

Children Of Honduras Trust

Newsletter July 2003

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WHAT A DAY!

Packing day went well. We were blessed with a beautiful sunny day, not a cloud in the sky, and this set the scene for what was probably our best ever packing day. We had concerns before the day, since for the first time, the period in which the containers were to be packed was limited by a deadline. Going over time beyond the deadline could cost us more money that we could not afford. The planning discussions previously held with several of our team members certainly proved to be useful. In accordance with the plan, things taken out onto the yard were segregated and sorted according to type and labelling etc., thus making a visible and workable challenge for the packers! It seemed to work remarkably well.

Aided by a very efficient catering team, the packers worked non-stop until the first container doors were closed at 12 o'clock, meeting the required deadline. The second container, because of the more detailed packing around difficult



- LOADING DAY, MARCH 2003 -

_shapes and sizes, took a while longer to complete. Fortunately we were granted an unexpected relaxation of the deadline for this van and did not incur any penalty. As usual we were all amazed at the large amount of things that were somehow packed into the last few feet of available space. All credit to the determination and agility of the packers!

The work was completed by just after 3 o'clock. Very few things remained to be stored for next year. All in all a very satisfactory day's work made possible by the teamwork of everyone involved.

MADE IT! —

Thank you to everyone who prayed for a safe journey and timely arrival of the containers to their destination in Honduras. They made steady progress from Derby through to Tegucigalpa without significant complication or delay. A small glitch occurred as a result of their arrival rather late in the day at the capital city. Since it was too late to deliver them up the mountain to Valle de Angeles the containers were parked in the bonded storage yard at the city's Toncontin Airport. Going into the yard was easy. Getting them out was another matter altogether! It took Alberto, Norma and Dina (the importation organiser) a week to release them. Alberto commented that it was a nightmare getting them through the Customs process. The last minute details and paperwork combined with Honduran bureaucracy resulted in a very frustrating time, especially when each day that passed cost us an unnecessary storage levy. Eventually the customs authority granted release and the containers arrived at their final destination in the Valle de Angeles on the 9th May 2003. At the end of it all an e-mail was sent to us advising, "We have received the lovely goods you sent for us, and we are very grateful to the Lord, to you and all your army of co-workers/sponsors that make all of this possible. MUCHAS GRACIAS A TODOS." Alberto added the following quote. "Our declaration of thanks to all the friends of CH Trust in England. By its work you are giving a good testimony of 'love to your neighbour' and demonstrating it by your love. Not even the waters are able to quench this love. Blessings to you from the Valle de Angeles. A GOOD LAND. DO NOT TIRE OF SOWING IN HER." Pastor Alberto and Congregation of the Vision Christiana Church.

From the Pastor of Peniel Church Tegucigalpa

To Jennifer and Rita,

It is a privilege to greet you in our Lord Jesus Christ.

I take this opportunity to say thank you for the items you sent to benefit the children.

We distributed the gifts between 208 children of the church and the Child Development Center and they were so happy! The rest of items were given to the poor families who congregate in the Peniel Church.

On behalf of the benefited people and in my own name, please receive our sincere gratefulness. We appreciate very much for your help. May the Lord keep blessing you abundantly.

Your brother in Christ,

Roger Rivera

Pastor Peniel Christian Center(Tegucigalpa)

Once again the Lord has performed for us His annual miracle and delivered the fruits of our labours to the people that need them. Although we almost take this annual process for granted, every year presents different hazards and demands different interventions by the Lord to gather, finance and deliver this blessing to those less fortunate than ourselves in Honduras. Even though the containers have only just arrived the business of preparing for next year is already demanding our attention. Donated items for next year, are already coming in! This has required some time to be spent tidying up and consolidating the over spill remaining in the storage containers at the close of packing day. Gone are the days when a few months of quiet could be expected! So our thoughts turn to the children's needs to be gathered for next loading day.

NOTHING LIKE A TREAT!___

As you are fully aware all children (and adults!) enjoy a treat, especially if it doesn't happen very often. Most Honduran children have little opportunity to play with 'real' toys, and even then usually only for a short time during their day at school. It would be good to be able to provide them with a treat, on an individual

basis, by giving something that would belong to them and would be treasured. (The children of many families will not even receive a gift at Christmas). Such gifts could be anything that offer good play value. Things like **balloons, bubbles (these need to be enclosed in a rigid container to prevent spillage), marbles, dolls, small toys and model cars, colouring books and crayons** to mention but a few of the possibilities.

THE CLOTHES RACE

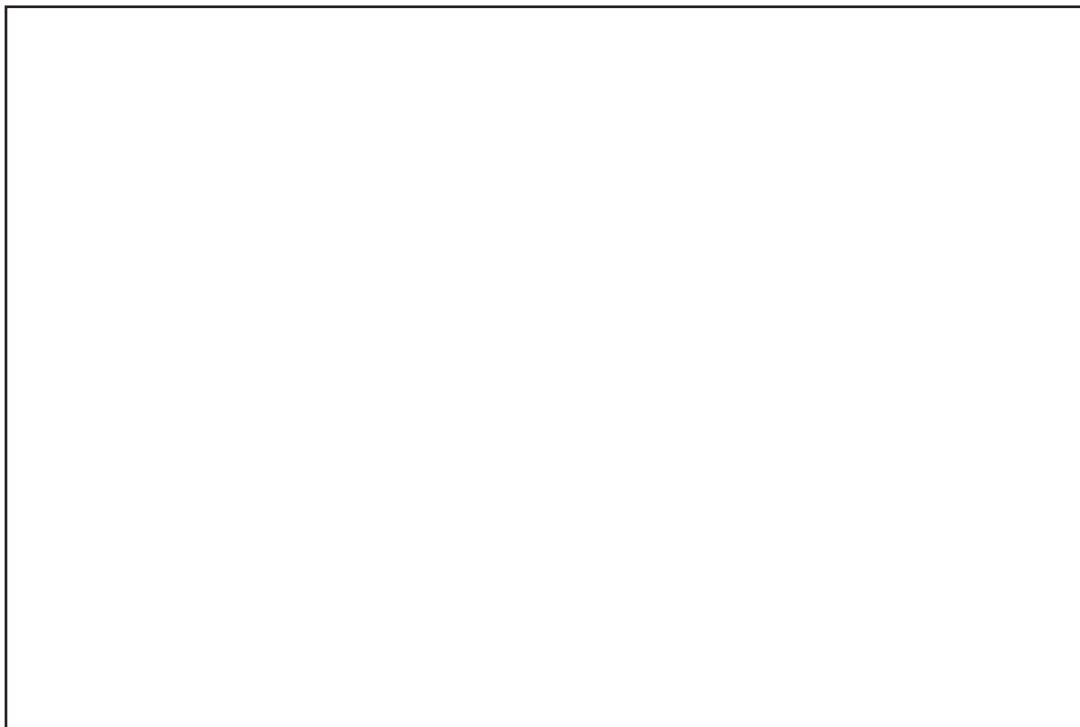
Many thanks to all of you who made an extra effort to collect the maximum possible quantity of **children's clothes and shoes**. As a result we were able to send more this year with the added bonus of improved quality. We are delighted to observe that the quality of the clothes we receive improves year after year. Praise the Lord. Guess what? The bad news is that all that has been sent will have been distributed to the needy and we have to start all over again! The churches that we work with in Honduras reach out to many poor communities. Since every community has a too large proportion of desperately poor people any help in the area of children's clothes and shoes is greatly needed and welcomed.

It seems that 'friendly' charity shops can be a good source for children's clothes. Many of the shops have little storage space and stock needs to be turned over quickly, especially at the end of summer. On the occasions when they are faced with excess stock the usual solution is to bag it and pass-on basically good clothes as rags for about £1 per bag. A shop in Huddersfield supplied us with a number of such bags. Similarly, here in Derby, one shop sold new children's football shirts to us for £1 per bag. (These shirts could not be sold because the logo on them was different to that of the local team!) We are very grateful for any children's shoes that have plenty of wear left in them. Particularly prized are black shoes, since these are featured in most of the school uniforms needed by the children to attend school.

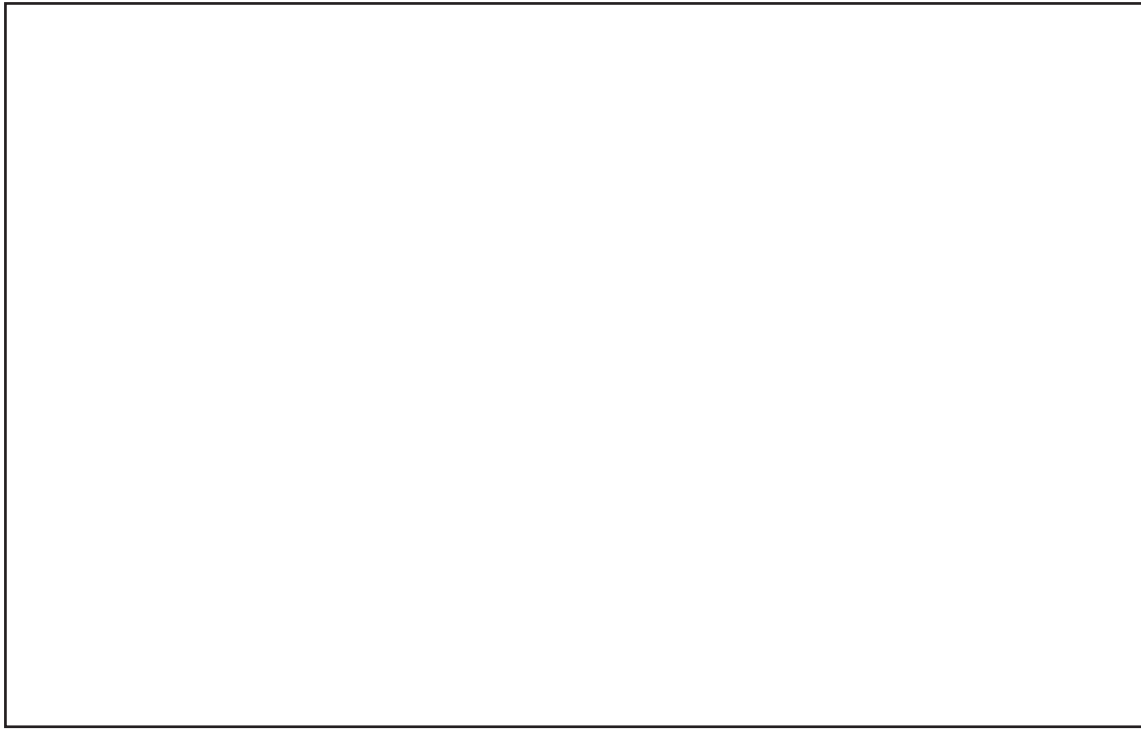
We have lost count, even in our guestimates, of how many children benefit from the containers that are sent from England each year. We will probably never know. However, we do know that their parents really appreciate any help they receive, no matter how small. Without the provision of any state aid, in a country burdened with a high level of unemployment, it is difficult to appreciate how many of the families cope. The aid that we send does bring relief and hope to a significant number of them. We thank the Lord and also each one of you that plays a part in making this possible. Without your help there would be no containers.

HELPING THE SCHOOLS

We are pleased to announce that the new classrooms at the Vision Christiana School in the Valle are now in use. This was made possible by donations from a church in Northern Ireland and a couple who live in Derby. The finance provided helped to build three classrooms and a school office in brick. The original plan proposed to construct them in wood above existing buildings. This was ultimately rejected due to technical concerns and the availability of more funding. The new classrooms have been built at ground level at the rear of the church. This was a major undertaking since the land here falls away steeply into a ravine. It was first necessary to construct a deep retaining wall some 20 feet high. The area behind then had to be filled in to level the land so that the classrooms could be built. Although a tremendous task, it was the only option available since the site is small and could not provide the required floor area in any other way but by resorting to multi-storey buildings. The new classrooms were pressed into service at the beginning of the school year in February, even though lack of finance left them without doors or window frames/glazing. In February the weather is fairly dry and warm. However, more recently, they have experienced some problems with wet children and soggy paper! Thankfully the accumulation of more income has now enabled the classrooms to be completed, a situation much appreciated by the children. A picture of one of the new classrooms is included for your interest.



- ONE OF THE NEW CLASSROOMS -



- CONSTRUCTING THE **RETAINING WALL** -

This year we were able to send enough wooden desks and chairs to equip the recently built classrooms mentioned above. We praise the Lord for his abundant provision. In the coming year we do not foresee any further requirement for this kind of school furniture. However there still remains a need for more stacking chairs and stacking tables.

To attend school each child must provide his/her own equipment. In many cases it is parental inability to meet these requirements that results in denial to their children of access to education. We try to help such families by providing some of the items needed. Especially items such as **clothing, pens, pencils, crayons, exercise books** etc. The children also appreciate **rucksacks** in which to carry their school things since many have long journeys, on foot, to get to school.

The schools are always asking for **recorders** for the children to play. **Any kind of ball (e.g. footballs, basket balls)** would be appreciated and also **skipping ropes**.

Toiletries are always in short supply and liked by the older children. (We are not allowed to ship aerosols). **Toothpaste, soap, toothbrushes shampoo and combs** are a constant need. (Please bring shampoo separately to Derby where it will be packed in buckets where it cannot damage and spoil other things if accidents occur).

COUNTING THE CALORIES

The diet of many Honduran children is at best poor and in a number of cases seriously deficient. We send basic foods to help boost the nutritional content available to them. Thus any food items that you can donate will be much appreciated. The basic items required include **dried pasta, dried milk, rice, oats, tinned meats and fish, cooking oil and plain flour**. It should be remembered that any items acquired for donation to next years containers will not be consumed until at least June/July 2004. Thus the longer the dated life the better. It is sobering to realise that the provision of a small parcel of food to a poor family may well double what would otherwise have been their weekly ration.

GENERAL SUPPLIES

Apart from the specific needs of the children there is also a raft of general needs arising out of the schools supporting infrastructure and basic domestic/personal shortages. On the personal front, many require toiletry items such as **soap, toothpaste, tooth brushes, combs, hairbrushes** and, would you believe it, even **toilet rolls!** All the above items are of great value to the families. The cost of toilet rolls in Honduras is ridiculous in comparison to peoples' income. I can personally vouch that the quality of even their most expensive rolls is very poor compared with what we are used to.

There are still ongoing building projects that we are supporting. We are therefore interested in **toilets, washbasins and stainless steel sinks complete with their fittings**. Since Honduran homes are generally too small to accommodate a bath we are not looking for any.

A more unusual request has been for tents. Any that we can send are likely to be used to accommodate visitors. We can also be sure that most children would enjoy the experience of a night camping out, although maybe not far from home. Large insulated cool boxes are a blessing, particularly for the frequent picnic outings organised for large groups of children.

Mattresses are also much appreciated. The best are the plastic covered hospital type. We do send domestic mattresses but they must be in excellent condition to justify the cost of sending them.

Honduran families can make use of almost any household item. However, any that we send must have sufficient life remaining to be worth the cost of freighting.

Thus **towels, bedding, kitchen items, pots, pans, cutlery** are valuable to those families who have little to call their own.

In the last containers we were able to send out three **Tilly lamps** and several storm lamps. This was a response to my own experience when visiting some Honduran homes last year. Rita and myself were invited to participate in an evening house group. The only light available came from a few candles. In spite of the fire hazard we struggled to see faces, let alone try to read from our bibles! The houses up in the mountains do not have electricity. If you know of a Tilly lamp that has not seen the light of day for many a year, is in good working order and is keen to see active service then there are folks in Honduras that would love to provide it with a new home.

Finally, does anyone have any **spare photographic films**? These we often accumulate free with our processing. Any spares would be very acceptable in Honduras where films are expensive.

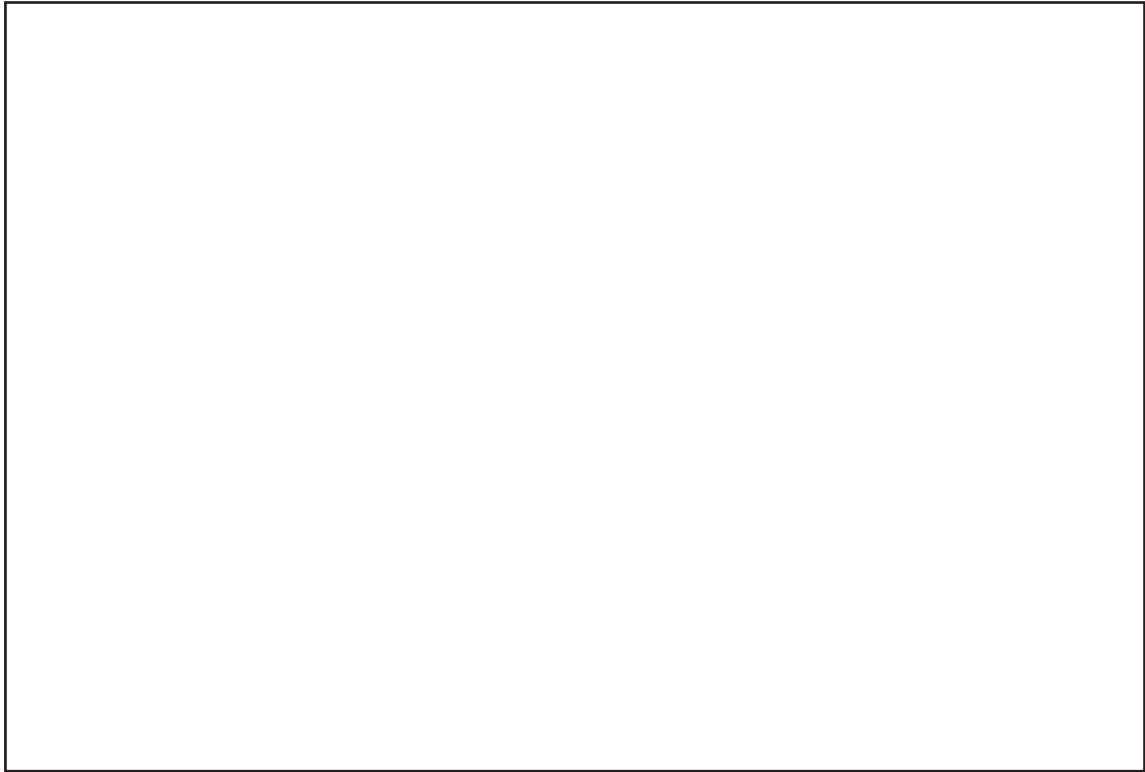
A HAZARD REMOVED! ___

During our visit to Honduras last year we visited a ministry located in Siguatepeque, which straddled an open and seriously polluted watercourse. Our report in a previous newsletter told about a child who had fallen into it and suffered illness and allergies ever since. We are delighted to report that this has now been covered over and is no longer a problem. There is an additional bonus to the extent that it has increased the useful ground area of the site. In the photograph you can see that the school bus is now parked over what was previously the open watercourse.

THE DISTRIBUTION CHAIN ___

The Lord started our ministry to Honduras some thirty years ago. During this time the work has been driven at the Lord's bidding and continues to develop and adapt to serving the needs of the children who are the central focus of this ministry. The CH Trust is administered by Christian trustees and members who seek the relief of poverty and hardship, sickness and the advancement of education of the children of Honduras.

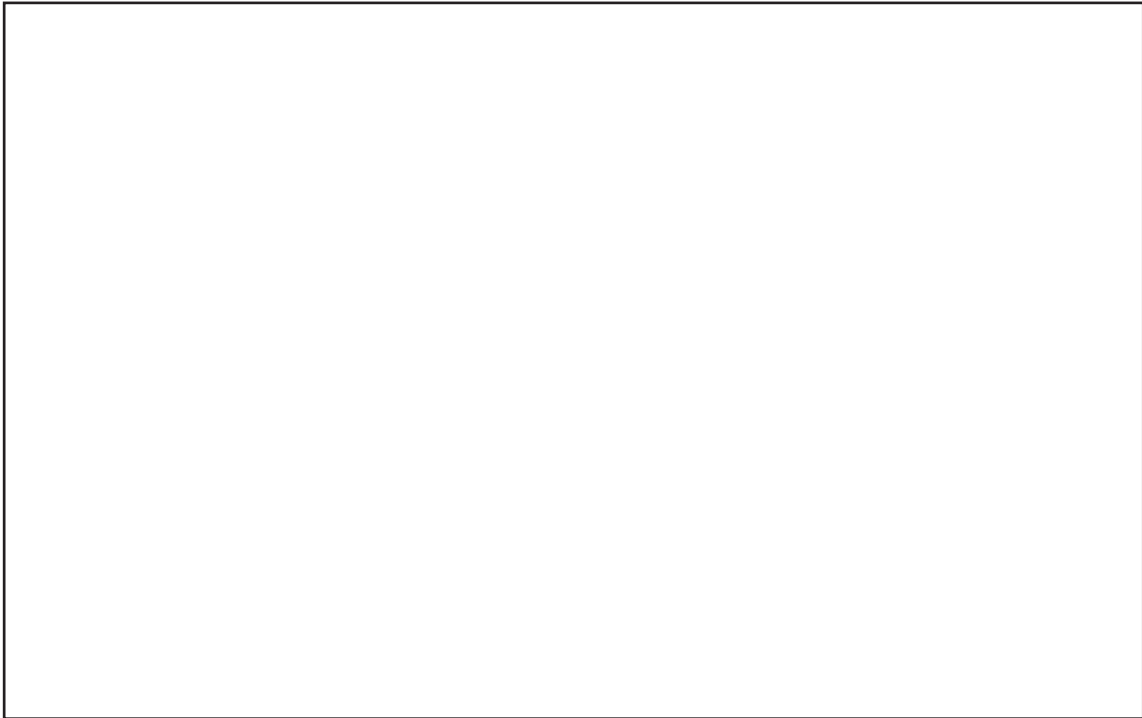
Many of our readers are involved in some way with our supply chain. As a result you will have some experience of how it works. In contrast not so many will be familiar with our distribution arrangements in Honduras. The importation



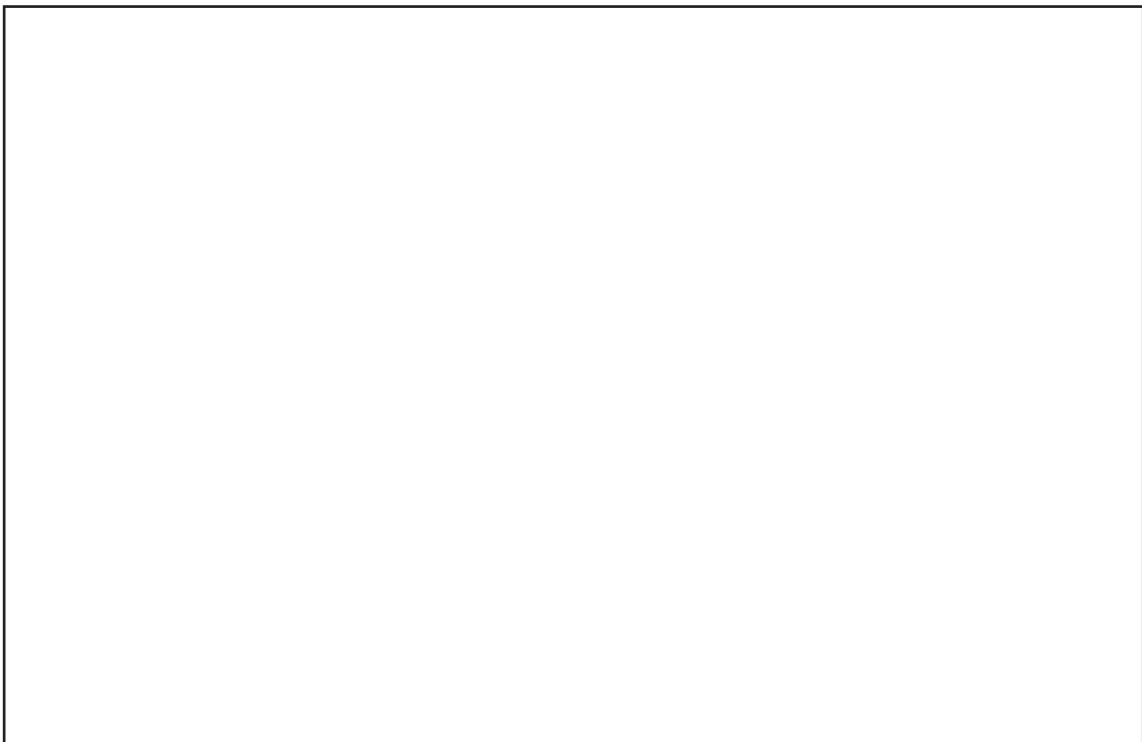
- OPEN WATERCOURSE (BEFORE) -



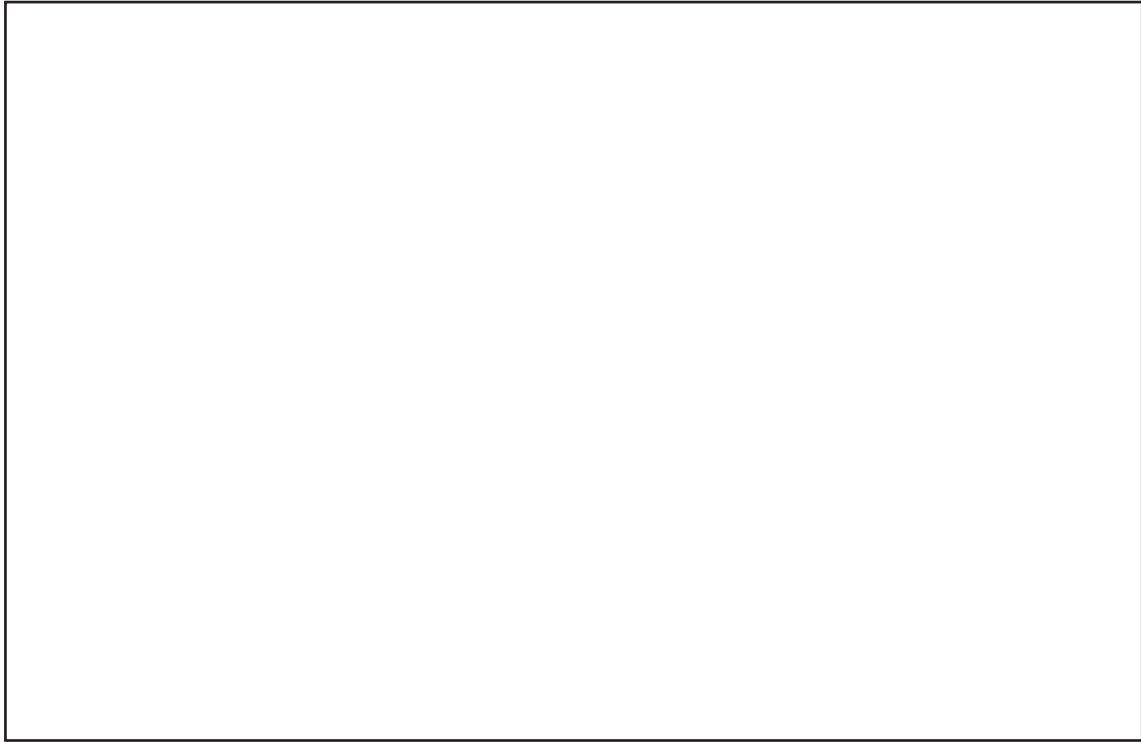
- OPEN WATERCOURSE (AFTER) -



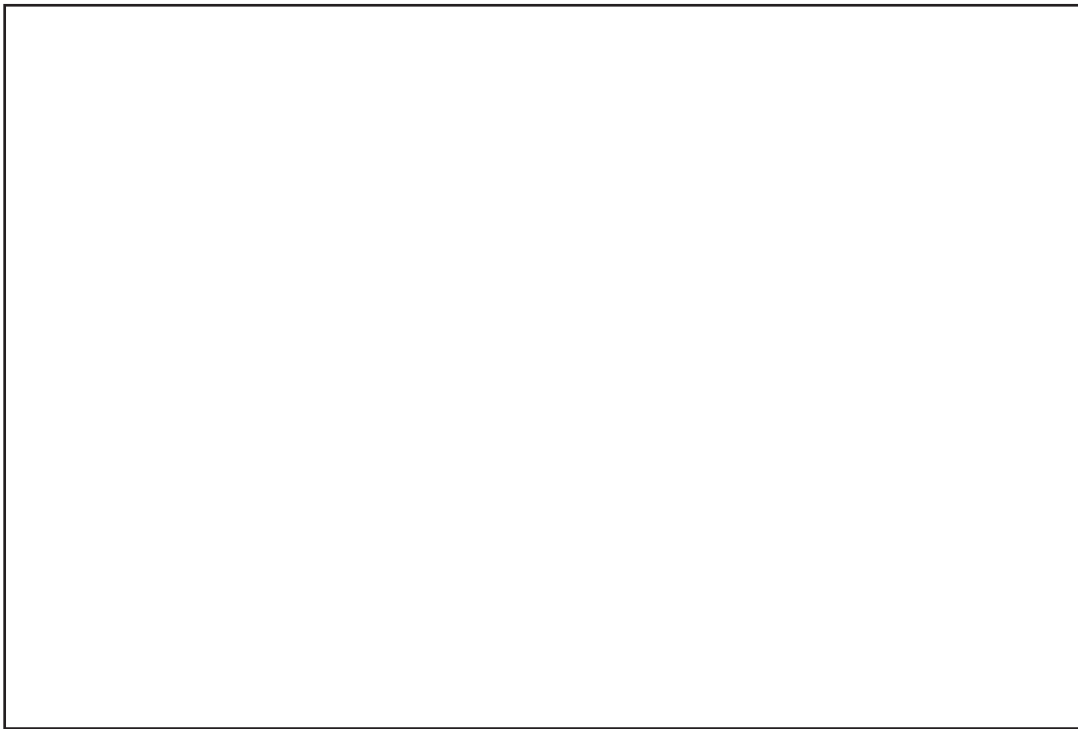
- MILK, OATS AND CLOTHES GIVEN OUT IN CHOLOMA -



- SUNDAY SCHOOL IN THE TINY CHURCH IN CHOLOMA -



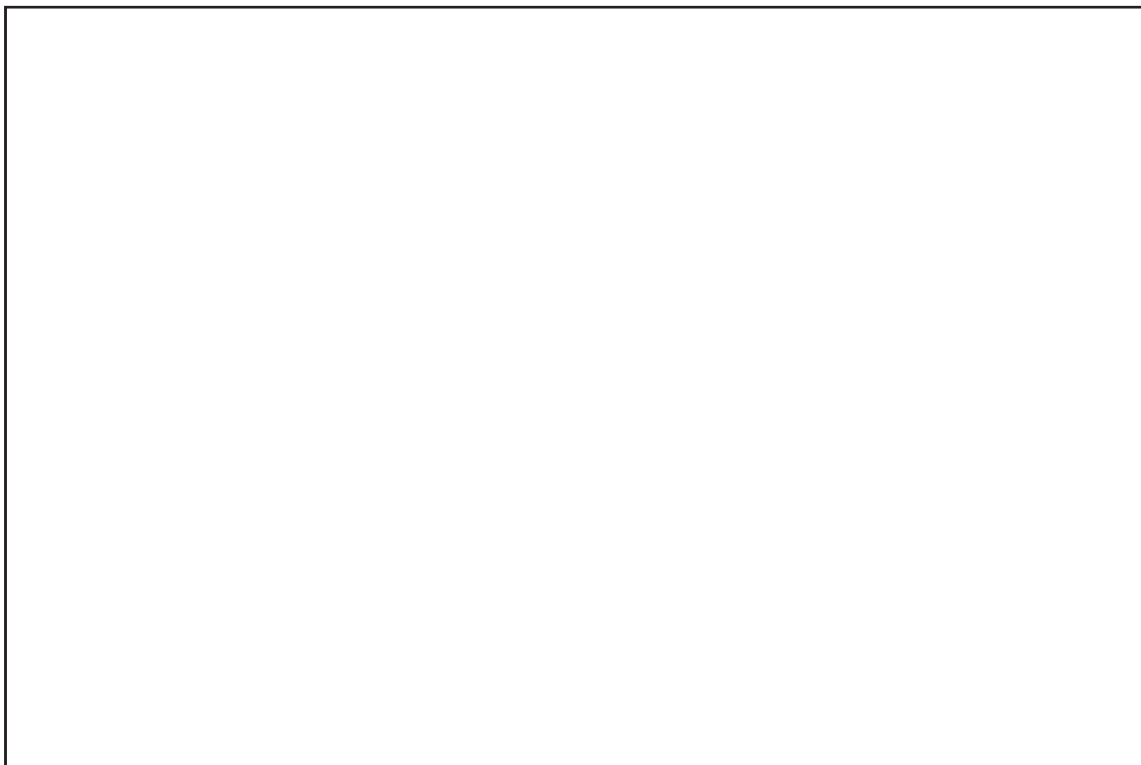
- DISTRIBUTING THE BUCKETS FOR SPONSORED CHILDREN-



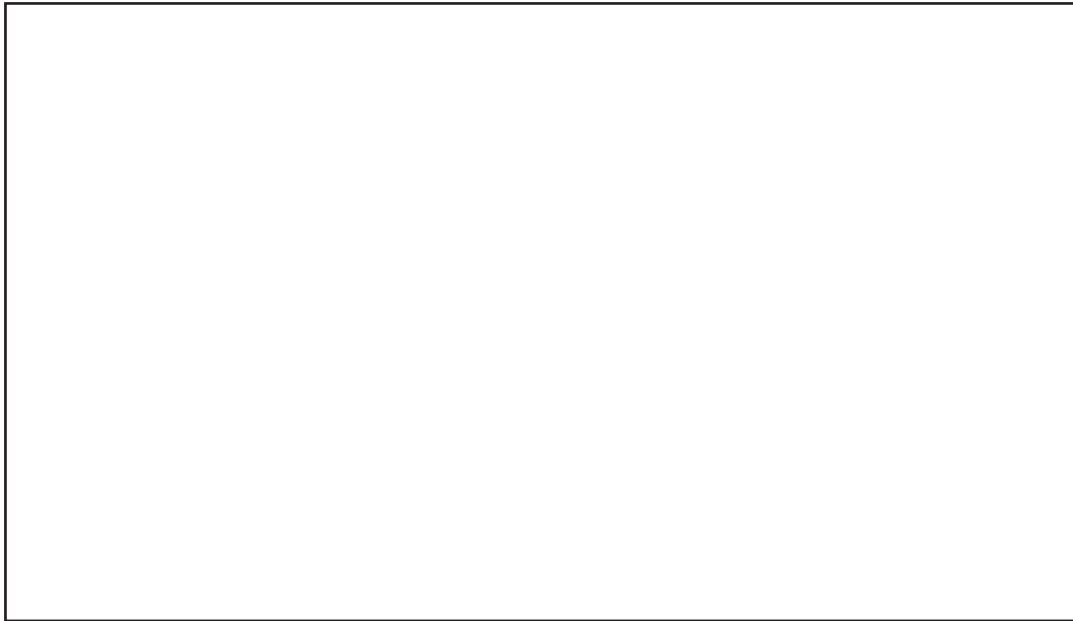
- GIVING OUT THE FAMILY BAGS -

of containers into this third world country is a long, expensive, complex and bureaucratic process. To import charity aid the receiving organisation must itself be a registered charity and able to employ a lawyer to prepare the import customs dispensa and the accompanying mountain of paperwork required by the authorities. In effect this means that we have to import into Honduras through a fairly large and well established organisation. Since we are a Christian charity it is not surprising that we elect to work through Christian churches in Honduras. This offers a number of advantages in connection with the distribution of goods. In the first instance we work through large churches who have the resources to take on the importation burden. They in turn can then distribute the aid through their smaller sister churches spread around the country. Unlike the UK, every church supports a large Sunday School which, on average, numbers twice its adult congregation. Even without any outreach into their local communities the churches are well placed to reach and deliver our aid to the most needy of the Honduran children. The larger churches are also responding to the needs of their communities by opening Christian day schools. We have been helping them to do this by providing the necessary desks and chairs etc.

Thus in order to import into and distribute goods in a third world country like Honduras it is necessary to identify a recognised, responsible importer and a network of people placed to receive and distribute those goods. The churches we work with admirably provide us with the means to meet these requirements.



- SUNDAY SCHOOL AT DANLI -



**- PASTOR RAUL (DANLI) COLLECTING GOODS
FROM THE CONTAINER-**

Over the years we have made excellent friends amongst the people we work with. From time to time Rita and myself visit the churches that we work through and discuss the needs and suitability of what we send with their pastors and elders. We never fail to be impressed by their sense of responsibility, enthusiasm and care for their communities, together with their effectiveness and integrity in delivering our aid to those who need it most.

FISHING FOR SHEKELS

Over the years the Lord has been very gracious in the provision of funding for the CH Trust work. Each year by some miracle, the huge debt incurred running up to loading day seems to melt away over the following couple of months to something that we can deal with and ultimately leaves us with a balanced account ready for the run up to the following year. This year I am equally astonished to observe that the Lord has provided sufficient 'raindrops' to enable us to cover our costs.

However, I feel led to comment our finances are becoming an increasing and unwelcome constraint. Our costs have remained remarkably stable over the last five years but our income has been steadily falling. Many of our long time faithful supporters have retired to smaller incomes and in some cases passed on. The general climate in which we operate has also changed significantly. Twenty five years ago we were one of a handful of small charities shipping relief aid abroad.

Now we are one of many. Churches and other organisations that once supported us financially as an almost unique ministry now oversee their own in-house projects for aid abroad. In spite of this expansion in activity the need in Honduras has escalated rather than decreased. We now send help to a vastly increased number of children spread across areas to the north and south east of Honduras as well as the central area around Tegucigalpa, which also includes the Valle de Angeles. Sadly there are still multitudes of families needing the kind of help that we are engaged in that have yet to be reached.

To operate we need a minimum budget of £12000 per annum to cover shipping and purchase the basic needs for medical supplies, 2 tons of oats and 2 tons of dried milk. Over the last three years I have personally met an annual shortfall of around £3000. Since both my husband and I are now retired, we are moving into circumstances where a subsidy of this magnitude cannot be sustained. In any case it does not seem a right way to perpetuate and secure the future of the ministry.

We are therefore faced with several options:

- a) To receive additional funding to a level that enables the ministry to continue at or exceed its present capability. This will require additional gifting from you, our readers and supporters, or perhaps some kind sponsorship by an interested commercial organisation.
- b) To reduce the costs of our operation by scaling back the high cost items that we send. Namely the medical supplies, milk and oats. We are loath to do this since they are regarded as a long term investment in the health of the children that we reach in circumstances where their diet generally lacks protein.
- c) To scale down the operation to one container instead of two and concentrate more on the high value items. This could also present a major problem since we consistently receive materials to fill two containers in circumstances where they are needed in Honduras and we have limited control over what comes in.

Before long we will be required to make some decisions on how to move forward. Will you please pray earnestly about this matter on our behalf. I believe that the Lord wants this ministry to continue in abundant blessing. It is this that has prompted me to share this problem with you.

Until we gain clarification on this subject we must plan for only one container next year and therefore we will only be requiring the large items mentioned above. The main items this year will be the everyday consumables of **foods**,

clothes, shoes, school supplies, medicals, toys etc.

The major expenses for the 2003 containers.

Medical supplies £1827

Two tons of Oats £480

Two tons of butter milk £2740

Freight by rail and sea to the north coast of Honduras for two 40' containers
£4714

Freight and import costs from the north coast of Honduras for two 40' containers
to Valley de Angeles £2000

Printing and postage for two issues of this newsletter £750

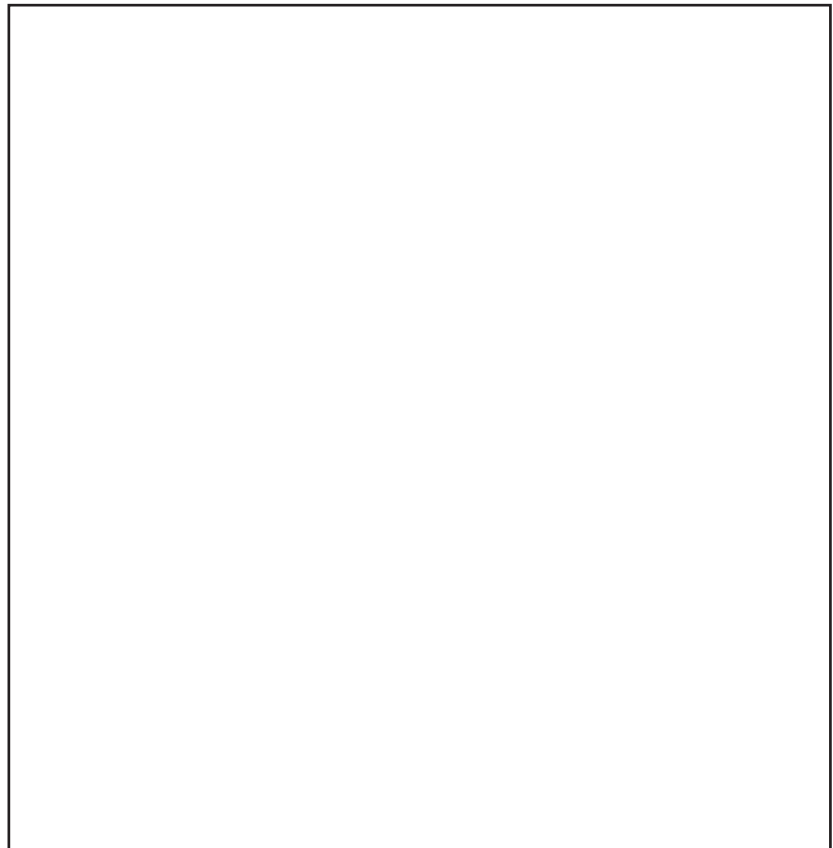
ONE SHOT SPONSORSHIP

Last year we introduced a modified form of sponsorship based on a one-off contribution. At a cost of £45, sent directly to Honduras, it is possible to purchase for a recipient child the equipment needed to enable him/her to attend school. In Honduras attendance at the state school is notionally free but only if the parents can afford to purchase school uniform (including black shoes), PE kit, tennis shoes, exercise books, curriculum manual, pens, pencils, crayons, dictionary, compass, eraser, etc and a small rucksack in which to carry it all. The children also take with them to school a snack and water to drink.

We rely on the church leaders to identify needy recipients, fix them up with the 'school kit' package purchased by the sponsorship money and to provide us with information about the child. They in turn have been delighted to help us provide access to education for some of the poorest children. We have been very pleased to receive photographs of many of the children who have benefited from these gifts donated by some of our readers. We have also received letters written by the children. The originals are in Spanish! Here are a few roughly translated extracts for you to enjoy.

These are the items needed by each child attending school and have been purchased with the money given in the £50 sponsorship.

Rucksack
Homework books
Sketch book
Compass
Felt tips
Colouring pencils
Carbon
Dictionary
Pair black shoes
Pair white tennis shoes
Day uniform
P E uniform
Socks
School manual



- CHILDREN RECEIVING SCHOOL EQUIPMENT-

Feedback from some of the Sponsored Children in Siguatepeque

To :- our friends in England

I am very happy with all the things that you have given me, they are very useful at school. My mum is a housewife and she could not buy these things for me. I love you lots even though I don't know you. May God bless you now and always.

Esteisy

To :- our friends in England

I give thanks to God for your lives. I wish that God would pour many blessings upon each one of you.

I want to thank you for the help you have sent me, for I did not have anything to go to school with but with what the pastor gave me I am able to do so. I was given all

the school books also uniform, shoes, trainers and a uniform for physical education. Thank God and to you all for making me happy.

I love you very much. And I hope God keeps providing, so that you keep making other children smile like you did me.

I say by for now

Mirna

God bless you friend,

Thank you for the help that you give and thanks to God for your lives and your kind hearts, for thinking about me for my parents are very poor. The pastor and Lourdes his wife have given me all the school books and every thing I need to go to school, shoes, trainers (I didn't have any shoes).

God bless you

Thank you for remembering me

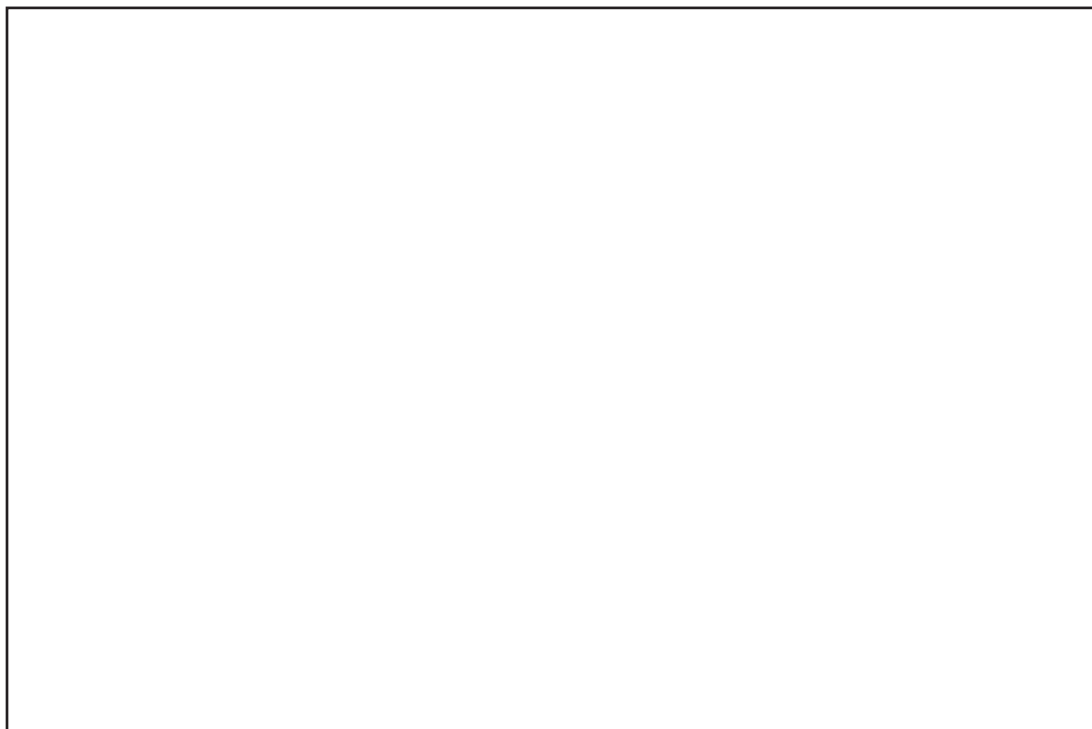
Yours sincerely Ana

When establishing the amount of the sponsorship we were obliged to employ a lot of guesswork. It turns out that our guess of £45 was a bit low. It seems that the standard 'kit' comes to nearer **£50**. If anyone would like to do a **one-off sponsorship** for next year of the above sum to allow a child from a poor family to attend school, then could you please send the amount to us before Christmas 2003. This is necessary because the Honduran school year starts the first week of February. We have to advise the churches on how many children have been sponsored and send out the money as one transaction (to absorb bank charges at a tolerable level ie. £22.50 per transaction) to be in Honduras at the beginning of January in time for registration.

I am sure you will be delighted to know that this scheme enabled 32 children to attend school this year who, otherwise, would have been denied this basic opportunity.

MOTORISED AT LAST!

Norma's dream for transport has finally been realised. This year the elusive motorbike finally made it to Honduras. It will be a great asset in enabling her to reach many more families up in the mountains who have, for the most part, been out of reach. We have also nominally cast it in the role of 'Man Catcher'! Many thanks to the person who has felt led by the Lord to make this a reality for her.



- UNLOADING THE MOTORBIKE -

CIRCULATION CENSUS

Over a period of years people move house, pass on, lose interest etc and our circulation list gradually gets out of date. If I have had contact with you during the course of the past year I will assume that you wish to receive future issues of the newsletter. For those of you where this has not been occasioned, could I please ask you to confirm your interest by returning the response slip at the end of this newsletter.

A DEAR FRIEND AND SUPPORTER OF CH TRUST HAS PASSED AWAY

We would like to acknowledge the work and support contributed by Lillian Taylor from Huddersfield to the activities of CH Trust and its work in Honduras. Her energy and enthusiasm for all mission work will be greatly missed by ourselves and all who knew her. Lillian was promoted to be with the Lord earlier this year. We are pleased to know that her sons are continuing to carry on the work that she did including support to CH Trust.

A TECHNICAL SOMETHING

The observant among you may have detected a slight change of terminology as used in this newsletter. In the past there appears to have been a bit of confusion over the difference between Packing Week and Packing Day. To clear up the issue we have redefined the terms slightly as follows:

PACKING WEEK

This is the period, usually during February, which coincides with the schools half term break in our area. Up to and during Packing week we welcome anyone with donations of goods to get in touch with us and bring them to the yard where our storage containers are located. By the end of Packing Week it is important that everything destined for shipment is identified with a number and safely stored away. We can then turn our attention to preparing the paperwork. On top of ordering the shipping containers and planning everything for the big Loading Day event in March, much paperwork is required to satisfy the demands of the various shipping, customs and import authorities. It is also during Packing Week that we check off that all needs have been met that we are able and sometimes identify things that we have overlooked. Please, please help us by trying to ensure that everything for Honduras is delivered to us by the close of this week. Many thanks in advance.

Packing Week next year is scheduled for February 14th-21st 2004

LOADING DAY

You have already met this term several times during the course of this newsletter. So hopefully you will have learnt it by repetition! The term refers to the big event, usually in March, previously referred to as Packing Day. This is the day when our excellent dedicated team of helpers transfer all the supplies from the storage containers into those that will travel across the sea to Honduras.

Loading Day next year is scheduled for 13th March 2004

RETURN SLIP FOR CONTINUED RECEIPT OF NEWSLETTER

I do/do not wish to receive future copies of this newsletter.

Name.....

Address.....

Please specify number of copies you require if different from what you usually receive.

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