

Christmas cards

We have sold almost 10,000 cards this year - a record.

Thanks to those of you who had card stalls and sold extra packs. Thanks again for the early orders and prompt payment, the extra money to cover postage and the generous donations which we will gift aid (if you have signed a form to say so). Thanks too for your kind and constructive comments and informative letters. I should explain that the African Christmas pictures are very difficult to find and after frequent requests, this year we chose to have a secular card as well. This sums up the majority of the comments received: "A change of style but a delightful one. It's good that some of the old designs are still available."

If you haven't yet paid for your cards please send your cheque as soon as possible.

Gift Aid
Our Gift Aid refund for tax year 2008/09 amounted to £3630.04. It was worth a bit of effort listing about 300 donations.

I am pleased to report that we are having a good year with our fundraising, and as a consequence I have been able to keep up regular fortnightly remittances to MRCH, in addition to funds sent for the building of the crèche. I should like to thank you all for the great efforts you have made. Those of you who were privileged to meet Astonishment and Bridgety, when they were in England, will know that the need is a bottomless pit. They are able to touch a few thousand of the 1.4 million orphans in Zimbabwe, and at times this is with the sacrifice of their own salaries. In order to

give them more financial help than we do at present, we need to increase our supporters' base. So with this in mind we are enclosing a copy of our latest brochure, which we hope you can give to someone you feel may be interested in becoming a supporter/ member. In 1997 when we formed the Friends, our intention was to raise a small sum each year to give the children a few treats and in our first three years we raised just over £7000. In the next ten years we have raised another £450,000, which has been instrumental in keeping the Home open, and saving the lives of an unknown number of children. Your generous support is priceless.

Paddy Coles Treasurer

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Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home

December 2009

Mr and Mrs Mapurisa's recent visit was very successful as witnessed by the following reports....

Newton le Willows, Merseyside

...Astonishment made a terrific impact here in Newton, helping me to promote the Home much better than I could before. He proved to be a terrific speaker and everyone who met Astonishment and Bridgety were impressed and inspired.

The children loved Astonishment's visit to the school and were fascinated to hear about the snakes in Zimbabwe. I was pleased that we raised £700 from donations and cards and hope it will go a long way to helping the Home. I also know that Astonishment and Bridgety enjoyed seeing the Blackpool lights.

Linda Tither



Tickhill, Doncaster

Astonishment and Bridgety's visit to Doncaster was very successful. Action for Children arranged for us all to visit three centres in Doncaster. One not far

We give support, mainly by cash, but also by advice + assistance to the Home for the benefit of the Children

from the town centre runs a variety of programmes for young Mums or for adults retreating from drug abuse who have responsibility for children. There is also a dedicated sensory stimulation room for severely disabled children and a toy lending Library for young families. The Bentley Centre is purpose built with a nursery and education centre staffed by a very helpful and committed team who showed us around and provided many ideas for the soon to be completed extended crèche and day centre at MRCH. Then to the Intake Centre for an excellent light lunch in their café to finish off very instructive visits. Afterwards the Head and other staff at the centre, Will Morrey from Head office and Millie Cummings from the regional office met with us to discuss planning and future development trends and how they could best support the work of the new crèche and Day Centre at MRCH. The staff went to considerable trouble to outline the programmes on offer to their community and gave Astonishment material to adapt to the needs in Zimbabwe. Email addresses were also freely exchanged. One of the staff, an early years teacher, has set the wheels in motion to offer her services to MRCH through VSO.

Don Banham

Hethersett, Norfolk

First of all I must say how delighted we were to be part of Astonishment's tour to this country, we were truly blessed and privileged to have had that time

with them both. Astonishment showed the DVD to us at Hethersett. People came from other churches within our Circuit and neighbouring villages. A total of £172 was raised. We were so impressed with how Astonishment responded to questions by speaking with such knowledge, love and passion for the Children's Home and his work there. The evening service at Hethersett was led by Sheila in the format of an interview. Astonishment had some prior knowledge of the questions, but not all – one question she asked was regarding the church services in Zimbabwe and the large numbers attending; the many children; the length of service and format. There was a very relaxed but meaningful atmosphere to the service. Sheila invited everyone to follow the Zimbabwean tradition when leaving the service, by everyone shaking hands with everyone else, concluding with applause! Astonishment is a true ambassador for the Matthew Rusike Children's Home. *Juliet Harwood*

During their visit Astonishment was asked to go to the House of Commons. This involved a sudden change to the schedule and thank you to the Hethersett friends who organised their train travel to London and took their luggage on to Bedford.

Astonishment wrote...Indeed, I thank God that we were able to meet all our commitments yesterday. We had a wonderful meeting with the Schools for Africa people and the launch of the Africa support programme was very successful. I was given some time to address the gathering that included MPs, teachers and school children. I was interviewed briefly by the BBC.

Bedford

I thought I would let you know one result of Astonishment and Bridgety's visit to our local school. The teacher says she has persuaded the school to take MRCH as it's children's charity next year and has got the librarian to sort out books which are usually sold to parents. They will collect more and raise the money to send them to MRCH. She is keen for me to talk to staff and parents too. She is sending Astonishment snow pictures in exchange for lion pictures, as her pupils are going to see The Lion King at Christmas! *Mary Bromley*

Highworth

A very sincere thank you for your hospitality at Highworth Methodist Church. We were delighted to be with you and to meet with Astonishment and Bridgety – when one sees all that they have accomplished it makes one full of admiration and very humbled by all they do. *Chris Pearson*

One thing is clear, the need is there and will continue for some time – probably years. *John Richer*

Droitwich

Relaxing before continuing their journey down to Bristol, Astonishment and Bridgety had a look through our scrap-books from our visit to Zimbabwe and the Home in 1998. They recognised many of the children – "He's now a qualified doctor" exclaimed Astonishment and we learnt a lot about the present state of some of the places we visited. Compared to the situation a year ago, things are easing in the country, but the need is still great for many people. The collection for FoMRCH was £330.15, a remarkable

sum considering that other collections had been supported in previous weeks and thanks also to those who signed Gift Aid forms, making 28% extra on their giving. *Roy Marsh*

Ringwood

Astonishment and Bridgety made a great impression at our church. We had a lunch for MRCH cooking for just over 70 people. We had a coffee morning at Verwood MC which proved very successful and we had a supper at home with our Minister. A couple who met Astonishment and Bridgety are very interested in going to Zimbabwe as working volunteers. *Paddy Coles*

Orpington

We had a really lovely time with Bridgety and Astonishment, it was such a privilege to have them. It has rekindled interest...we had an evening meal for 10 of us on the Monday and then Astonishment spoke in the church on Tuesday evening. We hope this will lead to more fund raising in 2010. *Fay Payne*

Your Executive Committee thanks all the hosts, friends and supporters for making this visit such a huge success and we wish you all every blessing for Christmas and 2010.

**2010 marks 60 years of MRCH
Several of you knew Rev
Matthew Rusike personally,
taught his children, went to his
funeral or knew the Home well in
the decades since 1950. You
have a wealth of information and
stories about MRCH in the past.
Can you write something for our**

newsletter which would be of interest to others?

Remember Mandy Gilyard who swam a mile across Lake Windermere in September? ...It was a fantastic day and a great atmosphere, I finished the swim in



35 mins. Now busy collecting the £300 sponsorship money.

Congratulations and well done for raising so much money – the Tshirt looks good too!

MRCH DVDs/Videos 2009

The Superintendent left us a copy of his DVD video showing life at the Home, with children and staff saying how they liked living in the family units created over the last four years. There are also some shots of the partly completed Crèche. We see the caring work done outside the Home, both helping people in the vicinity with daycare and at new centres across the nation. Copies are now available for you to show in your groups.

For anyone with access to a computer, Astonishment also left an Interactive DVD giving access to a slide presentation about the Home, the 2009 video, the 2005 video and several sets of photographs etc.