



Buloke
The Friends
of Buloke Charity

Registered Charity no. 1140094





The letter

Newsletter December 2016 from The Friends of Butoke Charity (Registered Charity no. 1140094)

How was your money spent by Butoke?

Welcome to the Friends of Butoke Charity's 2016 Newsletter. We've set out below details of the funds you have helped us raise and, also, of some of the work Butoke has done in the last twelve months.

Thanks to you, the Friends of Butoke Charity raised over £16,000 in 2016. We have sent £14,600 to help with the running costs of Butoke's orphanage. Butoke depends on the Friends of Butoke Charity in the UK and a similar US

organisation raising funds for the orphanage because the large aid organisations which have provided funds for other projects run will not fund it.

As well as helping with the costs of the orphanage, with your help we raised roughly £2000 to pay for the installation of solar panels to provide electricity for the Clinic run by Butoke. However at the moment the situation in the DRC is too unstable for the installation to take place.

All the money you give is sent to Butoke – the running costs of the Charity are covered by the trustees.

Instability in the DRC

The DRC has entered a period of chronic instability that has already affected Butoke. The cause of the instability has been the failure of the government to organise presidential elections. President Kabila should have stood down on 19 December 2016. The constitution of DRC prevents him from running for re-election. However no elections have taken place so far and whether or when President Kabila will stand down is far from clear.

Last summer there was conflict between “traditional” chiefs and the army in the area where Butoke operates, near Kananga, the main city in the Kasai Occidental province. The fighting reached Butoke's doors, but thankfully no-one at Butoke was injured or killed. The most recent reports from Butoke say that in recent weeks the fighting has got worse, and they are evacuating the orphanage to Kananga. Dr de Sweemer and Dr Jean are very concerned about the possibility of widespread disorder in DRC following the 19 December deadline for the president to step down.

Coverage of the DRC is very limited in the western media, considering it is a country with a population of more than 60 million which is about 75% the size of Europe. Butoke is keen for those of us who support Butoke to keep ourselves informed. The BBC has a good Newshour Extra programme about the current crisis on its website and the BBC's country profile is worth a read. For French speakers Radio Okapi is regarded as the best Congolese source of news.

The medical centre which will have solar powered electricity installed. The man on the left is Dr Jean Lumbala, one of Butoke's two directors.



The main activities of Butoke, 2016

As we reported last year, the school built and funded by Butoke opened in September 2015. It has struggled to cope with the local demand for education, with nearly 1200 children wanting to be admitted, far more than the school was designed for. It has been a difficult year, but the school has kept going and many children have received education that they would not have received without Butoke.

The scale of the crisis in education in the DRC is illustrated by the fact that there are about 2 million 6 and 7 year olds who are not in school at all because of a lack of school places.

Butoke's **community nutrition centre** has sadly continued to be very busy, treating about 25 cases of severe chronic malnutrition. Dr de Sweemer explained that one of the problems faced is that the communities with which Butoke works are so impoverished that malnutrition is ignored until it becomes acute or infections develop. There is some hope, however, with the UN developing a 10 year plan to combat chronic malnutrition in the DRC.

Butoke's **clinic** has functioned throughout the year and has developed a partnership with three rural clinics – in the hope of improving the medical services that they provide.

The **orphanage** has continued with 47 children resident. Some of the boys in the orphanage are now 15 or 16 and Butoke is working hard to persuade them to continue in education rather than going off to work in illegal diamond mines.



We are on Facebook!

We have a rather undeveloped Facebook page – but please look us up: putting “Friends of Butoke facebook” into google will get you there.

Christmas cards

Thank you to those of you who bought Christmas cards from us this year. And thank you too to Carolina Krupinska who very kindly designed them for us free of charge and to Print Crew for printing them at cost price. We made a profit of around £200 on their sale. We have plenty left – so if you would like to stock up for next year send Paul an email (paulevans@blueyonder.co.uk).



Easyfundraising

If you buy online, please visit EasyFundraising. If you visit online sellers via this site, most of the big retailers (Amazon, John Lewis etc) will make a small donation to the good cause of your choice. The amounts are relatively small but they add up: we've raised nearly £600 in the last three years. It only takes a minute to set up.



If everyone reading this newsletter used Easyfundraising, it would increase the Friends of Butoke's income by a significant amount.

Dr de Sweemer's 80th birthday



Cecile celebrating her 80th birthday with some of the orphans.

Dr de Sweemer celebrated her 80th birthday in June. Everyone was relieved that she made it to the milestone because in March she was hospitalised with cerebral malaria. She has spent most of her adult life working with children in the Third World so it was appropriate that her guests of honour at her birthday party were three of the orphans (see photo). It is sobering to realise that Dr de Sweemer didn't set Butoke up until she was nearly 70 (in 2005).

Just remind me again, what does Butoke do?

Butoke is a small NGO working in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Its core activities are to run an orphanage, a school, a clinic, a community nutrition centre and food security programmes. The on the ground expertise comes from two doctors, one Congolese (Dr Jean Lumbala) and one Belgian (Dr Cecile de Sweemer). Dr Lumbala is also a trained agronomist.

The Friends of Butoke Charity raises funds to help Butoke continue its activities. We have four trustees: Matthew Pollard, Adriane Pollard, Marleen Tiemens and Paul Evans.