

Trustees

Ian Sherwood
Ruth Sibley
Mike Stearns
David Hiscox

Romanian Children's Homes

Care, support and education for abandoned children in Romania

UK Administration and Information Office

Ian & Joan Sherwood
Farthings, Ilton, Ilminster
Somerset TA20 9HL
Tel: (01460) 54952

NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER 2009

Dear Friends

This year we made an earlier than usual trip, visiting at Easter, although Easter usually falls at a different time to Easter in the UK. It was a good time to attend as things were being planned for the year with regard to the farm and garden crops. We were able to fence off some more land and plant fruit trees, although late frosts are an issue in the mountains, but if successful we will look to expand. We bought some pigs, a sow for potential breeding and some young ones. These will provide meat and income for the home. The horse also had a foal, which was a surprise to all, the result of a secret liaison. In the current financial climate the value of sterling has weakened considerably against the Romanian Lei, so the Lei value of money we are able to send has decreased. It is at these times that the food and income produced at the farm is so valuable.

Five years ago we purchased a second hand Dacia (Renault 11 look alike) for use by Nelu for travelling to the farm and his regular visits to the Child Protection meetings. We needed to replace this and so this year we drove out a 1995 4 x 4 Suzuki Vitara. We were able to purchase one in good condition, which was given a thorough service. This will be better for travel to and from the farm as road conditions are extremely bad in wet weather. We hope to be able to purchase a better vehicle in the future.

Road conditions around the house are also poor but this is due to the authorities failing to put back the road surfaces after laying in the sewerage system. There was also a gas leak outside of our house when the digger hit the main. More worrying was the number of people who stood by watching while smoking, but all ended safely.

Whilst talking with Nelu we learnt more of the processes involved with the Child Protection office. We have always thought them to be over bureaucratic but we were amazed to hear that Nelu, Carmen and their two children (even Robert as a baby) were subject to blood tests and x rays each year just in case they passed on something to the children in their care. Both Nelu and Carmen are subject to yearly literacy exams. For this privilege they have to pay £200 each year.

We were able to stay longer in Romania during August and September. We have often mentioned the weather extremes in our newsletter and this newsletter is no different. Just before we left England there was a severe storm in Romania. The wind was extremely strong; Carmen was blown off her feet, but only slightly hurt. The garage roof was blown off and tiles were lost on many homes, it was such that the children were frightened by the noise.

Our long term supporters may remember Sanda, part of a family of four who were with us at the beginning, who went back to live with her mother. We saw Sanda in a nearby village; she is now 18 and has a baby. She looked well and happy. Carmen helps her with baby clothes through her contact with a local teacher. We hope to see Sanda again on another visit.



It was necessary for Nelu and Carmen to be away from the home for a few days and we looked after the twins (having arranged for the other children to be cared for). We had great pleasure in teaching the twins to ride the bikes which we had previously taken out for them. By the second day they had their balance and were well away, but explaining how to use their brakes took a little longer and involved a fall in to some stinging nettles. But they were not put off.

Joan also tried to teach Catalina and Lidia to knit.

We spent some time working with the older children in a bakery making sweet biscuits. In return for this we received bread for the home and feed for the pigs.

Christi has now left school and is working at the farm. He has asked for a separate house to be built for him. We have also been considering building a cellar at the farm for processing the milk and cheese etc. It may be possible to combine the two but that would be a future project as we are currently upgrading the farmhouse with new windows.

2009 has been a difficult year for many people both here and in Romania.

As the recession has taken hold many Romanians working in Europe have returned home, but have no jobs.

In these circumstances we especially appreciate your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Ian Sherwood



Christi cutting the hay