

Another bumper edition coming up – despite our promise to keep our newsletters as short as possible. This is becoming more and more difficult as there are so many good things to report on. And none more so than our wonderfully exciting news that we have five Ugandan visitors in early November (NB postponed from October). Barbara and Lorna set the ball rolling when they were in Uganda at Easter to set up the school links and you can read all about their visit in Barbara's diary. We are looking forward to the Christmas catalogue and also have news on Lorna's trip to India, the Goat Improvement Project and quite a few other items.

## A VERY WARM WELCOME TO OUR UGANDAN VISITORS

We are absolutely thrilled that five of our Ugandan partners are coming over here in November. In the spring newsletter we told you that we had received funding from the Welsh Assembly's Wales for Africa programme to pay for Emmanuel Maraka to visit as part of a community exchange project with Cordelia Weedon of Llanfyllin. As most of you know, Emmanuel and his wife Miriam founded, and work incredibly hard to run, the Kumi Orphan Project. The trustees felt very strongly that they must come together, so we are funding Miriam's trip ourselves.



Barbara speaking at an outdoor assembly at Busoga High School. Behind her from the left are Moses Kitimbo (one of the visiting teachers), Headmaster Charles Kaziba, Lorna and Barbara's daughter, Grace.

Barbara Maycock from Llanfyllin High School went with Lorna to Uganda at Easter to finalise the links between Busoga High, Kamuli Boys Primary and Reverend Nayenga Primary Schools with their counterparts in Wales: Llanfyllin High, Llanfechain Primary and Llansanffraid Primary. On her return, Barbara had only a short time to apply for funding from the Department for International Development (DFID) through the British Council and we were up against stiff opposition – but we got it, thanks to Barbara and enthusiastic support from all the schools involved. This will fund 3 Ugandan teachers to come here in November when they will take part in classroom activities with pupils and workshops with teachers. Teachers from our schools (again funded by DFID) will visit Uganda next February and, as Barbara will testify, we can learn an awful lot from their education system, poorly resourced though it is.

Our schools are very excited about taking part in this project and the children are eagerly waiting to meet their special

visitors - as we all are! While they are here, we are hoping that, when they are not busy with their funded projects, they will be available to meet as many groups and individuals as possible to share their experiences, tell their stories – and to inspire us to raise more funds for their valuable and vital work in this impoverished area of Eastern Uganda. An open meeting for the whole community will be arranged at Llanfyllin High School and we will let everyone know details as soon as we can. More from our website ([www.dolen-ffermio.org.uk](http://www.dolen-ffermio.org.uk)) or by contacting Val Talbot on 01691 791310 ([val@daval.demon.co.uk](mailto:val@daval.demon.co.uk)) or Lorna Brown on 01691 648709 ([lornabrown@sy225au.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:lornabrown@sy225au.fsnet.co.uk))

## GOAT IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

We are always looking for ways to raise funds for the vital work that is ongoing at the Kamuli Goat Breeding Centre under the leadership of vet, Dr Gideon Nadiope, together with the village goat improvement schemes set up by Moses Ekoi, a livestock expert. We have provided funds for fencing and aim to assist with goat shelters, AI training and the much-needed supply of Boer goats from South Africa. We are very fortunate to have received generous donations from Lloyds Animal Feeds Ltd and Innovis Ltd, the livestock breeding company based in Aberystwyth, as well as from local individuals. The people of Llanfyllin and roundabout responded with their customary generosity when they helped us to raise the magnificent sum of just over £1,100 at Lorna's garage sale in July. £200 of that total was raised on one item alone – a croquet set which had been donated by one of our supporters in Llangollen.



Gideon scanning at the Kamuli Goat Breeding Centre

## BARBARA'S DIARY: EASTER 2008 VISIT

A visit to Uganda has been on my agenda for at least 8 years, but commitments at home and school had made it difficult. At last, the time was right and, with Lorna's encouragement, I went at Easter with her and my 16 year old daughter, Grace. We were met at Entebbe Airport by Gideon who was to be our driver over the next 10 days and, without him, our journeying would have been impossible. It was night by now and, as we drove to Busoga, we could see people walking along the roads, just talking and spending time with friends and neighbours. There is the occasional light in a house where they may have electricity temporarily. It immediately smells, looks and feels very different from the UK.

**Saturday morning** - we enjoyed breakfast at the Busoga Trust Guesthouse with some gap year students. They were helping mostly in local schools, enthusiastic and enjoying the experience of life in a quite different environment. It was comfortable and clean here, hot water was delivered to the door in the morning and we slept soundly under our mosquito nets. We headed north to Kamuli, passing through a very green, pleasant land with red/orange soil and we could see many people working on the land. Busoga High School was about half a mile along a bumpy track, where we were met by Moses Kitimbo, Gideon's older brother and an agriculture teacher at the school. He also runs the school farm.

Our next few days were spent at Busoga High, sitting in lessons, speaking to teachers and finding out how the school runs. Busoga is a fee paying boarding school with about 800 pupils. There are only 5 computers in the school, no internet or phone line and classrooms are basic with pitifully few resources. Lessons start at 8 am, finish at 4.10 pm and pupils sit 2 or 3 at wooden desks. They work hard and are very attentive. We spent time with the headmaster, Charles Kaziba, to exchange school information. We also went to see Moses' old secondary school at Kabukye - 2 brick buildings in fields, with 230 students paying around £12 a term (only primary education in Uganda is free). There are 13 teachers and it seemed a real struggle, with no electricity and scant resources. We then drove to the Nile, which is quite a sight, with a few settlers digging out gravel and a ferry across. Back to Busoga and a full assembly outside under the mango tree. Lorna presented the school with a microscope and Grace was invited to speak briefly, which was tough for her but she managed it!

**Monday** - after breakfast, we said our goodbyes to Busoga High School, but I have a feeling I'll be back! Today we were heading to Kumi to spend time with Miriam and Emmanuel. We eventually arrived around 9 pm in the dark. Outside the house 30 to 40 children were studying quietly using the only electric light in the area. Miriam and Emmanuel made us feel very welcome - huge thanks to them for their hospitality and warmth during our visit..

**Tuesday** - this was to be a goats, chickens and schools day. About half an hour after we set off we were greeted by the community music group. Emmanuel told us later that musicians are key to motivating their communities. At



Kamuli Primary School

At Kamuli Primary School we spent time in the first class, which had over 120 children, all very enthusiastic, but with no resources and a long-suffering teacher. It looked impossible to a secondary teacher. The children would spontaneously burst into song and take it in turns to write on the blackboard. The final year class had only 26 pupils. There is a huge drop-out rate in Ugandan schools - children leave to marry or work on the family farm or have to stay back a year. One of the orphan boys in this class, Solomon, had been given a goat by the Kumi Orphan Project. After school we met community leaders and then travelled around family groups, with Miriam and Emmanuel checking the care and health of the goats and chickens. All looked well. People are very poor, often with 6 to 7 children - their own and many of them with orphans they are looking after.



Cassava for sale at Kumi Market

**Wednesday** - still no lights. Electricity is unreliable to say the least but it's accepted as the way of life here. Miriam took us to Kumi market in the morning. Goats, cattle, vegetables, bicycles, clothes, rat traps, poison -

everything you could think of. Then off to vaccinate chickens in a local community, where Miriam answered questions and sorted out problems. We visited Mukongoro Secondary School in the hope of setting up more school links, another poor school, with 525 pupils and 15 teachers.

**Thursday and Friday** - Lorna never stops and packs a huge amount in. However, we decided that we couldn't come all this way without some time to sightsee, so we set off for Murchison Falls National Park. What a treat! River trips on the Nile, crocodiles, hippos, giraffes, elephants and wart hogs. It was a beautiful, unspoilt place and we saw another side to this wonderful country.

**Saturday** - Finally, back to Kampala to meet up with Miriam and Emmanuel to pursue funding for the school exchanges with the British Council. Then to Entebbe Airport in typical Ugandan style, just making it in time! I loved being in Uganda and so did Grace. We're now busy setting up school links and have secured funding for 3 exchanges and we shall be welcoming our first visitors in November. I hope that this is the beginning of fruitful relationships on many, many levels and that Uganda will get under the skin (in a good way) of many, many more people.

## 2008 CHRISTMAS GIFT CATALOGUE

Hard to believe, but it's time to think about getting the Christmas gift catalogue ready. This has been a huge success so far, raising over £12,500 in just two years for the Kumi Orphan Project. Last Christmas we raised £7,320 and a further £900 since then on gifts for special occasions. We are only too well aware that this year's appeal will take place during a period of economic downturn, which is affecting all of us through much higher prices for essentials such as food, energy and fuel. However, we are hoping that people in this area will respond with their usual generosity and warmheartedness towards those in a much poorer part of the world who are facing even greater difficulties and deprivations.

As supporters, you will know the inspiring story behind the Kumi Orphan Project. Orphans in this part of Uganda are cared for by their extended family or by concerned villagers. However, these families struggle to provide for their own children and especially to pay their secondary school fees. Primary education is now free in Uganda but many orphans have to leave school before they have gained the skills and qualifications they need to earn their own living and this gives them little hope for the future. Because of this desperate situation, Emmanuel and Miriam Maraka (two of our eagerly awaited visitors) set up the Project to give orphans of primary school age livestock or citrus plants together with training in how to look after them. Older orphans have extra training so that they can train and supervise the younger orphans and their carer families.



Lorna and Barbara with Miriam, Gideon and Emmanuel (on the right) during their Easter 2008 visit.

Miriam and Emmanuel have to do a tremendous amount of work before the distribution of gifts can take place. They take considerable care to prepare the villages beforehand, establishing committees and training the leaders and community workers. These villages are widespread and remote and Miriam and Emmanuel do not have their own transport. Then there are the difficulties of buying and transporting livestock in such an area. They are also closely involved in the training of the older orphans and no gifts are distributed until these youth workers have been trained.

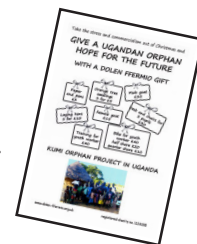
They cannot thank our supporters enough for the funds raised, though we ourselves feel privileged to be able to play our part in such a worthwhile project, and this feeling is obviously shared by all the many people in this area who

have so willingly and generously contributed over the past two years. Here is a report received in September from Emmanuel on the latest phase of their work:

*Project work utilising the funds is going on very well. We have been able to give bicycles, hens, goats and orange seedlings to Olimai and Ogoi villages. The seedlings were planted last week and this week. We have remobilised the very first communities of Aterai and Akibui establishing leadership committees and therefore establishing a structure like that in Olimai and Ogoi. We have entered, mobilised and trained leaders and community workers in a new village of Olupe. Vaccination of chicken will start soon. We are now mobilising another new village of Kodokul. We hope to have the committee and workers trained before we travel. In the village of Olimai there are very positive outcomes that we shall be able to share when we meet you soon.*

*My regards to all of you and your team members. Thank you for working to support us to serve children living in difficult circumstances in Kumi*

Catalogues will again be distributed with the November issues of the Tanat Chronicle, Yr Ysgub and Plu'r Gweunydd and will be available at Honeysuckle in Oswestry and various other outlets, as well as from our website. If you can't get hold of a copy, please contact Val Talbot on 01691 791310 or email [val@daval.demon.co.uk](mailto:val@daval.demon.co.uk) Happy Christmas shopping with Dolen Ffermio!



## LINKING UP WITH FARMING GROUPS

In July, Lorna and Emyr Owen had a successful meeting with representatives of the Montgomeryshire Federation of Young Farmer Clubs (Nia Lloyd, County Organiser and Gwynfor Thomas, County President). There was much enthusiasm for future collaboration between Dolen Ffermio and YFC regarding raising awareness and possible visits by YFC members to Dolen Ffermio projects in Uganda. The possibility of funding visits via Wales YFC International Travel Programme is to be investigated. In early September, they also met with representatives of the Farmers Union of Wales (Gareth Vaughan, President; Peter Roberts, Director of Public Relations; Dr Nick Fenwick, Director of Agricultural Policy, Claire Gurney, Policy Officer) regarding raising awareness. FUW have agreed to help publicise Dolen Ffermio's work with an article in the autumn issue of the organisation's monthly 'Y Tir - Welsh Farmer'.

## WE ARE NOW A REGISTERED CHARITY

We are proud to have the Charity Commission's official stamp of approval. We think it should also give us extra status and authenticity, especially for people who don't know us personally. And, of course, a big bonus is that, under the Gift Aid scheme, we can claim 28p in the £ (25p from 2011) on all donations made by UK taxpayers.

## LORNA'S VISIT TO INDIA

The visit to Dolen Ffermio projects in Uganda in December 2007 by Dr Pradip Ghalsasi, the veterinary director of the Nimbkar Agriculture research Institute (NARI), Maharashtra, India, resulted in many practical improvements at Gidoen's Goat Unit. Better conception rates to AI and new approaches to feed management are reflected in increased kid growth rates. New fodder crops have been introduced, goat housing improved and Gideon is busy with requests from various groups for AI crossbreeding, for which he is borrowing Boer bucks from Busoga University. With this practical proof of the great value of learning from the NARI experience of goat and sheep improvement in India, we were eager to know more, and so I visited India in April this year, after the school linking visit with Barbara and Grace Maycock.

It was wonderful to meet up again with Bon Nimbkar, the plant geneticist who founded NARI in 1968 as a private non-profit research and development institute with the philosophy of "solving the age old problems of rural India using the best tools of science and technology". It assists sustainable rural development by producing better seeds for farmers, and working on renewable energies such as solar and biomass. The animal husbandry section, started in 1990, is now Bon's greatest enthusiasm, directed by his daughter Chanda, an animal geneticist, Pradip and a technical team including Pradip's wife, Padmaja, working on the 3 experimental farms and as extension workers for the village and migratory shepherd projects. There are 100,000 such families in Maharashtra province completely dependent on sheep for their livelihoods. The animal husbandry programme has focused on collecting and selecting from the sheep and goats breeds of India, defining their characteristics, including prolificacy, and disease resistance, and using cross-breeding to improve productivity. Cross-breeding programmes either involve only Indian breeds, such as the use of Sirohi bucks from Rajasthan on local goats in Maharashtra, and the latest very

successful crossbreeding project, a collaboration with the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) using Garole sheep from West Bengal, which carry the FecB prolificacy gene (NARI has proved they were the source of the Booroola gene in Australia), to increase twinning in the Deccani breed favoured by Maharashtra shepherds.



Shepherd with Deccani ewe and twin lambs

AI to natural heat is used to produce the FecB carriers, which I saw in action at Lundi farm, and then we visited one of the 30 flocks which have exchanged their Deccani rams for FecB carriers, and witnessed the shepherds' enthusiasm for the scheme and the extra revenue it is

bringing. Weekly health and growth monitoring is carried out by the NARI extension workers. Exotic breeds are also used in cross-breeding with local breeds; the Awassi milking sheep imported from Israel, or Boer goats imported as embryos in 1996. More recently Pradip has produced the Damascus goat milking breed by breeding up from semen he collected in Syria. These large goats caused a sensation at a national show in Delhi this year. A commercial enterprise, Nira Valley Genetics, to make exotic breeds and their crosses available to the public is being developed. Many other advances had taken place since my last visit in 1996: a new headquarters building with demonstration area for farmers and shepherds. I saw the new variety of seedless, disease resistant Leucaena fodder tree developed there, and the intricate grafting process that propagates it. Many other fodder crops are under evaluation. All of these activities would have great relevance for Uganda and I hope that our colleagues can visit NARI before long to benefit from this amazing work.



Pradip and vet with Damascus buck and Boer doe

The other great benefit of their visiting India would be to see the **renewable energy** in use there. Rural India makes great use of methane production for cooking, and solar water heaters. Much research is in progress to develop appropriate, affordable technologies to improve rural life. I visited the Appropriate Rural Technology Institute (ARTI) rural entrepreneurship development centre in Phaltan and saw a multitude of ideas which would improve people's lives in both Uganda and the UK. As well as biogas (methane) technology, for which they have new compact plastic units which can run on manure, though food waste is more efficient, there were low cost greenhouses and other plant nursery ideas, bamboo for building to replace metal, improved cooking stoves and briquetted charcoal made from sugar cane trash. All these and many more are being evaluated for use in homes and schools etc and to create rural business opportunities. So there are very exciting prospects for Uganda here too!

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We shall have to call the AGM close to meetings with our Ugandan visitors but we felt it wouldn't be appropriate to combine them. We need to discuss the progress of the past year and make plans for the future. A notice and agenda will be sent out to members but, as always, if anyone else wishes to come along, please do. We are now up to 36 members, but there's plenty of room for more! If you would like to join us, you would be most welcome. It's only £5 a year and free for students. You can download a membership form from our website or send for one from Chas Nicholson 01691 791626 or chasnicholson@btinternet.com