

8th July to 4th August 2017 - Report on the Visit to Namibia

Windhoek

David and Caroline Tracey arrived at Hosea Kutako Airport just after 10 am on 8th July - we were overjoyed to find that all six suitcases and our two in-flight bags arrived safely. After completing the necessary Arrival Form our first stop was MtC to purchase a Namibian Sim Card.

We then headed for Europcar to pick up our vehicle which would during our stay cover 3160 km.

We finally arrived at Rivendell Guesthouse for 2 pm followed by Cllr. Richard Silvester, the third member of our party, the following afternoon with a further two suitcases.

Rivendell is a small Guesthouse which can accommodate 28 people. Ciska (the proprietor) was extremely helpful answering our many questions during our stay.

The Book Den (c/o Hosea Kutako Avenue & Puccini Street - Email: elmarie@bookden.com.na)

The Book Den was our first port of call on Monday to purchase 12 Good News Bibles and 12 Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionaries. These are to go to the children who achieve The Richard and Margaret Fairclough Education Awards at each of the three schools. We were soon to realise that this was not going to be an easy task. It took us the entire day trailing around Windhoek to purchase these books. Without Eileen's (Book Den Manager) help this would not have been possible. The good news is that we can purchase future Bibles and Dictionaries giving a minimum of four months notice prior to our next visit. It is also worth mentioning that the children's books sold in this shop are of excellent quality and we decided to purchase a very small selection just in case any of the children receiving the 'Margaret and Richard Fairclough Awards' were too young to receive a Dictionary.

The Diocese of Namibia (108 Robert Mugabe Street, Windhoek)

We were warmly welcomed by Bishop Luke Pato who gave us the sad news that Lucas Kaluwapa Katenda (a popular and outspoken priest) had broken away to join the Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church (GAFCON) taking with him a number of priests and deacons. This took place shortly after his failure to be elected as Bishop of Namibia.

Throughout our stay we experienced time and again the pain and anger felt within the Anglican Church in Namibia - not only because Katenda had resigned but also because he was telling Anglicans that their original Baptism was not valid and that it would be necessary for them to receive a full baptism immersion. We witnessed firsthand the teaching given at church services so as to reassure and to persuade parishioners to remain true to the church they attended. Furthermore, our link parish in Okathitu is still reeling from the shock of the sudden departure of their Deacon who left to join Katenda.

Unfortunately, Bishop Luke was unable to confirm the ownership of the Rectory at Ruacana and asked us to make enquiries with the council offices whilst there and to keep him informed.

We were warned that poverty and malnutrition in the north of the country has increased with many undernourished children.

King's Daughters Bicycle Shop (Abraham Mashego Street, Katatura, Windhoek)

We had hoped to visit Mike Linke - Bicycle Empowerment Network (BENN) whilst in Windhoek - who helped us set up the Bicycle Project in Okathitu. However, BENN has now moved to Walvis Bay which is where the containers of second-hand bicycles are shipped to. It was suggested that we might like to visit a recently opened Bicycle Workshop in the Katatura district of Windhoek and decided that this would enable us not only to make comparisons with the Okathitu Workshop but also to give Richard a taste of the project that has made such a difference to so many Namibians. King's Daughters was set up to help the sex workers of Katatura. Eileen the Manager also works in the HIV/Prevention Clinic nearby.

CLaSH (80 Dr.Frans Indongo Street, Windhoek-West)

We visited this pre-school for deaf children by a special request made by Samantha Davies (presently studying Deaf Culture and British Sign Language at UCLAN).

Founded in 1989 CLaSH is the only provider of pre-school education for deaf children and has a unique role in Namibia. Their aim is to achieve the best possible care and education for children with communication difficulties.

Heidi Beinhauer (Director) and the staff made us welcome and we were given an insight to the teaching of deaf children. The highlight of our visit had to be when one young girl signed - thanking us for our visit and the gifts we had brought with us.

British High Commission (116 Robert Mugabe Avenue, Windhoek)

We met with Hans-Christian Manke (Political and Press Officer) who wanted to learn more about our link. He was keen to offer us both advice and an insight into the political situation in Namibia. He also asked us to consider the possibility of allowing the British High Commissioner to award the 'Richard and Margaret Fairclough Trophies' as this would raise the profile of the awards as well as our link.

Otjiwarongo / Tsumeb (House No. 1018, 10th Road, Tsumeb)

Through 'Friends of Namibia' we were able to make contact with Derek Sherratt a member of the Chesterfield/Tsumeb link. Derek very kindly offered us the use of his home in Tsumeb to save us making the 803 km journey to Outapi in one day. Tsumeb is about half way between Windhoek and Outapi (Okathitu Parish) and Chesterfield have recently established the Respect kindergarten which employs three staff looking after some thirty-two children.

Cheetah Conservation Fund (D2440, Otjiwarongo)

CCF is a non-profit institution which was established in 1990 to help save the wild cheetah, whose numbers were rapidly declining due to a loss of habitat, loss of prey and indiscriminate killing by farmers who viewed them as vermin and a threat to livestock.

Visiting the CCF Centre on our way to Tsumeb helped us to learn more about the valuable work that is being undertaken to conserve the world's fastest mammal in Namibia. We

agreed that should a youth visit take place in 2019 this would need to be included on the agenda.

Outapi (Okathitu Parish)

A brief visit to the Catherine Bullen Clinic in Oshivelo on our way north found us arriving at Outapi for 6 pm. The town has grown considerably in the last three years with a good shopping centre. Provisions can now be easily purchased in this town rather than in Windhoek as on previous visits.

Fr. Kashima together with the church council followed us on our journey into the bush in the dark. Our first job was to dig out one of the vehicles that had got stuck in the sand. After unloading the car, we held a meeting by candlelight both to be welcomed and to discuss our itinerary. We were introduced to Helmi Katoma (Community Health Worker) who would live at the rectory with us for the next ten days. Helmi spoke reasonably good English and would guide us through the bush for our many visits.

Had Caroline brought her robes? With no Deacon and Fr. Kashima (retired Archdeacon of Oshakati) looking after numerous churches, Caroline was asked to lead Sunday's Communion Service. Thrown in at the deep end she would be provided with an English/Oshiwambo Missal.

Fr. Kashima told us about his son-in-law (Katenda) leaving the Anglican Church after his failed election as Bishop. It is difficult to know how we should respond. Both Okathitu and Omaandi have lost their ministers along with other churches across the diocese.

Following the instructions given by the Namibia Committee it was decided that Friday would be the day set aside to bring community, school and church leaders together to discuss the way forward for our link. The aim of that meeting would be to:

- obtain the Namibian's thoughts on the aims and objectives of the link
- identify projects which would improve education, overcome sickness, hunger and poverty.
- improve communication by using 'Whatsapp' with key people who would oversee/monitor projects and communicate with us for accountability.

With their usual hospitality our hosts decided that it should also be a 'Party Day'. Chickens would be slaughtered in our honour served with oshifima, rice and pasta.

Our itinerary would allow us one free day to divide the many gifts we had brought with us between the schools, churches and kindergartens. The laundry bags we brought with us together with card luggage labels allowed us to organise ourselves for the many visits we would make in both parishes. The following gifts were generously provided by the wider community of Horwich and Bolton:

Wool, knitting needles and crochet hooks
Bibles
Educational posters and educational books
Stationery items
Knitted hats and jumpers
Hand Puppets

Premature Baby Suits
Gift Card Money for Goats & Chickens, Church Building Fund, Books
Scout Neckerchiefs and Badges
Altar Cloths and Church Linen
Photographs
Parish School Presentation Books of drawings and letters
Telescope
Richard & Margaret Fairclough Trophies with Dictionaries and Bibles
Cash Donations
Balloons
Letters
Clothes (sweatshirts, trousers, jogging bottoms, fleeces, T-Shirts)
Suitcases
Horwich Parish Church Tea towels
Wedding present for Fr. Phillipus and Letticia
English Tea
Footballs
Hi Visibility Vests and Arm Bands
Puncture repair kits and bicycle badges

The Church of the Good Shepherd

The congregation seems to have grown with many more children in attendance and a kindergarten which meets each morning during the week in church.

Three years ago the steel structures were put in place for the new church building. With a lot of fundraising and hard work the four walls and roof are in place. There is still a long way to go and Fr. Kashima has asked whether it would be possible for Holy Trinity to help finance the glass for the windows.

We explained that Holy Trinity has had numerous repairs to the church, hall and school in recent years and continues to face high maintenance costs. Thereby we stated that we were doubtful if we could financially help with this particular request.

Following our 'Community Meeting / Party Day', Fr. Kashima provided a written quotation from 'Champion Glass, Outapi' for an amount of 14,648.00 N\$ = £931.21 which he asked us to present to the committee for consideration (a gift of 800 N\$ has already been donated). Fr. Kashima has also requested financial help to supply both the rectory and church with electricity.

Okathitu Combined School

374 Learners - Grades 0 to 10 - over 50% of children orphaned or 'under privileged'.

There has been no funding from the government for education this financial year. This has placed the school in a difficult situation. They had lost three teachers due to these cuts.

Additionally, grain from the government for feeding children after the floods did not reach them until May (four months late). This has meant that they are left with grain that has to be used by end July 2017 leaving them with unused bags. It has been decided to divide

this amongst the pupils to take home to their families, although officially they are not allowed to do this in case the grain is sold.

Unfortunately, it became clear that the learners chosen to receive the 'Richard & Margaret Fairclough Awards' were those who had obtained the best exam results. As these learners had now left for higher education the parents were invited by the school to accept the awards on their children's behalf. We have made it clear that in future the trophies must be awarded to children overcoming adversity whilst working hard at their education.

Two further members of staff have been chosen to join the 'Okathitu / Holy Trinity Namibia Committee WhatsApp Group'. Hopefully this will improve our overall communication with the school.

The school agreed that solar lights would be a suitable educational project which would help children complete their homework and prevent risk of fire. 99% of the pupils come from homes that do not have electricity.

In addition to this Okathitu School has asked us to consider a tailoring project which would assist orphans to make uniforms for themselves. It would also provide learners with a lifelong skill to make their own clothes. They would need a building, sewing machine, material and sewing equipment.

Onangholo Combined School

426 Learners - 50% of children orphaned or 'under privileged'.

Once again it was clear that the school had not followed the criteria set out for the 'Richard and Margaret Fairclough Trophies'.

We were able to identify one member of staff to be added to the 'Group WhatsApp' for Onangholo School.

Agreement was given by the school that the solar lights would be a suitable educational project. However, they have also requested that we additionally consider enabling them to build and provide books for a library at the school.

Bicycle Empowerment Workshop / Brickmaking

The new building for the bicycle workshop is almost completed with the container being used to store second-hand bicycles in need of repair. Hilya has also introduced a solar powered ambulance bicycle which will be implemented this year. The Ministry of Health and Social Services gave an order for three of these whilst we were visiting.

With the implementation costs of the ambulance bicycle and the cost of building the new workshop we made an executive decision that the second instalment of 5000 N\$ for their loan could be delayed for a further twelve months. It was further agreed that we would confirm which community project should benefit from the second instalment which would be due in July 2018.

The brick making project now has eight employees which enables them to produce over 1,000 bricks a day.

Community Health Centre

On behalf of the Community the local Headman reported that they would like the Namibia committee to consider contributing towards a toilet for their new health centre. The health centre will be built close to the church with each household in the community giving a donation for the building of the health centre, as the government are unable to offer financial assistance.

Additional Visits

Whilst in Okathitu parish visits were also made to Okapya Church and Kindergarten, Oneheke Church, Omaandi Church and Kindergarten, Ondeka Kindergarten, Omahange Kindergarten and Tsandi Hospital.

Oshifo (Ruacana Parish)

After our final goodbyes to the congregation at the 'Church of the Good Shepherd' on Sunday 23rd July we headed for Oshifo which is a small town in the wider borough / parish of Ruacana close to the border of Angola.

Once again we witnessed the growth of the town which included a new shopping complex. The Chinese have given funding to the Namibian Government for infrastructural improvements. It seems bizarre to see these improvements alongside poverty and government financial cutbacks. We informed both link parishes of the financial hardships our schools and communities are experiencing here in Britain.

Cllr. Richard Silvester enabled doors to be opened with the local council. We were given a guided tour of Ruacana and saw firsthand the building projects enabling local people to rent a plot of land supplied with a toilet block on which they can build their own home with affordable bricks.

We were surprised to learn that Ruacana (70,000 sq. km.) is almost as large as Windhoek with the boundaries of Oshifo being extended. In addition, it has a military airport and the tourist attraction of the Ruacana Waterfalls.

We were to spend ten days in a small guest house which offered us the comfort and luxury of running water, electricity and internet (*if spasmodic*).

The Church of the Holy Family

We were disappointed to learn that we would not be sharing a Sunday service in this church having been invited instead to the consecration of a new church in Etunda 8 km away. This service, followed by confirmation, was taken by Bishop Shihala who retired in 2005 and is presently helping Bishop Luke Pato.

Upon learning that the new church (*named by the Bishop as the 'Church of Mary and Martha'*) was the sister church of the 'Church of the Holy Family', we quickly made an executive decision to give 1,000 N\$ as a gift from Holy Trinity Church. We officially welcomed them into our link. Fr. Phillipus will serve on alternate Sundays with the help of a lay minister in each church.

Unfortunately, the sewing project failed just five months after its inception in 2014. We learnt that the sewing machine and equipment together with items made had been left gathering dust in the rectory. It is clear that lack of leadership and motivation of those

involved were the reasons for the failure of this project. It was decided (*with the approval of the Namibia Committee and Revd. S. Fletcher*) that the sewing machine and equipment should be given to the Domestic Science/Home Economics Department at Tjihozu Combined School.

It was a difficult message to bring to the church council but God is good and we were able to help them to view it not as a failure but as a stepping stone to help the future generation to learn valuable skills. Furthermore, it was suggested that with the gift of wool and knitting needles they start up a 'Knit and Natter' group.

A visit to the property department of the town council established that the rectory had not been purchased. However, we were able to forward to Bishop Luke the information needed for this to take place.

In addition, we learnt that the extension of the town boundary means that the grounds of the 'Church of the Holy Family' would soon sit within that boundary. This would mean that a rent would become payable, alternatively the plot of land could be purchased. However, the church would probably be unable to afford either of these two options. Bishop Luke has been informed of the situation.

Tjihozu Combined School

It was a delight to visit this school and despite the lack of governmental funding Lusia Shipiki (the Principle) had wisely ensured that there was money left over from funding received in 2016. Furthermore, she is a major driving force in applying for donations and holding fundraising events to ensure the learners receive the best education possible. Staff not only give their spare time in putting on extra curriculum activities but also provide funds for the school from their own wages.

The school has its own agricultural project where learners are taught how to grow vegetables. Produce is sold and any profit is shared amongst the learners. It was decided to encourage this project by giving the school money raised to buy livestock (5,000 N\$) and in due course two pigs will be purchased.

Additionally, learners taught to design and make clothes with the sewing machine will also be allowed to sell what they have made. We were also able to donate wool and knitting needles to this school and spent a pleasant afternoon teaching a number of young people to knit and crochet.

We were pleased to learn that Tjihozu School had followed the criteria set for the 'Richard and Margaret Fairclough' Awards. A special presentation day was held with many awards being given. Holy Trinity Church also received two awards - to be framed and displayed in church.

Tjihozu School is successfully run and the learners are very happy. On our final day we were inundated with 'thank you' letters and we were sad to say our goodbyes.

Baobab Scout Group

We were able to attend a meeting of the Baobab Scout Group and were able to watch fourteen young people be invested as Scouts. We presented them with the Neckerchiefs, badges, photographs and letters from 6th Horwich Scouts. It was a delightful evening and

in September we will attend a 6th Horwich Scout meeting so as to present them with letters personally written by the Scout members.

The Regional Development Officer of the Scouts of Namibia (Hileni Ndeapo Kadhingula-Amutoko) is keen for a link to be developed between the two Scout Groups.

Ruacana Bicycle Empowerment Workshop

Numerous conversations with Hilya from Okathitu, the Chief Executive of Ruacana Council and also the Regional Director has encouraged us to suggest the possibility of a bicycle workshop project in Ruacana. If the container is sited within the church grounds, the rental could certainly help towards the planned future rental for the plot of land on which the church is sited. Hilya from the Okathitu Bicycle project is willing to train up maintenance staff and to give advice and support.

Ruacana Council is willing to consider helping with the overseeing of such a project with Caroline acting as co-ordinator between the different parties (Bishop Luke Pato / Michael Linke from BENN / Hilya Ekandjo / Fr. Phillipus / Emilia N Nanyeni - Chief Executive Officer - Ruacana Council / Andreas Shintama - Regional Councillor - Ruacana Constituency).

Such a project would offer employment to young people and bring extra revenue for both the town and church with an encouragement for physical health and fitness.

Additional Visits

Whilst in Ruacana parish visits were also made to St. Benedict VTC School, Pendukeni Kindergarten, Fr. Andreas Amrhein Kindergarten, Kaherero Kindergarten and Day Care Centre, Omonawat Tjihozu Health Centre and the Etunda Irrigation Project.

PROPOSED YOUTH VISIT IN 2019

Both Okathitu and Ruacana are keen for our link to develop and for our relationships to grow. Each of these parishes responded positively when asked about the possibility of a youth visit in 2019. It remains only for the PCC to decide whether such a visit should take place. Our link parishes are waiting for us to confirm either way and to inform them in due course numbers.

SOLAR LIGHT PROJECT

Should a decision be made to support a solar light project these can be purchased from Okathitu Bicycle Empowerment Workshop. Cost 650 N\$ (£41.32) each / Minimum of 50 lights 625 N\$ (£39.73) each / Minimum of 150 lights 620 N\$ (£39.41) each

BUILDING OF A TOILET BLOCK

Should a decision be made to provide funding for a toilet at Okathitu Health Centre the Namibia Committee may like to sell gift cards for such a project.

Caroline Tracey
14th August, 2017