

## Burford School Uganda Link Trip 2005



### How It Started

'Oli otya' (how are you) Wychwood!  
7.45pm on the 12th July was the start of our African adventure. This was possible because eleven years ago Annie Paget, the original link co-ordinator gathered a group of students and teachers and began the Burford School Uganda Link. The aim is to improve the quality of education on Bumanji Island, Ssese through learning together, developing facilities and making lifelong friendships. This year we were part of a group of thirteen students and four teachers who sat on the tarmac at Heathrow airport awaiting the gruelling eight hour flight which would deliver us safely to Entebbe, Uganda.

We arrived at 5.35am to meet Stella, the Ugandan link co-ordinator and were faced with one of our many 'firsts' a matatu (a mini bus with most of its components hanging off!) to Namirembe guest house. The Namirembe boasted a million dollar view as it looked down on

Kampala; here we prepared ourselves for the trip to the Ssese Islands to meet our Ugandan friends and partners at Bishop Dunstan School, Kalangala.

### What A Welcome!

Nothing however, could have prepared us for our overwhelming welcome; we were greeted by swarms of screaming, jumping, dancing, drumming people who pulled us off our matatu into warm embraces, we were already their best friends, demonstrated by the fact that we were accepted into their families and given african names. Immediately, we were aware of the improvements which had been made to the school by previous teams fund-raising efforts. The girl's dormitory and library stood out, their pride at having these buildings shone through, as they showed us around presenting each book with honest interest. The school and partners made us feel at home by including us in everything

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from cooking and cleaning to traditional song and dance. This was felt most whilst spending time in our partners' homes, experiencing real Ugandan life. Our experiences varied greatly; Alex shared a bed with his partner's grandfather, Antonia had running water and a maid, Lowenna lived in a mud house, whereas Immy stayed in concrete rooms. Most people spent their time collecting water or cooking the evening meal, which consisted of fish and the local delicacy matooke (plantain cooked for several hours over a charcoal fire wrapped in banana leaves). Most of us didn't enjoy matooke as it was like bitter, thick and lumpy mashed potato but Pat our resident hero saved the day by taking on the matooke challenge and eating four Ugandan sized (massive) portions, he remains undefeated!

### **Exploring Together**

Part of the trip consisted of exploring new things together, for example we had our first trip on the boat donated by Burford church. We also visited Nagamba Chimpanzee sanctuary where we were bombarded by rocks thrown by Baluku the 'Human Hater'!

The climax to our trip together was a magnificent safari through Queen Elizabeth National Park where elephants and warthogs strolled passed just metres away.

Part of our visit involved visiting several primary schools, Bbeta, Bumanji and Kibanga; where the pupils entertained us with fantastic singing and dancing which we attempted to reciprocate!

One of the main reasons we visited the primary schools was to participate in teaching groups with the pupils, although we had been warned that they may be older than British primary school

students, it was a shock to find a room full of 15-17 year olds staring back at us obviously unimpressed with paper mask making! Luckily, we had some hits with rounders and Danish long ball.

One of the most memorable times, was when the students from Kitigum and Gulu (schools in the north) came down to spend some time sharing experiences, playing games and participating in an arts day. The tragic, horrific and emotive stories they told of the fighting where they live, left vivid images in everyone's minds, as we tried to perceive the appalling conditions they live in. However the climax to our time on the island was a farewell concert, performed by all three schools in a variety of ways, such as singing, dancing, speeches and moving art work from the Kitigum and Gulu students.

Now that we have been to Uganda we have the mammoth task of raising £33,000 to enable our partners to come and experience our way of life, and for us to provide them with computers for the library built by previous teams.

### **Future Fund-Raising Events**

2nd October: Tolsay, Burford - Table Top Sale – Plants, cakes, clothes, books, bric-a-brac

2nd October: Clay Pigeon Shoot – Tickets available on: 01993 830403 – Sally Barrett

**Any donations to the Burford School Uganda Link will be gratefully received.**

**Tel: 01993 823303.**

**Nankinga Hannah Nixon  
Nakayima Hannah Barrett  
Namubiru Namsbuga Immy  
Corbett**