

Welcome to the second in our new series of newsletters. We hope you enjoyed the first and learnt a bit more about Dolen Ffermio and what we are trying to achieve in Eastern Uganda, with your help and support. Lorna has recently returned from her second trip this year and we are sure you'll be fascinated to read her diary. Sadly, since her visit, this region of Uganda has been devastated by the worst flooding in years and we are including a report in this issue.

If anyone would prefer to have a copy of the newsletter in Welsh, please let us know (details at end).

LORNA'S DIARY: AUGUST 2007 VISIT TO UGANDA

Even though she was only there for a week this time, Lorna's visit was so crammed full that her diary is too long to reproduce here, but you can read the whole of it on the website. These are Lorna's own words unless in italics.

Saturday, 18 August – woke too late to go with Gideon and Monica to a Baptism ceremony, but joined them for the social gathering afterwards, where we met some keen livestock farmers. Godfrey Tebesigima is a successful dairy farmer and is very interested now in goat production so could be an ideal person to organise a community goat improvement group, with Gideon's assistance.

Sunday 19 August – set aside for discussions with Gideon, the supervisor of all Dolen Ffermio links in Uganda. Firstly a report on the **Kamuli goat breeding unit**, where Gideon is about to start studies into goat oestrus cycles as part of his Master's degree, and will provide us with much needed background information for the synchronised oestrus, artificial breeding work. Gideon hopes to travel soon to Fort Portal in NW Uganda to purchase a nucleus stock of Boer goats for our unit. A secure paddock with chain link fencing will be used for the Boer billies. We still need to look into the economics and practicalities of electric fencing, using solar panels. We also need to consider financing a borehole on site at the goat unit, as waiting to get water is too time consuming for the unit workers, Richard and Bossa.



Goat being weighed at the Kamuli Goat Breeding Unit

Planning should begin for the development of village goat improvement groups in Busoga. The cattle inseminators are still keen to organise and head these groups and we should recruit to form community groups of proven and keen livestock farmers, like Godfrey Tebesigima.



Goat House at Busoga University

Monday, 20 August – Off early with Gideon to the new agricultural faculty at **Busoga University** to meet with Moses Kitimbo, our key colleague on Dolen Ffermio projects, and university staff including the Registrar, Mr Nathan Muyobo, veterinary lecturer, Dr Andrew Tamale and Paul, the farm manager. We had a round table discussion about how the agriculture faculty and Dolen Ffermio might work together. We all agreed that **goat reproduction** would be the preferred *area of work* and that it must benefit village farmers, the poorest sections of Ugandan society.

We went on to **Busoga High School** with Moses, who teaches Science there and manages the school farm, to discuss with the Deputy Headmaster, Patrick Mugoya, the proposed link with Llanfyllin High School. They are very keen on the link, with particular interest in a teacher exchange programme and help in developing their science laboratories, which lack equipment and text books, and computer studies. They have only 4 computers *for the 900 pupils* and no computer studies teacher. They have no internet access, so we should definitely look into this. The school is also interested in setting up a goat unit on the school farm.

Tuesday, 21 August – *The bus from Jinja took 5 hours and I arrived very dishevelled and dusty, so glad to be greeted by Miriam at the CREATE centre and enjoy a welcome meal.* We talked about the activities of the Kumi Orphan Project for which funds were raised in the Christmas gift catalogue. Here in Wales we probably don't realise how much dedicated work is involved before distribution of livestock and seedlings to the orphans can take place.

Considerable time and care is taken to meet the new communities and determine their needs. The latest communities to benefit are the 2 *remote* parishes of Olimai and Omurang.

Wednesday 22 August – I discussed with Emmanuel the possibility of CREATE having its own breeding unit to supply the Orphans Project with improved billies and females. In the afternoon we went to Olimai Primary School to meet the new committee formed to oversee the projects. *Closer links with primary schools and the formation of local committees are innovations this year.* The classrooms are bare, most of them having no furniture, just a blackboard, with a hundred or more pupils to each room who have to sit on the floor. The 9 committee members were very welcoming and enthusiastic. I was very impressed at the care taken to ensure that all aspects of community life were reflected in the makeup of the committee: Christian and Muslim faiths, women and men, age and disability. They have written a “Development Plan” and have drawn up a list of the most needy orphans.



Lorna and Miriam meet members of the Olimai Committee



Olimai orphans and their carer families with Lorna and Miriam

We went to visit 3 homes where orphans have been chosen to receive Dolen Ffermio gifts. *One was the home of grandmother Elizabeth Achola, guardian of 2 grandchildren, whose mother died just a few weeks ago. At another house a young man and his wife, who have 3 very young children of their own, have agreed to care for 6 orphans.*

Thursday, 23 August – My last day in Kumi District was very memorable. Emmanuel and I left before light to go to Serere to select 6 billy goats of the improved Mubende Elite breed for the new communities. Back down the bumpy roads with the goats in the hired pick-up and, in spite of being quite dirty and smelly, we received an amazing welcome from the community *gathered there.* After welcome speeches and many thanks to Dolen Ffermio for the gifts and to CREATE for organising the Orphans Project, *there was dancing, singing and dramatic renditions of poems.* Then came the great moment of launching the Project by handing over the 6 billy goats and some of the laying hens. There was a sudden downpour of rain as we left, which is said to be a very good omen for a gathering in Uganda. I do hope that will be so for the people of this community, who greatly deserve some assistance, considering the enormous challenges they face of rural poverty, parental deaths from HIV/AIDS, remoteness, and yet who are working so hard and cheerfully to improve the situation for orphaned and vulnerable children. I was greatly affected by the great needs experienced here and resolved to try and increase our efforts on their behalf. It would be really good if some of our schools could link with Olimai and Omurang Primary Schools.



Villagers dancing to celebrate the Project launch at Olimai

2007 CHRISTMAS GIFT CATALOGUE FOR THE KUMI ORPHANS PROJECT

It's that time of year again when we all need to start thinking about Christmas. We had the idea for the Christmas catalogue rather late in the day last year, so we're starting earlier this time. We're sticking to the same format to keep costs right down but we've increased the gifts to 7 (from 5) and we are hoping that we shall match the magnificent response we had last year – or even better!! The children desperately need our help, as you can see. We simply can't let them down.

We don't know about you, but we dread the thought of trawling round crowded shops looking for gifts, keeping the receipts in case they're not what people want. And what a relief it was when the first gift catalogues appeared so that we didn't have to rack our brains to suggest ideas about what people could buy for us. Of course, the difference between our catalogue and the ones produced by the big charities is that we can guarantee that **every penny** goes to the Project and we are absolutely sure that the gifts go to the most needy orphans.

We shall be inserting the catalogue into the November issues of the Tanat Chronicle and Yr Ysgub and putting it in as many outlets as we can. If you don't get your copy, or would like extras, please let us know. And, please don't forget that you don't have to wait until Christmas to buy gifts. This year we've had birthdays, a wedding (male and female goats!), sale of Mother's Day cakes, “fines” for Lenten backsliding at a primary school, a collection by guests at a 50th birthday party and even an unwanted compensation cheque from a Building Society

FLOODING: A NATIONAL EMERGENCY IN UGANDA

Heavy rain since July has caused severe flooding in north and eastern Uganda, affecting at least 300,000 people, a third of whom have the added misery of being in internally displaced persons camps due to the war with LRA rebels. A UN backed emergency appeal for US \$41million has been launched.

There will be serious food shortages due to the loss of the first season's harvest and delays in planting the second. The normal 2 month 'hunger gap' is likely to extend to 10 months this year!

The worst affected area is Teso and the risk of the floods spreading to Busoga is very high. Miriam reports that Soroti, just north of Kumi has been cut off and the road bridge has been swept away. Emergency relief will have to come in by air. Clean water supplies are devastated so dysentery is a great problem and malaria and respiratory diseases have increased by about 30%. Miriam's home area of Amuria, and Katakwi, north of Soroti have been badly hit. So far the Kumi orphan project areas are not affected, but if rains persist, as they are forecast to, into November, then flooding may well spread there and already crops have been damaged because of excessive wetness.



APPLYING FOR REGISTERED CHARITY STATUS

Dolen Ffermio has decided to apply for registered charity status and the first question to answer must be **Why?** First and foremost, to enable us to do more and give more to the hard-pressed families and orphans you have been reading about. It should give us extra authenticity for people who don't know us personally and, hopefully, greater potential for acquiring grants from government bodies and donations from firms, as well as the huge bonus of being able to claim 28p in the £ back from the Inland Revenue on individual donations.

How do we go about it? Very slowly! We're all volunteers and also amateurs at this sort of thing, and it is proving rather complicated. However, we are fortunate in that we have (belatedly) discovered PAVO (Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations) and are benefiting from their help and advice. The first step we have to take is to draw up a constitution for Dolen Ffermio, which sets out our "Objects" (aims) and the "Powers" we need to carry them out. We also need to appoint Trustees who will take responsibility for the running of Dolen Ffermio.

Membership of Dolen Ffermio

We've had one meeting of supporters to find out their views and we now need to call another meeting to seek approval for the constitution. This time, on the advice of John Davies from PAVO, we are going to form a membership of people who will be allowed to vote on the constitution and then on other matters as they arise in the future. We must stress, however, that supporters who don't want to become members will always be equally welcome. Details of the meeting are in the box below. We are sending out invitations but, just in case we miss anybody, please do let us know if you would like to come along and also if you would like to become a member.

www.dolen-ffermio.co.uk

We hope you've all seen our new website. We are indebted to Derek Ward who produced it, pays for it and keeps it updated. It's easy to use and packed full of information. One of our aims is awareness-raising and this is a brilliant way to keep everyone informed of what Dolen Ffermio is all about and what we are trying to achieve. If you haven't logged on yet, now's the time. Derek's really good at putting all the material we produce on the website, so you'll find this newsletter on there, the catalogue, Lorna's diaries, reports from Uganda, minutes of meetings. You name it, it's there!

COMING UP

Constitution Meeting on **Tuesday, 6th November** at 7.30 pm in the Parish Room of St Silin's Church, Llansilin

Conference at Llanfyllin High School for Sixth Formers and College Students with overseas speakers and workshops on **Thursday, 6th December**

Comments, queries, requests please to: Val Talbot 01691 791310 val@daval.demon.co.uk