

**Issue 2**

**Autumn 2011**

Welcome to the latest newsletter, updating you on what has been a very busy six months. In the process of writing this I have really enjoyed finding out about Purple Field Productions and the people involved who make it happen. I am grateful to all of you who have helped contribute to this issue and it goes without saying none of what you are about to read would have been possible without all of your continued support – thank you very much!

Fiona Day, PFP Administrator

**The Time is Now**

**Great progress has been made following the release of our film *The Time is Now* in February this year.**

We made the film in Ghana in 2010 in conjunction with Cerebral Palsy Africa (CPA) to help parents and physiotherapists in their campaign to increase services for children with cerebral palsy (CP).

By showing the enormous benefits that can be gained from physiotherapy the film highlights the desperate need for an increase in these services throughout the country.

More than 100 copies of the DVD have been distributed to hospitals, schools, disability NGOs, government departments, parents of children with CP and TV channels.

It is the TV coverage that has perhaps had the greatest impact. For three consecutive weeks the film was featured on the national breakfast show, and the patients, mothers and physiotherapists involved in making the film were invited to join in discussions to talk about CP, and to answer questions from the public.

CPA are extremely enthusiastic about the affect this exposure has had at various levels. Discussions have been taking place between the Ghana Association of Physiotherapists and the National Health Service over the provision of physiotherapists to meet the needs of children with CP.

Although we cannot be sure how much impact the film has made directly, things are changing for the better in Ghana. Twenty eight of the 30 physiotherapy graduates who were unemployed at the time of the film launch have since been offered government physiotherapy posts. And a second fully trained physiotherapist has been appointed to assist in the Children's Physiotherapy Clinic at the Korle Bu Hospital featured in the film. Mothers of children with CP have moved from feeling ostracised and demoralised to becoming campaigners who are both strong and vociferous.

The pressure needs to be kept up to promote the film to more and more people in Ghana, particularly the decision makers. Please help us by letting people know that the film can be viewed in full at <http://www.vimeo.com/25944451>

Sandra Casamer, the physiotherapist working at Korle Bu Hospital has said that "it feels like the light at the end of the tunnel is shining brighter and brighter. Thanks so very much for the wonderful documentary. Please tell Elspeth and her team that we are finally making big break-throughs with the campaign."

The representative of the Minister for Health has said that he will "take the case into deep consideration - this is the beginning of new things".

His words give hope of yet more action and we look forward to further news.



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## LATEST NEWS

### Conservation Agriculture in Malawi

**Local Ilminster supporters were recently treated to a sneak preview of the latest PFP films made in association with Total LandCare (TLC), a Malawian NGO concerned with improving farm productivity and the quality of life among rural communities and their environments.**



We were very fortunate that all of the crew were able to join us for the evening. Colin Stevens (Director), Ingrid Hesling (Stills photographer and Production Assistant) and Olivia Prutz (Camera Operator) gave us an illustrated talk using photographs taken on the trip, which was followed by a screening of the films.

The evening was truly inspiring and we learnt that life for rural communities in Malawi is very tough. There are very few cars, and what vehicles there are, are dangerously overloaded, most people walk everywhere and nearly everything is carried on women's heads - the level of poverty and hunger is shocking.

This desperate situation can partly be attributed to climate change creating water shortages, but also to the difficulties of growing enough food without exhausting the soil. Current farming practices are hugely labour intensive requiring endless back breaking hours maintaining planting ridges and hoeing out weeds. When the crops

have been harvested the waste residues are burnt further depleting the nutritional quality of the soil. During the rainy season, which starts in November and lasts for up to 3 months, the torrential downpours strip the exposed fertile topsoil away leaving behind an impoverished soil that produces very low yields.

Cooking practices also create problems. Women spend hours and walk miles collecting wood to fuel their open fires. This is not only very time consuming but can also make lone women very vulnerable. These existing cooking methods require huge quantities of fuel which has led to significant levels of deforestation.

Vincent Kamwanya, Field Officer for TLC, has said "I have been to areas, such as Salima, where there are literally no trees left. People there use casava sticks and maize stalks to light their fires."

These practices have left Malawian farmers and their families hungry, exhausted, demoralised and very poor.

Colin thinks it is time Malawian farmers were given a voice "I have loved working with the local farmers and the extension workers. I hope this film will offer them some more opportunities to develop new farming methods and create more small businesses. Farmers deserve our respect as they work really hard. And they can share their knowledge through film"

The crew left England in August and spent two months working with farmers to create the films that will help raise awareness of new farming techniques and improve the quality of life in rural Malawi.

After filming the crew organised a test screening for a group of local farmers. The new farming methods and much more efficient cooking stoves demonstrated in these latest films are quite revolutionary to the Malawian farmer. Quite naturally and rightly, given their circumstances, the farmers invited to the screening were cautious about adopting new methods.

However, in one of the film we meet Grace who was one of the first to be persuaded by TLC to trial these new techniques.

She is a brave and strong woman who was not put off by her neighbours' negative remarks when she embarked on this new approach. And, in the film she proudly tells of the new found wealth she has achieved by following these practices including solar panels and 10 new skirts!



She also has more time to spend with her family at home or to embark on new entrepreneurial farming enterprises. And, she defiantly tells us that she didn't need a man to help her achieve it! She has since become an ambassador for this farming method spreading the word and encouraging others to adopt these new practices and getting them to see the benefits that they too can enjoy both financially and in their quality of life.

Felix Chadwala, Field Officer for TLC has said "The film will attract other people to come and listen to the messages. With a film, people are attracted because they want to see what is being shown. Therefore we can reach people we would not normally be able to reach. It will generate interest. They will see the concepts in the film and come to the extension workers to find out more."

The film is a real triumph and is an excellent tool to show people how they can improve their livelihoods and their children's future.

## Malawi Experiences

The Dream Team

**The crew working on the latest PFP film spent two months out in Malawi filming. They were based in the quiet lakeside town of Nkhotakota living in a clean and safe but, extremely small apartment.**

Trent Bunderson, Executive Director, TLC wrote “they were tremendous sports to put up with some difficult lodging and travel conditions without a complaint. That is a rare quality.”



The walk-in wardrobe doubled up as an editing suite and the hostess trolley served as a kitchen area, dressing table and further editing facilities! It was these cramped living conditions that quickly brought our three volunteers together to form “The Dream Team”.

Following their return we caught up with them to find out more about the highs and lows of their trip.

Highlights included meeting many great people and being greeted by singing and dancing at the villages. They all agreed being able to do the job they love, knowing that it was helping to make a positive difference to improving people's lives at the same time, was a great opportunity and a real privilege.

As for low points on the trip, Colin's one and only pair of shorts were accidentally cut in half by Mr Manda, the local tailor, though

fortunately he wasn't wearing them at the time!

The most useful items of luggage included a 50p inflatable pillow donated by Colin's sister, and Ingrid's Swiss Army knife came in handy too.

Poisonous snakes and precarious transport arrangements, clinging on to rice sacks on the back of pick-up trucks, added to the excitement levels.

On their return they were very conscious of how much we consume and waste in this country and are trying to do their bit by improving their life styles. Also they agreed that what they missed most of all are the people they met during the course of making the films, particularly Vincent, to whom Olivia was able to give a quick lesson on film making; Margaret, a recent convert to sustainable farming methods, who had such hopes for her family's future being improved through taking that decision and Sailes, their driver, who had a very welcome calming influence.



And, their best advice for anybody planning a trip to Malawi is to keep calm, relax, smile and enjoy the sunshine. Malawians have to put up with an awful lot, and you soon realise that there is no point stressing over the small things, everything will be fine and nothing is a problem.

They felt very privileged to have had this opportunity to be involved in a project that will make a real difference to improving people's lives. All of them were deeply shocked by the dreadful level of poverty that so many people were living in and by the lack of future prospects for all the smiling, happy children they met.

In their own words, the “warm heart of Africa” (as Malawi is known) is a sunny, smiley, energetic, heart-warming and heart-wrenching country - and they would all love to go back.

## Mawa Langa – great reactions!



**As many as 50,000 children may have watched *Mawa Langa (My Tomorrow)* already, a film made in association with Temwa and YONECO. The film has now been distributed to over 150 organisations in Malawi, and we hear that community screenings have attracted crowds of up to 400.** These figures alone are quite staggering. Additionally the film has been shown on national Malawian television further increasing its exposure. Of course numbers are not the most important thing – the questions is are children really being helped to protect themselves from HIV and AIDS? The feedback we have received so far has been very encouraging. For example, a supervisor of a drop-in centre in Malawi writes “we have been showing *Mawa Langa* to kids and the message is very clear..... and (you) will surprised to hear that the children want to watch the film daily.... I find *Mawa Langa* very educating and I can bet that through this (film) children have gotten the message on prevention, how HIV is spread and how to avoid peer pressure.”

Interviews with individual children have also told us that after watching the film they have felt better equipped to recognise the dangers particularly young girls who are very vulnerable to being enticed by older men with cash and material incentives. Children generally came

away much better informed about how to protect themselves. And not only that, they all enjoyed it and all agreed that they would like the film to be shown more frequently.

The Ministry of Education is also very enthusiastic about *Mawa Langa*, and have reported that they are using it as a training tool in social studies, for all teachers working with HIV and AIDS, and for all primary advisors throughout the country. They also want to use it for their AIDS TOTO Clubs and have said they would like to receive as many copies as we can supply.

These are all great results for this project.

## Film Festival Updates

It has been a very busy film festival season for PFP with several of our films successfully making it to the international screen.

Earlier in October we were fortunate enough to have not just one but two of our films selected for screening at the Abilityfest 2011 Film Festival in Chennai.

Both *Radio Bhai* (made in association with the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed) and *Encourage and I Can* (made in association with Epic Arts) were very well received and the feedback we received was very positive. The festival organiser wrote "We are pleased to inform you that ABILITYFEST 2011 was a huge success. The crowds came in large numbers and appreciated the cinema that we showcased. We are also very proud to say that 'ENCOURAGE, AND I CAN' & 'RADIO BHAI' were very well received. We spoke to people in the audience who enjoyed 'RADIO BHAI' and others who were touched by 'E&IC'."

*Encourage and I Can* was also selected for screening at the 8<sup>th</sup> European Film Festival "Integration You and Me" in September. And *Mawa Langa* (made in association with Temwa and YONECO) has

been accepted for the Red Ribbon International Film Festival for HIV and AIDS related films to be held in Ghana during November.

This is great news for PFP, a terrific credit to all our local participants and well deserved recognition for our crews – our congratulations to them all.

## FUTURE PROJECTS

### A Conservation Film for the Albertine Rift Communities

Mountain environments not only contribute greatly to the beauty of our world, but they also fulfill a multitude of vital tasks, including the provision of fuel, food and medicinal products, the storage of carbon, the purification of air, and the regulation of water flow.

However, in many cases, the ecosystems involved are seriously threatened by climate change, and this can have very significant implications for the people who depend upon them.

In the Albertine Rift Region of Africa, the ice in high mountains is already beginning to melt, and there are many indications that climate change has started to affect both the environment and peoples' livelihoods. However there is, as yet, very little information reaching those local communities, either to explain what is happening or, most crucially, to suggest adaptation strategies that they could adopt in order to survive.

The next PFP project will take us out to East Africa to work with the Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS) in order to make a film especially designed for screening to local people. We shall hope not just to increase understanding of the changes that are taking place, but also to enable communities to share experiences with regard to practices that they have found helpful. To this end, we shall travel to the forests of

Mukura and Gishwati in Rwanda and the Echuya Forest in Uganda in order to find out how people are coping. We understand that in Mukura Forest they have developed a much more sustainable method of bee-keeping which reduces the risk of forest fires already on the increase as the dry seasons become more severe; that in Gishwati, they have a successful tree planting scheme that will also provide a useful fruit crop; and that in Echuya they are protecting their vital water catchment forest by a new approach to bamboo cultivation.



Wetlands, too, are threatened. We shall be visiting Rugezi in Rwanda, a previously important wetland now at serious risk of drying up. In an effort to restore the area, the Government has undertaken some radical terracing here, but of greater interest to other communities will be the work carried out by local people themselves in their battle to reduce soil erosion.

Purple Field Productions is happy to announce a strong team for this project. The film will be directed by Mark Rimmer who was the number one cameraman on our very first film *Radio Bhai*. Mark has done extremely well since then, working in the film industry in Europe, and it is great that he still wants to volunteer his services. The Editor and Second Camera will be Sam Woolf. It is Sam's first time with PFP, but we have seen the excellent work he has done elsewhere, so we hope that he, too, will feel inspired to return.

## SUPPORT IN THE UK

### A Fundraising Volunteer Report

Zoe Ainsworth Grigg – Volunteer Fundraiser

**This has been a good year for fundraising and there has been a considerable increase in the number of donations coming from Quaker groups.** As a Quaker myself I ran a special appeal for Quaker fundraising and saw many Quakers subscribing and becoming a Friends of PFP and contributing regularly. This is so important to PFP because we are able to budget for the future.



One event was a stand at the Quaker Yearly Meeting Gathering (see photo). This certainly made many more Quakers aware of us and the important work we do on a very small budget. The impact of PFP's projects on social need in the developing world far exceeds the amount of money needed to produce an information film.

One recent development has been the offer of two of my personal friends to volunteer to run in the Great South Run and the Exmoor Beast Challenge.

When they did this, they raised sponsorship money by placing a fundraising page on Everyclick. This raised a much needed amount of money towards the charity and if anyone else feels that they can do this, please email me for more information [fpf.fundraiser@gmail.com](mailto:fpf.fundraiser@gmail.com)

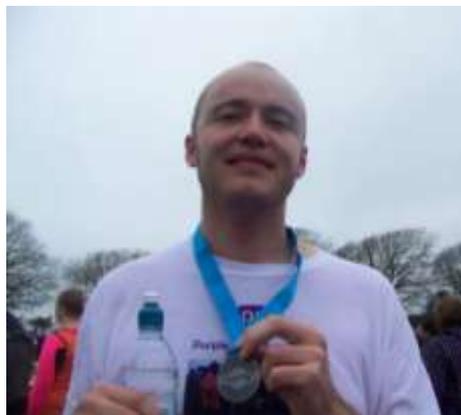
We also took a stand at the Somerset Show and Exeter Green Fair. Photos of these events can be found on PFP's website.

I enjoy volunteering in this way for a very worthy charity, and so if you feel able to volunteer or act as an advocate for PFP in another part of the country please contact [elspeth@purplefieldproductions.org](mailto:elspeth@purplefieldproductions.org)

### Raising money for PFP in the Great South Run

Andy Curtis

**This year I decided to take part in the Great South Run, a 10 mile race through Portsmouth.** The race is gaining increasing recognition and was televised this year for the first time on Channel 5. The distance is somewhat unusual for a modern race, around half-way in distance between a 10km and a half-marathon. This is one of the race's unique selling points and it is billed as the world's most prestigious 10 mile race.



I wanted to run for PFP and eventually raised just over £250. Fundraising was difficult in the current economic climate but people were interested in PFP and its work.

The most frequent way of donating was through [www.everyclick.com](http://www.everyclick.com), and using facebook was a good way of spreading the word amongst friends. Some people had difficulty opening the link on Macs and iphones, but on the whole the process was pretty straight forward. I had less success fundraising via

twitter, although I am relatively new to tweeting.

Training for the race required running at least three times a week over a period of six months, and virtually every day leading up to the run. On the day of the race there was a really good atmosphere in Portsmouth and the rain just about held off. The race route was pretty flat and went through the historic dockyards, which is home to HMS Victory and the remnants of the Mary Rose, as well as passing more modern landmarks such as the Spinnaker Tower. People lined the streets to cheer runners on and I saw two old friends who happened to be walking along the sea front, which was a nice surprise.

It was good to finish the run. I had a meal afterwards to avoid the traffic. It was great to take part with so many people running for a wide range of charities and good causes. I was pleased to run for PFP and hopefully will be able to do so again in future races.

### Booksale News

**We had a very successful booksale in August raising £312.** We also recently made £20 on the sale of a specialist book. Thank you to everyone who donated books and, if you think you have any treasures that you are willing to part with, then we have contacts with interested buyers!

### Promoting PFP using Social Media

Simon Davis, Volunteer

**I first made contact with Purple Field Productions in September when I was looking for an opportunity to do voluntary work for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.** Elspeth suggested that I might be able to promote PFP using social media and the Internet, which is what I have been doing. I began by advertising on the social networking sites Facebook and Google+, putting out PFP videos on the organisation's website, and the Everyclick search page, which

earns money every time it is used. Recently we were fortunate enough to have the popular website [reddit.com](http://reddit.com) put up an advert on their homepage for us. It was seen by over 150,000 people!

It was really great to meet some of you at the inspiring fund-raising evening in Ilminster in October. Thank-you for making me feel welcome.

Note from the Editor - please look at the following links:

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/purplefieldproductions/>

TWITTER - @PFFPMalawi

[www.youtube.com/purplefieldonline](http://www.youtube.com/purplefieldonline)



## FUTURE EVENTS

### Diaspora walks through Purple Fields

Robert Colledge, Diaspora

**Diaspora, "Somerset's favourite Irish Band" (BBC Somerset Sound) return to Ilminster Arts Centre at the Meeting House on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December at 7.45 p.m. in a concert to raise funds for PFP.**

Diaspora's followers in the Ilminster area need no introduction to the band; but for those who have yet to experience Diaspora's unique musical and comedy mix here's a little about us.

Formed over 15 years ago, we debuted in nearby Curry Rivel, and went on to perform across England and Wales, broadcast on BBC Somerset Sound, and tour Ireland and France. We are more active today than ever. Our current line up

comprises [L to R in the photo]] Robert Colledge, Kevin Chamberlain, John Monaghan, Danny Drake and Chris Dunne. We play four-, six- and twelve-stringed acoustic and electric guitars, banjo, mandolin, bouzouki, fiddle, whistle, flute, bodhran and other percussion. Not to mention the Kazoo and Swanee whistle...



Bringing our own inimitable sense of humour, chat and music to the Meeting House, and airing your favourite Irish music together with our own fresh material. We're set to give you a great night of entertainment, and as a bonus, there's a brace of self penned numbers written especially for this concert.

This CD and our other albums will be available for sale at the venue. For more information visit our website [www.diasporamusic.org](http://www.diasporamusic.org).

For tickets contact the Box Office of the Meeting House on 01460 54973 or contact us on [info@diaspora.org](mailto:info@diaspora.org)

**And finally** – just to introduce myself... I am Fiona (Day) the newly appointed PFP Administrator, working with Elspeth at 10 Hill View Terrace, and gradually taking over various areas of responsibility within the charity – e.g. the accounts, the database, the newsletter. I work for 3 hours on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Being completely new to PFP has entailed quite a learning curve which I am thoroughly enjoying!

My husband Matt and I have lived in Somerset for the past 11 years and we have two young sons, Lewis and Charlie.

## How to donate to PFP

Your continued support is vital to ensure the future of PFP. Standing Orders are particularly valuable as they allow us to plan ahead. A small regular donation can go a very long way. And if you are able to gift aid your donation even better as we are able to claim back a further 25% of the value of your donation from the Inland Revenue. If you feel able to donate by standing order please either download a form from the donate page on our website [www.purplefieldproductions.org](http://www.purplefieldproductions.org) or contact us by email.

## A BIG THANK YOU FROM PFP!

We would not be able to do any of the work you have just read about without your help and support – we are extremely grateful to all of our donors and volunteers who have helped us in the last six months.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and we look forward to updating you with all of our latest news in Spring 2012.

## CONTACT DETAILS

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