



Saving and Enriching Lives in Ethiopia

Ross' Piece *The end of the Financial Year will soon be upon us. Please consider reducing your tax bill by donating to WellWishers, to help bring clean water to our beneficiaries in Ethiopia. Over 55% of rural people still do not have this basic human right.*

A mother recently told me that when talking to her 8 year old about WellWishers, the reply was "It's more important for them to have water than you to look beautiful!!" That pushed the family over the edge to fully fund a well. Kids say the most amazing things sometimes, don't they?

If you would like your donations to be tax deductible for the 2009/10 Financial Year, they **must** be actually in my hands by no later than 25th June. Donations received after then, will be deductible in Financial Year 2010/11. Receipts will be sent out late July/early August.

Please note that Membership Fees for 2010/11 are due on 1 July. Members can vote at the AGM, elect Trustees, plus receive the Annual Report. From over 1,000 supporters, current membership is just 56. Be in it - it's your organisation. The cost is \$1.10, payable by 2 x 55 ¢ stamps (form below).

NEWS IN BRIEF

Donor Offers \$60,000

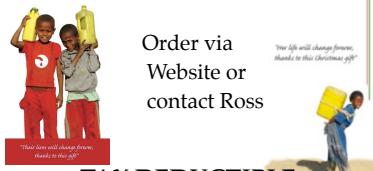
In 2010/11, our Friend will again match donations \$1 for \$1 up to \$60,000. Donate generously now.



\$2.00 & over donations are Tax Deductible

Gift Cards in Lieu of Unwanted Presents

Use them for birthdays, anniversaries, etc. The cost is only \$60 and gives an average family clean water for the rest of their lives.



Order via Website or contact Ross

TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Oxfam's Legacy

Over the page, you can read Graham Romanes' personal story of his relationship since the early 1980s, with Ethiopia and its water wells.

Graham is a valued Trustee of WellWishers.

Credit Card Donations

ourcommunity.com.au/wellwishers

Wellwishers pay a small fee for donations received this way but for some, it may be an easier way to donate. It's a secure site.

Wells Progress

The 66 wells under construction are about 20% complete on average. Overall completion is on target for this October.

HELP!

Donations this year are currently running 24% below last year's levels. This means that we'll build **16 less** wells next year, resulting in about 7,000 people missing out on clean water. Please help as best you can by donating generously before 25 June. Regardless of our economy, our friends are still without clean water.

To make things a little easier for those who receive this by post, we've enclosed a Pre-Paid Envelope. Now all you need to do is tear off the donation strip, pop it in the envelope with your donation and mail it. No need to look for envelopes or stamps.

HARRY'S GREAT ADVENTURE



Harry, a young English backpacker, recently set out to kayak from Byron Bay to Sydney [700kms]. Upon reaching Newcastle, some low-life stole his sole possession of value - his kayak!

Unperturbed, Harry then walked the remaining 160 kms to Sydney! All this was in the cause of **WellWishers** - and his efforts resulted in donations of \$700.

It's wonderful when even tourists to our country will do such selfless acts as this. Hats off to you Harry - and thanks, mate.

ANNUAL RAFFLE RESULTS



Pictured here is Olympic great, Herb Elliott, drawing out the winning ticket for this year's nation-wide raffle. It was a bit of a struggle this year but we did just manage to raise enough for another well which was our target. So thanks to all those who bought tickets and worked so hard to sell them.

The winners [from Canberra] will enjoy a week at the lovely Mercure Resort in Queenstown, New Zealand - including air fares and car hire. Thanks again Mercure, for your support.

To become a Member of **WellWishers**, please complete this form and return it to the address below with the Annual Membership Fee for 2010/11 of \$1.10 [payable with 2 x 55¢ stamps]. Please add your email address, if you have one.

Application for Membership of WellWishers Trust: NAME:

POSTAL ADDRESS: P/CODE:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

OXFAM'S LEGACY

WellWishers started life as an Oxfam Community Aid Abroad (CAA) project in response to the disastrous famine in Ethiopia in 1984. The assessment of CAA at that time was that a critical cause of starvation in northern Ethiopia, particularly in Tigray province, was the policy of the Ethiopian military regime, known locally as the Derg, to use the famine to crush the uprising.

Shortly after the overthrow of Haile Selassie by the military in 1974, the Tigrayan people realised that this "revolution" wasn't going to be any better. In 1975, the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front formed at the tiny hamlet of Dedebit in central Tigray. In 1978, the TPLF created the Relief Society of Tigray (REST) as its humanitarian arm, to mobilise and coordinate international assistance for the relief effort in Tigray. CAA immediately funded the purchase of a 10-tonne truck to carry relief supplies across the border from Sudan.



Romanes with personal guard and REST staff at Abi Adi, Central Tigray, January 1985

When the plea for help came from REST in 1984, CAA responded by coordinating a shipment of relief supplies with other Australian NGOs; and with the purchase of a drilling rig to develop domestic water supplies in Tigrayan villages. The ship, *The Golden Venture*, carrying a shipment of relief supplies for the Ethiopian Government, packed its cargo the wrong way, and called first at the government port of Assab. The government seized the rig and 3000MT of food aid destined for REST. The incident only served to highlight the attempted strangulation of Tigray by the Derg.

By this time, Graham Romanes, managing CAA's support for Tigray, and located inside the war zone, realised using a drilling rig would be difficult with MiG bombers overhead daily, and proposed a less visible and more community-based response. The replacement rig was sent to Tigrayan refugee camps in Sudan, and the Hand Dug Wells program was conceived.

CAA's new and far-too-modest proposal proved unsuitable for the difficult terrain in much of Tigray. Over the next five years, in close consultation with REST, CAA developed construction methods for wells, still low-tech but totally manageable and sustainable within the conflict context. These wells were up to 25 metres deep, often through old rock, 1.5 metres in diameter, and then capped and serviced by a hand pump designed for local conditions. Wells were sometimes lined with concrete rings and sometimes using local rock. David McMurdie, a retired Melbourne Water engineer, worked tirelessly for those five years to perfect the digging equipment, construction technique and hand pump design. REST worked on community involvement; training the local technicians; and the long-term sustainability. REST eventually established a Water Department, staffed by highly trained Tigrayan hydro-geologists, technicians and community mobilisers.

During the 1990s and early 2000s, CAA supported REST in the construction of 700 wells. The program was a flagship for CAA, and the method of well construction became affectionately known as the "CAA Method". However in 2002, CAA chose to close its Horn of Africa program. The withdrawal from Ethiopia was completed by June 2005.

Given the enormous kudos the program had brought Australia in Ethiopia, REST were delighted when Ross Allan, a then Board Member of Oxfam/CAA, threw his personal support and energies, together with his wife Marianne, into continuing the valuable relationship which had developed over 20 years. *WellWishers* was born. The rest, they say, is history-in-the-making.

Please note that Donations are to be in favour of "WellWishers" and posted to the address at the bottom of this Newsletter. Over 95% of funds raised go to the actual Wells projects. There are no pastoral activities related to this project. **All donations over \$2.00 within Australia, are Tax Deductible.**

DONATIONS: \$6,000 provides 1 well, bringing clean water to over 400 people. All amounts most welcomed.

Please tick Square **ONLY** if an interim receipt is required (you will automatically receive one in the month following your donation)

Enclosed is my Donation of \$ (Cheque/MO attached - in favour of *WellWishers*)

Address (incl. postcode)

OR: Debit my Visa or MasterCard - **Please CIRCLE your card type** (automatic periodical donations can be arranged)

Name on Card: Signature:

Card Number: Expiry Date:/..... CCV(last 3 numbers on back of Card)

Name for Receipt Purposes **if different** to bank account or card name:

OR: You Can Donate Online (Secure Site): www.ourcommunity.com.au/wellwishers