

How can I help?

To all readers:

We are always in need of clothes, bedding and other items as shown on our priority items list. These can be brought along on Friday afternoons or Saturday mornings in Horley, or by arrangement with the team in Lampeter.

Your financial support is vital, if you are a taxpayer please remember to gift-aid your support.

Your prayers, especially for those working in Romania, are very much appreciated.

To those who live in the Horley area:

We sort and pack at Horley Baptist Church every Friday afternoon starting around 2pm. Once we have moved into the Furnistore building on the Bridge Industrial Estate (beside the Balcombe Road railway bridge) we plan to regularly sort and pack on a Saturday morning as well. This should commence in mid February. Please come along and help.

To those who live a short car journey from Horley or from Lampeter:

Several supporters collect and pack on a small scale using their own garages as a store, and then bring a complete carload to Horley or Lampeter. While the last lorry was being loaded, clothes arrived by the carload to supplement what we had already collected.

To those who live further afield:

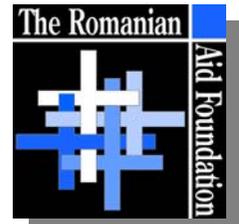
The Lampeter team decided to take the plunge last year by purchasing an old lorry trailer in which they now store sorted and boxed clothes. Without the need to transport everything to Horley for storage, they were able to prepare their aid at such a rate as to fill the November lorry to Dorohoi without it needing to call in to Horley for a top-up. If you would like to try and replicate something similar in your area, please give us a call and we will try to help as much as possible.

Vacancy for Telephonist

For many years Vera Bird has supported RoAF, most recently in the role of telephonist. Now she has to stand down and we are seeking a replacement. The job can be done from home and mainly involves responding to enquiries left on our answer-phone. Contact us by email if you feel that you could help.

The Romanian Aid Foundation Newsletter

January 2007



Romania formally joined the European Union on the first of January. There was a great deal of celebration in Bucharest, with both the President and the Prime Minister vying to be the most accurate on the countdown of the final seconds. For most of our clients however, the celebrations were short-lived. The roads may be better and there is more street lighting, but the EU-imposed harmonisation of taxes does not extend to a parity of income, so those who cannot meet their bills at present are simply finding that their debts are rising faster than before.

RoAF is working with its Romanian partners to bring some relief to such people, by providing clothing, food and some limited help with fuel or medical costs. In this newsletter we are concentrating on the UK activities which allow this help to continue. Next time we will look at some of last year's achievements in Romania.

New Horley Warehouse

The most exciting news item to start the new year with is the planned move from the temporary accommodation in Smallfield to a much larger and more convenient site in the centre of Horley. We plan to sublet part of a warehouse used by Furnistore, the total area will be around 950 ft², enough space to store about a load and a half of packaged clothes and other aid items.

Furnistore is a Christian charity primarily involved in making second hand furniture available at very low prices to those who otherwise would be without. The work covers most of East Surrey and has been established for a similar time as RoAF. Full details about the work of Furnistore can be found on their website at www.Furnistore.org.

The key people running Furnistore are well-known and good friends to many involved in RoAF, so we are looking forward to a mutually beneficial relationship as we both work alongside each other. This will be costing RoAF a little more than the Smallfield store, however by the time you have read the next piece of news you will most probably agree that it is the right way forward.

The Romanian Aid Foundation and Asociatia Neemia

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The Romanian Aid Foundation and Asociatia Neemia

Working with Romanian people to bring help to the needy,
Hope through the Christian message and co-operation through joint ventures
UK Registered Charity 1060828

Old Debt, New Encouragement

Those of you who have been part of RoAF for several years might recall the dispute we had with the council over the rates for the very large warehouse that RoAF was using back in the early 1990s. Originally we were led to believe we would receive a 100% discount as our charitable status rate allowance on the property, although this was never formally confirmed. However after several years, the council confirmed our charitable allowance as 80% discount, which, although this is pretty much in line with what a charity like RoAF should expect, the bill for several years back payment of rates came as a major shock, as we were under the impression we had a 100% allowance. This total demand was over £16,000. After much negotiation the council agreed that RoAF should pay this at £200 per month, which we have been doing for many years. This was, of course, in addition to the current rates bills for the Salfords warehouse last year.

With the building in question having been demolished, an approach was made to the council asking them to review the situation again. At that time RoAF's finances were not looking very healthy but we felt that it was inappropriate to ask new RoAF supporters to give when a proportion of their giving went straight to the council to pay off a seven or eight year old debt that only arose due to a misunderstanding. Well, the good news is that the £7,100 outstanding balance has now been written off.

It was back in early November that we were agonising over the size of the area to take with Furnistore, wanting it large enough to make all the packing, sorting and storing viable, but small enough to keep the costs reasonable. We felt it right to go ahead with the size confirmed above even though the cost would be around £200/month greater than the cost at Smallfield. Having made that difficult decision, the very next day we heard from the council, writing off our £200/month debt.

For those readers who think this is a coincidence, it was a happy coincidence, those who believe in prayer might have a different interpretation.

Joy in a Box

Thank you all for the wonderful response we had to the Joy-in-a-Box appeal this year. The total number of giftboxes sent to Dorohoi this year totalled some 3,000!

Hospital Help

Congratulations and thanks to Lampeter Christian Fellowship who raised £2,300 last year to provide Dorohoi Hospital with a new scanner. Thanks too to BUPA who donated 17 beds to the hospital earlier in the year

Financial Report (UK Activities)

In 2006 over £24,000 was raised for the work of the Romanian Aid Foundation and this is summarised below, together with a comparison with last year:

	2006 Total	2005 Total	Comments
Regular Donations	£ 4,822	£ 4,950	<i>Thank you</i>
Other Donations	£ 12,455	£ 15,700	<i>Please see note below</i>
Tax Refund (Gift Aid)	£ 5,062	0	<i>The 2006 refund relates to several years' giving</i>
Fund-raising Activities	£ 1,566	£ 902	<i>Well done to all concerned</i>
Legacies	£ 1,000	0	<i>Thank you</i>
Total Income	£ 24,895	£ 21,552	

And how was it all spent, you ask. Well, mainly on transport, each full 40ft lorry to Dorohoi costs around £2,000 from Horley or £2,200 from Lampeter

	2006 Total	2005 Total	Comments
Transport	£ 14,627	£ 15,612	<i>Seven loads in 2006, eight in 2005</i>
UK Warehouse costs, including current rates	£ 3,094	£ 456	<i>Rent for the Salfords depot was £1 per year</i>
Old Rate Debt	£ 2,000	£ 2,400	<i>Now written off – will be zero in 2007</i>
Special Projects	£ 2,950	£ 1,344	<i>Scanner in 2006</i>
Administration	£ 1,905	£ 1,896	<i>See note below</i>
Total Expenditure	£ 24,576	£ 21,708	

As these figures indicate, the main cause for concern is the drop of 20% in general donations. Warehousing and transport are expected to cost about £20,000 this year.

In 2006, our normal expenditure was nearly £2,000 more than we received but our receipts were helped by a tax refund covering several years; these claims are now up to date, so we will not receive anywhere near this figure in 2007.

We received over £1,000 from legacies and memorials this year; perhaps you could consider including RoAF in your will.

New Book-Keeper

A big thank-you to Graham Howard, who agreed to take on the role of bookkeeper earlier in the year. As a direct result we can now announce that our accounts are easier to understand and all the gift aid tax refund claims are up to date; thank you, Graham.