

December 2008

Newsletter

Education Visit

October 24th - November 7th 2008

On 24th October I set off once again for a visit to Nekemte for the third year running. I was accompanied by Dick and Diana Benn and two teachers from Blackawton Primary School, Lora McMahon and Kirsty Chapman. I was eager to meet up with the friends and contacts I had made during my previous visits, and it was wonderful to be greeted with such enthusiasm. The people of Nekemte are so welcoming and friendly. The town continues to grow, new buildings springing up everywhere, and we were fortunate to be the first visitors in a splendid new hotel in the town centre opposite the Classic Café.

One of the main objectives of our visit was to strengthen and consolidate the school links which have been established through Exeter-Ethiopia Link between schools in Nekemte and schools in Devon. Six schools in Nekemte and surrounding area are now linked with schools here, and four of these have now entered into a formal partnership agreement. There was positive talk of shared curricular projects, and I feel very encouraged that these links will grow and develop in the years to come.

Lora McMahon and Kirsty Chapman had come from Blackawton Primary School to establish contact with their linked school Birka Bekumsa Elementary School. They made three visits to Birka Bekumsa and have much to take back to Blackawton.



**Enabling communities
to help themselves**

During the year the Link has been able to give some support and encouragement for various projects in schools, and it was delightful to see the progress that had been made.



*Students working in the new library at
Sorga Leilisa Community School.*

Birqa Jato Elementary School's new library is almost finished, and Diriba Elementary School has completely renovated a building where a library is now in use.

Of the seven women students sponsored at the New Generation University through the Link last year, two have now graduated. I am pleased to report that the other five young students all had excellent marks in their first year exams and have now begun the second year. Grateful thanks to Bernard Lynch, Phil and Anne Holland and Mike Beard who are sponsoring them. We have agreed to sponsor two more students in the nursing faculty.

I was fortunate on this visit to have the opportunity of visiting and participating in some of the projects which were initiated by the VSOs in Nekemte with whom we are in touch - the English Language Self Access Centres, the Children's Library, Street Library and Saturday School for HIV / Aids orphans. Many thanks to Jane King, Emma Sarton, Suzanne Vanderlek, Aynsley Jones and Ben Dodson.



The Street Library in action.

Lora McMahon and Kirsty Ckipapman introduced 'parachute activities' with two classes at the School for the Deaf and thanks to Selamawit Sagni for her help.
Penny Pullen

And with Penny, *from Diana Benn*

What an amazing trip, quite an experience! A beautiful country and smiling helpful people. Dick and I were most surprised by the extensive areas of cultivation and the quality of the crops.

My main objective was to visit Birqa Jato School. What a surprise to see such a very high standard of written work, in English, coming out of very humble classrooms with such limited teaching resources.

Dick took the opportunity to make personal contact with the accounts department, Kidane I dossa and Rahel Refissa. It was a

pleasant surprise for him to find that Rahel is a lady! We were both concerned, however, by the lack of cleanliness in the hospital. A big challenge here.

SELLING on eBay

Just a reminder that Paul Jordan, a friend of Penny Pullen's, has offered to sell items on eBay to raise money for Exeter-Ethiopia Link. Paul is willing to manage this himself. This is an excellent offer, with no extra work for anyone else. Paul will advertise the goods, (photograph if necessary), sell and package them and post them off. It is up to us to find items to sell. I'm sure everyone has things they don't want so - **empty your attics NOW**. Items must be of good quality as we want to keep a good name to be successful. Also to start with we would prefer to have articles which are not too big in size. Paul can be contacted at:

1 Lower Tithebarn Cottage

Tithebarn Lane

Pinhoe, Exeter EX1 3RQ

01392-466936, 07870-258175

pauljordan@hotmail.com

Articles may be left in his porch, or Penny would be willing to collect things:

penpul@tiscali.co.uk or 01392-274603

Fundraising

- Thanks to all of those who made it to Ella's Garden Party in Farway in August, it turned out to be a lovely sunny afternoon, which was not expected, and £400 was raised.
- The Acoustic Cafe evening in Topsham on 4th October raised £380 - thanks to all those members who helped and to Jeff Sleeman who organised and ran the event.
- Silverton Primary School raised over £100 for Diribi Elementary School their 'linked' partner school.

- The sponsored walk on 21st September raised a fantastic £1,348 towards our sanitation and water project in schools.



*And here are the happy walkers
(photo taken by Rachel Jamieson)*

- Thanks also to Exeter Golf and Country Club (tennis section) who raised £400 and to Mike Beard who has managed to gather £350 in donations from various people.
- Pauline Gibson's coffee morning on 29th November raised £148.

And more news from Rachel Jamieson Emailed from Nekemte recently.

Alex and I have been in Ethiopia for two weeks and have travelled to Lalibela in the north and to Harar in the East and I am overwhelmed by the beauty of the scenery. Now we are in Nekemte and find that it too is amazing. It is situated on a hill over 2000 metres above sea level with terraced hillsides and the green of trees and crops all around. Yet beauty is tempered by the mass of poverty it conceals. The lush green too is of concern as it is the result of the unusually prolonged rainy season which should have ceased several weeks ago.

It means many of the crops that were ready for harvesting are now flattened and there are fears of a poor harvest.

We have been warmly welcomed in Nekemte by Qes Alemu and friends and we are delighted to find the new spectacle workshop nearly completed and the furniture ready to move in. Started just a few weeks ago, it is now a substantial building and was made possible with money raised by the Exmoor and Tiverton Rotary Club. Frances, their International Chair, is here with us and is thrilled by the progress. This enthusiasm is shared by the locals and the builder has even contributed £100 of his own money - a large amount for Ethiopia - to complete the external decoration of the spectacle workshop.



Qes Alemu overseeing the work !

I have also met with some women fuel wood carriers to help assess where we go with the 'donkey' project. With so much of interest to do and tasks to complete our week here will soon be over. Hopefully we can return and share our experiences to further strengthen the Link.

EEL Gift Catalogue 2008

The new revised Link Gift Catalogue is now out and can be downloaded from our website. Supporters who receive this newsletter by mail will find a copy enclosed. Please consider whether you can purchase any of these presents for your friends and family this year. We often don't really need the gifts that we receive year after year and this is a way of spreading our message of hope and support further afield.

And many thanks to Ella for putting this all together for the Link once again.

*Any copy for future newsletters can be sent to the editor, Bruce Hebbard, at Cedar House, Pines Road, Exeter EX2 9EN
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***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, 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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**or view our website:
www.exeterethiopiaLink.org**

Stop Press:

We are planning to have another discussion day with the AGM on Saturday 28th March 2009 - please put this in your diaries now. More information in the next newsletter.