

April 2008 Newsletter



Enabling communities
to help themselves

Ethiopian medical training

Lizzie Cook is a medical student training to be a doctor at the Peninsula Medical School in Plymouth. Last summer she travelled to Ethiopia on an elective placement, including Nekemte Hospital, and sent us these comments on what she found:

“Last summer I spent seven weeks in Ethiopia on a medical elective. I spent three and a half weeks in Gondar working with the Kindu Trust charity and three and a half weeks in the paediatric department of Nekemte hospital. I chose to concentrate on malnutrition and the combination of the two placements gave me a significant advantage. In Gondar I was able to gain an understanding of the factors that predispose children to malnutrition and in Nekemte I was able to experience the clinical manifestations of the disease.

My time in Ethiopia was challenging on many levels. However, I feel I have benefited both personally and professionally from the experience. I received a warm welcome in Nekemte and I'd like to thank Qes Alemu Nega, who went out of his way to make my stay as comfortable and enjoyable as possible. I am extremely grateful for the hospitality and generosity he and his family showed me. I found Ethiopia to be a beautiful country and the experience has left me with many valuable memories.

Nekemte Hospital Paediatric ward is a new building which was recently opened.

The ward has forty beds and is staffed by a medical team comprised of two nurses and one paediatrician. Children were admitted with a wide range of conditions. However, pneumonia, bronchiolitis, TB, malaria, burns, fractures, neonatal sepsis, HIV, gastroenteritis and malnutrition were common occurrences.



This ward has one room comprised of ten beds which accommodates children suffering with malnutrition.

My time in Nekemte hospital was split between the paediatric department, obstetrics and gynaecology and operating theatre. This gave me an overview of the majority of cases treated in the hospital.

It also allowed me to talk to and interact with the eight doctors and many students working in the hospital.



Lizzie and the doctors at the Hospital.

The paediatrician conducts an early morning ward round each day. Children with serious conditions that require emergency surgical intervention are admitted but do not receive immediate treatment as there is only one general surgeon. There are a limited amount of drugs available, especially analgesics. The doctors in the hospital are frustrated by the lack of equipment, drugs and resources available."

Plant Sale 31st May

Bruce & Charmain Hebbard will be holding a plant sale again from 2-5 pm on Saturday 31st May at Cedar House, Pines Road, Exeter EX2 9EN (01392-437479).

If you have any:

- herbaceous annuals/ perennials
- small shrubs

Please bring them to us as soon as possible, preferably before the day of the sale. And we're sorry but we don't want any trees (even small ones) or any vegetables.

Cakes will also be on sale on a bring and buy basis, so get baking too please!!

AGM and Social Evening with Guest Speaker

This will be held on Saturday 26th April at 6pm at The St Sidwell's Centre, Sidwell Street, Exeter EX4 6NN.

Please bring cold food and drink to share.

The meeting will follow the usual format of:

- Ø A brief AGM (6.30pm start) which will include the Link Annual Report for 2007.
- Ø Time for food, drink and chatter.
- Ø Continue at about 8pm for a brief presentation on current issues in Ethiopia and discuss plans for next year. The event will end by 9pm.

From past experience this is an ideal opportunity not only to catch up on the Link's activities and to support the Committee, but also to meet other members. We hope to see as many of you there as possible. Peter Grainger

Education Update

March 8th - Exeter Ethiopia Link Discussion day was excellent. One of the main positives of the day was the enthusiasm and obvious commitment of the UK schools. All six schools who are at some stage of establishing a link with an Ethiopian school were represented.

The four schools who have already established a link are:

- Broadclyst Primary School linked with Bekumsa Biya Elementary School
- Tedburn St. Mary Primary School linked with Sorga Lelissa Elementary
- Blackawton Primary School linked with Burka Bekumsa Elementary
- Exeter Cathedral School Pre-prep linked with The Bethel Kindergarten.



Class One at the Bethel Kindergarten with their teacher Mrs Faith Ndwiga who is the Link teacher for Cathedral School.

All these schools had followed their initial connections with their linked schools last Autumn with a Christmas package.

Exminster Primary School is preparing a photo folder and introductory letter to send to Birqa Jato Elementary School and Silverton Primary School have been supporting Diriba Elementary School.

Very many thanks to Tonia Dudley and Chloe Farrant who gave an illuminating presentation of their visit to Bekumsa Biya last October. This was followed in the afternoon by a valuable workshop which gave opportunity to the schools to share experiences, ideas and discuss the way forward. With reference to EEL's School Linking Strategy, reciprocal visits, partnership agreements, shared curricular projects etc: were discussed. All understood that the links already formed are in embryonic stage and progress cannot be rushed, but we all felt extremely encouraged that these links would develop over time. The representatives from the UK schools exchanged contact details to enable further discussion, information and exchange of ideas to take place between them. Silverton Primary School have sent a further donation raised from their Charity

Market to Diriba Elementary School. This is toward the renovation of Diriba's library building. Exeter Cathedral School Pre-prep Dept: have received some beautiful photos from the Bethel Kindergarten of their Ethiopian Christmas celebrations. Children from Exeter Cathedral Pre-prep designed Christmas cards which were then sold to the public. The money raised from this is going to help the Bethel Kindergarten to buy some resources. Penny Pullen

Link Discussion Day

A discussion day was held to evaluate the recent work of the Link and to guide its future direction. Thirty members and guests attended the lively event on 8th March at the Sidwell's Centre and the main outcomes were:

- There is great value in meeting to discuss all of our current activities together and we should do it more often, perhaps annually.
- The Eye Health Project has greatly increased our profile, membership, fundraising income and our workload. To use the clinic as a model of good practice we need to encourage teamwork, respect for patients, cleanliness and good waste management. We should probably consider no more than one project like this to start every five years.
- The placement of a student doctor from the Peninsula Medical School, in Nekemte Hospital, worked well and has provided us with some good insights into the hospital services.
- Six school links are being established and as they are at various stages of development, there is value in networking between the Devon schools to share experiences. Visits to the link schools in Ethiopia by teachers from Devon are essential to sustainability.

- University and nursing scholarships for women have been successful and should continue. Finding individual donors for specific students appears to be an attractive way of providing these.
- In water and sanitation, some spring capping, pump restoration, water tanks and latrines in schools have been successful, but the quality of workmanship and maintenance remain difficult to ensure. It may be time to support training needs in this area again. Improving the quality of water supplies in rural areas and tackling sanitation are important areas to address.
- For the economic empowerment of very poor women, the donkey project has been sustained successfully over several years and is now being evaluated, along with the more recent provision of sheep.
- One way of combining our support for health initiatives, education, water/sanitation and empowerment of women would be to have a greater emphasis on providing toilets, for girls in particular, in schools - with hygiene education, and training in building and maintaining improved toilets.
- The emphasis of all of our work should be on working with local needs, long-term sustainability and transfer to local management.
- We should have at least one visit each year and always encourage first-time visitors to accompany experienced members. It was proposed that a similar discussion day should be arranged in Nekemte with our partners during a future visit, perhaps in 2010.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this event and made it such a successful day. Do get in touch if you wish to discuss with me or others on the committee any of the issues raised. Peter Grainger

Newsboard

- The Link now has a copy of the DVD 'Black Gold' which is all about ethical questions concerning the Ethiopian coffee trade. It can be borrowed for a week from Ella Huffman. Contact her at ellahuffman@lycos.com or on her mobile 07825-215013.
- Thanks to Jason and Joseph who took part in the Sidmouth 'Grizzly Run' to raise funds for the Link.
- Raise up to 15% for the Link when you spend online with many big companies. Check it out on our website NOW.
- Members of the Keswick Fairtrade Association in Cumbria have now made three visits to Choche in Oromia. The aim is to establish a link to promote Fairtrade and three members of the local Coffee Farmers Co-operative Union will visit Keswick this summer to further this exciting development.

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, Water, Women's and Educational projects in Hareto and Nekemte and links between schools in Exeter and the communities in Ethiopia.

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