

# May 2009 Newsletter



**Enabling communities  
to help themselves**

## Visit to Ethiopia 10-24th April

Four members of the Link, Peter Grainger, Alexis Taylor, Ella Huffman and Mark Hodgson, arrived in Addis Ababa on 10 April, Good Friday in England but a week ahead of Easter in Ethiopia. This is the end of the dry season and the first "small" rains had already begun. Our visit was

- to check on the Nekemte Eye Clinic just before the end of our three-year support
- to take forward a project to improve water supply, toilets and hygiene education in our linked schools
- and to start a project to help a group of village women with income generation

We took £9000 in funding for these projects plus equipment and spectacles for the eye clinic and water taps for schools. Our host, as usual, was Qes Alemu Nega, the main development worker with our Mekane Yesus partners, who met us in Addis for the drive to Nekemte. We were also able to catch up with water engineer Tadewos and telecom manager/MBA student Garedew in Addis.

Nekemte is now a fast-developing regional town, with a population larger than Exeter. The bank was able to change our travellers' cheques (not possible in the hotels in Addis anymore). We stayed in the newest hotel (£10 per night) and experienced a huge rain and thunderstorm one night and planned power cuts due to a national shortage of electricity, but no mains water shortage in

town. The main roads are being rebuilt and many are now finished attracting many more taxis and buses. Larger buildings are going up including a new hospital, Wollega University for 10,000 students many commercial properties. Life in Nekemte is certainly changing for some people, but poverty is still very evident around the fringes.



*Surfacing the new road by the hospital.*

We were able to visit our five linked primary schools in and around Nekemte and at four signed project agreements and started financial support to upgrade water supplies and toilets. Taps were supplied and money left to extend water lines at Burka Jato school, as well as other funding for their library. At Diriba Primary school we found the worst children's toilets and money sent by Silverton School was donated to renew these. And at Burka Bekumsa school in Nekemte, the priority remained for a duplicator but in future we will help with a water line extension and tap

stand here too. This school now has a good working library. At Bekumsa Biya school almost £1000 donated by Broadclyst Primary school was left for improvements to a natural spring and their water well and pump.



*The spring at Bekumsa Biya school will be improved.*

The priority for water supply at Sorga Leilisa school was similar and also funded. (See schools update for details.)

We were very pleased to see the Eye Clinic working well, with a new cataract surgeon in post. The budget and programme for the final few months of our grant aid was agreed and plans for the immediate and longer term handover to other funding sources worked up (see the next newsletter for a complete report on the project).

A new project to develop income generation for a group of disadvantaged women in Wacha on the edge of Nekemte had been proposed last year. We were able to discuss the priority to get this started, which is for water. Funding was left with the Women's Section of EECMY to perhaps provide a well (but this has since changed to mains water connection) to assist with vegetable production.

Many other connections were made including with VSO volunteers Carol Black and Kevin Smith and staff at the new Microfinance section at New Generation University. We also managed to visit Hareto on the return journey and see how the two schools there are faring. Student numbers are increasing and resources very limited as ever but conditions are gradually improving. Overall we had a very busy and successful trip which achieved most of its objectives and introduced two more members of the Link to the wonders of Ethiopia.

Peter Grainger

### Schools update

Since last summer there has been a flurry of activity on the schools front. This has involved further consolidation of the School Linking scheme between Devon and Ethiopia and also the funding of a number of projects. Penny Pullen writes:

- 'Through a sponsored decathlon involving the whole school, Broadclyst Primary School raised a magnificent £975 for improving the existing well and spring at their linked school Bekumsa Biya Elementary School.
- Continuing support for their linked school, Diribi Elementary, Silverton Primary School raised a further £253 from their end of Term Service and Christmas Performance and £130 from their end of Spring Term Service. This money, together with £800 from the Link, was directed toward the construction of two new toilet blocks for the school.

The schools in Ethiopia wish to thank the linked schools in UK for their support. The links are important to them and they are committed to the development of a true partnership over the next few years.'

The Link has also contributed £1,000 towards the purchase of books for a number of school libraries and these have been delivered by visiting groups. In addition to this the following specific contributions have been made:

- the library at Birka Bekumsa School is now complete and £800 has been passed over towards the cost of a duplicator,
- we have helped Birka Jato School by providing £500 towards the extension of mains water to the toilet blocks and for six taps and £300 has been granted for their library,
- Sorga Leilisa School received £500 for the purchase of desks and also £650 for their pump to be serviced and nearby protected spring to be improved,
- Hareto Primary School was also given £800 for desks,
- Hareto High School was given £100 worth of books and dictionaries.

## FUNDRAISING

- We have now raised almost £300 from our Gift Catalogue.
- A big thank you to Exeter Golf & Country Club (tennis section) who have raised £560 for the Link over the past year.
- Many thanks also to several private individuals who have donated around £400 in total.

## Media/Publicity Officer Wanted

The committee is keen to find somebody who would be interested in taking on this role in order to give the Link a higher local public profile. If you're interested and would like to know more about this please contact Mark Howells on 01392-202713 or [mshowells@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:mshowells@blueyonder.co.uk)

## 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 will advertise the goods, (photograph if necessary), sell and package them and post them off. It's up to us to find items to sell. 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](mailto:pauljordan@hotmail.com)

Articles may be left in his porch, or Penny would be willing to collect things:  
[penpul@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:penpul@tiscali.co.uk) or 01392-274603

## easyfundraising.org.uk

Shopping on the Internet? If so you can raise money for the link at no extra cost.

1. Visit [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk)
2. Register choosing Exeter-Ethiopia Link as your chosen cause
3. Before purchasing an item – log-in to easyfundraising and search for the retailer you wish to use (over 600 to choose from including Amazon, Boots, Next, Argos etc)
4. Make your purchase as normal and a percentage (varies from each retailer) will automatically be donated to the link: £143 has been raised in the last year.

Also use [www.easysearch.org.uk](http://www.easysearch.org.uk) as your search engine and for each search you make a small amount is donated to the link. **Happy Shopping and Searching...**

## Link Discussion Day

Our now annual discussion day was held in March to evaluate the recent work of the Link and to guide its future direction. About 25 members and guests attended the event at the St.Sidwell's Centre and the main outcome, as with last year, is the great value in meeting to discuss all of our current activities together. The presentation in the morning was by two returning VSO workers from Ethiopia, Mark Smith and Jane King and they provided some valuable insights into how things work 'on the ground'.

As usual the workshops, on the themes of; Education, Health, Women's projects and Water and Sanitation, gave food for thought and were extremely useful in allowing members to stand back from the day to day issues and review policy and new ideas.

The AGM recorded thanks to committee members who were standing down; Adrian Thomas, Kate Pearce and Claire Proietti with a particular thank you to Alex Taylor, standing down as Vice-Chair, for her untiring work with the Eye Clinic. Peter Grainger made it known that this would be his final year as Chair and Mark Howells was elected as the new Vice-Chair. New committee members elected were Rachael Jamieson and Mark Hodgson with other members continuing. Bruce Hebbard

Anybody interested in our projects can see the Eye Clinic in Nekemte online at <http://wikimapia.org/9581605/Nekemte-Eye-Clinic>

Further exploration on this website can also be made of the area for all of our linked schools and institutions mentioned at various times in these newsletters.

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

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