



The Catherine Bullen Foundation

Making a difference in rural Namibia

NEWSLETTER

No: 46

Summer 2022

At last back to Namibia!

On 14 March, this year we finally returned to Namibia after two long years of travel bans because of Covid-19. On arrival in Windhoek we were impressed with the improvements to the terminal building relieving some of the bottlenecks that we used to experience going through immigration. While we waited to be picked up from the airport, we sat on the same seat that we had sat on two years ago which brought back memories of when our flight home was cancelled.

We spent our first week in Windhoek attending meetings to catch up with our projects which are featured elsewhere in this newsletter. One of the highlights was a reception at the British High Commissioners residence welcoming us back to Namibia, hosted by the High Commissioner, Mr Charles Moore. Amongst the guests were Vice President Mbumba and his wife who we had previously met, together with those friends and colleagues we had not seen for the last two years.



Roger and Linda with His Excellency, the British High Commissioner, Mr Charles Moore

Otjimanangombe Primary Healthcare Clinic

After spending a week in Windhoek, we journeyed on to the Omaheke regional capital, Gobabis and then to Otjimanangombe. Everyone was thrilled to see us and we soon settled in, especially as we were now staying in our own accommodation at the clinic. We had negotiated with the Ministry of Health to allow us to lease at no charge one of the units that the Foundation had built in 2008 and was vacant. We personally paid for some renovation work and our thanks go to Bob Puzey an Englishman who lives in the village for overseeing this work.



Our accommodation at the clinic.

We arrived at the Clinic on Independence Day which was a public holiday, so the clinic was closed. However, a young girl came in as an emergency as she was about to give birth. It was a difficult labour and when the baby was born it was not breathing. It was touch and go but thanks to the skill of Sister Tomas and Nurse Frieda ably assisted by Linda, the baby started to breath. The next challenge was to get mother and baby to hospital and the resultant wait for an ambulance.

One of our concerns was the prevalence of Covid-19 in the country and during our stay this was relatively low. Mask wearing was encouraged in the clinic and there was a trickle of people attending the clinic to be vaccinated. Unfortunately the uptake is still low and only 24% of the population have been fully vaccinated.

While we were there, there was an outbreak of scabies in the school hostels in the area due to poor personal hygiene and dirty bed linen. On one afternoon a school minibus appeared carrying thirty children, all with varies degrees of scabies. The school is around one and a half hours away and there is a clinic near to them. When asked why they came to Otjimanangombe, a teacher replied that they get better treatment here.

We spent four weeks at the clinic and we were pleased to see that it was being well utilised by the local community especially the indigenous San population. The staff were doing a wonderful job sometimes under challenging circumstances. One of these was the lack of maintenance with hardly anything having been done over the past two years because of Covid-19.

Some photos of our stay



Top left: A general view of the clinic
Top right: The outside waiting area.

Bottom left: Roger undertaking receptionist duties and booking in a patient.
Bottom right: Linda with a young patient.



Top left: Veritjimue Mujoro is a TB Field Promoter, employed by COHENA, an organisation combating TB and funded by the Global Fund and based at the clinic. Here she is with food that the Foundation has purchased to give to her TB patients. Behind her is a map, showing the catchment area of the clinic.
 Top right: Veritjimue giving the food to her patients.

Bottom left: Sister in charge of the clinic, Linea Tomas.
 Bottom right: Nurse Frieda with a patient dressed in traditional Hereo dress.

Water is Life

In 2018, during our visit to Eiseb Primary School and Hostel, the headmaster asked if we would consider providing a borehole for the School as they were having problems using the nearby community borehole. After agreement with the trustees it was decided to proceed with this and the fundraising began. In 2019 when we returned to Namibia, we started to research deeper into drilling a borehole and heard horror stories of dry boreholes and the subsequent financial implications. However, having committed the Foundation to the project and it was decided to stick with it. Meanwhile, fundraising had been successful with our German partner Suni.E.v donating a third of the cost and the friends of John Friend making a substantial donation. John Friend had died suddenly from a heart attack at Seserim during a trip to Namibia and his friends looked for a project to commemorate him by and our project fitted the bill. So with the funding in place we met in March 2020 with the driller, Mr Booysen who was confident he would find water.

Then Covid-19 hit, and the project was put on hold until this year. All through the two years it was delayed we had this nagging thought on whether we would find water. However, events had overtaken us, two weeks into our visit this time, we discovered on social media that the government were drilling two boreholes at Eiseb, obviously, ours was no longer required. On Tuesday 22 March, the Governor rang us and confirmed this was the case, but he had an alternative plan. He told us about Donkerbos Primary School and Hostel which was two hours drive away from Otjimanangombe in a south easterly direction towards the Botswana. It had no water supply and the nearest borehole was 6 kms away with the children collecting water on a rota basis. They were rationed to two glasses of water a day and they bathed in rain water in a plastic tub. Currently there were about 30 children from the school isolating in Gobabis Hospital with scabies.

We agreed to meet the Governor at the school in two days time. So on the following Thursday we set off with Nelson from the clinic as our guide. The last part of our drive which took about 20 mins was on a track that had been bulldozed through the bush. It was all sand with roots sticking out and we followed the tracks of the previous vehicles.



Left: The road to Donkerbos. Right: Linda and Roger with Pijoo Nganate, the Governor of the Omaheke Region

As we came over the top of a hill we saw the school and hostel in front of us surrounded by the bush. First impressions were that it was clean and tidy with well kept grounds. On the arrival of the governor, who was accompanied by a NBC tv camera crew, we were shown around the school and hostel. We were shown the toilets and showers that were built about five years ago by the Namibian German Special Initiative programme, but could not be used as there was no water supply. We also saw the tanks that stored the rainwater from the hostel roofs for the children to wash in. After inspecting the buildings we were treated to a programme of singing and dancing followed by lunch, at which of course I made a speech where I confirmed that the Foundation would provide a borehole for them after what we had seen.

Events then moved on at a pace. Arrangements were made by the Governor to enlist a government hydrologist to site the boreholes and on Monday 4 April we returned to the school with Mr Booysen, the driller. The hydrologist whose name was Rudolf checked his co-ordinates and commences to site the boreholes with his instruments. He was accompanied by four San men from the community eager to see what was happening and to show off their expertise with the metal rod. Two sites were identified, one by the road near the school and the other 450 metres into the bush and these were both confirmed by the San with their traditional methods.



Left: The hydrologist and his assistants checking their co-ordinates. Right: The San Bushmen with their traditional methods.

Mr Booysen agreed that he would start drilling on the following Thursday and while he was drilling near the school, the community would clear the bush around the second site. We were told that the school children were so excited when the drilling rig arrived. On Saturday 9 April, we learned that the borehole had reached a depth of 219 metres producing 800 litres of water per hour, so it was a big relief all round. Although sufficient for the school needs it would have been better if it had been more. The following Monday, the drilling of the second borehole began and at the end of the day we got a call to say they had reached 160 metres and it was still dry. The next day we had a message from the driller saying that they had drilled to 255 metres producing a yield of 15,000 litres per hour which was a fantastic result. The driller was very pleased and advised that it was the best result he had ever had in

the area. This was a huge relief for us as it was always in the back of our minds that the boreholes could be dry.



Knitted items and regatta tops being distributed



Left: Measuring the flow of water. Right: Roger with local councillors and some very excited children sampling the water .

On Tuesday 26 April, we returned to Donkerbos to celebrate the finding of water and late Independence Day celebrations with the Governor. There was a programme of speeches and traditional dancing. Afterwards we distributed knitted items produced by the Mersea and the local community ladies together with regatta tops donated by the regatta committee. Also distributed were a large number of jumpers knitted by Ann Alexandra. It was then time to go to the borehole which was down a rough track to where the contractors were erecting the solar panels. A generator was attached to the pump and after a few minutes, clear water came out of the pipe, much to the excitement of the children. We all

were invited to taste the water which was not at all salty. The solar panels and pipework should be installed by the end of that week.

We then returned to the school for a late lunch which was beef, rice and vegetables. The beef came from a cow that had been supplied by the constituency councillor and had been slaughtered the previous day.

It was hard to describe our feelings knowing that we had brought water to this school and community when before that had none and changed their lives forever. Also that we had seen this project through from start to finish within the timescale of a month. Without your support none of this would have been possible.



Left: The solar panels in place: Right: A new 10,000 litre tank on its stand beside the hostel.

Good Hope Primary School and St Mary's Senior School for Girls

While we were staying in Otjimanangobe we visited Good Hope Primary School in the village of Okovimburu to view the donations that had been made by St Marys Senior School for girls. Firstly, we went to the hostel kitchen to inspect the two large electric cooking pots which had been donated and were spotlessly clean. They have now been nicknamed 'Linda' and 'Roger'!

We then visited the classrooms to see the children in their new uniforms which had now been embroidered with the school badge on the shirts and blouses and the initials of the school on the boys trousers.

St Mary's now have a programme of fund raising events to buy socks and shoes for the children.



The children with their embroidered uniforms.

LifeLine Clinic feeding programme

After visiting Good Hope Primary School we carried on to the private LifeLine Clinic at Epukiro to help them with their twice weekly feeding programme for the San Bushman women and their children.



Left: Volunteers preparing the meal. Right: Some happy recipients.

The Catherine Bullen Primary Healthcare Clinic, Oshivelo

We arrived at Oshivelo on Monday 18 April, (Easter Monday), as we passed through the police checkpoint, we were immediately recognised and it was waves and smiles all round. Next day we met all the new staff who had joined in the last two years while others had left leaving only one nurse who we had previously worked with. They made us very welcome and we settled back into the clinic routine with Linda helping with the nursing side and I assisting in reception. As at the clinic at Otjimanangombe, it was obvious that no maintenance had taken place in the last two years. But despite this all the staff were doing a fantastic job. While we were there the Regional Director of Health called in to see us and we expressed our concerns regarding the maintenance situation and he advised us that he now had his budget through and he would see what he could do.



Top left: Our accommodation at the clinic. Top right: The outside waiting area.
Bottom right: Reception. Bottom left: Indoor waiting area. Here Linda would weigh the patients and take their temperature and blood pressure.



Top: The clinic staff

Bottom: The nursing staff.

Order placed for 4x4 ambulance for Otjimanangombe Primary Healthcare Clinic

During our first week in Windhoek we visited Mr Ben Nangombe, the Executive Director in the Ministry of Health accompanied by the British High Commissioner, Mr Charles Moore. He advised that the ambulance staff would be appointed in Gobabis, but would be stationed in Otjimanangombe which was a satisfactory outcome.

The following day we visited Pupkwetiz Toyota to discuss the ambulance and we advised that we would be back at the end of our trip to place an order.

On Friday 23 march, we met with Mr Shikulo, the Regional Director of Health in Gobabis and discussed the ambulance and he told us he had put in a request for a driver and a paramedic to be based at Otjimanangombe.

At the end of our trip when we returned to Windhoek, we went again to Pupkwetiz Toyota accompanied by Gehas from Komeho, our Namibian partner ngo as they would place the order on our behalf. After a brief discussion, we formally placed the order. We were advised that they had kept the vehicle to be converted back for us, as there were no vehicles coming out of South Africa due to severe floods which had damaged the Toyota factory there, destroying 10,000 vehicles. The earliest we would have got a vehicle would have been next November.

We will commission the vehicle and hand it over to the Ministry of Health during our next visit to Namibia in September.



An ambulance similar to the one we have ordered.

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

This has been the only one of our projects that has seriously been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. This forced original contractor to leave the project with only a minimal amount of work having been done.

Since 2019, when the project began, costs have increased and we have redesigned the hall and we are now looking for another builder. In the meantime, our architect is compiling a Bill of Quantities which will give us a more detailed picture of how much the cost of the hall will be, especially as we have received such a wide variation of quotes.

This project is now the focus of our fundraising and if you would like to support us with a donation, please see page 15 on how to do this. Thank you in anticipation of your support.

ARTISTIC IMPRESSIONS



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An artist's impression of the multi-purpose hall

Fundraising

Virgin Virtual London Marathon 2022

On Sunday 2 October while 50,000 runners will run the London Marathon, the Foundation has three places available in the Virtual version running a course of your own choice. If you would like to take part or know someone who would like to, please get in touch with us by the end of July latest so that we can get you registered. We do not set targets, but just ask you to get as many sponsors as possible to raise funds for our Namibian Projects.

Shop collections

We have carried out the following shop collections so far this year

West Mersea Co-op - £321

Halstead Co-op - £140

Felixstowe Co-op - £254

Frinton Triangle Shopping Centre - £303

A big thank you to Nicky, Elish, Sandra, Shirley and Mike for their help. A full list of forthcoming collections is on page 15.

China Smashing

After an absence of two and a half years due to Covid-19, our china smashing stall had its first outing on Sunday 19 June at the Blackwater Country Show where we raised £334.

Many thanks to Paul, Penny, Chloe, Kim and Paul for their help. A full list of forthcoming venues is on page 15. If you can help, please let us know.



Left: Collecting outside the Co-op at the Frinton Triangle Shopping Centre. Right: The china smashing stall set up at the Blackwater Country Show and already to go.

Forthcoming Events

We have the following events scheduled:

Saturday 23 July 2022

Shop collection – Stanway Co-op

Saturday 30 July 2022

Shop collection – Manningtree Co-op

Sunday 31 July 2022

Mersea Island Car Boot Sale – collecting at the car park and stall

Saturday 6 August

Shop collection – West Mersea Tesco

Saturday 13 August 2022

Shop collection – Brightlingsea Co-op

Saturday 20 August

Lions Summer Fair – china smashing

Saturday 27 August 2022

Shop collection – Woodbridge Co-op

Sunday 28 August 2022

Clacton Car Show – china smashing (to be confirmed)

Sunday 4 September 2022

Brightlingsea Car Show – china smashing

Saturday 10 December 2022

Shop collection – West Mersea Co-op

Saturday 17 December

Shop collection – 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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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).**