



# The Catherine Bullen Foundation

*Making a difference in rural Namibia*

## *NEWSLETTER*

No: 51

Spring 2024

### ***Mattresses for Donkerbos***

In our Winter Newsletter we mentioned that during our last visit, we discovered that the children in the hostel dormitories at Donkerbos Primary School were sleeping on worn out and sometimes no mattresses at all. Therefore, the Foundation decided to fund the purchase of 120 mattresses and these were ordered at the beginning of January and delivered four weeks later. On receipt the school Principal, Miss Patience messaged us 'what a joy you have brought to the poor Donkerbos learners. This is a great gift'.



The mattresses arriving at Donkerbos.





The new mattresses in one of the dormitories



One of the pupils enjoying the comfort of the new mattresses

The majority of the pupils are from San bushman families who are unable to afford to provide their children with school uniforms. The Foundation has decided as a project to fund uniforms for those children. Wearing a school uniform gives them a sense of pride and belonging to the school community.

### ***Irrigation System for Eiseb Primary School and Hostel***



The photo on the left shows a large school garden with an irrigation system funded by the Foundation. Planting will start soon and it will provide produce for a food programme for those who are undernourished and vegetables for the Hostel kitchen.

On the left is the Principal, Mr Marenga, the school secretary, Berlin who is Head of Department, two hostel workers and the teacher responsible for the hostel.

During our visit to the school and hostel we were able to see the showers and toilets working again, made possible by the Foundation paying for repairs to the drainage system.

We also saw the aftermath of a 10,000 litre water tank that had crashed down from a 4 metre height when its stand collapsed. The Foundation will help towards replacing the stand.



## ***Omuhatuurua Primary School and Hostel, Otjimanangombe***

At the beginning of March, Mrs Sylvia Kavari was appointed the new Principal following the death of her husband in September 2022. The school has also grown with the number of pupils increasing and while we were there, they were interviewing to appoint another two teachers.

As last year, students from the International School of Paris will be visiting the school in June and carrying out a number of activities including painting the inside of the kitchen and re-tiling the floor of one of the dormitories.

One of the things that really impresses us doing our visits is how talented the school choir is and we often listen to them singing in the evenings as we sit outside our accommodation at the clinic. This time we took the opportunity to video them singing a number of songs which will be used at a fund-raising concert at East Mersea Church on Sunday 12 May. (Details later in the Newsletter).



The Omuhatuurua School choir and Edward, their choir master.

## ***Otjimanangombe Primary Healthcare Clinic***

We spent the last four weeks of our recent visit at the clinic, where there was a steady flow of patients mostly routine and follow ups, but some more serious such as a snake bite, a stroke victim and complications during childbirth. During the last two weeks, one nurse went on leave bringing the staff down to two. If the patient required transportation in the ambulance to Gobabis, the nearest town, then sister Linea had to go with them, leaving Linda in charge. This happened a number of times, and was a bit nerve racking with Linda seeing on one day, 55 patients, by herself.

During our last two weeks of our stay at the clinic, there were periods of welcome heavy rain, which unfortunately turned the road through the village into a quagmire. One morning an articulated lorry carrying bags of animal feed went down the hill by the school and overturned on the bend at the bottom. The driver suffered bruising, his co-driver had cuts to his face and hands and a woman passenger suffered back injuries. They were brought to the clinic where their injuries were treated and

then sent in the ambulance to Gobabis. If the clinic and the ambulance, both provided by the Foundation had not been there, those injured would have had to wait for hours to be treated.



Left: The overturned lorry, with its load strewn all over the ground. Right: the casualties being loaded into the Ambulance with Linda's help. Thankfully the woman's back injury turned out to be only bruising.

## ***The Catherine Bullen Primary Healthcare Clinic***

We spent our first four weeks at Catherine's clinic which is busy with around 100 to 130 patients a day, with one day rising to 160. An added challenge is that the local prison sends prisoners on a daily basis to be treated, sometimes twenty at a time, handcuffed and guarded by police armed with AK47 sub-machine guns who have to be given priority over the other patients. The main issue is the lack of transport to get patients to the hospital. When the clinic was opened in 2014, it was allocated a proper ambulance which was stationed there for several years. Unfortunately, due to the lack of maintenance of vehicles in the district, the ambulance was moved to where it was needed the most. The only transport available at the clinic this time was a Toyota Corolla saloon car with four seats for cases referred to the hospital by the nurses. When the referrals totalled over this number, then a decision had to be made who was to be given priority. An example of this was a young girl with a broken arm who had to wait a week until there was a space in the car to get her to hospital to get her arm put in plaster. If there was a serious case that required an ambulance, then one would be sent from Tsumeb.

In a previous newsletter, we reported that we had hoped to provide an ultrasound machine for the clinic. But after a meeting with the Chief Medical Officer it became apparent that this was not a practical proposition as it could only be operated by a doctor or radiographer. We had initially been told that nurses could be trained to use the machine. So we have had to put this project on the back burner until the clinic becomes a health centre which would have doctors.

At a meeting with the Regional Director of Health we discussed the ambulance situation. We proposed, subject to cost, that the Foundation would refurbish one of the ambulances awaiting repair at the District Hospital. However, we advised that we would only do this, if he could guarantee that the



ambulance would be permanently based at Catherine's clinic. He gave us this assurance, so we are now waiting for quotations.

## ***Good Hope Primary School and Hostel***

This is the school that St Mary's Senior Girls School in Colchester are supporting. They have now raised the necessary funds for an irrigation system for a large extension to the school garden and this is now being installed. Their next project will be to provide computers to be used by the children.

## ***Projects***

### **Donkerbos Primary School and Hostel**

The Foundation will fund the purchase of school uniforms for the marginalised San bushman children.

### **The Catherine Bullen Primary Healthcare Clinic**

The Foundation is planning to refurbish a Toyota Quantum ambulance to be permanently based at the clinic.

### **Clinic maintenance programme.**

In partnership with the relevant Regional Health Authorities, the Foundation has funded the following:



The Ministry of Works repairing the yard lights which have not worked for at least a year.

*Otjimanangombe Primary Healthcare Clinic* – Repairs to the Yard Lights, internal lighting and toilets.

*The Catherine Bullen Primary Healthcare Clinic* – Repairs to the toilets. Refurbishment of the hot water system which was clogged up with lime scale and had not been functioning for a number of years.

## ***News from Namibia***

### ***Drought rears its ugly head.***

While the UK was experiencing above average rainfall, the opposite has been happening in Namibia with a newly released report by the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform recommending that the government declare a national emergency. This follows the effects of drought findings across the country due to low rainfall.

The assessment was conducted in seven major northern communal crop producing regions between 12 February and 11 March 2024. Maize, millet, sorghum and wheat are estimated to be 53% lower than the last season's harvest. The dry spell has further negatively affected vegetation and water availability for livestock with deteriorating conditions expected to worsen

According to the Namibia Meteorological Service, the rainfall prediction for March to May 2024 indicates below normal rainfall over the bulk of the country. The Ministry is recommending that the government declare a drought or an emergency at national level.

We witnessed for ourselves the effect of the drought. A farmer friend was having to sell his sheep because of lack of grazing and as lots of farmers were doing the same thing, leading to prices tumbling. Another farmer showed us a photo of his grazing pasture reduced to a sandy waste due to lack of rainfall.

### ***Dr Hage Geingob (1941-2024)***

We were sad to learn of the passing of the President of Namibia, Dr Hage Geingob, just after midnight on 4 February as he was reported to be about to start chemotherapy for cancer.

Namibia has a new President in a typically peaceful process, as H.E. Nangolo Mbumba was sworn in as President and H.E. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah as Vice-President on the afternoon of 5 February. They will serve out the remaining term until 21 March 2025. Namibia expects elections in November 2024.

Dr Hage Geingob was a leading campaigner for Namibia's independence from his school days, then in exile in Botswana and from 1964 as SWAPO representative to the United Nations and the Americas, during which time he did a BA and MA. In 1975 he moved to Lusaka to start and head the United Nations Institute for Namibia, helping Namibians to study and prepare to be the future Government of their country.

After returning to Namibia in 1989 he was SWAPO's Director of Elections and later that year he was the Chair of the Constituent Assembly that brought the formerly-warring parties to work together to craft the Constitution that was unanimously adopted in February 1990 and has served Namibia so well.

In the early years after independence, as the first Prime Minister, Dr Hage Geingob's leadership was responsible for several key steps that helped set the tone of Namibia as a leading democracy in Africa and the world, with respect for rule of law and freedom of the press, and concern to help all Namibians advance.

In 2004 he studied for and was awarded a PhD at the University of Leeds for a thesis studying the evolution of Namibia's democracy. On a personal level, he is well known for his warmth, friendship, lively interest and humour, and for his leadership. As President, he has built a strong leadership team and continued to build and strengthen democratic institutions and governance.

The new President, H.E. Nangolo Mbumba (the former Vice President), is a very experienced leader with a giant track record of diplomacy, leadership and achievement.

*(Source: Friends of Namibia obituary)*



During the period of mourning, each Government establishment had a table of Remembrance. This is the one at Catherine's clinic.

We met Dr Hage Geinbob briefly last November during our trip with Chrissie and Coilin Westgate and after being briefed by Pijoo Nganate, the Governor of the Omaheke Region he was able to solve a couple of problems we had at the time relating to the delayed fencing of the borehole at Donkerbos and the over use of the ambulance with regards to Eiseb Clinic..

During our last visit which ended on 17 April, we were able to have dinner with the First Lady, Mrs Sustjie Mbumba hosted by the British High Commissioner, His Excellency Mr Charles Moore where we were able to brief her on the Foundation's current projects and describe our experiences during the current trip.

## ***Donations and Fundraising***

### ***Felixstowe Rotary Club***

In early February, we were guest speakers at the Felixstowe Rotary International Charity dinner and we gave a presentation on the Foundation's work. By the end of the evening, the Foundation received a very generous donation of £2,500 towards its projects in Namibia.

## ***Titash Fundraising Indian Lunch***

The Last time this event was held was in early 2020 and then Covid-19 struck. We were pleased to be given the opportunity to revive this popular lunch after a break of nearly four years. On Sunday 21 January, sixty-eight guests sat down to a superb meal provided by Dil and his staff. A total of £1,237 was raised including a raffle and the auctioning of two beach huts for the day. On the day, we also received a donation of £500 from the Premier League thanks to Chris and Kim Ball Way's son-in-law. We also would like to thank the Lion's and Kerry Millar's friend for the loan of the beach huts and those who donated raffle prizes. A special thank you to Dil and his staff for the lovely meal

### **Shop collections**

Since the last newsletter, we have carried out the following shop collections:

West Mersea Co-op - £123.33 (low figure due to atrocious weather)

West Mersea Tesco - £321.66

### **Other Events**

Mersea Island Lights Up - £432.70

Carols in the Pub, Dog and Pheasant, East Mersea - £236.51

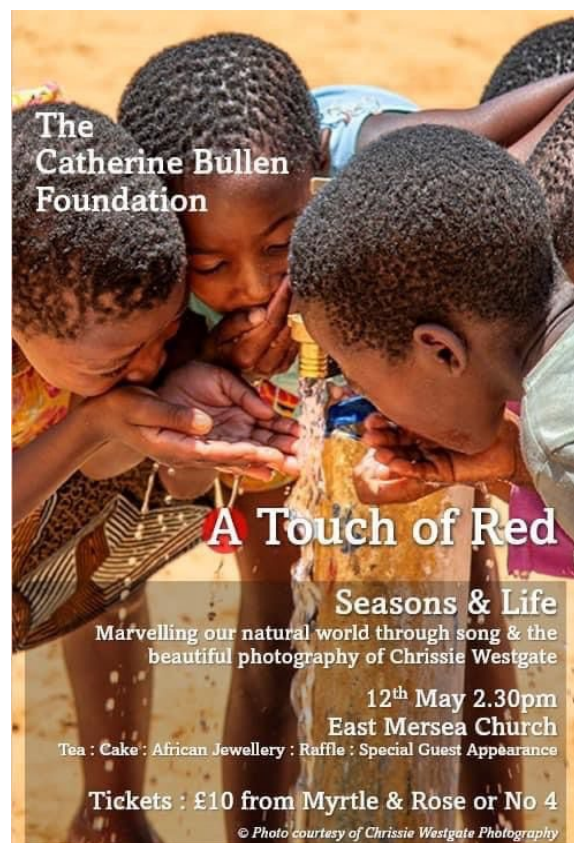
## ***Forthcoming Events***

We have the following events scheduled:

*Saturday 11 May*

West Mersea Tesco

*Sunday 12 May*



**The Catherine Bullen Foundation**

**A Touch of Red**

**Seasons & Life**  
Marvelling our natural world through song & the beautiful photography of Chrissie Westgate

12<sup>th</sup> May 2.30pm  
East Mersea Church

Tea : Cake : African Jewellery : Raffle : Special Guest Appearance

**Tickets : £10 from Myrtle & Rose or No 4**

© Photo courtesy of Chrissie Westgate Photography



*Saturday 25 May*  
Halstead Co-op

*Saturday 8 June*  
Felixstowe Co-op

*Saturday 15 June*  
Frinton Triangle

*Saturday 29/30 June*  
Colchester Food and Drink Festival – Homemade cakes

*Saturday 6 July*  
Stanway Co-op (Pear Tree Business Park)

*Saturday 27 July*  
Manningtree Co-op

*Sunday 4 August*  
Five Parishes Country Show – Publicity and sales stall

*Saturday 10 August*  
Brightlingsea Co-op

*Saturday 17 August*  
Lions Summer Show – Publicity and sales stall

*Sunday 25 August*  
Clacton Car Show – Publicity and sales stall

*Saturday 31 August*  
Woodbridge Co-op

*Friday 12 September*



*Saturday 7 December*  
West Mersea Co-op

*Saturday 21 December*  
West Mersea Tesco

## ***Donations***

It would be very much appreciated, if you feel you could support us with a donation for our projects in Namibia. As we are a UK charity working overseas, we are not eligible for any British Government grants.

It can be made online on our website [www.namibia-aid.org.uk](http://www.namibia-aid.org.uk) through 'justgiving' or 'Paypal'.

By sending a cheque made out to the Foundation to 15 Colchester Road, West Mersea, Colchester, Essex, CO5 8RS

Or you can donate by bank transfer to:

Account Name: The Catherine Bullen Foundation

Sort Code: 20-22-67

Account No: 53717690

## ***Regular giving***

Some of our donors have made a more formal arrangement by setting up a standing order to donate a regular monthly or yearly sum. For which we are extremely grateful. If you would like to support us in this way, please use the above banking details so that you can set it up.

## ***Presentations***

The Foundation is pleased to give presentations to groups and clubs on its work during the day or evenings.

## ***Make a difference!***

The Catherine Bullen Foundation is working with local communities to help build and nurture a new life for the people in rural Namibia. Because we are a small charity, our overheads are small and are personally covered by the trustees, so that every single penny donated to us goes to the intended project, with spending strictly monitored by the UK trustees and their ngo partner in Namibia. All visits to Namibia are self-financed and no charitable funds are used for this purpose. Please help us make a difference by making a donation, either online at [www.namibia-aid.org.uk](http://www.namibia-aid.org.uk) or sending it to the address below.

## ***How to contact us***

By Email: [info@namibia-aid.org.uk](mailto:info@namibia-aid.org.uk)

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By phone: 01206 383368 (inside UK) or 0044 1206 383368 (from outside UK)



## Donation/Gift Aid Declaration

(The Catherine Bullen Foundation – Registered Charity No. 1110516)

### Details of donor

Title..... Forename(s).....Surname.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Post Code.....

Signature.....

Date.....

I want the charity to treat

\*the enclosed donation of £..... as a Gift Aid donation

\*the donation(s) of £..... which I made on .... / .... / .... as (a) Gift Aid donation(s)

*\*delete as appropriate*

**You must pay an amount of Income and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the appropriate tax year. (currently 25p for each £1 you give).**