



The Catherine Bullen Foundation

Making a difference in rural Namibia

NEWSLETTER

No: 20

Spring 2014

Journey to Eiseb and a new dormitory!

In our last newsletter we reported that construction of the new dormitory was due to start in mid January 2014. This was delayed to the end of that month and we were keen to see progress. We had heard that construction was well advanced but the builders were still waiting for the Ministry of Works to inspect the foundations! This filled us with some trepidation as we had heard that the Namibian German Special Initiative Programme's (NGSIP) project at Eiseb had been condemned due to poor workmanship and they had been ordered to demolish and start again.

So today (Tuesday 4 March) was to be the day when we were to meet up on site with the 'men from the Ministry'. We had experienced heavy rain during the night, but this morning there was sunshine and clear blue skies for our 170 km drive to Eiseb. Our vehicle was a Toyota Hilux double cab 4x4 and we started our journey with two passengers, Ernest Tong, the TB Community Health worker from the clinic who acted as our interpreter and the Headmaster's farm manager who we were taking back to the farm. We left Otjimanangombe at around 09.00 am and it wasn't long before we started picking up people along the road who Ernest knew (it amazes us that there are always people walking along the road with dense 'bush' either side for miles, with no indication where they have come from and their destination). Our additional passengers were a San bushman going to nearby Vormansput, an elderly gentleman going to the 'gate' and Roger's granddad (Roger was the first baby born at the clinic) wanting a lift to Eiseb. It soon became obvious that the previous night's rain had made the gravel road somewhat treacherous as we slid across from one side to the other and ended up broadside across the road. We then had to take it slowly until conditions improved. This was somewhat different to last October when we had driven to Eiseb when everything was as dry as a bone. Now all had changed with the coming of the rains and everywhere was green again. Our next encounter was a road block set up by the Ministry of Agriculture and manned by local lads to prevent the movement of cattle, meat and dairy products due to an outbreak of foot and mouth in Botswana. Ernest knew them all and we were soon on our way. As we drove on we had to avoid large numbers of birds of prey which were on the road eating beetles. It was not long before we arrived at the settlement of Okatumba also known as the 'gate', due to it sitting on the border between Epukiro and Eiseb constituencies. It consists of a few rough brick buildings and tin shacks on one side of the road and a shop and cattle pens on the other. Each fortnight, there is a cattle auction at the pens where the local subsistence farmers bring their cattle to be sold to the large meat companies and earn valuable cash to survive. As we passed through the 'gate' and went to the left, a single track to the right into the bush was sign posted 'Border 156 kms'. This is the Botswana border, but there is no crossing open there.



The settlement at Okatumba, known as the 'gate'

We soon left the main road and travelled 15 kms into the bush on a single sandy track with grass waist high each side to take the Headmaster's farm manager home. This done, we retraced our steps to the main road and settled down for the rest of the journey, relieved that the road surface had improved. Wildlife encountered on the way included Dik-Dik and Steinbook (types of small deer), jackals and baboons. We also came across a large flock of vultures feeding on the carcass of a Honey Badger. As we drove, we viewed this huge expanse of 'bush' which stretches as far as the eye can see in all directions, with the soil texture changing to the red sands of the Kalahari. With noon approaching we finally arrived at Eiseb and made our way to the school and hostel. The 'men from the Ministry' were already there and they looked happy with the quality of work on our dormitory, so a sigh of relief all round.



Our dormitory well on the way to completion.

What was disappointing was the lack of activity on the showers, toilets and two smaller dormitories being built by the NGSIP. Also, we discovered that the septic tank that we will share was too small and the matter will have to be raised with them. There then followed a meeting with the Ministry, Eric Barth of Rydox Builders and Mr Marenga, the headmaster. All was well

except everyone was frustrated with the NGSIP. We said our farewells advising we would be back in a fortnight to view progress. Stopped at the clinic to say hello to the nurse who very proudly showed us around the clinic and her vaccination graphs. Final stop was the village shop to purchase drinks kept in an elderly gas run refrigerator. The shop has basic foodstuffs and household items stored on wooden shelves behind a metal grill and the atmosphere inside was stifling. After an uneventful return trip, we arrived back at Otjimanangombe at 16.40.

A fortnight later on Tuesday 25 March, we were again off to Eiseb. Our starting point this time was the Lifeline Clinic in Epikuro, a private clinic run by the N/a'ankuse Foundation primarily for the San Bushman families. This was our base for two weeks after leaving Otjimanangombe and our passenger this time was Dr Tim Thornton, a retired GP from Yorkshire, who comes to the clinic as often as he can to volunteer his services. We left just after 08.00 am, and again due to heavy rain the previous night the road as far as the 'gate' was in a treacherous condition. Luckily, it improved and we arrived in Eiseb around 11.00 am. Unfortunately both the headmaster and deputy head were attending a workshop in Gobabis, the regional capital, but we were well looked after by one of the teachers, Mr Hoveka. After much searching the keys to our new dormitory were found and we were impressed with the work that had been done since our last visit.



Top: External view. Bottom left: shower and wash area. Bottom centre: Toilet. Bottom right: Interior view.

With the building finished, all that needs to be done is to provide water from the borehole which will be completed in May and connect to the septic tank. There lies the problem, NGSIP had still not been on site and it was recognised that the half completed tank was too small. A call to the NGSIP representative revealed that their Eiseb project was now at the bottom of their schedule and would not be completed until October. This is completely unacceptable to the Foundation and representations are being made for an earlier completion.



The three partially finished buildings of the NGSIP project, currently scheduled to complete in October 2014.

We then turned our attention to 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. It would require extending and the Foundation is looking at this as one of the possibilities to provide these facilities for the hostel.



The shop/warehouse which is a possible candidate to convert to a kitchen and dining hall.

Our final task at Eiseb was to distribute school uniforms to the children which had been donated by a company in Colchester, but more of this later.

The Catherine Bullen Hostel, Omuhaturua

Due to the large amount of work that the Foundation has carried out at the hostel at the Omuhaturua Primary School in Otjimamangombe, the hostel has been named after Catherine for some years and a small sign was erected on the end of the boy's dormitory. Because the sign was deteriorating, Roger and Linda decided to privately fund a replacement which was duly erected in March.



The new hostel sign with Roger, one of the hostel matrons, Cornelius, Follo, Linda, Paul Foley and Erwin.

Kitchen update

On our last visit with the help of Joe Morgan, our UK volunteer, we sealed the kitchen floor with industrial floor paint, but returning in March we saw that this had not been successful and it was decided to tile the floor which was done during our stay. We had also noted on our previous visit that the kitchen soak away was not effective due to bedrock stopping the waste water dispersing causing the appearance of a stagnant pool which was a health hazard. After consulting our architect it was decided to put in a septic tank connected to a French Drain overflow with the architect funding half the cost, and again this was completed during our visit.



The newly tiled kitchen floor



The septic tank under construction

Chicken update

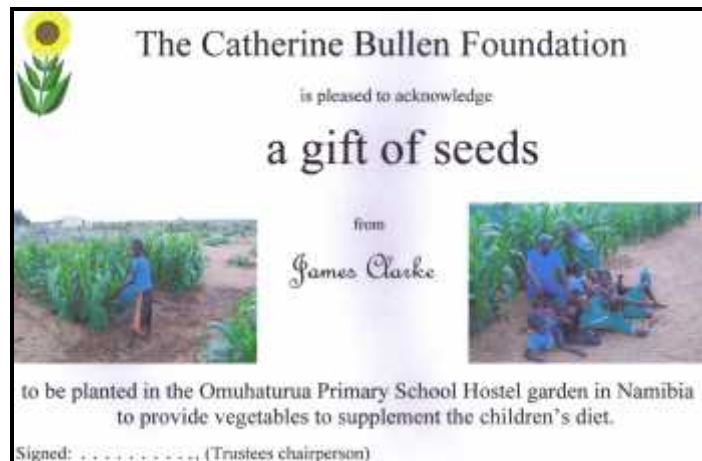
Since our last visit, progress has been made on the construction of the chicken run, known locally as the 'henery' or 'chicken cottage'. It is hoped to have the chickens in residence in the next few weeks. Thanks to everyone again who donated chickens.



The partially completed chicken run.

'Sow a Seed' programme update

During our last visit we purchased onion, carrot, spinach and pumpkin seeds and these have since been planted by the Hostel Gardening Club.



Above: Our 'Gift certificate' to acknowledge a donation for seeds of £5 and upwards.

Below: Pumpkin plants and carrots in the hostel garden from the seeds provided during our last visit.



Otjimanangombe Primary Healthcare Clinic

Since the clinic opened in July 2008, there has only been one nurse, which has meant that the clinic was unable to reach its full potential in the services it could offer. This was rectified by the Ministry of Health at the end of last year when Grace Marata a registered nurse from Zimbabwe joined the clinic and we are very pleased to welcome her to that post. This has meant that the second nurse's accommodation at the clinic where we usually stay is no longer available for us. Luckily, through the kindness of Steve Kavari, the headmaster and his wife Sylvia, we were able to stay in a spare room in their house during our last visit which was very much appreciated.



Linda and Grace the new second nurse at the clinic.

Medical Outreach into the 'bush'

As on previous visits, we undertook a medical outreach trip into the bush and as before the Ministry of Health provided a Hilux 4x4 and a driver. Luckily, this time it was a double cab so passengers had a more comfortable ride. Before leaving for the day, the vehicle was loaded with all the necessary drugs and equipment. Travelling with us was Angeline, the clinic nurse and Ernest, the TB community worker. We left at 09.00 and travelled along the gravel road towards Eiseb before turning on to a single track into the bush. Our destination was a settlement called Ozondorura some 60 kms away.



The 'road' to Ozondorura

On the way we visited a number of homesteads and as well as tending to their medical problems, we gave out blankets and knitted hats where we felt there was a need. At one place we came upon a teenage disabled lad crawling on the ground on all fours with sores on his bottom due to

sitting on wet dirty sand. On our return, we would make enquiries about getting a wheelchair for him. Below are photos recording our trip.



Blankets donated



A typical homestead



The disabled lad



Linda examining a patient



Distributing knitted items to the San and local children.

N/a'ankuse Foundation- Lifeline Clinic

As previously mentioned after our fortnights stay at Otjimamangobe we journeyed 80 kms along the road to the Lifeline Clinic in Epikuro, a private clinic run by the N/a'ankuse Foundation primarily for the San Bushman families. Here, for two weeks, we were the guests of Dr Tamsin Bell and her team. Also staying there were father and daughter, Paul and Kerry Foley from New Zealand and Australia respectively who were volunteering with the N/a'ankuse Foundation and Dr Tim Thornton, a retired GP from Yorkshire, who comes to the clinic as often as he can to volunteer his services. Linda was able to help at both this clinic and the state clinic next door and also take part in outreach trips to the school hostels at Post 10 and Post 13 and a workers clinic at the Harnas Wildlife Foundation. As well as treating the San Bushman for the usual ailments there was a huge emphasis on health education for the prevention of the spread of TB and the early detection of the disease. Once detected, there was then the task to ensure that medication was taken on a regular basis and that the patient did not default. We were very grateful to be at the clinic and experience their work.



Dr Tim Thornton talking to the San Bushman families at Witbank Farm on TB prevention



Outreach trips to the School Hostel at Post 10 and the Harnas Wildlife Foundation
Left: Linda and Dr Tamsin Bell. Right: Dr Tim Thornton examining a San boy at Harnas

Our container dreams are answered

Each time we travel to Namibia, we each have one suitcase, so one has our personal belongings and the other has what knitted items we can stuff into it. This has meant that up until now we have only been able to take part of the goods donated to us. Last year two of our supporters put us in touch with a lady whose husband worked for Colchester based, Wren Schoolwear Ltd who donated around eight large boxes of school uniforms which would be ideal for Eiseb. On top of that we were given two large dustbin bags of T-shirts and more knitted blankets. Last October, we met up with a Land Rover specialist in Windhoek, and in between talking about Land Rovers he mentioned that periodically he had a container come over from the UK with bits and pieces. At this point Linda woke up and arrangements were made for us to have some space in the next container. So on a cold and wet January morning we drove to Harlow with fifteen bin bags full of items to be stuffed into the container. The ship arrived in Walvis Bay, Namibia in early March and we picked up our bin bags from a freight warehouse in Windhoek. So a big thank you to Ollie for the container space and Gregory Camm of Woker Freight Services for transporting and storing the items free of charge. Here are some of the recipients from the shipment



Small knitted baby clothes donated to the Premature Baby Unit at Gobabis Hospital



The school children at Eiseb receiving their school uniforms.

Towards the end of our visit we travelled to Rundu in the north to visit one of Komeho's (our Namibian ngo partner) projects there. While we were there we donated a large batch of knitted items to the San bushmen and their families at the settlement at Likwaterera.



The San bushman children receiving their blankets to keep them warm during the forthcoming winter nights.

Oshivelo Clinic update

During February, two weeks prior to us leaving for our visit to Namibia, we received a letter from the Namibian Ministry of Health to advise that the new medical clinic at Oshivelo will be named the Catherine Bullen Primary Healthcare Clinic. It will comprise of a male and female ward, a pharmacy, an ambulance station, a procedure/delivery room, six casualty beds, and consulting rooms. Because of its location on a tourist route and the main road to the north it will be better equipped than a Health Centre. In March we had a meeting with the Hon Dr Richard Kamwi, Minister for Health and Social Services who confirmed the above. He advised that the clinic was scheduled to be opened in late June/early July this year.



Main clinic building



Linda pondering what the sign says underneath the wrapping

Fund raising

Indian Lunch – Titash Indian Restaurant, West Mersea

Now an annual event, this year's lunch was held on Sunday 23 February and again it was a full house. As well as the raffle, an auction featured a weekend on a Mersea houseboat (thanks to Veronique) and a day at a Frinton front row beach hut with fish and chips and apple strudel thrown in (thanks to Helga and David). The event raised a total of £1,338.

China smashing stalls

We have a number of events scheduled for our china smashing stall, the first being at the Colchester Lions Fun Day at the Lower Castle Park, Colchester on Monday 5 May. 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 summer. Our first collection of the year was at West Mersea Co-op on Easter Saturday where we raised £169. Many thanks to Nicky Wilmott who helped with this.

Marathons and Sponsored Events

London Marathon 2014

This took place on Sunday 13 April, and Andrea Pisani who ran for us completed the 26 mile course in 4 hrs 25 mins. Vowing never to run it again, she promptly entered the ballot with her partner hoping for a place next year. She raised a marvellous total of £1,644. You can still sponsor her at www.virginmoneygiving.com/AndreaPisani



Andrea after completing this year's marathon.

For the 2015 London Marathon, Virgin have released 500 places for smaller charities, the Foundation has applied for a place and will be notified on 23 May if we have been successful. So watch this space.

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 which the Foundation is selling for £20 each. Some have already been sold, so if you would like one please contact us so that we can advise which remain for sale.



Poster depicting the canvas prints created by the students.

Their teacher Jonathon, stated that pupils from across all three sites and the ASC unit in Clacton worked eagerly, meticulously and willingly giving their time and talent to create these pieces ,depicting wildlife indigenous to Namibia. Students juxtaposed symmetrical and asymmetric elements and utilised bright colours to echo the tribal prints and fabrics of the continent.

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

The Foundation is pleased to announce that during March we received a donation of £10,000 from a charitable trust which wishes to remain anonymous. This is the second donation we have received from this source and we are extremely grateful.

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.

CAKES!

On Saturday 24 May and Sunday 25 May we are having a cake stall at the Mersea Food and Leisure Festival. So if you can bake or donate us a cake, we would love to hear from you. Just ring Linda on 01206 383368 or 07771 630928

Forthcoming Events

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

Sunday 18 May 2014

Clacton Car Show – China Smashing Stall

Saturday 25 & Sunday 25 May 2014

Mersea Food and Leisure Festival Cake Stall – Please bake us a cake.

Sunday 25 May 2014

The Red Lion, Manningtree

5Aside Band performing from around 20.00 onwards

Bucket collection in aid of the Foundation

Monday 26 May 2014

Colchester Hospital Radio Fete, Lower Castle Park, Colchester – China Smashing Stall

Saturday 31 May 2014

Shop Collection– Manningtree Co-op Supermarket

Saturday 14 June 2014

Shop Collection - Brightlingsea Co-op Supermarket

Saturday 12 July 2014

Shop Collection – Frinton Triangle Shopping Centre

Saturday 19 July 2014

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

Saturday 2 August 2014

Shop Collection - Abbots Road Co-op Supermarket, Colchester

Sunday 9 August 2014

West Mersea Lions Summer and Transport Show – China Smashing Stall

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 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.

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

By Email: info@namibia-aid.org.uk

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

Mobile: 07771 630928
07733 140748

Obituary

It is with great sadness, that we have to announce the death of one of our trustees, Graham Strange who has died after a long illness. During his time working for BPI, he arranged a number of successful fund raising events and he was a valued member of our Foundation team. Our condolences go out to Celia and the family,

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).**