



S · M · O · A · T

ST MARK'S OVERSEAS AID TRUST

Newsletter - Spring 2010

Dates for your diary:

St. Mark's Flower Festival

25th to 27th June

The flower festival is part of St. Mark's 150th birthday celebrations and SMOAT will provide a display featuring its activities. Church open Fri 9-5, Sat 10-6, Sun 2-5.

Scrabble Evening

(provisional date at this stage)

Friday September 24th

Quiz Night

Friday 19th November, St Mark's Hall, Reigate

Speaker evening

Chris Aldridge, Announcer on Radio 4

Friday 4th March 2011

For details of any of these events nearer the time, see our web site: **SMOAT.org.uk** or contact one of the committee

Editorial: Giving Money

Did you read the Sunday Times' article in the issue of the 24 April which exposed (again) the problems of giving foreign aid effectively? It told a story of the difficulties in applying aid without greasing palms or paying over the odds for local resources to help in emergencies. It was certainly some vindication of the SMOAT policy of avoiding areas of conflict or natural disaster.

As you know SMOAT raises money to give away, but not to just any needy story. We have always researched our projects thoroughly but recently we have redoubled our efforts in that direction.

Some 'possibles' come through the post. Others come from personal contacts. Too many websites are long on promotion and short on information from which to judge performance. Eliciting precise information by phone or e-mail is not always easy. So what kind of criteria do we apply and where is the best place to put your money?

Today we usually try to avoid the larger organisations, not because they are not doing good work efficiently but because our money is more needed in the smaller or middle sized organisations. We prefer organisations which have been going for a few years and have learned how to sustain their financial basis. We are seeking those which are meeting the needs of the very poorest.

Because we have limited funds we avoid on-going commitment or allowing activities to be dependant on us. Accordingly we favour self-help projects of a capital or once-for-all nature but which can be seen as sustainable.

Most chosen projects should improve the longer term prospects of their community. This is clearly the case for clean water and sanitation projects which both improve help and release labour for other purposes. I came across one project recently which claims through water installation and irrigation to change one uncertain harvest into three successful ones. Some NGOs are doing more ambitious things better than ever. The same can also be true for other health-supporting projects.

Supporters like projects directed at poor children because of their vulnerability and the need to give the next generation a better chance, and so do we. Education should be enabling. Projects concerned with

improving agriculture or the local poor economy such as local production of marketable produce may also enable communities to pay for their own education and health needs. More and more NGOs are recognising the need to provide basic credit to stimulate the micro-economy.

Above all this lies the need to ensure the resources hit their intended target with the minimum of overheads. That is why the closer contact we can have with the ultimate objective the better.

So, is your money safe with SMOAT? Not entirely. By its very nature investment in the Developing World is risk investment. Rain failure, political unrest, recession elsewhere, currency depreciation are a few of the unforeseeable events which can lead to failure. But the need is great, the fruits are potentially high and we do try to avoid as many pitfalls as possible. We try to do better with your money than the more aggressive promotional organisations.

HARRY INGRAM

SMOAT Christmas Appeal 2009

Just to refresh your memories the two projects suggested for your support at Christmas were Microloan Foundation and Project Uganda.

The first was to support the extension of its loan facilities from Malawi to Zambia and we hoped to fund the start-up of one group. Project Uganda was the flourishing project set up by a cooperative effort of the inhabitants of Winterslow in Wiltshire. We hoped we might support the installation of mosquito nets in perhaps four local schools in the area of Rukungiri.

The Appeal produced a record result, once gift aid is added, of £8600. This sum has been divided equally between the two organisations. It will fund three new fund groups in the Lundazi area of Zambia and mosquito nets for nine schools in Uganda. This will protect one thousand seven hundred and twenty children from the debilitating effects of malaria

So, there will be many more benefitting from start up loans than we hoped for and these will go on and on as they are repaid and loaned again. There will be much more work for the young

craftsmen at the Project Uganda School from the installation of the mosquito nets and the health of a great many children will be improved. Both organisations are very grateful for your support and in due course we hope to be able

to tell you more about the results. The success of this appeal is wholly down to your most generous support. The thanks of the SMOAT Committee go to you all. We are ourselves very encouraged.

SMOAT "Mission" pamphlet

After more than thirty years virtually unchanged, the time has come to revise the SMOAT publicity leaflet. The pamphlet aims to set out the SMOAT vision and mission. Our reflections about this concluded that whilst the core objectives of SMOAT remain the same as when it was formed, quite a lot has changed in the way we set about our objectives. You will shortly be able to judge for yourselves whether our deliberations have met the need.

We cannot manage to spread the good news of SMOAT only by word of mouth. The pamphlet should be very useful in adding form to the message of our objectives. Unfortunately the cost of printing is high so and this will mean that for this year there will be significant "overheads". Any contribution you may feel inclined to make will be very welcome.

Quiz Night 16 November 2009

A quiz run by Helier Dreux is always a notable event and this night was no exception. A hundred and thirty eight people came from near and far, some regular SMOAT supporters, some enthusiasts for a quiz. They came to pit their memories and brains against the cunning of this inventive Quiz Master.

Periods of intense silent concentration were succeeded by a noisy buzz punctuated by bursts of laughter as competitors discovered, flashed up on the screen, the answers

to the clues which had foxed them. Positive comments on the fish and chips at half time and the constant buzz of conversation all bear witness to the success of this very sociable evening. The event realised £1118 which enabled a cheque for £1,500 to go to the SightSaver project in Bangladesh.

Helier will be returning with more challenges on Friday 19 November 2010. Please put the date in your diary.

HARRY INGRAM

Musical Evening

On 27th February we were entertained to an evening of varied music from the Carousel Clarinet Quartet and The Meadvale Singers. The Clarinet music ranged from Purcell and Bizet to Hungarian dances and Jazz, whilst the singers took us on a journey including spirituals and Rutter. This is the second time the Quartet have performed for us. The Meadvale Singers includes a past chairman of SMOAT, Ruth Appleton, amongst its members. In addition James Suckling, Reuben Suckling and Melanie Knight played James' own piece, "Hope to Give", which was written specifically for a charity concert towards the end of last year, so its inclusion in our musical evening was also highly appropriate.

Whilst it might be normal to judge the success of such an evening by the reception given to the performers by the audience, which was indeed appreciative, for SMOAT the evening was also a great financial success. Including some donations, the end result was that a magnificent £900 could be sent to support the work of IMPACT in Cambodia and Nepal. The project aims to raise nutritional standards by giving families the means to grow their own food in home gardens, by providing training, tools, irrigation, compost and seeds and saplings.

This can be achieved for just £20 per family and will have a real impact on the lives of the communities. Ongoing support will ensure that the benefit is lasting, and experience shows that the knowledge and skills learnt are passed to neighbours, thus benefiting the wider community.

RICHARD SALMON

"England and Saint George?"

A celebration of Englishness in word and song.

We are very indebted to Sylvia Weatherald who wrote, produced, directed and led this excellent evening of vivid entertainment on the theme of Englishness.

To suggest this was an evening of poetry reading would be to miss

the mark entirely. More precisely the spirit of the narrative and the power of the poetry were woven into a theatrical performance of the highest quality.

The magic of the spoken word came to life in the skilful hands of

Sylvia and Debbie Grant, and their fluency was complemented by Martin with his excellent voice most ably supported by Geraldine at the piano. Charlotte Page made a most successful debut for SMOAT and Michael Heatt enlivened the proceedings on his tenor horn.

The event was very well attended by over a hundred people who showed their appreciation by the vigour of their applause. It was a night which will be long remembered.

The evening raised over a thousand pounds and enabled a

cheque for £1300 to be sent to Village Water. This is a small English charity which specialises in providing pumped clean water to small villages in western Zambia.

It does so on a very well coordinated, self-help basis which involves the community in doing the manual work and setting up the accompanying sanitation facilities. Subsequent inspections ensure the projects operate effectively.

Thank you Sylvia, and to all those who attended.

Village Water

This is the charity to which the proceeds of England and Saint George were sent. Village Water was founded in 2001 and an associated NGO also set up in Zambia with offices in Lusaka and Mango to provide water and sanitation facilities in remote villages in western Zambia. I understand this is the only NGO installing water in western Zambia. We liked their modus operandi.

Villages have to apply for water installation. Each community must set up a water committee, appoint a treasurer and collect small regular donations (for maintenance and repairs). Two villagers are trained as pump minders. The community must undertake the sanitation programme by digging latrines for each household and install washing facilities using cement and tools provided for these purposes. Then the well is dug and the pump installed.

Hygiene classes covering kitchen and food cleanliness are held. All this results not only in clean water and far better hygiene but also time is saved and irrigation projects undertaken which result in better diet, more time and more income generation.

To date the charity has brought these results to 60,000 people in 240 villages.

The Revered Ian Kitteringham

30 November 1935 to 30 January 2010

Ian was vicar of St Mark's when SMOAT was formed over thirty years ago. He and his wife Jeanette helped SMOAT through its early years and supported us for the rest of their lives.

Ian moved on to Caterham where he started COAT. At the end, their memorials were to be divided between SMOAT and COAT.

Jeanette, after a very long illness of kidney disease and Parkinson's died on 21 December 2008. She was Head of French at Reigate Grammar School and a strong vicar's wife for Ian wherever he went.

Her memorial last autumn contributed to the Practical Action water project in Nairobi.

Ian also suffered from Parkinson's and prostate cancer so that his closing years

finally without Jeanette were very difficult indeed.

A summary of Ian's life and work was in the St. Mark's Parish Magazine for April 2010.

Many of you will remember him as a very principled person. He was a humble, self effacing, warm and wise man open minded but progressive in his thinking. He clearly liked people, fortunately warts and all, and perhaps his greatest gift was to be able to change others.

In supporting the formation and early years of SMOAT he left us all an example of selfless endeavour and the need to apply the virtues of optimism with practical realism. SMOAT must now carry on the practice of those virtues.

We shall be seeking a suitable project for his memorial.

HARRY INGRAM

MONEY MATTERS (Pun intended!)

In other words this piece provides a few facts and figures to show how SMOAT fared over the last financial year. But it also encourages us all to remember that, though many people in the developed world are facing financial difficulties in the present economic climate, the situation is even more difficult for many people in the developing world and we must try to continue to support them whenever we can.

I am encouraged that despite experiencing a drop in income in 2009 SMOAT nevertheless managed to support many very worthwhile projects during the year. Income for the year was £15,836 - down by just over 10.5% on 2007 and down by about 14.75% on 2008 (but I think 2008 was a rather exceptional year). The 2008 Christmas Appeal (shown in the 2009 accounts) raised £5,740 - an increase on the previous year. On the other hand, thanks to a healthy surplus in 2008, SMOAT's charitable giving in 2009 exceeded income by some £4,283 amounting to £20,075. A surplus of £4,175 was carried forward into 2010.

This year's fundraising events so far have enjoyed excellent support and all SMOAT's supporters deserve thanks for that. Please keep up the good work so that SMOAT can continue, and hopefully increase, the support it provides to people in the developing world to help them to climb out of poverty and all the hardships it brings.

And please remember that if you are eligible to Gift Aid your donations, whether regular ones or those made at a fundraising event, doing so enables SMOAT to recover an extra 28% at no cost to you. If you need a Gift Aid form, please let me know or go to the SMOAT website at **www.SMOAT.org.uk** and download a form.

ALAN PRESTON (*Treasurer*)

*For more information, or to join our mailing list,
please e-mail richard@smoat.org.uk*

Harry Ingram (Chairman) e-mail: chairman-harry@smoat.org.uk
Alan Preston (Treasurer) e-mail: treasurer-alan@smoat.org.uk

Other committee members:

Ann Dale
Barbara Perkins
Richard Salmon
David Lear

Ruth Simmons
Ian Stratford
Pauline Young