



The Myosotis Trust

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NEWSLETTER OF THE MYOSOTIS TRUST

CHRISTMAS 2010 EDITION

FREE

The Trust is an humanitarian charity founded to improve the physical, spiritual and mental health of the orphaned, the old, the young, the sick and the poor of Barlad in Eastern Romania.

MAKING A NEW HOME

By Carol Daniel



What is 'Myosotis'?

Myosotis is the botanical name for the forget-me-not flower. When the Trust's Director first visited Romania, everyone in the hospitals and orphanages asked her not to forget them.

Therefore as our logo we use the Myosotis flower so that *none* of us forgets.

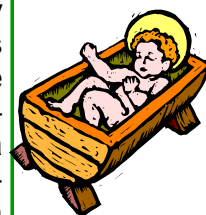
In this issue...

On-going support from The Rotary Club of Stamford St. Martins, the formation of a Breast Care Clinic at the Health Centre and on-going Support Group, the first Romanian 'Noise' Project, update on current situation in Romania and many more interesting articles.

In the last newsletter I wrote about the young people whose home had been closed and the sad situation they were now in. With the agreement of my fellow trustees, The Myosotis Trust has agreed to help support the Romanian "sister" charity to offer them another life-long home. Currently I am trying to obtain a 25 year lease on the property that they used to live in and have obtained the full support of The Head of Child Protection and Family Services for our region.

I am in contact with Linda who the original home was named after and she has helped fill me in on the history of "Casa Linda" as it was named which is very helpful. Mr Armeanu, the head of the child protection department has agreed to cover the cost of gas, electricity and water. So I have to wait to gain the lease which I want rent-free.

In the meantime, the major problem of staffing needs to be determined as I want to create a "real" home for the young people who will be invited to live there. This will be hard for most people to accept who are only used to the current institutional approach to care and of course we will need 24 hour support provided by people who truly care and are committed to the objective of the home to support these young people to live as full and enriching life as possible in a home that they feel secure in. This will be a difficult task given the budgetary restraints we inevitably will be working with. But here is the really great news: Anna-Maria, who was one of the early young volunteers is now a University trained social worker, married and living in Husi and she has a heart for these young people and has agreed to manage the project and work with us as soon as we can get the legal go ahead. She will also, with Miky's support, try to start a Young Volunteers' program in Husi and the group in Barlad are eager to support the idea of a new branch.



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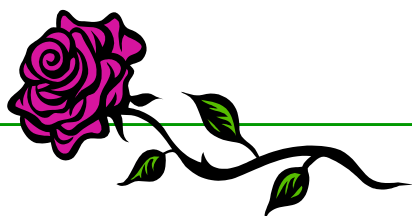
For many years I have been visiting the monastery in Husi and the previous Bishop of Husi encouraged me in the work of Myosotis and I hope that the nuns of the monastery, small in number, may become regular visitors and that a link with the Orthodox church may be possible for the project. Whilst many new churches are being built in Romania there appears to be very little pastoral involvement within communities.

The home is not in a bad condition and has recently had gas central heating installed as gas has arrived for the first time in Husi. It lacks insulation which will be necessary to keep the warmth in and in the summer the heat out! Redecorating can happen in time but refurnishing will be necessary as most items are either broken or have "walked". The washing machines and dryers are broken and the existing bunk beds need replacing or remodelling to provide single style beds. Carpets, tables, chairs are all on my want list.

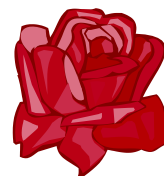
It will be necessary to "borrow" a suitable vehicle to take these items out if we can receive donations of what is needed to fill a home. Drivers, and later people prepared to do jobs will all be required. But all this depends on getting the lease sorted out and until I do I can only start asking people to line-up items they may be able to donate. I must stress that only items in very good condition can be accepted.

What about the people who will be invited to live in the new home? To start with only five of the original residents will be offered accommodation and this is because they are the people who I believe can live with the level of support that we can provide. I know them all and they will form the core of their home. If we can offer accommodation to more in the future then that will be a great blessing.

Behind all my thoughts on this daunting undertaking is the work of Jean Vanier who founded the L'Arche homes, now in many parts of the world. Assistants go to live in the homes receiving their board and lodging and pocket money and stay for periods of a year or longer living with the residents. Jean Vanier believes that those with intellectual handicaps have much to offer those without and I would encourage you to read some of his books. Thus I hope that Assistants will come to our home in Husi to live with our residents and join fully into their lives.



Next to the house is a disused area of land and I hope that we may be able to lease that in order to keep chickens and maybe goats. One of the "boys" loves being outdoors and a small farm could be our first work project as making opportunities for work is also very important to enable as full a life as possible and I also hope to be able in the future to provide work opportunities for other people who are in need of sheltered work. Over the last few years I have been trying to put a plan for making baskets together and am still sitting on the egg.



I will not include any photos of the potential residents but you can see the house and also know that if we can go ahead it will be renamed The House of Roses and guess what we'll be planting, lots of climbing and bush roses as well as fruit trees. We are under starter's orders and waiting to go! Oh yes! the children who used to live there are now in their early 20s and it has made me realise just how quickly the years are passing. We all need to get busy before time leaves us behind. There will be lots of young people who will no longer be covered by the foster parent allowance which ceases at 18 if full time education isn't followed and thus they will leave their foster families and have only unsuitable institutions to live in. I think this will be the next big problem to be tackled in Romania as these are the youngsters who were formerly in orphanages (placement centres).



Two people sent donations after reading my article in the last newsletter for the young people and their encouragement has helped me to take on another challenge; Thank you.

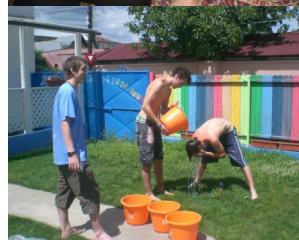
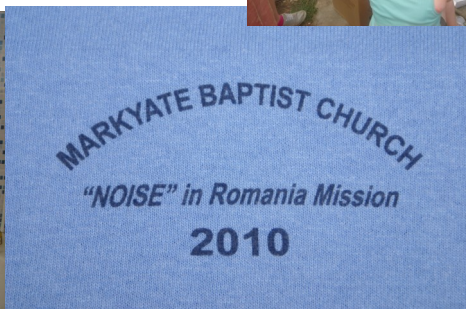


Reading List- all books can be purchased from; The Myosotis Shop in Ruislip 01895621001.

Jean Vanier

Essential Writings Darton Longman & Todd ISBN-10 0-232-52753-9 The Miracle, The Message, The Story- Kathryn Spink DLT ISBN 0-232-52594-Befriending the Stranger DLT and so many more.

Carol R Daniel October 2010



English and First-Aid Lessons for the Young Volunteers

I was privileged to be part of the Markyate Baptist Church party to Barlad in August 2010 as a driver ferrying the tools and equipment which couldn't be taken by air. I guess I was asked because of my previous experience driving in Eastern Europe and because I had previously driven to Barlad in November 2006. I was not inclined to join with the building group who, in any case, were not short of healthy young volunteers. Therefore I needed to find some appropriate and useful occupation during the two weeks spent in Barlad. I had run very successful classes in conversational English in Poland and suggested to Carol that we could try something similar in Romania. She eagerly accepted this idea and added that with my medical background I should also teach some first-aid.

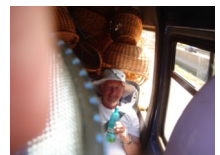
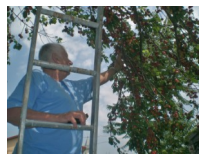
At the camp we had a large group of the Romanian Young Volunteers and were able to get across some of the basic principles of first-aid including how to avoid becoming a casualty yourself and how to avoid doing any further damage to the patient! This was done in the open air against the background of constant bombardment by mosquitoes but was helped by the fact that many medical terms are very similar in both languages.



The English classes were also held in the open air but in the garden of Casa Esme in the late afternoon. Any of the Young Volunteers who wished to attend were invited and we averaged about twelve to sixteen each day. It is not easy to teach a group of that size with mixed ability but the fact that the same ones came each time suggests that they managed to get something out of it. It is great credit to them that they chose to attend at all especially during their summer holiday. We tried to make things as interesting as possible by basing conversation around topics of their choosing and things which interested them. The great advantages which we had over their school lessons was that there was no examination at the end and we never criticised or blamed them for getting anything wrong. However what they seemed to appreciate most was talking to someone whose first language was English rather than a Romanian language teacher. I am sure they were helped just as much if not more by the informal conversations and friendships with the Markyate young people who will be responsible for them learning many words and definitions not found in the OED.

It was great fun to be with the group who were ever attentive and unfailingly polite. I have acquired a large new group of Facebook friends.

David Gardner October 2010



If you would like to arrange for someone to come to your organisation to give a talk on the work of the charity please contact Carol on 01650 511942 for Wales.

For speakers in England, please contact Maureen Tinsey on 01895 633928 to arrange a suitable date.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We currently need washing powder for an automatic machine (to use for Casa Esme, Health Centre and new project), floor cleaning liquids and general kitchen cleaning liquids. Disposable nappies (Low priced shops) bath/basin cleaner. Play dough, poster paints, coloured craftpaper, shampoo, sanitary towels. If you are able to donate any of the above, please contact us.



Rotary Club of Stamford St Martin's

I first became aware of The Myosotis Trust when I met my partner Pete. As many readers of this magazine will know, his Dad, Neville Ward, has been a supporter of the Trust for many years.

The opportunity arose for me to invite Carol to the Rotary Club of Stamford St Martins in the spring of 2009. Each year, the club supports different causes at home and abroad and I thought The Myosotis Trust offered something different to the norm and a chance for us to enhance the lives of these children in Romania. Thankfully, the club members all agreed and The Myosotis Trust became the International project to support for the Rotary year July 2009 – June 2010.

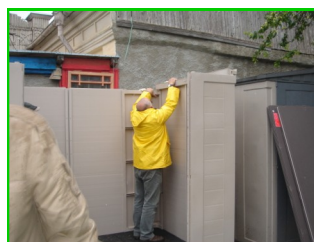
Our fundraising activities throughout the year included a "Moulin Rouge" themed Ball, a donation from a friend of the club who completed a physical challenge, a Summer BBQ, a Safari Supper, a pamper party, sale of Rotary Christmas cards, raffles and a Pimms and Pudding afternoon.

A couple of club members also took it upon themselves to lead independent projects in support of the Trust. Janette Fytche worked with her class at the primary school and raised £423.50 at their "Romanian Rainbow Day". They wore bright colours, collected colourful food for their harvest table and ate lots of cakes at The Rainbow café after school! Sean Enwright arranged for essential goods (detailed from Carol!) to be collected one evening at his local village hall. Flyers were distributed around the village listing what was needed and the results were magnificent. Neville had to bring the minibus up to Stamford to fit the boxes and boxes of washing powder, bleach, cloths etc all in! This has now been transported to Romania to be used at Case Esma and the Health Centre. Elissa Flatters visited Case Esme and met with the team there and the children. Elissa is a special needs teacher in the UK and was able to offer valuable advice on structured learning.

From our fundraising, I'm pleased to say that we presented a cheque to Carol in June for £2400 which financed the cost of the summer camp this year. In addition to this, we also bought a much needed new shed for storage and an array of fun learning aids now in use in Case Esme. The even better news is that the Rotary Club has decided to continue their support of the Myosotis Trust for another year so watch this space!

Samantha Cook

Past President 09/10 – Rotary Club of Stamford St Martins
October 2010



Markyate Baptist Church

'Noise in Romania'

Mission 2010

Our 2010 Mission to Barlad started to come to fruition during the summer of 2009, following the successful men's mission earlier last year when a number of wives and ladies "complained" (in the nicest possible way) that they should be allowed to come on the next mission - and as Miky had suggested that it would be great if the teenagers could come out again to help at the summer camp, a much larger mission plan started to develop. On top of this it also became apparent that we could possibly put together a women's breast clinic to run throughout the mission period (see the separate report on pages 10 and 11).

The upshot of all these ideas was a much larger team of 19 teenagers and adults (men and women) plus 3 supporting drivers for the UK Myosotis minibus set off on mission at the end of July for 2 weeks of very concentrated activity in and around Barlad.

Having loaded the minibus up to its roof with equipment, tools, materials, prostheses and bras for the women's clinic the weekend before (just about leaving enough space for the 3 drivers to fit in), and then prayerfully sending them off on the Wednesday before the mission started for the long 3 day journey across Europe, we set off at 2.00am from a strangely deserted Luton



airport on a Wizz Airlines flight arriving in a very warm Bucharest at 7.00am to be met by Miky and a coach for the long drive up to Barlad.

We set to the next morning, having unloaded the minibus the previous afternoon before heading off for a well earned rest, with 6 of the teenager girls setting off with the young folk from Casa Esme and the young volunteers, for their camp near Hushi whilst Lesley and Val also set up the Women's clinic at the Health Centre and starting training the Romanian nurses. The rest of us moved into Casa Esme school for a week of concentrated deep cleaning and redecorating all the rooms at the school, removing and replacing the sump pump in the cellar to pump out the flooded basement and clear and weed the play areas in the garden and carrying out various other repair and maintenance items we found along the way.

At the end of the first week, we had completely transformed Casa Esme into a wonderfully bright and clean school again, ready to welcome the children and the volunteers back after their camp. An amazing week of hard work, lots of laughter, great prayer and worship and lots of sweating in the incredible heat.



Our second week saw

the return of the camp team and the departure of two of our adult team members who could only be with us for the first week. The women's breast clinic was achieving amazing miracles and had attracted the interest of the local TV station who came to interview the team (and also carried out follow up studio interviews with Carol after we had left) - a great opportunity to promote the wonderful work that Myosotis is carrying out and to spread the good news about the women's breast clinic for the future.

The team split up again, with the teenagers all moving up to work at Bacani building a new fence between the two houses up there and to bring blessings to the families with children's games, lots of football, and also prayer with the families. The rest of us moved to the health centre to redesign completely and layout the rear gardens with new paving, flower beds and planting, similar to that carried out on the front garden during the 2009 mission - and boy oh boy did we sweat in the incredible heat - and did we all lose some weight that week! We also carried out a local community project by cleaning up and repainting the communal passageway next to the health centre to show the neighbours just how much the Trust cares for them. It was amazing to see the transformation from a dark, smelly, graffiti ridden passageway into a bright clean and sweet smelling communal area again.



Continued from page 6.

But what a wonderful mission this turned out to be - we had successfully established a new women's breast clinic at the Health Centre, trained the nurses in fitting prostheses, gaining a huge amount of public awareness of The Myosotis Trust's work throughout the area. We had set up Casa Esme School for the new term's activities in a fantastically bright and clean condition, and pumped out the waterlogged basement ready for future waterproofing to make more space available. We had built the fence at Bacani, remodelled the gardens at the Heath Centre and shown the neighbours how loved they are. We all were mightily blessed by God in our daily devotional times of worship and fellowship; and the teenagers have established some fantastic new Christian relationships with many local Romanian teenagers through their nightly Bible studies, worship and group meetings.

And on top of that some of us managed to come home ½ a stone lighter --- but that's another story.

Alan Poole



Give As You Earn

We are registered with 'Give as you Earn'. This is a method where you can give to charities directly from your wages. Your salary department should have details. Donations can be made on a 'Charity Choice Form' or coupon using our charity's name, 'The Myosotis Trust'. Our registration number is 241276. Please pass the word on to your family, friends and colleagues!

Members of the Bro Ddyfi Patient Fund in Wales, kindly donating an E.C.G. machine for use at our Health Centre in Barlad.

From left to right: Mandy Ingleston, Gwyneth Jones, Carys Griffiths, Pat Edwards, Anne Jones, Eleri Evans, Gwilym Fychan and Olwen Roberts.



Romania in 2010

In 2010 the budgetary deficit in Romania would reach 9,1%. Unfortunately, the Romanians consume more than they can produce; and the production is wrongly distributed within the budget. 63% of the state budget represent salaries, pensions and the social allowance. On top of that, the debts with the public external service and our contribution to the EU add up to a final figure of 70% of the state budget. The 30% left cover for the hospitals' functioning, schools, justice, army and the police force. What we are left with doesn't cover the need for investments which could create real job opportunities for people. The imbalance appeared within the report between the contributors and the beneficiaries of social allowances, pensioners, unemployed, people with disabilities. In 1999, there were 2.2 contributors to one beneficiary, in 2009 we talk about 0.8 payer to/versus one beneficiary. The ultimate chance was to borrow money from the IMF to support all the social expenditure.

Unless we sign a financial assistance package with European Commission and the International Monetary Fund, our external public debt will reach, by the end of 2010 45% from our Gross Domestic Product/income (GDP/I), 63% in 2010 and 2010 over 70% from GDP, said the Prime Minister.

The prime minister declares that the 25% salary cut, the 15% motherhood allowance and the 15% pensions reduction were the only valid measures for overcoming the crisis, a real economical growth and amending the structural deficiency within the public system. Apparently the child allowance (currently 8 pounds per month - 3.500.000 of beneficiaries nationally), allowances for people with handicap, the monthly payment of 40 pounds for children up to 2 years, the support for the HIVs etc. won't be reduced.



(source: The Romanian Government web site, July 2010)

In our governors' opinion, the reduction of salaries and pensions, combined with a 24% VAT tax - beginning this July – and a 20 billions Euros loan from IMF, EU World Bank and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development represent the infallible recipe for economy growth and national prosperity. As for the loan, the money will come in tranches with a 3.5 rate per year and callable by 2015.

I will provide you with a calculation of the new salary of a public officer.

At the beginning of august, the Governors decided also to tax 16.5% the free lancers' independent activities and any self-provider such as journalists, artists, writers, taxi drivers and all their kind...



The frustration in Romania got up to an unimaginable level and people's desperation reached the top limit. Only the street manifestations and desperate cry of the pensioners all over Romania at the beginning of July this year managed to touch a string of our politicians' heart who decided in the end that no pension would be less than 70 pounds a month. Meanwhile, the food prices have gone up, so has the fuel and train tickets, the monthly bills and medication. The inflation in August was calculated to 7.6% and there is great risk of going up by the end of the year to 9%.

Facing the situation, in a country of No Rules, people will have to work around desperate plans and take ultimate solutions: leaving the country or doing the tax evasion. It is a fact that many doctors and nurses have already left the country to start a-new else where. As for the tax avoidance, that's known as an old practice and dear tradition in Romania.

The opposition is accusing the government for its political incapacity and the prime minister for the fact that he doesn't have a solid planned strategy for taking the country out of the crisis. The austerity measurements adopted were at hand and easy to do. While no plan for further investments and attracting funds for local and regional development, high taxes would only suffocate the economy and encourage the black market. Nothing has been done to eradicate the corruption, the underground economy and traffic of any kind. Meanwhile the public money is preferentially directed only to the politically agreed companies who are entitled to develop businesses and monopolize the economical and production fields. Small and medium enterprises are not at all encouraged to develop because of the tough fiscal regulations. For the period between 2007 and 2009, EU allocated Romania 5,624 billion Euros for structural developing projects. Only 600 billion Euros have been attracted by public and private organizations by the end of 2009 which means approximately 10%.

Alex Stireanu September 2010

TWO WEEKS IN ROMANIA CHANGING LIVES

As I write this it is now October, traditionally the month in which we raise the profile of Breast Cancer in the UK, and it brings to mind two weeks in the summer when we were privileged to offer the ladies of Barlad something that for most was very far from their dreams.

I think it was November 2009 when Lesley told me that she was going to Romania with The Myosotis Trust to set up a clinic fitting Breast Prostheses. I was immediately drawn to this very worthwhile project, an opportunity to share our knowledge and help ladies who are not as fortunate as we are here in the UK to have a free post mastectomy service. I told her I would love to go with her and a couple of days later she told me I was welcome to join her and the mission party.



For the last twelve years both Lesley and I have worked in the Health Service where our jobs include fitting breast prostheses and we have always recycled breast prostheses forwarding them to various charities to send them abroad.

We had to have a plan as the department we work in only employs six staff. We had to ensure that the service did not suffer because we were away. We spoke to our colleagues Shirley, Mary, Peggy and Deanne, and they immediately supported us offering to do extra shifts to cover and we contacted Sue Vaughan from Anita UK who agreed to cover our clinics while we were away. Our house was in order. Now we had to get enough prostheses for our own mission and what about bras — a well fitting bra is fundamental when supplying prostheses: where were we going to get them from?

In January 2010, we chose January as we did not want our appeal letters getting lost in the piles of Christmas mail, we wrote to the four major companies that we work with, Anita UK, Ameona, Trulife and Thamert. Anita, Ameona and Trulife sent us post mastectomy bras, swimwear and related products. We also spread the word by making posters asking staff at our hospital the Luton & Dunstable and London Luton Airport to donate bras. Before we knew it we were receiving bras every day. Our colleague Shirley took it upon herself to take control of these and with bags given by another supplier, Kettering Surgical Supplies, she individually packed and labelled them. Soon the message had got out and Erica from Amoena was particularly vigilant in collecting prostheses for us. We are particularly grateful to our colleagues in Port Talbot and Hinchinbrook Hospitals for their support.

Before we knew it the 26th July arrived. When we left Miky had sent word that we had 45 ladies to see, by the time he picked us up at the airport 60 ladies had booked into the clinic.



Val and Lesley even made time to make some jam from the fruit on the trees in the garden at Casa



We spent Sunday afternoon and Monday morning setting up the new Breasts Prostheses Service room. Carol and the staff at the Health Centre were wonderfully welcoming and personally I felt very at home there. Carol had decided that as well as the two centre nurses we should train Mrs Garafitza, and we were of course very pleased to do so and all three Dana, Mihaela and Mrs G took turns to come in pairs firstly to observe and within a few days they were confidently leading the fitting. Of course there was the language barrier but this was resolved by our very own interpreter, Nadine, who was very patient with us but also got involved with the whole process. We certainly could not have managed without her and she even managed to help us polish up our little bit of Romanian.

That first afternoon we saw 11 ladies. Within days we knew we were going to top the estimated 60 and Lesley and I quietly hoped to see 100 ladies. However to fit 100 ladies would be a challenge and each morning after our morning group prayer we would go to our room and just have a few minutes of extra prayer asking that we would have enough products and appropriate bras for our ladies and the service we were providing. Our aim was to provide each lady with a prosthesis, a brand new bra as well as a second bra from the donations made from friends and colleagues. The local Hilton Garden Hotel had also donated individual bottles of body wash, body lotion, shampoo and conditioner which we had bagged up and gave to every lady attending.

Each day was a challenge and we soon learned how far the news was spreading. Some ladies were travelling over 35 miles to access the service. Many ladies did not have a bra and one lady admitted that she didn't know her bra size as she had borrowed a bra to come to the clinic. All these ladies touched our hearts and we feel privileged that we were able to visit this wonderful country and set up a service that will help restore the dignity and self confidence of these very deserving ladies of Barlad and surrounding area.

However on the penultimate day we were faced with a great challenge: our 99th lady arrived with her husband, one of only 3 that came with their wives, and when she undressed we realized that she was bilateral. For some reason we had been protecting a set of prostheses and were relieved and enormously pleased that these were the perfect size for this lady who was unable to hold back tears when she looked at herself in her new bra and matching prostheses, a very emotional and rewarding moment.

Well you ask did we reach our personal target? — Yes we did. — We fitted 105 ladies and fitted 108 prostheses. Absolutely amazing....

We found that the ladies of Barlad liked their bras to be looser fitting than would be usual here, as the new larger bras began to be short in supply Lesley and I went shopping. We found it surprising how difficult it was to find bras in the shops: we did manage to find a few which we purchased to supplement our supplies. In the end we kept a few bras as fitting bras and we ended up five bras short, but we are happy to report that once we got home we sourced these and have sent them over with Janet.

However the challenge continues as it would be very cruel to offer this service and then for it to be taken away, therefore we continue the collection of prostheses and bras, and are pleased to have sent over another supply which Janet, Peter and Neville took over in the mini bus in October: we are hopeful that these will be sufficient to keep the service going and will continue to send prostheses and bras for as long as we are able.

Please include this wonderful service, the staff at the Health Centre and the ladies of Barlad in your prayers.

Valerie Galbraith & Lesley Poole



Summer 2010

End Of Year One — Celebration / Achievements.

Myosotis Update

Rotary Year 2009—10

Rotary Year 2010—11

Summer 2010 saw an exciting conclusion to our first year of support for The Myosotis Trust and the children of Casa Esme.

The funds raised in 2009/10 have achieved a great deal for the children of Casa Esme;

• **Summer Camp 2010**

The summer camp provides an opportunity for the children of Casa Esme to enjoy a fun-filled week of camping and fun activities which they would otherwise be unable to experience.

The summer camp runs for 3 weeks during the summer, taking three groups of children for a week each.

The camp is supported by both local and UK based staff and volunteers.

• **Learning Support Equipment and Materials**

We have provided a range of equipment and materials for special needs children to help their continued education and social development at Casa Esme.

The decision regarding the equipment was made following my visit to Barlad in February and discussions with Casa Esme staff. There has also been frequent dialogue with the trustees in the UK to ensure that we are all working with a common objective for the development of Casa Esme.

The items provided were grouped into three categories

⇒ **Polydron Starter Set**

This maths equipment has a range of uses.

It helps children learn to recognise and sort shapes, and helps raise self-esteem. It can also be used independently for structured play.

⇒ **Multi-purpose Balls**

These range in size, and texture. One of the noticeable features of my visit was the abundant energy of the children, and their difficulty working together. These items can be used individually, and therapeutically, but also for team games.

The smaller balls with a textured surface can also be used to develop hand movements, and hand / eye co-ordination.

⇒ **Art And Craft Aids**

A series of adaptive aids were purchased to ensure all children could be included in activities, and they could develop their self-esteem, and to increase their level of independence. These materials range from things such as easigrip scissors, pen grips, and painting mittens. These enable children to access activities they would not otherwise be able to enjoy.

• **Storage Facility (Shed)**

A shed has been provided for secure storage of outside play equipment and to accommodate gardening equipment / materials in readiness for the 2011 garden project. Like any area, security and safety are imperative.



Communication Aid Messagemate™ is a communication device which enables the user to communicate by selecting a range of visual images or words on a touchsensitive tablet / pad which are then communicated using a pre-recorded speech message. Messagemate can be readily adapted and customised to suit a child's specific needs and disabilities. New messages can be recorded and loaded to the device which will enable Casa Esme staff to customise the device using



voice messages recorded in the child's native Romanian language. The device is

designed to be used by a range of users with a variety of disabilities and / or learning needs. Within the Messagemate product range, there are 4 models which can accommodate 8, 20 or 40 messages per device. The device is typically able to operate for 3 to 5 weeks on a full battery charge. The manufacturer / product range has been selected for the flexibility in operation and equally importantly the durability of the design. Due to the location of Casa Esme the device needs to be robust / resilient and reliable in operation. The Messagemate product range is currently in use worldwide and is particularly suited to operation in remote and arduous environments.

Case Studies - Children Of Casa Esme



Simona Marin Paraschiva (12)

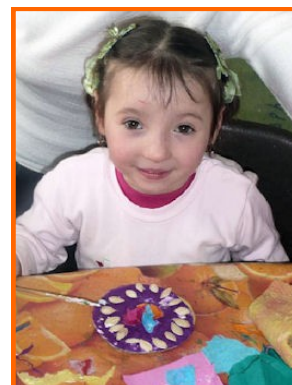
Primary condition : Cerebral palsy, epilepsy, severe neurons motor disability and tetra paresis.

Simona is a bright cheerful twelve year old girl with a high level of disability.

She has attended Casa Esme since 2005 and the main objectives are as follows;

1. Ensure that her social integration is maintained.
2. Develop the abilities that are inherent within her.

Simona has no expressive verbal language but does show awareness of people and places together with recognition of basic colours and concepts. Simona does make simple spontaneous sounds and communicates with these, her eyes and her hands. It is the aim of the club that we purchase a Messagemate communication device which will help unlock her potential and enable her to integrate and communicate / engage with other children . Simona is currently dependent upon adults to communicate and finds it difficult to interact with children for this reason. Simona's favourite activities are those which involve textures and tactile experiences such as playing in sand and handling small objects.



Constantina Bejan (11) & Crina Bejan (7)

Constantina - Primary condition : Emotional behavioural disorder, expressive language disorder.

Crina - Primary condition : Spina bifida, left sided palsy

Sisters Constantina and Crina are currently placed with separate foster parents and were only made aware of each other's existence after attending Casa Esme.

Constantina has become more self confident at Casa Esme and has made progress in her social skills and language activities. Constantina can feel very frustrated as she has difficulty in expressing herself.

Crina is a very cheerful, happy child and enjoys every aspect of her time at Casa Esme

She was noticeable for her enthusiasm to learn, ability to concentrate as a one to one and her interest in new tasks.

Crina does have problems speaking and this is a focus for her development.

WHAT NEXT?

The teaching strategies and speech and language aids planned for purchase in the current year of the project are specifically designed to meet the needs of children such as Constantina, Crina and many others at Casa Esme.

I am currently compiling teaching ideas with a view to sharing these with the staff at Casa Esme in order to maximise the potential and the independence of the children. These will be delivered at a future visit along with additional resources.

If you are especially interested in this aspect of the work of the club, please contact me. I will also be talking more about this at the next business meeting.

Yours in rotary - Elissa

14 September 2010

Sponsored Bike Ride from Shop to Shop



In the Spring of 2011, we are holding a sponsored Bike Ride from shop to shop; namely from our shop in Ruislip, Middlesex to our shop in Machynlleth, North Wales.

We anticipate this will take us three days and are grateful for the promise of a back-up vehicle from Clancey Docwra.

We shall be most grateful for any sponsorship which will all go towards the worthwhile work of the charity. We will have a Justgiving website up and running by then.

The ride is open to anyone; the more the merrier, so, whatever kind of bike you have, we look forward to seeing you if you can join up with us.



Details from:

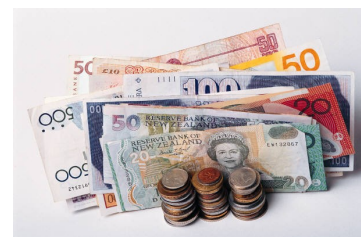
Janet Wastall Tel: 01582 873131



A word from our Treasurer

We have been very fortunate over the past few months in having had our trip to Romania, Summer Camp and other special projects paid for by the generosity of various friends, and for this, we are very grateful. Thank you. However, at present our funds are dwindling as we will soon find it difficult to meet our regular commitments again.

Last year, we reclaimed £10,000 through the Gift Aid Scheme which was obviously an enormous boost to our funds. Most of you, I know, already subscribe to this scheme and some are unable to. If, however, you don't but could, please consider doing so. It would cost you nothing and would help our funds. If you require any information on this scheme, or forms to complete, please call me on 01895 675343. Thank you very much.



Angela Evans

November 2010

Divine Intervention

It started well enough, if anything can have a positive side at 5.30 in the morning. My co-drivers Janet and Peter Wastall were standing outside of my house with beatific smiles on their faces, ready for the 'Off'. The 'Off' being an early start to the next three days and 1690 miles to the Myosotis Centre in Birlad in Romania. After transferring my half asleep horizontal body from bed to minibus, we set off to catch the 09.15 ferry from Dover to Calais.

The purpose of this particular trip was to transport a very full (and rather heavy) minibus load of various items of specialist teaching equipment, medical items, hygiene supplies, a large flat-packed plastic shed plus many other carefully stored items to our Medical Centre and children's school in Birlad. A secondary objective was also to take the vehicle to Birlad to hand it over to our staff there, as it was to replace our original vehicle that has been based there for six years, and was rapidly coming to the end of its life. Suffice to say, some Romanian roads are not quite up to motorway standards!

The trip, though fairly long, was quite straightforward, the three of us had done it about 20 times over the past ten years and knew the route off by heart, albeit some of us (moi) still made the occasional mistake necessitating interesting deviations through Vienna, Budapest!! However, the normal route was France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Austria, Hungary and finally Romania.

The trip is broken up into the three days, UK to Geiselwind in Germany (640 miles), Geiselwind to Nadlac on the Hungarian/Romanian border (650 miles), and the last day from Nadlac to Birlad (just under 400 miles). The two night stops are eagerly anticipated, as they provide a meal and more importantly, a beer (or two) and a good rest.



Normally the journey is easy, with the three drivers taking stints of about 2 hours behind the wheel. The first two days are mostly motorway, whilst the last day travelling across Romania is much slower due to the road conditions, plus numerous village speed restrictions. One of the favourite ways of avoiding boredom when not behind the wheel, is either reading a good book, watching videos on a small DVD player, or sharing loads of saved up crosswords.

So, the 9.15 ferry was boarded, and left on time, a satisfying breakfast was consumed, then off the boat and foot down up onto the A16, destination Dunkirk, Brussels, and so on through the first day, Liege, Aachen, Cologne, Frankfurt, Wurzburg and then Geiselwind, bed, food and medicinal beverage(s).

This particular vehicle had made this journey many times, and had performed well apart from a couple of minor faults; however this was all about to change. Just as we were actually pulling into the car park of the hotel at Geiselwind where we were staying the night, there was a resounding bang from under the van, and the clutch pedal totally disappeared, and we juddered to a spectacular halt.

A local garage came to our rescue the following day, and towed the van away to their workshop; the worrying news came later that day. The whole clutch assembly had completely disintegrated. We were told there was some good news, but also some bad. The good news was that they could fix it; the not so good news was that it would take several days to get the parts from France, and the even really not so good news was that it was going to be expensive!! Another slightly awkward aspect was that we were all booked to fly home from Bucharest on the Friday, and this was already Monday.



Just when all seemed to be doom and gloom, the garage rang to say they may be able to get the parts earlier than originally expected, and would pull out all the stops to get us on the road as soon as they possibly could.

Unfortunately our tickets with British Airways were non transferable, and there was no way we could still deliver the vehicle after the repairs and still get to the airport for the original flight. After several phone calls to BA explaining our predicament, they came up trumps (in spades) and rebooked us on the Sunday flight free of charge.

Hence, four days later than originally planned, we pulled up outside the Health Centre in Birlad to a fantastic welcome by Carol, Miky and Georghita; never did a beer taste so good. I found it hard to argue with Janet and Peter's theory that given we were going to break down somewhere; it couldn't have been at a better location. **Somebody** was definitely looking out for us.

Neville Ward

October 2010



This is the cross that stands high above the village of Geiselwind, which is illuminated at night.



Helping Hands



Project about social and professional inclusion of young disabled people

From 26th September to 3rd October 2010, Romanian Myosotis Association, in collaboration with Uniamoci Onlus Association from Italy, has developed in Bîrlad a project on social and professional inclusion of young disabled people. The money needed to sustain the activities in this project was provided by European Commission, the Program "Youth in Action".

We called the project "Helping Hands" and we chose this motto as one of the messages that we wanted to send to the local community: "We respect human diversity!".

The goal of the project was to achieve a minimum diagnostic for the possibilities that our community provide to young people with special needs for socio-professional inclusion and to promote a positive attitude related to people with special needs.

All the twenty-two young people involved in this project (12 Romanian and 10 Italians) have participated for six days in multiple activities concerning the socio-professional inclusion of disabled young people.

The experiment-activity we called "Exploring Bîrlad in wheelchair". The volunteers accepted the challenge to solve a common task of daily activity (shop, go to school, get money from the bank) having only the resources given to you by being immobilized in a wheelchair.

Public Café on social and professional inclusion of young people with disabilities. At this activity we had a lot of guests; along with young people involved in the project have participated also families of young disabled people, employers of institutions in Bîrlad whose beneficiaries are persons with disabilities, and a person confined to wheelchair.

Forum theatre show held at two high-schools in Bîrlad in front of the teenagers. The topic of our representation was the discrimination of young disabled people. We performed some scenes about a young girl who, after a car accident, have become confined to wheelchair and now her class mates exclude her from all group activities. The end of the play we performed was a sad one, but we have offered to the young people participants to our show to make their own suggestions in order to change the end of the play. So, we performed again the scenes, but this time we make the changes suggested by our public, as follows.

Visit one of the institutions in Bîrlad whose beneficiaries are young people with special needs.

Two activity sessions with the beneficiaries of the 11 Plus Project. This project is supported by Romanian Myosotis Association for children with severe disabilities which exceeded the chronological age of 11.

Direct interaction between project participants and young disabled people and/ or their families, combined with the discussions. We had this during the project outlined for the participants a real and complex representation about the problems that young disabled people from Bîrlad are faced with: lack of access to public institutions, lack of access to the information; no support enough from the community, no institutions enough to provide services for persons with special needs, lack of specialized services, insufficient money for covered medical and educational needs, hostile attitude of the general population, etc.

For the future we intend to develop projects to raise awareness of people from our community concerning the presence of persons with disabilities and their needs, in order to promote an appropriate attitude towards them.

Another relevant component of this project was the interaction between young people belonging to two different cultures of the European Union: Romania and Italy. The intercultural dialogue was natural and inevitable through the project time, and the last day of the activities in this project was dedicated exclusively to this issue. Dressed in traditional Romanian costumes, the volunteers of Romanian Myosotis Association spoke to the guests about the culture and traditions of our country. The moment was followed by the presentation of Sicilian culture and traditions made by the young Italians.



Loredana Dobrin

Project Co-ordinator

Driving to Barlad

Peter Wastall
August 2010

Introduction

Supporters of the Trust have often expressed interest and asked about driving vehicles and taking out supplies from Ruislip to Barlad.

There has been a very good team of drivers over the years and these include Des Riley and Neville Ward (who unfailingly and tirelessly service and maintain Myosotis vehicles), and Colin Titmuss, Peter Sellars, David Gardner, Chris Bell, Jack Boardman, Ginny Weston, Janet Wastall (my wife) and me.

Janet and I came to the Trust in the summer of 1999. I had just taken early retirement, having been in London all my working life, but had always thought how great it would be to drive lorries. So on the first day of my retirement, Janet and I began a course which led us both to acquire HGV licences and very shortly afterwards we were introduced by mutual friends to Carol Daniel, who at that time was looking for drivers to make the first two trips to Barlad during the latter part of 1999. Carol and Des had just bought a 17 ton DAF 2100 lorry, which had previously been owned by a local Fire Service and had already seen service for charity visits, including Serbia and other trips abroad. It was a great opportunity for me and has been a passion of mine ever since. So Neville (who had recently retired from BA and had long held an HGV licence) and I set about making plans for the visit.

Documentation and Preparation

There was a considerable amount of preparatory work to do, which generally started some eight weeks before we were due to begin the trip.

It was necessary to prepare a full inventory of every single item we were taking, which included medical equipment, clothes, shoes (Janet and I had previously collected a full van load of boxes of shoes from Clarks of Somerset), furniture and many kinds of household items. The inventory had to specify the weight and UK cost of each item. It then had to be sent to Barlad for the Trust to get clearance from the Mayor of Barlad, together with full details of the drivers and the journey details of the lorry and the specific dates on which we would be journeying and staying in Romania. Myosotis in Barlad then sent back formal approval documentation (in Romanian) to us by post, which we needed to produce at the Hungarian and Romanian borders. Similarly it was necessary, in good time before the visit, to obtain clearance on the inventory, vehicle details, border crossing point and time of entry, from the Hungarian Embassy in London and to produce documentation at the Hungarian borders. (We were told that we would not get the lorry through the Hungarian crossing point if we did not arrive at the specified crossing point at the correct time with the agreed registered number plate for the lorry and we had to be very careful about this.)

Additionally, we had to obtain clearance from the Romanian medical authorities in Budapest, which usually resulted in long telephone calls with Budapest who chose generally not to understand English.

Also, we needed visas for Hungary and Romania and to obtain transit insurance documentation for the lorry.

There were also other contingencies which had to be sorted out at the last minute. On one occasion it looked as though foot and mouth disease in the UK would prevent us from taking the lorry abroad. Sometimes we received late notification (when the lorry was packed and ready to go) that we could not take various items of medication and clothing—but we took a chance and left all as was on the lorry. From time to time, we were also confronted with ferry and fuel strikes—all of which, if we were delayed, would inevitably affect the timings we had previously given in England to the Hungarian and Romanian authorities (who took every opportunity to be difficult, unreasonable and fractious), which could have resulted in the two countries denying us entry on arrival at their entry and exit borders.

A few days before the scheduled date for leaving, all the items to be transported were collected (often from numerous different places in Ruislip) and loaded onto the vehicle.



***Collecting and loading
gifts from a school in
Ruislip, with Syl Alexander.***



**Loading the minibus at Markyate Baptist Church:
Peter Wastall, Mark Buckley, Neville Ward,
Alan Poole and Graham Brown**



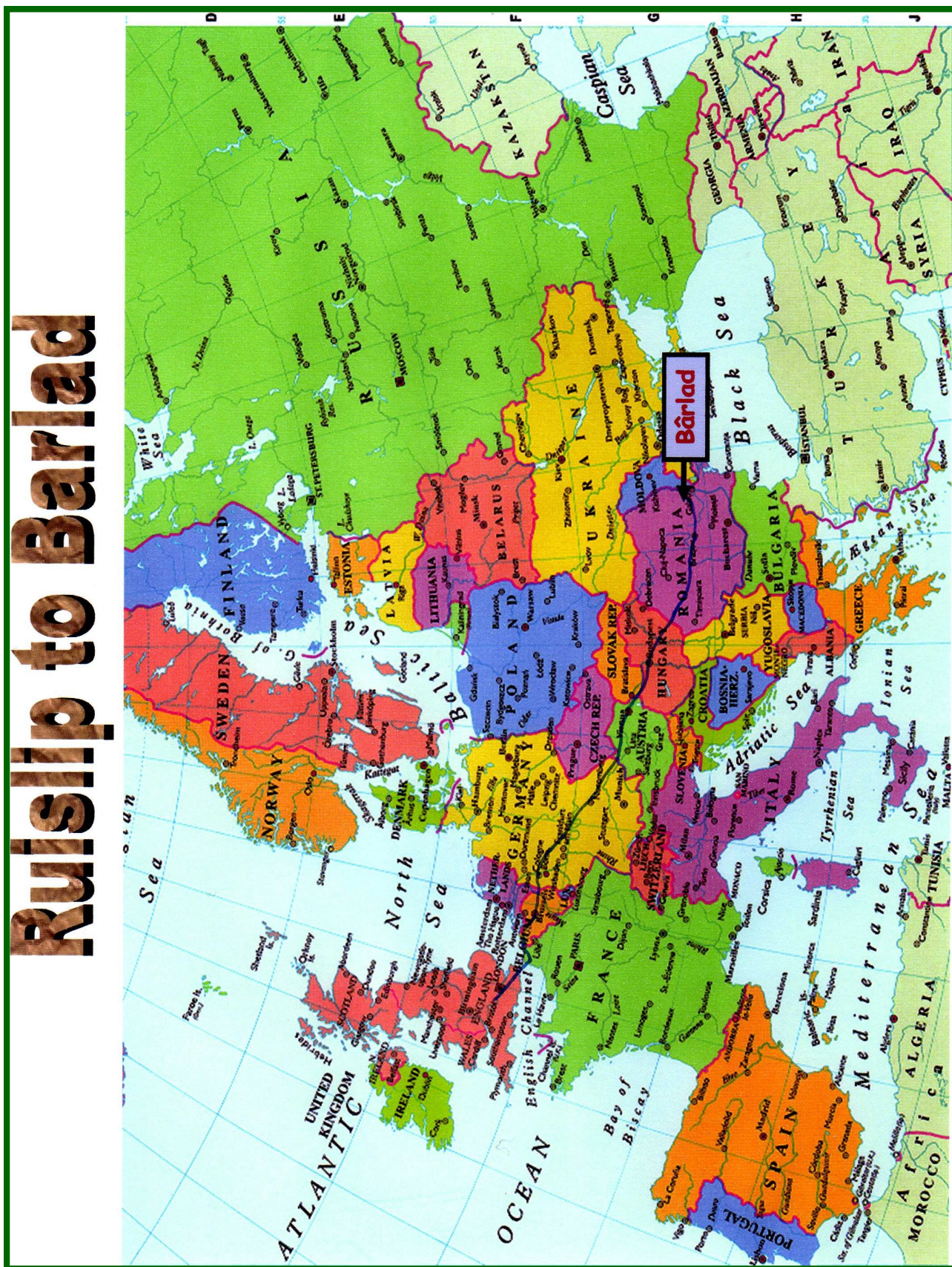
However, despite all the problems and difficulties with paperwork, loading and borders, we always managed to arrive in Barlad at our previously projected time and date.

The Journey: Distance, Route/Map and Time

The return journey by road to Barlad is around 3,300 miles and the route takes us through France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Hungary and finally into Romania. (A map is shown on the next page.)

These days (in the minibus) we take overnight stops and the journey takes about three days each way, which means we need to cover around 550 miles a day, often, especially in the early days, with long delays at border crossings (twenty eight hours at the Romanian border on one occasion) and waiting times for cross-Channel ferries, which includes a full day's drive across Romania. In the early days, in the lorry, we would drive through the night and covered the entire journey (not generally being able to exceed about 55 mph and often much slower) in just two and a half days.

Ruġip to Bârlad



The Lorry



All the drivers developed a great and sustained affection for the Myosotis lorry. The lorry never let us down, as a consequence of all the time, effort and expense which Des and Neville always gave in maintaining and keeping it at a very high standard.

The lorry lasted for some three years, before it had to be “retired” locally in the Barlad area, and has since been used for spare parts for other vehicles. We still see what is left of the lorry occasionally on our visits.



The Myosotis lorry in Barlad



Neville Ward, Peter and Janet Wastall and Andrew Wastall with the lorry in Barlad.



Des Reilly

The lorry in a three mile queue, waiting at the border to cross from Austria into Hungary.

Sometimes the officials would close their customs window, pull down the blinds and play computer games during work hours, with some fifty or more lorry drivers kept waiting for many hours to have their papers checked.



The Minibuses



The Trust owns two minibuses. The red minibus is now registered in Romania and stays permanently in Barlad for general use. The blue minibus is registered in the UK and is used for visits from Ruislip to Barlad, always being fully laden when it leaves Ruislip.

The two Minibuses in Barlad.



Neville Ward and David Gardner maintaining one of the two minibuses in Barlad.



Chris Bell, Janet Wastall, Colin Titmuss and Neville Ward.

The Borders

Dover

During earlier years when the Trust used the lorry for transport to Barlad, the first “border” was leaving Dover, where we needed to get customs documentation clearance and then join a queue of lorries for customs officials to “seal” the back doors of the lorry (the seals theoretically saving us from searching inspection at borders until we arrived at the customs centre in Barlad). After that, we had to wait in a shed for lorry drivers until our given number was displayed on a board and then collect our papers. The whole exercise could take anything between 1½ and 3 hours from first arriving at Dover, and often delayed our departure on a ferry. Generally we would leave Ruislip at around 5.30 am. Often it was gone past 2 pm when the ferry arrived at Calais, giving us some 450 miles to drive before our first night’s stop in mid Germany (at Geiselwind), where our very good friend, Gunter, supports us in his way by offering us accommodation free of charge.

France, Belgium and Germany

Generally, apart from showing our passports at Calais, we were not stopped at the borders entering France, Belgium and Germany, though were often stopped on the road—police noticing our UK registration plates—and asked to produce our papers, our destination and contents of the load of the lorry.

Borders at Austria, Hungary and Romania

From the time we arrived at the border passing from Germany into Austria, until we had completed our journey to Barlad, the border officials were unwelcoming and went out of their way to be unhelpful and obstructive. We would often be simply ignored when we eventually reached a customs window at a border after hours of waiting, with papers being tossed back at us with in a wholly dismissive manner, without any explanation of what was required. It was then up to us to try to sort this out. Frequently, we were told to wait away from the customs window with other drivers and given no further attention. We would be told to go to another customs office but not told where located in a different part of the border. We would try to talk to other drivers to sort out the paper problems, but generally commercial drivers required different papers to charity drivers and could not help. Often we needed as many as six different stamps on our papers, and all had to be obtained in a set order. There were no posters giving advice and each time we made a new trip, the border procedures would have been changed, so remembering the procedure at a particular border from a previous visit was often very little help. (We even had to get clearance from a veterinary official on the border site and would be kept waiting, when we eventually found his office, for an interminable time.)

On occasions, the vehicle would be effectively strip-searched by armed guards with dogs.

We always took particular care for all medical items to be within the time expiry date marked on the item. We knew that if out of date items were found, the whole load could be rejected and we would have no option other than to return back to England with our mission at an end.

We could be held up for twelve hours or more at the entry border into Romania and shunted from one place to another. The guards were always looking for “presents”, without which it was obvious we would not have our papers stamped. At the border into Romania, there was a tacky onsite liquor store, and it was made clear to us that we needed to buy whiskey or other alcohol from the store and offer to the guards—who we are sure would then pass the liquor back to the store and pocket the cash. The officials were perfectly open about requiring a cash backhand payment. Often they would refer to some vague tax for which they would charge us, but would never give a receipt. On one occasion, when we were taking some old second hand furniture, we were told by the officials that it was antique and we would therefore have to pay an antique tax and invited to offer “an amount” to satisfy this. On another, the official told us he had headache and needed a large bottle of aspirin and other items before he would attend to us, seeing from our inventory that we were carrying all kinds of medical supplies. An official inspecting doctor asked us for cigarettes.

We, as drivers, would have discussions about the bribery, but we simply would not have been able to access through the border unless bribes were paid and our journey would thus have been jeopardized.



Only when our papers had been stamped as required by every section at the border could we go to the hut controlling the exit gate and offer our papers. If all was in order, we would hurry to the vehicle and join the exit queue to start the next part of our journey. (Otherwise we would be sent back to start all over again.)

***One of the many customs counters
at the Romanian border at 2.00 am in
the morning.***

During the Journey

There were many incidents over the years, which happened to us on the journey to and from Barlad, and a few, which immediately come to mind, include the following:

We were stopped many times by police in Germany, Austria, Hungary and Romania. Abroad, of course, all police carry fire-arms and we were stopped on a German motorway by a police squad car and taken a large designated compound where the vehicle was aggressively searched throughout for any "contraband" (particularly drugs, cigarettes and alcohol) and dismissively told to get on our way when nothing could be found. On arriving back in the UK at Dover at 2.00 am, the lorry was directed to a customs shed and searched by officials and dogs—even to the extent of removing wheel nuts to see whether we had previously taken off the wheels during the trip, again to store "illegal items" behind the wheels and import these into the UK. On one trip in Hungary in November at around midnight, we were stopped by armed police. However, when one of them noticed a toy giant teddy-bear in the driver's cab, we offered this to him as a Christmas present for his children. The policeman was very thrilled with such a gift and was so pleased that the squad car escorted us out of the town and on our way. In Romania, we were stopped on six occasions on a single trip driving from Barlad to the Romanian border, generally by very old decrepit police cars which claimed to be equipped with radar for speeding detection (which we knew was untrue) and given an immediate fine without a receipt. (We knew that the police would recognise the UK number plate and would regard us as easy to trap into a fine.) Police would always claim that they could not speak or understand English, but on one occasion a police driver wanted the payment of a fine, because he had seen from the lorry's log book that the colour of the back part of the vehicle had been changed from green to red, but not recorded in the log book. I remember, too, the lorry was stopped and Neville was told to get out of the lorry to face questioning. After half-an-hour or so, it looked as if Neville would be fined for speeding, but the police had not realised that I was driving and Neville was in the passenger seat—the police had forgotten the driver is on the right in the cab and not left, as in Romania. The two policemen were very cross as they had started to fill in the documentation to fine Neville and seeing their mistake, told us to get on our way.

We met many people who were homeless and without money during our journeys across Romania. This young boy, whose picture is below, was trying desperately trying to find courage to come up to us when had stopped for a break in the Carpathians. He was obviously living rough with no friends or home. We left a small pile of food for him and often wonder what became of him.

On another occasion, we saw a young destitute woman and child at a railway station on a very cold wintry night during the early hours of the morning, just trying to find some warmth and shelter. She had nowhere to go and no money to look after herself or her child. We saw many incidents like this.

During our visits, we saw many horrendous accidents on motorways, and over the Carpathian passes where artic lorries had gone off the road and tipped over the side down the mountain.

Journey's End

It was and is just very good indeed to reach Barlad safely and well, often after very difficult and memorable journeys. It was all very worthwhile and rewarding to get to Barlad and be so generously and hospitably welcomed on our arrival and throughout our visit by all of our very good friends in Barlad.

The two stars of our visits overall have always been our friends in Barlad and the vehicles. We have a great affection and attachment to both. Our very grateful thanks to them both.



Romanian Visit to Barlad 2010

The MESSterious Case of the Submersible Pump!

After years of resisting doing purely voluntary work, I was finally 'persuaded??' to join the merry band of 'Noiseys' from Markyate Baptist church on their Mission visit to Barlad as part of the Myosotis Trust. First challenge was to endure the 2:00 a.m. flight from Luton to Bucharest, and then the six hour minibus journey to our destination! However, the excellent company helped to dispel the rigours of this introduction! In spite of rumours to the contrary, the hotel was perfectly acceptable, and we met the delightful Barlad representatives – Carol Daniel and Mihai Popa at the day school Casa Esme.



Under my supposed 'plumbing experience' qualification, I had been asked to install a submersible pump at the school. My 'site inspection' revealed a 5 metre deep shaft leading down to a vast cellar, extending under the school, and partially under the adjoining road and property. The cellar was seriously silted to over a metre depth I estimated, as it had been frequently flooded over time. The mud was a perfect breeding ground for various bugs! There was about a metre of water in the shaft.

I understood that the local fire brigade had wrecked one of their pumps on one occasion, trying to drain the cellar after some serious flooding in the town! They had been reluctant to make further visits. The original pump had finally given up about three years ago, and funds were not available to replace it. Fortunately, Mihai was able to transmit photographs and I was able to identify a suitable alternative, which Alan Poole was able to obtain and was donated by one of Clancy Docwra's specialist suppliers, Bridges Electrical Engineers Limited of Midsomer Norton.



I had no experience of installing such an item, but am always game for a challenge! Work commenced, and I found that I was able to use the existing pipe-work to connect in the new pump, a great result!

However, the 'electrics' proved to be a much greater challenge! The original breaker was defective, and had been jerry rigged. The old pump had probably failed because of overheating. There was no level sensing control for automatic operation, and hence had run 'dry' before being manually switched off. (on many occasions!)

The 'jerry rigging' was actually used over the first night, and with the new pump running virtually all night, it had cleared the standing water from the shaft by morning!

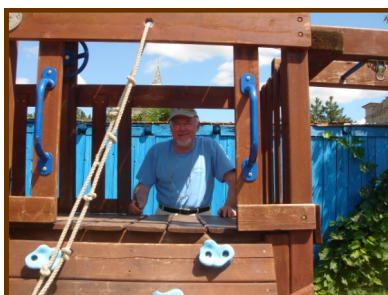
Attention was then given to rectifying the electrical installation. This took much longer than the pump installation! A new breaker was obtained and eventually the wiring was laid in correctly and tested. The pump continued to operate (automatically) over the next few days, but less frequently as it cleared the remaining water coming in from adjacent properties. Eventually the cellar will dry out, but the silt remains a problem, being a considerable expense to remove.



Gordon J. H. Jones

November 2010

I found the venture a challenging, but ultimately rewarding experience, and have deep admiration for all those involved in Carol's projects. If more projects of a similar challenging nature surface, I might be 'persuaded' to go again!





The Orchyd Experience



Between the 5th and the 15th of August two members of the Myosotis Association in Romania participated voluntarily on a holiday organized by "Orchyd" Charity UK which was prepared for a number of twenty severely disabled children from England.

I don't know when and how this idea was born and I don't know as well through which stages it had to go until it got to our ears.

For us this experience had as a starting point the moment when the Director of the Myosotis Association Romania announced to us that for the summer of 2010 we have the invitation to participate as volunteers on a vacation for severely disabled children, vacation organised by an NGO in Ruislip, UK.

It sounded great: holiday, severely disabled children, UK... were issues that guaranteed an experience which promised to bring significant changes in our personal and professional life. Perhaps from this reason, me and Alexandru had the same thought: „we have ahead of us a period with a huge learning potential and the final results will depend mostly on how much we will get involved in this experience.” That's how we decided to dedicate full time to this project during its entire period.



The first day was for us a day to know and to adapt to the new environment we were facing. Even from that moment we found out that the beneficiaries of this project are twenty children with severe disabilities, children who would leave for ten days their family environment in exchange for a holiday planned and organised exclusively for them. During the camp the children were accommodated in a special school for disabled children in Ruislip, had food cooked inside the school by a team of volunteers according to the medical recommendations and to the specific personal diet of each of the participating children.

The activity program included daily visits to different places in the neighbourhood : LegoLand, a Zoo with exotic animals, Theme park for children, swimming pool, cinema, bowling ,a two days camping trip for the disabled children (sleeping in tents), going shopping in shops and stores in London, etc.

On the second day we met the main actors of this event: the disabled children. We were surprised to see that most of them came in their wheelchairs although they did not have the capacity to coordinate their movements; two of the children were blind, one child was autistic, but all of them were smiling, sociable, open to interact with the others and capable of showing and giving a lot of trust to the person next to them.

The activities followed the syllabus, the days went by, one by one and we got to the moment when the parents came to school to take their children back home. Emotion, the joy of seeing, the nostalgia of the days that had passed without coming back, new friends, e-mail address exchange, the promise of meeting again, appreciations, encouragements... everything coloured the end of this vacation.

I think that anyone who goes through such an experience has a lot to share with those at home. I would like to stop only on two aspects which I find revealing for the future: the concept of "Volunteering" in UK and the social integration possibilities that the British culture offers to the disabled people.



The youngest volunteer involved in the "Orchyd" project was, probably, fifteen years old and at the opposite end there were people who could have shared their personal memories from the second World War. What was absolutely surprising to notice is that in Britain the volunteering has no age. People understand that voluntary involvement into activities that regard the community as a whole is a duty for each one of them and, in consequence, they involve with abnegation in such activities. A surprising thing for us was that although the group was so heterogeneous, it was dominated by harmony, understanding, synchronisation and mutual completion. The elderly people naturally get involved into activities coordinated by twenty or twenty-five year old youngsters and give them credit and trust that what they do is of good quality. In exchange, the youth asks for the opinion of the "experienced", consult them and value the life experience of the elder volunteers. In all this period I had the feeling that I am in a family with a lot of members and I was more surprised when I found out that most of these people meet only once a year, when they organise the "Orchyd".

The visit to Greenwood School for disabled children in Ruislip is enough to understand the dimension of the differences that exist between the social integration possibilities for the children in U.K. and the possibilities offered by our country. Various working materials, large and well equipped activity rooms, play grounds properly adapted to the needs of the disabled children, toilets that are adapted to the same kind of needs, no steps, no obstacles ahead of the children with walking disabilities.

People in general are used to meeting people with special needs. Issues like accepting the presence of a disabled person, adopting a proper attitude in relation to such a person, offering help in order to create facilities for the disabled people are part of the normality of the community in general. This aspect was easy to notice where ever I went: the sidewalks are designed with ramps easy to have access to by the disabled people, the means of transport are accessible to the people with walking disabilities, all the buildings, companies, public places we went to have a special toilet room for the disabled persons. The care for this kind of person goes up to having within parks special adapted playgrounds to meet the needs of the disabled children.



The fact that a project meant to offer some vacation days to some disabled children has gathered for the last forty years over one hundred volunteers from the local community speaks for itself.

No doubt „Orchyd” is more than twenty severely disabled children, tens of volunteers from the community (from all age ranges, no matter the professional status) and some trips to beautiful places for the children. „Orchyd” is a world where people are tolerant, receptive to the needs of the ones around them, hardworking, smiling and kind; a lesson about the love for the one next to us, about kindness, respect and about unconditional acceptance of the one next to you. Once you've been part of it you achieve principles and values you will take with you wherever you go.

At the end of this project I have remarked that during all this time inside of us it was born and grew the wish of realising a similar project for the disabled children in Barlad. We hope that the efforts we'll make in this direction during the following period will be a success!

All the things I've mentioned here make the involvement in the Orchyd project a special experience for me and Alexandru and also are strong reasons for us to be thankful for all the people who made this experience possible for us. Thank you, Carol! One more reason for us to say thank you! A big thank you for both the families who have led us through this experience with so much warmth, patience and hospitality! Thank you, Hilary and Marc Lemon! Thank you, Helen and Philip Pye-Beraet! And also thank you to all our dear new friends we met in Orchyd! We keep you in our soul and in our minds as special people who bring in our lives special memories.

Loredana Dobrin
October 2010



Merry Christmas



Barlad 2010 - More than a memory!

I'm standing on Luton Parkway Station when the sound of the railway is interrupted by the roar of engines as a plane takes off from Luton Airport. Looking up I notice the livery colours of "Wizz Air" which, as it happens, is where this personal account starts.

At some ridiculous hour of the night a group of us from Markyate Baptist Church and a few stragglers met at Luton Airport to board a Wizz Air flight to Bucharest and 2 weeks in sunny Romania. The ideal beach holiday destination, not. Boarding the plane and scrambling for seats we found ourselves amongst a group of Romanian fruit pickers on their way home from the fields of Suffolk and Cambridge. My lasting impression of the arrival will always be the blue and yellow warehouse resembling an Ikea depot, which on closer inspection became an Ikea depot. I didn't realise, until then, that the Romanian public had been invaded by Viking hoards from Sweden selling Billy bookcases, Husvik lamps and introducing the natives to meatballs.

Travelling from the airport to Barlad it was noticeable that there was very little order to the countryside, no defined fields like good old England with its hedgerows but vast expanses of wild countryside with very little planning. Houses littered the route in a sort of higgledy piggledy way without any rhyme or reason which gave it that kind of random look. All along the edges of the road people set up ad hoc markets selling what produce they had managed to grow in order to supplement their meagre income. Tables of water melons and other fruits and vegetables littered appeared wherever there was a small gathering of dwellings, whose gardens were, in the main, turned over to the growing of vegetables and fruit instead of roses, daffodils and the occasional rusting car as is the case in the UK.

On arrival in Barlad we were delivered to a very nice hotel, whilst the younger members of the party had to rough it on the concrete floor of the school. After a bit of a rest the adults went for a meal at a local restaurant where the food was pleasant but the local red wine was smooth, fruity, tempting and went down a treat after such a long journey.



The girls in our party left us the following day to go camping with a group of children who attended the school at Casa Esme. So Monday and Tuesday found the adults and the lads preparing and decorating the now empty school. And whereas, according to Flanders and Swan, the plumber came on Monday and the painter came on Friday, the plumber and the painters came on the same day and they stayed all week.

The school's cellar had a pump which didn't work which meant that the cellar regularly got flooded, and so a new pump was required. The sight of Gordon's legs being held by Janet as they protruded from a manhole will remain with me a long time. The new pump now works a treat emptying the cellar, and its silt eventually, the rest of Ballad and even the Black Sea if it's made to work hard enough.

On the Wednesday of the first week we took a break from the emulsion, although I did make them work in the morning, to venture into to the countryside to visit three families who are supported by the Trust. These three families originated from backgrounds with little going for them. With the help of the Trust they obtained housing and the support they needed. But the biggest gift that the Trust were able to give among the gifts that we bought was Hope. They had somebody who cared for them in all the squalor that they lived in. The most difficult thing about the trip was the feeling of being a mere spectator being shown around. These were not exhibits in a human safari park, these were people who hurt who, in a Europe that has so much, were still without so much. My Dad used to tell the story of how receiving an orange at Christmas was a big thing, I can understand him a little more now as I saw the reaction from the gift of a bag of potatoes brought to each family and but the smile on a little boy's face when we gave him a football. It was as if the sun had come out on a rainy day.

In the second week the lads joined up with the girls to do other things whilst the three of us remaining put on our "Groundforce" hats and gloves to toil away in the midday sun to turn the back gardens of the clinic into a haven of tranquillity that even Charlie, Alan and Tommy would have been proud of.

Barlad is a place of differences, differences between the Gypsy ghetto and the wealthier areas; differences between those off to work or school in the morning and those that followed you around asking for money in the evenings; differences in the shops that were becoming more westernised and those that were more economical; differences between those with running water and those reliant on the street pumps not a half a mile from the town centre and those who could drink from them and those who carried plastic bottles around with them all day; even the weather, so hot that when you came out of the supermarket, the coolest place in town, in the afternoon it was like the blast from a hot oven yet so cold in winter. I could go on, Barlad is a place where there is so much disparity.

And in the middle is the Myosotis Trust offering "Hope".

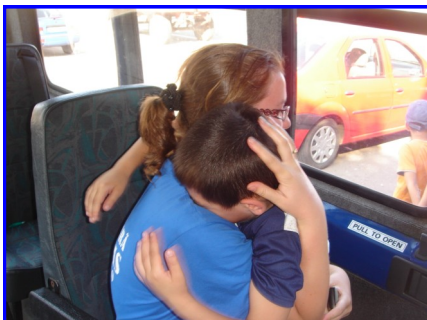
Mary Poppins says that "a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down" and although we worked very hard over the two weeks we were there, there were plenty of fun moments which made this trip so very enjoyable. This mission was full of memories for me, here are just a few:

Every day we were greeted by a group of young volunteers who went out of their way with their company, their support and their encouragement with little messages and an array of funny faces which appeared on the sandwiches every lunch time to show their appreciation,

Micky, our Mr Fix It, who went everywhere and did everything, and most of all the smile of a small boy when he was given a football.

Steve Mercer

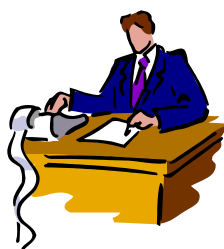
November 2010



THANK YOU



To Dave Green of Gowers Chartered Accountants, The Old School House, Bridge Road, Langley for kindly donating their accounting services.



Many thanks are also due to various churches for their continued support: St. Martin's, Ruislip, Markyate Baptist Church, St. Mary's Denham, The Church of the Ascension, Wembley, St. Edmund the King, Northwood and St. Peter's (ad) Vicula, Pennal, without whose support our work would be diminished.



Particular thanks are due to the various suppliers of bras and prostheses which made our Breast Clinic possible in Barlad this summer. Our thanks go to: Amoena UK Ltd., Anita, Trulife, Kettering Surgical Appliances, Charles Blatchford & Son, Hilton Garden Hotel, London Luton Airport and the Orthotic Team and Out Patients Dept at the Luton & Dunstable Hospital.



BRITISH AIRWAYS

To British Airways who kindly provide us with tickets annually to Romania and include us in their wonderful Charity Event at the end of the year and supply raffle prizes.



Harpenden
MENCAP



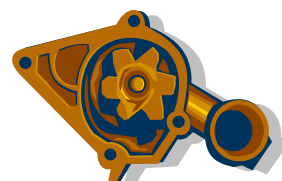
To the Harpenden Mencap Society for supplying us with second hands books which we are able to sell in our shops in Machynlleth, Wales and in Ruislip; this has greatly increased our income.

To Herr Gunter Seitz, proprietor of the Landhotel, Geiselwind, Germany who regularly gives us free accommodation on our journey to and from



Romania and this year was particularly generous to us when we were stranded in Germany for 4 days when our mini bus broke down, requiring a new clutch.

A special word of thanks to Bridges Electrical Engineers Ltd for generously donating the pump that was so desperately needed to stop the flooding at our school, Casa Esme.



Myosotis Prayer Topics for Winter 2010



We give thanks for all the positive things that have been achieved during the year:

For the successful Mission of the Markyate Baptist Church in the Summer.

For the setting up of the Breast Clinic in the Summer and for the on-going work of the clinic and the Support Group for all the clients.

For the enjoyment at the Summer Camp in their new location.

For all our generous sponsors who so faithfully give throughout the year.

We pray for our new home for young adults, The House of Roses, in Husi and pray that this home will be a place of peace, love and security for all our young friends. We pray that staff and funding will be forthcoming.

We pray that Carol and the Trustees may be given wisdom and seek Your will in all the decisions that need to be made for the on-going work of the charity.

May we seek for the people and country of Romania to know many improvements in their standard of living now they are in the European Union. May the increased wealth and advantages be shared equally with all, rich and poor alike.

May Carol's health improve as she seeks to work so tirelessly for the benefit of all whose lives have been touched by the Trust; please give her the strength to do Your work.

For the on-going blessing of the Young Volunteers and their friends as they meet together for Bible Study and prayer.

Let us be bold in our prayers. Our God is a great God and NOTHING is impossible for Him.



A Note from the Editor

As I write this, the evenings are already drawing in, the glorious shades of golds, reds and yellows are changing the face of the trees in the woodlands and Autumn is well and truly here. I have always loved this time of year; a time to reflect upon the past year, and also a time to look forward to Christmas and the start of another exciting year, full of hopes and plans for the future.

So, as I reflect on 2010, I do so with much thanksgiving for all that has happened to the people of Barlad and the surrounding areas, due to the work of The Myosotis Trust. We have much to thank God for, for all His many blessings to us in so many ways.

You can read in detail in this newsletter all the many positive things that have happened throughout the year, including the on-going support of The Rotary Club of Stamford St. Martins, the Mission from the Markyate Baptist Church, the donation of an E.C.G. Machine for the Health Centre and the forthcoming venture to open The House of Roses in Husi for our young adult friends.

In these days of recession, it is becoming harder to fund raise; I wonder, would you be prepared to have a Myosotis Box at home, say next to the 'phone where people can deposit their spare change? If you would like one, please give me a ring. If you have any comments or suggestions about this newsletter, or have any articles you would like included in the next edition, please do contact me on 01582 873131 or e-mail me on Janetwastall@aol.com

And finally, we are so grateful to you all, our wonderful supporters, who, without your continued interest and support, our work just would not be able to continue; we thank you from the bottom of our hearts and we pass on to you huge thanks from all our friends in Barlad whose lives you have blessed with your amazing generosity. God bless you all.

Janet Wastall
November 2010



THE TRUST WOULD BE VERY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR KIND HELP

DONATION FORM

If you should wish to support the continuing work of the Trust, but do not currently do so, please complete the details below, detach and forward this form to us.

I would like to donate £..... (single donation)

I would like to give a regular amount each month (please complete entire form)

BANKER'S ORDER FORM

TO: The Manager (your bank's name)

OF: (bank address).....

.....Postcode.....

Please pay:

HSBC (40-39-13), **65 High Street, Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 8JE**,

for the credit of **The Myosotis Trust**, (Account No. 11177419),

The sum of (figures) £.....(words).....

ANNUALLY

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(PLEASE DELETE AS APPROPRIATE)

Starting on (date).....until further notice

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GIFT AID CERTIFICATE

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I wish **the Myosotis Trust** to treat the following as Gift Aid donations

(please delete as appropriate):

☐ The enclosed donation of £.....

☐ The donation of £..... I made on: dd/mm/yyyy

☐ All donations I make from the date of this declaration until further notice.

*I know that I must pay an amount of income/capital gains tax
at least equal to the tax the charity reclaims on my donations in
the tax year.*

Signature.....

Date.....

Thank you for your kind support

