



# First visit to Wau since 2018 begins new chapter for PWP

**SPECIAL  
ISSUE!**

**Six Trustees and committee members from the Poole-Wau Partnership visited Wau from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025, the first such trip for 7 years.**

The team was privileged on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February to take part in the opening ceremony of the new building at **St John's College**, in the cathedral compound in Wau, for which PWP has provided £55,000, 95% of the cost, raised over three years.

The new block (top right), named the **Poole-Wau Partnership Building**, has been constructed to a high standard, with suspended ceilings and electric fans. The four lecture rooms and three offices will be a transformative asset for St John's College. The ribbon was cut by Bishop of Aweil, and acting Archbishop, **Abraham Yel Nhial** (mid-right).

The team consisted of Chair Jeff Neagle (bottom right), Jan Davies, Rev. Penny Draper, Andrew Holt, Mark Rathbone and Richard Tazewell. Jeff, Penny and Mark led a three-day training conference (below) for students and church leaders based on St Luke's gospel: after an introduction to Luke, his sources and the distinctive features of his gospel on Day 1, the second day was devoted to **Women's Role in the Church** and Day 3 to salvation, a major theme of Luke's gospel. It was well-received: College Principal Philip Abiel commented, *"For me and the College, the course was fantastic. You need to come here more!"*



**The Poole-Wau Partnership**

St Dunstan's Church Office, Poole Road, Upton BH16 5JA

[www.poolewaupartnership.com](http://www.poolewaupartnership.com); 01202 624622; e-mail: [office@lytup.church](mailto:office@lytup.church)

# The Poole-Wau Partnership

linking Poole Deanery churches with Wau Diocese, South Sudan since 2011



## Wau visit, continued

Meanwhile, Jan, Andrew and Richard visited **Akon**, an area some 50 miles from Wau, where they were greeted by enthusiastic crowds of children (top left) and village leaders and dignitaries. They were also able to visit Thurlith School, founded and led by Rev John Bol.

On Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> February, team members spoke at several local church services (middle left), including in both the old and new cathedrals in Wau. In the afternoon, several of the team visited Mary Hope Hospital, led by **Sister Gracy**, (bottom left, with Richard) who has built up a large modern hospital from nothing in the 12 years since we saw the site in 2013.

Fellowship was strengthened with friends in Wau, including Acting Archbishop **Abraham**, Principal **Philip Abiel** of St John's College, and **Rev Andrew Apiny**, Dean of Wau Cathedral. The team was delighted to receive an invitation to dinner at Philip's house on their final evening in Wau. There was also the opportunity to discuss future project ideas, including drilling a deep borehole in the cathedral compound to provide fresh water and end dependence on daily deliveries of water by donkey cart, and a proposal to register the college with the government, so that it can offer degree courses.

The visit was not without its difficulties: Kenya Airways left Mark's case in Nairobi and it did not reach him in Wau for five days, and there were issues with the team's visas due to an error in dates by the South Sudanese Embassy in London. Archbishops Abraham and Moses were very helpful in resolving these issues, from which we learned that the key to trouble-free travel in South Sudan is always to have at least one archbishop with you, preferably two!

The team was thrilled to catch up in Juba on their way home with **Archbishop Moses Deng Bol**, who had flown from peace talks in Nairobi specifically to meet them. In an email message to the team, Archbishop Moses writes, *"It was really an exciting moment to meet my old friends with whom we have worked together for more than 10 years. Your visit to St John's has encouraged everyone there and people are very excited that you came for the opening of the new building."*

More photos from the trip may be viewed on our website:  
<https://www.poolewaupartnership.com/wau-visit.html>

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Chair: Jeff Neagle; [jefferyneagle92@gmail.com](mailto:jefferyneagle92@gmail.com)

Newsletter Editor: Mark Rathbone; [mark.rathbone@phoncoop.coop](mailto:mark.rathbone@phoncoop.coop)