

# September 2007 Newsletter



Enabling communities  
to help themselves

## EXETER-ETHIOPIA LINK 1987-2007 20th Anniversary

In October 1987 with the backing of our small Devon Aid - Exeter - formative committee I flew to Ethiopia, armed with 6 contact addresses in Addis Ababa, and the potential assistance of World Vision who had helped Sue Baxter from Okehampton to travel to Wayu the previous year to set up a link with that community. With Sue having blazed the trail, I didn't expect huge difficulties, but the Director of World Vision-Ethiopia initially decided that we didn't have enough money to be worth bothering with. Without the sponsorship of an established NGO, one stood no chance of getting a permit from the Derg Military Government, of Haile Mariam Mengistu, to travel outside Addis. At that time one could only stay in government hotels, paying three times the Ethiopian rate, so my money was draining away fast with little prospect of getting anywhere. But kind people soon came to my aid - the Anglican Church arranged for me to stay with a couple in their congregation, the Director of Canadian Physicians for Aid & Relief took me to see their projects near Fetal north of Addis, and Ato Getachew, an Ethiopian contractor, helped me send faxes back to World Vision in England imploring their help, and invited me to the Rotary Club 'Walkman Ball' at the Hilton - a fundraiser for the

Addis Ababa Cheshire home and the most ostentatious display of clothes and jewellery I've ever attended!



*On the road to Hareto in 1987 - near Bako*

Eventually the World Vision Director relented, the government permit was issued, listing in Amharic all the places I could go, and I was taken by Ato Million - Development Officer/Forester - to Bako where we met up with Ato Mossisa Duressa who was then Vice-President of EECMY.

At that time no 'farangi' could travel outside of Addis without an Ethiopian 'minder', so Mossisa fulfilled that role for our visit to Hareto which had been suggested as a suitable place for a link. Our visit to Hareto was brief, some time at the High School where World Vision had funded the construction of additional classrooms to extend the building originally built with World Bank / Swedish Aid funding in 1974, a meeting with the Derg's

administrator, and then on our way to Wayu.



*Richard with Ato Mossisa outside the only hotel in Hareto*

But it was enough; we funded our first project - a small tree nursery and vegetable garden at Hareto High School - and later sent library books and carpentry tools. Goats ate up everything in the garden and the tree nursery when everyone ran away to the hills as the TPLF forces came through sweeping Mengistu from power in 1991. But when I returned in 1994 trees were being planted all around the school boundary. They soon grew, and so has our Link, which now also encompasses Nekemte and district as well as Hareto. Not everything has gone easily since then, and not all our projects have been a success, but we can look back on the past twenty years with pride and reflect on many worthwhile projects achieved including:

- Nekemte Hospital Water Supply refurbished from a state where only 3 taps were working
- School Libraries started in 6 schools when the only one I saw in 1987 was permanently locked
- Water supplies - both wells and capped springs - restored in many schools and settlements

- VSO volunteer teacher trainer at Nekemte College of Education since 2001
- Over a dozen young people helped with college fees to continue their education
- Over 100 donkeys provided for women wood carriers who were previously the 'beasts of burden' themselves
- Community involvement in school and clinic building supported
- An artificial leg provided for student Garedew Duressa who lost his own leg to gangrene from a thorn when ploughing at age 9
- And now the Nekemte Eye Clinic thanks to Qes Alemu's vision and Alex's Taylor's persistence

In 1995, when we nearly voted to close the Link because of the difficulties with communications, our Ethiopian friends, Qes Alemu and Ato Alemeyehu, told us that we couldn't stop after 8 years as we had only just started! Now after 20 years we are on our way, but there is still plenty to do in the next 20 years. And with your support we'll do it!

Richard King

## Acoustic Café Evening

An 'Acoustic Café' fundraiser will take place at the Matthews Hall, Topsham on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October starting at 8pm.

The format of the event will be similar to the regular monthly Acoustic Cafés which I have run in Tavistock for several years ie. an evening of folk/ jazz/ blues featuring about eight different acts with the audience seated at tables in an informal café style setting. There will be home cooked food available to buy and the audience is invited to bring their own alcoholic (or non-alcoholic) drinks.

The Tavistock cafés have proven very popular as social and fundraising events and I am confident that the Topsham one will be a success. I will arrange the musicians, PA system, lighting etc and am prepared to do the food unless anybody would like to help me? Please contact me and I will make suggestions on what needs to be done. We also need a few raffle prizes, so if you would like to donate something, do bring it along on the night.

Otherwise we need a minimum of about six volunteers to be at the hall from 7pm onwards to help set up the hall, serve the food, take money on the door and clear up afterwards. I expect it to finish around 11.30, so a few people need to be prepared to be around until then to help clear up. Please let me know if you can help out at all.

We also need to publicise the event as widely as possible, so please tell all your friends, family and work colleagues and do your best to support the event on the night. There will be some publicity in the local press and posters will be available from Peter (01392 435648) for display or I can email you a copy to print out if you email

me. Any other suggestions for publicising the event would be very welcome.

I can be contacted on 07977 272174 or [jeffsleeman@waitrose.com](mailto:jeffsleeman@waitrose.com)

Jeff Sleeman

## Broadclyst School Link

In an exciting step forward with our links in the Nekemte area Broadclyst Community Primary School is now making contact with Bekumsa Biya School, Leghare. The Ethiopian school has already received a photo folder containing scenes of life at Broadclyst School and an introductory letter from the headteacher, Mr P. Hicks. Broadclyst School has adopted Bekumsa Biya as their charity for the year and events are planned to spread awareness of the contact. Resource links have already been made with Devon County Supplies, Devon Library Services and W.H.Smith.



*Tonia Dudley and Chloe Farrant*

To consolidate the link two teachers from Broadclyst, Chloe and Tonia, will be traveling to Nekemte in October with Penny Pullen. They are greatly looking forward to visiting Bekumsa Biya School. They hope to create video links and exchange skills and practices. Maybe, in the future, a teacher from Bekumsa Biya could come and visit Broadclyst School?

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

- Ian Graham-Orlebar for a donation of £200
- Vern Lester for raising £275 at his party and auction on 7<sup>th</sup> July
- Sacks Wholefoods shop in Totnes for their £62.50 donation
- £1,000 from a link member for public toilets at the Eye Clinic
- £1,650 from Exeter University Rag Committee, part of the proceeds from their annual fundraising

### Scholarships for young women

For the last two years the Link has provided scholarships for 6 young women students at the New Generation University in Nekemte. These one year scholarships, which cover their fees, enable them to study Information Technology, Law or Teacher Training.

If anyone would like to sponsor a student for a year's training they can help to change a young woman's life by a donation of £160 for the year. The need for further sponsors is quite urgent this year so please contact Peter Grainger if you can help.

### Plant Sale in June 2008 !!

Bruce & Charmain Hebbard will be holding another plant sale next year and want to encourage people to think ahead.

If you have any herbaceous perennials or small shrubs from your garden that you can pot up now then we'll be happy to take them from you next June. You may even be able to cajole your friends to start gathering some plants together for us!

### Annual Sponsored Walk

The Annual Sponsored Walk for the Exeter Ethiopia Link this year will take place on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> September in the Culm Valley or beside the Grand Western Canal; 7 mile and 5 mile options are available. This will be followed by refreshments at the home of one of our members at Uffculme.

Sponsor forms and details of the walk are on our website and included with this newsletter. Do please support us if you can.

*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***

*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  
Email: [petergrainger@eclipse.co.uk](mailto:petergrainger@eclipse.co.uk)  
or (for membership)  
Penny Pullen: 01392-274603  
Email: [penpul@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:penpul@tiscali.co.uk)**

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