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Date: Tuesday, 08 February 2005

Scout Leader Travels in the name of the Greatest Briton

Dave Marsh, Leader of the West Lancashire Scouts Uganda 2005 Project, is to be honoured with a prestigious Winston Churchill Fellowship. The Fellowship, a living tribute to the Greatest Ever Briton, is bestowed on only 100 British Citizens each year by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust. From over 2000 applicants Dave was amongst the 175 selected to attend an interview in London in January. There he had just 15 minutes to convince the Panel that he was worthy of the Award.

This project, Uganda 2005, aims to complete a multi-purpose building to be used for health promotions such as HIV/Aids awareness, clinics for immunisation of the local population (1,500) and community uses such as a head quarters for the local Scouts. Dave, an IT Systems architect and project manager, volunteered to lead a group of around 25 young people – they are currently undergoing training in construction techniques, tropical first aid and health and safety awareness, and are busy fundraising. They have just 17 days to complete the build in August of this year.

When asked what the name Winston Churchill meant to him, Dave answered, "It is self explanatory, everyone who knows of Winston Churchill knows the calibre of the people or organisation that is associated with him. If you are overseas it says volumes about the calibre of the person who comes from the United Kingdom."

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust is a living tribute to Sir Winston, whose life and example are the inspiration. Set up after his death in 1965 by public subscription, the Trust gives bursaries to enable men and women from all walks of life and from every corner of the United Kingdom to acquire knowledge and experience abroad. Churchill Fellows can be of any age, background or occupation, no qualifications are needed and the applications are judged on the merit of the project and the individual. Great praise then to be only the second Scouter to receive the Award – the first was Dick Griffiths, Leader of the West Lancashire Scouts Greenland 2004 Expedition. So to have two Fellows awarded in consecutive years is a huge honour for the County of Lancashire, and indicative of the quality of Scouting offered to young people in Lancashire. For more information, or if you would like to apply for a Winston Churchill Fellowship contact the Trust direct on 020 7584 9315 or see www.wcmt.org.uk.

Winston Churchill himself said, "With opportunities comes responsibility", and Dave is well aware of what this honour puts on him. He hopes that this visit to Uganda will be the start of a long relationship between the County and the District of Kabale. Future projects could include a secondary school.

The Project also has the backing of the Uganda Government. On a recent reconnaissance mission the Leadership team met with the Internal Affairs Minister, Dr Ruhanka Rugunda with whom they were interviewed for Ugandan television News. It was hoped that this historic meeting would help the fund raising – the West Lancashire Scouts are committed to raising over £15,000 in addition to the £2,300 each, to pay for the centre and to equip it. If you can help in any way please call the West Lancashire County Office on 01995 61336 or see the website www.westlancshirescouts.org.uk

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Editor's Notes:

- Scouting is the largest co-educational youth movement in the UK with a total of 476,992 members (March 2002 figures)
- Worldwide, there are well over 28 million members in over 216 Countries. Two thirds of the membership lives in developing Countries.
- The Aim of the Association is "To promote the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potential as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities.
- Scouting in West Lancashire has a membership of just under 10,000 members in the following 8 Districts: Chorley, Blackpool, Preston, Ormskirk, South Ribble, Fylde, Wyre and Lonsdale.

For further information, please contact the County Scout Office below:

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