



Cleaford News

We particularly wish to send

- ⇒ New clothes and shoes
- ⇒ Toys (including soft toys) for children over 36 months
- ⇒ Pens, pencils, exercise books, etc.
- ⇒ Paints, brushes and craft materials
- ⇒ Toothpaste, toothbrushes, and soap
- ⇒ Medical items—must be at least 6 months within expiry date
- ⇒ Incontinence pads

We wish all our readers and supporters a Happy and Peaceful Christmas.

We take this opportunity to thank all who have helped us, in prayer, in material goods, in practical ways and in finance.

We thank David Palmer, who took all the photos during our last visit to Romania.

Let us know if you would like a short DVD of 'thank you' interviews we recorded in Romania.

We are no longer sending food, knitted blankets, second-hand clothes, computers, monitors and printers.

December 2007

A great year

Those who were able to get to the AGM and Open Evening in October heard how encouraged we have been by what we have seen and heard during our last team visit to the projects in Romania. God has truly been with us for another great year!

Sangeorgiu de Padure

We are delighted that both the new building and the ministry continue to progress well. Since our visit in October we have been able to send the money for the insulation, which is a key item to be finished before the winter. We heard this week that work is going ahead at full speed.

The majority of the money we have been able to send has come from various Baptist ladies Groups in Essex, and we are most grateful for their interest in this important project. They are now working on other things, so we are seeking other support for the £2,000 which we need to send in March to complete this job. Any contributions, large or small, will be most welcome.



The main church room, now the second largest in the county, is nearly usable, and more work needs to be done on the Sunday school room upstairs. Pastor Istvan Borzasi told us that the town recently achieved greater status, and is now the centre for a large area, so the establishment of the enlarged church is significant at this time.

The Better Home Project



The progress that Daniel Hristea and his team have made in Tarlungeni and Budila is so amazing that it is difficult to believe that this project only started in the Spring!

There are now 7 homes in various stages of completion, and most are occupied in time for the winter. Equipped with a simple wood burning stove, it was wonderful to visit warm, dry homes, after we had become used to the damp and smell of the old ones.

We did notice the lack of possessions in the new homes of these very poor people, and we did not see a single children's toy, although there are lots of children! We were all captivated by Trian's smile. Although he can rarely leave his chair because of a disability, and he has nothing to do, at least he is warm and dry!

We are particularly excited that Daniel's work and leadership has convinced some of the other families that they can have a go at improving their conditions by building their own homes to our design, and with the loan of some of our tools. This indication of the growth in confidence within this downtrodden and ignored community is very encouraging.

Daniel needs a Project Manager for the BHP, so that he can pass over day to day involvement. The Trust will provide a contribution to a small salary—he now needs to find the right person.

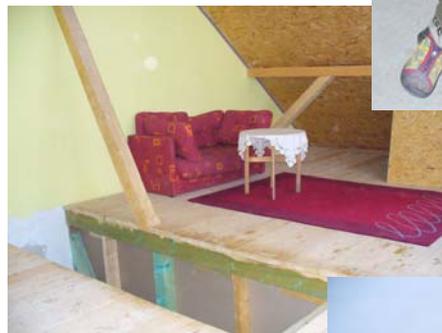
People are now coming from other communities in Romania to learn about the BHP, so those who have supported us in this work can know that the impact is going 'national'.

We thank God for Daniel's vision and initiative in getting the BHP underway, tackling a whole range of local problems, and encouraging the Roma people to believe in themselves and our God. As a direct result, the local authorities are beginning to recognize

the needs of the Roma people in their area.

At a suitable point in the job, Daniel presents the household with one of our t-shirts, and a Bible in Romanian.

It was great to meet some British students working with the families on the homes, and making great relationships. After he had (reluctantly) returned to the UK one wrote to us saying that he had had the 'time of my life'.



There are still many families 'living' in these—we need to keep the support coming in so that the Project can keep going for quite some time!

The Gospel is growing!

During our visit we were invited to join in worship with a number of groups in different places.

Zizin

On the Sunday afternoon we were able to help with some gospel conjuring for the Sunday School in the church in the middle of the Zizin Roma area. We helped to finance the completion of the church building a while back, but there is still work to be done in the 'upper room' where a large number of children meet.

Since our return to UK a supporter has donated the £1,000 necessary to finish the work in this area—carpet, proper lights, wash basin, etc.

This lively group is led by two of the most educated of the girls from the community, one of whom is currently completing a university course.

Later we joined the evening worship in the church, which already looks in danger of being too small for all who wish to attend! Roma worship is lively and emotional—preachers do not need amplifiers here!

Sangeorgiu de Padure

An extra afternoon service was arranged because we were around, and we were delighted to meet up with many friends in the 'old' church. This congregation, which is a mix of Hungarian and Roma people, is the centre for evangelism in the surrounding villages, with a number of church members going out with Pastor Janos Totos to help with the setting up of new groups.

In this church it is still the tradition for men and ladies to sit on different sides of the church.

We were delighted to see the Garbor family at the church, and they then insisted that we rush back to their place in Viforasa for a drink and a biscuit.

Fantanele and Balauseri

We made flying visits to both these Roma villages, where in each case groups are meeting in a small family room. At Balauseri the home we had visited in the past was being refurbished, so we packed into an even smaller one room cottage. It is clear that more people would come to the meetings if only they could get in the door. In the summer some listen from outside through the open door, but on the sort of wet, dark night when we visited people are missing the message. We need to see about a small piece of land and a basic 'Better Home' type of church building in each of these villages. We have put some initial funds into our budget, but we will need more if this gospel growth is not to be stifled.



Other Projects

There is not much space left in this News to tell you -

- ◆ Daniel's Sacele Centre is approaching completion, with accommodation upstairs for visiting helpers nearly ready. The centre is being well used by groups from schools, ladies meetings, etc.
- ◆ The schools have received grants for refurbishment from the Ministry of Education. It has been hard work for the staff, but everything now looks much better and feels warmer.
- ◆ The Children's Hospital's young patients are now 80% Roma. Food and medicine prices are rising fast, but the hospital's budget is fixed by the Ministry at the start of the year!
- ◆ We have a DVD about the very successful summer camps run by Marta and Istvan Borzasi for hundreds of children and teenagers—we will be increasing next year's camping grant to £1,500
- ◆ There are now 50 children and 100 adults attending meetings in the very difficult Roma area of Rhegin—we last saw the work when it was a handful of teenagers in a miserable, dark hall.
- ◆ Gornesti church is nearly finished, and already the membership is growing rapidly now there is space to meet. We are sending £2,000 to finish the floor and install heating.
- ◆ The Community Centre at Tarlungeni being built under FAST's management is nearly ready. This will allow hot meals to be provided for needy children, as well as showers and other facilities for after school activities and 'CAB' type help for illiterate adults.

Abigail Cleaver

Many readers may like to know how Abigail, who has breast cancer, is doing. She has been on a tablet form of chemotherapy for some time, which seems to be largely controlling the secondaries, but has the unfortunate side-effect of giving very sore feet. She has recently had a radical mastectomy, which has removed the primary, but she is still very tired as a result.

Abigail enjoyed the autumn visit to Romania, where she was able to thank many friends for the tremendous support they have been giving. Knowing that there has been prayer and support from Romania, from our son's church in Siberia, and from many in Farnham Baptist Church has been great. She is also grateful for the help from local friends in the warehouse where aid for Romania is sorted and packed.

The Cleaford Christian Trust

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Prayer Points

Thank God for the growing groups of believers in the villages.

Pray for their witness to those around them, which can be strong in such close-knit communities

Pray for wisdom and energy for the church leaders, wives, Sunday school teachers and evangelists.

Pray for progress with the provision of meeting places for rapidly growing village churches

Pray that the Trustees may be guided by God as they allocate resources to the many worthwhile projects presented to them for support.

Pray for the children and young people who have heard the gospel at evangelistic camps during the summer.

Pray that we may all see the way God wants us to go in both the short term and long term life of the Trust, and that we may follow his will.

Pray that those who have received material help, such as Better Homes, may be open to accept the spiritual help of the good news of the gospel.