

Star of Harry Potter to become charity patron



Matthew Lewis is pictured back right on a team which played a Bambisanani Partnership fundraising match at St Mary's in 2007

By Claire Lomax

01943 607022

MATTHEW Lewis, who starred as Neville Longbottom in the Harry Potter film series, is to become the patron of the multi-award winning Bambisanani Partnership charity.

The charity has gained international acclaim for its pioneering work in rural South Africa using sport as a catalyst to promote education, health, global citizenship and leadership.

The charity began its life 14 years ago at Matthew's former school, St Mary's School, Menston, and now involves the University of Leeds and Leeds Trinity University in delivering a range of projects and programmes in collaboration with South African partners

David Geldart, chair and founder of the partnership, said: "Matthew became involved in Bambisanani Partnership activities when he was at school and despite his busy acting schedule, he has remained in contact ever since, supporting us in a variety of ways. Regardless of his fame and celebrity, Matthew remains a very modest, unassuming and well-grounded young man who wants to make a difference in the world. He really understands what the charity is about and the challenges that we face in South Africa; it is absolutely fantastic to have him involved in this formal capacity as our patron."

Matthew added: "It's a real honour



Matthew Lewis

for me to become the patron for the Bambisanani Partnership. Having attended St Mary's School, I got to see first-hand the excellent work the partnership was doing in improving lives, not only in KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, but also here in the UK.

"It truly is a partnership where everybody involved gains and has their lives enriched. To quote The Beatles, 'the

love you take is equal to the love you make' and I believe the Bambisanani Partnership is a perfect example of that.

"I've watched David Geldart and his team pour so much passion into this project and it go from strength to strength. I now feel very lucky, that more than a decade out of school, I am able to give something back and get involved myself.

"Not to mention that South Africa has been "home" for me a couple of times throughout my career and I have some of the fondest memories of my life there - I look forward very much to working with the partnership for years to come."

Following the Harry Potter series, Matthew has gone on to appear in films including *The Rise and Me Before You*. He can currently be seen as the lead opposite Rose Matafeo in newly-released rom-com produced by Taika Waititi's production company *Baby, Done*.

Television credits include award-winning BBC drama *Ripper Street*, *The Syndicate*, *Bluestone 42* and BAFTA award-winning drama *Happy Valley*. He recently had a stand-out role in Kay Mellor's new series for ITV *Girlfriends* and can currently be seen starring in Channel 5's new flagship drama *All Creatures Great and Small*, which has also had great international success. Matthew's stage credits include *Verdict* (Bill Kenwright Ltd) and *Our Boys* (Duchess) and *Unfaithful* (Found11).

Visit bambisananipartnership.org.