

# February 2006 Newsletter



Enabling communities  
to help themselves

## Education boosted by recent visit

In October last year Richard King and his daughter Martha visited Ethiopia and, as well as monitoring our on-going projects, made a special point of checking progress and current needs in the field of education.

Richard writes:

When I first visited Ethiopia in 1987 I saw no library books at all in Primary Schools, and at Hareto High School the books were kept locked up in a store-room. Thanks mainly to our efforts of providing books over the years the situation is now a bit better.



*Girls trying to read advanced dictionaries in the tiny library at Birka Jato School.*

All the schools we support now have libraries, though they are still poorly provided with books and the accommodation is often totally inadequate.

At Birka Jato School the mud-plastered library only has room for 20 children so we saw how they have to take it in turn.

During our recent visit to Wellega we focussed on improving this situation. We took as many new Macmillan 'Books for Africa' with us as our baggage allowance allowed, and purchased more from the new Macmillan agent in Addis Ababa. This permitted us to distribute nearly 400 books to 6 Primary schools, 2 Secondary schools, Nekemte Deaf School and Nekemte Teacher Training College.

Thanks to arrangements we made while in Nekemte we have since sent a further 800 books by sea freight to Matthew Gichile - President of the New Generation University (NGU) - who will arrange for customs clearance and distribution to the schools. Some of these books will also go to the NGU and the Nekemte Public Library, which now has a handsome new building with 20 rooms which can serve up to 100 people at a time.

## Scholarships for young women: YOU CAN HELP !!

While in Nekemte we met three of the six young women who will benefit from scholarships provided by the Link. These one year scholarships cover their fees enabling them to study Information Technology, Law or Teacher Training at the New Generation University in Nekemte. The Link has provided over £600 to pay for these scholarships.

If anyone would like to sponsor any of these students for a second year's training they can help to change a young woman's life by a donation of £10 p/month or £120 p/year.



*Tigist, Emebet and Tarike meet Martha at the New Generation University.*

Richard & Martha King

### Our thanks go to:

- Guy & Becky Freeman
- M.R Craig
- Richard Bikes of Heavitree for donations to the Link.
  
- The UIA Charitable Foundation for an £850 donation towards out current Eye Project.
  
- Jane Asten for hosting a coffee morning + Traidcraft products and CD/book sale back in December. She raised £210.
  
- Concept First for donating our new Web hosting and domain registration services. Visit us if you haven't already at [www.exeterethiopiaLink.org](http://www.exeterethiopiaLink.org) where you can download a sponsorship form for Rob Barrow's cycle ride in Cape Town in March (see page 3).

## Update on Donkeys for Women

When Martha and I visited Nekemte in October we saw how this project has helped to change the lives of over 70 women who now have donkeys for wood carrying. They also earn money by carrying other loads from the market and by hiring out their donkeys. We heard that some donkeys had died, but the policy of buying only female donkeys is paying off as quite a number have given birth to foals. All donkey women are to be told that, if their donkey gets sick, they are to take it to the vet for medicine, and obtain a receipt, which will be reimbursed from the Fund.

One sees quite a lot of donkeys in Nekemte now but many women are still carrying heavy loads of firewood so we decided to continue providing more donkeys. £1000 was handed over for immediate use and a further £1000 will be sent in 2006 once the 2005 accounts have been received. Wherever possible donkeys are to be provided for women without husbands because of the risk that husbands might persuade their wives to sell them and use the cash for other purposes.  
Richard King

## The Eye Project



Richard and Martha met this blind man at Bako. He'd been blind for 10 years and his son leads him around begging. Our friend Alemu Nega is examining the man's eyes. He considered that his condition is curable and he could

be one of the many people who could benefit from our Eye Project. There will be more news on the project in the next newsletter.

# Local News: In and around Exeter and beyond . . . . .

## 'Speaking for Ourselves' exhibition at Central Library

On 14<sup>th</sup> November the Lord Mayor of Exeter, Councillor Peter Wadham, opened Peter and Cathy Kiddle's exhibition "Speaking for Ourselves" at the Central Library. The day also marked the launch of our new membership leaflet, kindly designed for us by Jason Howells and available from our new website [www.exeterethiopiaLink.org](http://www.exeterethiopiaLink.org)



*Peter Wadham, the Lord Mayor of Exeter talks with Rob Barrow (see this page) with Peter and Cathy Kiddle in the background.*

## The Boston Tea Party

From 1<sup>st</sup> October a display on the proposed eye health clinic in Nekemte was featured at the Boston Tea Party café in Queen Street. The staff had agreed to allow us to collect donations from customers for four months, and we made the focus of the fundraising the building of the clinic itself - £1 for three concrete blocks. The staff, especially manager Simon, became really enthusiastic about the project and on 13<sup>th</sup> January worked in fancy dress all day, which raised £200. In total we have received over £800 towards the clinic, which is fantastic - about 2500 blocks.

As well as the money, awareness of the Link has been raised and we have recruited new members who picked up our leaflets. Having the Speaking for Ourselves exhibition in the same venue for nearly three months has also helped inform a wide range of people about the reality of life in contemporary Ethiopia.

## Rob's Bike Ride in Cape Town *Good luck !!*



*Please remember to download a sponsor form from the website and get pledges or donations for Rob's ride in South Africa on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2006. Here he is in training for his 108 km (67 mile) ride which he aims to complete in under 4 hours.*

## Any ideas for organisations/clubs?

Various members of the Link committee are always willing to talk about our work in Ethiopia to any interested organisations or clubs in Exeter and District. If you know of any bodies that might be interested (for a small fee for the Link) then please let Peter Grainger know.

## Congratulations to Alex Berhanu

.... an old friend of the Link who's just been voted Runner Up in the 'Tomorrow's People' Getting London Working programme.



- teacher
- taxi driver
- basic skills advisor

- LibDem nominee for Peckham in the May 2006 local elections!

His Tomorrow's People advisor said of him, "Alex is highly motivated and determined to succeed. He works tirelessly to improve his chances and still finds time to provide valuable support to others."

### *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 included Nekemte, the principal town in Wellega.*

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

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**or view our website:**  
**[www.exeterethiopiaLink.org](http://www.exeterethiopiaLink.org)**

### Exeter-Ethiopia Link AGM

This will be held at 7-9.30 pm in The St Sidwell's Centre, Sidwell Street (next to the Post Office) on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March.

We hope to see as many members and their guests as possible for this meeting. The format will be:

- ★ A brief AGM (7.00 pm start) and update on current activities.
- ★ Tea and Coffee provided, please bring cold food/drinks to share.
- ★ Illustrated talks on last year's visits to Ethiopia followed by a chat and discussion about future developments.

### Another coffee morning !!

Pauline Bennett will be our host:

- Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> February from 10.30am - 12.30pm at her home
- 19, St.Leonard's Avenue, Exeter. For directions try either [pauline@slug.co.uk](mailto:pauline@slug.co.uk) or tel 257597
- Exhibition/Sale 'Flora & Fauna of the South-West' mounted photos by Terry Yorke (20% to EEL)
- Cakes & home produce
- Books and CDs
- CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME

*Any copy for future newsletters can be sent to the editor, Bruce Hebbard, at*

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