

NOTES OF UGANDA NETWORK MEETING – 3 FEBRUARY 2002

“Nothing will be achieved for tomorrow unless we plan it today” was the theme of the meeting of UK-Uganda Network on Sunday 3 February 2002, at the Reading Scout and Guide Headquarters in the Royal County of Berkshire.

Around 30 Members chose to journey to Reading, on a blustery Sunday morning for this annual Progress Meeting on the Network's activities and, more importantly, to discuss the formation of a Core Team moving forward the Network's activities in the next few years.

There were to be two main topics of discussion:

- a. The formation of a Core Team to move the activities of the UK-Uganda Network in the years ahead, and
- b. For those planning expeditions and projects in 2003, to share information and, if appropriate, form a Core Team for Uganda 2003.

Around 09.30 members began arriving for a welcome cup of coffee and refreshment. There was soon a hive of activity with preparation of all the layouts, displays and, more importantly, meeting friends, all with exciting news of encouraging signs for the future. It is always pleasing to see young, new faces, eager and excited about their plans for next year in Uganda.

Geoff Breeden OBE gathered everyone together at around 10.00 am for welcome, domestic arrangements, apologies and a pause for thought as Colin Bennett read one of B-P's messages to us all.

Through our E-mail Contact List, Members had been encouraged to send greetings stating how many they thought would be sent for the day. We received 67 greetings but only one had given a number, ie 45, and, therefore, will receive a bottle in due course. Well done David Shaw.

REPORTS ON RECENT VISITS TO UGANDA

Martin Takel, Julian Shore and Robert Morley had recently returned from Uganda and presented their report – can be viewed on website.

Julian had brought his video recording but sadly forgot the remote controller for the TV so we await the May Meeting to see the video.

Diane Mackie and her husband from Northampton visited Uganda last November and her report was circularised with photos and is available on the website.

After a short break, the Members received up-dates on current projects as follows:

PROJECTS UP-DATE

B-P Training Centre and Camping Ground – Buwenda – Avon Venture Scouts. Mike Bell and Colin Bennett gave an update on this project, which commenced in 1993 on a site given by the Local Council to Ugandan Scouts at the time of Independence from the UK. Sadly, through the troubled years it was occupied by squatters. The process of regaining and transferring the land title had at last been successfully completed with the signatures given by the Trustees of the Ugandan Scout Association for a 49 year Lease. This has proved a long tortuous negotiation with compensation being paid to squatters for their rights, trees, shrubs, in some cases up to £2,000. It was, therefore, with congratulations to all, particularly Colin Bennett, with the Deeds being signed and sealed in the hands of the Uganda Scouts Association. Mike Bell spoke about the numerous forms required and gratuities paid to achieve this objective.

The District Commissioner for Jinja, Richard, is employed full time as the Site Warden together with a gardener and handy person enabling them to live with self-sufficiency from produce and accommodation.

In December 1992 over 100 Venture Scouts assembled at the Avon County Training Centre and Campsite, Woodhouse Park, Almondsbury, Bristol, to hear the then International Commissioner, John May and now Network Co-ordinator, suggest that they undertook a project. There was much talk of acquiring 3 or 4 Landrovers, driving them overland through Kenya to Jinja in Uganda. Four of the Venture Scouts committed themselves to the first trip in 1993. As the project evolved it was suggested that all sections could participate, from Beavers collecting 2p coins, upwards through the Movement. It is interesting to note that one of the then Beaver Scouts in 1993 will be in the party to visit Uganda in 2003.

Thus, the 10-year Programme comes to a conclusion. Not only has a building in the form of a Training Centre been provided, there is also an accommodation/guest block, kitchen and toilets. The site is an ideal venue for visiting Scouts from around the world. Last year the party started strengthening their links in the community. Computer have been provided as an additional facility at the centre, visits have been made to local schools where contacts are being developed for improving their ICT facilities. The emphasis of the project has been development of young people, through scouting, not only from the UK but in Uganda.

The centre at Buwende is an ideal venue for parties of explorer scouts, scout network members and others to explore the Pearl of Africa.

Bulangira Disabled Association - Pallisa. Peter and Betty Scurry, Eric and Marie Goulding advised that they will be visiting at the end of April. A Partnership Agreement has been agreed between the Bulangira Disabled Association, Uganda Scouts Association, Friends of Scouting Society Uganda and UK Partners for funding to completion of the building with over £5,000 raised towards the target of £15,000.

Lukotaimbe, near Soroti, Kamuli District. Fran Salussolia from East Sussex are planning a visit in 2003, following information gathered by Martin Takel and Julian Sore on their recent visit. Fran is busy raising funds and recruiting those wishing to help develop the project in this remote area.

Soroti – See Martin Takel’s report.

Peace School, Mubende. Progress Report awaited.

Mityana Scout/Community Enterprises. Dave Mowbray advised that together with Geoff Breeden and Jonathan Cooksley he would be visiting Uganda later in the month to follow up progress in connection with the land ownership and development of this Community Project.

Apach. Members were delighted to know that the Landrover donated by Scouts from North Wales during Uganda 2000 had now safely arrived. No further news was available in connection with continuation of this project.

Brombra – Mbarara. Veronica advised that work on the camp site continues with a bulldozer creating pit latrines and a fence erected around the site. She would be visiting during the forthcoming Skillstraining trip at the end of February. Members of the 11th Bromley Scout Group continued their sponsorship of school fees.

Tororo – Mfumi. Harvey Morris reports that the well is now completed and working and they are looking at a new project for the party from Epsom to visit in 2003.

Masindi/Apach. Phil Morley reported that all progress had stopped due to the ebola outbreak that severely affected the Community and brought a stop to Scouting. They do, however, hope to re-establish contacts and visit in 2003.

Pallisa. This is a project instigated by Steve Hall, County Commissioner for Surrey, who is supporting Kavule School for the Deaf about two miles from the town. They are hoping to bring electricity to the school.

Pallisa. The well constructed in 2000 has now run dry and Marie Goulding is investigating whether to deepen the borehole. She will probably be visiting the project at the end of April.

Mbarara, Masindi or Mubende. David Thomas reported that he had hoped to follow the success of the Skills Training activities of Uganda 2000 but only three would be participating in a trip leaving on 12 February and returning 27 February. They hoped to boost Training Skills for Leaders and are meeting up with the Leader Trainer Commissioner, David Livingstone.

Explorer Belt 2003. Nick Winter reported that there had been over 24 interested persons with 5 or 6 wishing to participate in Explorer Belt and 12 to climb Mount Elgon.

Street Kids, Kampala.

groups would be visiting during 2002.

is now into Year 8 and two

Mukono – St Joseph’s Balikuddembe School. Seaton Valley District, Northumberland, were continuing to provide support and resources for this school and the development of the Scouts, although we had heard nothing from Nicholas in the last few months.

The Friends of Scouting Society - Regular communications are received from Sammy E D Senkumba, the Executive Secretary, and they hoped to apply for Membership of the International Scout and Guide Fellowship at the World Conference in Vancouver, Canada, in July.

Mayuge. Neil Dallon reported that they were hoping to set up a new project in this township in 2002/3 and this would be followed up through the DC Magoola Eric Kibbedi.

General Discussion – Martin Takel expressed his concern that we had not progressed to set up a Core Team for Uganda 2003. The Chairman stated this would be the areas for discussion after lunch.

Dave Mowbray felt that the Network should have a small Core Team to help with practical advice for those running Projects in the future.

Martin, in his report, had highlighted the fact that they had had a Ugandan with them throughout their trip but they had to pay for his expenses.

Dave Mowbray felt that we should be looking to developing other areas of Uganda, particularly Masiga area where Gabriel Kalungi, who was previously the National Commissioner is now the local MP.

WELCOME

Michael Evans, the County Commissioner for the Royal County of Berkshire and his wife, Christine, together with Mick Stocks Deputy County Commissioner joined the meeting and in welcoming us to the County remarked on how surprised he was to hear of the work we were doing in promoting International Scouting links in Uganda.

Michael quoted from words of the recent e-mail from the Network Co-ordinator, emphasising the support and encouragement for young people to participate in International Scouting.

INTERNATIONAL SCOUT NEWS

David McKee, Programme and Development Manager International, joined us for the day and gave a resume of activities to the Members.

David commented, initially, on our new display supporting an effigy of the crane, likening it to the monument outside the Africa Regional Scout Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. **NB:** The designer, Jonathan Cooksley, has not visited Kenya or been aware of such a similar design.

David emphasised the fact that we must encourage support for young people, giving them guidance and advice.

One thing we should realise is the fact that when foreign visitors, ie those from Third World countries, etc, come to the UK, they do not know what to expect. They are not prepared or used to the cost of living, climate, etc, and we must be prepared to offer assistance and guidance in our hospitality.

The opening up of IT with Cyber Cafes gives new means of communicating for Scouts in African countries and the mobile phone network. We should, however, consider paying for their high costs of accessing these services..

David outlined how the fees for attending World Jamborees are capped, based on GDP, which, in Uganda, is 200 dollars.

In our work with the Ugandan Scouts we must include the cost for them to participate, both in Uganda and here in the UK.

David reminded all Members that they should follow Foreign Office advice before leaving for Uganda, checking with the FCO website. If the British High Commissioner's advice is that citizens from the UK should not visit a particular area, then this must be strictly adhered to, otherwise the insurance would be invalidated. There is no flexibility in this respect.

There can be confusion for the Ugandans may advise us that things are safe but **we must follow the British High Commissioner's guidelines.**

David is in constant communication with the staff of the Uganda Scouts Association and noted the new appointment of Martin as the National Executive Commissioner with Pross being responsible for Community Development and we assume looking for funding from Aid Agencies.

We were all pleased that the saga of the Uganda 2000 Containers, was coming to an end. It was suggested that it is better for the Ugandans and their economy, to buy their own style uniforms in Uganda rather than we spend large sums of money shipping out surplus old style UK uniforms. If we have some new uniforms we wish to take they should go as excess baggage as it is far more negotiable.

David offered his congratulations to the Avon/Jinja link team on their land negotiations but warned that in time the local Council could well take it back, as has been the experience in other Africa countries.

Authorisation for mountain and adventurous activities. Leaders should follow guidelines for the UK and talk to their County Mountain Assessor to assess the risk and obtain authorisation for Uganda.

The reports on works of the Projects is encouraging but we must always be conscious of the longer term stability of continuing in financing the activity. What will happen in the future? Projects need to generate income.

David Judge, the ACCI for Essex, has become the National Chairman of the International Committee for Rotary International and is hoping for form links for Rotary Clubs to support Scouting here in the UK linking with those abroad. Contact should, therefore, be made for sponsorship at home and in Uganda.

Mike Bell commented that relationships keyed to the Network are not just about Scouts in Uganda but developing young people here in the UK understanding differences.

In September 2001, David McKee attended the Africa Regional Conference at Gabon, where he experienced a new feeling to Scouting in Africa. A new Africa Regional Plan was adopted, agreed at the Mafeking Summit, with a budget of \$10M for the 31 Member Countries.

It was interesting to note that half the Scout population comes from one Association, with the largest growth in South Africa, with one State having over 150,000 members. In Kenya, there are approximately 200,000 members –Uganda 76,000.

The project involving peer education with a renewal of education programme to move organisations in Africa away from the emphasis of discipline to fun, for example camping currently involves effectively building a new home for show piece camps that are then left after 2-3 days. There needs to be education of children about AIDS and the possibility of sharing badges, Leader Training and common ideas for the future.

When the Chief Commissioner visited Gilwell, she was given a set of UK Training Manuals for effectively there is no training material of hand-outs available for Leaders in Uganda. An area, no doubt, for David, Veronica and Bill to follow up on their trip in a few weeks' time. Much of the training in Uganda and the whole of Africa is oral and the Regional Committee hope to produce standard Leader Training Packs.

Victoria, at her International Team Meeting, emphasised how vaccinations can save lives and we should, perhaps, encourage support for this Programme,

David Bull, our International Commissioner values the work of Networks and would like to see experience gained expanded wider.

The Polish Network is currently participating in Polski, Explorer Belt 2002 and Polish Partners.

The Russian Network is looking at running an Explorer Belt and making contacts with the new Scout Association and developing links at grassroots level.

David feels there is a need to develop relationships in Africa, bringing together those who have links and projects ie Rwanda, Zambia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda.

They could share good practice and, following the Committee of Council's wish to ensure safety of members, all Adult Groups be registered as Scout Fellowships. The Russian Network has become a Scout Fellowship, Poland will shortly be following and it is, therefore, appropriate that the meeting should consider either the UK-Uganda Network becoming a Scout Fellowship or it being part of an overall Africa Scout Fellowship Network. These Scout Fellowships effectively are Districts under the Sponsoring Commissioner – the International Commissioner – and would provide a route for accountability. There were several questions from the Members for clarification but generally there was a feeling that we should support the formation of an Africa Scout

Fellowship Network and offer the facility for such a formation at our meeting in May at Walesby Forest Camp Site.

THE QUEEN'S GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

David outlined that the pack had now been made available for all Groups and encouraged the purchasing of the badge of which a proportion is to be shared between one of several projects, ie

- a. Development and refurbishment of B-P's grave site in Kenya with a Visitor Centre.
- b.
- c. Sunrise Street Kids Project Uganda.

The Queen has extended an invitation for all Commonwealth countries to send five Representatives and a chaperone to the Annual St George's Day Parade at Windsor. We would be providing hospitality and a chance for them to spend five days, one day coming together for a London experience. The Ugandan Scout Association had accepted the invitation and the five Scouts will be accompanied by their International Commissioner.

The next European Scout Conference takes place at Thessalonika in Greece.

PRI – the introduction of the new Programme with re-defined International understanding and a change to the International Friendship Award will help with the education of young people to find out about how people live in other countries.

The Explorer Belt is to be changed to give more flexibility to Teams of Four.

The new Programme gives opportunities to help Explorer Scouts and Scout Network to share experiences.

Finally, we can learn from our African friends as they teach Scouts to smile and sing. Let us leave the doom and gloom brigade behind and follow their example.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Veronica Moloney asked about funding for the Uganda Scouts Association staff and David McKee advised that this concluded at the end of 2000.

Alan advised that from the www.scouts.or.ug website there was news that the USA have now given rights for a local company to extract sand from the shores of Lake Victoria at Kaazi, providing £394 per month towards paying for all staff. Several Members raised concern in connection with the damage it may cause to the site, both currently and in the future.

Colin advised those going to Uganda who were concerned about the side effects of larium, that a new drug is available which will also help cure those affected with Malaria. There were reportedly no side effects. Martin Takel had acquired these on NHS prescription for £6.10 for his recent trip whereas his colleague had to pay the private fee of £65.

There is also a new medicine to help cure Malaria. Colin told of the sad story of a 29 year old thatcher who had worked on the verandas at Buwenda, who had recently died of Malaria as there was no-one to pay for his treatment.

Neil Dallen suggested that we might consider setting up a special fund for Ugandan Scouts to attend the World Jamboree here in the UK in 2007. David McKee pointed out that National Organisations were responsible for electing those who could attend in their contingent and there was no facility for us to invite those whom we know from our contacts.

The Members adjourned for lunch.

Discussion Groups

After lunch the members reassembled in their Discussion Groups to talk about Core Team Development of the Network and its activities. There was interesting lively discussion drawn to a close when each Group reported back. The summary of these discussions to follow.

Open Forum

Following the report back from the Discussion Groups, there was an Open Forum of general exchange of information, between those present, with the Chairman bringing the meeting to a close at approx. 6.00 hrs. He thanked all for their participation and noted the enthusiasm and support for strengthening the work of the UK-Uganda Network, not only in the current year, but particularly 2003 and beyond.

Finally, the Chairman thanked our host and sponsors – Berkshire Scout Enterprises Limited for their hospitality for the day. All left looking forward to the next meeting 17/19 May 2002 at Walesby Forest Scout Camp Site, Nottinghamshire.

Martin Takel then chaired a meeting for those involved in projects in 2003 – it was agreed that Martin Taken, Nick Winter, Eric Goulding and Alan Beavis would meet to move the development forward on Tuesday 19 February 2002. At that meeting, it was agreed that the Core Team for 2003 should meet on Sunday 7 April 2002 at the Reading Scout & Guide Headquarters, Northcourt Avenue, Reading – 10.00 – 16.00.