

This newsletter is being produced in response to the discussions at Swindon Deanery Synod in February 2015. The Link team aim to produce it twice a year to keep you up to date with what's happening with our link with dioceses in Uganda. Please feel free to circulate widely in your benefices, reproduce extracts in weekly notices or display on noticeboards.

Most of all please use it to pray for our brothers and sisters in Kampala and Luweero Dioceses

News from our Link Schools

Churches from around the Deanery support different schools in Luweero Diocese. Here is an update from some of them (with the church that supports that school in brackets).

Balittalwogi Primary and Special Needs School (St John's Haydon Wick) More children have enrolled as pupils this year and more have special needs. They are aiming to have more inclusive learning with the special needs (mainly blind) children learning alongside the sighted children. The school is training more teachers to be able to teach blind children.



Braille Primer at Balittalwogi School

Bwaziba Primary School (St John's Haydon Wick) There has been an improvement in academic standards recently following the decision to allow some children to board and have extra lessons at night and very early in the morning. However behaviour has deteriorated in some cases because the children are escaping from school in search of food and cannot concentrate because of hunger.

Katikamu Sebamala Primary School (West Swindon) Sadly we have just heard that the headmaster, Mr Mpiima Wilberforce has died following liver cancer.

Sekamuli Secondary School (Highworth) A new headteacher has been appointed following the death of the previous head (and co-founder) in a traffic accident. They are beginning to develop a computer laboratory.

Famine Update

Uganda continues to be affected by poor rainfalls, although in the central area, where Kampala and Luweero dioceses are, rains did come in time to allow crops to be planted successfully. However a pest called Fall armyworm has destroyed maize in some areas. Further north the famine persists and the number of refugees coming to Uganda from Southern Sudan continues to rise causing great concern.

50th Anniversary Celebrations

2019 marks the 50th anniversary of the link between Bristol Diocese and Uganda. Celebrations are being planned. If you would like to be part of the planning committee or want to know more about what the link committee does, please contact Sally Robertson about the **training morning on Saturday 7th October** which will be an opportunity to find out more about links with Uganda across the diocese.

Warning about requests for help

As you will see from this newsletter there is great need in Uganda and it is true that what seems a little amount of money to us can go much further in Uganda. However the link committee has recently been discussing the best way of responding to the need and particularly to individual requests for help. It is often not appropriate just to help one individual as it can cause difficulties in the local community. Also there are many scam emails and hand written letters coming from Uganda, which look remarkably plausible, but often refer to invented institutions and situations. Please always check with your committee rep or with Sally Robertson if you receive a request you would like to help with, so that we can avoid money being sent to those who are not in the most acute need or a dependency culture developing.

Future Plans

The link committee feels we should focus on young people and are investigating the possibility of some teachers visiting Uganda and some younger people. There are plans for a group of young people from across the diocese to visit next year, including possibly some from Pinehurst.

Ugandan Christians are openly generous with whatever they have, whether they are affluent or poor. They truly reflect Jehovah Jireh: God our Provider. Their open-hearted generosity underpinned the visit of seven Christians from across Swindon from 11th – 26th February 2017, firstly in Kampala and then in Luweero.

Kampala is a very busy, affluent city. Having experienced their 'anything goes' traffic system, we will never again moan about traffic in Britain. The seven of us were spread out across the city, but were cared for very well by our hosts although our accommodation varied from a gated mansion with amazing views to a new-build in the bush. We weren't allowed to part



with our Ugandan shillings, which ironically made us millionaires (£250 = 1,105,000 USh), as we visited the source of the Nile at Jinja, the Equator and the Martyrs Museum. When we protested they said, "We will stop paying your bills when you stop being our guests." The only concession we could get was, "You can have your revenge when we come to Swindon."

We were taken to an outreach project at the Women's Education Centre that is helping young people from the shanty towns to learn life skills such as hairdressing, dress making, sandal making and wafers for Holy Communion. The rooms in which they learnt these skills and the equipment they used was very basic, but it was making a considerable difference to these young people. We also visited Sanyu Babies home where visitors are asked not to pick up the babies, as they have to get used to living without being held.

After 4 busy days, we said goodbye to Kampala and travelled about 50 miles north to Luweero where we stayed in the Diocesan Guest House. While Kampala is a bustling city with its memorable traffic we were now in a more rural part of Uganda. While in Luweero we visited 3 contrasting schools and a hospital:

We were also taken to a fishing village on Lake Kyoga in Nakasongola District. Here we were made welcome in the 'ot' (traditional round thatched hut) of the local lay reader. The village toilets were some half a mile away due to the nature of the ground. We created a bit of a sensation among the local children most of whom had not seen a muzungu (white person) close up. This was as far from the wealth of Kampala as it is possible to imagine. People live by fishing. There were no gardens or vegetable growing. We were shown around by a very intelligent young Vicar called Isaac who had a huge parish to look after and at the same time was educating about 14 teenagers, who were all living in his small home.

He had many sad stories of the reality of life away from the capital. One of the big social issues he was constantly confronting was the purchase of young girls by wealthy men. These girls aged between 12 and 15 would be sold by their families, becoming concubines. There were also stories of a culture of hard drinking every evening with men forming drinking clubs on the shore of the lake. There is much hostility to the church particularly by men.

Four of us (in two pairs) had the opportunity of staying overnight with a local family, which was a valuable experience. The ladies stayed in a well-furnished 3 bedroom house complete with T.V. We enjoyed another full plate of meat, potatoes, rice, matoke and beans, which also became breakfast alongside boiled eggs. Just before bedtime we had a time of bible study. Meanwhile the men experienced a small two-roomed house for a family of five, plus foodstuffs and visitors.

At the end of our stay, we visited Murchison Falls National Park where we went on safari and visited The Falls by boat. This game park is considerably bigger than Wiltshire. We travelled 80 km in our first evening. Lions, elephant, giraffe, hippos, Cape buffalo, wart hogs, hyenas, – and later on – four grazing rhino were all visible from close up. We even went off road to see a pride of nine lions with the cubs playing in the grass like kittens.

Exhilarating as it all was, it is the people who will live longest in our memories.

The hardworking Godfrey – vicar, pig farmer, geography teacher, school governor, and on top of all that, Diocesan planning officer in Luweero.

The hard pressed staff at the Sanyu Babies Home in Kampala. who will regularly receive babies picked up from the road-side and care for them until a home can be found.

Link Team Members

Sally Robertson (chair) sally.robertson27@btinternet.com or 01793 724219 Mary Crichton (Stratton St Margaret); Jan and Tony Prichard (Dorcan); Chris Hawkes and Raymond Adams (Haydon Wick); Judith Mumford and Tudor Roberts (Lydiard Millicent) Daphne Hardwick and Steve Dumba (Old Town); Martina Lewis (Parks and Walcot)