

The Romanian Aid Foundation
UK Registered Charity Nr 1060828



May 1999 RoAF Newsletter

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During April Bob Coates, Steve Humphreys, Bernard Bellingham, Robert Bell and Clive Wright visited Dorohoi. For Bernard and Clive this was their first visit to Romania. We took the opportunity to give the newcomers an introduction to the town.

On the Saturday we went to the resource centre site some four kilometres south of Dorohoi. Here we saw the work that Beni and his team have done in preparing the building for the use by RoAF. The building has been transformed from a car workshop into a secure warehouse suitable for the charity's needs. We then inspected the apartment which RoAF has now bought for use as its office and to provide a point of contact within the town.

This visit coincided with the Romanian Palm Sunday and Easter weekends. On the Sunday we split up, with Steve, Bernard and Clive going to Balinti whilst Bob and Robert went with Josif to Havirna. We attended one service together at Dorohoi Baptist Church on Sunday evening when we were invited to address the congregation and took the opportunity to explain our visit and bring greetings from Horley.

On the Maundy Thursday we went to Tataraseni where we were the guests of the Ababei family. In the evening we attended the Baptist Church where we sang to the congregation and heard a talk on the actions of the disciple Peter during the first Easter weekend.



When Peter saw the angry mob advancing through the Garden of Gethsemane to arrest Jesus he drew his sword and attempted to fend them off. He tried to do God's work using his own strength and his own methods. As the work of RoAF grows and develops its own momentum we are tempted to react in a similar manner and do things our way. May God grant us the wisdom to do things in His way - even if it seems illogical, painful and slow.

Some observations from the April'99 visit -

Dorohoi Boys' Home: We visited the Boys' Home on several occasions during our stay. The Home is not an orphanage as many of the 150 boys living there come from broken homes or their families cannot support them. About two-thirds of the boys were on holiday, celebrating Easter with relatives and friends. There are some 12 residential staff; due to budget problems none of them has been paid since January.

The gas supply has been cut off due to a fire in the basement boiler house. As a result there is no heating in the building and a newly installed gas boiler for the laundry cannot be used. It appears that at present the only source of heating is the oil-burning range in the kitchen, which has itself been condemned. The fuel



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supply pipe has been ruptured so that oil seeps through the walls of the kitchen and laundry.

We were shown the food storage areas. There is very little food in stock. The fridge is unserviceable and the bread cupboards have been condemned. Old People's Home: We visited the People's Home with Dumitru where we met the new Director. He seems conscientious and caring although probably inexperienced in this sort of work. He conducted us on a tour of the premises, which were clean and tidy, and being maintained by the residents. As on previous visits, the residents appeared well looked after and content although with very little to occupy their time.

We were shown the boiler installation, which is being kept in good condition. This supplies heat and hot water to the kitchen and dining room, but does not, as yet, heat the whole home. We were also shown the pigsties which were not so clean. Apparently there is very little food left over for the pigs.

Needs were identified as being the beds and mattresses already promised, some materials such as wool for handicrafts. A computer would be helpful for the Home's accounts; we were assured that there is someone who would be able to use it. A picnic in May and visits by the singing group from the Church would be welcome.

Dumitru concluded our visit with a short talk to the residents and staff about the significance of Easter.

Bob and Steve had a meeting with Topala Dorel, a Pentecostal minister who lives in Dorohoi but whose churches are in Darabani and Cristinesti. During our conversation Beni was called away so we had to explain the vision of the resource centre in French! We introduced the idea of the prayer link and left some of our newsletters. The congregation meets for prayer on a Tuesday evening. He told us of some of the needs within his congregations including unemployment and hostility from outside. Most of his requests were for prayer but he also mentioned the need for a wood stove to heat the church in Cristinesti next winter. We asked Beni to give some clothes for distribution to the needy members of the fellowship. We were invited to join them for a service and agreed that we would consider this during our May visit.

On the Thursday afternoon we spoke with Jacob Lucien, the orthodox priest in Tataraseni. He showed us the village church with its ornately decorated interior and icon collection. He spoke about the difficulties in his work and the need for co-operation between the denominations, and reported that ours was the first social contact for some four years.

Prayer partners: The prayer link has been a regular feature of our monthly newsletter. However, we have felt that we had insufficient feedback and prayer requests from the people and Churches in Dorohoi. Having prayed about this matter ourselves, we spoke with Ovidiu and Simone about the co-ordination of the prayer link. They have both agreed to put together some items for us to look at in May and we will take out some materials to help them. In the longer term we would hope to be able to generate a Romanian version of the newsletter. **Other Charities:** We met with Phil and the Hand-in-Hand team on several occasions. Both our charities have compatible rather than conflicting objectives and can work together. In particular, we were both interested in helping the People's Home. We agreed to keep in regular contact. Jonella has been confirmed as their co-ordinator in Romania and she will be supported by workers

at the Desca orphanage. Beni has been able to advise them on how to formally set up a charity in Romania.

Whilst in Dorohoi we learned more about a German charity called ACTS working with the Girls' Home. It is supported by a Brethren Church in Germany and is run locally by a Romanian couple. The charity is taking vulnerable girls out of the orphanage so that they can live in a safe family atmosphere and to this end ten prefabricated home units are to be built in May or June. An informal contact was made; we hope to have more meetings in May.

Local Enterprises: We visited Patrica Maxim, a local potter, sculptor and artist. He is a generous Christian man with considerable talent and strength of character, and is willing to teach people his trade. He has a good reputation and was working on a commission from a museum at the time of our visit. We also visited a Christian carpenter who has a workshop in Dealu Mare near to our resource centre site. He is responsible for most of the furniture in the public parks in Dorohoi. He too is willing to offer training to suitable apprentices.

For Bernard and Clive this was their first visit to Dorohoi. They have both survived the experience and have gained a deeper understanding of the work that RoAF is doing there.

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