

JACOB'S WELL APPEAL

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Christmas Newsletter 2012



Here I am in a cold wet November writing about some hot news! Our six volunteers made it safely to Burkina Faso - yes it is very hot there - and they have managed to put a big tank at the top of a new water tower so that the ABC school children in Bobo Dioulasso can wash their hands, flush the toilets and have a drink of water. They were fascinated by the tap and soon emptied the tank, a tap was a novelty for them. Our last container had taken some precious sports gear which was very popular and Sylvia gave them their first ever PE lessons. The tractor we sent was busy harvesting and they had a good crop but they were very thankful for the gifts of food which we had managed to send. Our volunteers were busy helping to sort and distribute the clothing. Already a long list of needs has arrived on my desk and I have a gang of volunteers full of enthusiasm to work to send out the help. They need bandages, dressings and lots of antiseptic creams as well as antibiotics and worm medicines. They had no stethoscope or auroscope either.

The harvest gifts from our schools and churches have been such a help. We are also gathering more sewing machines, especially hand operated, as electricity is rare in the homes of the poor. Gully and Henrik, who founded the school, are aiming to start a technical section for the older boys and girls and they will teach sewing, joinery and metal work. Gully is helping some women to start small businesses, especially the widows who are often penniless. This last year they have managed to build a large assembly room which is used as a dining room and also as a church on Sundays. God has richly blessed their work.

In Ghana we have been struggling with many problems this last six months. Sandra, the leader of Jacob's Well there, has been stuck in Accra



Constructing the Water Tower

trying to get containers through the Port and the many clearing procedures. The container which arrived in July has only just made it out and new rules have now been introduced which have caused big problems to our last container which was delivered mid November. Regulators are plentiful, costly and merciless and this will reduce the amount of medicines and equipment we can send to the poorest area of Ghana. Corruption is still rife there. Sandra and her team need our prayers and they deserve better help from the authorities. Their work has made a big difference to the quality of life of many people in the Upper West Province Meanwhile the kidney machines etc that have been standing in the heat and the medicines are losing dates!



Jacob's Well Volunteers at ABC School

Since new regulations on medical aid were introduced in Romania we have not managed to get permission to send another load but we are still trying. Jacob's Well Appeal have now duly registered as a wholesaler for this purpose and we are stubbornly still trying. We work in the poorest area near the Ukraine border where there is still a need. In September Peter and I visited the Chronic Psychiatric Hospital in Siret. A new hospital is now finished except for the gas, electricity and water supplies and the money to finish it has run out. The building is smaller than the old hospital and they have need of a day centre for rehabilitation and we have discussed working together in the near future as we have the space and only a few residents left in our Rehab unit. We are hoping to fit a gas supply into the kitchen and boiler house before the frosts come as last winter the temperature was down to -37°C and the central heating pipes froze. With an additional gas boiler to back up the wood boiler it should be possible to avoid this trouble again. There is now a big shortage of pharmacists and doctors



Some of the children in the new multipurpose ABC school hall

in this part of Romania as they can easily get work in France for a much larger salary. The hospital asked us to let them know if we found a pharmacist as they would like to share that with us also!

Before Christmas we are hoping to send one load to Moldova. Like Romania we have had to stop sending medicines. However we have some needed dental equipment as well as many colostomy items for the hospice that has set up a special stoma centre for their distribution. We hope to do this before the snow comes.

This Christmas we are looking forward to having Dr Farid, our Afghan leader, back in Beverley for a short stay. He has kept our registration with the Afghan Government and has distributed the medicines we sent by air last spring. The Pakistan authorities are now allowing some transit cargo through but it is still a very big risk as the road is not secure. We will discuss the way forward with Dr Farid and we hope to be able to get some supplies through by road if possible next year.

During this last year our team of researchers have made some slow progress. The size of the problems that we research - the Lyme disease, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Gulf War Syndrome and ME - seems to get bigger the more we learn. However most of our patients are slowly getting better and we are gathering them from all over England, Scotland and Wales because nobody else wants them. Not all of them started with tick bites but they all have similar illnesses. We hope to be able to document these as we get more patients.

Finally we want to thank God for the many supplies that are given - yes, the warehouse is very full again - and also for the volunteers who help us so much. We couldn't manage without them. We thank God for the opportunities we have to do his work and for the wonderful people who help us, here and abroad. At Christmas, we remember God's gift to us, the baby Jesus. We hope that his gift of love and forgiveness will be shared throughout this troubled world. God bless you all.

Beryl Beynon, Medical Director