



Cleaford News



December 2012

An extraordinary year

We particularly wish to send

- ⇒ New clothes and shoes
- ⇒ Toys, complete puzzles, games
- ⇒ Coloured pencils, felt tips
- ⇒ Paints, brushes and craft materials
- ⇒ Toothpaste, toothbrushes, and soap
- ⇒ Medical items—must be at least 6 months within expiry date
- ⇒ Incontinence pads
- ⇒ Secondhand tools—for carpenters and mechanics.

Visit our website at cleafordchristian-trust.org.uk (without the hyphen!) and join the **Cleaford Christian Trust Google Group** for news updates.

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

We approach the end of 2012 on an 'upbeat', as we pray that we are over the main challenges that we faced this year. With this Cleaford News you will find a copy of the statement which we have supplied to our Independent Examiners, and which we will also be sending to the Charity Commission. This outlines the way, from March onwards, our investigations uncovered misappropriation of funds within the church in Romania.

Writing personally, I found it very upsetting, and initially difficult to believe, that people we have known for 20 years as Christian brothers and sisters, and as good friends, could treat us in this way. Worse still, they deprived their impoverished brothers and sisters in the churches of sorely needed help.

We have detected a series of reactions amongst the church members whom we know in Romania, and particularly amongst the younger pastors. At first there was disbelief, then horror and embarrassment. There seemed to be a widespread assumption that that this would be the end of our work with the Hungarian speaking churches. There was then a desire for a 'cleansing' within their own organisation, and delight when we confirmed that we would not be abandoning them! We have emphasised that we must not lose sight of the fact that much good work has been done, and that there is still plenty of scope for us to support the continuing evangelism and development in the younger churches.

Many of our supporters have heard something of these problems, and we are grateful that you too have stood with us in continuing the work. There have been one or two reductions due to wholly understandable changes of personal circumstances, but we are encouraged by the fact that our regular financial support has actually increased during 2012. We are very grateful for this, and for the prayer support which we know we have had whilst we have been working on these problems. God has been faithful and led us through a rather different year!

Throughout this episode we have had an excellent team of Trustees, and I want to pay tribute to the way they have handled these unprecedented problems. I am also grateful to a former Trustee, Revd. Dave Stickland, who gave much time, thought and prayer to advising us. We are delighted that, having retired from parish ministry, Dave is now rejoining the board.

Little did my wife, Sheena, know what she was walking into when she joined the Trust after we married! She has been a true 'helpmeet' during the stressful times, particularly when we were getting almost daily messages from Romania describing further suspicions and discoveries. To round off the year, she has been nursing me after some pretty serious surgery in August. We are both grateful for the way we were able to handover much of the day-to-day work of the Trust, and leading the travel, to other Trustees and friends.

A very happy and meaningful Christmas to you all, and many blessings in 2013,

Angus Cleaver

Peris Church

When Abigail Cleaver died we proposed that gifts in her memory should be used for a suitable project in Romania. She was very fond of the church in Gornesti village, a few miles to the north of Targu Mures. There was a need for a similar church in the neighbouring village of Peris, and it was decided that this building would be her memorial.

Pastor Attila Toth and a team of local people have done a splendid job to create the new church. The old house on the piece of land we purchased was demolished, and the new building is now virtually complete.

Several of our Trustees were present for the opening dedication service in October. Roger Guy kindly read a short address from Angus Cleaver (who was not able to travel), and numerous others spoke at the service. Roger also performed the ceremonial cutting of the ribbon, once he had been lent the pair of scissors that worked!

At this stage Attila has very sensibly put in a partition wall so that the church will not seem too large for the initial congregation, who are just moving in from having been meeting in a private house. This also means that they will not be paying to heat too large an area. We have no doubt that the church will grow, which has always been the experience once the village sees a designated building to which people can be invited.

We are now sending funds for the purchase of 70 chairs, which give you a good idea of the size of the building. We just need a little more money for the finishing touches, and then the project will have been almost entirely funded by gifts given in Abigail's memory.



A round up

The Brasov Children's Hospital is awaiting the appointment of a new Medical Director, and we have said our farewells to our good friend Dr Mazgareanu. He stayed on to see the completion of a very successful upgrade to the operating suite. We have had excellent support from a number of schools, individuals, churches and the Reading Disney Store in the provision of toys and games for Dana to use with the children. This year our craft materials came in useful as the children produced their own Christmas decorations for the hospital.

We are making monthly allowances to four pastors who are in need of financial support. In each case they are working with churches that are too poor to provide a basic salary and expenses. The Baptist Convention HQ has no funds for these men, so in many cases their wives have been working excessive hours to support their ministry.

We raised funds during the year for pastor Otto Kis to enable a large, and very poor, family in the Roma community at Garcin to buy a little house in place of the terrible hovel they had. Doru now has a job in the Brasov city gardens department. Once the bank heard that he was part owner of a house they wanted to repossess it in settlement of an old debt that was outstanding. We were able to pay off the debt, so now they are secure.

Otto and Elizabeth Kis's ministry continues to flourish in Sacele and the villages around Brasov. His work with the disabled (The Hope Group) is now nationally known, and he is co-ordinating activities across Romania. Other groups they run include a children's club and young couples' and women's meetings.

Widows' and families fund

As you would expect, we have carried out a complete review of our arrangements for support of widows and families in special need. In the past we passed on to supporters, in good faith, the information which we were given about each case, but subsequent investigations have shown that these were not always factual. Pastors Zolt Deak and Otto Kis have reviewed each case in the Brasov area, and have submitted fresh details of those whom they recommend for help. Andrew Erdo has done the same in Vlahita, and we are making similar arrangements in the Targu Mures area

The majority of the money which was sent in the past, but not distributed, has been recovered, and so is available to help these people. There is also some surplus where, for example, a lady had died. We propose to use that money to help the people whom have now been recommended, and we propose to use some of the surplus for a 'hardship fund'. From now on there will at least two people responsible for handling this money.

We know from experience that the costs of winter heating are a problem for many older people, and the pastors will be able to apply to the hardship fund for help for needy individuals suffering in this way. The other common need for special help is for treatment and medicines following injury or accident.

We have not yet concluded all the reviews and so do not know what the monthly total outlay will be. We are grateful to those who have been giving specific donations to the 'widows fund', and we can assure them that their designated donations will be used for this purpose, either as monthly payments or for special help.

Harghita Christian Camp

The Camp ran into financial difficulties last year, following which there has been a change of management. The legal position has also being changed, so that it is now a separate Foundation, with its own Board of Trustees. We understand that the new Chairman has successful business experience, and the new managers have now had a summer to put their previous experience in catering and estate management into practice.

The new managers are a young couple, Zoltan and Erika Joo, who lived in the UK for some time, working with relatives of Jamie Oliver! They have a small baby, Viktoria, who is a few months old. They are being ably supported by Andrew and Ester Erdo, who ran the Camp very successfully before they retired several years ago.

Those of us who have been able to visit this year have been delighted at the improved atmosphere which Zoltan and Erika have created, and the Camp is now flourishing. The Camp was fully booked for the summer, and is now running on a profitable basis. Many bookings have already been received for next year, and it is also proving to be a good venue for weddings; there are hopes to develop this type of business during the Camp's less busy periods.

Zoltan and Erika were overworked this year, and so there has been a search to find another couple who could share the load with them. We recently asked Andrew Erdo senior if an offer of a small monthly allowance from the Trust would help this recruitment process, and have just received the following message from Andrew.

"This morning when I talked to Zoltan, he told me that Erika's parents are willing to come to the camp and serve there, helping their children. This was a very hard decision from their side for many reasons. Laci, Erika's father is a engineer with a very good and well paid job. To leave that job for something "uncertain" was a step of faith but they accepted it from God. They took this decision recently and when I told Zoltan about your offer to help the camp with an allowance to a family he took it as a clear answer to our prayers and a sign that their parents made a good decision. In my opinion no one else could be for such a help as their parents. Laci is a very good manager and could take a lot of burden from Zoltan's shoulders. He is absolutely trustful and so Zoltan and Erika would share some of the responsibilities, which at the moment are more than a young couple could handle alone. Erika's mother could take care of Viki and this way she would have more time to do her job at the camp. She is now retired and would not be necessary to be employed. I am really excited to see how God can move people in order to fulfil His plans. Your offer to help is not "just" a sign that God provides, but in the same time is an encouragement to step forward in faith. Thank you very much indeed!"

The Camp already has some UK volunteers lined up for next year to help with the demolition of the two original buildings which have reached the end of their lives. A big effort will be needed to raise the necessary funds to replace the dining room, which is the first priority, and extend the electricity system to meet the current(!) load.



Dana and Dr Mazgareanu at Brasov Children's Hospital



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Zoltan, Erika & Viktoria Joo at Harghita Camp

We're on the Web at
<http://www.cleafordchristiantrust.org.uk>

Trustees:

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Sheena Cleaver

Revd Dave Stickland

We use a **Google Groups** for our Trust circulations. Please go to the Trust website and add yourself to the list if you are not already on. Drop us an email if you can now receive the News (and other occasional items) by email, which saves us printing and postage.

Prayer Points

Pray for Zoltan & Erika Joo, and Andrew & Ester Erdo, and Erika's parents as they work at Harghita Christian Camp so that it can continue to be used by God to bring many more to Christ.

Thank God for the financial and prayer support received by the Trust, and pray for its continuance.

Pray that the Trustees may be guided by God as we work to resolve the problems stemming from financial irregularities in Romania.

Pray for the leaders and pastors of the Hungarian Baptist Convention in Romania as they come to terms with the consequences of those irregularities, and as they seek to restore the good name of the denomination.

Thank God for the church development in Peris, and pray that with the provision of the new building there may be an awakening of interest in Christian things in that village, and that all ethnic groups may feel welcome.

Pray for the hard working pastors and their wives in Brasov and Mures counties, many of whom have young families. Pray that God will guide them in management of time and energy.