

The Jungle in Calais is aptly named and is a thing of incredible complexity, apparent chaos, vast diversity and enormous creativity. It is an eco system where human endeavour, and the will to survive, slap you in the face. When you go there, the development of our humanity is surprisingly inevitable.

The Red Cross are not there. Unicef is not there. Neither is Save The Children or other aid agencies – and why? Because this Jungle of human desperation is not recognised as a humanitarian disaster zone by the French Government and so the major NGOs cannot operate there. But – like Homeopathy – the Jungle is not about being part of the mainstream. The Jungle is about the tremendous power of small scale initiatives created by people wanting to help, and joining in a huge wave of co-operation saying: ‘How could we not?’

Like Homeopathy, that wave of consciousness will stretch across the world, until a tipping point is reached and we finally ‘get it’. We will ‘get’ that war is no more a way to solve human problems than smashing our immune systems with petrochemical drugs is a way to solve our health problems.

So why would four Homeopaths set out on a day trip to the Calais Jungle? We’d packed the boot of the car with remedies, lots of sac lac and envelopes and various materia medicas and donations from organisations including some First Aid Kits from Helios, the wonderful Neals Yard Hand Defence Spray, fantastic probiotic capsules from Optibac and the most enormous donation of Vitamin C and Zinc and Multi Vits from Viridian. There were more donors: Weleda, Nelsons, Bio Pathica, Natural Dispensary, Homeopathic Supply Company and Sulis, who donated a remedy machine.

The first stop was The Warehouse: the control centre where volunteers arrive daily - families, church groups, Muslim women's groups, concerned individuals, young people wanting to make a difference. The Warehouse is about 3 miles from the Jungle and people are asked to volunteer here first – to don the hi-viz jacket and start sorting the donations that have poured in from all over Europe. Clothes, wellies, cooking utensils, bedding, towels, washing things. Everything needed in a cold, muddy, windy refugee camp is sorted and ordered and put in vans from here. The supply drops are done carefully and in as orderly a fashion as possible to ensure dignity is retained by both parties.

We set up a makeshift clinic in The Warehouse and went about finding the long-term volunteers who we had been told were suffering from near burn-out. Many of them were living in a nearby youth hostel and working in The Warehouse organising this incredible set of logistics. There was a bit of burn-out, coughs and scabies. One woman was pregnant and living as a long term volunteer in her camper van. Her partner gave us the outline of her case and we were able to administer remedies, floradix and some multi-vits.

Then on to the Jungle itself. A woman who had been running a Healing Tent for the past 6 months welcomed us when we told her we were coming with remedies and vitamins and essential oils. The Healing Tent was in the women and children's area and was a point of reference for about 500 people - mostly Afghan men and boys – but the wonderful Caravans for Calais organisation had secured caravans to house some of the women and children through this winter. A few women ventured into the Healing Tent when the news got round that we were treating people. Mostly on that first day we were getting to grips with Jungle Lung and Scabies, Pashtun and Farzi

(the languages spoken in Afghanistan) and were amazingly lucky to have found a brilliant young man who acted as our translator.

We asked him to explain that the remedies were natural medicines – this was popular. We asked him to find out the modalities – were they able to sleep? Go to the toilet? Were they worse lying down? etc.

The Narayani combinations seemed to make perfect sense in this setting. We combined the Cough Chest Asthma remedy with tissue salts, sometimes preceding the combination with Ignatia or Oak. We did not need people to tell us their trauma. We could feel it. Pulsatilla became quite a regular remedy used while some injuries called for Arnica/Rhus tox/Hypericum etc. No need to go too deep – these people were survivors and were coping with cold and damp and a relentless demand for patience.

The vitality and resilience of people who had risked everything to take a boat across the Mediterranean, walk through Europe and end up here was what we mostly felt. For them it was now a waiting game. Patience and fortitude hold sway in the face of daily aggravation from the French Police throwing tear gas, water cannon and threatening evictions. Anything is better than staying in your country where you would either be press-ganged into a militia, strapped into a suicide belt or bombed by a Russian, British or American maniac thinking he was playing the ultimate computer game.

The children sometimes came in to translate for their parent. Many were unaccompanied. One young boy was looking for some shoes that would fit him – he was planning to jump on a lorry that night.

The third time we went back to the Jungle, the whole area had been bulldozed where the Healing Tent had been. The love, creativity and humanity that had developed on this wasteland was too much for the authorities to cope with. Dystopian blocks of regimented, caged containers had been provided for the Jungle dwellers to move into. Our wonderful host from the Healing Tent had upped and gone. The Sudanese men who had made circular compounds for themselves to live in had lost all their tents – even though they had invited the bulldozer drivers and the French Police to sit and take tea with them round their fires before they flattened their enclaves.

This time we set up our clinic at the First Aid area and shared a day's work with a student doctor, a couple of nurses and a young anthropology student from Holland. We were most welcomed and the young doctor sent people out to us on several occasions. We left him a good supply of the probiotics we had been given by Optibac. They seemed to be giving out endless amounts of paracetamol and neurofen as far as I could see.

We saw lots of small infections, eyes, throats, skin lesions, scabies, coughs and ailments from exhaustion and sleeplessness. I gave out a lot of Kali Phos with constitutionals - if I could sense it - and specific remedies for the presenting symptoms. Hypercal cream, Traumeel gel, Lavender Oil (rub into the scabies' open wounds) and the wonderful Neals Yard Hand Defence Spray were the most valuable additions to our remedies. The Vitamin C was also a great gift to be able to send people away with. Delicious cough mixture from Weleda brought the boys from far and near – a mouthful of syrupy, fruity elixir was too much to miss.

The refugee crisis is not going to go away. We are being forced to see the effect that war has on people and realise

that we are all one: one great globe of individual cells all making up this human body. Just as chemotherapy makes war on the apparent cause of a cancer – so bombing countries and thinking we are winning the ‘war on terror’ wreaks havoc with the whole system.

There is a chance, within this chaos, to see the green shoots of healing and hope and a new way of thinking. This is just what the Jungle is about – and that is why Homeopaths need to get over there and lend a hand, learn and hope we can just help a bit.