**TAKING FOOTBALL TO AFRICA AND BEYOND CHARITABLE APPEAL**

**KENYA VISIT 12 TO 22 FEB 2019**

**Report by Warrant Officer Louise Simpson MBE**

The Royal Air Force Shawbury based Taking Football to Africa and Beyond Charitable Appeal began in 2006 with the aim of delivering ‘Aid through Football’. The intent was to collect donated items of football kit and deliver them to the needy in Africa and subsequently across the globe. Since its inception the Appeal has delivered over 221000 items including over 65500 football shirts to children and adults in 57 countries worldwide. The Appeal is organized by Wing Commander Neil Hope MBE, Flight Lieutenant (Retd) Tony Kinchley and Warrant Officer Louise Simpson MBE from RAF Shawbury in North Shropshire.

Each year the organisers try to complete a delivery trip to assist in distributing the kit. In February the team conducted its latest delivery visit when 11 service and civilian personnel mainly from the Shawbury and Shrewsbury area travelled to Kenya, in East Africa to complete an amazing 54 visits, delivering 14716 Items including 5027 Football shirts.

Travelling Party:

Wg Cdr Neil Hope MBE - Appeal Organiser- *SO1DAAM (Danger Area Airspace Manager) & Head of Battlespace Management Assurance - RAF Shawbury/BM HQ, Air Command, RAF High Wycombe*

Sqn Ldr John Feast – *Headquarters Wales & West Air Cadets, RAF Cosford*

Flt Lt Alistair Molloy- *Trainer School of Air Operations Control (SAOC), RAF Shawbury*

Flt Lt (Retd) Tony Kinchley- Appeal Team- *Trainer SAOC RAF Shawbury*

WO Louise Simpson MBE- Appeal Team- *Trainer SAOC RAF Shawbury*

Miss Sarah Hingley – *Civil Servant - Shrewsbury*

Mrs Elizabeth Dakin – *Recently retired Head Teacher - Thomas Adams Secondary School, Wem*

Mr Alan Houlihan – *Proprietor – Elephant & Castle Public House - Shawbury*

Mr Ryan Jackson – *Rope Access Technician/Industrial Abseiller - Shawbury*

Miss Hannah Greene – *Warrant Officers & Sergeants Mess Steward – RAF Shawbury*

Miss Hayley Simpson - *Teaching Assistant - Shawbury*

Visit Report/Diary

13 FEB

The Team travelled from London Heathrow Airport to Nairobi Jomo Kenyatta Airport with Kenya Airways. The team were accommodated at Braeburn Garden Estate School in Nairobi and after a short stop at the accommodation were straight into the visits. The first visit of the trip was to Hope Adventist school and Juwawa Academy in Kagongo village. The head teacher Rose and her staff have 85 children aged 3- 6 yrs. Also, there the team met the Juwawa Academy, Chui and Sima teams and the local team called the Kangongo Boosters.

The second visit was to the Starkids Academy at Githorogo, to meet Head Teacher Rosalind and her 22 staff. The school has 200 children ages 3-20 years, with 65 of the children living in the schools sheltered accommodation.

The final visit of the day was to meet 2 new teams at Kalsarini. The junior teams are run by Tiobath Xnughra (known as Coach Alpha), who started the team 10 years ago to reach children from the less privileged families of the Klithin Coffee plantation. His team of 60 kids are U6-U16. The senior team is run by Alex Mugo.

14 FEB

On day two the team travelled to Kandara Children’s home, 2 hours north-east of Nairobi near Thika. The home sits in the hills in an incredibly green and pretty area and is home to 60 children including 19 girls and 7 smaller children in the baby unit.

The next stop at Karibaribi was to the primary school and the local team Karibaribi FC, as well as making a delivery to a small children’s home called Action. The Karibaribi football team have 25 players and the Shawbury team played them in a brief match managing to keep the score down to 2-1. The primary school have 260-270 children and 13 staff.

While there the team met Antony Kitsao from Action for children in Conflict, who hosts a total of 45 children and has a football team of 20 players.

The final visits of day two took the team to Juja Farm to meet Ibrahim Kimani and Faith Wanjiku Njuguna, the head teacher of the school. The school has 710 children aged between 6-17 years old.

15 FEB

Day 3 saw the team have a down day. Some team members went to the Nairobi National Park, Sheldrake Elephant Sanctuary and Giraffe educational park whilst others played golf or walked the course at the Royal Windsor Golf and Country Club.

16 FEB

On day 4 the team travelled to Gilgil, 3 hours north of Nairobi, including a stop off to view the magnificent Great Rift Valley from close to 9000 ft, to stay with Mary Coulson at her beautiful new apartments. During the afternoon a visit was completed to the Restart Centre; founded by Mary in 2008; which re-homes abandoned and abused local children. Five large boxes were delivered, and the team were treated to a show of poems, beautiful singing and amazing dancing by the extremely talented children.

17 FEB

Whilst in Gilgil 5 visits were completed during which the Appeal team met with 9 football teams and one rugby team. George Ouma arranged for the local teams to meet the team at DEB school, where tress planted on a previous visit were tended and pruned. As well as the local youth team’s kits were presented to Enock Ngelelo and Denis Okari from Tam Tam FC and Warrant Officer Stephen Odhianbo from The Thunderbirds Youth Program. The Thunderbirds are from Laikipia Kenyan Airforce base and have teams of U13/15/17/20, all run and coached by Kenyan military personnel.

At Loving Hands Rescue Centre, run by Jane Kinuthia the team met Paul and Anne, who run the orphanage for HIV and AIDS infected children who have all been abandoned by their families. They currently have 38 children, from ages 4-17 years.

The last visit at Gilgil was to Saidia Children’s Home, run by Sarah Nduta. The home offers protection to destitute children from the local area and currently has 52 children from 1 month to 17 years old. They ensure the children’s education is paid for and now have 3 university graduates and 14 high school graduates.

18 FEB

The following day the team had an eventful journey back to Nairobi when the 2 vehicles managed to crash into each other! Once moving again one vehicle broke down, probably due to the impact on the engine. The majority of the team travelled onwards to Kibagare Good News Centre/St Martins Girls Secondary School with the stragglers joining them after a vehicle change.

The school is run by Sister Emma and has 760 children; however, they provide a feeding programme for children from the slum and feed 1400-1500 children during the week and 1500-1800 on a Saturday. The team saw first-hand the difficulties of feeding so many when they served the children lunch. While at the school kit was delivered to members of Kibagare FC men’s and ladies’ teams.

The next stop was Okolo Primary School run by Pastor Amos Okolo, where some team members who have previously visited, saw how much the Pastors great work has improved the environment for the children.

After a short journey the team arrived at Hope House Orphanage run by Laizer. They currently have 16 babies, the youngest being a 1-month year old premature baby. The team spent an enjoyable hour holding the babies and carrying out feeding. While there Jim from Street Kids FC met the team to collect a box of kit.

19 FEB

Day 7 was busy with little time between several visits in the Ruiru and Eastland’s areas of Nairobi. The first stop took the team into Ruiru Prison and its Training School. The prison was established in 1974 and has a population of 400 inmates. The aim is to rehabilitate inmates through farming; however, they also have an inmate football team. Mary Mbaka, the coach of Hearts of Ruiru team, who works as a prison officer, introduced the senior officers and teams she coaches. Mary coaches 128 children of different age categories and coaches the inmates. At the prison the Shawbury team played one of the children’s teams drawing 1-1; subsequently, however, losing on penalties. At the Prison the team also met and delivered kit to Georges Opell from Samba Football Club, who has a total of 52 children, in U12, 14 and 16 teams.

The next visit was to Mukuyu Primary School to meet Moses Mungai Mbugua for the first time. The school has 800 children and Moses is the games teacher. While there the team met and delivered kit, from Birmingham City Ladies, to the Gitothua Starlets, a Ladies team run by Victor Mwasaru.

The next delivery was at the Devki Ruiru Township Secondary School team at their school. This was the first visit to the school and the U16 and U19 male and female teams, who received Aston Villa and Tottenham Hotspur Kits and footballs from Halfords. Next the team were impressed by the artificial football pitch at Ruiru Stadium where they met CCIC Community FC for the first time, a team run by Mr Peter Ndichu, which develops youngsters of 15 years and over. Mr Ndichu was very pleased with the Vauxhall Motors FC kit and the large trophy given to him.

The final visit of the day was to the Dr Kampf School and Musa Otieno Soccer Academy. Here the team met with Musa Otieno, one of Kenya’s all-time greatest players; captaining Kenya over 50 times and playing professionally in South Africa. Musa’s Academy has approximately 156 children in U8 - U20 year teams. The Appeal donated kit from Tideswell FC, Cambridge United, Manchester United and Leicester City and were honoured to take part in tree planting with the teams.

20 FEB

Day eight started well with the first visit to Stella Maris School in the large Mathare slum, where parents and children were finding getting mid-term results. The school has 210 children and recently started teaching the new Kenyan curriculum at the school.

The second planned visit of the day, to the Brain House Academy did not occur, however, due to road blocks/road works and thousands of goats stopping the vehicles from getting to the school. The boxes were dropped off with local contacts at the excellent Tushinde Charity, so the children would not miss out on receiving the kit.

The team then travelled across Nairobi to Ngando to visit schools assisted by the UK based Porridge and Rice Charity to visit the Excel Emmanuel School, where they were overwhelmed by the fantastic welcome of the 406 pupils. After some lovely refreshments and interaction with the children the team moved the short distance to Lizpal School, with its 327 children aged between 3-14 years old, run by Beth Wambugu, the head teacher. The entertainment here included a very interesting take on a news report of the team visit, including an interview of one of the team members, Al Houlihan.

The next visit of the day was at Riruta and the first visit to Forrester School. The head teacher Risper Auma explained that the school has 172 children and 12 teachers.

To finish off the day the team spent a lovely evening with Pam Galley and her family at her wonderful home. Pam assists with the UK based Small Steps Forward and treated the team to a superb home cooked meal. The team left 2 large boxes of kit for Jake Evans to take to their schools in the north west on his impending visit from Wem.

21 FEB

The last day of the trip was into famous Kibera slum. It is the the largest slum area in Africa, with an estimated population of over 1 million people living in an area of less than 3 square kilometers. The slum has no permanent power, sewerage or water systems. The team were hosted and escorted by Vincent Kegode, who runs the Kibera Project and Kimta School. The project looks after 70 smaller children during the day, giving them lunch and taking them on visits, including learning to swim. He also runs an after-school program for approximately 200 older children. While at the water tower, some members of the team met the boys from Kibera Lexus FC, who were very happy with their new Aston Villa kit. Vincent then took the team to Kibera Rotary, or Kimta Academy. The school has 69 Playgroup and Pre- primary children. The after-school program caters for 242 primary school children and 15 secondary school children.

The final visit in Kibera and of the tour was to the fabulous Stara School, where the team met Josephine Mumo, the Deputy Head Teacher and with John Oyoo, who runs Kibera Celtic FC. The school has 470 children aged from 3-18 years old and 29 staff. While there the team help feed a snack to some of the children, then later lunch to the entire school.

Conclusion - The trip was a resounding success and achieved many things in a variety of ways for the team members. The aim of delivering ‘Aid through Football’ was well and truly achieved, the established links continue to grow strong and new links will develop further in the future.

Items delivered were donated by: Eccleshall School, Melksham FC, Leicester City FC, Manchester United FC, Chelsea FC, RAF Brize Norton, Halfords, Smile of Arran Trust, Worcestershire FC, Aston Villa FC, Everton FC, Steven Biggins/Hadnall School, Durham FA, Hampshire FA, CU FC, Fleet Town, Hook UTD, Nicola Van Hoven, Raven FC, Tracey Pyke, Bramley Sunnyside FC, Chris Marriott, Wiltshire FA, Swindon Town FC, Sarah Hingley, Charlotte Hope, Respect, Shrewsbury Town FC, Chippenham Town FC, RAF FA Icarus, Droitwich Spa JFC, Hereford Cathedral School, Guy Rust, Ann Lewis, Matthew Wosik, Eckington Boys Club, Ecclesall Rangers FC, England FA, Tottenham Hotspur FC, Harry Hope, Maxine Taylor, Tony Kinchley, Harton & Westoe Colliery FC, Jarrow FC, La Coruna FC, Rainworth MWFC/Young owls, Lakewood Youth, Julie Smith and family, QPR, Chippenham Park, The 3 Crowns, Borough Arms Malmsbury, Worcester City FC, Birmingham City Ladies, Vauxhall Motors, Tideswell, Cambridge United, CAFA, Stanstead FC, Belhus Park, Lancs FA, Essex FA, Gillibrand Warriors, Hunts FA, Hemingsford Utd, St Ives rangers FC, Rotherham Utd, Mookwood FC, Rawmarsh St Joseph’s FC, SHCFA, Hadley wood and Wingate FC, Adam Reid, Nike, Wingate and Finchley FC, Chris Doig, Middlewood Rovers JFC, Gavin Nicholson, Toby Murell, Stubbington FC, Vicky Fisher, Blackfield and Langley FC, East Riding CFA, Kiveton Park FC, Swallownest Jnrs, Glasshoughton Welfare FC, Stanstead FC.

Items remaining in Kenya at Braeburn School for delivery were donated by: Crosspool Juniors, Derbyshire FA, Chris Lindsay, AFC Worcester Olympic, TNS, Huntingdon FA, Brampton FC, Huntingdon Town FC, Westmoreland FA, Arnside FC,