

PROJECT ROMANIA

NEWS
AUTUMN
2008

with
Charo
Seica Mare
Twinning



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MULTUMESC SEICA MARE!



THANK YOU SEICA MARE!

What a wonderful group of children visited us from Romania. The buildup to the visit was one of excited anticipation and we were richly rewarded by their company during the week they were with us. I think it rained at some point on each day but no-one's spirits were dampened and the experience was mutually rewarding. I'm sure many new friendships were created. On their arrival in Chard the Mayor presented each visitor with a blue back-pack containing various gifts. These proved invaluable during the visit and helped us identify "our" children in a crowd.



The 1st day we took them to **Crealy Adventure Park** for a fun day to help them settle in. They had a great time enjoying the various rides. I wasn't surprised that they showed little interest in the animals. Cows, goats and horses are part of everyday life at home.



During their stay they visited every Chard school to perform their dances, songs and recorder pieces. They were so accomplished and so pleased to share these aspects of their culture.



And who can forget little **Catalina**, only 8, but mastering the rapid fingering of a dance tune on her violin when she played with Gina, her mother. "Gina" could well stand for genius. She trains the children in her spare time, single-handed and has a voluntary class of 70 (a pity 35 had to be left behind).



Their national costumes were beautiful, with intricately embroidered blouses and lace trimmed aprons, none quite identical.

Some had been handed down in their families and were over 100 years old. They were so pleased and proud to wear them and show them to us all!

The Twinning Ceremony was a happy event and the evening concert included performances by local children as well as the Romanians. For me it was Catalina who stole the show again with her Vivaldi violin solo.



It was lovely to welcome them to each of the town's



church services on the Sunday. Father Nicolae was especially interested in the 2 Byzantine icons at the Church of the Good Shepherd.

It was great for **Chard Churches Together** to share worship at St. Mary's in the afternoon with the Romanians. And how pleased **Bianca** was to say a personal 'Thank you' to Project Romania for her hearing aids.



Then there was the fun by the sea at Lyme Regis, with a fish'n'chip supper also enjoyed by the Mayor and Mayoress of Chard; the street samba dancing on Monday evening at the Chard International Festival; the Tour of Britain Cycle Race; lots of shopping; meals supplied by each of the 7 Chard churches; one could go on... ..

They loved it all, and so did we

June Roberts,
Secretary to Project Romania, and Chard - Seica Mare Twinning

STOP PRESS - November 30th - Florin Benghea emails ...
"We will dance in the middle of Sibiu on 6th December with Florinel in front as a drummer of CETATEA SIBIU (Sibiu Fortress). On 7th the team will have a TV interview, and it's because we danced in Chard".



We thank our God for you all

Thank you for all Your blessings, Lord

Chard
Churches
Together



Florin
Manager

Marilyn
Chairperson



Free coach from National
Express



Half price at Crealy -
WOW



The Monmouth Rebellion



FISH N CHIPS - WONDERFUL



Sharing a "Civic joke"



RAIN ?
Only every day, but we didn't let it dampen our spirits



JUMPING - FOR JOY



So happy to take home Certificates from Manor Court School



Samba dancing with Chard's "1st lady"



OUR GOD is a GREAT BIG GOD

"TWINNING" AND PROJECT ROMANIA WORK ...

HISTORY : 2001 and the first "Civic Visit" to Comuna Seica Mare with the Mayor, the late Cllr Jean Smith, her chaplain Revd Kathryn Morgan and 4 trustees. Jean was welcomed with "Bread and Salt", a token of respect, at Buia and given an honorary citizenship of Seica Mare. During that visit formal "Twinning" was discussed and a Twinning Association started in Chard. However, despite UK enthusiasm, Chard had a long wait to "twin".



JUNE 2008, and Nicolae Susa was elected Mayor, with Florin Benghea, who has done so much for his village as Project Romania manager, as his Deputy. Florin has always been a *man with a passion for others and a great love for God*; now he's taken his place in Chard wearing the Romanian sash. Jean, who met him in 2001, would have been proud to see him standing there with Graham Watson MEP, and his wife.



CIVIC INVOLVMENT: The Mayor and Mayoress, Martin and Nanette Wale, welcomed Florin and Gina, and all the visitors to the Town Hall; Cllr Jill Shortland, **Leader of Somerset County Council**, with her husband, Garry hosted the Bengheas & 15 children! (All visitors were hosted by families in Chard).

Graham Watson, Project Romania Patron, said **"Twinning is ONE STEP IN A CHAIN bringing hope to a community"** - Project Romania has worked in partnership with Chard-Seica Mare Twinning Association and Chard Town Council. Graham also said how privileged he was to be with people from Chard and Seica Mare who were "building the spirit of international community and had been doing so for 17 years, long before Romania entered the E.U." He had visited Buia in 2005 and been filled with hope for the future, recognizing what people can do when they come together with commitment to make things better. He was 'hugely impressed' seeing how money raised here was used at the Rainbow Centre in Buia where children go for Homework Club,



and is convinced that the way to build effective global community is to work together at grass roots level.

The Romanian Mayor and Deputy had talks with Cllr Shortland and Cllr Wale. Our civic leaders can teach leadership skills and give advice to their Romanian counterparts for EU 'income-generating' projects. In July a "Bees Abroad" team visited Seica Mare and help will be needed to access EU funds. Our civic leaders have the experience to help, leaving

'PROJECT ROMANIA' to go on working in 'charity mode'

SHARING GOD'S LOVE & CARING FOR CHILDREN

The Rainbow Centre of Hope. Florin Benghea suggests building chalets in the garden for Christian Camps; study weekends for local children, etc. This would help Buia which has 90% unemployment and also generate some income for the Centre. The area is one of outstanding natural beauty.



We hope two chalets will be ready by next spring -named for their sponsors - **Pyrabalisk** and **Foxglove**.

St Mary's is planning to run a Holiday Club at the Centre next summer.

OTHER NEWS : Revd Marilyn Tricker, Chard Methodist minister is now Chairperson & Sheila Clement is treasurer. Our thanks to outgoing trustees Brian Turner, Peter Woolway, Primrose Seth-Smith and Liz Murtha. Welcome to Alan Simpson (ForeFront Community Church) and Nick Robinson (St. Mary's). All 7 Chard churches now have trustee.

Florin has offered to work "voluntarily" for project Romania, but he is also doing a Management Course at Sibiu University, costing £50 per month. The money comes from "General Funds" but if **YOU** could help by sponsoring some of that, please contact our treasurer.

Manor Court School has collected lots of materials for the Craft Room at the Primary School in Seica **and** raised money for delivery costs. It will be a very welcome 'Christmas present' and benefit many children.

Milk bottle tops. We've had over 500 kilograms from local schools and churches, Tiverton Town Band, Kilmington Church, groups and individuals in the area, plus 1 LARGE cheque for the twinning came from a bottle tops contact. Keep collecting, and helping Romania and the environment. The Welcome Bap in Holyrood Street, Chard is a local drop off point.



"After a wonderful week we ALL want to say a **BIG THANK YOU** to everyone who donated money and gave their time to make our visit go so well. Thank you ***Simon Frackiewicz** (Robert Frith Optometrist) for testing 46 pairs of eyes and donating 5 pairs of prescription glasses; ***Somerfield Stores** and ***Clarks Shoes** who gave money towards our dancing boots ***Crealy Adventure Park** for our half price entry ***The Co-operative Community Fund** for our insurance ***National Express** for a free coach to and from Luton ***Tour of Britain** for a free coach to Burnham on Sea, AND to ***Cricket St Thomas** ***Brecknell Willis** ***Phoenix Inn** ***Castle Cement**, ***Welcome Bap Lunch Club*** 7 churches for daily dinners *the brave "sponsored" canal walkers *the **Mayor and Town Council** * 9 host families ***Chard schools** ***Allan, Alan and Eileen**, Master of Ceremonies, camera man and pianist **and the many others..."

These children have been great **AMBASSADORS** for **THEIR** community. Several of them put their own pocket money in a Project Romania collecting box on recognising Maria's photo. Since their return ...



BREAD has doubled in price in Romania! **BREAD4BUIA** gives 150 desperately poor children 2 loaves of bread each week - it costs approx £8.00 per month to sponsor each child - we are short of the sum total each month and need more regular sponsors. **PLUS**, young Alex, and little Maria here, are still having hospital treatment - we need sponsors to go on providing this much needed help.



Please visit www.projectromaniachard.org.uk for more information

If you want to be a sponsor, donate or have a Gift Aid form please contact : The Treasurer, 5 Norrington Way, Chard TA20 2JP

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