

uganda update

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Spring 2001

Partnering with the future of others

Dear Friends,

February 2001 Visit

Two comments stand out to us from members of the team who accompanied us on our visit to Uganda in February:

- 'The people I met will always be with me'
- 'You are never ever prepared for what you see'.

Simon Marden, a local Hailsham estate agent who visited Uganda with us, summed his reaction up in these words:

'I was shocked at the poverty but highly impressed with the people's spirit. I found that having nothing does not make you unhappy. Happiness has nothing to do with worldly goods. Unhappiness to them was poor health and no food. They have nothing but their happiness is infectious and once you have met them, you will never forget them.'

Partnering with the needs of the Orphans

Twenty-eight orphans are now sponsored. The need for the school for the orphans in the Kabubbu Jungle is now urgent. The long-term difficulties involved in transferring the children into this school once they become too settled in 'Fields of Life Academy' will be significant. We would like to start building in September / October this year, ready for the first intake of children when the new Ugandan school year begins in February 2002.

The Kabubbu residents have made 6,000 out of the 70,000 mud bricks needed for the school and have cleared a road to the school site. They have removed many tree stumps by hand and an eight-foot termite mound that held a special surprise – a bee's nest containing a large amount of honey.

Thank you to Simon who had a go – stomping in the mud to make bricks – but found it was hard going – and stopped at one brick! Nevertheless he is committed to raising funds for the school.

Pastor George has given two acres of land (his birthright) for the school. Quicken Trust is negotiating to buy an adjoining five acres. The local authorities have expressed their support. £11,750 has now been raised for the school building and land. The project has now been costed at around £45,000.

On our recent visit a four-year-old orphaned child was brought to us – she had run away from home and was wandering alone in the jungle. She begged not be returned to her grandmother who beat her. We involved the local community Elders. All we could offer was for her to be chosen to attend the 'Fields of Life Academy' with our other sponsored orphans. Maybe the beatings will be less if she is not at home for up to 10 hours a day.

We will have so much more to offer orphaned children like her when the school is built.

A special thank you to Mary Dicker for using her skill to work with groups of orphaned children in the jungle helping them to face the future.

Thank you for partnering with the orphans.

Partnering with the needs of the Schools

Partnerships between local schools and Ugandan Schools continually develop.

Some of the schools engaged in ongoing partnership or fundraising include:

Broad Oak Primary School
Whatlington & Mountfield Primary School
Roselands Primary School
Burgess Hill High School for Girls

Our special thanks go to all schools that have agreed to fundraise or have partnered with a Ugandan School. We continue to receive requests to speak at school assemblies. This is a vital way to encourage children to have a caring attitude towards those who live in 'Third World' conditions. Rebecca Bonnick, who has raised a great deal of funds for the Orphans' school, used her teaching skills with the children at St. Paul's School, Bweyogerere on our visit.

Partnering with the needs of the Church

One church in the Hailsham area has expressed interest in partnering with the 'House of Blessing' church in Bweyogerere. This Ugandan church, now four years old and with a congregation of 600, has been built despite much opposition by the local witchdoctors.

Geoff Shearn, Sam Bonnick and Andrea Marden led a successful training workshop there and built a good relationship with Pastor Stephen Mugwanya.

A special thank you goes to Mark & Karen who have agreed to partner with Pastor Dick for £20 a month. Pastor Dick lives in very simple conditions. He is very poor and hopes to marry soon. This generous gift will be a great blessing to him.

A number of individuals agreed to partner with David and Valerie Crowhurst who look after our work in Uganda. We mentioned in our last letter that they had moved to Uganda with only 2 suitcases and their £3,000 life savings. On a recent short visit to the UK, ten sponsors offered £10 a month to support them and they received over £1,200 in gifts – so this should keep them going for while.

Partnering with Social needs

The women in Kabubbu were delighted to hear the news of additional livestock being given to them. On a previous visit we had said we would provide a cow. When we returned in February we saw the animal shelter they had already made plus 2.5 acres of elephant grass planted. There was great excitement when we said we could actually now supply 3 Friesian cows and 5 more chicken farms. We have had to abandon the pig project in favour of chickens as the market in pork has dramatically declined.

Additional sewing machines have been supplied to make school uniforms. All these projects have prompted questions from the women.

‘Why do you keep coming?’ ‘What is there in this for you?’ This has also resulted in the men asking ‘Can you help to find some work for us?’ and again the ‘Why’ questions - ‘Why do you care about us’ – all provide wonderful opportunities for us to listen and share some of our own life experiences.

Thank you to all who have supported these vital projects enabling the women to support themselves enabling them to reduce their backbreaking work in the quarry.

Partnering with Healthcare needs

We are able to supply a small fund of £50, given each quarter to David and Valerie, which has made a huge difference in the lives of many people. For example, a woman who was in labour would have lost her baby without urgent medical attention.

On our recent visit a carer brought a small child to a support group run for the mothers of disabled children. When Jean Shearn (visiting from the UK) asked the ‘mother’ about the child she was told the child had been abandoned in the bushes and someone (the new ‘mother’) had heard the child cry.

The child was bruised around the neck where someone had attempted to strangle her. Urgent X-rays paid for from our fund revealed only a dislocated collarbone.

Without this medical fund all these, and many other vital cases, would not be able to be helped. There is a particular need to treat children with malaria and worms.

Would someone like to partner with the ‘medical fund’ for £4 a week? David and Valerie would then have a regular fund to help many people with routine and urgent treatment.

Special Thanks

There are many to whom we need to give special thanks:

- To a someone who recently donated £1,500 towards the school for Orphans
- To Simon Marden for organising the August Bank Holiday event
- To Geoff Shearn who has been working tirelessly to develop the website and create videos from all the footage we took on our visit
- To British Airways Community Relations who now support The Quicken Trust as one of their chosen charities providing travel assistance and cargo each year for strategic development work on the Orphans’ school
- To Caroline Pattenden of the Hailsham Gazette for excellent media coverage
- To Bob James of Sovereign Radio (107.5 fm) who has taken an interest in our work and interviewed us on two or three occasions

Forthcoming Events

- Saturday 9th June
Coffee Morning, tombola and side shows at ‘Springfield’, Hailsham Road, Stone Cross near Eastbourne - 10am to 12 noon. (Park in Hankham Road)
- Thursday 28th June
Assembly at Burgess Hill High School for Girls
- July
Visit to Uganda with British Airways staff and a local retired G.P. who will be looking at healthcare in rural Kabubbu.
- Friday 24th – Monday 28th August (August Bank Holiday Weekend)
Sponsored bike ride to Uganda! Teams of 4 people - as many teams as we can find - will cycle the 4,169 miles from Hailsham to Kabubbu without leaving Hailsham shopping precinct. Can you sponsor them? Would you like to ride a bike? Details will be appearing in the Hailsham local press – if you live further away you can still take part, just write for details.

Still needed . . .

- Partners at £100 each (or multiples of £100) for the Orphan school
- As many opportunities to speak at all sorts of meetings as you can give us
- Sponsors and teams for the August Bank Holiday bike ride
- Partners for Healthcare
- Fund-raising events for the Orphan school

Your gifts and your skills really make a difference

We look forward to continuing our partnering with you as you partner with the future of others. Without you so much less would be achieved.

On behalf of the orphans of Uganda – Thank you.

Geoff & Geraldine Booker