

the faces of the Ugandan people we met; their dignity, warmth and realistic compassion.

And what next for AICM? We can be thankful for the certainty of knowing that the Lord knows, “the plans I have for you, says the Lord, to give you a future and a hope“.

Lynn Crittenden



The first highlight of our trip this year for me was taking new people and seeing them becoming inspired by the friends at AICM in Kabale. I first had the idea that visiting was the best way to ‘get the AICM bug’ two years earlier, watching one of the TV challenge shows, and here it was, taking shape.

The second highlight was visiting many of the orphans being sponsored, though all was obviously not well at Ihunga School. Falling rolls, and teachers who had not been paid for 4 months had led, not surprisingly, to a great deal of discontent, and it was moving to talk to the students who were struggling to continue their studies. At Muko High School, in contrast, we were warmly received by the headmaster, a priest, who summoned the six children sponsored and introduced us. We talked to them individually, hearing about their ambitions and their difficulties. Before we left they sang us a beautiful song of thanks and we were all deeply touched. The school has no phone and no vehicle, but they have to hire a lorry every morning to bring water for the day



We try to help AICM, and in return, receive a huge blessing from them. I came back determined to raise more funds for them somehow, and I thank God for the privilege of knowing them.

Liz Tapper

Contacts

Treasurer: Canon John Tapper, Mill Cottage, Mill Lane, Sissinghurst, Kent, TN17 2HX.

Membership & Newsletter: Mike & Gill Henderson, 01480 466101.

Sponsorship: Monica Titterton, 01303 863599.

General enquiries: enquiries@aicm.org.uk

FRIENDS OF AICM NEWSLETTER

October 2009

Ugandan Tales



Dear Friends, Well, after six take-offs and equally scary landings, travelling thousands of kilometres along mainly pot-holed dust tracks, eating watermelon and pineapple for breakfast, lunch and dinner, not to mention endless goat and chicken stewsI came back in one piece and alive! What a wonderful experience - so ably led and arranged by Colin and Sue Townsend of the AICM trustees, ably assisted in all matters financial by the Canon John Tapper, and with daily spiritual direction from Canon Trevor Williams (Chairman of the



Trustees) - I thank God, and you my friends for your prayers and good wishes. We spent a week of our time in Kabale, in the extreme SW of Uganda, where AICM is based with its vocational training college for students, many of whom are

generously sponsored by AICM friends in Britain - giving necessitous younger people, skills-based training in a variety of areas, from tropical agriculture to car maintenance and IT - and we visited many schools in the wide surrounding countryside, often up in difficult hillside terrain, where conditions are so basic, it is unbelievable. Children up to age 11 are entitled to free education, but after that, it's becoming an adult and working your way through life with your family (if you're not orphaned) by subsistence farming, family crafts, and selling what you can in the ubiquitous street markets. BUT, youngsters and adults apiece were constantly happy, joyful, grateful, friendly, in fact extremely welcoming. They were, everywhere I went, whether in our party of

thirteen, or by myself, A RESURRECTION EXPERIENCE. Our money through donations and annual sponsorships is well spent - but of course there is an ongoing need to help with AICM's work, both on sponsoring pupils at secondary school and in the College - together with much needed regular giving to support the monthly expenses of the training college at Kabale (salaries, etc) . If you feel you might like to help, please do speak to myself or any trustee, especially Monica Titterton.



I haven't even mentioned the wonderful safari and wildlife adventures, beautiful verdant mountainous landscapes, wonderful uplifting costumes, singing and dancing, and my helmetless motorcycle experiences around the capital, Kampala, on a 'born-again' Honda ... and, well I could go on. I hope to have shared some of my experiences with you all during the summer - and at the time of writing this, I am planning a little Ugandan afternoon at mine in August....were you there?

Love, Revd Roger Smith. (Folkestone Benefice).



with the Batwa dancing and singing to us and for me it was a very moving occasion to meet with this community, and I was only sad that we spent so little time with them. I was also able to return for a visit to Bwama Island and was pleased to discover there is now a thriving school where the lepers

used to be. I live in rural Kent and have been fortunate in finding 3 local Church Primary Schools who wanted a link with a Batwa school, so I took out with me the funds raised by them through a breakfast club and 'dance-a-thon'. They had also given footballs, balloons, pencils and pencil sharpeners and it was a joy to be able to give these to the 3 schools. Since my return I've had the opportunity to speak to the children and staff in our local schools and each school is committed to working to sustain their link.

Revd Margi Walker



I'm wondering why it has taken me so long to write a short piece for the newsletter - inertia, distraction, inadequacy, life? Perhaps, it is just that it has taken me all these weeks to start processing the experience of being in Uganda. A land of contrasts in itself, let alone with the UK.

I was thinking about the impression that this amazing country has had on my senses - from experiencing the intense city living of Kampala to the terraced, mountainous space around Kabale and seeing the AICM workshops and schools.

Hearing the dawn chorus of insects on the equator, to the wonderfully evocative music and songs of the children as they welcomed us. Tasting the yummy fruits and vegetables together with the red dust thrown up along the rocky roads into our eyes, ear and hair! Feeling the warmth of our Ugandan sisters' and brothers' hands and the



wake-up call of chilly morning showers! Experiencing the scent of warm, flower-filled night air and the exotic smells of cooking! But on reflection, I am left with memories of

From the Treasurer

On our recent trip to Uganda one fact became very apparent; the wages of our staff who work for AICM are very low.

- A typical Extension Worker earns about £10 per month.
- Extension workers are the basic link between the Batwa Communities, the women's groups, and the schools, and they play a key role in the work of AICM.
- After our return, the Trustees met, and decided we had to increase our monthly giving to raise the basic salaries. Our present monthly commitment is £1,500 per month, and we have raised it to £1,800 per month.
- This is a giant step of faith, as our regular monthly income from a number of very generous Friends is only £680 per month. The rest is made up of one-off donations, of which we receive a lot.
- If anyone feels able to make a monthly commitment to improve our position, please contact me on john.tapper@virgin.net, and I will send you a Form.

John Tapper



I joined with 12 others in the July trip with AICM to Uganda. For me it was an emotional time as I was returning after a gap of 47 years when I'd spent a year based in Kampala as a VSO, but significantly had spent Easter on Bwama Island on Lake Bunyonyi which was then a leper colony. I had always wanted to return so to find myself visiting Rwamahano Batwa school and to discover it overlooks the Lake was amazing! We were met by dozens of children, most clutching plastic containers of some sort in order to fetch water from the tap at the bottom of the hill, then it was a 10 minute climb up to their school. There were 4 classrooms but with nothing on the walls and not enough benches for all the 107 children to have a seat. There were blackboards and slates lying on the floor. Even the teachers had no chairs and paper was in short supply. When we arrived a simple meal of posho (cornmeal porridge) and beans was being served. This is to ensure that each child has a decent meal each day. We had a wonderful welcome

Thirteen of us travelled to Uganda to visit AICM and its various projects. For me it was a return to a continent where I had worked 40 years ago, but my first visit to Uganda. What a wonderful, beautiful country and what welcoming people. Everywhere we went, we were greeted with singing and dancing. However, our visit had a more serious purpose than just a holiday, although struggling through the dust and potholes of the hilly roads in Kabale District was a long way from the seaside holidays that most of our compatriots aim for. I was struck by the valiant attempts of the AICM workers to bring education, a better standard of living and the practical outworking of God's love to people who had very little. This was particularly true for the Batwa, deprived of their forest home and reduced to a life of poverty high up in the hills. We visited the Batwa



village at Rwamahano where, because of AICM, they had an extension worker, teachers, a school, free lunches for the children, the beginnings of agriculture and a rainwater harvesting system.

We spent a day visiting community groups where women, often now joined by some men, were involved in rearing goats, keeping bees and making crafts for sale. So many of these women are widows, deprived of their husbands by AIDS. We met orphans who had lost one or both parents and were being sponsored by supporters in the UK. Perhaps my most enduring memory will be of standing on a very steep hillside, faced with stunning views of the hills and lakes in the distance and listening to the small children of the Graeme Naish Nursery School singing to us - tuneful, confident and very impressive and then being followed to our vehicles by a great crowd of children and goats.

But what help could we give? Firstly the determination to raise more support at home. Conversations with AICM about solutions to their problems; bouncing ideas around – because for them, being in the middle of the



situation, it must sometimes be difficult to see the woods for the trees. One of our group had the technical expertise to give advice on building projects at the VTC, some of us raised a concern about high infant mortality amongst the Batwa which might be overcome by simple re-hydration treatment. Others in the group took useful gifts for the schools, maps, pens and pencils, exercise books, torches. Clean bottled water was taken to the health centre at Kyobugombe, a place that desperately needs some decisions by the local government about finance. Some of the group attended the graduation ceremony at the VTC and cheered the students who had done so well and were determined to raise more sponsorship for VTC students.

I was sad to leave Kabale, its dusty streets, colourful markets and shops, and erratic electricity supply. It had begun to feel like home and I can't wait to go back.

Kate Potter



Everyone should have received a copy of the above leaflet advertising a day of fun, food and information on AICM at South Leigh Church and Village Hall on Saturday, 14th November. South Leigh is 1½ miles SE of Witney off the main A40, Oxford to Witney road. What will also be on that day is the **AGM** of The Friends of AICM, which all are welcome to. Remember that if you wish to join us, especially for lunch which will cost £4, please let a member of the church, or Sue and Colin Townsend know on 01993 703463.

The day will start at 11.30 with tea and coffee, followed by the **AGM** at noon. Lunch will take place at 12.30, then for the next hour or two, there will be a number of presentations and talks on various aspects of AICM taking place around the room, as well as different views on the charity and country by a selection of recent visitors. Christmas cards, notelets and small gifts will also be on sale.

Please come along and join us for the **AGM** and to find out more both on your own charity and the one it supports in Uganda, AICM.

currently in charge of the VTC, Richard, who has been in charge of field work, but who has now moved on, and the lovely extension workers, Nichodemus, Benson and Liborn. We need to pray for them all and we all returned determined to redouble our efforts to increase support and funding here in the UK.

If any reader would like us to visit a group of any kind to show pictures and talk about AICM we will be very pleased to do so. We are based in the Oxford area but are prepared to travel within reason, or can probably put you in touch with someone nearer. Please do get in touch. Contact details follow:

Colin and Sue Townsend

105, Newland Mill

Witney, OX28 3SZ

Tel: 01993 703463

colin@ctownsend52.orangehome.co.uk

A Great Loss

It is with regret that we have to tell of the death of a staunch supporter of AICM in Folkestone. Timothy, Director of AICM has the following to say:

It is with great sadness that we have learnt of the untimely death of Ms EUNICE MARTIN from Folkestone. Eunice has been a member of the Friends of AICM-UK. She has also been sponsoring a number of children



under the AICM Orphans Support Program. During my brief visit to the UK in April 2008, I had the opportunity of meeting Ms Eunice and we had a brief time of fellowship together with Brenda Broderick, and I noticed her love for the work of AICM and for reaching out to the needy. Without doubt, Eunice Martin was a true disciple of our Lord & Saviour, Jesus Christ. We thank God for her testimony.

At this moment, we offer our deepest condolences to her family and friends. We pray that God rests her Soul in Eternal Peace.

On behalf of the AICM Management and Staff,

Timothy Twikirize



how needy some of these students are, and of the many other students in need of help that AICM is aware of. Sponsoring these young people from very needy homes offers them a real lifeline.

One of the main occasions of the year at AICM is the graduation ceremony at the Vocational Training College, or VTC. Some of us were privileged to be present for this, which on this occasion also celebrated the 25th anniversary of AICM. It was an occasion of great joy, presided over by two bishops - Bishop Enoch Kayeyee, AICM founder, and Bishop George Katwesigye of Kigezi Diocese. AICM Director Timothy Twikerize was in overall command. The pride of the students in their achievements was evident, and their success is testament to the faithful determination of the AICM director, board, and staff in Kabale, in witness to these students of the love of God in providing life-time skills through vocational training. At the same time, all of us who had opportunities to look around the college, its buildings and facilities, and to meet its staff, were aware of the tremendous challenges of running such a college. To maintain good facilities and accommodation and to keep a good staff with high motivation and morale requires adequate funding. Since so many of the students whom the college seeks to help come from such needy backgrounds, fees are always a problem and the college always struggles to receive all fees due. We realised just how important is our bursary scheme through which VTC students can be sponsored. This is a very real way in which we can help both an individual student and the future of the VTC.



We left Kabale after only a few days, but we felt as though we'd been there so much longer and were loath to leave such lovely Christian friends on whose shoulders rest such enormous tasks: Timothy, the Director, George, the Treasurer, Gloria,

The Long Walk

In July, Alessandra Thomas of Llandudno, began a 500 mile walk spread over some months to raise money for AICM. Here, she tells us about herself.



I grew up in Australia, but moved to the UK in 1998, living in Oxford from 1998 to 2007 when I moved to Llandudno in North Wales. I initially lived with Dr. Marjorie Reeves in Oxford, and only left her home after she passed away. During the years I spent with Marjorie, I met my husband who worshipped at the same parish of St. Mary's. I was also introduced by Marjorie to (I believe) Bishop Kayeyee, and from then I started contributing in small ways to the Friends and have continued to do so for almost 8 years. I worked for many years within an agency that provided consultations to NGOs and charities that worked in Africa and Asia, and it is this experience which served to reaffirm my belief that the AICM is an outstanding charity. I currently work for Conwy County Borough Council in Children's Services. I set off on the 500 miles challenge to improve my health and inspire others to take up walking (if I can walk 20 miles a week, any one can). The first few weeks were the hardest and now I find walking 3 or 4 miles a day as second nature. Of course it might prove to be challenging as the days grow shorter and colder, and it's mighty windy here on the North Wales coast. I am hoping to raise £500 for the AICM, so please help me achieve this. For details, go to: <http://www.walk500miles.com>

Alessandra

Kent Friends of AICM

Our first meeting was held on 9th September at Margi Walker's house in Stelling Minnis. We enjoyed getting to know each other over a shared supper, followed by hearing first impressions of AICM from Margi and Roger Smith. John then explained the basic commitments of the Friends, on behalf of the trustees. Lawrance and Monica Titterton told us about their forthcoming trip to Kabale, and we shared ideas for fundraising. We finished with prayers and singing, and arranged to meet again on Saturday January 9th 2010 at noon at Roger Smith's house, 22, Wear Bay Road, Folkestone. All Friends are very welcome to come.

Liz Tapper

Reminiscences and Thoughts - Uganda, July 2009



“This is not just a trip, it’s an expedition”. “It feels as though we’ve been on a roller coaster!” These were two comments that seek to put into words some of the feelings during and immediately after our recent visit to Uganda and especially to Kabale to visit our friends at AICM. Colin and I would probably also add feelings of relief and gratitude to God that all arrangements we had made in organising the trip worked out. We were aware of many answers to prayer, not least in matters of vehicle and road safety, and for the tremendous friendship and fellowship amongst our group of visitors. We were blessed indeed. I think I probably speak for all of us in saying that we are still absorbing and pondering over our experiences.

For ourselves we found ourselves more profoundly affected by this visit than our previous ones, and for many reasons. We were overwhelmed by the magnitude of the scope of work being attempted by the team in Kabale. On the day after we arrived there, we set off to visit some of the community groups being supported by AICM. We arrived first at the Batwa settlement of Rwamahano, where we found it was lunch time for the children at the little primary school, and were greeted by Nichodemus, long term, faithful AICM extension worker and also teacher for these children. It is thanks to support in the UK that this school is there at all, that lunch was available to these children, and that Nichodemus receives a salary. Also as a result of the intervention by AICM, the school now warrants two government employed teachers, but even their salary is topped up by AICM. After this we were to have visited other Batwa settlements and schools, but because of the distances we needed to cover, this proved impossible in the time we had before darkness fell. However, driving around in the hills above Lake

Bunyonyi, we went past, or looked down upon, the other settlements, and their leaders or representatives took the trouble to come to the roadside to welcome us and thank us - a humbling experience. In just one day we glimpsed something of the number of communities being touched by AICM and the huge distances involved in reaching them. That glimpse became even more overwhelming the next day when we were off again. On this occasion we were to see something of the scope of work amongst these women’s groups who belong to the Bwindi Community Association. We discovered that there are 27 groups, involving over 14,000 women, and because of the reputation of AICM there are many more clamouring to join.

We first visited a primary school where foundation classrooms have been added by some of these women with support from AICM. This is the school that has now taken the name of the late Graeme Naish, a founding and long term supporter of AICM. How he would have loved to see these little purple-clad



children singing their welcome. The women also have pens here, where they keep goats, gifted by AICM through the Alternative Giving scheme.

However the real eye opener that day was a little later when, en route for Kabale again, we stopped outside a secondary school, to be greeted by hundreds of men, women and children, representing the many groups of the Bwindi association, together with their key extension worker, Benson. They had gathered to thank us and to sing and dance for us in appreciation of all that they recognise AICM is doing for them.



It was another overwhelming and humbling experience. More thought-provoking occasions were our visits to many of the secondary school students sponsored by various friends of AICM in the UK. We had gifts for many of these, which they were so grateful to receive, and were aware of just