

## **BOSNIA AID COMMITTEE OF OXFORD**

During November 1992 and February 1993 I put cardboard boxes in the shops of Milton, Shipton and Ascott and asked for donations of dried and tinned foods for a convoy going to this desolate part of Europe. The response was overwhelming and each time more than 500 tins of food were collected as well as a large quantity of dried food, including sacks of flour from Matthews' Mill.

Annalise and I took a very well laden estate car into Oxford and delivered these goods to the derelict warehouse in Cave Street which is the collecting point.

The last convoy left for Bosnia under the direction of Bill Croker, one of the Committee's brave volunteers, on Saturday, 20th February. I am pleased to report that Bill has returned safely to the U.K. and has informed me that he took three days to get to Tarcin in Eastern Bosnia, via Split. Tarcin is a large village centre for distribution to many smaller villages. He took 13 tons of food which doesn't sound very much but when linked to the same amount from other small aid committees actually amounts to quite a substantial quantity. Bill assures me that these small donations are keeping these unfortunate, dismal people alive.

Whilst in Bosnia the Oxford volunteers heard that an aid worker from London had gone missing. They entered a village and met ex-prisoners who had been with him in prison. Bill notified the authorities and his release was secured. He had been imprisoned for ten days and badly beaten - his only fault is that he is of Asian origin. Bill and the Oxford group brought him safely back to the U.K.

Begging is always difficult but when it is not for yourself it's a little easier. I do not wish to swamp the villages by requests for donations but if anyone wishes to give perhaps they would contact me. Items can be left at the surgery or I could collect. Convoys are leaving monthly from Oxford and any amount is worth collecting, large or small. At present space in the lorries is only used for food and medicines. Because the people are Muslim they prefer not to eat ham or pork, however Bill can use these to bribe the border guards who, when tempted by these, usually let the lorries through.

My reason for writing this article is not to beg for more, although contributions would be gratefully received, but to say a big thank-you, on behalf of the people of Bosnia, to everyone who has given so generously.

For such a small community we did wonderfully well!

Jill Fox