

The Quicken Trust

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Uganda Update ~ Autumn 2003

The Quicken Trust is supported by



Partnering with the future of Others

Dear Friends,

The last few months have felt like a roller coaster ride as we have hurled between fundraising events, speaking engagements, church services, school assemblies and travel. Since the beginning of the year Geoff has had several overseas business engagements and we have made three visits to Uganda. As Geoff has been away from home for around nine weeks we have to carefully plan our speaking engagements, networking and administration.

Like any roller coaster ride, alongside the thrills there are hazards and challenges. We have to weigh up the hazards against the thrill of the ride, particularly when weighed down with the huge task of administration and book keeping. At these times we keep ourselves focussed on the task ahead and the benefits for Kabubbu even though this results in sacrificing aspects of own entertainment, socialising or even work in the garden!

Sue (Geraldine's sister) is now working in our office twelve hours a week. We continue our pledge that every penny of every £ raised is used in full for Uganda and so currently this vital expenditure is being met through personal resources.

The developments in Kabubbu, in a little over three years, can only be described as a miracle in which both you and we have been involved. All the items requested by the Kabubbu community in February 2000 are now in place. Help for the orphans, a school, a clean water supply (provided by British Airways) and recently the Parish Health Centre. Other developments not requested at that time have either been completed or are in the pipeline ... more on that later!

However, all achievements bring responsibility. Just like for the parents of a new baby.



Everyone admires the baby and sends cards or gifts. But long after the visitors have gone there is a great deal to do over the weeks, months and years ahead as the child must be fed and nurtured as the parents struggle to assist their child towards maturity and independence.

Kabubbu now has in place some of the vital structures and projects it needed. But the long-term development work to bring it to maturity, to continue to assist the people in acquiring the skills, knowledge and the abilities to sustain the projects will keep us busy.

Our third major annual fund raising event the 48-hour “Bike Ride for Uganda” held during the ‘Medieval Charter Market’ in Hailsham in July was a great success. So many volunteered to erect the stand, make and sell items and pedal. To date this has raised an amazing £12,500, already £1,500 more than last year. We still have some money to collect.



Peter McMahon in the tin shack
with Hailsham's Deputy Mayor

The money will provide much needed community housing for some families in desperate living conditions or where guardians are terminally ill.

Two outstanding fundraisers deserving special mention are Jenny Moore and Richard Morgan. Both have visited Kabubbu. Jenny is 77 years young but this does not deter her from pedalling or networking or enlisting others to help from St Wilfrid's Church, Willingdon. They raised £1,700 for two hours of non-stop pedalling. Jenny, congratulations on what you achieved ~ something that can be done, despite age, when a person with passion catches the vision!

Richard raised over £1,000 with his team from Frenchgate Christian Centre in Eastbourne. Richard has proved to be a source of all knowledge in assisting us with construction and organising work teams for Uganda.

Also special thanks to Peter McMahon, this years head boy at Eton College, who gave up the comforts of home to sleep in a reconstructed Kabubbu shack for 48 hours during the event to highlight living conditions in Kabubbu. The reconstructed house caused quite a stir! A big THANK YOU to everyone who helped in any way.

In this Uganda Update we will:

- Report on developments in Kabubbu in the past six months
- Look at future developments
- Invite you to visit Kabubbu to meet the children and enjoy a true African experience

Partnering with the needs of Orphans

We continue to visit Kabubbu three or four times a year and so get to know the children more and we watch with pride their developments and growth.

Sanyu, a generous girl who visits us bringing fruit or a handicraft she has made. Jerry, a brilliant footballer. Twins, growing in confidence but once so shy they were afraid to look at us. Sharon and Lillian, happy twins who are part of one of the few families we know with two parents (specially selected by a sponsor). Evelyne, one of the first pupils to be sponsored, now inches taller. Sarah, with her bright blue eyes that captivate everyone she meets.



During our June visit the children returned from their school holidays a day early because they wanted to be filmed by Philip Gomm of Meridian T.V. The three hours of filming was edited into two four-minute news features that were broadcast on “Meridian Tonight” early in June. We thank Meridian T.V. for their support and for donating the complete film to us. This will now be edited into a new 30-minute video that should be available in early October. It will cost £9.99. We still have a few copies of the original story of our journey into Kabubbu, filmed in Jan 2002, available at the original price of £9.99 and this may be of interest to those who have recently begun supporting a child in Kabubbu. The two videos together will be available at £16.99.

One of the stories on the new video highlights the tragedy of a little girl of 12 who is dying of AIDS. Her mother and brother have already died of AIDS. Her father struggles to buy medicines to help alleviate some of the dreadful symptoms of the disease. The one vital tablet he needs to prolong his daughter's life costs £4 a day. If he is lucky to find a day's work he may earn £2.

We often make a “Home Study Report” at the request of a sponsoring family. This report builds on the relationships between sponsors, Quicken Trust and the local community. We visit the family for up to an hour to complete a questionnaire. The questions range from how many other children live in the family home (the record to date is 32 in a very small four roomed house!) and their relationship to the child being sponsored.

We ask questions on health, on the level of education or skills developed by the guardian or older children in the family that we may be able to



develop into work initiatives. We also ask if we may look inside the family home (usually a taboo in Uganda) to see for ourselves if they have furniture, a bed or a blanket or cooking utensils. Around 70% of families probably don't have a bed and maybe only one or two very old soiled foam mattresses for a family.

A copy of the report is sent to the sponsor. Some of these have resulted in developing a number of small farming initiatives or providing a pit latrine etc. We thank four sponsors for recently providing their families in Kabubbu with repaired or new homes. Some were living in dilapidated mud houses on their own land and their sponsors have each provided £600-£700 for a brick built two roomed house.

We invite each person who sponsors a child in Kabubbu to contribute £10 for a Christmas gift, which will be a blanket for each child. We would appreciate contributions by 23 October in advance of our November visit. Thank you.

Partnering with the School

It amazes us that the children of Kabubbu retain hope for the future despite the difficulties ahead. Many of you will remember our story of how, on our second visit to Kabubbu, we were met by the 400 orphans all eagerly anticipating something. On that visit we selected 12 children at random to enquire how and when their parents died; whom they now lived with; who fed and cared for them and so on. After the sad stories and tears we asked each child "What would you like to do when you grow up?" We were amazed that the children retained hope and one little boy said he wanted to be a Pilot. We wondered if he had ever seen an aeroplane.



Recently Coca Cola in Uganda had a promotion involving collecting special bottle tops. The winning prize was "School Fees." In the U.K. the prize would be a new car, a multi-media home entertainment centre or exotic holiday. This gives an idea of how much education is valued in Uganda.

But after Primary School, what? After Secondary School, what? The reality is that for some they, like their parents, will be unable to find employment and exist as subsistence farmers. Currently around 75% of the population has no regular salaried work. Following education, investment is particularly vital in rural areas to break the cycle of poverty and to create the industry and resources needed to utilise their skills and knowledge and to assist them to become self-sufficient. This continues to be a global problem as governments entice skilled and qualified personnel from developing countries to staff western hospitals and schools.

The pressure is on for school children to succeed. By the time they are 10 or 11 years old they are usually required to start school at 7am and work through to 9pm every day. Even if they succeed at school (and their standard of education is often higher than in the U.K.) they may be denied the opportunities for University

because their parents die or cannot afford the fees for the limited placements.

The Library, begun in a school classroom in February this year, has been an enormous success. Around 200 adults attend the weekly adult literacy classes taught by the Librarians. It was good, on our last visit, to be able to talk with some adults with whom previous conversation was limited.

Thanks to Victoria Vassie at British Airways for initiating this project and to Reuters and BA for contributing £3,000 each enabling the Library to now have its own building.



Partnering with Primary Health Care

Despite a few hiccups along the way, by the time you receive this letter, the Health Centre will have opened. We were warned on our June visit to Kabubbu that we would have few applicants for the vacancies of Nurses. We were thrilled that those predictions didn't become a reality and that 24 qualified staff arrived for the interviews. Arriving in Kabubbu a few days before the interviews we had no idea how to find the qualified personnel to help us interview applicants for the Centre. However, we were led to meet the right people along the way by unexpected 'Divine' encounters.



The panel included Connie, an American Nurse who lectures at Makerere University with whom we unexpectedly had contact through a local family who visited Kabubbu earlier in the year. And Pastor George unexpectedly introduced Dr. Charles, a Ugandan who was educated in the U.K.

Then there was Dr. Ann who was born in Kabubbu. She introduced herself to us in February 2000 when she told us she would like to return to her local community to work but had a secure job in north Uganda. Imagine our surprise when she reappeared in June 2003 and offered to help us with the interviewing and the necessary steps to obtain the licence from the Ministry of Health to run the Centre.



Together the panel selected three women and one male Nurse. Some of the staff appointed hold additional qualifications in midwifery, sexually transmitted diseases (which are rampant), AIDS and mental health (useful in a culture of superstition where mental illness and trauma may be incorrectly diagnosed).

The Health Centre will cost around £10,000 annually to operate. This includes wages for four staff and medicines. If the Centre proves to be a success and well managed, in two or three years time the Ugandan Ministry of Health may adopt it and provide funding for around 50% of the annual running costs of the Centre.

Partnering with the Church

We had a great time with Andy Caldwell our local Baptist Minister who visited Kabubbu with us in June to conduct a Pastors retreat. Andy enabled the Pastors to openly discuss their concepts of God as “Our Father”. Some Pastors had lost their father and had no experience of love. Others had a cold, unapproachable, authoritarian father figure and because of their own dysfunctional experience they had difficulty in relating to God as a Father or being as a father to their congregations.



A generous donation made by Mr and Mrs Stone enabled 13 bicycles to be bought and a great cheer went up when they were presented to the Pastors.



Also on this visit 250 Bibles donated by the Stuart Hine Trust were presented to the children at the Kabubbu Community Primary School in the local language and 50 Bibles to the Church. We were pleasantly surprised one evening when the four ladies who we pay to cook for the team approached us asking if they too could have a Bible. Later in the evening, by the light of the moon, we found them huddled together outside our house avidly discussing what they were reading. Obviously a much treasured gift that may counteract the power of the Witchdoctors who with their superstitions bring so much fear into the rural communities.



Teddy - one of our cooks with her new Bible

Partnering with Social Needs

The small farming initiatives continue. On a recent visit we were surprised to be told that chicken was not on the menu. We didn't think to question this at the time until we received an e-mail from Joyce in Kabubbu about the problems one lady was having in sustaining her chicken farm so we began to ask more questions.

This old lady wanted to sell her chicken for meat, as she said there was no “profit” in selling eggs. We were unsure if this was because she wanted “the cash” or if she had understood at the beginning of the project that it was to be sustained. Maybe the chicken weren’t laying enough eggs to provide money to purchase the feed because she hadn’t understood how to care for them.

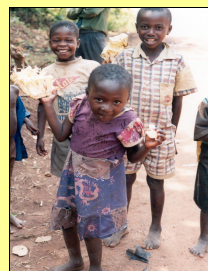
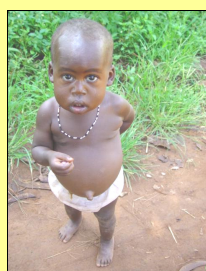
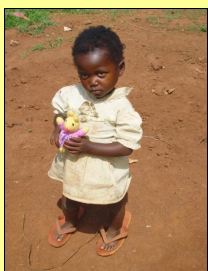
After asking questions we finally asked Joyce to send us a revised costing on establishing and running a chicken farm. It was only then that the context of the problem was fully understood. Uganda was selling its surplus grain to help the famine areas in Malawi and Ethiopia thus depriving some of its own people of the feeds needed for the chicken and in turn, the vital protein they need. We continue to work at overcoming this problem and understanding the culture. We frequently find behind every old and new problem there are dozens of others to solve first!

We were pleased to at last see the road into Kabubbu levelled. This has made an enormous difference to the journey and enabled us to now travel safely without the fear of the vehicle turning over. A journey that previously took 30 minutes or more now takes about 10 minutes. We thank the District Engineer for honouring his pledge.



We continue to hold on in faith for electricity to come to Kabubbu. This would enable us to provide some vital equipment to the Health Centre and enable the school to make good use of the computers donated last year.

We thank Halcyon of Heathfield for continuing to sponsor our newsletter and for producing and donating the Christmas cards for sale on the enclosed leaflet.



Halcyon has also funded the airfares for a team of seven including five members of staff to accompany us to Kabubbu in November. They will begin construction work on the first of the “roundels” for tourism under the supervision of Richard Morgan and Kevin Pollard. We will train a group of local men to build more.

Eventually we are hoping to build four or six roundels to accommodate up to 20 tourists on a 3-day cultural experience as part of a longer holiday in and around Uganda. The tourists, including some who sponsor children in the village, will be



A roundel similar to those to be built in Kabubbu

able to come and meet the children at school and experience Kabubbu life. This would create some work for the local people growing fruit or vegetables, rearing cattle, acting as guides to tours around the village and school, teaching traditional crafts, cooking, translating, dancing, singing and entertaining the small groups that travel there.

And what's more, they will probably be the only houses in Kabubbu with running water, showers and flush toilets!

So start to plan your summer holidays for 2005/6 now although, of course, in Uganda it's summer all year round (apart from the rainy season!) and always daylight from 7am to 7pm ~ so start saving! You will have a memorable visit.

Thank you for your Partnering

There are so many organisations to thank that have supported Quicken Trust over the past months. As well as those mentioned in the text special thanks go to Burgess Hill School for Girls, Chislehurst Churches Together, Clarins, Paget Trust, & Stuart Hine Trust. There are too many individuals to mention. We thank you all.

Wisdom needed

- For ongoing funding for administrative support personnel
- To continue to identify key people in Kabubbu who have the passion to maintain harmony within the community
- For plans for the future of the children beyond primary school
- For decisions concerning work initiatives to enable self-sufficiency
- To decide which farming initiatives to develop
- For all decisions on tourism, marketing & advertising, training, construction and skills development within the community

Comment

“In all my years working with aid agencies, this is the ‘Rolls Royce’ of all the projects I have seen or been involved with”

Bill Farmer, senior Aid worker with 30 years experience, visiting Quicken Trust's work in Kabubbu in June 2003

Thank you for all you do to help us bring so much joy to the lives of so many orphaned children in Kabubbu. Without your help 250 children would still have little hope. Now they are living in hope.

Geoff & Geraldine Booker

