

ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS

WHEEL OF FORTUNE: In 2008 artist Fortune's future looked bleak. His home had been burned down by Govt. agencies around the election time but his wife and family escaped to safety across the border. Fortune was taken prisoner and held in a camp for being on the 'wrong side.' He suffered unspeakable horrors but after three months was released. After recuperating in a safe house he was referred to me by a Jesuit who said Fortune was an exceptional man and deserved

support. How right he was! I recall the first photo of Fortune leaning on two crutches (his legs had been broken – the least of his problems) – a mere skeleton of a man. However, thanks to support from the congregation we managed through the sale of his handmade jewellery and donations to restore his life to some semblance of order.

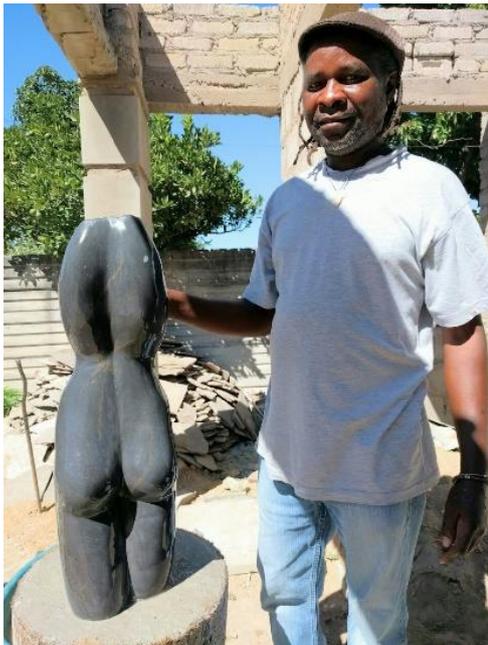
Fortune was eventually reunited with his wife



and family. His faith is very important to him and a few weeks ago despite his own hardships he accompanied his church missionaries to spread the gospel. During his visit to Vatsomba in Eastern Zimbabwe he met brothers Clever 5 and Derek 7 (above left) who suffer from malnutrition. They are looked after by their 12-year-old sister Nancy who had gone away trying to catch some fish for their tea. They used to receive support but the donor has moved away so the family are again reduced to eating tree roots etc. However, I have recently received three generous donations from the congregation which will be put to very good use. Photo above right - Fortune proudly showing some of his tomato crop whose growth was helped by fertiliser supplied by Marlow URC. He will sell the surplus at a local market. Fortune used to have a good job in a top hotel in Harare but like all the other artists fell on hard times and survives on a day to day basis. He is a selfless man and I am proud to have him as a friend.

THE ARTPEACE DISPLAY area in St Andrew's Gateway is currently bare. Many pieces have been taken up to the URC Centre at Windermere which has its own display alcove and of course the Southwark Cathedral shop constantly needs topping up. However, the good news is that more pieces are expected during June. More and more talented desperate artists want to be part of our initiative and word is spreading.

One example is Celestino originally from the Bikita area of Masvingo province - the last born in a family of nine. His parents were subsistence farmers with little education. In 1975, his mother was killed in crossfire during the war for liberation. Celestino grew up on communal lands, leaving school in 1987 to begin work as a farmer. In 1989 his father was murdered, and he was forced to move to Harare in search of better work. Homeless for a time, he was sleeping near the road to Chapungu when artist Boira Mteki discovered him and invited him to study the art of stone sculpting and assisted him for six months. He has also worked with Agnes Nyanhong and Arthur Fata, His work won recognition at the 1992 Zimbabwe Roots Exhibition.



Another example is Moses below left working on baby elephants for St Andrew's and friends.



SNAKES ALIVE!

During the May Bank holiday whilst artist Mike Masedza was visiting friends near Silveira House, he witnessed panic at a nearby homestead. A large python had entered an enclosure and killed a young goat. Mike said an off duty policeman came to the rescue and

with help from locals moved the offending snake to a National Park. The python is Africa's largest snake and specimens

may approach or exceed 6 mtrs. (20ft). It kills its prey by constriction and often eats animals up to the size of antelope occasionally even crocodiles. It reproduces by egg-laying. Unlike most snakes, the female protects her hatchlings. Thanks to Mike for supplying this photo for his UK friends - just another day in the life of our artists!

Johnston Simpson

