



Julius in his pineapple plantation

## Friends of BOAT Winter 2024

### Chairman's Message

I am delighted to report the ongoing success of our first online ILM course in Uganda (see trustee Viv Horton's report of her recent visit) and also to acknowledge the very generous support of several of our friends in recent months. With such funds we are enabled to consider further on-line courses – both in Uganda, and possibly in Kenya in the near future, with the support of our alumni there.

And a plea; as our workload (and average age!) increases, the board would welcome one or two younger members with an educational/tropical background. Catriona (Secretary), Peter (Vice Chair) or I would love to hear from you!

Thank you all for continuing to support BOAT.

**John Harris** (Chairman)



### Mick Merritt

We are sad to report the death of Michael Merritt on 24th May. Better known as Mick, he was the co-founder and the inspiration behind the formation of B.O.A.T. as a registered charity in 1991. Mick together with his wife Heather and young son had not long started out dairying on a council smallholding. He received a call from his brother Steve working for VSO in London asking if he could accommodate a dairy lecturer from Thailand by the name of Echachai Krodsuwan and there began the embryo of BOAT. Echachai was so enthusiastic to learn that after an approach to the then principal of Bicton, Malcolm Florey it was arranged for him to follow lecturers and gain knowledge. Echachai returned home and became head of his department and consequently director of the Institute. This led to the registration of the charity and the need to raise funds often by raffling a tractor to which Mick and Heather would often be seen at shows selling tickets. The service for the celebration of his life brought a packed church with as many people outside, as well showing the great respect so many had for him. The trust would like to thank all those who donated and the family for the very generous donation received. RIP Mick.

**Bill Vellacott MBE**

### Sheila Walker

The Trust would like to thank the friends and family of the late Sheila Walker who was a long-term supporter of Friends of BOAT, for their generous donation following the celebration of Sheila's life at St George's Church, Beckington as was her wishes.

**Bill Vellacott MBE**

### Kulika's Mission to Transform Livelihoods Through Ecological Organic Agriculture



By Viv Horton

Nancy in agro-forestry section Lutisi

Kulika Uganda's mission to transform livelihoods is achieved through training key farmers in the skills and technologies of Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) and uses the extension model to maximise impact in their local communities. Anna and Julius' stories below are fine examples of the impressive outcomes that can follow from Kulika training.

Anna was trained as a Key Farmer in 2011. She started on her own small farm in Lowero with matoke and vegetable-growing and had sufficient success for the community to come to her to learn how to grow so successfully. Since then, she has branched out into a wide range of both arable crop and livestock-rearing, each of which supports the other, in an organic cycle. Anna is proud to be a 'Kulika' and is now working alongside Caritas to adapt to methods that mitigate climate change. She has become the principal of an institute aiming to professionalise small-scale farmers, which already impacts 5,800 who are trained in EOA extension techniques,

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The Trustees would like to thank Vapormatic for producing this newsletter and to thank all its sponsors for their generous help.



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Key farmers' workshop that took place at Lutisi and was attended by Anna and Julius.



Top: Viv and Avril visiting Lutisi.  
Bottom: Florence teaching about bio-fertilisers at Lutisi.

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and plans to reach out to 79,000 in the next three years!

Julius was originally a garden teacher and had his Key Farmer training in 2005. Initially he grew pineapples extremely successfully and eventually was able to leave teaching and become a paid coordinator for the Food for Thought programme working with 45 schools. Having visited Riverford when on an exchange to the UK, he was

inspired to set up 'Homeland Organics' which is a demonstration farm in Mubende, promoting EOA for family, neighbours and the wider community. He has a particular focus on youth and works with 20 schools. The centre is still developing with accommodation and a kitchen planned as part of a 5-year strategy. Florence from Kulika is his adviser and his son takes care of the business side of the enterprise.

## BOAT/Kulika ILM Mid-Course Evaluation By Peter Reed

It's hard to believe the first pilot online BOAT course is nearing completion. With Viv and Avril's recent visit to Kulika, they took the opportunity to carry out a mid-course review with the candidates and I have shared some of the main points highlighted. Thanks must go to Debs, from STS, who is their trainer/mentor and all speak highly of her.

'The online project management tools have been a source of excitement and experimentation'

'Reinforced a sense of pride in Kulika and its values in practice.'

'Appreciated the flexibility of course delivery and group size is good for discussions and sharing maintains enthusiasm.'

'Teaching on leadership styles and organisational culture enables participants to see Kulika from the inside and objectively, recognising good practice in oneself and others.'

'There is much delight that all the teaching is directly related to participants' daily work'.

'Understanding that motivation is not just derived from money but could also be about inducements and terms and conditions of work'.

'Learning to prepare carefully so he could be clear and effective as an advocate in his work'.

'Learnt to use leadership skills to respond calmly and with wisdom when managing conflicts in the field, helped by seeing that people have different perspectives. The course has direct relevance to daily work and enables evaluation of projects successes.'

'I've gained confidence in community development. I came to this job with a degree in finance and had felt lacking, but now feels on a level with people who had studied community development at university.'

'I am so excited to be included'

'The equipment provided by BOAT has been a major improvement and made the course possible for them - laptops, internet and screen. They used to have to share computers at the centre and go to Kampala Head office for internet connection (a journey of 40K that took us 3.5 hours on a Friday evening!).'

'First online experience and we feel together with enough time and teaching'.

'I hadn't realised that leadership is about other people... and is working to develop the capacity of different team members.'

'It reminds us of what we know and how to do it better. I am amazed how much has changed in project management with lots of new tools online.'

'The course is especially useful for training new staff especially in new projects so that they understand the culture and ethics of Kulika. It gives strength and understanding to do a good job.'

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