

My latest visit to Irundu was really one of consolidation of the projects so far undertaken. Our involvement with the demonstration garden ended on 31st January. Jenny Harrison and I moved into the house which was blessed by Bishop Joseph on March 1st. Micro-credit is now well established and understood and we have responded to feedback from the borrowers.

The Bishop's pastoral visit to the parish ended with an outdoor Mass for about a thousand. Bishop Joseph confirmed 151 youngsters, married one couple then after Mass blessed our Friendship House and unveiled the plaque which included the words 'May God Bless our Friendship'. I then hosted on your behalf lunch for 40 VIPs and countless parishioners. Bishop Joseph returned to Jinja accompanied by 24 goats he had been given!

Congratulations and a very big thank you to the parishioners of Worth Abbey Parish who so generously raised enough money over one weekend to pay for seven hundred mosquito door nets. This far exceeded our expectations. We distributed nets in two villages where Prossy, the nurse, has been teaching the basics of health, hygiene and sanitation. The nets have presented a good opportunity for this education so that not only will the people be protected from malaria to a large extent but they know how to reduce the risk of cholera, typhoid and dysentery. The distribution of the nets and the educational programme continues and is very much appreciated by the people in Irundu.

Another twenty one benches can be made from your generous donations in the Change for Irundu tins. This is brilliant, thank you so much. As you can imagine the children get so much pleasure from sitting on a bench and having a surface to write on rather than being on the floor. Please keep popping in that loose change at the end of each day.

Our next big project is to establish a medical centre. Through the incredible generosity of a parishioner we have been offered a donation from their charitable trust to convert the old parish hall into a pre- and post-operative centre with space reserved for a physiotherapy department. Also, provision has been made for a simple mobile service going out three days a week to different villages on a fortnightly cycle. On the other days there will be a clinic at the medical centre. This is a much needed facility and will bring comfort and relief to many, many people.

Sue Garner is running the marathon to raise money for physiotherapy equipment. Sue, a Worth Abbey parishioner, is a physiotherapist and hopes to come out to Irundu in the autumn. Thanks Sue for this great effort

We are continuing to encourage our house groups to link up with their small Christian Communities. We want lots more pen pals to come forward and we are actively seeking sponsors for school fees to enable some orphans to attend the vocational courses of carpentry, tailoring, hairdressing, brick laying or agriculture. The cost is £180.00 pa per student. All courses are for three years apart from hairdressing which is just one year. This will be a really valuable way of ensuring these disadvantaged youngsters have a future

Fr Stephen will continue to cultivate the land we have opened up so there will still be a supply of the lovely fresh produce for us all including the school. The house is really comfortable but no more luxurious than the Priest's house – just new. It is wonderful to throw open the balcony doors every morning to enjoy the cool fresh air before the day hots up, drift across the garden to Mass where you will receive some really good thoughts for the day (and shake hands with dozens of little ones!) then back to the house where Irene has the breakfast on the table – what better start to the day! We regularly dined on fresh fish from the lake, fresh vegetables and fruit. In the garden we have jackfruit, mango, paw-paw, lemons and avocado. Tempted?

Imagine a class of 148 thirteen year olds! Poor Sr Agnes would love to have some assistance - just being able to speak, read and write English is enough. You could wield a paint brush to brighten the children's surroundings, enjoy a game of football or volley ball with the kids, work on the land, carry out some repairs to the buildings - whatever is your preference. Teachers and medically qualified persons always wanted. Everyone has something to offer.

Finally, when we visited a small Christian Community a little 6 yr old girl, Flavia, spent about an hour or so walking round with a rather fractious baby strapped to her back. When we gave her a sweet she immediately bit it in half to share it with another child; that gesture for me sums up the spirit of Irundu. We have so much to learn from our warm-hearted and generous-spirited friends.

Anyone wishing to sponsor Sue or a vocational school student please contact the Parish Office Tel: 01342 710313.