlatter@ntlworld.com](mailto:andlatter@ntlworld.com) or by phone 01462 637235.