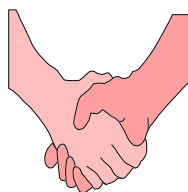


Bromley



scouts and Guides of St. Joseph's



Mutual development through sharing

Mbarara



Agandi

Newsletter No. 6

October 1999

FANTASTIC!

Our expedition to Uganda was truly the experience of a lifetime. There was not a single hitch and not a day's illness between us. We have been back four weeks now and are slowly returning to normal - whatever that is! When we departed Bromley we left as 11 individuals; we returned as one very united and close group. We had a lot of fun and laughter; enjoyed hard work in the heat; experienced very basic accommodation and marvelled at the beauty of Uganda and its wildlife, but I think most of all we were humbled and overwhelmed by the welcome we received from so many children, their parents and their teachers.

Many of the group wrote diaries - all of us kept notes and we all took hundreds of photographs. It will take us some time to collate everything for a full report. In the meantime I would like to give you a taste of what will follow.

Funds: The Travel Fund target was reached. Many thanks go to Bromley Council who gave us a grant of £50 per person, and to our Scout County of Greater London South East who granted us £100 per person. The Project Fund closed at £6000; it was finally helped by donations particularly: £300 raised by the now closed Judo club run by Simon and Julie Curtis, Fashion Show - £203, Map of Silver - £170, Archery - £60 and Beavers - £34. Our grateful thanks to ALL who helped us reach these magnificent sums.

Camp at Frylands: 3rd-4th July. The theme of 'Bridge building' emerged in both the pioneering structures built and the comradeship achieved. The camp was completed when, in order to satisfy the requirements of Scout Insurance, Helena, Katie and Julie were invested into the Scout movement. We all proudly wore our U.K. uniforms for a photo call. I am sure most of you saw the picture in News Shopper 11th August. Excitement was really beginning to be felt now as the day for our departure was only five weeks away.

The Farewell: On the evening before our departure we assembled for the 6 o'clock Mass where we looked splendid in our U.K. uniforms. We were given many special mentions by Fr. Brian and then a final blessing to send us on our way. This really did make us feel a bit special and an appreciated part of our parish.

The true farewell took place at 4.30pm on Sunday 15th August in the Church car park when those closest to us waved us off. We were ferried to Heathrow by a good friend of Terry's, courtesy of Team Lambeth.



The Expedition: Our overnight flight of eight hours was uneventful and rain greeted us when we arrived at Entebbe. We had a warm welcome and breakfast at the Speke Hotel where we stayed for the next 24 hours while we attended to banking, transport and generally becoming acclimatised to Uganda. The next day [17th] found us on our way across the equator to Mbarara where our hosts were eagerly awaiting our arrival.

Our **accommodation** consisted of dormitory with 16 rooms, basic bathroom facilities and a large hall cum dining room with adjacent kitchen. Most importantly, we had space and privacy.

Our **activities** included a weekend camp with the Scouts and Guides, a local hike to some waterfalls, school and home visits, safaris to National Parks and relaxation at a nearby swimming pool. Evenings were passed in different ways e.g. visiting someone's home, the occasional meal at a hotel, even a visit to a local disco or just playing cards



and catching up with diaries. We were with Ugandan people most of the time so just occasionally it was good for us to be by ourselves.

Food was cheap and plentiful and we were able to eat according to our tastes, even at roadside restaurants where up to 20 hot meals of chicken and rice were served in 10 minutes. Beef and chicken were always available; any vegetable you care to mention was in plentiful supply and fruit such as pineapple, paw-paw, passion fruit and water melon were usually on the menu at breakfast lunch and dinner. Bottled water from the Rwenzori Mountains and sodas [Fanta, Coke etc.] ensured that we always had safe drinking supplies and that we never became dehydrated.

Our **health** needs were adequately met when we signed and adhered to a Health & Safety contract ensuring we would take anti-malaria tablets, cover up at night, drink plenty, protect ourselves from the sun etc. As mentioned earlier, there were no illnesses or accidents that required medical attention. Adequate sleep and a good first aid kit [wipes and plasters] were all that were needed.

The **project** we set out to do [development of a campsite and recreational facilities] proved not to be possible because the authorities are still talking about the use of the land. However, we erected a very fine fence around the school for which they were extremely grateful and this gave us a sense of satisfaction.



We spent several happy hours with our **hosts** celebrating or just enjoying their hospitality. Pascal's baby Alex was baptised on our second Sunday; Julius' twin boys

celebrated their first birthday; Jacinta's twin girls are now nine months and very cheeky! Mrs Fortunata Muzaaya [carer of 6 orphans and 6 of her own children] gave us a royal feast and entertainment; she managed to squeeze no



fewer than 18 children and 8 adults into her house – not counting the 11 of us!

We left Uganda having made very many new friends and with a list of children wanting **pen friends**. There is also a new list of nine children in urgent need of **sponsorship** for school fees. This list could be of one hundred children but it remained limited to only those children known to us and their teachers. They are all Scouts or Guides and are from very very poor families; many are total orphans. Five to ten pounds a month would be an enormous help to each child. I await your phone call.

What next? During the year 2000 we hope to see progress with the land development [the money is still there – the fence cost very little] and we intend to host six Scouts and two leaders for CampDowne 2000.

In the meantime please come and help us **celebrate** our Scout Group's Diamond Jubilee and the Brombara Project in grand style on **17th October** beginning with a special Mass at 11.45am. This will be followed by presentations, buffet lunch and exhibitions in the Church hall.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

Slide **presentations and talks** will soon be available to any interested group and the full written report should be available towards the end of October – please let me know if you would like either.

Thank you for your support

