

White Cross Mission Newsletter – Summer 2002

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A foreword from one of our patrons, Bishop Graham James

THE BISHOP OF NORWICH
BISHOP'S HOUSE
NORWICH NR3 1 SB

When something dramatic and heartrending hits our television screens people in this country are often very generous. That was certainly true in 1989 when news of the plight of many Romanian children hit the headlines. Charities with commendable aims are frequently established, but the test of good work is whether it continues after the story fades from the news agenda.

What is remarkable about the White Cross Mission is its consistency, persistence and endurance in the face of a host of difficulties that would have caused any charity with less courage and vision to give up. With the development of the farms and the different houses, White Cross Mission has moved on to a new stage. Its genius is that Pat Robson and those who work with her manage to challenge the authorities in Romania yet also win their respect and trust. These are not simply political skills. They come through a transparent devotion to the needs of these children and young people, many of whom are children no longer, and helping others to see that the image and likeness of God is found in every human being.

Those who support the White Cross Mission and work with it and for it must have often had cause to curse the darkness over the years. I thank God that instead they have lit what seems like an inextinguishable candle.

Graham Norvic

Co-ordinating Director's Report

There have been several important changes this year. In Romania Fundatia Crucea Alba, led by Dr Oros, has handed over the ownership and control of all our houses in Beznea, Bratca, Balnaca and Suncuius to a new charity led by Pr Gheorghe Bud and Vasile Pasca, known as Fundatia de Caritate Delureni.

After months of discussion the division, when it came, was harmonious and efficient. FCA has kept control of Rodica and Josif's house in Cenalos and we continue to pay the salaries of the two housemothers. With the help of a small German charity Dr Oros has renovated the former clinic at Cenalos and it is now home to eight small children. Three of these children witnessed their father murder their mother, another three were children of a local prostitute and were malnourished and neglected, the other two are babies, one of whom was found abandoned and alone in an empty flat. Rodica and Josif spend quite a bit of their day here and the mothers care for them as well as the smaller children. The money we pay towards their salaries make it easier for the clinic to be staffed.

Popa continues to do an excellent job in caring for the children and the housemothers under his control. All the families are working well and the children are making good progress, particularly with their schooling. Macoi has been reunited with his family and Claudia may soon go to live with her family.

Lucian has been moved from Casa David to Casa Fericita to take Macoi's place and he now goes regularly to school in Bratca and seems very happy. There are two children at Spital Remeti who need to be placed in a home. If Claudia does eventually move it is possible that we could accommodate both these children.

The bigger boys at Casa David are doing several odd jobs in the community, particularly building work and harvesting. This is a really important step forward because we are most anxious that the children mix with the people in the village and are seen as employable. Finding paid jobs for some of them will be the next step.

We no longer have much to do with Spital Bratca although we do have an active fund for the provision of an indoor play area and each year we use sponsorship money to buy shoes for all the children. The organisation and running of the Spital is now in the hands of the Department for the Protection of Children's Rights and, on the whole, things are much better.

After we sent a letter to this department saying that we would no longer provide money or material to repair the Remeti Spital building the department began to spend money itself. The building now has a new roof, new electrics, gas-fired central heating and all the rooms have been refurbished and redecorated.

With the help of Miss Caroline Moore we are paying the salary of a speech therapist at the Spital in Braile. As a result of her excellent work some of the children are now able to attend school. I hope we are able to pay her salary for many years to come.

The children at Remeti, Bratca and Braile are, on the whole, genuinely handicapped and, although we believe that all children, no matter how handicapped, would benefit from a loving home environment, we are realistic enough to know that it will be unlikely if these children ever know anything other than institutional life.

We continue to visit the young people at Cadea and help whenever we can and it is with pleasure that I can report that Rik Evans and Maggie from Newquay have taken it upon themselves to regularly visit Cadea to teach the children clowning skills. Their visits give the youngsters much pleasure, relieving the boredom of institutional life and teaching them to be self-confident and excited by their acquisition of new skills.

It is our dream that the institutions throughout Romania would eventually be closed and all the children would be moved into homes like ours. Unfortunately we can't afford to open and support any more homes but, thanks to Dr Oros and Popa, the media has always been interested in what they see as our 'experiment' and we have received a great deal of publicity. As a result other charities and government agencies have attempted to

follow our example and now similar houses are springing up all over the country. Hopefully our dream will, one day, come true after all.

As long as we can provide the money to keep things going we are beginning to believe that we can rely on the Romanians to move things on and keep the dream alive.

We can, that is, as long as we have people we can trust in charge. Unfortunately Popa has had a serious stroke and, although he won't give in to the resultant weakness, he does not look well and his state of health is a constant worry to us.

In the USA we tragically lost Verna Quirin in May of this year when she died of an unexpected heart attack. Verna was a most enthusiastic and dedicated worker for the White Cross and her death is, indeed, a tragedy. She will be sadly missed. Cindy Taylor is holding everything together in the USA for the moment and our thanks go out to her.

In California Susan Foster decided, only last month, that it was time to have a health check and it was discovered that she urgently needed a heart bypass operation. The operation has happened and Susan is recovering, but it was very scary to find out that, if she had left it just two short months, it would probably have been too late. We wish Susan well and are very thankful she had the sense to have a check.

Verna's church in Kansas City has continued to support our work with money and with prayers. David and Mary Ann Hensinger and their church and friends in Oxford, Maryland have also supported us faithfully. David and Mary Ann went out to Romania in May to see the houses and meet the children. In particular they visited the children in Casa David, which is the house named after their son.

In California, with Susan's help, the church of St Mary's, Pacific Grove, has decided to help us with our work and has just recently donated US\$15,000 in order to buy a tractor in Romania to be shared among all our houses.

Back here in UK we have very active Friends' Groups in Penzance, Redruth and Camborne, and Perranporth and St Agnes. Without the support of these groups in the UK and USA, as well as the amazing support that comes from the churches we would not be able to continue our work. We are enormously grateful and hope that raising the money is not seen as a chore and that, instead, people find that to be generous can be fun.

Here in the UK the charity is administered by Jenny who deals with all the finances and the secretarial work and a lot more besides. She does an amazing job as does Jeff who continues to take teams of intrepid workers to Romania to carry out essential work.

It must be obvious, after reading this report, that the White Cross Mission is at a bit of a crossroads. The initial work has been done. Most of the battles have been fought and our project is up and running. Our role has become one of fund raiser and protector of our dream. We are not needed and,

certainly, should not be needed as movers and shakers. Our role has to be one of supporter and encourager.

Unfortunately we are all getting older and the children in our care are frighteningly young. Popa is not well, Verna is dead, Susan has had a serious operation, Jenny has a seriously bad back, Jeff and Roger have both been ill this year and I am going "ga ga."

We've been talking about it for long enough but this year I am determined that we should begin to hand over to younger members and that we "oldies" should use our expertise and become fund raisers in order to raise the £1,000,000 we need to create a trust fund to keep our project going. We need to find younger people who can be as committed to the children as we have been to take our places as directors, so that unexpected illness or just pure exhaustion on our part does not mean the end of all our work. It's not that we are ready for the scrap heap but, unless we are able to give ourselves unhindered to the fund raising, there won't be a future to look forward to - for us or for the children.

We are the people who have become battle-scarred and that has made us over-cautious. It's time for newer, younger blood to take over and to pump new life into our venture. If they make mistakes it's no more than we did. In an ideal world we will, hopefully, be seen as wise and as approachable enough to be consulted!

Our candle has lit many flames. It's time to give others a chance to make a difference in the world.

Pat Robson

Maintenance Director's Report

One of the major projects that I undertook this year had nothing to do with buildings but was to help organise the inaugural White Cross Open Golf Competition in June 2001. Former maintenance volunteer, Ron Watson, and I played host to 9 teams on a glorious day. Ian Stirling joined in the fun and presented the prizes after a very welcome dinner. The second competition takes place this year on 30th August at Truro Golf Club. I hope to see all you golfers there! "c

Work in Romania was not neglected with the start, last September, of the conversion of the ground floor at Casa Anoushka to a dental surgery and small apartment for visiting dentists. September's maintenance team also carried out the servicing of the boilers at Remeti and Bocicoiu Mare, right up on the border with the Ukraine. This will be the last servicing of these boilers by the White Cross now that the Romanians have taken this on for themselves, even at Remeti, converting the supply to gas, for which we donated the funds.

This September will see the completion of the conversion of the ground floor and, if it complies with the stringent requirements of the Department of Health, will be open for business in the Autumn. Dr Platon's son is keen to help us out when he has finished his training as a dental surgeon. This is a

really pleasing development and we hope it will lead to other Romanian dentists volunteering to help.

This leaves the top floor here for conversion to a small apartment for a couple of the older boys or girls, thus creating two more places in our homes, perhaps for the two children that Mariana thinks are ready at Remeti.

It remains to be seen whether I take a team from UK for the conversion or whether a local team, including perhaps Gusti and Cosmin, are prepared to do this work. The state of the minibus will decide this. It has served us well for a number of years but is now costing us more than we can afford to keep it on the road - this year the insurance alone has shot up by over £600 and it seems to need repairs on almost a monthly basis! Last year I said 'Never say never again' and, although at the moment, there appears to be little requirement for future maintenance teams we can never be certain that a new project is no further away than a telephone call or a letter of invitation.

Jeff Townsend

Balance Sheet As At 31 March 2002

Cash & Bank Accounts

Alta MoneyMaster	3492.53
Bratca Playroom	331.10
Current Account	1584.11
Deposit Account	176.62
Money Market	16041.98
Petty Cash	56.88
Trust Fund	57879.24

Total Cash & Bank Accounts **79562.46**

Investments

CAF Ethical Plus Fund	5000.00
Shares	31693.00

Total Investments **36693.00**

Total Assets **116255.46**

Deduct Creditors Business Card **-34.84**

Total Equity **116220.63**

Income & Expenditure 31/03/02

Balances as at 1 April 2001	£	£
Current Account 01256106	1642.66	

Alta MoneyMaster 41369075	5421.86	
Bratca Playroom 61499521	78.16	
Deposit Account 61338943	6526.94	
Money Market	15405.28	
Trust Fund 21475363	32121.96	
Cash In Hand	193.51	
Business Card	-651.92	
		60739.15

Income

Dividends	1238.38	
Donations (Appendix 1)	74121.86	
Fundraising	1651.50	
Interest Received	2008.07	
Loan Note Realised	13506.00	
Refunds	709.36	
Sales	1296.10	
Sponsorship (Appendix 2)	11281.47	
Travel & Insurance	2576.33	
		108389.07
		169128.22

Expenditure

Administration (Appendix 3)	10777.24	
Fundatia Crucea Alba	930.55	
Fundatia de Caritate Delureni (Appendix 4)	23878.94	
Interpreting	38.53	
Legal Fees (Romania)	5.00	
Miscellaneous	2434.41	
Publicity	871.11	
Purchases	1184.45	
Salaries in Romania (Appendix 5)	16818.97	
Special Efforts (Golf)	710.88	
Spitals & White Cross Schools (Appendix 6)	3767.15	
Sponsored Students	501.62	
Travel (Appendix 7)	14230.50	
Vehicles	2540.24	
White Cross Houses (Appendix 8)	10911.00	
		89600.59

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