



The Catherine Bullen Foundation

Making a difference in rural Namibia

NEWSLETTER

No: 48

Spring 2023

Another successful visit

It is unbelievable how time flies, no sooner had we returned to the UK at the end of November last year, we were back on the plane again to Namibia in February.

One of our tasks during our visit was to open the multi-purpose hall at Omuhaturua Primary School and hostel which will be described later.

While in Windhoek we had to deal with a number of issues, such as tracking down a valve for our solar geyser at our accommodation in Otjimanangombe Clinic and visiting a medical equipment company for a quotation for emergency equipment for the ambulance. We also visited the Nursing Council of Namibia so Linda could pay her 'dues' to allow her to carry on nursing in Namibia especially in the clinics at Otjimanangombe and Oshivelo where we were to spend four weeks at each.

We also had dinner again with the British High Commissioner, Mr Charles Moore accompanied by our good friends David and Charlotte from ATI Travel. One of the subjects discussed was the increase in Namibians travelling to the UK and claiming political asylum. As Namibia is a stable country, the main reason for this is an economic one with youth unemployment running at just under 50%. As this is not a valid reason for asylum, those arriving will eventually be deported back to Namibia. We also briefed him on the Foundation's projects.

The opening of the multi-purpose hall for Omuhaturua Primary School and Hostel, Otjimanangombe

The construction of the hall was described in our last newsletter which was completed at the end of November. The community and the school then waited patiently for our return to carry out the official opening. While in the UK we had organised the purchase of the chairs and tables, the latter really going to the wire with 180 chairs arriving just days before the opening.

Before we left last time, we decided to name the hall, 'The Steve Kavari Hall' in recognition of the late principal's contribution to the school and we purchased a plaque which was placed at the entrance. We also purchased a new sign for the hostel which is named after Catherine. The school had a large sign painted on the end gable, together with a big portrait of the principal on the side of the hall.

The hall was handed over by the Foundation on Tuesday 7 March. Amongst those in attendance were the Director of Education for the Omaheke Region, Ms Wantenaar, the Inspector of Education, Mr Kavari, Constituency Councillors Mr Paki Pakarae and Mr Wenzel Kavaka, Mr Pecka Semba from the Regional Council, traditional leaders and Principals from neighbouring schools.

The proceedings started at 09.45 with speeches and performances from the school choir and San dancers. We and the Foundation were praised for what we had achieved, especially the speech by Pecka Semba which was quite emotional. Linda read out a speech from the British High Commissioner who was unable to attend and the final speech was made by Mrs Sylvia Kavari, the acting Principal. At the end of proceedings we went out of the hall and unveiled Steve Kavari's portrait and officially cut the ribbon to formally open the hall.



Top left: Gable end of the hall with the inscription.

Top right: The portrait on the side of the hall.

Bottom left: The sign at the hall entrance.

Bottom right: the new hostel sign



The San children's dancing troupe performing a traditional dance.



Acting Principal, Mrs Sylvia Kavari making the closing speech.



The day after the opening 230 pupils who stay at the hostel enjoyed their first meal in the new hall.

We also introduced the children to table tennis. Linda and I gave a demonstration match to teach them how to play. Having not played for over thirty years, it was a bit of a 'hit and miss' affair. (Excuse the pun). Much to everyone's delight, Linda won.

Our thanks go to Noleen and Robert West who donated the table and the accompanying equipment.



Otjimanangombe Primary Healthcare Clinic and the ambulance

After spending a week in Windhoek, we journeyed on to the Omaheke regional capital, Gobabis and then to Otjimanangombe and to the clinic arriving on Sunday 19 February. After settling in, we learned that the SEN nurse Frieda was on leave until 6 March and the other nurse, Linea was going to Gobabis with a patient in the morning. So on Lin's first day she was thrown in at the deep end in charge of the clinic. So for the next fortnight, whenever Linea had to go with a patient to Gobabis which was quite often, Lin was on her own. Thankfully, the other members of staff were very helpful, especially with translating for those patients who did not speak English. When Frieda returned the situation did not improve as Linea went off to a workshop for a week.



Left: The busy waiting area. Right: Linda with Sister Linea and SEN Frieda. Below: The minor damage to the ambulance caused by hitting a goat. Photo on the right showing the substantial ARB bumper fitted to prevent this happening again.



Unfortunately, while we were there the ambulance which we donated was in Windhoek for repairs after hitting a goat. The damage was superficial, but the opportunity was taken to fit a more robust ARB bumper to give better protection. The repairs and the bumper were paid for by the Ministry of Health. We are pleased to report that the ambulance is now back at the clinic and the Foundation will be funding emergency equipment for it.

During this period, it meant that the clinic had to resort to a Land Cruiser Bakkie with a mattress in the back which was prone to breaking down. In one such incident, the vehicle went to pick up a young girl who had been bitten by a snake and then broke down. Prior to its arrival a traditional healer had cut open the wound and had placed cows milk and dung into it. With the arrival of the Bakkie the nurse rigged up a drip and administered an anti-venom injection while they waited to be rescued from the bush, five hours later. The child recovered, none the worse for her ordeal.

Eiseb Primary School and Hostel

We visited this school on Wednesday 22 February which was around a two hour drive on gravel roads. This was the hostel where the Foundation built a 40 bed girls dormitory, a kitchen and a large covered dining area. We had a short meeting with the Principal, Mr Marenga, his secretary and the new Head of Department. Ms Berlin Mujoro. They now have 450 pupils at the school with a lot of them being San. Many have no school uniforms or socks and shoes and we asked Berlin to get a quote for the uniforms. We then inspected the buildings that the Foundation had built and all seemed well. Finally we watched the children being served and eating lunch.



The children being served a lunch of meat and maize porridge.

We have since received a quote for 140 sets of uniforms and winter jerseys, which the Foundation will fund.

Donkerbos Primary School and Hostel

On Wednesday 1 March, we took a two hour drive on gravel roads to visit Donkerbos Primary School and hostel. This was the school where the Foundation successfully drilled two boreholes in April 2022. During our last visit in September 2022, we discovered there were no funds to connect the borehole tank to the dormitory's toilets and showers and therefore the Foundation provided the money for this to be done. So on this visit we were keen to see what progress had been made.

We were met at the gate by a welcoming party of pupils and teachers and the new Principal, Patience introduced herself, having only taken up the post in the last month. We proceeded to the dormitories to find that although the showers and the toilets had been connected, they were not in use due to leaks and the drains backing up in both the girls and boys dormitories. Accompanying us was a member of staff from the Constituency Council and having seen the situation, agreed to contact the Ministry of Works to come and assess what work needed to be done and give a quotation. Apparently the septic tank had never been emptied as the school could not afford contractors to do it. Following on from this visit, we have now received a quotation and the Foundation will fund the work which we will inspect when we return in September.

Then we inspected the classrooms where some of the children were sitting on breeze blocks and sharing desks. After our visit we reported this to the Regional Director of Education which has resulted in additional chairs and tables being delivered to the school during this month.

The good news from Donkerbos, is that the Constituency Councillor, Mr Kavaka has managed to secure funding to equip the other borehole that the Foundation drilled. This will provide water for a community garden, not only providing produce for the community but also to the hostel kitchen. The funds will also pay for the construction of a security fence around each borehole.



Pupils sitting on breeze blocks due to lack of chairs.

Good Hope Primary School and Hostel

This is the school that St Mary's Senior Girls School in Colchester are supporting and we paid a visit on Tuesday 14 March. There we met Zebald ('Zebby') Tjitunga one of the teachers and spent some time with him discussing St Mary's latest project to supply some of the pupils with socks and shoes. He asked whether St Mary's could also supply some jackets for the winter. Also discussed was the setting up of some sort of communications network between the school and St Mary's. Since we have returned back to the UK, funds have been sent to the school for 133 pairs of socks and shoes and St Mary's are now fundraising for the jackets.

LifeLine Clinic feeding programme for the San

After leaving Good Hope Primary School we drove to Epukiro to visit the LifeLine Clinic. This is a private clinic which is primarily serving the local San bushman community. They have a feeding programme which feeds the women and children twice a week with a meal consisting of meat and maize porridge. We usually make a point of visiting the clinic on one of these days to help out and to say hello to Nurse Anna who we have known for many years.



While we were there we distributed some woolly hats to the mothers and children that had been knitted by local Mersea ladies.

Gobabis Hospital Premature Baby Unit

During one of our weekends in Gobabis we visited the Premature baby unit to donate some Baby clothes that had been knitted by Carol Boreham. There we saw twins Petrus and Jacob who had been born prematurely and both mother and babies were doing well.



Twins Petrus and Jacob snuggling up in the donated baby clothes.

The Catherine Bullen Primary Healthcare Clinic, Oshivelo

Having spent four weeks at the Otjimanangombe Clinic, we then drove north to Catherine's clinic at Oshivelo where we would spend another four weeks. As previously mentioned this is a very busy clinic with 80 to 100 patients a day. However this total was even surpassed on the Tuesday after the Easter weekend when 166 attended and through the dedication of its staff, each patient was seen with the clinic only being open slightly longer.

On arriving at the clinic, we noticed at night that the grounds were in complete darkness and the nurses had to use the torch on their phone to see their way from their accommodation to the clinic. The reason for this was that the bulbs had expired in ten yard lights and nine security lights on the clinic. So the Foundation purchased some new bulbs and the Ministry of Health supplied the labour to fit them. Now no doubt you can see the clinic from the Space station!

The clinic is still without a dedicated ambulance and relies on a staff minibus to take patients to hospital which is no good for serious cases. Two incidents while we were there showed up the weakness of not having a proper ambulance at the clinic. Firstly, an army Land Cruiser with soldiers sitting in the open back, burst a tyre and rolled over throwing the passengers out of the vehicle with one even landing over the fence of the Etosha National Park. This resulted in three soldiers being killed and four being seriously injured. The clinic's minibus attended with two nurses, but was unable to transport the seriously wounded who had to wait for an ambulance to come from Omuthya Hospital some 60 kms away.

The second incident, was a mother pregnant with twins, who was brought to the clinic with extremely low blood pressure and fitting. The nurses did all they could to save her but both she and the twins she was carrying died. If there had been an ambulance, there may have been the possibility of rushing her to

hospital and perhaps saving the twins with a caesarean. An ambulance arrived from the nearest town which is an hour away just as she died, we were to learn later from a ruptured placenta. During her pregnancy the lady had been told to stay near the hospital in Tsumeb because she was at risk, but she had eight other children and could not afford to go.



Linda and the nursing staff at the Catherine Bullen Primary Healthcare Clinic

On a lighter note, while at the clinic, Roger works on reception. One morning two ladies appeared, and the standard question is always 'are you sick' To which one of the ladies replied 'no she is in labour. She was rushed to the delivery room and gave birth to a baby girl within 30 minutes of arriving and later went home the same day.

Fundraising

Clacton Bereavement Club.

At the beginning of February we visited the Clacton Bereavement club and gave them an update on the Foundation's projects. A donation from the club and sales of San jewellery resulted in £172 being raised.

West Mersea Car Boot

On Sunday 8 May, we manned to gate and collected £141 for the Foundation's projects. Our grateful thanks to Tina for giving us a slot and Nicky and Graham for their help.

Shop collections

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

Morrisons Little Clacton – 131.32

West Mersea Co-op - £255

West Mersea Tesco - £190

A big thank you to Kim, Paul, Elish, Sandra, Shirley, and Mike for their help. A full list of forthcoming collections is on page 12 and 13.

Donation by the Luton North Inner Wheel

In January prior to us travelling to Namibia, we travelled to Luton to give a presentation to the ladies of the Luton North Inner Wheel who had been fundraising for the Foundation. While we were there we were presented with a cheque for £600.



Linda and Roger receiving a cheque for £600 from Rona Wakefield, on the right, from the Luton North Inner Wheel.

China Smashing

We have decided to carry on with this stall for one more year and desperately now need more china. If you are able to donate china (no pyrex or glass please), please give us a ring on 01206 383368 before dropping any off at the house. Also if you are able to help at one of the events, it would be greatly appreciated A full list of forthcoming events which will be attended by the china smashing stall is on pages 12 and 13.

Fundraising lunches

We had hoped to revive the Indian Lunch at Titash this year which probably would have been in September. However, after giving it some thought and taking into account some people might still be on holiday, we hope to revert to our original spot at the beginning of February 2024. The same goes for the Seafood Supper which we hope to hold in early September 2024.

Forthcoming Events

We have the following events scheduled:

Sunday May 21 2023

China Smashing – Clacton Car Show

Saturday May 27 2023

Halstead Co-op

Monday 29 May 2023

China Smashing – Colchester Hospital Radio Fun Day, Lower Castle Park

Saturday 10 June 2023

Felixstowe Co-op Supermarket

Saturday 17 June 2023

Frinton Triangle

Saturday 24 June & Sunday 25 June 2023

Home made Cake Stall, Colchester Food and Drink Fair, Castle Park.

Home made cakes wanted. So if you can bake a cake. Please get in touch.

Saturday 22 July 2023

Stanway Co-op Supermarket

Saturday 29 July 2023

Manningtree Co-op Supermarket

Sunday 6 August 2023

China smashing – Five Parishes show

Saturday 12 August 2023

China smashing – Lions Summer Show

Saturday 19 August 2023

Brightlingsea Co-op Supermarket

Sunday 20 August 2023

Round the Island Yard Sale

Saturday 26 August 2023

Woodbridge Co-op Supermarket

Sunday 27 August 2023

China smashing – Clacton Car Show

Sunday 3 September 2023

China smashing – Brightlingsea Scouts car show

Saturday 9 December 2023
West Mersea Co-op Supermarket

Saturday 23 December 2023
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 on line on our website 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 on line at www.namibia-aid.org.uk or sending it to the address below.

How to contact us

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The Catherine Bullen Memorial Prize

Since Catherine's death in 2002, we have presented a prize in her memory to her old school, Colchester County High School for Girls. On Tuesday 9 May, Roger visited the school and attended the assembly for those who are leaving this term. He presented the prize to Annabel Brookes who is going on to study medicine at either Southampton or Leicester University.



Roger presenting the Catherine Bullen Memorial Prize to Annabel Brookes

Donation/Gift Aid Declaration

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

Details of donor

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

Address.....

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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)

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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).