

# March 2007 Newsletter



Enabling communities  
to help themselves

## MET men visit Nekemte

Two scientists from the Met Office in Exeter took some time off and paid a flying visit to Nekemte in January of this year.

Carlo Buontempo and Michael Saunby, two members of a newly formed voluntary group called Wepoco went to meet representatives of voluntary and government organisations to find out how weather and climate information might be made more available and more useful to small farmers in Africa. Peter Grainger kindly prepared the ground for Carlo and Michael when he visited Nekemte in November as part of the Exeter Link.

This was the first time that Carlo or Michael had visited Ethiopia although Michael had worked with several Ethiopian meteorologists at Reading University more than ten years ago. Arriving in Addis Ababa late on Thursday night gave the travellers a long weekend to catch up with these old friends and make several new ones, they even found time to quiz development experts at the British and Italian embassies. One new friend, Tesfai Hagos, of the World Food Programme helped arrange travel to Nekemte and made arrangements to visit the agricultural research station at Bako.



*Irrigation system used by the Agricultural Research Centre to grow off-season crops.*

This is the largest facility of the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research and specialises in maize breeding. Dr Chemedaba Daba welcomed the two meteorologists and took them on a tour of the 1,000 ha site.



*In Nekemte the visitors received a very warm welcome from Teferi Bizuayehu (centre), the Dean of the New Generation University and Qes Alemu Nega.*

Qes Alemu introduced the travellers to Nekemte and its university. Alemu made many useful introductions and took Carlo and Michael to a recently built dam and irrigation scheme where they saw local farmers hard at work.

Returning to Addis Ababa the two joined in the very colourful Timkat celebrations before returning to Exeter.

The findings from this brief visit combined with help from the many contacts Wepoco now has in Ethiopia have enabled the Wepoco team to bid for funding from the British Embassy and present a case for corporate support from the Met Office. Please visit the Wepoco website [www.wepoco.com](http://www.wepoco.com) to see some photos from the trip and check on progress with the first Wepoco weather and climate information and education project - in Nekemte.

Michael Saunby

## Progress Report on the Eye Clinic project

The weather has been very favourable for building. Work began in October and should be completed in April thanks to Project Manager Qes Alemu Nega's tireless work. By May the room currently being used in the hospital will be vacated much to the relief of the doctor and nurse who have managed to see over 4,000 patients despite the very cramped conditions. Donated equipment and spectacles, taken over last September, have enabled them to provide services where little existed previously.

The Link manages the grant from the Four Acre Trust and the Trustees visited the project in January.

The development of an Eye Care service has put Nekemte on the map. In January a team of surgeons from Scotland did 165 cataract implants. They plan to visit again. A team of German doctors have linked with the Eye Care project and will also go over from time to time. Specialist training is available for the doctor and nurse this year in India. Whilst they are away the plan is to equip the Clinic.



*An earlier phase in the building programme for the Eye Clinic back in December.*

Link fundraising activity continues apace in order to meet our annual commitment to contribute £6,000.

Alex Taylor

### • Dates for your diary

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July** - Vern Lester will be offering his house and garden for a 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the founding of the Exeter-Ethiopia Link.

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> September** - sponsored walk and cycle ride.

**Details for both in the next newsletter.**

## Education Group Update

The visit to Ethiopia last autumn provided a great deal of new visual material which the Education group is putting to good use. Penny Pullen has been making a video particularly for use in schools to raise awareness and encourage school links. Staff at Broadclyst Primary School have been helping with the video and they are keen to establish a link with Bekumsa Biya Elementary School.

Penny and Cathy Kiddle gave two talks in Landscore Primary School using parts of the video and the Link's new Powerpoint presentation. Further school visits are planned.

### More donkeys for women, and sheep too!

The Women's Donkey Project, started over 5 years ago to provide donkeys for poor women who previously were carrying back-breaking loads of firewood to market themselves, continues to develop.

As well as providing a further 28 donkeys during 2005-6, the project has also given 2 sheep to each of a dozen women in the Sorga area.

Four donkeys were reported to have died in the last two years but there have been a further 11 donkey births, vindicating Alemu's policy of only buying females and bringing the total number of donkeys provided through the project since it started to well over 100.

The committee has decided to send a further £1000 from Jan Greet Fund to continue to expand the project.

Richard King



*The new way of carrying wood - much less back-breaking than before!*

### News in brief:

- Amy Wilson's 2006 photos 'Ethiopia through One Eye' are on display in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor corridor of the main Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital from now until the end of May.
- Small grants of about £1,000 in total have been made to both Hareto and Sorga Lelisa Elementary Schools for maintenance and improvements.
- Work is continuing with our Water Project in Nekemte. The Link has just allocated £1,000 to grants for this from the German Embassy.
- Exeter Cathedral School has adopted the Link as its charity for the year. A school concert at 7.30pm on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> May in the Cathedral will be raising funds for us. Tickets are £5 adults; £3 pensioners, students and children.

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

***Exeter-Ethiopia Link  
Registered Charity No 1000293***

## Exeter-Ethiopia Link Annual General Meeting

This will be held at 6-9pm in The St. Sidwell's Centre, Sidwell Street (at St. Sidwell's Church) on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> April. We hope to see as many members and their guests as possible for this annual gathering.

The meeting will follow the usual format of:

- A brief AGM (6.30pm start) and update on current activities.
- ▶ Food and drink (please bring cold food/drinks to share).  
Tea and Coffee will be provided.

Illustrated talks on last year's group visit to Ethiopia in November including Vern's video and information about our new link up with the MET Office here in Exeter.

### Many thanks go to the following for their donations and support:

- Tesco Extra Superstore in Exeter for £30 worth of vouchers. We will use this to buy socks for sufferers of elephantiasis in Nekemte.
- Joy and Paul Fisher of Chipping Norton, Oxford for their donation.
- Exeter Philharmonic Choir who raised £2,200 for the Link at their two Xmas concerts in the Cathedral.
- The two cafés-The Plant and 36 Cowick Street-for publicising the Link and selling Ethiopian coffee during the recent Fair Trade Fortnight.

### Holiday in Scotland! and help Exeter-Ethiopia Link!



Spacious and comfortable accommodation in Aberfeldy - Scotland's first Fair Trade town. Sleeps 6, completely refurbished, garden and garage. Beautiful walks from the door, golf, sailing, adventure sports, fishing, whisky distilleries..... A perfect centre for exploring Perthshire.

For every week booked we will donate 10% of the rent to the Link!

Contact Claire and Massi Proietti  
07791 284411/07772 472641/  
01363 877676 for more details.

[Claire.proietti@btopenworld.com](mailto:Claire.proietti@btopenworld.com)

Or try 'visitscotland capercaillie cottage'.

## 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 Wollega, Ethiopia. In 1994 the Link included the town of Nekemte.*

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

**For further information contact:**

**Peter Grainger tel: 01392-435648**

**e-mail: [petergrainger@eclipse.co.uk](mailto:petergrainger@eclipse.co.uk)**

**or (for membership)**

**Penny Pullen: 01392-274603**

**e-mail: [penpul@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:penpul@tiscali.co.uk)**

**or view our website:**

**[www.exeterethiopiaink.org](http://www.exeterethiopiaink.org)**