

It looks like being another jam-packed edition as there is so much to report on and we hope you'll bear with us. There'll be reports on the magnificent sum raised from the Christmas catalogue, Lorna's diary from her December visit to Uganda, the highly successful conference at Llanfyllin High School, a grant for an exciting link project, together with updates on fund-raising, the application to become a registered charity, the website and Dolen Ffermio's membership. We also want to tell you about Lorna's visit to Uganda with Barbara Maycock from Llanfyllin High School at Easter to set up the link with Busoga High School. Read on!!

## GREAT JOY IN UGANDA AT NEWS OF CHRISTMAS GIFTS



Miriam and Emmanuel Maraka, the founders of the Kumi Orphan Project

Well, we couldn't believe how well we had done to raise £4,035 from the first Dolen Ffermio Christmas gift catalogue. Here in the UK we had set our hearts on raising £5,000 for Christmas 2007 but, instead, all you wonderful, generous people almost doubled it to £7,320. I don't think we need to tell you how grateful we feel and who better to express the heartfelt thanks of everyone in Uganda and here in the UK than Miriam and Emmanuel themselves?



Lorna with Francis and his female goat which he received last year from the 2006 catalogue gifts

Dear Dr Lorna Brown,

I would like to sincerely appreciate assistance of £7,320 that Dolen Ffermio has raised to support children who have lost one or both parents in Kumi District of Uganda. I have learnt from Mrs Val Talbot one of your active helpers that this sum was raised from the 2007 Christmas gift catalogue. There is no doubt that such a gift is a result of hard work by a team of committed people, and a generous response by loving and caring people in your community. It is the first time in the history of 10 years work with children in need of special protection and care that we receive such a large and generous gift from a group of friends and their supporters. I therefore thank young people, ladies and gentlemen who are supporters of Dolen Ffermio at Llanfyllin High School and those living in and around Llanfyllin and Oswestry who gave so generously and gladly.

I have noted with joy that the level of support by Dolen Ffermio to Kumi Orphan Project has been increasing over time. That is great and please keep it up! On the other hand it also means added responsibility on our part in Uganda to ensure proper utilisation of these funds. Fortunately the needs were identified and shared with Dolen Ffermio. And so this gift of over £7,000 will be used to purchase 27 bicycles, 100 lots of paper and pens, 300 orange tree seedlings, 550 laying hens, 85 mature female goats, 18 mature breeding male goats and to undertake 18 training courses. The remainder of the money will be given to previous beneficiaries to build up their stocks and to meet other needs associated with the project. The support will directly assist over 400 new families with care of orphans. Thank you for the generous gift that is a sign of love and friendship.

Permit me to take this opportunity to invite your friends and supporters to visit us in Kumi. This is one very good way we can continue to build a human-centred relationship and celebrate life despite the problems and challenges we are all faced with. Uganda is a beautiful country. You are all welcome!

Sincerely

Miriam and Emmanuel Maraka

## LORNA'S VISIT TO UGANDA 8 to 16 DECEMBER

**Saturday, 8 December** - not a good time of year for me with my annual sheep ultrasound pregnancy scanning season just starting, but I must go now as it is a rare opportunity to meet a good friend and vet colleague Dr Pradip Ghalsasi, from the Nimbkar Agricultural Research Institute (NARI), Maharashtra, India, who was in Uganda at this time. NARI has pioneered sheep and goat breed improvement in India and has recently received a prestigious Indian government award for their work. Ever since working with Pradip 12 years ago I have been convinced that the Indian project was very relevant to small ruminant development in Uganda, so here was our chance to meet there at last!

**Sunday 9 December** - Gideon Nadiope, our projects supervisor, Pradip and I start discussions straightaway on how the Indian experience of goat improvement could assist our efforts in Uganda. Also how Indian appropriate technology could be adopted. Gideon was particularly interested in small scale production of liquid nitrogen, the shortage of which in Uganda is a major constraint on cattle breed improvement.

**Monday, 10 December** - Gideon has arranged for Pradip to talk to post-graduates at the Faculty of Veterinary Science, Makerere University, Kampala. It was an excellent presentation and we were all very impressed by the tangible increase in shepherds' incomes, averaging 500 rupees (£6) per ewe, by the introduction of a twinning gene, FecB, from the tiny Garole breed of sheep into the larger Deccani breed. Pradip described how they were improving goat milk and meat production.

**Tuesday, 11 December** - to the Kamuli goat unit to remove sponges from goats being synchronised for artificial insemination (AI) in 2 days time. Pradip told us that in India better results were obtained by using CIDRs instead of sponges in this process. He made many other constructive comments on the running of the goat unit including pasture and fencing, including solar powered electric fencing. Indian pasture and fodder plants are very similar to those in Uganda so Pradip's advice is very relevant. On to Busoga University campus, where we met farm manager Paul Musenero and his team and were very impressed by the Boer goat unit, the good growth of kids, and the new feed store on the goat house. Pradip spoke of a new seedless and insect resistant variety of Leucena, developed by NARI, which is very good for goats, and the dual-purpose Damascus goat which they are introducing to India by use of imported semen. In India, 90% of goats are reared by women, who are often landless. In the evening we had a good discussion on goat improvement by torch-light with a deputation of people from the village who had asked to be involved.

**Wednesday, 12 December** - preparing for insemination day, checking out the bucks, the does were coming into heat as planned. At noon we went to meet retired Bishop Cyprian Bamwoze and his wife, Naomi. After cool delicious homemade lemonade we saw developments at their fish farm.

**Thursday, 13 December** - the great day of insemination! Pradip recommended a double insemination with 8 to 10 hours between to improve conception rates. The time in between was used by Pradip to explain all his recommendations for the goat unit, including pasture improvement, supplementary feeding, new feeds to try, target growth rates, culling and sales



Pradip, Gideon and Bossa (from left to right) carrying out the AI

policy, to finance developments at the site, including building more goat houses. He emphasised the importance of social ranking in goats, which impacts on feed intake and welfare. Altogether, an extremely useful session, culminating in Gideon writing an action plan.

**Friday, 14 December** - to Kumi and a great welcome and lunch from Miriam before we set out for the orphan project communities, depending on Gideon's careful driving to negotiate the tortuous almost non-existent bumpy roads. We first visited the Olimai-Omarang communities, which had received gifts from the Christmas



Pious with his chickens

2006 catalogue. I was delighted to see how these gifts had multiplied, especially the chickens. Pious received 3 chickens in August and now has 27 young ones! Marita and her carer family are very proud of their billy goat, which they share within the project. Francis and Stanley, both in care of their grandmothers, are also proud of their female goats and eagerly await them producing kids.

Miriam and Emmanuel are working very hard with the new communities which will receive Christmas 2007 gifts. We met two of the organising councillors from Ogosoi

community and families living in extremely deprived circumstances, including one where 12 year old Betty, the eldest of 10 children, had been catching small fish in a swamp for her siblings' meal, while her widowed mother took an ill child to hospital. These fish are a valuable protein source in an area of such extreme poverty. Once again I was so impressed at how cheerfully people struggle to survive in desperate circumstances, and what amazing work Miriam and Emmanuel do in organising the Kumi Orphan Project.



Marita (2nd from left) with her carer family and the billy goat, which they share within the project

**Saturday, 15 December** - met Moses Ekoi in Ngora and we all went to see Margaret Stevens, who had discovered Dolen Ffermio through our website. She has a Saanen buck near to Moses' planned goat unit and kindly offered his use for AI. Our thanks to Margaret for another promising route to progress on cross-breeding goats for dairying. Moses and his wife, Helen, provided a wonderful home-grown lunch after we had inspected the area being prepared for goats and Pradip had given



Pradip, Gideon and Helen Jane discussing plans for co-operation with the Soroti project

valuable advice on pasture and possibilities of solar powered fencing. Later Dr Helen Jane Ayudo, vet for the Soroti Catholic Mission goat project, came to discuss plans for future co-operation.

**Sunday, 16 December** - my last day and the first chance for Pradip to sight-see a little with a short boat trip to the source of the Nile. The memorial of Ghandi's ashes being committed to the Nile is here, another Indian-Ugandan link. We met Emmanuel in Kampala, where he has been involved in meetings to assist Teso (Kumi and Soroti districts) after the disastrous flooding there this year. I want to thank Pradip for his exceptionally valuable contribution to our work in Uganda, and also thank the Nimbkar Institute for releasing him from his busy programme in India.

## GOING FOR GOLD

Great news! We've been given a grant of £1,250 by the Gold Star Communities Framework which has been set up by the Welsh Assembly to encourage links between communities in Wales and Africa. This will not only help to fund an exciting project in itself but will, hopefully, lead to a bigger project under the Gold Star framework which will allow us to go beyond our farming activities in Uganda and to involve other sections of our rural communities: farming groups, vets, schools, medical centres, women's groups, faith groups, water, appropriate technology and energy providers, especially renewable energy.

This initial grant will be used to fund two exchange visits; firstly for Emmanuel Maraka, a livestock specialist and co-founder of the Kumi Orphan Project, to come to Wales and secondly for Cordelia Weedon of Llanfyllin, a youth and community worker specialising in photographic projects, to visit Uganda. The intention is to set up a photo diaries exchange project enabling people in Uganda to learn about the potential of photography and, combined with creative writing, to tell their stories on a personal level. In Wales, the project will highlight issues vital for the future of farming in Wales. Giving people a voice of their own will empower the participants, enable them to learn additional skills and strengthen the links between the two communities.

Emmanuel and Cordelia will work together for 2 weeks in each country on projects relevant to each community. Educational materials will be produced for use in both countries and exhibitions, publications, local newspapers and the internet will make the results known to the wider general public.

The first visit to Wales will involve schools, young farmers' clubs, the Llanfyllin Arts Connection and the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) in Machynlleth. The return visit to Uganda will involve schools, villages and CREATE (the Centre for Recreation, Education and Appropriate Training for Everyone) which is where the Kumi Orphan Project originated.

**[www.dolen-ffermio.org.uk](http://www.dolen-ffermio.org.uk)**

The website can now be accessed via **[www.dolen-ffermio.org.uk](http://www.dolen-ffermio.org.uk)** as well as via the existing .co.uk. Eventually we may phase out the .co.uk access as the .org.uk is more appropriate. It continues to be an invaluable source of information and we are immensely grateful to Derek Ward for setting it up and scrupulously keeping it up-to-date. He has plans to revamp it, mainly because it is getting rather full and to include more reports from our Ugandan colleagues. We are also hoping to produce a Welsh language version in the near future, with help and funding from the Welsh Language Board.

## **SIXTH FORM CONFERENCE at LLANFYLLIN HIGH SCHOOL 6 December**

Months of planning and preparation, the hospitality of the school, the high calibre of speakers, the enthusiasm of the students attending and the exemplary organisation of Barbara Maycock, head of Sixth Form Studies, all combined to make the conference a resounding success.

The morning began with a very warm welcome from the headteacher, Mr Carl Mincher, and from then on students and guests in the packed lecture theatre were treated to interesting and thought-provoking talks on the general theme of *Pathways out of Rural Poverty*. Robin Benbow, a local sheep farmer, kicked us off by looking at the Future of Farming in Wales and Dr Ioan Fazey of the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, followed with *Food Security in Rural Development*. *Aid versus Trade* was covered by Anna Jane Evans of Christian Aid, and Martha Musonza-Holman from Zimbabwe. Richard Jones, Shropshire farmer and Chair of Dolen Ffermio, gave us an overview of *Dairy Farming in the UK and Uganda* and we were given an insight into how goats are providing *Pathways out of Poverty in Bangladesh* by Professor Mujaffar Hossain of Bangladesh Agricultural University and John Best of Reading University.

The afternoon was taken up by 12 workshops, each of which posed a question and delegates were invited to explore the issues involved and try to come up with some answers. *The future of farming – will young people want to farm? What role for women in farming? How useful are overseas links? Who benefits from gap years and volunteering overseas? Will central government initiatives deliver the millennium development goals? Fair trade for farmers, at home and away? Challenges posed by climate change in Africa and Wales? Can the world be fed as population increases and resources decrease? Future development for Dolen Ffermio?*

One delegate from each workshop reported back to the full conference in the final session, with much thoughtful and incisive analysis. Mr Mincher paid tribute to the response and attentiveness of the students and hoped that there would be some positive and practical outcomes from what had been a fascinating and enjoyable day.

Our most grateful thanks to the school for hosting the conference and providing us with very welcome refreshments, to the speakers and workshop leaders for giving us their time and expertise and to Barbara for organising it all so efficiently.

### **UGANDA UPDATE**

As the newsletter "goes to press" Lorna is back in Uganda with Barbara and her daughter to finalise the link between Llanfyllin and Busoga High Schools. We hope that this will lead to exchange of ideas, experiences and, hopefully,

staff eventually. Busoga High School is very keen to develop its IT provision in particular – at the moment there are 2 computers for 900 pupils so they have a long way to go. We are also hoping to establish links with more schools throughout the region which will tie in very well with the Gold Star Communities framework.

### **WHERE ARE WE WITH REGISTRATION?**

You may well ask. We are waiting with bated breath, having sent off the application on 29 February. It turned out to be a long-winded affair and the Charity Commission changed the application process halfway through but it has been a worthwhile exercise. We have looked at lots of different issues, such as child protection in Uganda, sustainable fund-raising, the roles and responsibilities of trustees and, I have to say, when we saw it all down in black and white, we were rather proud of the extent of the activities we are engaged in.

Another excellent spin-off is that we now have a membership. At the last count it was 25, but there's room for plenty more, so please do join us. We won't ask you to do anything extra though we would obviously be delighted to welcome anyone who would like to be more involved.

If you would like to sign up, please send a cheque for £5 to Chas Nicholson, Nant Gwy, Llansilin, SY10 7QQ (01691 791626 or chasnicholson@btinternet.com)

**PS It's free for anyone in full-time education**

### **FUND-RAISING**

As well as the magnificent response to our Christmas catalogue appeal, we have been extremely fortunate in the fund-raising efforts of a number of groups and individuals throughout the year. A special vote of thanks goes to Llanfyllin High School for raising £674 for the Kumi Orphan Project at Christmas and to the congregation of St Myllin's who collected £572 during their harvest festival and re-dedication of the bells in October. Ysgol Pennant has made two collections for Dolen Ffermio and Llanfechain Primary School donated their harvest collection. We had some extraordinarily generous donations from individuals at Christmas, and since, and some local firms have promised to donate once we are a registered charity. This is all very heartening and we are hoping to build on it by developing a sustainable fund-raising strategy so that we can plan ahead and make long-term commitments to our partners in Uganda. If anyone has any suggestions or ideas or if you fancy doing something yourselves, please do let us know.

**Thank you for your generosity and support  
We simply couldn't do it without you**

*Comments on the newsletter please to Val Talbot  
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