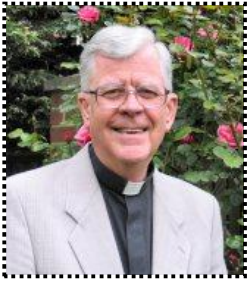


**PORTSMOUTH DIOCESAN BAMENDA COMMITTEE**



Portsmouth visitors with Archbishop Cornelius and members of his Bamenda – Portsmouth Committee



**A REPORT  
OF THE  
VISIT TO THE  
ARCHDIOCESE OF BAMENDA CAMEROON  
OF THE DELEGATION  
OF THE PORTSMOUTH DIOCESAN COMMITTEE  
10<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2010**

Delegation:

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**Mr. Colm Lennon, Vice Chair PDBC; project manager**

**Mrs Josephine Overton, member PDBC; organiser Clinicare International**



**Mrs Catherine Waters-Clark, member PDBC; J & P Worker; schools' twinning promoter.**

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## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OF THE VISIT TO BAMENDA OF THE DELEGATION OF THE PORTSMOUTH DIOCESAN COMMITTEE 10<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2010

Notes:

- Only four days after our return, on 26<sup>th</sup> January, **Archbishop emeritus Paul Verdzekov died**, aged 79. His mortal remains were taken for burial at Shisong his birthplace. At 12.15 pm on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> March, in our Cathedral Bishop Crispian will celebrate a Requiem Mass for his eternal rest. It was he who with the late Archbishop Derek Worlock, in 1974 set up the twinning between Bamenda and Portsmouth. A week before he died I visited him at his modest retirement house on the outskirts of Bamenda town. He had asked to be remembered to all the priests and laypeople of Portsmouth Diocese. When I received his blessing, little did I know that it was a final farewell. MAY HE REST IN PEACE.
- **References to other Documents** refer to written material made available to us while in Bamenda. In addition there are pictures of nearly all the places and projects described above. To facilitate electronic mailing these were not embedded in this report. However on request, the Report, with a complete set of pictures and scanned documents, are available on CD. Also, they are to be made accessible on the official Bamenda website: [www.bamendaandportsmouth.com](http://www.bamendaandportsmouth.com) . For other information contact the Chairman at [ronhishon@btinternet.com](mailto:ronhishon@btinternet.com) . In addition to this report, Mrs Jo Overton has prepared a special report on health and social care, which is also available on the CD (Doc. 15C).
- **The weakness of the Pound Stirling** continues to affect our donations. A few years ago, £1 was equivalent to 1,000 Cameroonian Francs CFA (linked to the Euro), whereas currently it is worth approximately only 760 Francs CFA. In addition, to maintain the Archdiocesan offices and administration there is normally a deduction (of about 6%) on all financial transactions. Readers should take this into account when calculating the value of our grants.
- **Cost of Visit.** The costs of my return flight was paid by the Portsmouth Diocese; that of the other three delegates was born by the Bamenda Fund; once in Bamenda, the Archdiocese of Bamenda covered all the costs of our transportation and accommodation; the costs of travel insurance, Visas etc. was born by the delegates themselves.

### Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January

#### THE JOURNEY

It was an icy -2 °C when we departed London Heathrow, 1½ hours late at 10.00 am, on a Swissair Flight to **Zurich**. There we were rushed across the Airport in a special bus, just in time to catch the 12.30 flight which arrived at **Douala** Airport at 7.30 pm. Douala is the largest city in Cameroon, a sprawling tropical Third World City with an average temperature in the high twenties or low thirties and 95% humidity.

Once we had retrieved our luggage and battled our way to the exit, we were relieved to be met as promised by Father Michael Bibi, the secretary of their Portsmouth – Bamenda Committee, and Diocesan Director of Maryvale Bamenda (Diocesan Catechists' Training).

We stayed overnight in Douala at the urban health centre run by the Anglophone Franciscan 'Shisong' sisters. They received us warmly, fed us and invited us to watch football on their small and battered TV – Cameroon drew 4-4 with Mali in the first stages of the Africa Cup in Angola! Mercifully, the air-conditioning, though antiquated and noisy, did function, and we were able to rest.

### Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January

We joined the sisters for 6 am (sung!) Mass, and after Jo Overton had given the sisters some medicines from Clinicare International, we set out on the very cramped 5½ hour journey from Douala, gradually ascending to **Bamenda** in the North West Region.

The sights and sounds of the journey are in themselves an education! Memorable sights included: in Douala vehicles weaving unpredictably in and out around the potholes, motorcycle taxis carrying up to three passengers at once or incredible loads of furniture or sacks of rice; then further along a compound crowded for a death celebration, banana plantations, and roadside markets selling pineapples, sugarcane and yams (even on one occasion two dead cane rats!); later on Eucalyptus trees and the pink dust haze of the Hamatan.

We passed over the wide estuary of the River Wouri to **Bonaberri**, then on through **Mbanga,, Loum, Nkongsamba, Dschang, and Mbouda**, up and up through stunning hill country into the North West Province at the new Parish of **Santa**. Then came **Akum**, Bamenda Station, and finally we descended steeply into **Bamenda Town** (for general

information, c.f. [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bamenda](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bamenda)), the Seat of Archbishop Cornelius Esua, Archbishop of Bamenda.

## THE ARRIVAL

We were warmly welcomed by Archbishop Cornelius Esua and Fr. Ignatius Waindim (both of whom had visited Portsmouth last year), along with Fr Gregory Ngwa (fin. Sec.) and (Dutch) Brother Hup Welters MHM (Diocesan architect and designer), and after refreshments and a good meal of salad, mackerel and plantains etc., we were shown to our simple but adequate rooms.

### 1. MEETING THE ARCHBISHOP & HIS COMMITTEE 11<sup>th</sup> January Docs. 01, 02

At 4 pm we four met the Archbishop and the members of his Bamenda Portsmouth Committee. Their Committee consists of Fr Engelbert Kofon VG, Fr Michael Bibi - Committee secretary, Fr Ignatius Waindim - Archbishop's Secretary, Fr Gregory Ngwa - Financial Secretary, Fr John Ambe - Diocesan Education Secretary, Fr Bernadine Nsom - Principal of Pope John Paul Catholic Comprehensive Wum, Sr. Dorothy TSSF – Bamenda Prison Chaplain, and Mr. Ephraim Nkwain – a senior catechist.

We reviewed and made some small changes to the programme (see doc No I). Each day we would be taken to visit different places and people, both those we were already supporting plus new ones too.

We thanked their Committee for our copies of the minutes of their most recent meeting (see doc No. 2), and especially Fr Bibi for the systematic follow-up and feedback of projects supported by the Portsmouth Diocese.

We agreed that we should work together to set up a set a better process for the acceptance and monitoring of projects. This process would entail a) completion by any applicant of a project form; b) approval by the Archbishop's Committee; c) consideration by our own Committee for possible inclusion in our annual fund allocation d) a written annual progress report giving details of work done and money spent.

#### Other Business.

During the meeting we were informed about a number of projects including BEPHA, the Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province Health Assistance. This voluntary health insurance scheme was now taking off in the four participating dioceses (Bamenda, Kumbo, Mamfe and Buea). It already had 4,000 participants, with a goal of 12,000 to achieve self-sustainability.

We were given an outline of some new or developing projects we would be visiting in the next day: the DIOCESAN YOUTH FARMING PROJECT in Sabga and Pinyin, the site of a planned CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY of BAMENDA at Banjah (to include secular faculties), the CATHOLIC RADIO STUDIO /STATION. – see more details in the report below.

Under the leadership of the Mill Hill brothers, the DIOCESAN GARAGE and CARPENTRY WORKSHOP had in the past trained many mechanics and carpenters who now had their own businesses. However, though still operational, that training dimension now lacked leadership. It was suggested that 'Progressio' (previously CIIR) could be approached to help with this.

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After the Meeting we met Fr Muma Francis Sama, a native of Bamenda and newly ordained priest for the Diocese of Detroit USA. Father Ron had known him as a teenager in Azire Parish.

### Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January

#### 2. ST.MARTIN DE PORRES' PRIMARY SCHOOL WUM & ST THOMAS' MENKAF Doc. No.3

**The journey (in two vehicles) to Wum** took more than three hours, negotiating the deep holes and rocks of the unmade roads. At one point a bridge had collapsed and we had to take a diversion through the river, at another the bridge had been repaired but would take only one vehicle at a time! Thank God for the HILUX and the RAVA4 and Fathers Nsom's and Bibi's experience at the wheel!

Along the way we stopped to admire the dramatic Menchum Falls. The landscape varied from rice paddies and palm trees to hilly grassland. As we travelled, it was clear that for most people little has changed over the decades – still sundry block houses, mostly without electricity or piped water, still the daily chore of subsistence farming by hand.

Father Derek, with a number of senior Christians was waiting to welcome us. We heard a speech from Mme Ebua Angeline on behalf of the PPC (see Doc. No.3). Children from the School danced and sang before leading us down the hill into their school. We were pleased to see that with £2,000 from Portsmouth in 2008, repairs and improvements had been made to some of the basic rural classrooms. However a second block is in danger of falling down, and can no longer be used. This is a poor area, and though the parents do try to support, they clearly needs help to restore this double classroom.

Also, we heard and were given photographs of another school in the Parish, **St. Thomas' School in Menkaf**, too remote for us to visit this time, which is in even greater need, and our 2009 grant of £2,500 was channelled to it.

### **3. ST. MARTIN DE PORRES HEALTH CENTRE WUM Tue 12<sup>th</sup> Jan 2010**

We were welcomed by Sr. Olive, the new matron. There is a doctor and 16 staff members.. It has 63 beds, treats 300 – 350 patients per month and delivers 36 – 40 babies per month.

We have helped in the past to build the maternity, and we have contributed £2,700 over the past two years; we saw that work to build a new toilet block is well underway. They hope soon to build a laundry block. There are many needs e.g. lack of trolleys or wheelchairs; the delivery table and lamp needs replacing.

This is a functioning institution in a poor area. They are doing excellent work, and we hope to continue helping them. We gave them a copy of our 2010 greetings plaque.

### **4. JOHN PAUL II COMPREHENSIVE CATHOLIC COLLEGE WUM Tue 12<sup>th</sup> Jan 2010**

We were met at **JPACC** by the head teacher Fr Bernadine Nsom, members of staff, and students who sang a song of welcome. I passed on warm greetings from St. Edmund's School in Portsmouth, which is twinned with JPACC.

This College, set in the poorer rural part of the Diocese, started from nothing a couple of years ago. Numbers at present of more than 100 boarders are expected to grow to five or six hundred as the intake continues. There has been spectacular progress since we visited in 2008, when the school began by renovating a series of small abandoned municipal houses. Using land, partly given by local tribal leaders, and partly bought, they have renovated an existing building to be the refectory and chapel, and built 2 large dormitories and 2 classroom blocks and a principal's house.

Their PTA has financed the building of one of the dormitories. The students themselves grow much of the food they eat. The Portsmouth Committee have added to contributions raised by St. Edmund's to make donations of £2,400 in 2008 and £3,000 in 2009. We have provisionally earmarked a further allocation this year.

After a tour of the school, we were given lunch in the basic computer room. The principal asked us to consider adopting one or the buildings that are scheduled – a laboratory for domestic science etc. We now await formal application.

We were presented with gifts, and we gave them a copy of our 2010 greetings plaque.

### **5. ST. PATRICK'S R.C. PARISH & PRIMARY SCHOOL NJINTEH – BAFUT Tue 12<sup>th</sup> Jan 2010**

**Docs. 4, 5 and 6**

On the return journey we turned off to this newly established quasi Parish, an offshoot of the main Bafut Parish. We were welcomed by Fr. Cosmas PP (e-mail: [cmnjinteh@yahoo.com](mailto:cmnjinteh@yahoo.com)), 2 seminarians on pastoral work, the teachers and children of the primary school.

Speeches of welcome were given by Mr. Ndongmaji J.N. PPC Chair (Doc. No.4), by the the Chair of Njinteh Mission Station (Doc. No.5), and by a senior pupile of the Primary School (see Doc. No.6)

It is a non Catholic area and not wealthy. In 2008 and 2009 we helped here both with school fees and the renovation of classrooms (see docs), and have provisionally earmarked an allocation for 2010.

We were pleased to see evidence of progress made, and various requests were made: for further school restoration, for a Parish Hall, for completion of Bell Tower etc. We await formal application for one or more projects, though the need to help with school fees always remains. We were presented with gifts, and we gave them a copy of our 2010 greetings plaque.

### **Wed. 13<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

### **6. ST JOSEPH'S CHILDREN AND ADULT HOME (SAJOC AH) – MAMBU BAFUT**

St. Joseph's, under the care of the Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis (TSSF), rehabilitates children & adults with physical disabilities & provides temporary home and education to visually impaired children. In 2009 they saw 715 new cases! The 40 staff include 2 physiotherapists, 4 asst. Physios, 1 nurse, seven teachers of special education and various technicians.

It works in collaboration with nearby St. Theresa's health centre and refers patients to Njinikom Hospital for operations. It offers all kinds of physiotherapy, boasts an orthopaedic workshop, makes its own false limbs and crutches, and has a working farm. For more details, see their website: [www.sajocahforhope.org](http://www.sajocahforhope.org) This is an exceptional resource, always busy with patients young and old from far and wide.

Along with other agencies, we have supported them over the years. In 2008 we gave £1,200, in 2009 £1,500. The sisters are asking our help towards the building of new residential block for stroke patients, which may cost £90,000 in all(!), but there are not yet as yet any clear plans for its funding or staffing. We have some money provisionally earmarked for SAJOCAH, but we need a formal application.

#### **7. ST. THERESA'S CATHOLIC MEDICAL CENTRE (STCMC) MAMBU – BAFUT**

We were welcomed by the matron Sr. Belinda TSSF. We made a thorough tour of this busy and well established centre, more like a hospital. It has two resident doctors, with facilities for surgery, day clinics etc.

In 2008 and 2009 we gave a total of £2,700 towards their operating theatre, which is operational.

They need money for further equipment, and we await a project application. Meanwhile Jo Overton made a donation of medicines from Clinicare.

#### **8. ST. THERESA'S SUPPORT GROUPS MAMBU – BAFUT see docs. 7 and 8**

These two support groups, which are attached to STCMC, were there to greet us warmly with song and speeches. We were presented with gifts, and we gave them a copy of our 2010 greetings plaque.

The Herbal Doctors' group, originally set up by American Peace Corps Volunteers, was new to us, and we listened with interest to the report of their work and plans (Docs. 7a-b). We are not clear as to how they fit in with the work of the Health Centre.

The HIV AIDS self-help group report gave an account (see Doc 8a-b) of the money we had donated (£2,400 in 2008 and £3,000 in 2009), detailing (but not costing) the purchase of food both for consumption and re-sale, and of medicines, AIDS testing, the support of 25 orphans etc., and requested continued help, but again without costing.

#### **9. ST JOHN VIANNEY PRE-SEMINARY FORMATION HOUSE BAFUT 13<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2010 Docs. 9a-b**

Led by their rector Father Anthony Yilaka and spiritual director Fr Antoninus Tantan, we met the 25 (10 less than in 2008) pre-seminary students from 6 dioceses, following the one year programme of formation and discernment. John Paul Akumeh, a senior student, gave a written address (see doc 9 a-b).

This centre was founded in 1993, and is principally for the Ecclesiastical Province (the 4 dioceses of Bamenda and Kumbo [NW], Buea and Mamfe [SW]), though at present there are several from other countries.

In 2008 and 2009 we had contributed a total of £4,000 towards a new Chapel project. However, for various reasons this had been put on hold. In fact there is a mission church a short walk away, which is little used. In any case their present buildings are adequate for worship, and though they express some need to replace some existing computers, it was felt appropriate that the unused money should now be re-allocated to one of our new projects, while we await any further application through the Archdiocese.

#### **10. PRIMARY SCHOOL AZIRE PARISH 'SMALL MANKON' 13<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2010 Docs. 10 a-b, and 11**

We went to meet the schoolchildren of St. Theresa's Parish Azire in a quite tough urban area of Bamenda Town. There are 737 primary school children and 113 nursery children. We were welcomed by Fr Engelbert Kofon PP and Fr Richard MHM (assistant priest and school manager), Mme Margaret Ngabe Head-teacher, other teachers and members of the Parish. Over 700 children paraded in their yard and sang and danced for us.

A speech from PTA chair Richard Nde Layong (see Doc 10 a-b) reported on the ongoing repair to the dilapidated school outer wall, to which both the Bamenda Fund and the PTA had contributed, and on which work was still in progress. Funds were still need to complete a project which had grown beyond the original plan. A senior boy of about 11 years old also read loud and clear his own speech of welcome!

The school regularly receives help for school fees from an individual donor in the Portsmouth Diocese. Also, at the request of the Bridgemary Gosport Branch of the UCM (*Pres: Mrs J. White 11 Carisbrooke Road Gosport PO13 0HG*), Fr Ron passed from them to the Azire CWL a card and gifts. In return they gave a letter and literature to post to them in England.

#### **11. ST. EDWARD'S CHURCH MULANG 13<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2010 See doc. 12**

We went with Fr Engelbert to St. Edward's, a flourishing mission station of Azire [Small Mankon] Parish, in the outskirts of Bamenda Town), where we were warmly welcomed by a delegation of Christians, including Mrs Mankefor Mary (see Doc. 12) current president of the Mission Committee, along with John Achuo past President, and Benjamin Awah, the catechist.

They have four men from their community studying for the priesthood. They have a large Church seating at least 1000 people which is filled on Sundays. The cost of the foundations and first footings were paid for in part by Portsmouth Donations in the early 90s.

In 2008 and 2009 we gave a total of £10,000 towards the construction of a Mission house to house a catechist or priest. We were pleased to see that the building is complete and the catechist is now in residence. A Christian family had paid for the sanctuary to be tiled. All this paves the way towards the Church having the Blessed Sacrament reserved, and they now await the Archbishop's permission.

We heard a speech from the Mission President (see Doc. 11) in which the project of a hall was mooted. We await a project application. We were presented with gifts and cooked food to take to Archbishop's House; we gave them a copy of our 2010 greetings plaque.

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

**Our Driver: Fr. Cletus**

**12. SS. PETER AND PAUL PARISH CHURCH & SCHOOL NDOP**

**Doc. 13 a-b**

Ndop is in the centre of a comparatively low-lying plain, surrounded with dramatic rocky hills. Here we received a warm welcome from Frs Joe Akem PP and Fr Raphael (Curate and School Manager), who accompanied us to the (old) church where I celebrated Mass for the Primary School Children plus a large number of the local Christians. It was a full sung Mass with choirs, drums and a solemn entry of the Scriptures, preceded by cutlass carrying traditional dancers.

After Mass we were given a tour of the new much larger unfinished Church, to which our fund has given £6,000 over two years. We were pleased to see that since our 2008 visit, rafters and roof were now in place. However, we learned that the Archdiocesan technicians were not happy with the construction of the rafters, and were considering what corrective work needed to be done. Though not finished, the New Church had been in use until in the height of the rainy season when flood water had entered the Church. Work was afoot to make adequate channels to prevent this occurring again. We will consider further donations, depending on further news.

We also had a tour of the Primary school, to which our Fund gave £2,400 in 2008 and £1,200 in 2009 for refurbishment. It was clear that more work needed to be done, though the degree of participation by the PTA was unclear.

We then attended a reception attended by the PPC and other leading Christians. In his speech (Doc 13 a-b), Chairman Mr Afungchwi Raphael Ndofor (e-mail: [graphndofor@yahoo.com](mailto:graphndofor@yahoo.com)) outlined the problems of the church, and assured us of the continued fund-raising efforts of the local community. We were sad to hear that the previous PPC chair and ex H/M of the School, Mr Muenyi Matthias, was ill in hospital, and we asked our greetings to be passed on. We gave them a copy of our 2010 greetings plaque. Lunch followed.

**13. ST. PATRICK'S PARISH & HEALTH CENTRE BABANKI-TUNGO Thurs 14<sup>th</sup> Jan. Doc. 14**

We received a warm welcome from Fr John Berinyuy (P.P.), members of the CWA and other Christian leaders. This Parish includes Bamessing.

We then toured the Health Centre which caters for between 80 – 100 people per month, provides a well-baby clinic etc. It has 5 staff (4 qualified). We saw that much progress had been made to the building, and the entire new centre had been roofed etc. However so far only half is equipped and in use. A doctor comes once a month from the Health Centre at Akum. We made a tour of the clean and well kept premises, including the pharmacy. Jo Overton made a donation of drugs from Clinicare.

A formal speech was presented by the Chair of the PPC Mr Chenyi Joseph (see Doc 14). He acknowledged recent help we had given to the Health Centre in Babanki-Tungo (£6,000 in 2008, £3,000 in 2009), to the Father's House in Bamessing (£1,200 in 2008 and £1,500 in 2009) [see below No.14], and to St. Theresa's Health Centre in Bekow-Bamessing (£1,200 in 2008 and £1,500 in 2009) [see below No. 15].

Some new projects were mooted: new Churches in Mbesoh - Bamessing, Ntukwe and Sabga outstations; a catechist's house in Tichu outstation. Also the Archdiocesan Agricultural Project at Sabga [see below No. 16].

We received gifts and we gave them a copy of our 2010 greetings plaque.

**No. 14 ST THERESA'S MISSION STATION BAMESSING**

**Thurs 14<sup>th</sup> Jan 2010**

We travelled back up to the main road, through Mbesoh, the Bamessing tribal heartland boasting life-size statues of past fons. At St. Theresa's (part of Babanki T. Parish) we were met by an enthusiastic crowd of Christians, who proudly showed us round the nearly completed and partly used (by the catechist etc.) Father's House. (see above No. 13 for

details). They are a numerous Catholic community who look forward to being a separate parish. We gave them a copy of our 2010 greetings plaque to hang in the house.

Towards the end the gathering was graced by the Fon of Bamessing (whose predecessors had given the land for the Church, house and nearby school and health centre) who came to greet us and assure us of his support.

**No. 15 BUKOW – BAMESSING HEALTH CENTRE Thurs 14<sup>th</sup> Jan 2010**

This community-based health centre, which in 2008 had the support of the whole population, seems now to be in difficult times. There are just two members of staff – Marceline and Franklin – who struggle to maintain a good service. The number of patients has decreased from 90 to 30 patients a month. When we went there, there was only one patient and one lady who just given birth. They asked me to name the child – ‘John’. Jo Overton gave a packet of drugs from Clinicare.

Their main problems are: as yet no Govt. Registration (promised ‘in the pipeline’), no visiting doctor (we reported this to Sr. Sheila the Diocesan health coordinator), no mains electricity (the line is nearby), and antiquated buildings. They have as yet not spent the donations we have made: £1,200 in 2008 and £1,500 in 2009. This money may have to be re-allocated.

**NO. 16. ARCHDIOCESAN AGRICULTURAL PROJECT AT SABGA Thurs 14<sup>th</sup> Jan 2010**

Our final visit of the day was up in the hills of Sabga, where the Diocese have acquired a plot of land on which to develop a mixed farm (livestock and crops), to be worked by Youths under the direction of Fr Cletus the Diocesan Youth coordinator. This has the double purpose: of giving income-generating work to unemployed youth, and of teaching ecologically sustainable farming methods as opposed to the traditional practice of burning grass to provide nitrogen and new growth.

Already some crops have been sown and harvested, but they still have to purchase livestock etc. This project comes under the diocesan Youth Coordinator. For more details see No. 46 below.

**Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

**No. 17 ST. MARTIN DE PORRES HOSPITAL and PROJECT HOPE NJINIKOM doc. 15**

Sr Xaveria, warmly welcomed us and escorted us to through the gate, accompanied by young traditional musicians and dancers.

We were given a tour of this established and well run hospital, which as usual was very busy, packed with both in-patients, out-patients, well baby clinics etc. We saw the theatre, wards, pharmacy, clinics, and pharmaceutical production unit. The hospital has 229 beds, 3 resident doctors. In addition great has been done recently by a team of orthopaedic doctors from Holland.

A formal address was given by Robert Mbang, a staff representative (see Doc. No. 15). It paid special tribute to the contributions of St. Colman’s with St. Paul’s Parish in Cosham, who have sponsored this hospital’s projects for many years. With their donations, augmented by the general funds of the Bamenda Committee (to the Hospital: £2,400 in 2008 and £3,000 in 2009) we have helped complete the new maternity and surgical block. They acknowledge too the supply of drugs by Clinicare International.

With a similar amount totalling £5,400, we have helped sustain the work of Project Hope which is a community based programme for those infected or affected by HIV AIDS. Project Hope (E-mail: [prohopecam@yahoo.com](mailto:prohopecam@yahoo.com) website: [www.projecthopecameroon.org](http://www.projecthopecameroon.org) led by Augustine, is exceptional in its degree of careful organising and systematic outreach to the population. Still nearly 17% of the local population is infected with AIDS, and more especially pregnant women and the under twenty age group. They have a team of 38 volunteers and reach out to 700 orphans and their carers. Working with the Parish’s pastoral care of the you’re the focus on preventive medicine and social care, including supporting children at school. The Committee are committed to continued support for this project.

We were presented with a full written Project Hope Strategy Plan for 2010 – 2015 (available for inspection on request from the Bamenda Fund chairman [ronhishon@btinternet.com](mailto:ronhishon@btinternet.com) ), to expand their programme throughout the NW Region of Cameroon.

They itemised some new appeals, in particular their need for a van to transport IV fluids (which they produce on site) to other Centres, and for improvement to the water supply to the hospital and neighbouring villages. We will await any formal applications.

We all received gifts and we in turn gave them one of our diocesan greetings plaques.

**No. 18 ST. BEDE’S COLLEGE ASHING – KOM Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2010**



We visited for the first time in recent years St. Bede's College, a large coeducational Catholic Secondary school of approx 800 pupils with an excellent reputation for achievement. It is all boarding, and set in a quiet rural location among rolling hills.

We were welcomed by its recently appointed headmaster is Fr Bonaventure Ndong, who trained in Southampton, and who until recently was H/M of St. Paul's Nkwen. We were given an extensive tour of the school.

The entire student body gathered outside in the hot sun to greet us with song and dances. Despite the breakdown of the PA system, we listened to speeches from Fr Bonaventure and a member of staff, and gifts were presented, including some CDs of religious songs recorded by Fr. Bonaventure (copies available on request). Fr. Ron and Catherine W-C both replied. We enjoyed lunch at the School.

In the speech a request was received that St. Bede's, like St. Paul's in Nkwen should be twinned with a similar Catholic School in the Portsmouth Diocese. Catherine is a governor of Bishop Challoner School in Basingstoke, and Fr. Bonaventure undertook to write a letter to the Head teacher there to initiate a dialogue.

**No. 19 ST. MARY'S KEZON - BAMBUI Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

Fr George Ngalim, PP of Bambui (until recently at Bayelle) met us at the Church. No other Christians, apart from the catechist were present. In the past we had helped to construct this Mission Church. In 2008 we gave £2,400 and in 2009 £1,200 towards internal furnishing etc. We were pleased that some benches had been made, and that some reinforcements had been made to the Church structure. However the Church did not appear clean or well cared for.

The Parish Priest did not consider this Church a priority; he told the catechist that the following weekend he would not be able to come, and that the Christians should go to another Church. There is no ongoing project here at the present.

**No.20 AKOSSIA MISSION STATION – BAMBUI**

Fr Ngalim considered this Mission a greater priority than Kezon. We were not able to visit this Mission Station, and we await receipt of more details and a formal application for assistance.

**No. 21 ST. PETER'S CATHOLIC PARISH CHURCH BAMBUI Fri 15<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

Fr George took us to see the uncompleted skeleton of the new Parish Church. It is needed to house a growing church population, and to free the current church for use by the adjacent seminary.

The initial design was over ambitious and ran into financial and technical difficulties. Now under the control of the Archdiocesan technical team, it will be reduced in size and redesigned. There were no members of the local community present. We were surprised by the lack of formal welcome, speeches etc.

At the Parish house we met retired Fr. Joseph Ayeah, well known to Fr. Ron.

**No. 22 ST. THOMAS AQUINAS REGIONAL MAJOR SEMINARY BAMBUI Fri 15<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

This was a short courtesy call only. We were met by the Rector Fr. Agapitus Nfon who gave us a tour of the seminary campus. (for an illustrated description log on to <http://www.stams-cm.urbaniana.edu/pages/present.htm> I offered to pay for a subscription to any publication for the seminary.

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

**NO. 22. ARCHDIOCESAN EDUCATION OFFICE**

**Doc. 15 A**

Fr. John Ambe, the Catholic Education Secretary, has responsibility for the funding and management of all the Catholic primary and secondary school in the Archdiocese. His office is situated in the Cathedral compound in refurbished buildings previously occupied by M.H.M. brothers.

Currently there are 158 Primary and Nursery schools (16 more than two years ago) with 721 teachers for 25,000 children, while there are 11 secondary schools with 338 teachers for 6,000 students. To support the schools there is a well established mobile R/E team.

Despite a very good academic and moral record, Catholic schools are facing a massive challenge. Built by the people and staffed by the Archdiocese, the Government only erratically contributes a small 'subvention' towards teachers' salaries, which are substantially less than those in Government School. At the same time 'free' Government schools are planted near Catholic Schools, with inadequate and often absent staff.

To survive, the Church has to charge School fees. These are not excessive but beyond the means of many orphans and those affected by the HIV/AIDS endemic in some 20% of the Population. While in some areas support Groups and parochial initiatives strive to help needy children, the Archbishop has a special Education Fund (ABEF) (Doc. No.

15A full report available on Request) which channels help for school fees to schools throughout the Archdiocese. Fr. Ambe presented us with a full written report (available for inspection on request to the Bamenda Committee) of the names of 676 children throughout the diocese whose fees had been paid by the fund (costing about £15,000). He assured us that through this fund parishes and schools in the UK could support children in specific schools in the poorer areas of the Archdiocese.

*The current annual basic School fees are approximately: £25 (Primary in urban areas); £10 (Primary in rural areas); £30 (Nursery schools); £120 (Secondary boarding Schools).*

Since our 2008 visit the Portsmouth Fund had contributed £2,400 to the Scholarship Fund; also, a further £8,000 which has been used to provide transport to the Mobile Catechetical Team.

We presented the Office with one of our diocesan greetings plaques.

#### **No. 22A MOBILE CATECHETICAL TEAM**

**Doc 15AA**

Also under the auspices of the Education Secretary, Sr. Ernestine with two other Sisters of St. Anne based in Bayelle, and 30 voluntary laypeople who work together under Fr Cletus Ashu Amah of the Youth Chaplaincy, form a mobile team of catechists instructing many Catholic Children in Government and Private secondary schools. The Catholic students are encouraged to join the YCS (Young Catholic Students).

In 2008 and 2009, we gave a total of £8,000 to a fund to help pay teachers. As the Government finally did give the promised subvention this sum was not needed. Instead it was diverted to provide transport to the Mobile Catechetical Team.

#### **No. 23 SR SHEILA - PROGRAMME FOR HIV/AIDS VICTIMS & FAMILIES. Sat. 16<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2010**

Crowded into a classroom in the Cathedral grounds, a large and happy crowd welcomed us among them. Led by Sr Sheila McElroy, it is a group of about 75 local people whose attitude and response to AIDS has been transformed through her programme. She also offers other support (school fees for children etc.), home visits, and a primary school sexuality programme. This is a functioning and worthwhile project.

In 2008 and 2009 we gave a total of £2,700, to buy beans and help with school fees etc. Jo Overton made a donation of multi-vitamin tablets from Clinicare. We hope to be able to continue our support.

We heard speeches of thanks from leaders Vincent, Hilda and Pa. Nsom, We received gifts and we presented them with a Portsmouth Diocesan greeting plaque.

#### **No. 23A SR SHEILA – ARCHDIOCESAN HEALTH COORDINATOR Sat. 16<sup>th</sup> Jan 2010 Doc 15B**

Archbishop Cornelius asked Sr Sheila mshr to take over this work from Sr. Chiara TSSF. She has oversight of all the hospitals and health centres in the Area. Despite limitations of health and transport, Sr. Sheila does try to visit all centres in turn. She is particularly interested to promote small or rural health projects in places like Esau, Teze, Bekow-Bamessing, Njindom etc.

On our behalf Jo Overton took note of the situation regarding the supply to the centres from the central store of medicines and equipment. She has since prepared a detailed report of all the health centres we visited (see Doc 15B).

Sr Sheila was appreciative of the support the Bamenda Fund gives through Clinicare International. It would appear that for the future it may be more cost effective to arrange for the purchase of drugs locally, rather than pay post and duty on packages from UK. On the other hand, specific items of equipment may be better imported from overseas.

We encouraged Sr. Sheila to complete Project Aid application forms for different centres under her care. Once we received costed concrete projects from her, they would be given serious consideration by our Committee.

**No. 24 DIOCESAN COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE Sat 16<sup>th</sup> Jan Docs 16 – 18** We were welcomed by the coordinator Mme Laura Naddin Ngwa Anyola and her team. For details of this Commission log on to [www.justiceandpeacebamenda.org/](http://www.justiceandpeacebamenda.org/) or e-mail them at: [jpcbda\\_2002@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jpcbda_2002@yahoo.co.uk) .

Laura gave us a full PowerPoint presentation describing the structure and work of the Commission (see also Docs 16 a-b), including providing legal advice to prisoners (see doc 18 a-b), facilitating reconciliation between dissident neighbouring communities in the Bawok- Bali and Oku areas, organising seminars and conferences and giving radio interviews to alert the public to the dangers of human trafficking (see Doc 17 a-b) prevalent in the NW., and raising awareness of human rights in the workplace etc. In addition to direct action, they produce pamphlets, posters and other literature.

It is clear that her team are doing good work, and we invited them to submit to us a costed concrete project application through the archdiocesan committee.

**No. 25. ARCHBISHOP PAUL VERDZEKOV (RIP) NTASEN Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

I visited Archbishop emeritus Paul at his modest retirement house at Ntasen, on the outskirts of Bamenda town. It was he who with the late Archbishop Derek Worlock, in 1974 set up the twinning between Bamenda and Portsmouth. He had asked to be remembered to all the priests and laypeople of Portsmouth Diocese. When I received his blessing, little did I know that it was a final farewell. Only four days after our return, on 26<sup>th</sup> January, he collapsed suddenly in his house, and died, aged 79. MAY HE REST IN PEACE.

**No. 26 HOLY ROSARY CONVENT MANKON BAMENDA Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

We four were invited to supper with the Holy Rosary sisters, now a mixed Irish and Nigerian community. They include Sr Collette McCann (Archdiocesan Pastoral Formation Team Leader – see entry below), Sr. Sheila McEvoy (Archdiocesan Health Coordinator – see entry below), the Head Teacher and two other teachers at the Holy Rosary College, a large a highly rated boarding school for girls.

It was Sr Collette who facilitated the recent visit to Bamenda of Mr Colin Bryce of Park Gate near Fareham, as part of his gap year.

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2010****No. 27. NTENEFOR MANKON MISSION STATION CHURCH Doc. 19 a -b**

This small and growing community is an outstation of the Cathedral Parish, situated high up in the Station area overlooking Bamenda Town. A new link road is being carved out just along side it.

We were welcomed by Fr Michael Ngwa, the assistant priest and school manager, in the absence overseas of the PP Fr Joseph Ateh. Though the Mass was scheduled for 8.30 am we began about 9.15 am. I celebrated their Sunday Mass in a double classroom of the school. It was packed with Christians of all ages, with other peering through the windows. It was a full sung Mass with much singing and processions. At the end of Mass there was an informative speech from the Mission Committee chairman, Mr. Ngne Michel (see Doc. No. 19), accompanied by Mme Mary-Bern Fultang, and gifts were exchanged from both sides.

We then went for a tour of the half completed Church. The Christians have worked hard over the years and raised money to build their Church. Twice they have erected rafters – the first fell down and the second were considered dangerous and were ordered to be taken down! Now, with the new road very near the Church, they will have to re-design it so that the front is away from the road.

Archdiocesan technicians have inspected the site are due to make recommendations. We must await an approved and costed project application before we consider offering help.

**No. 28 THE ARCHDIOCESAN EXECUTIVE OF THE C.W.A. Sun. 17<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2010****Doc. 20**

CWA e-mail: [cwabamenda@yahoo.com](mailto:cwabamenda@yahoo.com) . We went to their Diocesan HQ, at Finance Junction Bamenda, where we were welcomed by approx 12 senior CWA members, led by the Archdiocesan animator Miss Susan Awa. For a full list of the Executive, see Doc. 20.

We were given a good summary of the CWA's involvement in every aspect of Church and Civil Life, copies of their current statutes, and Work Plan for 2010. The latter includes: spreading information to combat AIDS and giving humanitarian support for those infected or affected; disseminating knowledge and good practice in the area of diet, family health and hygiene (both domestic and in public places); also a Diocesan workshop on social challenges including Justice and Peace issues and parenting. In addition the CWA is active in the support of Catholic Education etc.

Susan acknowledge the contacts made with them by Rosemary Farrow, a Bamenda Committee member, and Diocesan Secretary of the CWL in Portsmouth. Susan hoped that their English counterparts would be happy to give the money they were raising this year to the CWA BAMENDA Campaign to pay for many poor children to go to school. The money would be channelled through the Archdiocesan Education Secretary to schools where the need is most acute (e.g. in Mekaf – Wum; Ashong – Batibo; Njinteh – Bafut; Teze – Ngie).

We passed on to them the good wishes both of the CWL and UCM in our Diocese, and presented the executive with a copy of our official 2010 Greetings Plaque.

**No. 29 SACRED HEART CATHOLIC BOYS' COLLEGE – MANKON Sun 17<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2010 Doc. 21**

Sacred Heart College was founded 1961 by the Marist Brothers. It has developed into one of the most prestigious Colleges in Anglophone Cameroon, with 824 students, of which 561 are Catholics, and 161 are non-Catholic Christians. It has an academic staff of 48 and 17 support staff.

We were welcomed by the Head Teacher, Fr Michael Kintang, who himself gained his MA in education from Southampton University.

We joined all the students in their large chapel for Sunday Sung Evening Prayer and Benediction, after which the HT gave a formal speech of welcome (see Doc 21 a-d). We all then gather outside for a photo of the Committee delegation with the entire School community.

Fr Kintang expressed his interest in the College being twinned with a similar College in the Portsmouth Diocese. As St. George's Catholic Voluntary Aided College Southampton (Leaside Way, Swaythling, Southampton, SO16 3DQ) was the only all boys' school in our Diocese, Fr Ron undertook to make initial contact with its head teacher, Mr Graham Wilson BA(Hons) MBA through their website [www.stgeorgecollege.co.uk](http://www.stgeorgecollege.co.uk) or E-mail : [info@st-george.southampton.sch.uk](mailto:info@st-george.southampton.sch.uk) If the school wished to proceed this could be organised through our Committee member Catherine Waters-Clark [cwc@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:cwc@hotmail.co.uk).

We were given a generous evening meal by Fr Kintang and his community.

### **Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

#### **No. 30 ST. FRANCIS XAVIER PARISH BALI-NYONGA**

We were welcomed by the PP Fr. Joseph Mbinzenyuy. We were pleased to see that the £2,400 given in 2008 for the refurbishment of the Father's House had been well spent, and the house was now in good order.

#### **No. 31 SS. PETER & PAUL PRIMARY SCHOOL BAWOCK Mon. 18<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2010**

This is a poor area, still feeling the aftershocks of severe tribal conflict some years ago – a conflict resolved through the good offices of the Diocesan justice and peace reconciliation service. In 2008 and 2009 we had given a total of £5,400 towards the reconstruction of a nursery section for the school. We found work still in progress. The roofing is still not complete, though the materials are to hand and should be in place shortly. There is still work to be done and some money still not spent. The local community support this project through labour, and some money. We await project completion schedule.

We met head teacher Peter, and catechist Isaac, who is also a teacher at the school. When there is no priest, he leads Sunday services in the small mud block church. A speech of thanks was given by a senior Christian, the children sang, we received gifts, and in turn we gave them one of our Diocesan 2010 Greetings plaques.

#### **No. 32 ST. SEBASTIAN'S PARISH BATIBO Mon. 18<sup>th</sup> Jan 2010 Docs. No. 22 and 23**

We were welcomed by Father Charles Ngobi P.P. and the members of the Parish P.C.C.

I was the celebrant at a full Sung Mass led by the drums and voices of a Parish Choir, in the huge unfinished Church (begun by Fr O'Kelly). A good number of Christians attended, along with the school children.

At the end of Mass we heard a speech of welcome from the Chair of the PPC, Madame Mowoh Beatrice Enjei, who gave an address (See Doc No. 22). She thanked us for our assistance in the past (in 2008 and 2009 we had not contributed anything, for lack of any detailed feedback toward Church. They still need to fit windows, and then cement the floor, finish the sanctuary, install a ceiling and lighting etc. This February they are to launch a 3 million franc (approx £4,000) fundraising appeal towards the windows, which will cost about 10 million francs in all.

Small children from the remote mission station of ASHONG had been brought in the back of a truck, and enchanted us all with their songs and recitations (see Doc. 23). There had been a Catholic Primary School there, but it had been taken over by the Government without compensation, apparently with the acquiescence of the teachers (who anticipated better pay!). Now the Catholics have re-started from scratch, at present at infant level, without classrooms. In 2008 and 2009 we had given a total of £2,400 to the Batibo School for the deaf and dumb. However that school had moved and was no longer under the Archdiocesan umbrella. The money was to be given to the Ashong school project.

After Mass the senior Christians sang and danced for us, before we were given a good lunch in the Father's House, accompanied by the PCC. The local District Officer and his wife came in to greet us too!

#### **No. 33 ST. PAUL'S COMPREHENSIVE COLLEGE MILE 3 NKWEN Mon. 18<sup>th</sup> Jan Docs 24 & 24A**

We were met by Father George Ngwa, the new Principal, and other staff members, including Charles Jaff the head of R/E who has visited All Hallows Farnham, which is twinned with St. Paul's. Last year Archbishop Cornelius had celebrated Mass at All Hallows, in recognition of the successful twinning of the two Colleges.

We were given a good tour of the college campus. In 2008 and 2009 we gave a total of £5,400 towards ongoing works to build dormitories to accommodate more and more boarders, at the request of parents and provide adequate latrines for the growing numbers of pupils. The latter work is still going on. Also, and there is a need for a new refectory block too. There are even big plans afoot long-term to increase the school admission up to 5,000!

The entire student body assembled, we were entertained to traditional dances. The Head teacher gave us a welcome speech (Text not available). Also we were presented with a printed copy of his 'Beginning of the Year Report' (Doc. 24 – *complete report available on request*) which shows a current intake of 730 pupils, served by 36 teaching and 8 admin / support staff. We also received copies vols 2 - 4 of the 'SAPACO MIRROR, produced by the senior students (Docs 24A *available on request* to All Hallows) We were presented with gifts, and we in turn passed on the greetings of All Hallows School in Farnham and presented the school with our 2010 greetings plaque.

**No. 34. ST PAUL'S MISSION CHURCH MILE 3 NKWEN (Bayelle) Mon. 18<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2010 Doc 25**

St. Paul's, an urban Mission station of more than 2,000 Catholics, is part of the Bayelle Parish, one of the most populous and affluent in the Archdiocese. We were welcomed by Fr Victor Forgho PP, his assistant Fr. John Musi, and members of the Mission Committee, including the Chair Mr Joseph Lifelaf Bongaman, the Secretary, Mr Aloysius Che, and senior catechist Ephraim Nkwain.

We saw the nearly completed new Church which holds more than 1,000 people. They have Mass every day (200+ for weekday Mass!). The Church has been nicely constructed and finished, even with stained glass. Their next step is to replace the makeshift temporary seating with proper hardwood benches – these cost about £100 each. So far they have 16 of these.

We heard a speech of welcome and introduction (see Doc. 25). We were reminded also that Lawrence Bryce, from Park Gate Parish near Fareham, who had visited Bamenda last year, had raised some money for Bayelle Parish, and passed it to our Committee Chair for forwarding. Fr Ron assured Fr Victor that any specified monies would be forwarded to Bayelle during our next annual fund allocation, due this Spring.

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

**No. 35 ST MARTIN DE PORRES ALATENING – AKUM Tues. 19<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2010 Doc. 26**

We were welcomed by the Fr William Tardze who had recently returned from his sabbatical in UK. He is PP of St. Pius X Parish Akum.

Together we travelled some miles to visit Alatening, which is a rural Mission station of Akum Parish. Due to confusion about the time, we met only a few Christians there.

The Mission was founded in 1954, and over the years a mud block Church was built, followed by a Catholic School. In 2005 they have begun to build themselves a proper larger Church. So far the walls have been partly built. Following the advice of the Archdiocesan technical team, they have begun extending the foundations to enlarge the seating capacity. There is still much to be done, and the resources of the local Community are small.

As we were leaving, other Christians were coming, laden with food they had prepared to welcome us. We thanked them for the food, which we took with us to give to the kitchen of Archbishop's House (where we were lodged), and Father Ron had a special meeting in the Parish House with the Mission Committee executive. They presented him with a written speech of welcome and introduction (See Doc. 26). Fr. Ron promised that on receipt of a project application the Portsmouth Committee would try to include them in their funding allocation.

**No. 36 ST PIUS X PRIMARY SCHOOL & SCHOOL FOR DEAF & DUMB AKUM 19<sup>th</sup> Jan 2010**

We were welcomed by the head teacher to this long established, but rather run-down Parish School. However, this was not a formal visit and we were not given any definite request for help.

In adjacent buildings is a simple school for deaf and dumb children. This project [www.ashia.org/deafschool/MSaboutus.html](http://www.ashia.org/deafschool/MSaboutus.html) was initiated in 2002 by an Irish Holy Rosary Sister (they have a health centre in the Parish) and is now coordinated by Sister Charity Mbarah mshr, Coordinator of deaf school - Email: [ccmbarah@yahoo.com](mailto:ccmbarah@yahoo.com)

We visited the classrooms and were impressed by the devoted work of the teachers. Fr Ron has contacted Sr Charity to inform her of our visit and invite her response.

**No. 37 PRIMARY SCHOOLS AT TENELAH AND NSOH – AKUM 19<sup>th</sup> Jan 2010**

This school is on two sites, some miles from each other.

St. Julius' in Tenelah section is off the main road; the buildings are in bad state, and the number of pupils is small. Another private school has been opened nearby and has attracted local pupils.

St. Sylvester's at Nsoh section is on the main road, is housed in better buildings and appears to be in better state.

It is clear that these rural schools are struggling to retain teachers and pupils in the face of lack of capital investment and the difficulties in the payment of school fees and teachers' salaries.

**No. 38 HOLY FAMILY HEALTH CENTRE AKUM                      Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

We renewed acquaintance with Sr. Virginia Okeke, a Holy Rosary Sister, who with another sister bursar, runs a well-established and busy health centre (7,761 consultations in 2009!). It has 2 resident doctors, plus occasional visits from ENT doctors from Holland. They 44 staff including 20 qualified nurses, and good facilities built up over many years. They get support too from the Irish Missionary Resource Service (IRS). A new surgical and post-operative unit is under construction.

Jo Overton of Clinicare took note of their system of acquiring necessary drugs, and their current needs for medicines or equipment. In 2008 and 2009 we donated a total of £3,200 for a Laparotomy machine. However, the money has gone to an urgently needed blood testing machine, and the former is still lacking.

Jo. Overton gave a donation of drugs from Clinicare, and we were happy to present the Centre with one of our Diocesan 2010 Greetings plaques.

**No. 39 BAMENDA PRISON                      Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2010                      docs No. 27 and 28**

We went to visit Bamenda Prison (about 4 km from the Cathedral) with Fr Cletus, Sr. Dorothy Yefon TSSF, the pastoral leader there, with her helpers Mr. Killian and Lucas. We were met at the humble main door by the recently appointed Prison Governor, Mr Ngangjoh Lamya Mama (e-mail: [ngangjohlamya@yahoo.com](mailto:ngangjohlamya@yahoo.com)), a native of Baba 1. We noticed that in his office in a place of honour still hangs a dilapidated colour wedding picture of Prince Philip and Diana!

There are about 500 inmates in this high security prison including + – 50 teenagers / first offenders, and 8 women. We were admitted only to see the young offenders.

He welcomed the longstanding pastoral and material help that the Church offered the Prison, and welcomed us to tour the youth section of the prison and speak to the inmates. We saw the poor conditions where they lived and slept.

There is a school for the young offenders, and basic craft workshops, where young prisoners were making shoes, embroidering traditional gowns, and learning welding . However for staff and materials they depend entirely on the Chaplaincy.

When there are funds, the Chaplaincy also supplements the prisoners' meagre diet with money raised both locally and through ourselves. In 2008 and 2009 we gave a total of £2,700, which was more than used for buying rice and other materials (see Sr. Dorothy's written statement Doc. 27).

The young offenders gathered in their yard to greet us with song and dance. The director of their 'Reformatory School' Mr. Ahuo Bertrand, read out a formal speech of welcome and appeal (see Doc. 28). We presented the Governor with our 2010 Diocesan Greetings Plaque.

**No. 40 SITE OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF CAMEROON                      Tues. 19<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2009                      Doc. No. 29**

We went with the VG Fr Engelbert Kofon and the Education Secretary Fr John Ambe to visit this enormous 178 hectare site at **Ndzah** near **Banjah**, high above Bamenda Town, among the grasslands hitherto grazed by the cattle of the nomadic Fulanis. To date, the site has been acquired through negotiation with the local Fon, and agreements for compensation for those who will be displaced have been negotiated. Preliminary plans have been worked out by a team of local architects. . It is planned to have the main campus here, with satellite centres in each of the Dioceses.

This project is supported by all four dioceses in the Province: Bamenda, Kumbo, Mamfe and Buea. To launch it, in October of last year, the four bishops issued a **Pastoral letter** (see Cover - Doc No. 29, or full text on line on their website [www.catuc.org](http://www.catuc.org) ). As the University is to be Catholic and approved by the Holy See, its outlook and ethos will be in harmony with Catholic Truth. However the encyclical envisages a full range of secular, scientific and cultural faculties.

The main site, when fully developed will include buildings not only for lectures and student residences, but accommodation for staff and families, with all the associated services (church, schools, banks, shops etc.).

The Bishops have launched this ambitious project, looking to the large number of professional Cameroonians living and working in the USA and Europe, and hoping to attract both human and financial resources from them, and from the Universal Church.

Meanwhile, the first step will be to renovate some school buildings near Bamenda Cathedral, and open the first faculty there in the near future.

For further information contact the Project Coordinator, Prof. NKWI Paul Nchoji at [nchoji@catuc.org](mailto:nchoji@catuc.org).

**No. 41 BAMBUI WATER PROJECT                      Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2010                      docs No. 30- 31.**

Fr. Cletus took us first to the Convent home of Sr. Kate Morton (e-mail: [katemorton@ymail.com](mailto:katemorton@ymail.com)), the retired head teacher of Oaklands School Waterlooville, who had first informed us of the Project. Waiting to welcome us, with her and other members of her community, was Project coordinator Mr. Fornimoh Chrysanthus, whom we had met in 2008.

With the main construction project now completed and in operation, the Community were busy building a Water supply office and store, where the administration of collection of water rates and the storage of equipment for maintenance and metre installation could be accommodated.

We walked to the nearby site where the foundations and footings were already in place; also thousands of sun-dried blocks have been prepared, aluminium roofing has been purchased, and window frames and doors are ready made.

In 2008 and 2009 we have contributed a total of £5,400, The local community has also raised approx. £1,500 to pay for labour, and the consumers are paying their levies regularly. There is at present a credit of 784,240 francs or approx. £1,000. It was noted that in the summer of 2009 Oaklands School had made a further donation presented at the Mass celebrated there by Archbishop Cornelius – this would be forwarded to the Project as part of our next fund allocation in Spring this year.

Mr. Chrysanthus presented us with a written report, detailing progress (see doc. 30) while Sr. Kate, who acts as treasurer gave a detailed account of expenditure (See doc. 31). We were given traditional gifts, and we in turn presented one of our Portsmouth Diocesan 2010 Greetings plaques. The occasion ended with us enjoying Sr. Kate's home-made ice-cream gâteau!.

**No. 42                      TWINNING OF OAKLANDS SCHOOL WATERLOOVILLE                      Doc. 32**

Subsequent to the visit to Bambui, Sr. Kate wrote to me a letter informing me that Oaklands School (her old school), under their present head teacher Mr. Matthew Quinn, want some form of twinning (see Doc. 32).

She suggested they could twin with St. Bede's Ashing, but we had already agreed the Catherine W-C offer first refusal to Bishop Challoner in Basingstoke. I have e-mailed this to Sr. Kate, and raised the possibility of an alternative school in Bamenda – St. Mary's College Ndop, under the LSU 'Sisters of Christ'. I have also explained this to Oakland H/T.

**No. 43    ARCHDIOCESAN PASTORAL FORMATION TEAM    Wed. 20<sup>th</sup> Jan 2010    Docs 33, 34 A-E**

Situated at the Paul VI Pastoral Centre in the Station Area some 3km outside Bamenda, it is led by Fr. Anthony Banks [ [anthonybangsi@yahoo.com](mailto:anthonybangsi@yahoo.com) ] (who is also Director of the Pastoral Centre from which the Team operates), along with Sr. Colette McCann mshr and Mr. Ephraim Nkwain (a longstanding catechist, still working in Bayelle Parish, and a member of the Archdiocesan Bamenda-Portsmouth Committee).

Its mission is the implementation of the Provincial Pastoral Plan (full printed book available for inspection on request – see Doc 33), inspired by the Lumko Institute (in S. Africa) and drawn up by the participants at the 1999 Catholic Convention and revised in 2009.

At weekends it leads in-house seminars for lay leaders of the Mission out-stations, families, parishes etc. In addition, working out in the parishes, it successfully involves more Christians in seminars on Small Christian Communities and formed teams of leaders throughout the Archdiocese. Although the Centre provides premises for pastoral courses and seminars, the team has to pay for them and so have to ask for contributions from the Parishes and Deaneries.

We are surprised to hear that the Archdiocese has no annual budget for the Team salaries, transport etc. Consequently in 2008 and 2009 we gave £2,400 and £3,000 respectively towards team salaries (in particular for the married lay catechist). Also in 2008 we gave £4,000 intended as part contribution to a nearly new 4 wheel drive vehicle. To cut costs the Team spent it on a very 2<sup>nd</sup> hand vehicle that proved a disaster. We gave another £4,000 in 2009 which is still in credit. The sale of the faulty vehicle may raise 2,00,000 FRS (£2,500), which means they need more (approx. £5,000) to make up to the current cost of a nearly new vehicle that will last!

*This is a highly committed and well organised team who are doing good work and have given details of their recent and programme of future activities. They deserve our support*

**No. 44 PAUL VI PASTORAL CENTRE****Wed. 20<sup>th</sup> January 2010****Doc. 35**

This centre is run as a self-sustaining institution. Both the Formation Team and the Maryvale Institute (see below) use it, and have to pay for its services. It is open to any group or individuals for courses, retreats, rest etc. Although it is under the general leadership of Fr Banksi (see No. 43 above), its day-to-day running is in the charge of four Franciscan sisters headed by Sr. Mary Fidelis Vejai TSSF (see Doc. 35).

We were not formally introduced to the sisters, but Sr. MF quietly put her introductory printed sheet in my hands. In it she lists some of their needs: more accommodation; a priest's residence; a chapel; independent power (solar?) supply.

**No. 45 MARYVALE CATECHETICAL INSTITUTE BAMENDA Wed. 20<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2010 Doc. 36 a-d**

This Institute is named after and linked academically with Maryvale Birmingham. Catechists play a crucial role in Bamenda, where most parishes have a good number of Mission Stations. Every Church has at least one catechist, often several. Some are full-time trained leaders who are paid (though a very modest sum).

The Institute has no premises of its own, but pays for the use of the Paul VI Centre. There the Maryvale Director Fr Michael Bibi, along with his assistant leader Miss Elizabeth Nomase (see No. 45A below), both of whose training in Birmingham had been sponsored by Portsmouth, welcomed us to join with a crowd of about 70 Christian leaders (mainly lay people with some Religious novices) who had come from all over Anglophone Cameroon for a 3 day residential seminar. Because of the lack of accommodation, not only was the main aula crowded, but they had to share bunks at night!

Elizabeth read to us a written speech of welcome and explanation (See Doc. 36). Maryvale runs two programmes- the Echoes Programme (a Parish based training for handing on the Faith) and the Catechists' training Programme – a two-year distance learning ending with a certificate in Catecheses.

In the last years we have paid Maryvale Birmingham for 150 Echoes Packs and 70 leaders' Packs. Also we have paid a £4,000 towards the 'nearly new' Toyota RAVA4 (the very vehicle which met us at Douala!), but there is still £5,500 owing on this.

The institute needs to build its own premises, including 2 dormitory blocks, classrooms and administrative offices. They have submitted to us a written application for help to build one of the dormitories, which is costed at £70,000.

We were given dresses (for the ladies) and Bamenda shirts (for the men) and traditional raffia bags. In return we presented them with one of our Diocesan 2010 Greetings plaques. We then went to the refectory to join the students for lunch.

**No. 45A ACCOMMODATION FOR A SENIOR MARYVALE TEAM MEMBER**

Previously we went to see the inadequate and only partially adapted small house which Elizabeth Nomase (see No. 45 above) shares with another catechist. It is quite remote from other houses and stores – to get to them or her place of work, she has either to walk long distances or pay for a taxi. She is a single lady, wholly dedicated to catechists' work and training for many years.

I have known her since 1977 when I sent her to Nguti, to be the first trained woman catechist in the Diocese. She has worked faithfully with small salary and without the backup that comes with being a Priest or member of a Religious Community.

We are seeking a compassionate individual or group that would be able to raise about £5,000 to enable her accommodation to be upgraded to an acceptable level.

**No. 46 ARCHDIOCESAN YOUTH CENTRE - MANKON Wed. 20<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2010 Doc 37**

We were welcomed by Fr Cletus Amah Ashu, the Archdiocesan Youth coordinator and chaplain, along with about 40 young members of local branches, welcomed us to their Hall, with adjoining rooms (an area for counselling, prayer, and a small resource centre / reference library with books for seminars etc.) .

A youth Choir from the nearby Azire Parish gave an excellent entertainment of choral singing. Then Mr Nsoh Walter, president of the Archdiocesan Youth Apostolate Commission, read an address of welcome and explanation (see Doc No. 37). Among other items, he highlighted the formation of Youth branches in 12 Parishes, and the reopening of a shop in Bamenda main Market, which sells religious and other general merchandise to raise money for their other projects.

Also he reported the purchase by the Archbishop of farmland in the Sabga (See No. 16 above) and Pinyin – Santa areas. . In the latter they had been helped to start a tree plantation, and in the former they had just started to develop a mixed farm, planning to use manure from the animals to gain a good harvest of arable crops. This needed investment, to buy cows and pigs etc.



Sr Ernestine (see above No. 22A) also attended. Though she worked under the Education Secretary, she had close cooperation with Fr Cletus, in forming branches of the YCS in non-Catholic secondary schools.

They have submitted a written costed application for the whole Sabga project (54m francs cfa), itemising the various needs, and their own labour contribution.

**No. 47 EVALUATION MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF THE ARCHDIOCESAN BAMENDA-PORTSMOUTH COMMITTEE. Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2010 Docs 38 – 40A**

In the absence of the Archbishop in Rome, the meeting was chaired by Fr Engelbert Kofon VG. Most of the other Committee members: Fr, Michael Bibi (Sec.), Fr. John Ambe, Fr. Bern Nsom, Sr. Dorothy, Ephraim Nkwain. In addition we four delegation members.

Mutual appreciation of the visit was expressed by all. Now that a Portsmouth Delegation had visited in 2008 and this year 2010, and the Archbishop and Fr Ignatius had visited Portsmouth in 2009, it was felt our mutual knowledge and understanding was growing well.

Some points that came out of the meeting:

During the course of the visit, Colm Lennon our Project manager assisted by the other delegates and Fr Michael Bibi had worked closely together to share information and to work out the details of a more transparent and effective process by which Archdiocesan institutions could apply to Portsmouth for help.

The first step was the completion of a mutually agreed project application form (see doc No. 38), which requires a clear description of the Project and its needs, its full cost, the degree of support from the local community and other agencies.

This would be submitted to the Bamenda Archdiocesan Committee for approval. Once approved it would be forwarded to the Portsmouth Committee project Manager for consideration for grant by the Portsmouth Committee.

Fr Bibi was ready to follow up the process on the Bamenda side, and work closely with Mr. Lennon.

Once a grant had been approved and sent as part of the annual grant allocation (through Mill Hill to the Archdiocesan Finance Office who would credit the appropriate institution), within a year and annually till project completion, the beneficiary must complete and return a formal Project Progress Report (See Doc. No. 39) to be sent through Fr Bibi to Portsmouth. (Fr Engelbert has subsequently sent a letter round the Archdiocese giving information about this process (See Doc. 40).

Colm asked for some clarification about the cost of vehicles and the method of acquisition. These were now usually imported nearly new 2<sup>nd</sup> hand through a Cameroonian contact in Germany.

Fr. Ron had a useful conversation with the Archbishop to follow up the possible sending of Bamenda priests to work for a time in Portsmouth. The Archbishop was in principle warmly in favour of the tentative proposal that Bishop Crispian had made through Fr Ron.

It was agreed that Fr Ron would prepare a working paper, listing the various issues that would need to be clarified, plus some suggestions. He would then e-mail these back to the Archbishop in time for the next Archdiocesan Consultors' Meeting (Subsequently this document was prepared and sent – see Doc. 40A). He undertook to keep Bishop Crispian similarly informed. It was hoped that during the Spring and Summer, a provisional process could be worked out, so that when the two Bishops meet in November, the agreement could be finalised.

The meeting concluded happily with prayer and blessing.

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2010**

**No. 48 SOCIAL WELFARE COMMISSION / CARITAS**

**See Doc 41**

We were welcomed to her humble office by the recently appointed director, Sr. Benedicta Muffuh TSSF E-mail: [srbenmuffuh@hotmail.com](mailto:srbenmuffuh@hotmail.com), who for some years was a therapist / counsellor on the staff at The Institute of St Anselm, Cliftonville Kent UK.

She is expected both to coordinate charitable works being done at Parish and SCC level, and at the same time respond at a diocesan level where necessary. For a formal description of her work and structure see (Doc. 41. is a lengthy document available for inspection on request).

This commission is supported by funds raised from 40% of an annual collection in the parishes of Bamenda on one Sunday in Lent. A further 25% of this collection goes into the parishes' own Social welfare commission (e.g. SVP) funds.

Sr Benedicta has very few resources including no reliable office equipment or methods of communicating or travelling independently. However, she is actively trying to apply for grants and donations from any source she can for her work.

Some of the challenges she faces at this time are:

To create a charity called Self-Reliant Services which would provide for charitable and development work; To get a well dug to provide desperately needed water in an outstation of Benakuma Parish near the Nigerian border; To identify orphans, handicapped people and refugees near the border areas with Chad and the Central African Republic and develop resources to assist them; To identify and offer assistance including health and social care to vulnerable street children in Bamenda; To develop a drop in centre for emergency food and clothing, counselling etc.; To develop an emergency fund be able to respond to requests in emergency situations (e.g. following a recent house fire in which a family of 5 had lost all their possessions).

We encouraged Sr. Benedicta to complete a written application form, to give us a concrete project we could help with.

**No. 49                      FAMILY LIFE ARCHDIOCESAN OFFICE    Thu. 21<sup>st</sup> January 2010                      Doc. 42**

We were welcomed by William and Grace Forba who coordinate the work of the main movements engaged in the support of family life. *These include: Marriage Encounter, Natural Family Planning Association, the Pro-Life campaign; the Christian Family Movement (CFM), Marriage Enrichment, and marital Counselling.*

William read to us a written speech of welcome and explanation (See Doc. No. 42). All the movements listed above are active throughout the archdiocese, as has been recorded in previous visits. They also expressed gratitude for the recent visit from Portsmouth of Mr John McCormick of Marriage Care.

We were thanked for the 2009 contribution of £1,000 for an overhead projector, which we saw in use at the office. While it is valuable for PowerPoint presentations, for outside use they really need a portable laptop.

In addition it became clear that their Office needed a couple to be trained specifically in marriage counselling techniques. It was suggested that they should begin to identify a suitable couple, and with the Archbishop's approval seek help with their training.

**No. 50.                      ARCHDIOCESAN STUDIO of RADIO EVANGELIUM    Thurs. 21<sup>st</sup> Jan 2010                      Doc. No. 43**

We were welcomed to the Radio studio, situated within the Cathedral precincts, by its Director Fr Cletus Ashu Amah and members of the team (the full team includes 4 priests, four trained technicians, and other lay assistants). Mr. Richard Nde, assistant director, read to us a formal speech and explanation (See Doc. No. 43).

The equipment of the current studio is quite recent at a cost of a total of 22 million francs cfa ( about £30,000). The team prepare and record a number of programmes which are put out by other private local stations. These include Catholic News, interviews about religious and social affairs, and daily meditations on the Scripture etc.

In the process towards the launch of an independent Catholic Radio Station, they have been helped with the expertise of Mr. Michel Phillipart of The Catholic Media Council (CAMECO) based in Aachen Germany. This NGO is a consultancy encouraging Community based communications in developing countries. The project now has Government Approval, but they are not able at present to afford the cost of transmitters, and two transmitting towers.

After refreshments, Fr Ron was invited back into the studio to record an interview to be recorded and broadcast on local radio.

While our fund is limited, Fr. Cletus should complete a project application form and pass it to us through Fr Bibi at Archbishop's House.

**No. 51                      ARCHDIOCESAN PRINTING PRESS    Thurs. 21<sup>st</sup> January 2010                      Doc. No. 44**

We were welcomed by the manager Mr. Chiatoh David and his team of compositors and printers. We were given a tour of their printing shop housing 3 antiquated Heidelberg Printing machines and two copy printers. They are inclined to break down, and have very limited colour capacity. Nevertheless they are very busy and produce a large quantity of material.

We heard a formal speech of welcome and description (See Doc. No. 44) from the Manager.

**No. 52                      ARCHDIOCESAN BAKERY    Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2010.**

We were shown round the recently inaugurated Archdiocesan bakery, which provides bread to a number of Catholic colleges which they can reach with their van. The bread they produce is the denser, sweeter kind, which is very suitable for growing children, along with doughnut like 'puff-puffs' etc.

The equipment is antiquated and was bought cheaply from a local businessman. It uses traditional earthenware ovens without automatic temperature or timing controls. Hence a lot of bread is wasted. They had hoped to buy new or nearly new more modern equipment, but so far it has proved too expensive.

The bakery was introduced by the Archbishop, partly to assure the children of a good supplement to their local diet, and partly as an income generating enterprise. However, due to the limitations of the equipment (which cannot make the popular French style batons) and of delivery, the bakery is currently just managing to pay for ingredients and labour, without any investment in new plant, let alone any profit.

**No. 53**

**LA VERNA HIV/AIDS SUPPORT PROJECT**

**Doc No. 45**

In the past we have supported this School Fees Project supporting groups caring for orphans in the Mezam and Boyo divisions of the NW Region of Cameroon (£2,400 in 2008 and £3,000 in 2009). However at the time of our visit the new coordinator Sr Norberta Yenyuy (in place of Sr. Hedwig, now in Kumbo diocese) was away in Nigeria, so we did not see her.

Subsequent to our visit Sister (e-mail: [nyenyuy@yahoo.com](mailto:nyenyuy@yahoo.com)) and her co-worker Mr. Cornelius Tawong (e-mail: [cornelustawong@yahoo.com](mailto:cornelustawong@yahoo.com)) have e-mailed me a full 16 page detailed report (see Doc. No. 45) of the project's activities, naming every child and school aided. In one year alone 2009/2010, they have spent 4,781,850 francs cfa (approx. £6,400) on fees.

Though led and motivated by Sister Norberta, these groups are based in the local community, embrace those affected by AIDS whatever their Faith, and strive by local fund-raising and small businesses to support AIDS victims and their often orphaned children.

While we would like to continue to support this project, I have asked Sr Norberta to submit a project application form, to be obtained from Fr. Bibi.

**THE RETURN**

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2010**

After early Mass, we travelled down to the S.W. Province, through Buea Town to Soppo, where is the Cathedral and Bishop Rogan Junior Seminary. There we were entertained to lunch. We passed through the Tole Tea plantation, past the palm oil and rubber plantations, down to the Sea at Bota – Limbe. After a short stay by the dark sands and coconut palms, as dusk began to fall, we then made our way through the chaotic traffic across the Bonaberi River to Douala.

We checked in at 8 pm for the 11.55 pm flight to Zurich, where we transferred to the London Flight which touched down at about 8.00 am on Saturday morning, English Time.

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