



# The Catherine Bullen Foundation

*Making a difference in rural Namibia*

## NEWSLETTER

No: 21

Summer 2014

### OSHIVELO SPECIAL

#### ***The Namibian Government keeps its promise and names the new Clinic at Oshivelo after Catherine.***

The story begins in July 2008, when we visited Namibia to open the clinic at Otjimanangombe which had been funded by the then Catherine Bullen Memorial Fund. On our arrival in Windhoek, accompanied by the British High Commissioner and Komeho representatives, we met with the First Lady, Penehupifo Pohamba, the wife of President Hifikepunye Pohamba and Dr Richard Kamwi, Minister of Health. We had previously met the First lady in London in 2007, so she was fully aware of the circumstances surrounding our visit. She expressed her thanks on behalf of the Namibian people for the provision of the clinic. Dr Kamwi then made a statement which took the meeting by surprise by announcing that provision was to be made in the 2009 budget to build a large new Health Facility at Oshivelo to replace the small outdated clinic where Catherine died and would be named after her.



The clinic at Otjimanangombe constructed by the Catherine Bullen Memorial Fund and opened in 2008 by the Minister of Health, Dr Richard Kamwi, where he promised to name the new clinic at Oshivelo after Catherine.

In October 2011, we had a meeting with the Permanent Health Secretary for an update on the situation and he advised that the new clinic would be a large Health facility. During our visit in March 2012 we saw a request for tenders for the clinic in a national newspaper and was told the following May that a decision was still to be made on the tenders. Nothing more was heard, until October 2013, when we spent some time in the Etosha National Park and on leaving mentioned that we were going to Oshivelo to lay some flowers for Catherine, as we do when we are in the area. On hearing this, the attendant at the gate said that we should go and have a look at the new clinic being built. Excited by this news we drove to the police station at Oshivelo to get permission to lay the flowers and they also told us about the new clinic. So off we went to have a look, and to our surprise, there was this large complex of buildings under construction. We managed to attract the attention of a young man in the compound who was washing his underwear and turned out to be the security guard named 'Armstrong'. Explaining who we were, he agreed to take us round. To say that we were pleasantly surprised was an understatement. On our return to Windhoek, we asked Komeho, our ngo, to make enquiries on our behalf regarding what was going on at Oshivelo. Their investigations turned up a letter that had been sent to us on 16 October 2012, but had never arrived. It advised that the clinic would comprise of twelve in-patient beds (six male and six female) and six casualty beds. It would have five consulting rooms and numerous specialist rooms. Envisaged completion at the time was September 2013. In February 2014, we were forwarded a letter to advise that the clinic was nearing completion and would be called 'Catherine Bullen Primary Health Care Clinic'. Seeing this brought it home to us that it was really happening.

So in March 2014, we visited the almost completed clinic again and were given another tour by Armstrong. One addition that we noticed was a large sign board outside the clinic, covered in black polythene hiding the name of the clinic. There was a temptation to have a sneak preview but this was resisted. Back in Windhoek we visited the Hon Dr Richard Kamwi, Minister of Health to thank him for keeping his promise and he told us to keep July free for the inauguration. As you can imagine that as soon as we got home we were on tenderhooks, eager to book our flights. On 6 June, we received a letter from the Minister advising that the inauguration would take place on 16 July 2014.



During our visit in March 2014 when Linda was tempted to take a peep

So on Wednesday 16 July at 05.30 am we found ourselves in the reception at the Minen Hotel in Tsumeb where we had stayed the previous night. With us were Rev Noleen West and her husband Robert, Gertrude Kavaca, the cleaner from our clinic at Otjimanangome, Mrs Nelago Kasuto,

Managing Director of Komeho and Mr Negumbo, the Chairman of Komeho. We left the hotel at around 06.00 am in the cold half light of a Namibian winter's morning with temperatures barely above freezing. As we drive out of Tsumeb, we pass the winding gear of what used to be a copper mine, now no longer in use. The town is now known for its smelter which converts ore from all over the continent and beyond. We join the B1, the main road to the north, with scrub and bush either side. Soon we come upon Lake Otjikoto, a deep limestone sinkhole, here in 1915, the retreating German army dumped weaponry and ammunition into the lake to prevent it falling into South African hands. Over the years, divers have brought cannons and ammunition wagons to the surface for display in museums. An hour into our journey, we pass the turning to Namutoni in the Etosha National Park and a sign with 'Oshivelo 23 kms'. Soon we approach Oshivelo with its informal settlement of shacks on the left as we approach a police checkpoint on what is known as the 'Red Line' This is a veterinary fence that separates the commercial cattle ranches of the south from the communal subsistence lands to the north as a precaution against disease. As a result, the 'Red Line' also marks the effective boundary between the developed and developing world. Today traffic is light, and the police wave us through. As we pass we see the police station and beside it the old clinic where Catherine died. Our eyes catch a covered up road sign, with the letters 'CA' visible, for a moment our hearts miss a beat – a road sign with Catherine's name on it! After the sign we turned right and passed the service station, a builder's warehouse and there we were in front of the clinic. A large marquee had been erected in its grounds facing the front door where the top table had been placed. But where was everybody? The programme advised that guests, the media and the community should arrive between 07.30 and 08.00, but we were the only ones here, except for those cooking the food. But then this is Africa and everyone works to Africa time.



The main building of the new clinic

We took the opportunity to eat our packed breakfasts provided by the Minen Hotel as slowly people started to appear. A lady from the Regional Health Authority came and directed us into the clinic staff room to wait for the other guests. It was not long before the Regional Director for Health, Oshikoto Region, Mr P Angala arrived and greeted us with a big hug. We knew him from when we opened our clinic at Otjimanangombe and he was pleased to see us. After a short time, we were ushered out to line up with other dignitaries and representatives of the police, army and prison officers to greet the Hon Dr Richard Kamwi, Minister of Health and Social Services. As we emerged we began to feel the heat of the sun against the clear blue sky. We were then all presented to the Minister and given another big hug, he was genuinely pleased to see us and for us to recognise that he had kept his promise. We were also introduced to the Governor of the region, the Hon. Penda Ya Ndakolo.



Meeting and greeting. The Minister of Health, Hon Dr Richard Kamwi is pleased to see us.



The top table, from the left, a Guinas Constituency Councillor, the Minister of Health and Social Services, Hon Dr Richard Kamwi, the Governor of the Oshikoto Region, the Hon Penda Ya Ndakolo and Linda and Roger Bullen

With us all having taken up our positions at the top table, proceedings began with the singing of the African Union and Namibian National Anthems followed by a prayer by Rev. J Haneb. We were then entertained by children from the local school performing a traditional dance.



Girls from the local school performing a traditional dance

Afterwards a representative from the Guinas Constituency welcomed everybody and introduced a second traditional dance performance. Then it was my turn to make my speech, full of mixed emotions of joy and sadness, I composed myself to deliver what will probably be the most challenging thing I have had to do since Catherine's death. I managed to get through it with a couple of wobbly moments concluding by thanking the Namibian government and the people of the Oshikoto region for naming the clinic after Catherine, in recognition of her continuing legacy to the Namibian people through the Foundation's work. I told the assembled audience that Catherine was described as a caring, compassionate person who was destined to become an outstanding doctor in the UK. I hoped that this impressive clinic will become a centre of excellence and an example to other clinics in Namibia.



My speech with Linda by my side. For the fashion experts, Linda's dress was made by Sylvia Kavari from Otjimanangombe and is a traditional Namibian dress.

The Rev Noleen West, who with her husband Robert have been dear friends since we first visited Namibia in 2003, when they accompanied us to carry out a small memorial service at the old Oshivelo clinic. Today, twelve years later they repeated that journey and Noleen said the following prayer

*'Dear Lord and heavenly Father, we give you thanks and praise for the many blessings you continuously give us. We thank you for this beautiful day and for the opening of this Catherine Bullen Clinic, which will be such a benefit to hundreds of people in this community. We especially thank you for Roger and Linda Bullen, who have turned the death of their daughter Catherine into a Foundation to support community projects of which many many Namibians are enjoying the fruits. We thank you for their courage and steadfastness in improving the lives of others in Namibia in spite of their tragedy and pain. We also thank you Lord that we are a resurrection people and that Catherine has risen to a life way, way beyond the joy and success she could have imagined or wished for. I know that Catherine is looking down and smiling on us now and saying well done to Roger and Linda. And we pray for a safe return home for all of us here today; and ask all this in the most wonderful name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.'*

It was then time for the Minister of Health and Social Services, the Hon. Dr Richard Kamwi to make his speech after being introduced by the Governor, Hon Penda Ya Ndakolo. In his speech he said that the clinic had been built by the government at a cost of £1,110,000 to serve the local community and travellers such as Catherine. He thanked the Bullens for their support with the many projects that they had carried out in the Omaheke region under the auspices of the Catherine Bullen Foundation, including a clinic at Otjimanangombe, refurbishment of the

dormitories and the construction of a kitchen at Omuhaturua Primary School Hostel, and most recently the provision of a dormitory at Eiseb Primary School Hostel, all at a total cost of £300,000. He invited the staff of the clinic to come up to be presented with a laminated copy of the oath they took when they qualified and asked them to join in a pledge to serve the patients in a professional manner.



The Governor of the Oshikoto region, Hon Penda Ya Ndakolo introducing the Minister of Health



The Minister of Health and Social Services, the Hon Dr Richard Kamwi delivers his speech.

A vote of thanks by the Oshivelo Headman, Mr Nation Nashikaku, was followed by a closing prayer from Rev J Haneb and the singing of the two anthems. It was then time to unveil the plaque on the front of the clinic and cut the ribbon.



The unveiling of the plaque outside the clinic

As we entered the clinic, the Minister of Health shouted to me, 'Come and see your granddaughter'. Slightly bemused and mystified, we followed him into the Delivery suite, where there sat a young mother holding her baby girl which had been born in the early hours of this morning. What the mother thought, god knows, having the Minister of Health, members of the armed forces and four white people descend on her without warning. The Minister enquired where was the father and then announced that the baby should be named Catherine!



Being introduced to baby 'Catherine'.



Rev Noleen West with 'Catherine'

It was then time to tour the clinic and see how large and well equipped it was before going outside to unveil the sign. Much to our relief everything was spelt correctly.



The main clinic sign



The six bed casualty ward

We moved on to inspect the nurse's accommodation and were told to our surprise that one unit had been put aside for our use. In another unit, we sat down for lunch consisting of pasta, meat and vegetables, before going to a meeting of Regional Health staff to discuss when we could come back to Oshivelo and take up the offer of the accommodation. We advised that it would be probably next year as our next visit is already planned, but since coming home we have managed to squeeze in a week there. So it now looks as if we will have to split ourselves between the Omaheke and Oshivelo.



One of the wards

Linda ready for action (not quite the regulation uniform)





The Clinic's ambulance station



The nurse's accommodation that has been allocated to the Foundation

The final task of the day was to go to the main road and unveil the two huge road signs proclaiming Catherine's clinic to those travelling the road in both directions. So ended an emotional and memorable day.

The clinic inauguration was reported on Namibian TV News, radio and the national press. In the UK in the Bristol Post, East Anglian Daily Times, and the Gazette and it also featured on BBC Look East.

The Bristol Post commented, *'Despite her tragic early death Catherine will always be remembered. Thanks to her parent's fundraising and the Namibian Government who have named a health clinic after her. Tragically she never lived to become the brilliant doctor her tutors at Bristol University envisaged. But how fitting that her name will now be forever associated with caring people and saving lives'*



One of the road signs indicating the presence of a clinic. Far right is the Hon Governor of the Oshikoto region, Hon Penda Ya Ndakolo, next to him is Mr P C Angala, Regional Director of the Oshikoto Health Authority and with us are his staff.

We would like to thank everybody who has and is still supporting the Foundation in its work in Namibia as without you, the clinic would not have been named after Catherine in recognition of the Foundation's projects. Also we would like to acknowledge the help and assistance we have received from the Komeho Namibia Development Agency.



From the left: Mrs Gertrude Kavaka from Otjimanangombe, Mrs Nelago Kasuto, Managing Director of Komeho, Mr Negumbo, Chairman of Komeho outside the side entrance to the clinic.

### ***Eiseb dormitory update***

In our last newsletter we reported that construction of the new dormitory was almost complete and that we were waiting for the water supply to be connected. In June 2014, a water tower was constructed and a tank placed on top of it which was subsequently connected to the dormitory. During our visit after the clinic inauguration, we were again disappointed to see the lack of progress by the contractor working on the Namibian German Special Initiative Programme's (NGSIP) project at Eiseb. They are providing the septic tank for all the dormitories, ours included, and this has not been built. NGSIP are also providing beds and bedding for our dormitory which are held up waiting for completion of their buildings. They are now working to a completion date of October 2014 and we hope to open our dormitory in the November.



Our dormitory and Eiseb and the newly constructed water tower and tank

### ***Proposed Eiseb Primary School Hostel kitchen***

As mentioned in our last newsletter we are hoping to purchase a shop/warehouse that is for sale adjacent to the hostel, which the school would like us to buy to convert into a kitchen and dining hall. The current situation is that we are waiting for the Ministry of Works to carry out a valuation on the property, so that we can negotiate a price with the owner. We have also requested an estimate based on the layout of the kitchen that we built at the hostel at Otjimanangombe. Progress has been made by the school in that they have got the 'Community' to donate the land on which the shop stands to the Hostel.

When we last visited Eiseb in March 2014, we distributed school uniforms to the children which had been donated by a company in Colchester. The dresses that were donated are now worn by the school choir who performed for us this time, together with some San Bushman children who performed a traditional dance.



The San Bushman children with pencils donated by Naomi Paul



The choir in their dresses

## ***The Catherine Bullen Hostel, Omuhaturua***

### ***Chicken update***

We are pleased to report that 17 chickens and a cockerel have been purchased with more to follow. They are laying eggs, some of which are being sold to the community.



Hostel 'matron' Follo with the chickens



One of the children looking after the chickens proudly shows off the eggs.

## ***Fund raising***

### **China smashing stalls**

We still have a number of events scheduled for our china smashing stall, the next one being at the Clacton Classic Car Show on Sunday 24 August. The stall has raised £754 so far this year and given people a lot of fun. Thanks to everyone who keeps us supplied with china.

### **Shop Collections**

Thanks to the East of England Co-op Society we are again collecting at various stores throughout the year. Our next collection is at the Halstead Co-op store on Saturday 6 September. So far this year the amount collected has totalled £1,004.

### **Car Boot Sales**

The weather and other commitments have meant that we have attended a limited number of sales at Waldegraves, West Mersea. Unfortunately, the Sunday when we were allocated the proceeds from the car park fell victim to the weather when the sale was cancelled. Thanks to our volunteers who turned out on the day. So far this year, the amount raised is £332.

### **Mersea Island Food, Drink and Leisure Festival – Home made Cake Stall**

This was held over the May Bank Holiday weekend on Saturday 25/Sunday 26 May and again we had our home made Cake Stall which proved as successful as ever thanks to all the people who supplied us with cakes. Over the two days we raised £630. Thanks to Lil Clarke and Nicky Wilmott who helped on the stall.

## ***Schools***

### **The TCES Group**

This Group runs four schools in London and Essex for autistic children and those with learning and behavioural problems. It has supported the Foundation for a number of years.

The children have produced artwork which has been turned into canvas prints measuring 50cm wide by 60 cm which the Foundation is selling for £20 each. Some have already been sold (monkey and the oryx), so if you would like one please contact us.



Poster depicting the canvas prints created by the students.

A number of schools in the area continue to support the Foundation. We are extremely grateful for the support we are receiving from the following schools.

**St Mary's Junior School, Colchester**

**Mersea Island School**

**Colchester County High School for Girls**

**TCES Group**

In Namibia: **The International School of Windhoek**

## ***Presentations***

The Foundation is pleased to give presentations to groups and clubs on its work. Now Roger and Linda are retired, they are not restricted to just evenings. So if you are looking for a speaker please contact us.

## ***Donations***

On Thursday 10 July, we were again guests of the Frinton Rotary Club whose International branch have been great supporters of the Foundation and its work in Namibia. During the evening we were presented with a cheque for £1,000 towards our kitchen project at Eiseb Primary School Hostel for which we are very grateful.



Receiving the £1,000 cheque on behalf of the Foundation from Keith Hockridge, the International Committee Chairman.

We have continued to receive individual donations, both large and small, which is very much appreciated. Each donation receives an acknowledgement of thanks from the Foundation and through this newsletter we would like to thank you again for your continued support.

## **Forthcoming Events**

### **Sea Food Supper**

On Saturday 11 October we are holding our ever popular sea food supper at The Company Shed, West Mersea. Tickets are £21 each. Just ring Linda on 01206 383368 or 07771 630928 or email [roger@mersea48.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:roger@mersea48.freeserve.co.uk)

At the date of going to press, we have the following events planned

*Sunday 24 August 2014*

Clacton Car Show – China Smashing Stall

*Saturday 6 September 2014*

Shop Collection – Halstead Co-op Supermarket

*Sunday 7 September 2014*

Colchester Lions Transport Show – China Smashing Stall

*Saturday 4 October 2014*

Shop Collection – Stanway Co-op Supermarket, Pear Tree Business Park

*Saturday 11 October 2014*

Sea food supper at the Company Shed. Tickets £21.

*Sunday 19 October 2014*

Bristol Medical Students (Galenicals) charity bar crawl bucket collection for the Foundation.

*Saturday 13 December 2014*

Shop Collection – West Mersea Co-op Supermarket

If you would like to help at any of the above or organise an event in support of the Foundation, please let us know. We will add events to our list on the website and in the next newsletter.

## **Website News**

We are in the process of updating our website at [www.namibia-aid.org.uk](http://www.namibia-aid.org.uk). One of the things we have already updated is donating on the site. We have gone into partnership with an organisation that administers 'Charity Checkout'. Many charities are using this method and it has the advantage of adding Gift Aid to the donation increasing the amount you have donated by 25% if you are a UK tax payer. It also allows you to register to make a donation on a monthly basis.

This is only available for people living in the UK, for those donating from the rest of the world, they should carry on using the current Paypal method.

## ***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 on line at [www.namibia-aid.org.uk](http://www.namibia-aid.org.uk) or sending it to the address below.

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

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## **Donation/Gift Aid Declaration**

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

### **Details of donor**

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

Address.....  
.....  
.....

Post Code.....

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).**

