

Welcome to the first in a new series of newsletters. Lorna Brown has just returned from her trip to Uganda, tired but happy and with heartfelt thanks ringing in her ears. We are going to concentrate on the Orphans Project in this issue: even so, it has turned out to be rather long as we thought you might like more background information than we were able to provide in the catalogue. Future newsletters will be shorter, we promise!

### A HUGE THANK YOU

From everyone at Dolen Ffermio  
From Miriam and Emmanuel Makara  
And, above all, from the orphans in Kumi

for raising the magnificent sum of £4045 from the Christmas Gift catalogue. Thanks to your overwhelming generosity, we are able to provide the following gifts for the Kumi Orphans Project

- 25 trained youth workers
- 26 improved billy goats
- 66 female goats
- 47 lots of 5 laying hens
- 135 lots of 3 orange tree seedlings

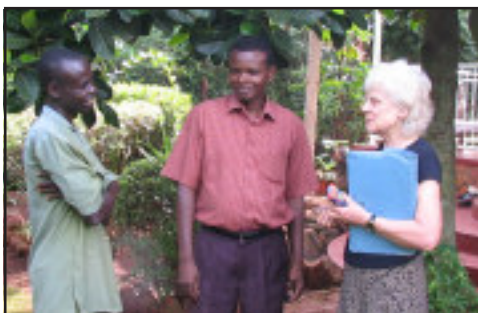


### A BIT MORE ABOUT DOLEN FFERMIO

Dolen Ffermio was founded in 1989 in Montgomeryshire and the Shropshire border area by John Jones (now sadly deceased) of Pentre Cefn Farm, Llansilin. Its aims were - and still are - to promote awareness in UK farming communities of the problems facing farmers in the poorer developing countries and the interdependence, through trade, of farming worldwide. The plan was to widen this remit by developing practical link projects overseas.

### Dolen Ffermio in Uganda

Busoga (population about 1 million then) in Uganda was chosen for various reasons. Uganda's once-thriving agricultural economy was destroyed by the reign of terror of Idi Amin and the ensuing civil war. Now with a stable government, Ugandans are working hard to reconstruct their country but it is a great struggle. In 1991 Dolen Ffermio set up a project to assist the development of a cattle artificial insemination service to improve the livestock and increase milk and meat yields. Grants from the UK government and local authorities in Shropshire, Montgomeryshire and Busoga, together with funds raised locally, paid for the training and initial salaries of 12 inseminators and provided them with the equipment needed.



Lorna with Gideon Nadioppe, the projects' supervisor (centre), and Moses from Teso

In 1998 a second practical link project grew from requests from the poorest people of Busoga, who had insufficient land for even one cow, but who could keep a few goats. They asked if a cross-breeding initiative to improve the small East African goats could be run in conjunction with the Cattle AI Service. The project was also extended to Teso region, which neighbours Busoga to the east and was in an even more desperate situation. Both projects are now under the guidance of Gideon Nadioppe, a trained and qualified vet. Progress on the goat projects has been slow, because of the difficulty of sourcing exotic goats, Boer or dairy, within Uganda. We imported Boer goat frozen embryos and semen in 2005 from South Africa to try and solve the scarcity problem and because the government imports of Boer goats came without any pedigree records. However, finding suitably large recipients for embryo transfer has been another headache!

## Dolen Ffermio in the UK

The awareness-raising side of Dolen Ffermio in the UK has been done through talks to many different groups, stands at agricultural shows, articles, conferences and, very importantly, by involving local schools. We hope to do a lot more in this area of work in the future.

### MORE ABOUT THE KUMI ORPHANS PROJECT

Members of Dolen Ffermio who went out in Uganda regularly on the livestock schemes came to know many remarkable Ugandans, including Miriam and Emmanuel Maraka. They live in Kumi and had been very concerned for some time about the plight of the many orphans there. Most orphans in that part of Uganda are taken in by members of their extended family or other villagers, rather than orphanages. They care for them as best they can but it is obviously a struggle for them, especially when it comes to meeting school fees or helping them after they have left school.



Uganda is now able to provide free primary education but secondary school fees still have to be paid for. As you can imagine, this means that most orphans have to leave school and fend for themselves, without the skills, qualifications or training they need to earn a proper living. It can also mean that, without hope for the future, some of them drift into trouble. Miriam and Emmanuel could see this and were determined to do something about it. Three years ago they set up the Kumi Orphans Project with very simple and effective aims. Primary school children receive livestock and plants to enrich their diet and enable them to earn enough from the sale of surpluses to pay

for school fees and other essentials and to gain farming skills vital for their future. Older orphans are trained as youth workers in plant management and animal health measures, such as vaccination, de-worming and nutrition. They are then able to train and supervise the younger orphans and their carer families. With their new-found respect, they can also encourage other teenagers to have responsible and healthy lifestyles.

### Christmas Gift Catalogue Appeal

Dolen Ffermio believes passionately in this worthwhile project and has pledged itself to provide help with funding. Last year we came up with the idea of a Christmas gift catalogue – and the rest is history, as they say! We were late starting it and, as we printed every copy ourselves on our home printers, it meant burning the midnight oil to get it out on time. We had no idea what the response would be and we were completely overwhelmed, not just by your astounding generosity, but also by all the expressions of support we received.

We have to admit to jumping on the bandwagon, as almost every development charity now produces gift catalogues. However, we felt that we were different as we are locally based, some group members are well known in the area, we can tell you exactly where the gifts are going and also assure you that *absolutely every penny* of the gift money will get there. All our members work voluntarily and we cover our own costs for everything we do.

### THE SLAVE TRADE AND AFRICAN FARMING

On this **200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade**, Dolen Ffermio would like to draw attention to its devastating effect on agriculture in Africa. For four centuries, each generation of young farmers was decimated as strong young men and women, 12 million at least, were brutally captured and shipped to the Caribbean and the Americas, a quarter of them dying on the way. Imagine the effect on British agriculture if it had happened here! Much of our wealth today originated from slave trading: don't we owe a great debt to agriculture in Africa, whose hardworking farmers are still struggling against inequalities?

**Cotton** was one of the main crops promoted by the slave trade. Slaves toiled in the cotton plantations, raw cotton was sent to British mills and the textiles produced formed 50% of the price in goods that we paid for slaves to the African slave-masters. Even today the cotton trade is a source of hardship and poverty. The US domination of the cotton market and the practice of “dumping” second-hand clothing on poor countries have ruined the cotton industry in poor countries like Burkino Faso, Mali and Uganda, where it was once a very significant source of income. You can still find beautiful woven, home-grown cotton in Uganda, but low prices have forced growers out and garment factories to close, further impoverishing Ugandans.

## LORNA'S TRIP TO UGANDA MARCH 2007

Just back from Uganda, doing technical training on the Dolen Ffermio goat improvement scheme and monitoring the progress of the Kumi orphans project, Lorna is delighted to report that Miriam and Emmanuel are busy selecting candidates to train as supervisors for the younger orphans. Supplies of grafted orange tree seedlings, chickens and goats are all on hand, to be distributed to the next orphan group once training is complete.

With Isabel Birkett of Llansantffraid, who was kept busy taking photographs and making a video film, Lorna visited the two previous orphan projects to see how they were doing. Below is a photograph of children savouring their oranges. For the orphans they are a valuable asset, not only to add vitamin C to their diet, but also to sell for 6p each in Kumi, or even 15p if they can get them to Kampala. For people who often have to live on 50p a day, this is serious money and will help to guarantee their future security.

The female goats and improved billies were also doing well. The first distribution females have kidded two or three times, with one of the females passed on to another needy family. As Lorna says, "It was so encouraging to see how proud the children were of their new goat herds. They tether their goats while they are at school and then run to take them out to fresh pasture when they get home. There are problems, of course. The male kids grow so well that people are reluctant to castrate them, in line with project policy to ensure breed improvement, and some kids have died of parasite problems. These issues are being resolved with advice from vets and the trained youth workers."

***"Children's lives are being transformed by the security and skills gained from these gifts", she adds, "and it's all thanks to you lovely people who supported our Christmas appeal."*** Emmanuel gave Lorna a letter while she was there, written in his rather formal English, which he has asked to be sure and pass on to everyone:

*Dear Dolen Ffermio*

*I would like to thank you for a grant of pounds sterling 4000 and more. These funds will be used to purchase local female goats, improved bucks, laying hens and improved orange seedlings for orphans and vulnerable children in Kumi District, Uganda. Community workers who will be trained will be empowered to support, guide and counsel orphans.*

*The effect of this assistance on the life of orphaned and vulnerable children will be positively great. It will give them hope in life; skills in improved farming practices; food like eggs, chicken, goats and oranges.*

*Given these great benefits, kindly accept our appreciation for the financial support Dolen Ffermio has given to the Kumi Orphans Project. Please extend this appreciation to all the people who bought gifts from the Christmas catalogue.*

*I write to you on behalf of orphaned and vulnerable children in Kumi.*

*Sincerely*

*Emmanuel Maraka*



Children enjoying the oranges they have grown themselves from orange tree seedlings

### DOLEN'S FUTURE PLANS

Some members will be going out to Uganda again in the summer to monitor progress and also to try and establish a link between Llanfyllin and Busoga High Schools. We'll send another newsletter in the autumn to let you know what is happening. Our website will be up and running any time soon. Look out for it on [www.dolen-ffermio.co.uk](http://www.dolen-ffermio.co.uk) where you will find a day-to-day account of Lorna's last trip to Uganda, with full details of her technical work there. We are also planning to organise a conference for schools and colleges some time in the future.

Don't forget that you can carry on buying the gifts throughout the year to mark any special occasion, including Easter which is coming up soon. If anyone would like another catalogue or simply to order one of the gifts, please contact Val Talbot, Graigwen Cottage, Llansilin, Oswestry, SY10 9BL or ring 01691 791310 or email [val@daval.demon.co.uk](mailto:val@daval.demon.co.uk). Please let Val know if there is anything you think should be included in the next newsletter, the website, or this year's Christmas catalogue – or if you would like to be involved in any way.