



Report March 2011



Visit to Egg Granny in Xian:

It was an early start on Saturday morning as Mary, Tony and I boarded the plane to Xian to visit Egg Granny who we have known about since January 2010 when we sent her orphans Boxes of Love from you. We had received an appeal for help for one of the babies in her care who was in need of surgery, so we needed to visit and assess the baby and see if she and the children were in need of any other support from us. Her home is one and a half hours outside of Xian. In our suitcase we had brought some jackets donated by Tape à l'oeil : thank you Olivier. After the 2hr 45 min flight we landed at Xian airport where we met up with Mark from 'Every child deserves a right'. Mark had done the water project for us at Lao Wang's Orphanage and is a wonderful friend. He had arranged for his friend Daniel to drive us during our trip. Straightaway we were off on our visit to the children: the countryside was very dry and dusty, but very pretty. Soon we were very hungry, so we stopped for lunch where we dined on local vegetables and noodles.

After lunch we were on the road again and although we got a little lost, we were soon there at Egg Granny's front door. I had imagined that she lived on the farm, but in fact the farm was down the road - this was a typical countryside house in a very small village.

We were greeted by Egg Granny herself and her three sisters and their husbands and families and of course the very excited children. They were all so happy: it is like one very large family, everyone is so caring and loving to each other and the children are treated like their own. The atmosphere was wonderful and the children were so well behaved. A lot of the children have disabilities ranging from cleft palate to Downs Syndrome, CP, and blindness. One poor girl has osteoporosis: she is 29 but very small and has been living there a long time.

The children entertained us with their singing and dancing. There was a lot of love there amongst the children and the Egg Granny family. We asked if they needed any help with food, but they have plenty for everyone, which is paid for with funds from the chicken egg business they have started. They asked us to help with a railing (stair banister) to stop the children from falling when going up and down the stairs - this we did. Next it was off to visit two other orphans who live at the chicken farm. We were very interested to visit them and see the chicken farm and how it worked.

To support the orphans, Egg Granny and her family rent land and outhouses, which were once a school. Here they have 5000 chickens laying eggs, which they sell daily both locally and also in Xian. They started very small with a few chickens and it's grown and grown. We felt very humbled by their hard work in order to look after these very special children. These two children at the farm were older - hard to say what age but probably in their twenties - one with CP in a wheelchair smiling and enjoying the sun and the other a mentally challenged boy who was helping with farm chores. The whole space and area was wonderful. I didn't venture into the chicken house due to my fear of birds. Mary, Mark, Daniel and Tony were braver. They have a very good self-supporting set up. They even sell the manure to the local people.

We had not yet seen the baby so after the visit to the farm it was back to the house for a last minute photo shoot: the children always love the photos. One of Egg Granny's brother-in-laws was going to accompany us back to Xian to visit the baby in hospital as he has had pneumonia. The brother-in-law brought with us one of the children that has down syndrome: she just loves him as her daddy and would not let him go without her. Mark was spending the night and the following day with Egg Granny and her family. So we said our goodbyes and then we were on the way back to Xian to the hospital or so we thought

On entering Xian we were soon travelling down small alleyways and then came to an abrupt halt outside a house in a very narrow lane. The doors opened to reveal a garage and we were motioned to get out while the van was parked. We thought we would now walk to the hospital but no, we were going inside the house. This turned out to be a home of the family of Egg Granny and we saw a cart with egg trays on, to transport the eggs for sale. We went inside and found more family and a nice warm fire. Near the fire, asleep nice and snug in a pram, was the baby we had travelled from Shanghai to visit. We now learn this is a baby boy with a problem that he can't go to pee and will need an operation. One very kind lady and her family in Shanghai have already asked to help this little boy get well. Unfortunately at the moment he is very tiny and recovering from pneumonia and on medicine, so they will tell us when he is well enough to travel and then will bring him to us in Shanghai for surgery. After waking up the baby with the phone flash (we had left the camera in the car) the ladies were soon fussing around him, so we felt it was time to leave and go in search of our hotel - it had been a very long, but wonderful, day. We will now work with Egg Granny and her family to help when there is a need. She would like the area at the back of her home fenced and turned into a playground for the children, and we have another charity that we will work with on this to make her dream come true. She and her family are doing an amazing job with these children: one big happy family.

Julie

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