



S · M · O · A · T
ST MARK'S OVERSEAS AID TRUST

Newsletter - Summer 2017

Dates for your diary:

Quiz

with **Helier Dreux**

Saturday 7th October
St. Mark's Church Hall

Launch of

Christmas Appeal

Sunday 26th November at St. Mark's
at 8am and 10am services

Further details of all SMOAT events will be available nearer the time on our web site: **SMOAT.org.uk**
on Facebook via **SMOAT.org.uk/facebook**
or from any of the committee.



Editorial

I am writing this editorial at a very significant and rather extraordinary time in our history. In the last year, a reality television star has become president of the USA, the United Kingdom has held a referendum which has triggered our departure from the European Union, there has been a change of Government leader and a General Election, leaving the country with a hung parliament and so much uncertainty for the future of our country. The whole country seems to be in a state of flux, we don't really know what to expect next. The World feels very unstable.

We have also been hit by three heinous terrorist attacks in quick succession, targeting ordinary people going about ordinary lives, resulting in many shocking losses and terrible injuries. There is no doubt that we are living in very uncertain times.

And yet, although we are all shocked and surprised by recent events, for most of us our day-to-day lives continue unscathed. We still have food on our tables and beds to sleep in. No matter which political party is in power, thankfully, we live in a democratic society, where we are allowed to think for ourselves, worship as we please, marry who we want and decide for ourselves how we have our hair cut! We still have access to our National Health Service which, although struggling to manage with severely cut budgets, still manages to look after us and provides us with enviable free healthcare. Our children are still being very well educated to the age of 18, free of charge. In short, we are very lucky.

In direct contrast, there are millions of people all over the world who are starving to death or dying from water borne diseases, scrabbling in crocodile infested waters to gather dirty water which will very often lead to illness or death. There are children all over the world who sleep on the streets because their families have died through illness or conflict. Millions of people don't have access to free medical care (and that includes the Western world) or free education. People are fleeing their homes and their own countries, putting their lives at risk, to escape wars. Some are unable to flee and have to live with the constant fear of death.

However, we will all carry on grumbling about the state of our country and the world in general and about how life can get difficult and is hard going. To coin a phrase, "we don't know we're born". So, what can we do about it? Well, I don't think we are going to solve all of the

world's problems. We have to leave peace-making to the world's governments, albeit that we all think we could do a better job sometimes! There are many ways of helping refugees, through donating money or goods to reputable organisations.

There are many overseas aid charities to which people can donate and, indeed, in the past SMOAT has supported some of them. However, as they have grown bigger and bigger, the relatively small amounts we could give them were like a drop in the ocean. Therefore, we aim at smaller charities with a UK connection so that we can have confidence that the money we give gets to exactly where it is targeted.

All the money we raise goes to the projects we support, the organisations we support make sure of this. So when we send £360 to Malawi to buy 12 goats, we receive a photograph of the goats that we have bought being stroked by the families for whom we have bought them! Have confidence in us to try to make a difference in the developing world and we will ensure that your donations, every penny of them, go right to the cause.

There is a well-known saying by Edmund Burke: *"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."* When I looked up Edmund Burke, another quote struck me: *"Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little."* Clearly, a wise man.

BARBARA PERKINS, *Chairman*

Join us on Facebook

This article might read like a personal ad, but this spring saw the launch of the St Mark's Overseas Aid Trust official Facebook page, and we are looking for online friends to support our work. 😊🌍

The online phenomenon of 'facebooking' came about over twelve years ago when Mark Zuckerberg expanded the university online social

networking site he had designed across multiple colleges, high schools and workplaces, before opening its doors worldwide in 2006. It had attracted the membership of over 12 million



people within one year. It is estimated today that Facebook has approximately 1.59 billion users and that 72% of online adults visit at least once a month.

But aside from liking each other's holiday pictures and comments, sharing funny cat pictures and posting photos and videos of dear friends in compromising positions (see the pictures of our brave chair Barbara, in her swim wear and bobble hat as we dared her to jump into the swimming pool in the ice and snow on her ski holiday - all for SMOAT fundraising of course!), what potential positive value can such a network provide to small charities such as ours?

Well, for a start it's free to use. And it allows us to share information such as forthcoming fundraising events and activities, and updates from projects we have supported with our online members. It also allows us to keep in close contact with the NGOs and charities we support and exchange ideas and information. But most importantly, it is a fantastic medium to reach a far wider audience that we could hope to achieve by newsletters and mail shots alone. And we can keep track of how successful our 'posts', (our online articles or pictures), have been in attracting an audience.

By way of example between 18th May to the 14th June the data

available to us from Facebook tells us that the activity on our page has reached 778 people. This means 778 people have either seen, liked, commented or, very importantly, shared one of our posts. When an individual shares one of our posts this means it immediately spreads to an even wider audience as all their friends and online connections will also have the opportunity to see our posts. The effect is cumulative and extremely effective as like minded people tend to be connected.

When we posted a copy of the thought provoking slide presentation from our AGM of the 13 projects in 7 of the poorest countries that we supported last year, this link was shared by 10 people. This short presentation beautifully illustrated how we know first hand the huge impact and incredible results our fundraising has achieved.

We recently shared some uplifting pictures taken by Impact foundation at the village of Melinne Tobi Naya in Zanzibar. They showed the actual installation of a tapped water system funded by SMOAT. Installed by the local volunteers in the pictures this village is now enjoying clean drinking water which saves time and protects people from waterborne diseases.

Imagine how many people we could reach with such amazing

good news stories of how it IS POSSIBLE to make such a huge difference to people's lives if more people like and share our page.

So spread the word, like our page, follow our posts and let's share the

good news of what it's possible to achieve. And in doing so encourage more support for our work to help end poverty. This could be a Long Term Relationship that makes a difference 😊

CLAIRE BOWERS

SMOAT's Christmas Appeal 2017

'We Need Expansion' said Rosina, headmistress of Mwingi Primary School and Deaf School.

This year, for our Christmas Appeal, we heard from IMPACT about their work with Mwingi Primary School in Kenya. The school includes a specialist school for children with hearing impairments. All these



children are boarders but facilities are very basic and the school remains woefully under-resourced. There are few desks, and there is limited seating in classrooms. In the dormitories beds are squeezed into the available space and children can sleep up to three in a bed.

There have been some great improvements, the most significant of which was the construction of their

own borehole. By digging deep into the ground, the school can now access fresh water on site. This means the children no longer have to walk several kilometres to get water. It also means that each pupil has been able to grow saplings, along with vegetables which they then eat.



The inspirational headmistress, Rosina, asked for our help to allow for an expansion of their dining room. She said in a short video for SMOAT:

‘When the school was finished it was supposed to have only 45 learners, now we have 143. They are all boarders - the cookers have aged, it doesn’t have basic things like the kitchen sink, cupboards - so we need expansion. Porridge burns, food spillage will be a thing of the past.’

Do take a look at her message which has been posted on the St Mark’s Overseas Aid Trust Facebook page. You can see pictures of the aging kitchen, the tiny dining room and her plans to allow her ‘learners’ to sit together. The cost was forecast at £3,276 and I’m delighted to confirm that we have been able to fund the dining room expansion in full. Thanks to your generosity, we’ve been able to top this up to £4,500, providing funds to support their wider ambitions such as transforming classrooms with desks and chairs for pupils and teachers.



Through our second project we’ve supported Inter-Care Medical Aid. They take surplus quality medicines and healthcare products donated by medical manufacturers, pharmaceutical companies and general practitioners. They then send these in consignments to rural health units in Africa providing much needed medicines to those in Cameroon, Ghana, Malawi, Sierra Leone and Tanzania.

Sending each consignment costs some £795. Your gifts mean that we have been able to donate £1,700, allowing two consignments to reach the very poorest in Africa.



As a community we have provided £6,200 through our Christmas appeal, supporting some of the most vulnerable children and rural communities in Africa. Thank you!

LOUISE BARR

Jay Rattenbury; 20 October 1924 – 21 March 2017

After a short illness but a long difficult period Jay died on 21 March aged 92,

Jay was an early member of the SMOAT committee and served on it for over twenty-five years. She brought with her a happy calming influence.

She was also a person of many parts, from the maker of delicious meringues, which melted in the mouth, to a manager who planned the Antique Fairs meticulously, single-handedly, and brought in big financial results. Then on the day it slowly dawned on us that the antiques stall holders, from quite trivial contact with her, had also formed a warm relationship with Jay, because she cared. Together they always made it a happy day.

That really sums up Jay's commitment to SMOAT. She thought deeply and at times passionately. At such times she retained her tranquillity but stuck tenaciously to her vision. But mostly she was happy as a person looking for the truth in what others said and seeking consensus. Jay was a person of joy.

Her hallmark was in the smile which adorned her face to the end. You could not but be drawn to her and the smile told you all you needed to know. We all loved her.

HARRY INGRAM

SMOATathon dispels February blues

The beginning of an English February can seem a cheerless time. It stubbornly refuses to yield much daylight, the brightness of the Christmas and New Year festivities is long gone, and winter is still with us with no obvious sign of spring lurking around the corner. It is easy to feel glad that it is our shortest month.

So could SMOAT do its bit to help raise spirits during this potentially dreary time of the year? The answer came in the form of our third SMOATathon, held on the first Sunday of the month. For five and a half hours, from 11.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., St Mark's Church Hall resounded with an extraordinary diversity of music created by singers and the players of a whole variety of instruments, including harp, flute, saxophone, guitar and brass as well as the much-used piano.

Expertly compèred by Graham Humphries, who displayed stamina as well as expertise in lasting the full 330-minute course, the

SMOATathon showcased the talents of more than 40 participants. Individually, in duets or groups, and with the performers' ages covering a range of almost 80 years, musicians took the floor for sets lasting from two or three minutes to half an hour or more. An appreciative audience, constantly changing as the afternoon progressed but never totalling less than 30 and most of the time significantly more, listened and applauded while consuming a noteworthy quantity of coffee, tea and cake.

The event was launched by the St Mark's Singers, and continued with classical pieces, some inspiring unaccompanied singing, songs from the shows and a whole range of popular music. Appropriately for February, we also heard some blues.

As with the great majority of SMOAT's events, the SMOATathon was intended to be both fun and fund-raising. It appears to have been successful in both of these aims. While there were, as always, some nerves on display, those performing largely seemed to enjoy doing so, and the audience digested this feast of music with relish, particularly when some of the younger participants revealed more than a glimmer of serious musical talent.

And, through donations received on the day and sponsorship of the performers, the SMOATathon raised £1,500. A percentage of this sum will qualify for Gift Aid, and the final total is expected to be about £1,750 - an outstanding result.

The SMOATathon was staged to help finance a project to repair and rehabilitate wells in villages in Zambia. The project is run by Village Water, a charity which SMOAT has frequently supported in the past, and on this occasion we were able to donate £2,000, boosting the proceeds of the SMOATathon with a small sum from funds provided by those who give to SMOAT regularly.

The SMOAT trustees would like to express their gratitude to all those who supported the SMOATathon by participating, joining the audience, sponsoring or donating, and also to those who give on a regular basis and thereby enabled us to pass on a larger sum to Village Water than would otherwise have been the case.

And finally, in case anyone is suffering from withdrawal symptoms, the provisional plan is to repeat the event in two years' time. SMOATathon 2019 will soon be on the horizon!

DAVID LEAR

Annual Treasurer's Report

At the end of May we held our Annual General Meeting – where we present the accounts from the previous year, and talk through each of the projects we have supported through our gifts. For those that couldn't attend the meeting, we are proud to present the highlights of the Treasurer's Report for our readers.

In 2016, SMOAT had total receipts of £17,473, and we made gifts to the value of £18,329 in 13 separate donations.

Receipts

- In 2016 our receipts were less than in 2015 (£20,305) but greater than 2014 (£15,001).
- Last year we had £6,000 given in bequests which was exceptional.
- Our fund raising in 2016 was significantly more (£6,862 compared to £4,427 in 2015). We held the same number of events (5). Our jazz night and the charity sale held in partnership with local boutique Quattro Rish were both significant fundraisers for us bringing in net income of £1,673 and £1,897 respectively.
- We are also particularly grateful to St Marks who refunded us hall hire from our events for 2014/15 and have not charged us for hall hire this past year. This is a huge help to the income made on our events.
- Thank you also for the Diamond Wedding donations and for those that sponsored Barbara's ski challenge.
- The monies raised at the 2015/2016 Christmas appeal were comparable to the previous year (£4,867 compared to £4,967).
- Regular giving was also comparable to the previous year (£4,831 compared to £4,906)

This was the second year that we had not put through GiftAid claims. The backlog of claims is being processed in 2016/17. (At the present time £3,496 has been claimed and circa £1,800 remains to be claimed)

Gifts

- For the second year, our gifts were greater than income. We had a cash surplus from the previous year of £3,384 which enabled us to give more than we received.
- We made gifts of £18,329 for 13 donations.
- Last year we gifted £22,180 for 15 projects – which included allocating the money from the bequests.

End-of-year balance

• Our assets at year-end totalled £2,391. This was less than the previous year (£3,384). It is important for us to maintain some reserves – however, we are striving to allocate as much money as possible within each financial year.

Please note that in line with our reporting requirements, our accounts are based on Receipts and Payments only. This excludes stock – we hold a small amount of unused drinks stock for our events.

If anyone would like a full copy of the accounts, please email me via treasurer@smoat.org.uk

NAOMI FLOOD, *Treasurer*

Beetle Drive - and VSO

A beetle Drive on 5 March was very well attended by forty-eight competitors and the SMOAT Committee. This is now a popular though perhaps old fashioned event. The many children are challenged by creating their beetles in the face of speedy competition earning triumph or disaster from the toss of the dice.

The pretence of calm adopted by the adults was broken at half time when they shamelessly competed for incredible cakes the cream from which ruined many a shirt front and potentially fragile waist lines.

The event raised £350 but equally important new friends were made and fresh understanding of the nature of Voluntary Service Overseas.

The proceeds from the event were made up to £1000 to support this years VSO Dianne Evans whose placement is in Tara a small town in the centre of Papua New Guinea. It has quite a modern hospital funded by an exploration company.

Dianne was a nurse with the NHS and you may be interested to know

that very many volunteers, not only for VSO but other overseas posts, come from the NHS.

Dianne first had to fund raise and then pass the selection process and undertake training. VSO then found a link with the overseas government to arrange a placement which would do the most good for that country. In this case it was one of the poorest and most primitive places on our planet. Then she had a most frustrating wait for her visa finally not leaving the UK till the end of March.

Her development and management role is extremely demanding as is shown by the list below.

- Delivering quality nursing perioperative care in emergency surgery (predominantly trauma and emergency obstetric interventions) including appropriate measures of sterilisation necessary for all such procedures.

- Developing operating room nursing protocols for all emergency and scheduled procedures.

- Providing support to the local staff in the provision of nursing care

for comprehensive emergency surgery.

- Assisting in the development of surgical programming, implementation of national and international standards where needed.

- Providing on-the-job training to hospital staff and healthcare students.

- Assisting in forecasting medical supply needs and managing medical stocks

- Along with the Operating Room case team, participating and leading in preoperative, intra operative and post-operative assessments and procedures.

- Maintaining high standards of care in recovery room for patients immediately after surgery.

- Providing advice to hospital management on policy matters on standards of care and improvement programmes."

This is not a simple check-list of areas for examination. It provides the scope for areas where best practice has to be translated to what the local nurses

are capable of being trained for. It also has to cover what we would find quite exceptional circumstances, as indicated in the following extract from a recent e-mail:

"The violence in Tari is quite shocking, The people of Tari care more about their tribe than anything else. Will even kill others in the cruellest of ways! Paradoxically the people appear peaceful and genuinely welcoming. Every person that I walk past greets me in such a beautiful way. Yet there is such an ugly side - I looked after a woman today who had one arm and leg chopped off by her husband. She is four months pregnant!"

I have gone into the above detail because for some of us it is very hard to understand the challenges these young people face and achieve in improving standards of care in Developing countries.

HARRY INGRAM

Peter Spriggs' legacy - a water project in Zanzibar.



"IMPACT used SMOAT's funds to install a tanked water system for a village in our project area in 2016. You will see that this involved the erection of two water tanks (the original budget was for one) but we were able to raise the extra funding through the support of some of our individual supporters who have a keen interest in our East African water projects.

"Thank you to our friends at SMOAT on behalf of the community of Meli Nne Tobo Baya."

PASCALE NOEL

(Funding and Development Director, IMPACT Foundation)

The photos on the back page illustrate this project.



Installing one of the water tanks



The two tanks in place



Drinking water on tap!

*For more information please contact any of the committee, listed below.
To join our mailing list, or to switch to receiving an electronic (rather than
a paper) copy of the Newsletter, e-mail richard@smoat.org.uk*

Barbara Perkins (Chairman)
Naomi Flood (Treasurer)

e-mail: chairman@smoat.org.uk
e-mail: treasurer@smoat.org.uk

Harry Ingram
Richard Salmon
David Lear

Louise Barr
Claire Bowers