

The November 2015 Visit

The group who made the two week visit to Cueibet in November were Canon David Henley (former Rural Dean), the Revd Mark Hayter (Nadder Valley Curate) and Geoff Taylor (Deanery Lay Chairman). We are very grateful to all who supported the visit financially or donated a range of items, including dressmaking materials, spectacles, books, clothes and football strips.



Coombe Bissett Primary School football strips

Juba

Due to the arrangements of our internal flights, we spent five nights in the Episcopal Church guesthouse in Juba. For a first time visitor, one of the most striking features was the warmth of the welcome wherever we went - from the staff of the Provincial Office who sorted out transport and travel arrangements to half the House of Bishops who were gathering for their annual meeting. At the Sunday Eucharist in Juba cathedral, we were conducted to our seats and welcomed publicly. After the service we spoke with the British Ambassador, who clearly recognised the importance of the role of the churches in South Sudan in both peacemaking and creating stability in the world's newest nation.



Bishop Elijah (right) with Bishop Alapayo of Rumbek

At the guesthouse, we were approached and welcomed by many people who knew about the link with Salisbury

Diocese and our deanery link with Cueibet. Several bishops stressed the importance of visits to South Sudan and the continuing need for the support and encouragement provided by the link. The people saw us as being different but yet recognised that we are all one in our shared faith. They believe that we are much more effective witnesses to their situation on our return to UK than the sending over of their own bishops to speak about their dioceses.

Although we were very pleased to arrive finally in Cueibet, we valued the opportunity to gain a wider perspective on the situation in South Sudan and make contacts who could be helpful with future visits and projects.

Cueibet

The journey to Cueibet began with a two hour World Food Programme flight to Rumbek where we were met by Bishop Elijah and stayed overnight. This was followed the next day by a 2 hour drive along 30 miles of rain damaged track. Never complain about the potholes in Salisbury!

Although there are reports of a dangerous security situation in South Sudan, the Cueibet area is safe with only minimal precautions such as guards on vehicles. The main issues are possible starvation in remote areas, a high risk of malaria and the challenge of coping with the large influx of Internally Displaced Persons into the diocese, fleeing from fighting to the north.



Flourishing papaya tree – 1 year's growth

Annual Conference

During the three day conference for over 28 archdeacons, rural deans and pastors, David Henley and Mark Hayter led a bible study on Exodus and the Acts of the Apostles and Bishop Elijah followed this up with talks on 'family life'. Geoff Taylor spent time working with the two staff in the diocesan office on IT and training and visiting the church primary school. In addition to experiencing the genuine welcome and delight in our visit, it was a joy to see how individuals came up to greet 'Canon David' who they remembered from previous visits.

Alongside the conference, we were able to see how the projects supported by our Deanery are progressing...

Agricultural Project

The fruit trees have increased from five to sixty with plans for more planting in 2016. One of the highlights of the menu on two occasions was papaya fruit from one of the original plantings. The orchard in Maluil on the outskirts of Cueibet is beginning to flourish but there is still a challenge of irrigation. The new borehole is some thirty minutes' walk away and water is carried by women on their heads. The next step is to buy a bicycle which can be wheeled carrying four water containers!

Sewing Machines

The sewing machines are being used by women and men. In Cueibet we saw them at work in the market place where the locals pay them to repair their garments – the beginning of a small income stream for the individuals and the Mothers' Union.

Sponsored Students



Michael, James, John and Daniel with donated study bibles, albs, stoles and laptops

We had already received reports on our sponsored student pastors, Daniel, John and Michael, in Kajo Keji courtesy of CRESS and Caroline Lamb during their visits. Our original sponsorship was to cover tuition fees and accommodation at the College. However, it has become clear that additional funding is required for incidental expenses, any medical costs and termly travel between Kajo Keji and Cueibet. The three pastors had joined James who was already in his second year. We felt that we should also take on responsibility for his additional costs so that all are treated equally.

New Projects for 2016

There are two new projects: a Women's Empowerment Programme (WEP) and building school classrooms.

WEP is a continuation of the project started after the last visit, but on a higher level. It will provide a six month intensive course in Juba for four women from Cueibet, training them in Tailoring & Design, Business

Management, and basic Health, Food and Nutrition at an approximate cost of £3,900. After the course, the women will be able to start up small businesses and train others in similar skills using new machines provided by the diocese. The emphasis is on self-sufficiency, contributing to the growth of the new nation.



WEP – Sewing Revision

Cueibet's primary school has four classes with over 200 pupils and it is hoped to cover the full primary range of eight classes in the next two years. Teaching takes place in the shade of four large trees with the seating being carried out of the cathedral by the children at the beginning of the week. During the rainy season, classes are held in the cathedral and another building. £2,500 has been raised as a separate project to build the classrooms before the rains return in May.

Making Progress

David Henley commented on leaving that this was the first time since his initial visit in 2013 that he had seen real progress in specific areas over a twelve month period. Chalke Deanery is beginning to make a difference to people's lives in Cueibet. The diocesan office, agricultural and sewing projects are beginning to generate small income streams and new leaders are being trained to minister alongside Bishop Elijah.



We now have cards, bookmarks and posters to publicise the link. Our contacts for Talks, Fundraising, Donations, and Publicity Material are:

- Talks:** Revd Mark Hayter: 01722 785176
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- Treasurer:** Gerry Purdue: 01747 830419
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- Newsletter:** Geoff Taylor: 01722 503081
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