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ST MARK'S OVERSEAS AID TRUST

Newsletter - Summer 2019

Dates for your diary:

SMOATathon

Sponsored music event

Sunday 29th September

St Mark's, Alma Road, Reigate

Quiz with Helier Dreux

Saturday 5th October

St Mark's Church Hall, Alma Road, Reigate

Check website for online ticket sales nearer the time

Launch of Christmas Appeal - Sunday 24th November

Further details of all SMOAT events will be available nearer the time on our web site: **www.SMOAT.org.uk**

on Facebook via **[SMOAT.org.uk/facebook](https://www.facebook.com/SMOAT.org.uk/facebook)**
or from any of the committee.

REGISTERED CHARITY No.280091



Editorial

Next year is SMOAT's 40th Anniversary! It's hard to believe that a small charity such as ourselves can keep going all that time - but we have and we've gone from strength to strength.

I've been on the Committee since early 2007. During that time the Committee has changed so much, but there is one common theme which has run throughout - every single Committee member has wanted to support people who, without help, wouldn't be able to survive. Our Committee members are and always have been some of the most committed people I know.

I know that some people say that charity begins at home. I can understand their point. We have too many homeless people in this country, too many people relying on foodbanks, too many elderly people being cold because they can't afford to pay for heating, too many people waiting for months and months for necessary operations, too little money going into the education system. It's all true.

However, in the countries we support, people die every day because they don't have food - there are no foodbanks. Elderly people, particularly women, are very often left to look after many grandchildren because their own children have died, mainly from HIV and AIDs. In the majority of cases, people have to walk for miles to get any medical assistance. In rural Nepal, there is only one doctor per 150,000 people. Children have to walk for miles to fetch water (usually dirty and disease ridden) and so they miss out on their education.

In Nairobi alone, there are approximately 2.5 million slum dwellers in about 200 settlements, representing 60% of the Nairobi population, but occupying just 6% of the land.

Kibera slum, the largest slum in Africa, houses around 250,000 people. The average size of a shack is 12ft by 12ft and each shack houses an average of eight people. Until recently Kibera had no clean water (remember there are 250,000 people living there) and they had to walk to Nairobi dam to collect dirty water, carrying cholera and typhoid. There are now two water pipes, servicing all of those people. In most of Kibera there are no toilet facilities and one hole in the ground services up to 50 shacks - that's 400 people. There are no government clinics or hospitals. Education is referred to as "informal".

So, you see, there are distinct differences, the main one being that without help from charities, the people living in developing countries would simply not be able to survive. I don't want to detract from the

problems faced by the developed world, but despite terrible hardships people can actually survive. And whatever your views are on our current political situation, we are very lucky to live in a democratic society.

At our recent Annual Public Meeting, we were able to report that we had given over £19,700 to ten projects in eight different countries. I am immensely proud to be part of the Committee that achieved this amazing accomplishment. Of course, we couldn't do any of it without your support. And so I hope you too can feel proud that you have helped to save lives, set people up in business, provided life-saving and life-changing operations, helped to keep children at schools by providing facilities and clean water, helped to fund a doctor's training so that he will be able to work in rural Nepal, helped 12 elderly grandmothers set up agricultural businesses to support their 72 grandchildren, provide water and sanitation facilities to many isolated villages.



If you look back at past achievements of the SMOAT Committee, the list goes on and on. Over the 40 years that we have been working to help people, we must have saved thousands of lives - what an amazing achievement. I hope that, over the next 40 years, the Committee continues to go from strength to strength. I also hope that some of the problems we have had to deal with over the years will become things of the past. Everyone in this world has a right to clean water, every single person is entitled to have an education, everyone should be able to seek medical assistance.

So what of the future? Please help us to give others that future that they wouldn't have without people like the SMOAT Committee striving to help them. Be a part of it, make a difference to this world - make it happen.

BARBARA PERKINS, *Chair, SMOAT Committee*

The return of Reigate Jazz Club!

Back in February we were delighted to facilitate the return of our own “Reigate Jazz Club” with our amazing singer, Angie Barton and her fabulous band. Following the success of our inaugural jazz event back in Autumn 2017, we decided to repeat the hugely successful formula.

The SMOAT team, with the aid of Father Martin and Chris created a cosy ambience in our very own hall with 1930’s style black and white décor, and beautiful lighting, all centred around a good sized dance floor. We added a fabulous wine bar and an amazing cheese board buffet.



Our reputation on this event clearly preceded itself, with tickets flying out of the door leaving us completely sold out before the night!

It was so fabulous to welcome both familiar and new faces at this event. We were especially delighted to welcome so many of Father Martin’s dance friends who certainly paved the way on the dance floor. There was no holding back and everyone got into the full swing of the amazing

music right from the outset! Angie’s singing was breathtaking, and the drum solo left everyone in the room open mouthed!

Staging an evening like this is a fairly big undertaking, and also there are more costs associated than with some of our

other events. However, ticket sales, drinks sales and a raffle meant that our takings on the night were substantial, and after costs we made a net profit of around £2,000 which is amazing.

We were delighted to donate this money to a new partner, Freedom From Fistula. The organisation was set up in 2008 to help women and girls in Africa who are injured in childbirth and left suffering from obstetric fistula. 100% of all donations to Freedom From Fistula go directly to the projects as all administration costs are met by the Glog Foundation.



Obstetric fistula is caused when a woman endures prolonged, obstructed childbirth with no access to a timely emergency C-section, usually because they live too far from any doctor, have no money to reach them or because there simply is no doctor. An estimated 2 million women and girls across Africa are suffering from obstetric fistula and condemned to a life of shame and isolation. They range in age from early teens through to women in

their 70's, many of whom have suffered for more than 40 years. These ladies have endured the grief of losing their child and then find themselves incontinent. They often live as outcasts - shunned by their husbands and families for being 'dirty' and 'smelly'. Communities turn their back on these women who are then left to fend for themselves, existing without love, dignity or hope for the future.

"At first, I didn't see myself as a human being since people didn't want to be around me. Now I see healing and it's like life has returned again."

Aminata, Sierra Leone

Freedom from Fistula currently operates in Sierra Leone, Malawi and Madagascar. Our money will go directly to The Aberdeen Women's (AWC) Centre in Freetown provides the only comprehensive fistula repair service in Sierra Leone and has the capacity to treat up to 300 fistula patients per year.



The Centre takes a holistic approach to the care of women and children and in 2010 opened its own maternity unit to provide the highest standards of maternal healthcare for the women of Sierra Leone, thus preventing the occurrence of obstetric fistula in the first instance and ensuring a safe environment for childbirth.

This Maternity unit is now the second busiest in Sierra Leone, delivering up to 3,000 babies each year. It is a self-contained facility and more than 90% of the staff are Sierra Leone nationals.

The AWC also runs an outpatient children's clinic which treats more than 20,000 disadvantaged children each year, providing a

primary care facility including immunisations and health education. It also runs a support programme providing wrap-around help to vulnerable and destitute teenagers before, during and after childbirth. In addition to support from a dedicated counsellor, there are classes in health education, infant care as well as literacy and numeracy and support to return to school.

We were impressed at the all-round holistic nature of this programme - it offers treatment as well as prevention, rehabilitation and education for women and girls and is fully within our SMOAT remit.

NAOMI FLOOD

2018 Christmas Appeal

The SMOAT 2018 Christmas Appeal has been a great success. We raised money for two projects - the Virtual Doctors and the IMPACT Foundation.

The Virtual Doctors is a Brighton-based organisation providing set-up and support for telemedicine services. The service puts experienced UK based doctors in direct contact with basic health clinics in remote parts of Zambia using mobile phone technology.

The IMPACT Foundation provides a floating hospital, the Jibon Tari, in Bangladesh. The hospital provides life changing surgery for rural poor Bangladesh communities who are suffering from various disabling conditions.

The Christmas Appeal raised an incredible £6,175, plus gift aid of £1,158.75, giving a total of £7,333.75.

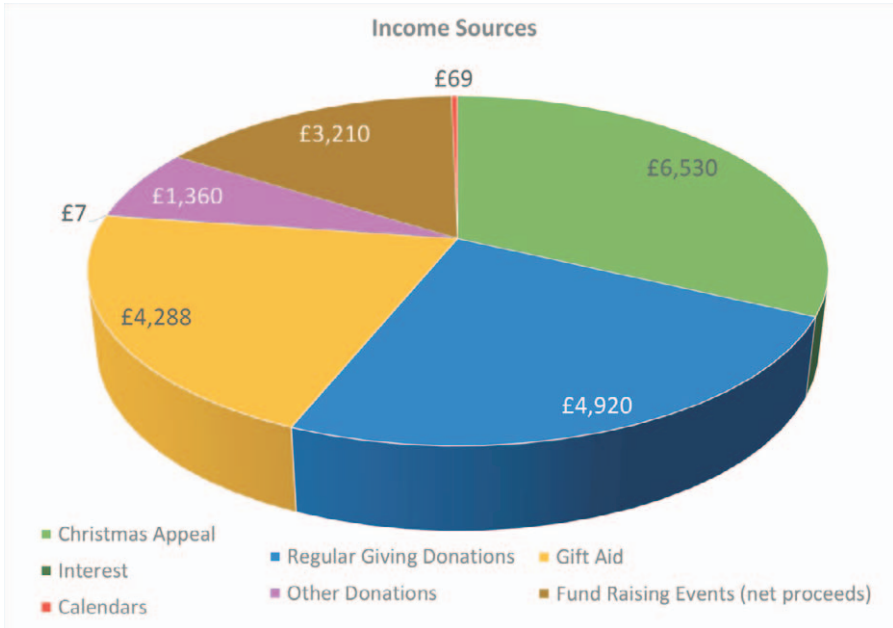
Due to your amazing generosity we have been able to donate £4,500 to the Virtual Doctors to fund 3 rural clinics in Zambia and £3000 towards the cost of providing medical services on the Jibon Tari.

Thank you so much for your donations.

JEAN WALLER, *Treasurer*

2018 Finance Summary

The 2018 accounts have now been completed. In 2018 SMOAT raised £20,384 income. The breakdown by source is below:



As a result of this fundraising activity we made donations of £19,790. The breakdown of donations is shown in the following table:

Gifts made	Source	
Doctors for Nepal	Bingo & Regular giving	£1,000
AWE	Christmas Appeal	£5,800
Kaloko	Christmas Appeal	£2,840
SAFAD	Brunch	£1,000
Project Uganda	Quiz	£2,000
Maisha Trust	Regular giving / Gift Aid	£500
Microloan Foundation	Regular giving / Gift Aid	£2,000
Workaid	Regular giving / Gift Aid	£1,500
Afrinspire	Regular giving / Gift Aid	£1,650
African Initiatives	Regular giving / Gift Aid	£1,500

SMOAT Annual Public Meeting – 19 May 2019

We recently held our Annual Public Meeting, which was very well attended. The headline of the meeting was that we gave away £19,790 to ten projects in eight different countries in 2018. This was the most money we had ever given away and it's amazing news! In case you weren't at the meeting, here is a brief summary:

Our Christmas Appeal supported Africa Water Enterprises (AWE) and Kaloko Trust. We gave £5,800 to AWE towards a solar water installation project and we gave £2,840 to Kaloko Trust towards a third age agricultural support project.



In February we held a Bingo event and raised £514. We topped that amount up and gave £1,000 to Doctors for Nepal to support a young man training to become a doctor. Indeed, Kamal has now passed his third year exams and will be going out into isolated rural communities to further his clinical training.

In June we held a BBQ Brunch and raised £623. Again, we topped this amount up and sent £1,000 to SAFAD to support Annette Butty, a 22 year old student from Cranfield University, in a placement in Honduras. She flew out in January for a year and is taking part in a water and sanitation project.

In October we held our annual Helier Dreux Quiz and we raised a magnificent £1,858, enabling us to send £2,000 to Project Uganda to support their work at the Solid Rock Nursery and Primary School in Rukangiri.





These were all our fund raising events in 2018 but because we have a number of regular givers we are able to top up amounts raised and we are also able to select further projects to support. To this end, we supported a further five projects:

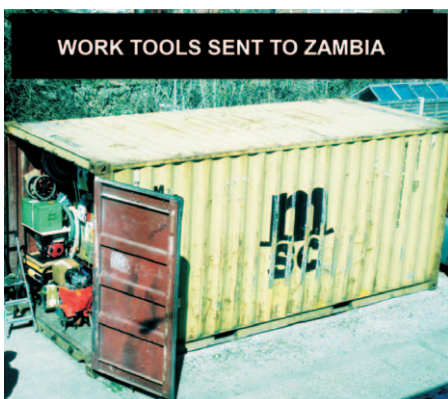
We gave £500 to Maisha Trust, Oasis Kindergarten in Kenya, to enable them to buy a PA system. This will mean they don't have to spend money on hiring equipment each time they have an event, thus the money saved will be spent on the children and the school.

We gave £2,000 to Microloan to enable women in rural areas of Zimbabwe to set up self-sustaining businesses. The average loan is £76, which would give business training and support.

We gave £1,650 to Afrinspire (a new organisation for us) for the construction of a three classroom shelter for Sudanese refugees in North Uganda. 200 refugees started using these shelters in January 2019.

We gave £1,500 to African Initiative (another new organisation for us) to fund a school HIV / AIDs intervention course in Tanzania.

Finally, we gave £1,500 to Workaid to part-fund container "Betty", taking tools to Zambia. We now know that Betty arrived safely in Zambia in March! It contained 902 boxes for 17 different vocational projects. Workaid sent three containers to Zambia in 2018-19, costing £12,000, so our donation was quite significant to them.



So, there you have it in a nutshell. Thank you to everyone who continues to support us and a big thank you to our regular givers. You can see from the last five projects particularly how much we are able to give away because people give on a regular basis.

BARBARA PERKINS

Putting the bee into the Beetle Drive

The relationship between people and the natural world can be very complex. One of its peculiarities is that some living creatures are far more appealing to humans than others. While the sight of a gambolling lamb may melt hearts, the reaction may be very different to a slug.

A recent survey revealed that the UK's favourite insect was the bumblebee. That may appear unsurprising - a bumblebee buzzing in and out of flowers is a sure sign that summer is not far away. But worldwide there are something like 25,000 species of bee, and of these, honeybees, including bumblebees, account for just a handful.

As we have become aware, thousands of bee species are now at risk of extinction as a result of activities apparently linked to climate change. The fall in the bee population leads directly to reduced pollination of trees, flora and fauna, which in turn has a hugely significant impact on the production of fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains and seeds. The evidence suggests that we ignore the decline in the population of pollinators at our very real peril.

Bees were at the forefront of SMOAT's thinking earlier in the year.

A Beetle Drive - always a popular family event - was being planned, and at about the same time a charity came to the Committee's notice called Bees for Development. It seemed an opportunity too good to miss: the chance to put the bee into the Beetle Drive while raising money for a bee-related project.

Bees for Development (BfD) is a specialist beekeeping charity, based in the UK, which works with similar non-governmental organisations in developing countries. The project that came to SMOAT's attention was in Ethiopia, where, as in many of Africa's poorer countries, those who do not own or have access to land are often unable to feed themselves and their families.

BfD's project was split into two phases. Phase 1, already completed, had provided 100 "landless" young people with basic skills in beekeeping. On average, they had each made three hives, and each had received one bee colony.

The aim of Phase 2 of the project was to provide two training courses, each schooling ten of the new beekeepers in various aspects of "enhanced" beekeeping. A particular skill that they would learn would be the ability to make their own "top-bar" hives. Bee management and honey harvesting are easily undertaken in top-bar hives, but the beekeepers have to acquire the necessary skills if they are to make them themselves and save the expense of buying them in ready-made or ordering from a carpenter.

The beekeepers would also learn how to grade and handle honey when harvesting, helping them to obtain the best prices at market.

The fundamental objective of the whole project was to increase household incomes and build more resilient livelihoods. And, having received and

benefitted from the training, they would be required to pass on their newly-found knowledge to their neighbours, thus ensuring that the resources put into the project continued to produce results.

And what of the Beetle Drive? An event ideally suited to a winter's afternoon, it was held in St Mark's Hall on Sunday, 10 February. Grandchildren vied with their parents and grandparents to create their beetles, producing a remarkably varied collection, including many species previously undiscovered and unlikely ever to be seen again. Ingenious and unexpected rule changes helped to keep all participants on the straight and narrow - unlike their beetles - and welcome refreshments were consumed during the interval. The queue leading to the tombola confirmed that it was doing a brisk trade.

A total of £410 was raised directly via the event - an excellent outcome. Thanks to those who give to SMOAT regularly, a further sum was added so that £1,000 could be sent to Bees for Development, allowing phase 2 of the Ethiopian beekeeping project to go ahead.

It is hard to overstate the life-changing impact that a donation such as this can bring to those who benefit from the particular project supported. One of the special features of this BfD initiative is that it provides for the training received to be passed on to others, who will in turn cascade it further. There is no knowing how many people in Ethiopia will benefit from the generosity of those who supported a Beetle Drive on a February afternoon in Reigate.

As always, the SMOAT trustees are immensely grateful to you all.

DAVID LEAR

Reaching out within and between communities

One of SMOAT's key purposes is to raise awareness within our community of the challenges facing the very poorest communities in the world. In an era when we increasingly hear about greater polarisation within our own communities, promoting this shared understanding of the scale and nature of challenges faced by the poorest seems even more pertinent, profound and impactful.

Over the last year SMOAT has continued to take steps towards this wider purpose. With 'sell outs' at the quiz and the jazz evening neighbours, friends and relatives have stepped into St Marks hall, often for the first time. We have seen events such as the bingo afternoon successfully bringing together the generations toward a common purpose of having fun, whilst supporting some of the poorest in our world. And we have seen children engaged in the reality of needing a doctor or hospital in counties such as Zambia, through our talk on

Virtual Doctors at Messy Church back in January. We often hear comments such as “I’ve never been here before” or “I haven’t been in this hall for years” or “It’s so unusual to have events that bring the whole community together like this”. And each time we do, we know we are aligned with SMOAT’s wider purpose.

But why might this matter? What is the value of promoting discourse and awareness within our whole community - with those from St Marks, with those from different religious backgrounds and with those who hold a secular perspective? It matters in bringing home the responsibility we have toward the world in which we live, in promoting unity within our own community toward a common purpose, and in appreciating and promoting solidarity with people from across the world.

As I think about the projects we support, the challenges those communities face, and the togetherness we experience in holding events and raising funds, it prompts me to reflect. I am brought to think about how small the world is, how lucky I am to live in such a supportive, safe and privileged community, how precious it is to come together across the generations within our own community, and how grateful I feel to be able to make a difference to those facing challenges I can barely begin to comprehend. Those are, of course my reflections - you will have your own. I would encourage you to sit back and think as you read about the projects in the newsletter or when you hear about the projects at the next SMOAT event. To reflect on what thoughts might be prompted as you hear about the challenges experienced and the lives of those we are reaching out to. Do share what comes to mind - we’d love to hear.

LOUISE BARR

We are now making tickets for some SMOAT events available online through TicketSource. For event details, see **www.SMOAT.org.uk**

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