

# Abigail NEWS

Spring 2011



## The Chicken Project



The group of families we have previously referred to as Daniel and Grace's neighbours but who have become affectionately known to us as the 'CROCHETING LADIES' because of the Kenyan pronunciation of 'CROCHETING', were delighted when we told them we could build hen-houses and buy chickens for them. They had all rallied to help each other and some of the houses were already partly built by the time we arrived but we had great fun helping them finish the others.

While Roger helped the men with the construction of the main framework, Shena went off to the

forest with the ladies to collect small saplings for the rafters. It was very educational being 'in on it' from start to finish. The bark was stripped from the exposed saplings then we had to visit the well to fetch water. The ladies had to carry large drums of water back to pour into the pit of loosened earth that had been prepared and then dance on it to make the mud which we used to fill in the rafters on half of the hen-house walls.

It took a long and VERY hot morning to fill in the walls of the hen-house but eventually the one we were working on that day was complete and almost immediately two of the hens ventured into it and stayed there happily pecking away. Another walked round it curiously, not quite sure whether she should go in or not!

A pastor from Eldoret appeared at lunchtime. He said he had been told by somebody, 'OUR VILLAGE IS CHANGING' and he had come to see for himself. He was very pleased and said

chickens were a major source of income in the Seiyo area so this would be a very worthwhile project.

The following week Grace and the ladies went to buy the rest of their chickens. It took them 3 hours to walk the 5 Kms CARRYING the new chickens but we hear they all arrived safely and are settling in happily. The ladies are all very happy and are determined to work hard to make the most of this opportunity they have been given. Having been given HOPE for a brighter future has completely changed these women from the ones we first met a year ago.

### Thank You To The Staff And Pupils Of Newton Farm School For Helping Us With This Project

The next thing we have to think about is getting good wells dug for them so the ladies don't have to walk so far to fetch water. They probably won't need one each but perhaps we could have two dug for them.



# Our New Goat (Ad) Venture!

The staff and children at Newton Farm School in Harrow also did a wonderful job of raising money for us to buy goats to assist 2 poor families.

The day came for us to buy the goats. After travelling for about 3 hours and for the past 2 hours of that bumping through a forest track that could hardly be called a road, I asked Daniel how much further we had to go. Typically, like all Kenyans, he didn't really have any idea but told me it was just 'over there'! I was getting very concerned thinking about this long journey the goats we were travelling to 'have a look at' would have to take back to Seiyo which I ASSUMED would be sometime in the future. It was only then we were told to our dismay that we were actually going to be transporting the goats back with us in the minibus!

'Just over there' turned out to be another hour's journey on the stony track to a village where we were met by John who was to guide us for another hour to where we imagined was our final destination.

There we met the District Agricultural Officer who told us which farmers in the area had goats to sell. One was 4 Km away so after negotiating a price for that goat and her kid, he told us he would arrange for the farmer to bring the animals to meet us 'somewhere' while we went off to see the goats at the other 'farm'. Samuel from the District Agricultural Office also joined us in the minibus and after travelling for a further half hour along another mud track we asked him how much farther we had to go. Only about 8 – 10 Km he told us brightly!!! Yet another 45mins, this time through beautiful tea plantations although still fairly rough roads!!

Eventually we arrived at our destination! Never were we more pleased to see a pen-full of goats. By this time we had been persuaded to purchase FOUR of these beautiful animals and begin a full dairy goat project in Seiyo, something that has never been done before. We were told this would be of great benefit to the community as well as the two ladies who were to be the first beneficiaries as goat's milk is very nutritious and would fetch a far higher price than cow's milk. Negotiating the price of each goat took some considerable time but we just took a 'back seat' at this point and let the experts do the business for us.

The next stage was to load the reluctant goats on to the minibus. The first two young nanny goats were reasonably easy, a pregnant nanny had to be treated with great care but she was quite docile, but the fun really began trying to get the big Billy goat onto the bus. It took some considerable time to restrain him enough and finally get him in but at last we could begin our long journey home. Six people and four dairy goats were loaded in – but we still had to pick up the other two goats we had earlier agreed to buy! About one and a half hours later we drew into the side of the main

road we had reached by that time. There we saw a land rover waiting with two goats in the back of it. We had met our last two passengers. More negotiations had to take place while the farmer tried to tell us he hadn't realised the kid had grown so much as he hadn't seen it for some time. The real reason was he had discovered we, the buyers, were white!!! We protested that as a farmer, whether he had seen the kid or not, he would know exactly how big it would be by now and that we were sticking to the price that had been agreed earlier in the day. He eventually relented.

There was still one more formality to attend to, however. We had to get the permit from the authorities allowing us to 'move livestock'. The district vet turned up on a motorbike and then sped off to get one for us while we and all the goats waited on the side of the busy highway. He returned soon after with the permit and at last we were able to begin the five hour journey back to Seiyo with 6 goats and 6 people crowded into the minibus!! We were very thankful the temperature had dropped a few degrees from the scorching heat of the previous day!! Several times on the journey we had to open the windows wide to get rid of the smell as a goat relieved itself. They were surprisingly calm on the journey, however, and only once had we to stop to retie the Billy goat. He was the only one tied and that very loosely just to stop him venturing through to the front seats. All the other goats were free.

It was dark by the time we eventually reached Daniel's farm where the goats were to be kept until enclosures and houses were ready for them in their new homes. Unloading the goats was much easier than loading them as they, like us, were very relieved to disembark at last and stretch aching legs.

It had been a very eventful day, and we arrived home absolutely exhausted with every bone in our bodies screaming out in protest at the confined and hazardous journey but we had huge smiles on our face because it had also been a lot of fun!

Three days later our herd of goats grew to 7 when our pregnant nanny gave birth. Mother and baby are doing very well.

Leah, a single mother of 6 children and Mary, an old widow are the two ladies who have been given the goats. Both are delighted with them and seem to be taking good care of them. They are very grateful for the generosity of the staff and pupils of Newton Farm School who have made this possible and overjoyed at the prospect of getting an income from the milk they will be able to sell.

**THANK YOU TO NEWTON FARM SCHOOL FOR HELPING US CREATE THIS PROJECT**

# A Clean Water Supply

The old saying 'Water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink' is so true. There is water in the parts of Kenya where we work but it is either not harvested or polluted due to discharges into rivers. Both Shena and I and various members from the groups we have taken out have suffered from what turned out to be water borne diseases. The local people take what care they can when collecting water from the 'surface wells', but their immune systems are able to cope more readily with the bugs. Even so, sickness and diarrhoea are rife in the area.

A fresh supply of clean water is a necessity for the Abigail Health Care Centre.

In advance of our recent visit, Daniel had been speaking to people at the Ministry of Water and had arranged for Roger to meet with them to discuss the options and gain some idea of costs. Two Reps from the Ministry of Water came and we had a meeting to define the needs firstly of the AHCC, secondly of the School and thirdly of the Community. It was considered that the community comprised of 100 families.



Following a site visit and Feasibility Study, the clear option is to drill a bore-hole and then add storage and distribution facilities. The Hydro-Geological survey has now been undertaken and the option is indeed very viable.

To provide water for the next 20 years, which is the planning rule in Kenya for boreholes, we will need to raise a substantial amount of money over the next 6 – 9 months so as to complete it around the same time as the first patients arrive.

Clean water will provide for over 1,000 people and a wider community of 10,000 via the Clinic and will prevent many mother/baby deaths as well as resolving simple illnesses and cuts etc from becoming serious and needing hospital intervention.

On the horizon we have the opportunity for some spectacular support that will help avoid a few thousand pounds of costs but will involve shipment from the UK. Hopefully we will give you more information about this soon via our website or in our next Newsletter.

During the construction phase of this water project there may be a team going out from the UK to support its implementation in a professional and timely way.

If you are able to support this part of the work, please indicate on the response form or if you know of others who have an interest in or contacts for 'WATER SUPPLIES' to needy folks, please pass on this request to them. Thank you.

## STOLEN CAMERA

We apologise to those of you who may be looking forward to getting photos of your sponsored children and families. Unfortunately Shena's camera was stolen on our last day and so we have lost more than half the photos we took. This also means we have fewer photos to choose from to show you in our Newsletter. We hope you still enjoy reading it.



## RESPONSE FORM

- I would like to sponsor one of Hannah's grandchildren (£18 per month)
- I would like to contribute towards the cost of the borehole £ \_\_\_\_\_
- I would like to give a general donation £ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel No: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please make your cheques payable to Abigail Ministries)*

- I am an eligible tax payer, please Gift Aid my donation.

**Thank you to everybody who has supported and encouraged us recently in many ways over what has been a difficult few months.**

# Seed School Teachers

It's not only the obviously poor people who are in need. The dedicated Seed School teachers turn up day in day out looking immaculate, ready not only to educate the children, but to see to all their pastoral needs as well. Their devotion to the children is very apparent in all that they do.

We had been told a few times as we passed a square stone building that this was where some of the teachers stayed but it was only because one of them was ill and we were asked to visit her that we saw inside the accommodation these teachers go 'home' to every evening.

The 'house' she lives in is one tiny room about 10x10 which she has

divided by a curtain to create living space separate from her 'bedroom'. A couch with no cushions on it and a small table filled one side of the divided room. We didn't see behind the curtain but it could only have held her bed. There was no sign of cooking facilities or running water. We heard later there was a charcoal burner outside and water is collected from 'round the back' somewhere!

Pain was shooting up my spine and into my head after sitting on those hard unpadded slats of bare wood after only about 2 minutes. The pain and discomfort she must be suffering living with her condition with no comfortable seats to sit on is unimaginable.

As deputy head teacher she earns about 6,000/- per month and the room costs 700/- per month to rent. When she visited the hospital she was told the cost of the first course of treatment (an injection of drugs) would cost 25,000/-. This would be over 4 month's wages, leaving her nothing for food or anything else. It was impossible for her to afford this but the hospital refused to treat her until she returned with the money. She was understandably very distressed about it.

Another teacher living next door in identical accommodation has taken Sheilah, one of the teenage girls from Seed School, to live with her. Her parents live too far away

for Sheilah to stay at home and so they had entrusted her to friends who live near the school. Unfortunately, the wife there was abusing her and so the teacher rescued Sheilah and has given her a home. Out of the little she earns, 4500/- per month, the teacher is sharing her food and her bed with her pupil because she has no money for extra food and no room (or money!!) for a second bed. This is far from an ideal situation but it demonstrates how far the love of these teachers stretches in caring for their pupils.



## Abigail Health Care Centre And Seed School

We are very disappointed with the slow progress being made on the Clinic and on the second block of the school. The walls of the AHCC are up as far as the roof but we had been told that it would be complete by the time we went in February. This was far from the case. Only the foundations have been laid for the new school block. It seems that red tape in connection with permission to proceed at different stages may have something to do with the holdup but we have heard so many 'reasons' for the delay we are rather confused as to what the truth is! We hope we will see a lot more progress when we make our next official visit in October.



# HANNAH

Hannah's has had a hard life. Her husband was killed while selling fruit by the roadside when their youngest son was only 6 months old leaving Hannah to bring up ten children on her own. Several of her children were rebellious as they grew up and over time 5 of them died of AIDS leaving her to bring up their children, her grandchildren. Her youngest son, Peter, committed suicide when he was only 17. Just one more heartache Hannah has suffered. Now her one remaining daughter is dying of AIDS. Lucy was infected by her husband who has since died. She has 5 children and it seems as though it won't be long before Hannah will be left to look after those children as well. Lucy is only 30 years old but the HIV has gone to her brain. Last year she suffered meningitis related HIV and now has bouts of aggressive insanity when she has to be physically restrained. When we visited her she was having a good day and we were able to meet the Lucy who could have been had she not been inflicted with this dreadful illness. She is painfully thin but she had a bright smile for us and sang joyfully with her children, mother and two nephews. Two of her middle children are also HIV+. Thankfully because she was on medication by the time she had the 2 youngest ones, they are free.

Sadly Lucy received the medication too late to prevent the virus ravaging her own body.

In spite of their extreme poverty, Hannah and Lucy had prepared a meal for us when we visited them which we enjoyed with the family. The children had taken the day off school especially because it was a 'special day' for them to have us visit them.

Hannah still has 4 sons living. Two of them constantly cause her grief and spend a lot of time in prison. Her two youngest remaining sons, 21-year-old twins John and Geoffrey, however, are lovely young men who help her in every way they can.

Hannah's faith has seen her through all her trials and sorrows. In fact she says they have made it stronger. She still needs a lot of help, however. We have bought her a cow to provide milk for the family but we are also hoping to find sponsors to help her and some of Lucy's children as she faces the prospect of looking after 5 more young children who will need their Grandmother for many years to come. Mary, the youngest is barely 3 years old.

If you would like to help Hannah and her family or sponsor one of Lucy's children, please indicate on our Response Form.

## PETER & LEAH

About 200 yards along the road from Hannah live Peter and Leah, a delightful, older couple who we met at Wednesday Fellowship and then visited in their home the following day. They have had 14 children but one son died of AIDS in 2005 at the age of 35. Two of their teenage daughters have had 3 children between them, adding to their difficulties because it means Peter is now responsible for those three little granddaughters as well. They find it a real struggle to cope although most of their daughters (they had 10) are now working as house-girls and do sometimes bring some money back to help their parents. In spite of their poverty and great needs within their family, Leah is a very cheerful lady and had killed one of their chickens and cooked it with some kathari for us. It was still only mid-morning! We had eaten a substantial breakfast at New Hope then visited Hannah where we had been offered a large bowl of kathari and bread and were already feeling very full, but how could we refuse these kind and generous people who were so proud to welcome and celebrate having white people in their home for the first time!! **THIS WORK IS JUST SOOO HUMBLING!!**



## Rael And Joseph Have Finally Moved In!

Rael and Joseph have finally completed the house we started building for them 2 years ago! The whole family are very happy and awaiting the birth of another baby soon. Naomi, their daughter, was delighted with the picture Eleanor had drawn and given to Shena to take to her. (Photo on reverse.)



# The Bakery

## Thank You To Everybody Who Raised Funds For The New Electric Oven.

We were still quite a long way short of the money required when Roger first went to order the oven in January but the very morning he was doing so in Kenya, Lindsay popped in to Shena at home in the UK with a cheque for £1628 from her church, Northwood Emmanuel, which was the money they had raised for the oven through their Christmas card appeal. This was the EXACT amount we still needed and so we were able to text Roger and tell him to go ahead and order the oven. GOD WILL PROVIDE OUR EVERY NEED!

Unfortunately the Bakery extension wasn't finished in time for us to see the oven delivered when we were there in February. We did make a nightmarish trip into Nairobi on the Friday afternoon, however, to arrange for delivery of the oven and some other equipment to New Hope the following week.

For those of you who have ever been on the M25 on a Friday afternoon, treble the traffic jams and frustration in 30 degrees heat and you will come close to understanding the journey we made. The warehouse we wanted to go to was on the opposite

side of the 6 lane dual carriageway and because of the hold ups it was getting perilously close to closing time. There are no central barriers between the two carriageways, only a 40ft dirt (literally!!!!) track and ditch. Tirus veered off onto this track to drop us off. We scrambled across it, praying hard as we dodged between the traffic now being driven there in both directions by impatient drivers and eventually made it to dodge the 3 lanes of traffic on the opposite carriageway before rushing breathlessly into the warehouse before they closed their

doors for the weekend. Thankfully the only injury on this hazardous journey was a very tiny shard of glass in Shena's foot!!

The workmen were frantically trying to lay the floor of the Bakery in blistering heat the day we left New Hope. Once that was done, all that remained was for the walls to be painted and then the whole place thoroughly cleaned. We are pleased to hear that the oven is now fully installed and we look forward to sampling the bread the bakers will be making next time we visit.

# Shena's Village News

Mary had some very exciting news for us. She and Timothy are now married!! In spite of the fact they have 5 children it turns out they have never actually been married! They had come to feel, however, that they wanted to be legally married and in the sight of God so they had a church wedding in December. She proudly showed us their wedding photos and Timothy left his work for a couple of hours to come home to see us as well. The

newlyweds looked extremely happy with each other! Their wedding cake was made at our Bakery where Mary works, the first celebration cake to be made there.

Mary and Timothy are very happy and proud of their home in the Village and have hedged off their portion and planted some beautiful flowers. Their shamba rivals Charles and Margaret's in No 1 for producing the best vegetables and growing the prettiest flowers!



THANK YOU TO ALL OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS, REGULAR DONORS AND ALL OF YOU WHO ARRANGE SPECIAL EVENTS OR DEDICATE YOUR OWN SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS TO ABIGAIL MINISTRIES.



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