



S · M · O · A · T

ST MARK'S OVERSEAS AID TRUST

Newsletter - Summer 2011

Dates for your diary:

Jazz Evening

with the

SUSSEX JAZZ KINGS

at St Mark's Church Hall

Friday, 7th October at 7.30 pm

More details on page 3

Adults £12 Child under 16 £5

Free nibbles and Pay bar

Tickets available from Ian Stratford 01737 244522

Proceeds to **Work Aid**, a charity which refurbishes and recycles woodwork / garden tools / sewing machines for poor people establishing a small business in Africa.

Quiz Evening

with our ever-popular quiz-master, Helier Dreux

Friday 4th November - *More details on page 5*

Details of these events are included in this newsletter, and more details will be available nearer the time on our web site: **SMOAT.org.uk** or from any of the committee.

REGISTERED CHARITY No.280091

Editorial

I hope you will enjoy reading about the activities of SMOAT in this Newsletter. We have had another period of intense activity, fund raising and selecting which projects to support. Yet it occurs to me that we are not making full use of the available resources.

Our prime asset is the band of faithful supporters who come to our events or contribute in other ways. In a word, "you". No, this time I am NOT asking for finance but for your ideas. I welcome constructive criticism but not approbation. What I should like most of all are your ideas of what would make SMOAT even more successful both in raising money and identifying the very best projects which help the poorest to help themselves.

For thirty years we have raised funds by holding a variety of social events mainly at St Mark's but also in the houses and gardens of supporters. Do you have any views on the kind of events we hold, or ideas for new kinds of event or other ways of fund raising which we might consider trying?

SMOAT has always sought the best self-help projects from reliable organisations which give good value for money for the poorest in the world. We have our criteria and we delve deeply into promising projects. Do you have any connection with developing countries which might give rise to such a project?

Finally you might just like to support SMOAT directly yourself in some way, in which case I should be truly delighted.

If you have any views on these or other ideas please put them in a short note and send them either to our secretary Barbara Perkins barbara@smoat.org.uk or send them to me chairman-harry@smoat.org.uk We shall be so very pleased to hear from you.

HARRY INGRAM

Barn Dance

Was May a good month for a Barn Dance? Would anyone turn out on a summer evening for an indoor event? Would anyone under 40 come?

Yes, Yes, Yes! A thoroughly good time was had by all - almost half being of school age! Fiddle & Squeeze got us twirling and changing partners almost to perfection and Pauline's cottage pie

was greatly appreciated in the interval.

The Lake Malawi Project for dams to conserve water benefitted to the tune of £1080 and one youngster was heard to enquire "When will the next barn dance be?" What more can you ask? Thank you everyone.

RUTH SIMMONS

JAZZ EVENING - October 7th

SMOAT will be holding a **Jazz Evening** in St Mark's Church Hall on Friday, October 7th at 7.30. This is an exciting new type of event for SMOAT which we are sure will appeal to a wide audience. We have booked the **Sussex Jazz Kings** who play professionally all over the south of England. They will be playing traditional jazz with a strong New Orleans influence. There will be a pay bar and free nibbles as well as a raffle. Tickets cost just £12 (£5 for children under 16) and are available from Ian Stratford on 01737 244522. Proceeds will go to **WORKAID**, a charity that SMOAT has supported before.



WORKAID, through a network of area organisers in the UK, collects donated tools and equipment, such as carpentry tools, sewing machines and typewriters. These are refurbished by its team of volunteers at its premises and then shipped to Africa for distribution to a wide range of training and employment-generating

schemes run by schools, polytechnics, churches, women's groups, and self-help groups for disabled people, HIV/AIDS sufferers, orphans, street children and refugees. The tools enable members of the groups to learn new trade skills and thereby become self-supporting. Hand tools are used to teach skilled trades such as carpentry, masonry, car maintenance and leatherwork. Sewing and knitting machines enable women to set up small businesses at home and typewriters are used to teach secretarial skills. Horticultural tools go to small-scale farming projects.

The proceeds of the Jazz Evening will go towards the cost (about £5,000) of shipping one 20 foot container of tools to Africa. A container usually has on board 10 tons of refurbished tools and equipment destined for 25 projects. **WORKAID** estimates that this will benefit on average about 50 disadvantaged people. Care is taken to ensure that each recipient group receives only items suitable for their needs and circumstances, so that nothing goes to waste. Three such containers have already been shipped to East Africa this year and **WORKAID** would like to be able to send another three to Zambia, Uganda and Kenya by Christmas.

WORKAID is a well-established UK Charity, having been operating successfully since 1986. Recently, it has opened a shop at its premises in

Chesham to sell refurbished tools for which a use overseas cannot be found. If you have any old tools or a sewing machine you no longer use then please let one of the Committee know and we will arrange where they can be dropped off, or if you bring them to the Jazz evening we will arrange for them to get to WORKAID.

IAN STRATFORD

Strawberry Tea

On Sunday 10th July we held a Strawberry Tea in the garden of Elfrid and Shirley Silcock. Apart from the fact that the garden itself looked magnificent, the setting as one walked in was splendid. With marquees and gazebos, pretty tablecloths and bunting, it was a glorious English garden scene.

We had strawberries and cream and homemade scones and jam and as much tea as people could drink! And in the background there was beautiful harp music being played by Susannah Shucksmith and one of her very accomplished students, and some great, lively violin music from Ian Thiele. All in all, it was a most civilised and extremely relaxing event and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves very much.

However, as with all SMOAT events, behind the scenes of a lovely day, we were there to raise money. And this time we were raising money for a charity called Village Water, a small UK Charity operating through its NGO in Zambia in arid areas which Water Aid and other water providers have not yet reached.

The project for which we were raising funds is based in the village

of Mukatimule, W. Zambia, which currently gets its water from contaminated scoop holes and, in the dry season, from a more distant river used by animals. It has no sanitation facilities. Waterborne diseases are common and very often fatal, particularly amongst children under five years old (18.2% of children under five die each year from waterborne related illnesses). Having two young children myself, this statistic in particular hits home.

We were asked to help fund the installation of a pump in the village. We raised just under £700 on the day, which is fabulous. The Committee decided to add to this amount from funds available, in order to give £1,500 to Village Water. This amount will pay for the cement, the pump and equipment to enable its installation, and it will also pay for field workers to visit the village afterwards to ensure the pump and other facilities are being properly used and maintained.

The pump will be installed and maintained by the villagers themselves. Crucially, it will also contribute to educational costs, so that all villagers are educated in the need, not only for clean water, but



for sanitation and higher standards of cleanliness.

The Strawberry Tea was not the first SMOAT event to support Village Water. We funded a £1300 project at Kankomba from the "England and Saint George" evening organised by Sylvia Weatherald last year.

So on that lovely sunny afternoon in July, as people sipped their tea and ate strawberries, they were helping to save lives. We took for

granted that we had water available to provide water for the tea, wash the strawberries and to provide toilet facilities for our guests, but the people in the village of Mukatimule have never been that lucky – until now.

Thank you to all who attended and to all who contributed to the day, with particular thanks to Elfrid and Shirley for letting us use their lovely garden.

BARBARA PERKINS

QUIZ Evening

with our energetic quizmaster, Helier Dreux

at St Mark's Church Hall
Alma Road, Reigate RH2 0DA

Friday, 4th November, 7pm for 7.30

Tickets from committee members, or phone Richard Salmon 01737 772811

Fish and Chip supper included (tickets must be booked in advance)

Free Parking

Bring your own drinks, glasses and nibbles

Proceeds to InterCare to fund the shipping of two containers of donated medicines to the new Madesi Mission Hospital in Malawi

Street Child Africa: Uganda

Street children need immediate help and then either repatriation to their family or a more long term settled arrangement. Orphans, if they are lucky, look after each other in child headed households. Such is the case with ten children in Danida, near Jinja in Uganda who lived in a shack.



With £722 provided by SMOAT, Street Child Africa has transformed the shack into a three bedroom house with veranda on land which they own. "The children are happy because their lives have been transformed in the community. The house was once the lowest class in terms of accommodation; it is now in the middle."

HARRY INGRAM

"Sailing By with Radio 4"

Which well-known TV presenter's early broadcasting career included a spell in radio sound effects, producing convincing squelching noises for farmyard scenes in *The Archers*?

Presenter James Naughtie caused pandemonium in Radio 4's *Today* studio by incorrectly introducing which current Cabinet Minister?

At St Mark's Hall on Friday, 4 March, the answers to these and other intriguing questions were disclosed during an entertaining talk by Chris Aldridge, one of Radio 4's senior announcers. With the aid of some wonderful audio clips from the BBC's archives, he took us behind the Radio 4 microphones to

reveal some of the pitfalls that await the unwary announcer, the least forgivable of which, it seems, is to overrun one's "slot" and fail to allow those crucial seconds for the all-important time signal.

Held in the middle of Fairtrade Fortnight, the event also featured a talk by Ernie James on the work of the Impact Foundation, whose most eye-catching project, for those previously unaware of it, was probably the Lifeline Express.

Now entering its 21st year of operation across India and described as "the world's first hospital on a train", the Lifeline Express has overseen the treatment

of more than 600,000 people, restoring hearing and sight and remedying mobility problems as well as carrying out other major surgery.

Ernie James revealed that Impact has now expanded the principle of mobile medical treatment by providing river-boat hospitals in

Bangladesh and Cambodia. The sale of Fairtrade produce helped the event raise nearly £240 to benefit a future Impact project. And the answers to those questions? Esther Rantzen and Jeremy Hunt.

DAVID LEAR

Serena Sabuto Ceraldi – our VSO in Malawi

Serena is a general surgeon who was based at Guildford. She volunteered for work at the Lilongwe Central Hospital, Malawi where her duties include lecturing at the Lilongwe Health Centre and operating at Kamuzo Hospital. She also supervises students at the hospital who, on graduation, will be the first Malawian-trained surgeons. This, it is hoped, will stem the brain drain which occurs when surgeons are trained abroad.

Inevitably Serena has found it very difficult to adjust from the high standards of the NHS to the primitive local conditions and culture where, for example, the electricity is liable to fail and assistants may not turn up. Furthermore, her function is at a higher level than in the UK so that she has to acquire new management techniques. She describes it as a mountain to climb combined with a need to change in her expectations towards the achievable.

She described some of her challenges and refers to virile bacteria, inadequate hygiene practices and coping with anaesthetists who allow patients to surface in the middle of an operation. "I can't have children moving about on the operating table with a tube down their throat. I tried to remain calm but moved on to a very hard sharp tone..." Serena seems to have developed a sharp edge to deal with assistants not used to responding to a white woman surgeon.

During her stay she has branched out to operating in small, primitive country "hospitals" as part of an outreach team. She has also been involved in assessing disabled children and arranged for medical books no longer used at the main hospital to be sent to the country ones. With funds from DIFID she opened a "practice" room for students at the hospital which is used all day every day. Her mother, an ex-teacher, has raised funds and Serena has used them to equip a classroom for disabled children in an orphanage and remunerate a teacher previously unpaid.

At the end of her year she returns to Italy where her father who was recently diagnosed with cancer is receiving chemotherapy, and she will also be married.

HARRY INGRAM

Scrabble Evening: Fresh Start Foundation

Our thanks are due to the Perkins for loaning their house for a Scrabble evening in January. The weather was poor but the attendance very good. Expertise with words on boards varied but the level of noise and laughter suggested there was no shortage of off-board communication and we all had a very enjoyable evening.

This event raised nearly £300 and this enabled SMOAT to support Fresh Start Foundation, a UK charity which helps two schools for orphans and vulnerable children in the Kwinella district of The Gambia. Since 2006 this small charity has had considerable success in providing further school rooms, fresh water, solar panels for lighting and computers and food. Your gift will fund 70 mosquito nets to protect the children.

HARRY INGRAM

Volunteer Fair

Once again SMOAT participated at the Reigate & Banstead Volunteer Fair held in The Harlequin on Saturday 5th March. It is an opportunity to expand our message beyond St Mark's Church congregation. Thanks for all who supported us.

Unfortunately visitor attendance was not extensive, however we did obtain about half a dozen new supporters and discussed SMOAT with several borough councillors and Reigate & Banstead's MP, Crispin Blunt.

Next year we are planning to have a stall at the Priory Park Open Day, where we will meet many more people and be able to discuss with them what SMOAT does. We hope to sign up even more supporters and spread our message to a wider audience.

IAN STRATFORD

*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