



Cleaford News



September 2010

A note from Angus Cleaver

The fact that there has been no Cleaford News for many months is wholly mine!

As some readers will know, Sheena Petty and I married in early April, and the time for organising things, both before and after the wedding, has really flown. During that time, things were also piling up on the desk, and it is only recently that some of the desktop has become visible again!

Sheena retired from school teaching at the end of July, and is already becoming more fully involved with the work of the Trust. She was in the team visit last February, and so had the chance to meet many of our associates in Romania. Her teaching in some of India's slums last year turned out to be good preparation for some of the scenes we met in February in the villages around Brasov (in Europe!).

Sheena and I, and Andrew Henderson, have recently returned from the Christian Camp at Harghita, where she was back to teaching English and music after only a short break!



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
- ⇒ Wellington boots (a special appeal this year)

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.

Financial Milestone reached

The Trust's books of account were opened on 1st July 1994, so we have just passed our 16th birthday. In the last few months our total cash income since we started has passed the magnificent total of £750,000. Some years ago we were given a wonderful personal donation of £40,000, and recently we have been given £17,500 by a family for a specific purpose (about which more elsewhere). Those are by far the largest single donations we have received, which shows that the majority of our income has come from loyal supporters giving smaller sums, regularly,

The founding Trustees decided at the outset that it would not be possible to devote time to 'fund-raising' events, and that they would rely on making the work known and trusting to the generous nature of supporters. **We are truly grateful to all who have given over the years, and particularly to those who have given month by month by Standing Order, some for almost the entire 16 years.**

The present Gift Aid scheme was not introduced until 2000, and we had little benefit from the rather restrictive earlier scheme. We have now reclaimed tax under Gift Aid of a total of £90,000.

In recent years we have also served as a vehicle for UK based supporters to give to our friends in the Romanian charity we support, called FAST. We have now administered over £60,000 on their behalf.

Abigail Cleaver memorial church

It seems a long time ago that Istvan Borzasi and his colleagues found a house in the village of Peris that they wanted to buy and convert into a church. You may remember that a small group of believers in the village is meeting in tiny private homes. We believe that Peris will follow the same pattern as the neighbouring village of Gornesti; once there is a church building the congregation will grow rapidly. In Gornesti it went from about 12 to over 80 in a short time after the church was opened.

Negotiations for the purchase of the Peris house went on slowly for a long time, until they finally fell through when all members of the vendor family could not agree on terms.

The good news is that another house was found; in this case the purchase price was lower as it was in poor condition, so the plan is to demolish and build to a suitable design. We are told that it is in a good position in the village, which is always an important point.

Christian Camps

Regular readers will know of the significance of the summer camping programme in Romania. It may still be true, but it was certainly the case a few years ago, that every young man being trained at the Hungarian speaking Baptist Seminary in Romania had been converted at a summer camp.

This summer around 600 children, teenagers and young people went to camps run by our associates. A large proportion are Roma youngsters from very poor conditions, who may never have been out of their village or away from home before.

Over the years we have increased our levels of support for camping, both financial and in materials for crafts, games, etc. This year we sent £4,000, which paid for 60 Roma children to have a week at the camp, including their transport to and from Harghita. For many years we have sent £2,000 directly to Harghita Christian Camp to help with their much increased gas bill.

We also sent good quantities of craft materials, many of which have been donated at school harvest services

or school Christmas collections.

Angus, Sheena and Andrew joined the Roma camp, and had a very busy time there! Ages ranged between 7 and 14, which made for some problems. Our brief was "partly there to teach English, but also to present the gospel with songs, games, tricks and puppets!"

By the end of the week the children knew a number of Christian songs, and had taken part in re-enacting some Bible stories. At one of the final meetings seven youngsters came forward to pray for forgiveness.

We were given first-hand experience of the prejudice against the Roma, whose behaviour had been quite acceptable until a Romanian group arrived at the camp. It was this Brethren group who started breaking camp rules, though it was assumed that it was our children who had lost the sports equipment! When there was a shortage of places in the dining hall some of the Romanian adults refused to eat in the same room as us, because we also had Roma children there!



Transport for Otto's Hope Group

Pastor Otto Kis has been spending hours (literally) collecting the members of his church for disabled (The Hope Group) for meetings. He collects from a number of villages in the Brasov/Sacele area, and only has a small car.

Jonathan Shulver, Associate Minister at Farnham Baptist Church, spoke about Otto's ministry at an evening service after he returned from the February team visit to Romania. As a result, members of the church who tithe the profits from their business have supplied the funds for Otto to buy a minibus (very similar to the one we jointly funded for the Brasov church 10 years ago). Otto will also have a trailer for the wheel-



chairs (once the passengers are in the bus!), so will now save a lot of time collecting the members for the meetings.

Historically, disabled people in Romania have been largely ignored, and we are reminded on every visit how much the Hope Group members value the ministry Otto and his family provide.

Following the loss of financial support from another organisation, the Trust is now also helping Otto with his rent.

We met Otto in Pericei just after he had collected the bus, which had been imported from Germany.

Brasov Children's Hospital

Sadly, the news is not at all good. When we visited the hospital in February we were told that the Ministry of Health was only paying 75% of the hospital's costs.

Andrew Henderson looked in at the hospital in August, by which time the situation had deteriorated to the point where the Ministry is providing no money for medicines. We understand that other hospitals are giving patients prescriptions, and leaving them to take their chance at finding the medicine, and paying for it. Andrew spent most of a day helping a friend find a medicine which is normally fairly common.

This arrangement is clearly impractical for the Children's Hospital, where the vast majority of the patients are from very poor Roma communities, who could not afford medicine even if they could find it. Dr Mazgareanu, the Hospital Director, explained that staff have had their salaries reduced in order to provide money for medicines, and that their only significant supply comes from The Cleaford Christian Trust.

Years ago we agreed a list of basic medicines, which we send to Brasov each quarter, with the quantities varying in the light of the hospital's stock position. In recent years we have seen the price of this list rise from about £800 a quarter to £1,200 or even more. At the same time it is becoming more difficult to get supplies

here, our main supplier having just ceased trading.

We have seen the UK Ministry of Health asking wholesalers to reduce their overseas sales in order not to denude UK pharmacies, but in spite of this it is rare for our wholesale suppliers to have everything on our list in stock.



For many years Abbotts kindly gave us, free of charge, a good supply of Isoflurane general anaesthetic. A couple of years ago a change was made to Sevoflurane, as being much better for children. It is many times the price of Isoflurane, and now Abbotts have only given us a supply that will last the hospital a few days.

Even if we had the money, we are not permitted to buy Sevoflurane, but it is available in Romania, at a slightly lower price than in the UK. Nevertheless it is very expensive for the hospital in their financial circumstances. Last time the hospital asked us to reduce the quantities on our quarterly list as they had good stocks of those items, and send them the money saved so that they could buy Sevoflurane locally.

Pray for Dr Mazgareanu as he seeks to do the impossible with the budget, and at the same time resist the pressures to fall into the corruption that is rife in so many other institutions.

Financial Accounts

The Trust's financial year ended on 30th June 2010 and, although they have not yet been audited, the books show the following highlights:

Income was just over £100,000, which includes £29,000 which we received on behalf of our Romanian associates at FAST.

We recovered almost £9,000 from HMRC via the Gift Aid scheme. (We note that the Gift Aid Transitional Relief of 2% is due to end on 5th April 2011, and that VAT will increase in January, so we will lose out in two ways.) Until next April a donation of £100 from a taxpayer is worth £128.20 to us; from 6th April it will be worth £125.00. Putting it another way, had the reduced rate been applying this year we would have recovered about £8,000 rather than £9,000.

Freight costs increased from £2,500 last year to £3,600, so we are looking at reducing the number of shipments in the year. Our medicines costs rose from £3,800 last year to £4,900, and our support for Pastors' salaries rose from £12,800 to £14,300 (on account of our pledge to match Romanian salary inflation).

We sent over £25,000 towards the Abigail Cleaver memorial church, and gave £2,000 to finish the renovations at Fantanele church. We sent £2,000 to complete the big church development at Sangeorgiu de Padure.

F.A.S.T

The work of our Romanian associates continues to grow at a great pace, with more and more support coming from UK donors, passing their money through the Trust. For the second year running, we passed on £4,500 for the Better Home Project.

Daniel and Ema Hristea, who lead the charity, are making a brief visit to UK in October and November, primarily to thank British supporters for their contributions in money and in many other ways. This is likely to be an annual event, and in future years there should be more time to plan their itinerary!

We shall be taking them to schools and churches in our area, and they also expect to be visiting the Midlands.

They have a very good website at www.fastcharity.ro with plenty of up to date news, and also the calendar for their UK visit

We are now using **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.

The Cleaford Christian Trust

...caring about Romania...

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Sheena Cleaver

Prayer Points

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

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 they allocate resources to the various worthwhile projects presented to them for support.

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.

Thank God for the many children and young people who have been to camps this summer.

Thank God for the progress of church planting.

Pray for good relationships within churches with mixed backgrounds.

Pray for the staff at the Children's Hospital as they seek to stretch what little resources they have, and show us how we may best help that situation.