



The Catherine Bullen Foundation

Making a difference in rural Namibia

NEWSLETTER

No: 11

December 2010

Despite the economic downturn, this has been the most successful year so far for fundraising. We have been extremely lucky in that the Foundation's aims and projects inspired a number of individuals and organisations to support us by running marathons, taking part in sponsored events, general fundraising or making a donation. We also attracted an increased number of grants and we aim to pursue this source of revenue in the coming year, although this is an extremely competitive area.

However the economic downturn has affected us in that we have noted that the amount collected during shop collections is slightly down as people watch the pennies. However, the most detrimental affect has been the downward spiral of the exchange rate between the South African Rand and the UK pound from around SAR\$13 when the clinic was built to the current SAR\$10.50, which is increasing the cost of our projects. The result is that having hit our fundraising target for the kitchen and canteen, we are having to keep fundraising for it to keep up with the falling rate. Therefore, we will not start any new projects until the current one is completed and paid for which hopefully will be by October 2011.

The other problem that continues to affect the Foundation is the inflexibility of the airlines in regards to their luggage allowance when it comes to charitable goods. We have ladies in Mersea knitting blankets, donations of school bags, and football strips which we have to restrict to our personal baggage allowance. All we are asking for is an additional case over our allowance.

Finally, we would like to say a big thank you to our trustees and all those individuals and organisations that have made this past year such a successful one.



Patient's transport to the clinic – Jeremy Clarkson eat your heart out!!

Future Projects

As previously mentioned, until we complete our current project, we will not embark on new ventures. However, our document *Vision 2020* looking to the future has identified where we can make a difference as funds become available.

In line with the Foundation's aims, the relief of poverty and the provision of health and educational facilities are of primary importance for the development of the Omaheke region in eastern Namibia.



The San bushmen are the indigenous people of southern Africa. They have been forced to give up their nomadic life and they are one of the poorest sections of Namibian society. The Foundation will fund projects such as the provision of livestock, freshwater and garden projects to enable them to become self-sufficient.



The Foundation will work in partnership with the appropriate authorities to renovate and upgrade schools, hostel accommodation and medical facilities in the Omaheke region such as the school and hostel at Eiseb.

Schools

Great Bentley Primary School

On September 28 2010, Roger attended the school for what for a better description was a Namibian afternoon. First stop was the Grade 5 class, where the pupils were updated with happenings at the Omuhaturua Primary School followed by a question and answer session where questions came thick and fast. It was then to the main hall, where the complete school performed a series of musical items in front of their delighted parents and teachers. This finished with a cheque for £676.77 being presented to Roger for the kitchen/canteen project for the Omuhaturua Primary School hostel. The pupils had also produced a further batch of letters for the school which is twinned with Great Bentley through the British Council.



Great Bentley Primary School pupils performing during the 'Namibian Afternoon'

Colchester County High School for Girls

Catherine's former school has always been very supportive. We were pleased to welcome another one of its teachers, Helen Barton to our fundraising committee, who joins Dr Elizabeth Gwyther, a trustee who also teaches at the school. Helen has already enthused her class to arrange a number of fundraising activities.

Colchester Institute

Last year students from the Art and Design class purchased two goats for the San bushmen and named them after their lecturers, Gary and Graham. On December 6 2010, Roger was invited to give presentations to four classes on the Foundations work. It is hoped that as a result of this, each class will buy a goat.



'Graham' and 'Gary' the Colchester Institute goats.

International School of Paris

The school is currently busy fundraising for their next visit to the Omuhaturua Primary School in July 2011. They are planning to paint and tile, three classrooms, purchase books for the library and metal trunks for personal belongings for the children that stay in the hostel.

Shop Collections

Since the last newsletter, we have carried out shop collections at Sainsburys at Colchester, Frinton Co-op, Tesco Sudbury and the Asda store in Colchester. Our last collection this year was on Saturday 11 December on our home ground at the Co-op at West Mersea where we collected £214. So far we have collected £2,156 and already have slots booked for 2011.



Linda Bullen and Foundation volunteer, Nicky Wilmott outside West Mersea Co-op.

Grand Ceildh - Dancing to make a difference

The Foundation's project to build a canteen and kitchen at the Omuhaturua Primary School Hostel in Namibia received a welcome boost from their Ceildh which was held at the Colchester County High School for Girls on Saturday 13 November. With music provided by the Tollesbury based 'Most Unexpected' Folk Dance Band, guests danced the night a way to a selection of Irish folk dances. A guest performance was given during the interval by the African drum group 'Drums Kool' from Wivenhoe. A total of £1,615 was raised for the project which will be used to purchase equipment for the kitchen and canteen. This event is proving very popular and a provisional date of Saturday 12 November 2011 has been set for next year.



Dancing to the 'Most Unexpected' Folk Dance Band.

London Marathon 2011

Unfortunately, none of our potential runners managed to secure a place through the ballot. If there is anybody out there who has a place and still does not have a charity to run for, then we would be pleased to hear from them.

Noel for Namibia

Although a far cry from the heat of a Namibian summer, the Coast Inn, West Mersea soon warmed up on Sunday 12 December to the sounds of traditional carols and seasonal songs with musical backing by Mersea musicians led by Greg Dunn. The event titled 'Noel for

Namibia' was organised by supporters of the Catherine Bullen Foundation.. The evening started with the arrival of Father Christmas in a vintage Landrover and children were soon queuing up outside his grotto in the car park. While those inside the packed pub enjoyed mulled wine, sausage rolls and other xmas fare. As well as communal singing, there was a performance by the local choir, 'Vocalise'. By the end of the evening, £1,010 had been raised for the Foundation and Roger Bullen one of the trustee's commented 'it has been a fantastic evening and we are very grateful to the 'Coast Inn Gang' who organised the event and to the people of Mersea for their continued support'.



Singers from the choir 'Vocalise' at 'Noel for Namibia'.

Namibian Trip – October 2010

In October, Linda and Roger travelled again to Namibia to monitor past and present projects. For the first week, Linda worked as a volunteer nurse at the clinic, while the second week was taken as a well earned break on safari in the Etosha National Park.* This is an account of the first week at the clinic.

Sunday 3 October

Spent our first night in Namibia at the Olive Grove Guest House in Windhoek. We were up early at 06.30 and sat on the verandah watching the sun rise over the city. During breakfast, three German girls arrived who we are taking to Gobabis, the Omaheke regional capital. They are volunteers for SUNI E.V., a German charity working with Komeho, our ngo, and they will be teaching in a local school. The charity will be carrying out work on the Eiseb hostel next year and we hope to work with them in the future to improve both the school and hostel as we have done with the International School of Paris at Omuhaturua Primary School. After a two and a half hour drive, we arrive at Gobabis where we shop for provisions and bottled water for the week. We also meet Sylvester from Komeho who has brought our bedding, cutlery, plates and pots and pans to use during our stay. We say our farewell to the girls and travel on to Otjimanangombe, the tarmac road soon turning to gravel for the three hour drive. On the way we pick up 'Ronaldo' the clinic nurse's son. At the clinic everyone is pleased to see us and the big news is that the clinic and nurse's accommodation have mains electricity. Later, we have a short walk and it is strange to see the lights on in the school and hostel.

Monday 4 October

After our first night at the clinic, we are up bright and early. The raising of the Namibian flag at 08.00 at the clinic announces that it is open for business and Linda walks over to begin her first day. Soon afterwards, Gabriel, a manager from Komeho arrives, to catch up with the news and we present him with a book on Namibian colonial history and an Arsenal magazine.

We then walk over to the school for a meeting with Steve Kavari, the headmaster. We discuss our suggested amendments to the canteen/kitchen plan and the arrangements for handing over the sheep the Foundation are donating to the school on Thursday to celebrate its 10th anniversary. While we are at the school, a sick HIV positive woman arrives at the clinic in need of hospital treatment. Our ambulance is at Windhoek having a service, so John the ambulance driver is called and he arrives an hour later having driven 80 kms from the next clinic with a Toyota Hilux on loan from the Social Services department. It is decided that Angeline, the clinic nurse should accompany the patient to the hospital in Gobabis, leaving Linda in charge of the clinic. From 10.00 am, there is a constant stream of patients and by 14.00, twenty four have been treated. During the afternoon, Sylvester arrives to pick up our vehicle as it has to go to Windhoek for a service. It is promised back for Thursday, first time we have been at the clinic without a vehicle and there is a feeling of being marooned in the African bush! A lull allows Linda to do a drug audit in the pharmacy, which is interrupted by the arrival of a woman who is five months pregnant who has a urine infection and fears she is losing the baby. After being reassured that all was well for the moment she left. As darkness fell, Angeline returned after a 6 hr round trip. Later at around 21.00, the pregnant woman returned to the clinic with her husband with symptoms of a miscarriage. It was agreed that she should stay in the clinic for the night with her husband.

Tuesday 5 October

The pregnant woman has had a comfortable night with no further developments. The 'ambulance' was called and this time came with a nurse to take her to Gobabis. Today the school is closed because it is 'Teachers Day'. Not sure what significance this has, but seems to be an excuse for a day off. A school football and netball tournament has been arranged and it is taken very seriously by the parents and there is a lot of shouting and coaching from the touchline. The pitches have no grass and it is very hot and windy at times which whips the dust up like mini sand storms. Meanwhile, Linda is busy in the clinic, during the morning a San family arrives on their donkey cart for treatment and we give them a blanket knitted by Shirley Youngs from West Mersea. Later, Linda manages to finish her pharmacy audit and checks the emergency trolley.



The San family with their blanket knitted by Shirley Youngs from West Mersea.

Wednesday 6 October

Patients start arriving at the clinic, one is a man in his thirties complaining of chest pains and is dehydrated. After collapsing in the clinic, he is put on a drip and made comfortable while Linda phones the hospital at Gobabis requesting that they take him in, to which they agree. Luckily, John the ambulance driver is already with us, so the patient is put into the makeshift ambulance and accompanied by Angeline to Gobabis, leaving Linda in charge of the clinic again.



The patient with suspected heart problems is taken to the 'ambulance'.

During the day she sees thirteen patients. Julia the HIV counsellor based at the clinic explains her testing process and Ernest who is also based at the clinic advises us on his work on testing for TB, counselling and follow up treatment. If it was not for the clinic, this would not be happening. At the end of the day, we go for a walk near the school and see the sheep being delivered for tomorrow's handover. The first one to be unloaded makes a bid for freedom and runs into the bush chased by thirty school children and one of the teachers. It is finally captured and carried by its four legs to be put with the others in the temporary kraal.

Thursday 7 October

Woke up at 6.30 am to the children singing as they get ready for their breakfast of maize porridge. Went over to the school just as the Deputy Minister of Education arrived. After various introductions we sat down at a long table with the various dignitaries facing the assembled parents and children. Music was playing as we settled down and this prompted a young San boy to give an impromptu dance demonstration. The Minister was so impressed that he organised a collection for him which was passed to the hostel house mother and this no doubt will pay for his school fees and uniform. The speeches from the Minister and the Director of Education for the region were very sincere. During our speech we surprised everyone by handing over a complete football strip, which had been donated to the Foundation by Mrs Barbara Currie, to the Otjimanangombe football team.

With the speeches completed, we walked over to the kraal and handed over the sheep to the Minister who in turn handed them to the school committee who handed them to the shepherd. We then accompanied the Minister on a tour of the school and hostel and who was very impressed with the work carried out by the International School of Paris. He was even more surprised to see the clinic. It was then back to the school for lunch before everyone left. The afternoon at the clinic was quiet and we accompanied Gertrude the cleaner back to her homestead meeting her cows on the way. It's all very basic with no toilet and a standpipe for fresh water from the borehole. On the way back we passed the school children herding the sheep to their new location. The return of our vehicle promised for today has not materialised which is a bit worrying as we plan to leave early tomorrow morning.



Handing over the football strip to the Otjimanangombe football team.



Roger Bullen handing over the sheep to Hon. Dr David R Namwandi, MP.
Deputy Minister of Education

Friday 8 October

Sighs of relief all round as our vehicle turns up at 09.00. We say our farewells to everyone at the clinic and then go over to the school to say goodbye to the teachers and children. We picked up Bruno, another of Angeline's sons and drove to Gobabis. Met up with Katherine Blakemore for lunch, a VSO worker with the Omaheke San Trust. During the afternoon we met Mrs Bussell at the Regional Ministry of Health to update her with our clinic visit. Tonight we are staying at Komeho's residential college a few miles out of town.

Sunday 10 October

Yesterday we had driven most of the day across country to a lodge where we stayed the night. Today we travel further north to get to the Etosha National Park, but before that we have a visit scheduled to see the San resettlement village known as 'Bravo' which is supported by Komeho, our ngo. Our journey takes us to Tsumeb and on to Tsintablis where we meet up with the people from Komeho. We follow them to the camp which seems like forever down sandy rutted tracks to the backend of nowhere. As we arrive at the village, we receive a lovely welcome with lots of singing and dancing. Komeho has built a community hall there and we gather inside for speeches and lunch. After lunch we are able to distribute blankets to the poorer families which have been knitted by West Mersea residents, Shirley Youngs, Lil Clarke and Joan Garrard.



Distribution of blankets to the San at 'Bravo'.

We are then taken round the settlement, the school is in a terrible state with the teachers living in corrugated metal sheeted huts with earth floors at the mercy of snakes and lizards etc. There are lots of issues regarding transport and medical treatment. The provision of fresh water is haphazard as the solar panels that power the borehole pumps are coming to the end of their useful life. We think they were looking to us for help, but there is so much to do and we are only a small charity. Sadly, we said our goodbyes.

*All visits are self-financed and no charitable funds are used for this purpose.

Donations

We have continued to receive individual donations for which we are extremely grateful. Each donation receives an acknowledgement of thanks from the Foundation and through this newsletter we would like to thank you again for your continued support.

Forthcoming Events

January 2011

Coffee morning Langenhoe – date to be advised

Tuesday 8 February 2011

Presentation to Ightham Women's Institute, Kent

Sunday 27 February 2011

Indian Lunch – Titash Indian Restaurant, West Mersea

Saturday 23 April 2011

Shop collection – Mersea Co-op

Saturday 30 April 2011

Shop collection – Clacton Co-op

Saturday 28 May 2011

Shop collection – Abbots Rd Co-op, Colchester

Saturday 11 June 2011

Shop collection – Stanway Co-op, Colchester

Saturday 2 July 2011

'Savouries and Cakes Morning' at 10 Cross Lane, West Mersea

Saturday 30 July 2011

Shop collection – Brightlingsea Co-op

Saturday 27 August 2011

Shop collection – Frinton Co-op

Saturday 12 November 2011- provisional

Grand Ceilidh – details to follow

If you would like to help at any of the above or organise an event in support of the Foundation, please let us know. We will add events to our list on the website and the next newsletter.

Make a difference!

The Catherine Bullen Foundation is working with local communities to help build and nurture a new life for the people in rural Namibia. Because we are a small charity, our overheads are small and are personally covered by the trustees, so that every single penny donated to us goes to the intended project, with spending strictly monitored by the UK trustees and their ngo partner in Namibia. All visits to Namibia are self-financed and no charitable funds are used for this purpose. Please help us save lives by making a donation, either on line at www.namibia-aid.org.uk or sending it to the address below.

How to contact us

By Email: info@namibia-aid.org.uk

By Post: The Catherine Bullen Foundation
Pear Tree Cottage
15 Colchester Road
West Mersea
Colchester
Essex
CO5 8RS
United Kingdom

By phone: 01206 383368 (inside UK) or 0044 1206 383368 (from outside UK)

Mobile: 07771 630928
07733 140748



Linda and Roger Bullen

and

The Catherine Bullen Foundation

Wish you a Happy Christmas

and a

Prosperous New Year

Thank you for your support over the past year