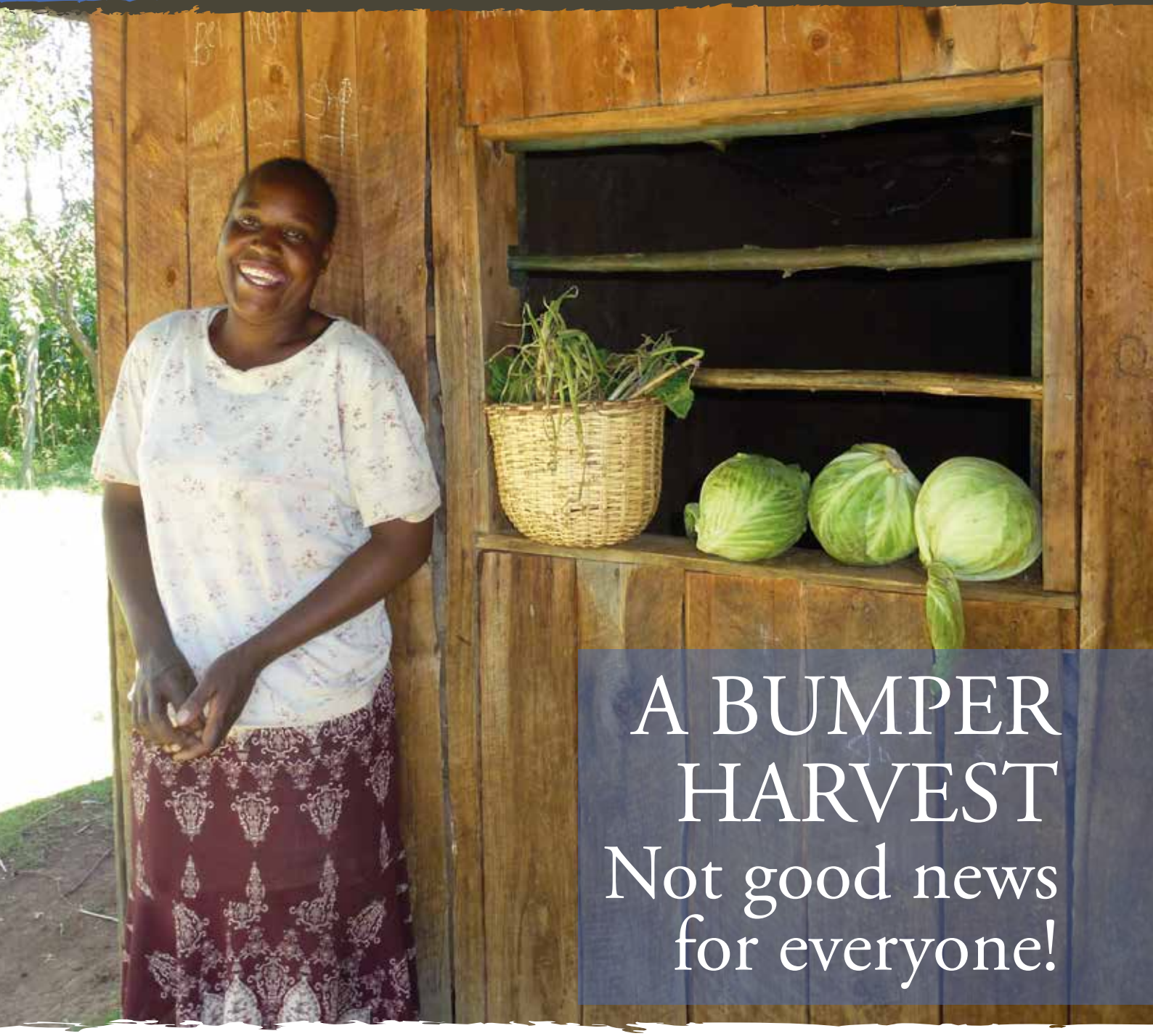
Abigail NEWS
Autumn 2013



A BUMPER HARVEST
Not good news for everyone!

All retailers struggle with fluctuating seasonal demands but for hard-working Helen the maize harvest brings a crisis. There has been plentiful rainfall in Kenya this year resulting in a bumper crop of maize. As a result, everybody has enough food in their shambas to make it unnecessary for them to spend the little money they have on buying vegetables from the shops. When we visited Helen she only had three cabbages and a few bunches of spring onions to sell. Trade had been so slow for weeks she hadn't enough money to buy any more vegetables from market to sell in her little wayside shop. Not that it would have made much difference if she had. Kenyans love their maize and most of them are happy to have it as their sole diet for as long as their crop lasts. We have tried telling them to vary their diet for health reasons but they always know best and are very stubborn students!! Helen is a widow with four young daughters but she will have to struggle to feed them until the maize season is over and the market picks up again. The next few months look pretty bleak for her.

Another Olympic Trophy for Kenya!!!

Local people in rural Kenya had heard about the Olympic Games in London as some of their heroes would take part having trained with Mo Farah, but it was all so far away. Then they heard about the promise of something to do with water coming to them from the Olympics – but saw nothing! Time went by - could something as spectacular happen here, some 25Km from the main town of Eldoret in Western Kenya and a further 7Km off the tarmac road?

Then news got to them that the component parts of the dismantled water tanks from the Olympics were on a ship in the Mediterranean Sea on their way! Could this really be true? Then the news that the containers were offloaded in Mombasa and would arrive at their village in about 5 days.

Finally early one sunny day the container lorries were reported to be nearby - was it real? Yes it must be true as they saw Nick and Roger and the local team waiting at the roadside along with reporters.

THE CONTAINERS HAD COME! There was real excitement all round as the driver of the vehicle with the two 20ft containers walked with us down what was still a very muddy and much rutted roadway from the tarmac to the site of the School and where the Abigail Health Care Centre are being built. Despite the road surface, or lack of it, the driver said YES he would chance the trip. Not chance, because we knew God was fully in control and His purpose was for the tanks to benefit the community.

At the junction with the tarmac road and the mud roadway there were a number of motorbikes and when the guys saw the containers – they could hardly believe their eyes – never before had such a vehicle ever attempted this road so they formed a guard of honour for the vehicle. They sounded their horns as they too slipped from side to side in the mud. Yes the container vehicle did get stuck but with a very heavy tractor that was bouncing up and down to get traction and some 40 or so men folks it was on the move, not once but four times. As the journey went on there were other sounds – what sounded very strange unless you had heard the last World Rugby Cup matches in South Africa! Yes it was the sound of vuvuzelas! The students from SEED School, the one Abigail Ministries is helping to build, and the other local primary school had left their schools and were running towards the vehicle and escorted us all the way.

As we travelled we "collected" most if not all the local folks and many from further afield who cheered us on the way. Everyone seemed to be on holiday and when we arrived on site, we found more people and local dignitaries and a real celebration took place. Nearly everyone put in much effort from those at school to older folk's even grandparents helping to carry the parts into storage. In the end there must have been around 200-300 folks involved during that very special day.

For publicity purposes we suggested that the local team invite the reporters. Well it was not just the local Radio and TV folks who came along, but also the national ones who reported the event and Kenya seemed to be thankful.

For Nick and Roger there was and still is so much to give thanks to God for and yet we still need prayers as we seek to plan the construction of the tanks alongside the bore hole which is scheduled to be drilled and fitted around the turn of the year. Please pray on with us that we get really good volumes of high quality water from the bore hole.

JOSEPHINE – a surprise find!

Josephine was very happy to see us. She has thawed considerably towards us since her husband died. He fought in the tribal uprisings during the British occupation in the 1950s and remained an intimidating presence throughout his life. However we always get a warm welcome from her nowadays! Josephine is not the only one who seems more relaxed and happy these days. Their two grandsons Rogers and Ronald who live with their grandmother are also happier boys. Ronald was very friendly the last time we met him but it has taken Rogers', the older of the two, much longer to have confidence to respond freely to us. Josephine was showing us a very old grinder which came from England in 1905. She uses it to very efficiently grind maize for the hens. It belonged to her husband and before he died he apparently told her she must keep it so she has no intention of selling it. We guess it was probably a trophy of war!!! We made a note of the details on it, however, which are: THE ATLAS GRINDING MILL, A 548, R HUNT & CO. EARLS COLNE so if anybody knows anything about this factory or can give us any more information both we and Josephine would love to hear from you.

Kenya Water Project

In June 2009 we began the construction of the London 2012 Olympic Aquatics Centre and Water Polo Arena. As part of our contract we were required to convert the Aquatics Centre into its legacy building, which involved dismantling the spectator stands. The Water Polo Arena was to be de-commissioned and dismantled in its entirety.

Throughout the construction of both projects we were continually challenged with finding a home for the equipment. We contacted numerous schools and local companies across the borough but sadly no one was interested.

In early 2012 my wife, Laila, and I went on our church weekend away where we received word from the Lord to pursue our dreams and pray into them. Soon after, whilst dozing on a train, I dreamt of shipping the redundant water storage tanks and booster pumps to Kenya.

We immediately contacted Roger and Shena to see whether there was a need for the equipment. Unbeknown to us, Abigail Ministries were putting plans in place to provide a fresh water supply at SEED School. The Olympic equipment would aid Abigail Ministries to complete the water supplies to the new Health Centre, SEED school and the local community.

We produced a proposal and submitted it to Balfour Beatty requesting the equipment and funding to cover shipping costs. Following a great deal of prayer and various requests, they finally accepted the proposal.

After 12 months of prolonged preparation and gathering of all materials in one place we managed to load three 20 foot shipping containers at the Olympic Park. All three containers would travel roughly 7000 miles overall from London Stratford to Felixstowe, where they would be loaded on to a boat bound for Salalah in Oman, changed to a smaller boat to out pace the pirates to make it to Mombasa, be offloaded on to a train to Nairobi and then the final 350km stretch by road to SEED School.

Much to our relief in July 2013 the equipment arrived safely at Cheptiret, Kenya. Despite heavy rain, pot holes, thick mud and getting stuck four times the lorry finally made it to SEED School.

With the help of 40 strong locals, the youngsters from the local schools and other willing helpers we offloaded all the equipment by hand and stored in one of the classrooms ready for our return in early 2014. Once the bore hole has been drilled and operational we will begin to construct the tanks and pipe them to the bore hole and booster pumps.

Happy New Residents At No 12

You will remember baby Samuel, the baby who had been 'in prison', from our last Newsletter. Little Samuel has settled in very well at New Hope and is a real little star. He toddles around now and is trying to talk and imitate the antics of the older children. He was reluctant to have his photo taken until he saw the other children having theirs' taken and then there was no stopping him as you can see!! You may also remember his Grandmother Rose was unable to take care of him because of looking after her very old mother-in-law in her tiny, makeshift shack which she had to call 'home'. Well life has changed dramatically for the family. Margaret who used to live in No 12 Shena's Village got married to a nice man who owns a small piece of land and she has moved away to live with him. This left No 12 vacant. Along with Anne, we thought Samuel's Grandma Rose's family was the neediest one we knew and so they moved into No 12 a few months ago. What a transformation. Rose and Samuel, her husband, old Grandma Margaret and 3 other grandchildren have settled in very well. Thanks to the generous gift from a church in Harrow we were able to buy them furniture and found sponsors for 2 of the older children. They gave us a very warm welcome when we visited them and asked us to pass on their appreciation to everybody who has contributed to their new happy home and to changing their lives. Rose seems to be one of the shining lights in the Village now and vies with Agnes for being the life and soul of the party!

SHENA'S VILLAGE

The villagers continue to be a happy community of people, living as a large extended loving family looking after one other and sharing each other's joys and sorrows. As usual we got a very warm welcome and it was lovely to visit them and to see how they have settled and made the houses their individual homes despite their meagre means. Although they bustle about busily carrying out their chores there is a sense of peace and wellbeing in the village which is thrilling for us to see.

Leah's Goat Project

Leah's goats continue to thrive and multiply due to her loving care. We are so proud of her. Very soon she will be able to give some other women a few goats to start them off on the road to being able to provide for their families as well.

ABIGAIL

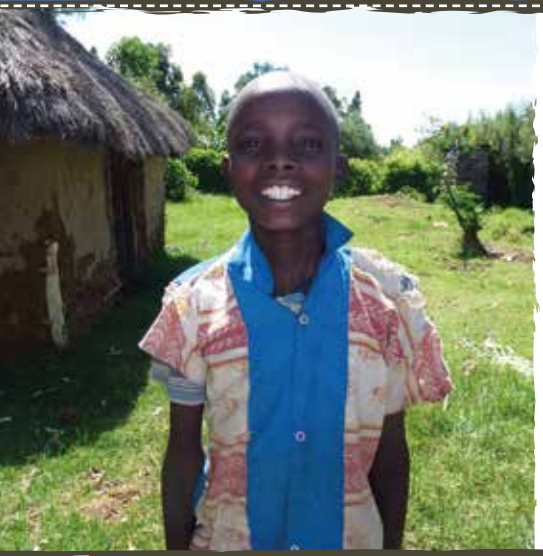
We said a sad farewell to Abigail our sheep who we were presented with the first time we visited Seed School! She has been very productive having given birth to many lambs over the years but she has come to the end of the road!! Headmaster Emmanuel has looked after her for us but now her 'children' will be sold to buy a cow for his sister Helen who is a single Mum struggling to pay her daughter's school fees. Abigail will be allowed to live out her natural life in contented retirement. She is so old she can barely walk now. Helen seemed delighted at the prospect of getting a cow as she will be able to make a little money by selling milk when the cow calves. No doubt we will be introduced to it in the future!

ELIZABETH

We felt both joy and sadness when we visited Elizabeth again. It is some time since we last saw her and in that time she has developed dementia and lost her power of speech. She was always such a vibrant lady and such fun to visit in the past but we missed her cheeky banter this time. We were thrilled however with her response to us. She obviously remembered us and made it clear by the way she hugged us, smiled and kept wanting to grip our hands that she was pleased to see us. Her two grandchildren, Redempta and Quincy have lived with her for many years but they both attend Seed School and are not at home in the day time. Their mother went to work in Sudan a few years ago and since then their Aunt Pauline has been looking after all three although she has a home and family of her own. Another cousin, Deborah, has been assigned the task of caring for Elizabeth during the day as she 'goes wandering' and cannot be left alone. We are rather concerned about the arrangements for all concerned as it must be very hard for teenage Deborah left alone all day in this remote house with Elizabeth and for Quincy who goes home after school and stays there overnight. Redempta has been taken into the newly formed 'hostel' which Grace has just set up in what was Daniel's mother's house.

Praise & Prayer

- Thanks that electricity has been installed to allow work to progress in the Bakery.
- Thanks that the tanks have arrived safely.
- Thanks for safety during Roger and Shena's recent visit.
- Pray for all the official and legal processes to be completed soon so that the projects can progress.
- Pray for wisdom and discernment in our relationships with the folks in Seiyo.
- Pray for the various groups visiting our projects in the coming months.



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THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS FOR YOUR VERY KIND GIFTS. THANK YOU ALSO FOR ALL YOUR PRAYERS AND THE ENCOURAGEMENT YOU HAVE GIVEN US OVER THE PAST TWO VERY DIFFICULT YEARS. WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL TO ALL OF YOU FOR HELPING US TO PERSEVERE!

The Smith Bakery

At last the electricity has been delivered to the Bakery at New Hope and the fantastic oven can be used! The bakers are now making wonderful bread and cakes and the market for these is beginning to pick up. This is the time of year schools put out tenders for suppliers for the next school year so we are praying we will be able to harness some of those deals. If we manage to do so, the extension to the Bakery building as well as the oven can be put to good use!

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS, REGULAR DONORS AND ALL OF YOU WHO ARRANGE SPECIAL EVENTS OR DEDICATE YOUR OWN SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS TO ABIGAIL MINISTRIES.

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