

## *TOFTA & LORDS MEADE NEWS LETTER - March 2006*

**Welcome note!** I am delighted to welcome you to the second newsletter. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate you for having started on the year very well, and thanks for your continuous support and endeavors towards educating the less fortunate children in East Africa.

The main purpose of this newsletter is to share with you our excitement and pleasure of the very encouraging results from the UNEB 'O' & 'A' levels that the students sat in October & November 2005.

**Great improvement in the U.C.E. results** The Uganda Certificate of Education 'O' level results were out in late January. The general performance was good, having seen an improvement in subjects like; English Language, History, Mathematics and Physics. There was a remarkable performance the Tofta sponsored students in the College, with six students passing in division one, eight passing in division 2, and five in division 3. There was no student who failed, and we are looking forward for even more improvement this year.

In L.M.V.C. the students achieved 25 Division 1s, the top division, 59 in Division 2, 26 in Division 3 and 3 in Division 4. All the 'O' level students can go on to higher education - many will chose to do 'A' levels, while a few will look for further training in vocational education.

**Happiness at L.M.V.C. as Advanced Level exams are out at end of February** There were jubilations at the College when advanced level examinations were released. Great performances from individual students as they competed for top positions in Mukono District, which has many schools decades older than L.M.V.C.. Both sets of results are a great achievement to all parties, that's to say; the students whom are able to go to the next stage in their education. Our sincere gratitude goes to the teachers, who taught and encouraged them, Tofta Education Trust and off course our great sponsors. That's great work, and many lives have been changed by you the sponsors & supporters through Tofta.

**Academic year begins** The first term of the 2006 academic year began on February 6<sup>th</sup>, and on that day students reported in big numbers from their long Christmas holiday.

During the long Christmas holidays great work was going on on the school campus. Various heads of departments engaged in the updating various activities in preparation for the new year. Continuing to lend a hand were the Interact Club members and the old boys of Lords Meade, who volunteered and helped in the repainting of the school. Thanks to Mr. Kalibbala for the mobilization work since the students were in their long holidays.

**Judith Blank leaving after great work.** Judith Blank finished her six months volunteer work at Lords Meade on 5<sup>th</sup> March 3, 2006. Judith is one of the volunteers the College received last year. After her arrival in October she's been involved in various activities with the students including counseling them on their future careers and their day to day lives. She decided not to teach any subject, only to involve herself in counseling where she did a great job. She said that she was amazed by the excellent attitude the students gave her, and she was happy to see that they were more free to ask any questions they wished concerning their education, for example; 'How can I read better and understand more?', 'Which subjects can I offer to become such and such a person?' 'How can I concentrate more?', and many other areas concerning personal problems. She had to encourage many of them like those who come from the war-torn Northern Uganda area. I am sure that her time here has also been a great experience for all the students in a way of cultural exchange. Thank you Judith.

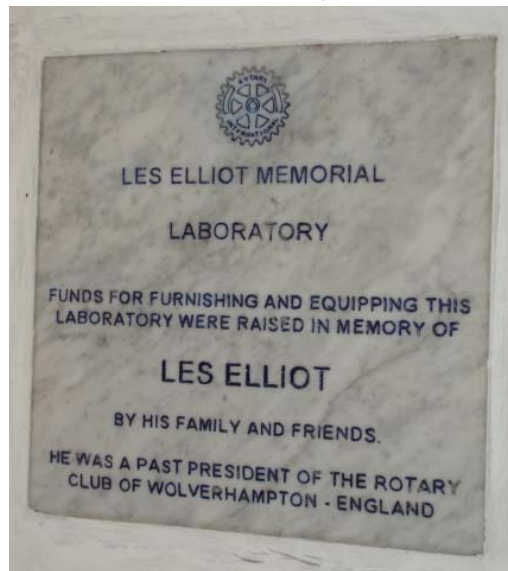
**Sam and Holly already on ground work.** Two volunteers from Wolverhampton came in to the College and were received by Mr. Kiganga, the Headmaster. They came in January for their six months teaching experience with the College. Sam is Val Chiver's son - Val is the co-ordinator for the link between Lords Meade Vocational College and Wolverhampton Grammar School. Holly is an old girl from Wolverhampton Grammar School. Sam is teaching Art and Geography while Holly teaches English & Geography. Sam has been heard to comment that he has had to adjust his accent in order to be understood very well by the students - but I think it the students who are adjusting their ears! Holly's parents have just spent a long week end visiting her, and were very favourably impressed with what they saw at L.M.V.C.

Holly has started tackling the cataloging of all the books in the library - a large task for which we are most grateful.

**Soon Farnfield Medical Centre to open for the public** Since the opening of Farnfield Medical Centre in August 2005, by Hon. Dr. Alex Kamugasha, Minister of State for Primary Health care, it now provides good medical facilities, including a simply equipped laboratory, to the students and staff of Lords Meade. We are again happy to inform you that we in the process of receiving a donation from Rotary District 1280 to up-grade the

equipment at the centre. After its registration by the Ministry of Health, it will be opened to the public also to access the only modern facility in the area. Thanks go to you Vanessa and Dan, and to every body who contributed to the establishing of the Farnfield Medical Centre.

**Les Elliot Memorial Laboratory.** Les Elliot was a Past President of the Rotary Club of Wolverhampton. When he died last autumn his family and friends decided that they wanted to give money collected in his memory to L.M.V.C.. It was decided that the funds, over two thousand six hundred pounds, would be used to furnish the second laboratory at the College. Work has been completed, and a plaque has been erected in memory of Les. We are most grateful to all for this support, and we hope it will be a fitting memorial to Les, as the students will now have a second laboratory to assist them with their studies.



The plaque in the Les Elliot Memorial Laboratory.



Senior 5 Students enjoy the facilities of the new laboratory.

**CHILDREN OF UGANDA , visit L.M.V.C.** On January 25<sup>th</sup> 2006, Lords Meade Vocational College, received visitors from the Children of Uganda. This is a non governmental organization (N.G.O.) looking after orphans and also taking them to school. Mr. Abel, the Director and Rita, the Sponsorship Coordinator had come to look for possible ways of bringing children to study at Lords Meade. They were received by Mr. Kiganga and they decided to bring in a number of children in different classes but especially, senior one because they want them to get the vocation foundation from the beginning of the secondary education.

**Sponsors visit L.M.V.C.** Sponsors Dr Rick & Charlene Powers, along with Rotarians Frank & Kathy Mayhew and their friends from Sonoma County, California, visited L.M.V.C. when they came to Jinja to investigate a possible Rotary project. The 7 visitors were very complimentary about what they saw at the College, despite the fact that the students were still on their holidays. We are always very glad to receive visitors.

**Selections for T.E.T. Scholarship Awards are through.** The selections for the Tofta Education Trust scholarship awards for 2006 academic year have been completed. The Administrator at the Tofta office received over 800 applications which came in from different parts of the country. The awarding of the scholarships has been based on the truth, and the need of help. It has been a very difficult exercise deciding whom the Trust will assist and who will probably not be able to attend secondary school. It is times like this that we pray for more sponsors. (It costs US\$400 per annum, payable through the website, or L270, payable to the Trust Secretary, to sponsor a child for a year)

**Wolverhampton Grammar School donates to Tofta.** The Tofta Education Trust received a donation of over five thousand pounds from Wolverhampton Grammar School. This has enabled the College to benefit from badly needed furniture in the library, so now the many books that we have been blessed with are neatly stored on shelves, and the students have tables & benches for their reading.

**Power-cuts due to drought around Lake Victoria** The Uganda Electricity supplier has been forced to carry out major load shedding as the level of Lake Victoria has dropped by over 6 feet. We now experience power cuts of 24 hours on alternate days. Hopefully the long rains have started in the Lake Victoria Region, but many days

of a lot of rain are needed to replenish the water level so that power can be restored to its former level. Owen Falls Dam is currently below 50% of its peak power production.

**Wolverhampton money funds a generator** As the administration was deciding how to use the kind donation from Val Chivers at Wolverhampton, the power-cuts came in. Little time was spent discussing the purchase of a generator for the main classroom block so that the students can now continue their studies at night in the main quadrangle. However, it is not powerful enough to power both the boys and the girls' dormitories at the same time. Another fifteen hundred pounds - will enable a second similar generator to be installed at the girls dormitory where it can also power the other classrooms so that the girls can study during morning preps.

**Sports department boosted by Nike.** Mr. Tom Lwebuga, a school mate of Peter Kalibbala and an early beneficiary of Mr Kirkwood's sponsorship, works with Nike in the United States. He kindly organized the donation of various sports equipments for Lords Meade. The College now boasts several team uniforms and more balls of various sports. We are most grateful to Nike for the donation, and also to the Rotary Club of Beaverton for sponsoring the transportation.

**Joshua Kalanzi Kalibbala was made a full Christian on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February.** On the 18<sup>th</sup> February Mr. and Mrs. Kalibbala had their son Joshua Kalanzi baptized. The ceremony was presided over by the parish priest Rev. Fr. Peter Mubiru at Our Lady of Fatima Parish Church in Jinja, the church where Peter and Ruth were married.

**Gael Riley's birthday.** Gael Riley, a long-term friend of the Director, had a 'special birthday' in early March. Gael, who lives in New Zealand, asked her friends to give, instead of presents, donations towards more triple-decker beds so that all the space in the dormitories, especially in the girls' dorm, can be fully utilized and more girls can enjoy the benefits of a boarding place. She reports that her many friends have been so generous that they have already raised over \$1,700, which will mean that another 45 girls will be able to have bed space. Many thanks Gael, for your kindness, and very best wishes for your next half century!

**Partial sponsorships.** Some of you have asked if it is possible to donate something towards a student's sponsorship - we are always grateful for any assistance - it makes so much difference to a child who has so little in life to be able to attend classes to further their education and their future. Please see the bottom of the letter for details.



**A visit to Tony Ssekate's home.** During the annual Rotaract Medical Outreach at Kiddera, some 70 miles north of Jinja, the Director & I were able to meet Tony and his siblings at his aunt's home. Tony did his 'A' levels at L.M.V.C. and passed so well that he is now studying at Makerere University in Kampala on Government sponsorship. Tofta supports him with a grant for educational items. Both of Tony's parents died of AIDS, and the local headmaster assisted Tony to complete his 'O' levels before Tofta assisted Tony at L.M.V.C.

Sadly, none of Tony's siblings are studying as the aunt cannot afford the US\$5 per term for any of the younger siblings who should be in primary education. Extreme poverty is common in this area. Tony, 2<sup>nd</sup> on right, says that he has had a miracle in his life, and he prays that he can complete his education and then start supporting his younger siblings in primary education.

**Rotary International Convention - Copenhagen, June 2006.** Director John Kirkwood and Field Officer Peter Kalibbala will be attending the R.I. Convention in June, and L.M.V.C. will make up part of the display at the booth that has been allocated to the **Rotary Club of Jinja's** project of **"KIDS IN CLASS"**. If any of you are attending the Convention please look out for them on Booth **B4-015**.

**Health bulletin: Bingo sharpens the mind...** 'Many elderly Bingo players have faster and more accurate minds than people half their age', psychologists at Southampton have found, reported *Men's Health Magazine*. Some elder players could scan and memorize their environment better than much young non players, adding to evidence that keeping the brain active keeps it fitter for longer. Perhaps we should think about introducing bingo to both the students and the senior staff?

*With very best wishes and many thanks for everyone's support*

Joseph Kirigwajjo

### **Director's message.**

The first couple of months of the year have the highest and lowest points of the year – the highest point being the results of the 'O' & 'A' levels – and the knowledge that the candidates had achieved a qualifications many of them had only dreamed of achieving. The lowest point of the year is informing the 600 applicants – most of whom are in great need – that we have not been able to offer them any support in their secondary education, and possibly relegating them to a life of semi-literacy. At times I feel that we are 'Playing God' to the unfortunate applicants. Often there are tearful scenes as both widowed mother and orphaned child try to come to terms with the knowledge that T.E.T. cannot assist them.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those of you who have so kindly agreed to offer support to a needy child – it is a life changing experience for the child to receive support for their education – especially the girls who are so vulnerable as teenagers. I shiver when I think how some of the girls will go as far as prostitution so that they can raise funds for their school fees.

I sincerely hope that you will enjoy our happiness over the exam results that have been achieved – and I thank you all for your support – material, moral or by prayer.

*John Kirkwood, Founder & Director*

*If you would like to assist Tofta Educational Trust assist a child with little hope for their future, then please send a cheque made out to 'Tofta Educational Trust' to Hon Secretary, T.E.T., 17 Sion Hill, Bristol BS8 4AZ or by credit card on the web at [www.lordsmeade.org](http://www.lordsmeade.org)*

*It costs 270 pounds a year, or US\$400, about 66 pence Sterling a day, or \$1.10 a day to give a child a chance in their life. While I know most recipients of this newsletter are already giving most generously, I wonder if anyone knows someone who might be interested in giving a child a future.*

*With love and best wishes to each and everyone.*