



Cleaford News

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We particularly wish to send

- ⇒ New clothes and shoes
- ⇒ Toys (including soft toys) for children over 36 mths
- ⇒ Pens, pencils, exercise books, etc.
- ⇒ Paints, brushes and craft materials
- ⇒ Toothpaste, toothbrushes, and soap
- ⇒ Medical items—must be at least 6 months within expiry date
- ⇒ Incontinence pads

We are no longer sending food, second-hand clothes or computers, monitors and printers.

February 2006

A Cleaford cross section

Our Cleaford News takes a different format this time. We hope that, by giving you a 'diary' of our last visit to Romania, you may get a feel for a cross section of what we are doing.

The usual pattern of visits, of which we generally make two a year, is for a party of Trustees and other supporters to spend a week in the country. During that time we aim to join in the worship at some of the churches, listen to our associates as they tell us about changing needs, and seek to give encouragement.

We are always very well looked after in private homes, and have the use of the church minibus (50% of which we funded a few years ago) to get around the country.

We fly from Heathrow, arriving at Otopeni Airport, Bucharest on a Saturday afternoon, and return to UK the following Saturday. The transit from Bucharest to Brasov takes about 3 hours, and involves some spectacular mountain views as we come through the skiing resorts of Sinaia and Predeal.



Sunday

The week starts and finishes in the ancient city of Brasov, where we stay in the Borzasi family home. Gyula Borzasi has been the senior pastor of the Hungarian speaking Baptist church in Brasov for many years, but has now resigned in order to take over running the Harghita Christian Camp

We also meet up with the minister of the Brasov Pentecostal Church. He has oversight of the Roma (Gypsy) church in Zizin village, where Daniel Hristea and the FAST team are working. There are suggestions that FAST might pick up ideas from the PEPE project which runs in the favellas of Brazil. It so happens that both Farnham Baptist Church and Downs Baptist Church (our supporting church in Woodingdean, Brighton) know quite a bit about PEPE. It becomes clear in the discussions that the Romanian situation, whilst similar to Brazil, has significant differences. A PEPE representative from Downs Baptist will come to Brasov to discuss this further.

Monday

Morning visit to the Brasov Children's Hospital. We start with a meeting with the Director, Dr Ion Mazgareanu, who seems a bit more depressed than we have seen him for some time.

We learn that he does not know what budget he will get from the Ministry of Health in Bucharest from one week to the next. Romania is hoping to join the EU, and everyone at the Ministry is too busy producing the reports and statistics demanded by Brussels to handle their day to day work.

We check our normal quarterly list of medicines that we send, and make adjustments in the light of the Hospital Pharmacist's requests. The BNF shows that some of their new requirements are going to be rather expensive, but there are other items which will not be needed this time. Dr Ion suggests we should send what we can within our total expenditure of about £1,000 per quarter. It is a sad fact that we are having to ration important treatments.

We normally don't mention items that we have procured until we can be sure they are in our hands, but this time we take a chance and tell the meeting that we are 90% sure we have obtained a number of new incubators free of charge. (During our previous visit the ITU Consult-



ant had shown us the only one that worked.)

Eyes fill with tears and we are told we must be angels. We just hope we will be able to deliver! [We have since shipped 13 incubators!]

We ask about the large crates that are parked in the hospital foyer. They contain new X-ray equipment, but the Ministry have not provided any funds for installation!

We go off with Dana Tanasescu to visit some of her team's therapy rooms, take pictures, shoot video, check on her needs of materials, and hear about some of the children they are treating.

Our good friend, asthma and allergy consultant Dr Adina Fanciali needs some more prick tests from us. She enjoyed looking after the English medical student for whom we had arranged an elective at the hospital.

In ITU we hand over some of the items they requested from us last time—these are mainly 'samples', with the full orders to come on the next lorry. More rejoicing—they will now have enough stethoscopes and other basic items. When we next visit they want to take us to dinner as an expression of thanks.

Tuesday

We drive towards Targu Mures, stopping in Odorheiu Secuiesc for lunch with Andrew and Esther Erdo, our long standing friends who, until their recent retirement, were managing the nearby Harghita Christian Camp.

They explain to us that retirement did not last long, as God then called them to oversee the development of another 'Harghita', but this time in the Hungarian speaking part of the Ukraine.

We record a video interview where they tell us about the proposed development, the needs for support, and how the poverty in the Ukraine "makes Romania look like the West". [Copies of the interview—one viewer has described them as 'an inspiring couple' - are available free of charge on VHS or DVD].

They are currently working through all the paperwork for building approvals, etc. with a view to starting construction in the spring weather of 2006. While the ba-

sic buildings and facilities are being constructed camping will continue, using the present tents for over 100 children at a time. These Christian Camps are very popular, and a very effective evangelism medium.

Harghita

Some years ago we undertook to meet the Harghita Christian Camp's gas bill in full, based on finance we receive from two supporting families. Not only has the gas usage increased with more activity at the Camp in the winter now that the buildings have been raised to a suitable standard to host winter events, but there have also been vast hikes in the price of gas—the last increase being 18%.



We have now reached the point where we have had to apply a cap of £2,000 per annum to our contribution, unless any other supporters wish to contribute.

Wednesday & Thursday

Targu Mures is the centre of the church planting activity which we support. Istvan Borzasi (who is also the current president of the Convention of Hungarian Baptist Churches in Romania), assisted by his wife Marta, heads up the work across Mures county, which is in the centre of the Transylvanian region of Romania.

We visit the village of Idrifaia, via a pleasant 45 minute drive over the mountains from Targu Mures. Some years ago we financed the purchase of two small houses on a block of land in the middle of the village, ideally placed between the shop and the school. The building nearest the road was refurbished, and is now the church, and work on the second building, which was in a poor state, is nearly complete in order to make it suitable to house a minister for the area.

All the work has been funded by Downs Baptist Church, Woodingdean, Brighton. Their financial position has changed over the years, and we are now looking for the final £800 to finish the job.



Church development is being hindered by the lack of finance to pay young pastors graduating from the seminary, but the situation will be helped here at least as this church will be able to provide a house for the next incumbent for this area. However we continue to pray that a UK church or group will be attracted to the idea of funding the very modest salary of another staff member, who happens to live and work in Transylvania! We have several young men in Mures county in desperate need of support.

We arrive to the sound of singing, as the congregation has assembled ahead of us. A few children have skipped school as they heard we were coming, there is a young man in a wheelchair who has been paralysed in a bus crash, and several small children who are being fostered by members of the church. As we leave one of the foster mothers (who gets no financial help from the state) asks Istvan if he can give her a little money to pay that month's gas bill.

We learn that there is a desperate need for incontinence pads for the young paralysed man, as they are way beyond the means of the carers in Idrifaia. [Very occasionally we are offered some that are surplus here, but would like to help with a more dependable supply.]

Currently Idrifaia is pastored by Janos and Elizabeth Totos, based in Sangeorgiu de Padure (whose salary we pay). He also oversees the new little church in Calimenesti, and that's where we go next—actually to the Toto cottage, where the church meets in one of the two rooms.



We have an opportunity to see Monika and her two boys, and she thanks us for the finance we provided for the renovation

of the house and reconnection of the gas, following the death of Attila (her husband who had lost his legs and hands) last summer. Istvan tries to adjust the curtain in the 'church' room, but only succeeds in breaking the string, much to the amusement of all present! [A Christmas photo of the 'Sunday School' which Monika now runs shows over 20 children crammed in.]

We drive on to Sangeorgiu de Padure to the Totos' home, and as always are entertained with tea and wonderful cakes.

News is still awaited as to whether the Americans will provide a 'standard chapel' to be put on the already prepared foundations of the new church here. If not we will need to find a few thousand pounds, the initial funding having largely come from the Baptist



ladies of Essex.

The church is full for the evening service, with a large number of children at the front. They enjoy seeing some visuals to accompany our Bible stories. This ethnically mixed church always has a wonderfully welcoming atmosphere, and is now bursting at the seams. It will be exciting to get the new building into use when the building work is finished.

Back in Targu Mures we have a meeting with Marta Borzasi about materials she would like us to fund for her children's work, which is now serving over 250 in the various locations she visits. [We also give her a nominal salary and a travel allowance.]

Friday

The last working day is a hectic one in the villages near Brasov with Daniel Hristea and his team at the FAST Foundation.

We start at Christian Literature Crusade's bookshop, spending money, given by the children's groups at Farnham Baptist Church, on Bible story books for the work with the Roma children.



We stop briefly at Kidland Centre in Sacele (a town that is really a suburb of Brasov) where pre-school work is in progress. Also in Sacele we inspect a substantial building (an ex-boiler house with the contents removed) which has been given to FAST by the local authority for children's work, and also to provide accommodation for overseas visitors who come to help with the work,



thus reducing travel and hotel costs. Such is the success of FAST's preschool work that more schools are asking Daniel to work in their areas. We visit Budila, a village new to us, where we meet a very enthusiastic head teacher who has made a large room available to FAST. Daniel has been able to procure some second-hand computers.



In the Roma area of Zizin we have a picnic lunch in the little old church building, which Daniel is turning into a small community office and contact point.



Then on to the new Zizin church, where invited small children have come to be issued with new socks and wellington boots (purchased by us at a nominal charge from In Kind Direct). Soon a production line is running, with Daniel washing feet—although the ground

outside is mud and slush, most of the children have turned up in broken down shoes, but some are only in socks. Then Melina Osborne (with us from Woodingdean) fits a pair of new socks, and they are passed on to Simone (Daniel's assistant from Holland), Andrew Henderson and Abigail Cleaver (TCCT Trustees) for boot fitting.

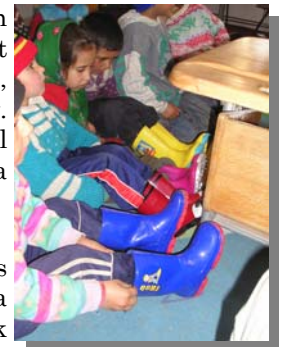
Once they are kitted out, the children all head upstairs to the church children's room for a Bible story, read from one of that morning's purchases, by one of the Roma teenage girls who is being trained as a kindergarten teacher.



A couple of ideas come up in conversation. The Zizin families love having their photos taken—Daniel has so far snapped 80 of the families! He is considering setting up one of the young ladies in the village as the village photographer. She is the only youngster going to high school in Brasov, so could get the printing done when in town, and start to earn a little money. We may supply the 'capital equipment' for this business—a digital camera.



Some preliminary thought is being given to establishing a small laundry and shower block for the Roma community. There is no possibility of plumbing in their very poor shacks in which almost all of the families live, but it might be possible to organise hot water and drainage at one building, and employ someone to look after the facilities.



A couple of doctors at the Children's Hospital were interested in our contact with the Roma community, as they had been wondering for some time how they could get in to the village to provide some basic preventative health care. At the same time Daniel's assistant Simone has been wondering how to arrange some basic medical help in the community. There is the possibility of training a community nurse, and we would be happy to set her up with the basic items she would need.

Other activities

Some of the other things we are doing include -

- ⇒ **Support for poor widows and families.** We have often had difficulty getting news about our sponsored ladies—for most of them nothing much changes that is newsworthy— but those who are supporting widows in this scheme should get a news sheet included with this Cleaford News.
- ⇒ Membership of **In Kind Direct** has been of great benefit. Most months we are able to choose items that would be useful in Romania, and at nominal prices. In this way we procure toys and craft materials for the Children's Hospital and Sunday Schools, consumables for the Camp, etc. You can see more about this excellent scheme at www.inkinddirect.org They have also linked us with the Guildford Disney Store who give us good supplies of seconds, etc.
- ⇒ We do a good number of **school assemblies** around Farnham and Guildford, which are generally a mixture of Bible stories and focus on Romania. Most of the schools are very regular in passing on useful items or arranging collections at harvest, etc.
- ⇒ At two schools we **video** the Christmas production each year, and sell copies to the parents. This produces about £1,500 annually, which is used to help meet the drugs bill for the quarterly shipments to the Hospital.
- ⇒ Quite a bit of time can go in **procuring medical items** for the hospital that they cannot get locally
- ⇒ We send a load on one of **Link European's** lorries about six times a year, so each time everything has to be sorted, packed, documented and taken down to Worthing.
- ⇒ We are **invited to speak** to a number of Ladies Groups, which we always enjoy, and feel we are raising awareness that all of Europe is not like southern England.
- ⇒ We always welcome **invitations to churches** (regardless of denomination) to preach, or to speak to midweek groups.

Revd Dave Stickland

Dave and Carol started to support the Trust in 1994, and in November 1997 Dave joined the board of Trustees. Now that they have almost full-time charge of a parish we have reluctantly released Dave, but know that he will continue to support us in other ways. As a man of God, with a financial background and senior management experience, Dave brought to our meeting a rare blend of experience and good sense, with the ability to steer us in the right direction whilst letting us think that we had found the solution ourselves! We are thankful for their support.

The Cleaford Christian Trust

...caring about Romania...
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Prayer Points

Pray about Romania's accession to the EU! It is already causing masses of extra work, there will be many expenses in complying with new regulations, and it fosters the belief that material benefits are the solution to life.

Thank God for the staff at the Children's Hospital, for their patience under very difficult conditions, for their loving care of the children and their bravery in doing what is right regardless of outside pressures.

Pray for the new management of Harghita Camp, that the gospel of Jesus Christ may continue to be the priority, and that it may not just become a very nice holiday venue.

Pray for his strengthening and guidance of the church leaders, who without exception have too much to do, not enough money, and families who can easily be overlooked.

Pray for the developing Christian witness at FAST, as their social help to the rejected Roma people is complemented by the communication of the Good News of Jesus to the poor.