

EXETER - ETHIOPIA LINK

May 2004 Newsletter

in association with Devon Aid

Linking Exeter in England with Wellega in Ethiopia

Easter Visit to Wellega & Addis Ababa

The latest visit to Ethiopia by members of the Link took place over Easter (with mixed sunshine and rain). Peter Grainger first spent a week in Addis Ababa renewing contacts at the British Council, and British and German Embassies, as well as spending time with Peter and Cathy Kiddle, VSO workers from Devon. He also met up with university student Garedeu, who we have been supporting, and engaged him to report to us on developments in Hareto when he visits home and he's written something about himself in this newsletter. A visit to the offices of Water Aid established a useful contact for future project funding applications.

Mark Howells joined Peter on 5th April and they were driven straight to Nekemte by Matthew Gichile, who has recently opened private university colleges in Addis and Nekemte. The next week was spent with our hosts and partners in Mekane Yesus (EECMY), especially Alemu and Temesgen, checking all of our projects, including those in Nekemte, Wama Valley, Tinfa Parish, Didessa Valley, Bekumsa Biya and Hareto. The water sources refurbished with funding from the German Embassy had all been completed, and most of the further work in the hospital was finished.



Refurbished deep bored well in the Wama Valley near Nekemte.

Donkeys were much in evidence. Additional funds of £3000 were deposited for future work and books were distributed to schools and other libraries. A laptop computer had been requested by Alemu to aid our project work and this was also left with EECMY. There was still time to paint Easter eggs and attend the open-air procession and service at dawn on Easter Day. By way of relaxation on the return journey to Addis Ababa, Mark and Peter stopped off in the spa town of Ambo for two nights and made a trip to the nearby crater lake of Mount Wenchi for a spot of hill walking and shower under a hot spring.

WATER SOURCES

Following Richard King's visit to Nekemte in 2002, a successful grant application was made by our partners, to the German Embassy. This grant of £5000 was to refurbish a number of water wells and pumps, to protect some springs, and to connect a clinic to the water mains. The work was to have been completed during 2003 but the serious malaria outbreak around Nekemte and staff changes at EECMY meant that much was left to be done in the first three months of this year.

It was therefore a pleasure to find on our arrival in Nekemte that the project was virtually complete. We were first taken to a primary school at Dallo, on a hill at the edge of Nekemte, where attempts to deepen a well to reach the water table during the dry season had proved impossible. However a joint effort with the local community had secured a new water tank and mains supply instead. The next day we travelled out to the Wama Valley, southeast of Nekemte (see cover photo) with Temesgen and Keno (a water technician who supervised most of the project). In this area the water table is deep and seven bored wells with hand pumps, originally installed by EECMY in response to the 1980s drought, had been successfully cleaned out and serviced. We visited three of these and learnt how the communities were controlling their use and collecting fees for future maintenance.

On Good Friday we visited Tinfa Parish, a short distance to the south of Nekemte, where villagers collect their water from natural hillside springs, competing with livestock for the dirty water. In this area the project had enabled six

springs to be protected from contamination by simple concrete chambers and steel pipes.

The next day we drove to Didessa Valley to the west, where two deep wells (60 metres) had been refurbished and brought back into use after two years. There was a contrast between one pump that was being managed well and the other that was already at risk of being overused and damaged through lack of care. An on-the-spot lecture by Alemu hopefully put that right.

Finally Hareto clinic, which we have supported before, is now connected to the water mains and has sinks in the examination and treatment rooms for the first time. On returning to Addis Ababa we were able to visit Nico Carstensen at the German Embassy and report that the project had been completed within the budget set. We brought him accounts for 2003, with those for the 2004 part of the project to follow shortly. He seemed pleased with progress and would be willing to consider further applications for funding from the Link.

Peter Grainger

Garadew Derara - Our Man in Hareto!

I was born in a poor family in 1981 in a village 3 hours by foot from Hareto. When I reached school age in 1987 my parents let me live with my grandmother whose house was an hours journey from Hareto. Since my father passed away in 1991, I shouldered the task of helping my parents farm the land. In 1994, I caught gangrene and lost my left leg when I was in 8th grade. After that, I was confined to home for 3 years. In 1997 I went back to school moving around with the help of a crutch. I was initially traveling an hour's journey from Hareto but in 1999 one of my teachers at Hareto school let me live with his son. So then I could continue my education with the help of my teachers and the community. I can say I was successful though my life was quite sad throughout that time. I scored As in all my subjects I took and I joined Addis Ababa University. I had met Richard King in 2001 when I was in 12th grade at Hareto. Since then, I have been in touch with the Exeter-Ethiopia Link and hope that we will keep in touch! In my way, I would like to thank the Link for its contribution to my life in so many ways.

DONKEYS, HORSES AND SHANK'S PONY

While visiting our different projects around Wollega I experienced the site of seeing an almost continuous trail of people walking along the roads and across countryside on their way to somewhere; business, school, the hospital or visiting relatives? In most cases they would be carrying something. I was pleased to see however, that I saw lots of donkeys in use carrying on assortment of goods and being led by a mixture of women, men and children. I also saw some horses being used not only to transport people but attached to simple carts and being used to transport goods; the use of carts we were told is a fairly new idea here!

The donkey project currently operates in three parishes around Nekemte and so far over 30 women have benefited from this scheme. We visited four women, Tejtu, Terfi, Demetu and Dintcinash to talk to them about how the ownership of a donkey has improved their situation; three of the women had lost their husbands through illness and all of them would have previously been carrying firewood into Nekemte to earn a living for themselves and their family.

Tejtu was not only supporting her own children but also those of her elder daughter whose husband had also died; this made a total of ten in the household. She is using her donkey to transport firewood but is also renting it to her neighbours for 1 birr per day. Not only does she



need to earn enough to feed her family but there are also other expenses such as school uniforms which cost around 100 birr (about £8); although a student does not necessarily need a uniform to go to school, the fact that it identifies them as being poor is enough to deter children from going. Since owning the donkey,

Tejtu has even managed to save some money and now her donkey is pregnant, the newborn will create extra income. Terfi's situation was slightly different in that her husband was still alive but they were both too old to carry out physical work such as carrying firewood and farming. Owning a donkey has meant that she can still transport firewood, charcoal or hay into Nekemte and carry on earning a living.



Demetu had four children, two of which were going to school. Her eldest son though had stopped going to school because he could not afford a school uniform and also to help earn income by farming from which he had been paid two sheep for two years work! He intends to begin again at school now that they have a steady income. Demetu said her life had really changed since owning the donkey; she has earned enough to start building a new house and was encouraged during her training to start saving. Dintcinash had six children and although she could earn twice as much by using her donkey she was still carrying firewood herself into Nekemte. Why was this? Simply, her donkey was pregnant. Rather than risk the health of the donkey and its newborn she would rather suffer the hardship herself. This gave me some insight into how she valued her donkey and the care she was willing to give to it.

I was really encouraged by what I had seen and heard from these four women; not only had owning a donkey relieved them from the burden of carrying firewood but it had also given them the opportunity to improve their financial situation which had allowed them to have better food security, improved housing, money for medical expenses and the chance for children to go to school.

Mark Howells

Saturday 12 June Link Meeting to review Projects at Fran Hamilton's house not far from Honiton.

10 till 4.30, so please bring food and drink with you for a shared meal.

(Take new A30 towards Honiton and come off at Patterson's Cross (signed Feniton etc). Turn off, then right under the A30 and left on to the old road, now the B3177. Just before Fenny Bridge turn left signed Buckerell. Go first right into the village, turn left signed Hembury Fort, past a phone box, down, then up to the Old Village Hall at the blue gate by Hillside. You're there!)

Some belated thanks from Alex Taylor go to the following:

* Spicer Road Dental Practice for instruments for Hareto Health Clinic.

* Lindsays Surgical suppliers for donated instruments.

* Holsworthy Community College in North Devon who raised £220 towards classroom equipment for Hora Dimtu school and a donkey. Alex met with Year 8 children at an assembly after they had read about our work on the website.

* The guests at Alex housewarming raised £120, enough for two donkeys!!

* The guests at Mrs Olive Craig's 85th birthday celebration which raised £167.

Any copy for future newsletters can be sent to the editor, Bruce Hebbard, at Cedar House, Pincus Road, Exeter EX2 9EN (Tel: 01392-437479) or by e-mail to b.hebbard@talk21.com

**Devon Aid / Exeter-Ethiopia Link
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Exeter - Ethiopia Link

The Exeter-Ethiopia Link was set up in 1987 to promote a Community Link between Exeter in Devon, England and Hareto in Wellega, Ethiopia. In 1994 the Link was extended to include Nekemte, the principal town in Wellega.

*The Link supports:
Health, Agricultural and Educational projects in Hareto and Nekemte and encourages educational links between schools in Exeter and the communities in Ethiopia.*

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**or view our website at-
www.exeter-ethiopia-devon-aid.eclipse.co.uk**

Some useful weblinks for up to date news on Ethiopia are:

www.guardian.co.uk and follow links to

➤World News Guide

➤Africa

➤Ethiopia

➤Addis Tribune etc

www.gondarlink.org.uk and follow links to

➤Kindu Trust

www.ethiopiadaily.com

www.ethiomeia.com

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www.allAfrica.com