

Convoy Report June 2009

Three trucks and a team of six delivered over 20 tonnes of aid to locations in Rogachev, Gomel and Petrikov and returned home safely on Thursday this week. The convoy, our third in 2009, was made possible by the work and involvement of many people and without their commitment these journeys would not be possible.

The Team, Bryan Selkirk from Catterick, Don Moore from Scotland, Andy Wardle from Endon, Bryan Holland from Manchester and myself were joined by Mike Fleming from the Knowsley council in Lancashire. Mike and colleagues have decided to support CCP (UK) in providing aid from schools that are closing in the Knowsley area and to organise fund raising activities with the proceeds going to support our projects in BY and our aid convoys. All the team, with the exception of Mike have made many convoys in the past and soon, very soon, we were to learn that Mike was an Everton fan who refuses to wear or acknowledge the colour Red (Liverpool's colours) apart from Tomato Ketchup. It was good to have Mike in the team and I know that he enjoyed the experience.

Leaving the Warehouse at about 3pm after all the preliminaries we set off to Hull when I got a call from the ferry company to advise that the customs computers in Manchester had 'gone down' and that they were unable to ship any non EU freight so 'please do not come!' I was assured that special representation had been made on our behalf but to no avail with the threat from the customs that P&O would have to pay £2000 fine for each vehicle sent without clearance – they had 18 vehicles similarly affected. After a chat on the CB radios we decided to go to Hull and risk having to spend 24 hours on the docks waiting for the next ferry. We arrived to find that the system had been fixed and we were on board – but we could have done without the uncertainty.

The journey to BY was routine – lots of driving and not much sleeping as the cabs seem to get smaller each journey but we made it. In Germany after a four hour drive we met Janet and Helmut at the services. Janet had baked a cake (again) and Helmut donated most generously to one of our meals. Many thanks for that Janet and Helmut.

After clearing customs on Wednesday, out of Poland and into BY, the team went their separate ways with Andy and Don heading for Zhlobyn customs with the Rogachev load arriving late in the evening and staying in separate family houses. The remaining two vehicles headed for Mozyr customs with the loads for Petrikov and Gomel.

Petrikov. State establishment "Petrikov Territorial Centre of Social Services.

This organisation had requested aid through Liena and as it is some years since we were in Petrikov it seemed right to deliver again. The centre was a

small detached modern building that had been provided by the Irish CCP and acted as a centre for the disabled children several of whom we met. The warehouse was so large that the big truck was backed into it to unload and contained many boxes of aid from the Irish CCP. As with our previous visits to this area the vehicle was unloaded by several men and many women so we left them to it and went for tea and a meeting. It appears that the Irish have moved on to other projects and we were being asked to consider a 'long term' support which we declined. I plan to contact the Irish to find out if there is a story here. They appear to do an excellent job but I reckon the need was for a new contact/supporter rather than a delivery of aid.

I asked about the director of the local girl's prison, Vasily as we had delivered there on three occasions some years ago. We called him and we spent a pleasant half hour talking. His only request was for craft aid and materials.

We had stayed overnight in the hotel in town at a cost of 46000 BLR – almost £10 for the three rooms in total and we were overcharged at that. It brought back memories of the Hoiniki hotel.

Rogachev: Rogachev District Public Association of Parents of children with disabilities and disabled young people.

CCP(UK) have supported this for many years association and we have made many such aid convoys during that time.

It is Thursday and Andy and Don are experiencing delays in the Zhlobyn customs that meant a late unload and another overnight stay this time at the Rogachev centre before heading late for Gomel on Friday.

Gomel: Novobelitsa District Education Department Gomel City

Jean Holt CCP training co-ordinator had asked for aid to be delivered to this centre after organising training courses there and her discussions with the director of Education. Bryan Selkirk and Brian Holland were to deliver the aid to the centre and went to the customs with Ira our interpreter from the SCT team.

After a couple of hours we got a message from Ira of the delays they were experiencing. The school head had not signed the appropriate form and was refusing to turn up to do so. What should have taken maybe a couple of hours meant that our team were not finished until 5pm. As it happens the Director of Education – previously mentioned above – had asked to meet us and Mike Fleming was keen on that as his boss has a similar role in Knowsley.

The Director was a nice guy and thanked us for the delivery and mentioned both Jean and Linda. We thanked him for seeing us but told him of the delay with his vehicle and the reason. He made a quick phone call and assured us that the vehicle would be unloaded soon – it was but not that soon.

The Knowsley council are holding an international conference for Education later this year and Mike Fleming asked if the Director would attend – he appeared keen so Mike will follow that through with his people.

Prior to this meeting Mike Fleming and myself went with Liena to visit Valentina at the Co-ordination Centre who distribute lots of aid on our behalf then to our office (SCT) in Gomel. I wanted to convince Mike that our aid distribution was under administrative control and after examining the numerous files that record every family's receipt of aid I was even more convinced and I know that Mike was impressed.

Mayflower Centre: Natasha the boss lady met us at the door complete with face mask – not sure whether she was avoiding us, taking precautions for swine flu or had a heavy cold herself and did not want to pass it on but it looked dramatic. We had a pleasant visit watching the disabled kids singing to Karaoke – they all seem to enjoy it.

SCT Office

We then visited the SCT office. Firstly the lifts were not operating – our office is on the 7th floor and it is a test of stamina to make it without stopping – and secondly the office was full of staff, some temporary, working on the recuperative holiday forms that require, I am told, 130 boxes of information for each child.

Much of the information from the families needs further investigation/confirmation so they were very busy but a happy bunch and I think that we managed a coffee among all the industry.

John Costello:

On the evening we met with John Costello a member of Jean's training team who had just completed a palliative care training course in Gomel. Alex his interpreter accompanied him and we enjoyed their company over a meal. John and Alex joined us for the day on Saturday when we had visits to a village kindergarten.

On Saturday Bryan headed for a visit to Korma where he is better known than the BY President as he and his family have hosted children from Korma for over 10 years.

Budo Kindergarten: This is not the full name but I cannot put my hands on my notes and time goes on.

We set off to visit Budo Kindergarten with a government lady, Tatiana, whom we have met before on previous convoys when we were delivering to the village of Teleashi. The aim of the visit today was to look for new targets for our aid, It was a good meeting at the kindergarten and with a team of ladies who are desperate to improve the facilities for the children there and in the wider village area. After viewing the premises and the village area we are convinced that we can help with an aid deliver soon.

The Remand Home:

Then we were taken to a second place in the forests where a building was under massive alteration to convert it into a short stay 'remand place for

wayward youth' where young offenders or those at risk of doing wrong things could learn team work, gain self confidence and communicate etc. National and local government had put in \$80k and \$30k respectively so we were told and they were asking for sponsors. I am not convinced that we need to deliver aid here but will wait for reports from them through Liena.

The Forest Camp site:

A visit into the forest to the camp site to be used by this centre was an eye opener as it was full of professionals having an annual bonding week – teachers, firemen, accountants, builders and many others. Lots of music, games and competitions with camp fire cooking in each of the different roped off sections. It was a bit special and they certainly did not require our help – we entered the tent erecting competition and despite two time penalties won by a mile – well you would expect us to wouldn't you?

The kids from the REMAND HOME are certainly in for some exciting experiences on this site that has every thing including a large lake.

Rodni Kut and Rogachev Association visit:

On Sunday we went to Rodni Kut with Liena. This is our home for four very severely handicapped youngsters. We are to extend this and John Gater and his builder friend are to go there to interview and hopefully organise the job. We had coffee and eats and enjoyed chatting with the youngsters. It was important for Mike F to see Rodni Kut as we hope the Knowsley team will provide funds for the extension. Then it was off to have lunch at the Rogachev centre where Andy and Don had delivered just two days ago.

On three occasions in Rogachev I have stayed in the flat of an old lady who claims that we were the first foreigners she had met and Liena said that we should make a quick call. She was delighted to see us and we just chatted for a few minutes and left for Gomel but it was a good visit and more for Mike Fleming to experience.

Monday came and we were up and off on the road for an uneventful journey home leaving the hotel at 7.30am.

The Blog: It was really good to have Mike Fleming with us especially as he produced our first convoy blog and kept a daily update for all to read. They were his words as he saw it and we got to see what he had written once it was on the internet. Mike was a full participant in all the work and driving and a great guy to have in the team. Details of the Knowsley fun(d) day on behalf of CCP(UK) will be known soon and all are invited to attend. Check out the blog: [Google Knowsley Blog](#) and you will be directed to it.

On behalf of the team our thanks go to all our colleagues and supporters in UK for their efforts and to our super team in SCT Gomel for their splendid work and patience.

We have a new leaflet designed to give all the information regarding our aid activities and to answer many of the FAQs. This can be downloaded [here](#) or I can send a supply direct to you on request. mkeallison@aol.com

If you can help with a donation or fund raising your support will have a direct affect on the welfare of some very needy children and their families. Just mention that the donation is for aid deliveries to Belarus. Cheques to CCP(UK). **You can donate securely on this site by [clicking here](#).The children in Belarus will be very grateful.**