



Ecologia News

SCOTTISH CHARITY SC023976

JANUARY 2006

Rosie in Alaska: just over halfway home

As I write, Rosie is taking shelter somewhere near Golovin on the Seward peninsula of Alaska. High winds and blizzards have prevented her from moving for the time being. Much has happened since our last update.

Rosie reached Magdan on the East coast of Siberia on the 15th September after a very difficult journey from Yakutsk. Rosie being Rosie, however, found the journey magical and awe-inspiring. She says that she will never forget the warmth and hospitality of the people and that a part of her will be forever in Siberia.

She did not keep to her original plan of running up through Northeast Siberia and across the Bering Strait as she was unable to get the necessary permission from the Russian government. She flew to Anchorage, Alaska instead.

In Anchorage she made good friends and met people who could give her valuable information about the Iditerod Trail, the route followed by the annual dog sled race.

On 8th October, just after her 59th birthday, Rosie arrived in Wales on the tip of the Seward Peninsula just on the Bering Strait. She got a lift in a small aircraft with a new friend, Aiden Ryan. From then on Rosie has encountered some of the worst conditions she has experienced so far. High winds and blizzards are common and there are no roads. The journey to the next village took two weeks instead of one as she expected. She ran out of food and made do with soup made out of her vitamin pills.

Bob Collins from Nome writes this to her son, James:

"I met your mother about 45 miles north of Nome as she was pulling her buggy, Hercules up a steep hill. A short time earlier there had been a white out with below zero temperatures and blowing snow.

Even though she was 'on a road', that road is closed during the winter due to extremely dangerous weather conditions. We invited her to dinner, about 30 miles down the road. She said she 'accepted in spirit' but was not certain of the timing. Despite adverse weather, she made and spent the night in order to dry out her gear. I cannot overstate the hardships she is overcoming.

Her spirit and condition are phenomenal. I will always consider myself privileged to have spent an evening with her. She has my total admiration, support, and respect. She truly does inspire others to become better human beings."

By the beginning of December she virtually ground to a halt and averaged about a mile a day. Hercules, her faithful buggy, was not made for these conditions and Rosie was forever pulling his wheels out of the ice. Something had to be done and between Geoff Hall and Bob Collins something was. Bob obtained a

proper snow sledge and hired two men to deliver it her in the wild as well as essential food and supplies. With snow shoes and the sled she can move more quickly. She has also been given a radio transmitter so that she can stay in contact with villages on the route.

More from Bob on the conditions that Rosie is experiencing

"The two in combination (tent and a special sleeping bag) will make her safer, especially when, not if, she has to stop for extended periods. I cannot stress enough (and she agrees) that this may be the most difficult segment of her journey. People do not realise Nome is much closer to Siberia than it is to Anchorage. People may have a tendency to think she is safer now that she is in Alaska. She has experienced more wind in the last month than she had in the entire trip thus far. Plus, this part of Alaska and the upcoming interior have Siberian cold. In Russia, she was largely following a road. Here, she could take 4 to 6 months just to get to the road system that leads to Anchorage. She has over 200 miles of more or less coastline before turning inland for 800 miles."



A big warm welcome from the children of White Mountain

Please don't forget Rosie because she is no longer in Russia. She is still running for Kitez and the other causes she believes in. When she hears that people are supporting her by contributing to those causes, it gives her a tremendous boost of energy that helps her keep going.

Rhiannon Hanfman

Kitezh and Orion Reedbed Project: * Clean



The children are participating at every step of the process—helping with building work, and next spring planting the 5,000 water plants that will keep the water clean.

In August the Kitezh graduates and their student friends dug the 140 square metre hole at Orion. A bigger wetland of 380 square metres was built at Kitezh.

*** Funded by DEFRA, British Council and the Big Lottery Fund**



In September Galen Fulford arrived to install the pipes and start to lay the gravel.

Best Practice Tour in Scotland for Kitezh Leaders

Valuable insights into current best practice with young people in difficulties in Scotland were received by Sergei Khlopenov, leader of Kitezh and Maxim Anikeev, director of the school during their visit to Britain last September. They were guided on a unique seven-day study tour of four well regarded residential projects for young people by David Dean OBE, founder and for 17 years principal of Raddery School/Therapeutic Community, currently consultant to the Kitezh Children's Community. The tour commenced at Harmeny School for primary aged boys in Edinburgh and progressed to Starley Hall School in Fife that works with both boys and girls of secondary age. The Kitezh party was shown the purpose built facilities in both establishments and had the benefit of hearing from both directors in much detail concerning philosophy and practice.

The third visit was to Kibble Education and Care Centre at Paisley near Glasgow where adolescents with various difficulties lived and worked within separate settings in the same campus. Importantly for the Kitezh visitors, Kibble has developed an intensive programme in which foster parents are carefully recruited, trained and supported. They are also remunerated for their work. The final visit was to the new and innovative Columba 1400 International Leadership Centre on the Isle of Skye. Here, leadership courses and team building processes utilising the notable interpersonal skills of the staff team and the rugged and challenging landscape and the sea are put together for youth and head teachers as well as executives in business and industry.

David Dean commented, "In all the establishments we visited we were fortunate to see an underlying philosophy successfully translating into professional practice which was understood and contributed to by all staff members. In order to achieve this enviable but necessary position of strength, management had devoted both time and resources coupled with a great

commitment to staff selection, training and ongoing support. It is this challenge on which Kitezh currently is working hard to make necessary inroads. Each of the four establishments is making a significant contribution to the Scottish child care and education system in the training of workers and an understanding of the task. That is why this was, in my view, the right experience and the right time for both Sergei and Maxim."

Sergei and Maxim then spent a week at the Findhorn ecovillage where they took part in the conference of European ecovillages celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Global Ecovillage Network and made a presentation on Kitezh that included the newly built wetlands for ecological waste water treatment.

This educational journey was funded by the Big Lottery as part of the current capacity building project.

Liza Hollingshead



David Baird (left) welcomes Max Anikeev, Sergei Khlopenov & David Dean to Kibble

n water for Kitezh-Orion on stream this summer

Lisa Shaw involved the children in painting a mural on the banya wall pictorially explaining how this process works.



Everyone worked hard but they had fun too.....



The reedbed is complete and ready for the plants to be put in next Spring.

How it works....

Wastewater from the houses will be cleaned through these wetlands. The water comes from an underground well and is stored in the water tower. After use it flows from the houses to the septic tank and then enters the wetland. The aerobic and anaerobic bacteria that live on the roots of the plants and on the gravel break down the nitrogen, suspended solids, and disease-causing bacteria. The plants bring oxygen into the water and absorb pollutants. The treated water that flows out of the wetland will not pollute the land, ground water or streams.

Kitezh by the Sea

From the waves you can see the trains passing by every few minutes and feel the jellyfish floating past. But if it's the first time you've seen the sea, a jellyfish or a moving train, that just adds to the excitement. It didn't matter that the beach was concrete, or that we shared our meals with a thousand ants, or that between the five of us we had one room and a hallway, because on holiday with Tamara, the good always outweighed the 'unusual'.

At the Black Sea I became a part of a family again: Marina, Nelly and Sandra my new little sisters, Tamara my new best mate/mother/confidante and out hosts, Grandma Shura and Grandpa Borya, a warm, kind-hearted old couple who quickly became besotted with the girls.

As soon as we arrived at the train station, the ice cream eating began. It was breakfast time but Tamara would not take no for an answer. I learned that ice cream is a Russian passion and should be eaten at every opportunity in order to get a real feel for Russian culture.

The train journey (36 hours) was an experience in itself. At every stop we took the opportunity to stretch our legs (and, you guessed it, have an ice-cream). People milled around on the platform selling all sorts of treats: ripe local fruits, honey and fresh fish. The children's eyes were on stalks.

On arrival we settled into a routine of waking at sunrise, eating breakfast and heading to the beach for morning exercises and a swim. We avoided the midday sun by coming home for a fruity lunch and a siesta and then in the afternoon went back for more swimming before dinner. Ice creams were consumed on what seemed like an hourly basis. Other thrills were dolphin

spotting, a trip to a cave, and an early morning walk in the mountains to pick berries and watch the sun rise.

But the most important things that happened were: Marina, Nelly and Sandra making friends with children outside of Kitezh, Nelly spending quality time with her mum, Tamara relaxing and getting a well earned rest, Marina learning to swim independently of rubber rings (and passing swimmers!) and Sandra opening up and smiling. She said she was the happiest she had ever been in Vishnyovka.

Francesca Hewitt, volunteer 2005



Welcome to new children in Kitezh and Orion

Orion is ready for occupancy in time for the New Year celebrations. Last summer the Kitezh graduates and their student friends from Moscow built two new log houses, the 80-metre deep well was drilled and gas line was installed. With weekly convoys of parents, teachers and children travelling between Kitezh and Orion, all feel equally at home in both locations. Now the most important goal is give many more new children homes in Kitezh-Orion. During the summer, Kitezh ran summer camps for 40 children from local orphanages in the hope that some of them might come to live there permanently. This year they have five new children and hope for two more in the New Year.

Andrei Yeliseyev (10) went to live in Orion in November with Dima Andreev, a committed founding member of Orion with two other foster sons, Valentin Mashkov and Jenya Sinko. Andrei lived for five years in two orphanages. During the summer camp he became very attached to people and desperately wanted a family. He is serious, shy and sensitive. He's now happily adapting to his new family and social relationships.

Christina Kononyenko (12) was born in Kaluga Region. Her mother is an alcoholic and her father refused to take responsibility so she lived in an orphanage

for four years, apart from a brief period in a foster family with her brother and sister. When she came to the summer camp at Kitezh she easily made friends. She reads a lot, is very sporty, loves roller skating and gets on well with the others. Asya Homyakova, a psychologist responsible for the children's psychological development, became foster mother to Christina because she felt connected to her from their first meeting and they are building a close relationship.

Galya Goldava moved from Moscow to Kitezh in January 2005 to be with her 11-year-old son Sasha, an energetic, humorous boy. His father had left them when he was four and life as a single parent was tough for Galya. Sasha had difficulties at school. Last year he took part in a summer camp at Kitezh and loved it, so his mother agreed to let him stay and often visited. His schoolwork improved



Masha Pichugina with Maxim & Ludmilla

and he began to catch up with his peers. Then Galya moved to Kitezh and a romantic story unfolded. She fell in love with Vladislav Terentyev, a founding member and now they all live together with Vlad's foster son Andrey.

This autumn two brothers, **Roma (14)** and **Ruslan Azamatov (8)** also joined their family. After the summer camp Roma very much wanted to live in Kitezh, and he insisted that his younger brother join him as he refused to be separated from him. They lived in Tadjikistan where their father was in the military. Their mother is an alcoholic. After their father's death the family moved to Kaluga near relatives, but the boys were neglected and were put into a children's home. Roma is intelligent, likes school and has found many friends in Kitezh. He has an open smile and is fond of sport. Ruslan is a bright, funny, boy, full of energy and enthusiasm. He is so happy to have a real mother and father with Galya and Vladislav.

Two more children are expected very soon in Orion: **Maxim Urashkin (10)**, and his sister **Ludmilla (8)**. Masha Pichugina plans to look after them. She will follow in her mother, Tamara's footsteps and become a foster mother.

If you would like to become a godparent to one of these children, do let us know.

Book now

.....for the experience of a lifetime

Spirit of Russia Tour 2006: 5 – 15 May

Two days in Moscow followed by a week in Kitezh where you can meet the families you have been supporting, your godchildren and experience real Russian life. Don't miss this opportunity.

"The visit to Kitezh was the highpoint of the year for me. I have told so many people about it and how truly inspired I was by all that is happening there —what you are doing, how the children are flourishing what a model it has become. It is such a wonderful place and all the arrangements from the sight-seeing in Moscow to the ride to Kitezh to the stay in the Guest House were everything I had hoped for and more."

Clare Marcus, tour participant, April 2005



Last year's Tour Group

You can now make secure credit card donations to Ecologia Trust through our website.

Look for this logo on the Kitezh 'How Can You Help' page.



Ecologia Trust

**The Park, Forres IV36 3TZ
Scotland**

Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 1309 690995

email: all @ecologia.org.uk

www.ecologia.org.uk