

Link Letter No.12 June 2012

**Dear friends,**

***Greetings to you all from Yei!***

**The hunger season**

It is true that the rains are now upon us, and the 'hot season' has departed, but apart from a few cold days here and there, it is still pretty hot if you ask me! It is SO good that the rains are here; if they continue then the crops should be good this year. The time of June is often known as the 'hunger season' as stores of food from the last harvest have been used up and the new harvest is still growing, so many will be going hungry around this time of year.

What is made worse, especially at the moment, is the rate of inflation – said to be 80 per cent in South Sudan. I am now doing well to buy four medium onions in the market for about £1.25. Sugar is sky high too (I can't really tell you the price since I buy it by the cup/glass/beaker/whatever is available but it is over double what it was this time last year).

Added to this, the currency here is really losing value, partly driving the prices so high. It is a very difficult time for many people. I know that many of my colleagues are finding it hard to be able to feed and educate their families, let alone the other things that are needed, but there are still always smiles in the morning when people arrive for work, and as we greet each other after our morning devotions.

**With new friends studying at Cliff College**



**Ruth Radley**  
CMS mission partner  
***South Sudan***

Ruth is a CMS mission partner seconded to the Children's Department of Across and serving in Yei, South Sudan. Across is an interdenominational Christian NGO that has worked in Sudan for over 30 years. Ruth's ministry involves a wide range of issues from developing child protection policies to trauma workshops to training Sunday school teachers. The years of war in Sudan make this work so vital to a future generation of Sudanese.

**Home, sweet home...**

It is great to be home again here, although I cherished the time with my family and other friends whilst I was in the UK, and yet as ever there were still people I didn't see – or who I didn't see as much of as I would have like to! It is always strange getting back into work; it's sometimes like taking off one head and putting another one on again adjusting to being back in a different culture! I feel that all my Arabic has left my brain, so I am starting all over again!

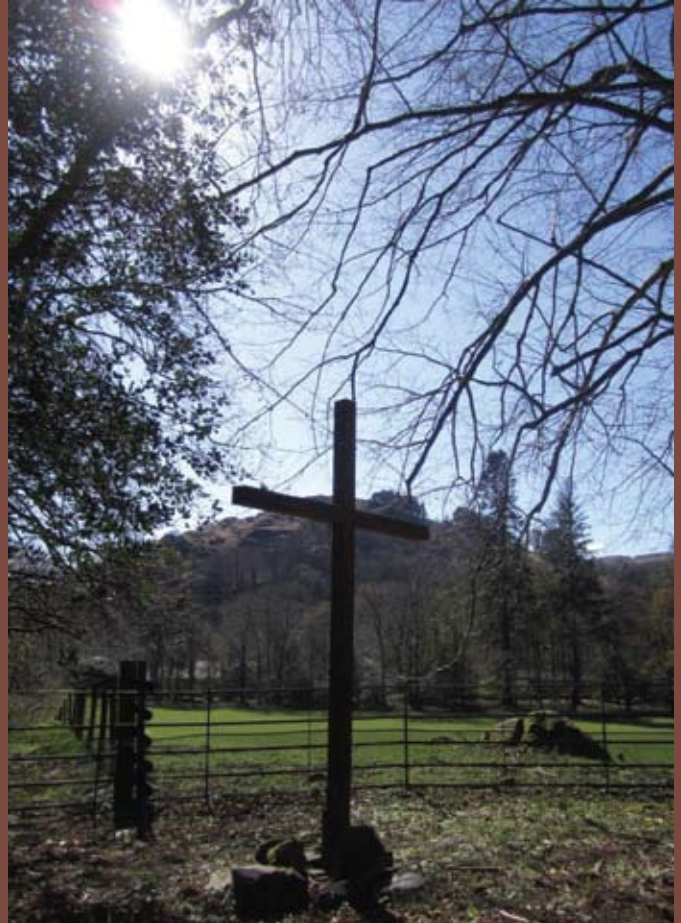
But it was lovely to be greeted at the airstrip by Hilda, Irene and Sam so warmly. As is always the case at the airstrip, it's a great place for meeting people, and I also was able to have a chat with CMS ex-mission partner Joanna Udal who had been in Yei for meetings with

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**Rachel Webbley, team vicar of St Alphege, Whitstable**



**In the grounds of Rydal Hall**

bishops. I was sad she was leaving as I was arriving, but hey... that's often how it goes!

Once we returned to Across, Irene had organised tea, chapattis, bananas and bread, quite a little feast, so the four of us sat to enjoy it together and catch up on news! Sam had to stop us – *we needed to give thanks* – I had arrived back safely and we could not take that for granted. He is right, but *why do we not do this more in the UK?* I was touched as he prayed for us all. Sam has done a great job with the work in my absence; it was a strange feeling to come back and not really know what was going on... but a good strange feeling!

#### **An unexpected UK tour...**

Most of my time in the UK I was wearing two pairs of socks and up to six layers of clothes! I think my 'tough northerness' has left me forever! I loved the time with my link churches, as each one in its own way was a blessing, and I look forward to seeing those I could not see this time with my shorter next trip. I was able to speak to adult groups, children's groups, young people's groups, all ages really, and also a few schools where we had lots of fun together. See the photo from St Alpheges, Seasalter and note the new Altar frontal! I had used the flag whilst I was preaching, and was touched to see where the leadership had placed it afterwards!

#### **A spot in the Rydal Hall grounds, which I have loved since a teenager**



#### **Hope of new life in spring**







**Stunning views across Windermere**

This visit to the UK was actually earlier than it should have been and it also all came together at a very late notice! Whilst I was in the UK in 2010, the opportunity to do an MA had been presented to me. What was hilarious about this was, only the week before I had said OUT LOUD to the Lord that there was no way I was going to be doing more study into ministry, He had given me a heart and a passion and that was what He could use!

However, when this opportunity was presented to me, I can't deny there was a strange feeling of excitement jumping in my stomach! I tried to ignore it, but then spent much time praying and discussing with friends as to whether this was right for me at this time. This of course also meant talking with friends in Yei, and both Bishop Hillary and Elly, my supervisor, were very encouraging regarding undertaking this.

**MA studies**

Finally, I could put it off no more, and applied to Cliff College, where I had studied long distance 2003-2005, and they accepted me! SO, I spent two weeks there in March, the first for lessons with many others and the second for some 'library time'! I needed that time as I am now trying to write the essays from here, so I needed to make



**Offerings for the school**

notes etc from books. Currently, I am three weeks away from my deadline, and struggling to fit things in! Every time I set aside a day for study, something happens that takes me away... such is the nature of living here! I trust that I will hopefully get it done soon!

It was a good week at Cliff, seeing old friends, and making new ones; sadly however, I will not be studying with these new friends the next time I am at college, since I am doing it over a longer period than most people and they will have finished their modular work by the time I am back at college, the end of 2013! It has been good to get my brain back into gear – after this module is finished, I will be doing an independent study module that is focussed on South Sudan, and hopefully linked into whatever my research will be... kinda hoping that might become clear soon!

**New challenges**

I am sure that many of you are aware of the challenges facing South Sudan at the moment. Recently there were peace talks happening in Addis Ababa, between South Sudan and Sudan. However, these talks stalled at the

**The Goja community vision, and the key opposite**



end of last week due to disagreement on the border line between Sudan and South Sudan. This means battles between the North and the South will continue until the border issue is settled and sadly the fear of a return to war remains a reality for many people. There are quite some challenges to be met. Please may I ask you to pray that REAL peace will grow between the two neighbours, and South Sudan can continue to develop.

You may be aware that due to disagreements with the north (the oil pipe line runs through the north, and currently there are none in the South), the Government of South Sudan stopped all oil production in January of this year. The oil accounts for 98 per cent of the country's revenue, so you can imagine how much the economy is struggling, in addition to the things I wrote above.

I am aware that not much news filters through the UK media about South Sudan, so I recommend [www.allafrica.com](http://www.allafrica.com) as a good website to check for updates as it captures newspaper reports from across Africa and enables more focussed prayers (*although the BBC website does have some bits under the Africa section, but written from a western perspective*).

#### A celebration

On Saturday I went to Goja community with friends and colleagues Mary and Bimo of the PAP programme. We were going to celebrate the official opening of the school there. Although it had been sponsored by another organisation, the community had contributed much into the building including sand, cement etc, meaning that it is really owned by the community. During the function, all those present were invited to give generously towards the running of the school, and much joy was had as people danced their way forward to give their offerings.

It was a day for celebration – you can see a photo of the community's vision for 20 years time on page three of this link letter. This is a result of the PAP programme that they have been going through. You can see the many ticks; these are things that the community has seen happen already! SO exciting, and I look forward to seeing what continues to happen! It is so exciting to see what communities are doing and how they are moving forward.

#### Prayer

Please do keep praying for the work here too, so many things are so encouraging, especially in the communities.

We are hearing so many reports of changed lives and changes in the children's circumstances. People are so open to learning and to become more like God intended us to be with our children; it's really encouraging. Please do continue that we all continue to walk, learn and grow together!

Please feel free to get in touch – by email or letter – it's always a joy to receive news from home! I trust that you are all well! Thank you for all your continued support, in many different ways. We are all grateful here for the support and prayers of many the world over, it really does make a difference!

Many blessings

Ruth

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