

S • M • O • A • T

REIGATE'S OVERSEAS AID TRUST

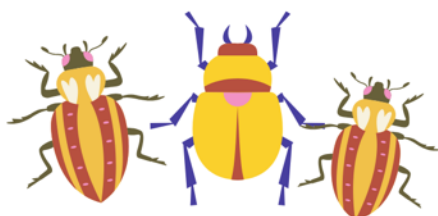
Newsletter - Summer 2025

BEETLE DRIVE

SUNDAY 29TH JUNE

2:30pm - 4:30pm

ST MARK'S CHURCH HALL



A great family game for players
aged 6 to 106

£6 a player
or £20 a family

Tea, coffee & homemade cakes included
Tombola

Purchase your tickets from Ticket Source at <http://www.smoat.org.uk>
or by emailing chair@SMOAT.org.uk, or using the QR code



Sunday 29th June

Please let us know if you'd like to come to the Beetle Drive as soon as possible.

We have to make sure we have enough cakes!

Annual Public Meeting

Sunday 13 July

Please come along to hear about SMOAT's activities over the last year, at 11.20am in St Mark's Church.

If you want to keep in touch with what we're doing on a more regular basis, check our web site where you can see updates on fundraising and other events, and book tickets online. Details and news are also regularly posted on our Facebook account, which you can access via

facebook.com/SMOAT.Charity

REGISTERED CHARITY No. 280091



EDITORIAL

This year marks the 45th Anniversary of SMOAT and we thought it might be a good idea to get a couple of former members of the Committee to each write an article. I asked Sylvia Weatherald to open the Newsletter with a brief history of how it all began. Sylvia was one of the founding members and chair of the Committee all those years ago and is still an enthusiastic supporter. Harry Ingram was Treasurer of the Committee when I first joined and was Chairman for a long time before I took over; he worked tirelessly for SMOAT over many years. He also is still an enthusiastic supporter and has written an article with his thoughts on the past and future of SMOAT.

I have a great deal of respect for Sylvia and Harry who have put so much energy into SMOAT over the years and I would like to think that SMOAT, or a version of it, will still be around in another 45 years, carrying on their work and helping our friends overseas who would otherwise struggle to provide food for their families, drink clean water, or just simply survive.

I hope you enjoy their articles.

BARBARA PERKINS, *Chair*

How it all began

45 years ago, St Mark's Church Reigate held a parish weekend away in Cambridge. One of the talks there was given by a member of our congregation, Alan Thiele. It was about problem solving, and we were invited to think about problems that affected us and how to tackle them. One or two of us were deeply troubled about the imbalance of wealth and opportunities in the world. What, for example, could we or anyone do, in our affluent country and in affluent Surrey, about poorer communities in the world?

We talked it through, and the result was that some of us thought, on our return, that we could maybe find a project in a poorer part of the world that St Mark's could fund. A small committee was set up and a film called 'Five Minutes to Midnight' made by a local film producer, Ian MacFarlane, was shown at St Mark's Hall. The film was a warning about the future, and it aroused and stirred its audience. An idea was suggested by our vicar, Ian Kitteringham, that, as Christmas (1979) was approaching, we would invite people to have an imaginary extra guest at their Christmas Day lunches, and give its likely cost of £5 to a fund that had been opened.

Initially this fund would support a small school in Masapong, Lesotho, known to one of our team, Vivian Biggs. It was suggested that we would help the school to grow vegetables in a school garden, by arranging for it to get a

supply of clean water. Nothing too ambitious, but achievable. Well, this one-off scheme was successful, and we decided to search for other projects we could fund.

We found out that an overseas aid trust had been established in a nearby parish in Salfords. Advised by them, we founded our own trust and decided that it would be called 'St Mark's Overseas Aid Trust' (SMOAT). Soon there were several other 'Overseas Aid Trusts' founded in this part of Surrey. So SMOAT began. Its aims included: making others here aware of the needs of (in the terminology of the day) 'Third World' people; to support projects which would encourage recipients to help themselves rather than just looking for gifts of money, and to support young people acting as volunteers overseas.

1981 - TREE PLANTING SCHEME
Burundi, East Africa



Photos from one of the very early projects.

It is truly amazing to me, who was its first chairman, that, 45 years later, it has grown to such an extent, and that it has kept largely to its original aim of helping communities to help themselves. The first committee decided that it would absorb its printing etc. costs, taking nothing out of donations, and that donors would be sought in the parish of St Mark's, and not just from church members.

Over the years, many people have dedicated themselves to these aims and must have helped thousands of people to have a better life. It is humbling to realise how many people on its committees have given hours of their time to find projects that would suit SMOAT's aims.

The current leader, Barbara, and her committee members are amongst the very best, and we are truly grateful for all their dedication and commitment. The world still needs SMOAT!

SYLVIA WEATHERALD
Former Chair and founding member of SMOAT

SMOAT Past and Future

So, Sylvia Weatherald has set out earlier in this Newsletter the way SMOAT came into being and its growth in the early years. The result was an organisation well beyond what was first envisaged. It would be easy to say it continued in the same way for 45 years but that would be an over simplification. It is a developing story of widespread inspiration and growth in understanding, whilst retaining the determination and moral values which brought it into existence.

Operation

An important factor is selecting projects which are good value for money and where the funds are assuredly spent locally and not syphoned off into overheads. When donations are made, they are always followed up to ensure the projects have been carried out, thus ensuring we can keep our supporters informed.

SMOAT has remained true to its progenitors by absorbing most costs, besides insurance and some photocopying, between the committee. Every penny hits its overseas target. It has kept to "self-help" projects rather than help with emergencies or projects requiring continued support over several years. It has preferred projects which have long-term prospects and not simply those meeting current needs.

Choosing good projects of best value for money, is not always easy and can involve value judgements. Suppose, for example, there is a good project providing support for a few disabled African children. The circumstances are heart rending. But for the same amount of money, clean water might prevent dozens or even hundreds of otherwise healthy children from dying. Or again, it may cost "£X" to support a community high in the Andes but the same aid could help far more people in the same condition on the lowlands beside the sea.

Projects with low overheads are favoured. Two examples spring easily to mind:

- At the millennium a builder's family in Wiltshire decided to set up Project Uganda to help a very poor overseas community. Since then, they return annually to construct excellent buildings and help install large irrigation and rainwater harvesting projects, with every penny spent locally. They meet their own costs themselves.
- Or again, take Sally, a very ordinary person with plenty of common sense, who runs Faith in Action. With no particular expertise but a sure determination, she is truly a remarkable woman. She supports very poor communities in The Lower Shire region of Malawi. It

began with sending containers full of packages of clothing for the poor. They still do that but they now cover most of the needs of the area: mosquito netting, goats for breeding, seeds for planting, bicycle ambulances and all manner of other items. She weighs the need for each before deciding. She also has large projects such as windmills and now solar energy to power irrigation, turning self-sufficient farming into farming with profit. But I have also seen the contract that recipients of the irrigation funds have to sign, which covers repayment and assigns part of the profits to welfare projects, especially the setting up of local health institutions. Business is combined with welfare for wider benefit than just transforming the lives of the farmers. We could learn something from that.



A 2014 Project Uganda project; behind is a dormitory built at a Girl's School , and in front foundations are being prepared for a new lavatory block.

Water Aid was formed a year after SMOAT. We used to support them until they got too big for us. At their 25th anniversary celebration, I met the man in charge and he told me that as a student he had helped with a water project which had been financed by SMOAT.

These are obviously very committed people, the type of which do not grow on trees but exist within all communities and learning about what they have to face and how they succeed is an inspiration for us all. Help from SMOAT can make all the difference.

Conditions for Success

Three elements are necessary for success. Firstly, from the point of view of maintaining a wider interest and support network, is a significant body of enthusiastic supporters, attending events and making gifts; secondly, are the

committed regular givers who provide a relatively secure income and allow forward planning; and thirdly, is the hard-working committee. The original committee was large and spread the load but over time it has shrunk to six, which is not enough.

What is required of the Committee today? It is imperative to promote wide local support, and that has become more difficult in recent years with a shrinking congregation and the busy requirements of families. This is a tricky one. In fact, families never had spare time. Weekends were for DIY. Jobs then were just as demanding. Wives had been out at work for some time. We had to make time. The decline in support seems more connected with distractions and the decline in sociability due to TV, the computer, mobile phones and so on.

There is also a widespread attitude that with the erosion of real incomes through inflation we have less to spare. Some say there is too much fraud overseas, which is true, but SMOAT provides the answer to that. Others take the view we should look after our own poor first, hence the (popular?!) withdrawal of government foreign aid. So, should we sink into our personal tribes, doing what benefits us, or take a broader outlook?

Today there is no shortage of evidence in the News that poor countries are still suffering from shortage of clean water and food and widespread health problems. It gets worse as deserts spread. The outlook is likely to be even more disadvantaged by Climate Change mostly due to richer parts of mankind. Even the relatively huge number of immigrants evokes, not sympathy for their condition, but condemnation because they threaten our living standards. The United Nations is significantly ignored.

But just as it was 45 years ago, it is still just and worthwhile to give individuals and particular agencies the support they so badly need. It is still possible to change lives. Just as it was then, the need is for us to be inspired and make time to raise funds and direct them into the areas for best return.

I can assume all readers know the parable of the good Samaritan and also the second commandment to love our neighbour as ourself. Here then is an opportunity to do just that: to show compassion in a practical way for a neighbour we have never met but is none the less our neighbour in this world.

So, my hope is that amongst my readers there are some who, like the pioneers 45 years ago, will be inspired to “give it a go” and see whether you can help the SMOAT Committee. There are lives waiting to blossom. The curious thing is that by making some sacrifice, such as finding time to help others, it brings its own reward. Better to have tried than turned a deaf ear.

SMOAT, and the poor of the World, need you.

HARRY INGRAM
Former Chairman and Treasurer of SMOAT

Project Review – SMOAT in 2024

2024 was another great year for giving at SMOAT. In total we donated £18,750 to 11 projects in ten different countries. £5,000 of this total was match funded via the Big Give Christmas Challenge meaning that our donation unlocked further donations from other trusts and foundations.

We started our donations back in February following our successful BINGO, event. Here we raised £1,000 for **Porridge and Pens in Ghana**. This small charity runs an academy school for around 500 children in Kumasi. Our funding provided a significant donation of textbooks, exercise books and stationery for the school. We were delighted to get these photos back of all the amazing books.



Our Christmas Appeal donations were made at the beginning of April. **Project Uganda** received £3,250 which it used to build two 15,000 litre water tanks at Katwekamwe Primary School in the Rukungiri district. The school has 755 students and no safe water support. Instead, students were forced to walk 3 kilometers to the nearest sink hole, which was shared with local villages and animals. The contaminated water lead to illness, dehydration and disease, and took students away from lesson and social time. The new water support provides fresh drinking water based on a tried and tested rainwater harvesting system with the tanks supported by guttering. Built by local labour, it will last around 10 years benefiting thousands of students.



Rodney Gothard from Project Uganda wrote to me in May with news “We were able to visit Katwekamwe school where last year you sponsored two rain-water tanks. The tanks were fine and full of water but unfortunately the taps had been

stolen, and they had wooden pegs pushed into the tank as plugs to stop the water from escaping !!! We were able to fit new taps and we also made up a cover which was locked with a padlock and we advised the school to keep the taps locked and to supervise the collecting of water. We would like to thank you so much for your donation to make all this possible."

Our second Christmas Appeal gift was to **Our Moon**, a college in rural **Zambia**. We welcomed patron and founder Helen Leale-Green at St Mark's for our launch back in November 2023 where she explained how desperately the school needed a secure power supply via a solar system. We keep in regular touch, and Helen writes:

"Since receiving £4,000 from SMOAT in 2024 for our solar system, we've made fantastic progress! We secured match funding from another donor, allowing us to triple our solar capacity - an incredible boost for our off-grid site in rural Zambia.

Our Moon is an education charity supporting bright but financially disadvantaged Zambian youth through our 18-month residential Young Leaders Programme. Our site, started in 2019, is still simple but full of promise - and now powered by a vastly improved solar system. With regular 21-hour power cuts in Zambia, this upgrade has been transformative.

We've positioned the cabling to connect our new building (including a computer room under construction),



added lighting and water points across the site, expanded kitchen power (we now have a fridge!), and extended internet access for students and staff. The water points mean we can develop our own vegetable gardens and livestock to help reduce our food bills.

When I visited in April, Justin, our Country Director, summed it up perfectly (and emotionally): “This solar system means we are able to make so much more impact.” With this power, we’ve grown from 8 to 18 students per year group, launched our SuperSpace outreach programme, and provided skills development for our local team. Community children may soon access our tech resources too.

Our last cohort all gained fully funded places at top global universities. This year, seven are already headed to the US - including one to Ivy League Dartmouth College!

Thank you, SMOAT, for your generous support. Your gift has powered more than just buildings - it’s energised a growing, thriving community.”

During early spring we donated £1,000 to **InterCare**, an organisation we have been working with for many years. InterCare partner with health units in Sub-Saharan African and contacted us to see if we could help funding one of their containers bound for **Malawi**.

The shipping container was full to the brim of healthcare goods and medicines worth over £188,000 and arrived at St Joseph’s Hospital in Limbe.

Phil Riley wrote to me in October and said “historically SMOAT has donated £10,000 since 2005. Therefore, we consider that all our successes – those described in this report and more – are also your successes. Thank you for being a part of our journey.”

We also funded books, this time for a community library with **EdUKaid** in **Tanzania**. Our donation of £1,500



Local staff and volunteers unload £188,000 worth of healthcare goods from the container upon arrival at St. Joseph's, Limbe, Malawi. July 2024



was used in June for the small coastal community of Mtwara in Southern Tanzania. It was fabulous to receive these photos of the books in Swahili being used by local students.

In the Autumn, our Quiz was sadly postponed, to March this year. However we still donated £1,500 to **Jacaranda Foundation** towards the Jacaranda School for Orphan's solar power installation project in Malawi. The aim of the project was to provide electricity to a community school educating over 10,000 vulnerable school children over the 25-year life of the solar panels.



In March we received a fabulous update: "Thanks to the support from SMOAT and other donors, we are delighted to inform you that the solar panels have been installed in the secondary school classrooms, primary

school library and tertiary college. This is already having a huge positive impact on learning at Jacaranda School for Orphans. Access to regular electricity is solving the issue of regular power outages - a huge issue throughout Malawi - and will eventually save money for the school, even potentially introducing a source of income. Use of solar power will also teach students about the importance of renewable energy, enhancing the quality of education the school is able to offer to very vulnerable children."

We were also delighted to donate a second tranche of funding, this time £1,500, to **African Promise in Kenya**.

This followed our very successful initial donation of £1,000 in 2023 to fund the build of a kitchen garden in one of their partner schools – Jora primary school.

The garden grows food for school meals, developing skills and education and also allowing the surplus to be sold locally. This second donation funded additional shade



structures and water storage tanks using rain water harvesting. The transformation is just incredible as these pictures show.

In December, SMOAT was keen to make a number of donations again via the Big Give Christmas challenge – this enables us to make a donation which leverages match funding, and also make partnerships with new organisations.



I was delighted to find **Gambia Schools Support** which is an absolutely tiny organisation doing great things in **Gambia**. Our £1,000 funded work at Medina Talokoto Nursery which was failing due to the death of its previous Spanish sponsor.

Our funding helped release further funds, totalling £23k, for a total restoration project which happened over a 6 week period, restoring classrooms with new roofs, new toilet block and kitchen. The local team also installed a solar bore-hole equivalent to the value of our donation. Enrolment has now risen from 41 to 110 and the local community are thrilled to welcome 2 new qualified teachers.



UK Bangladesh Education is another really small organisation with a big impact. We donated £1,500 via the Big Give for their Doorstep Learning Programme in **Bangladesh**.

The goal of this project is to give child domestic workers (98% girls) the chance to access learning, leave work and return to education or begin vocational training. They do this by supporting families to set up or

continue small businesses such as sewing and tailoring, running tea stalls, market gardening and selling vegetables, driving rickshaws and offering pest control services. By becoming financially stable families can break their dependence on income from child labour.

Each family is provided with tailored support to plan their business and receives investment support of £100 - £150 to purchase the resources needed to get their business up and running, e.g. a sewing machine, a rickshaw, seeds and tools, tea stall supplies, etc.

Our donation will support around 22 families. Annette Jera was in touch in May to tell me:

"To date, 13 families have received tailored support and are in the process of establishing small businesses in areas such as clothing sales, garment making, vegetable vending, operating manual rickshaws, and selling items like accessories and pesticides."



We also chose **Renewable World** who work in **Nepal** for a donation of £1,500. The funds raised through the Big Give campaign have directly supported their Energy for Improved Health (E4H) scale up project. Launched in October 2024, it is improving access to and quality of health services for 8,021



Uhiya Health Facility in Gorkha district serves a geographically remote community, accessible only after a 5 hour drive followed by a 3.5 hour uphill walk. 🏔️

people in 7 energy-poor off-grid rural communities in Gorkha District, Nepal, through clean energy solutions.

Project activities include the installation of solar power energy systems that will provide the health facility with a reliable uninterrupted power supply and lighting, and priority electrical

equipment such as vaccine refrigerators, baby warmers and nebulisers. The health facilities will also install solar powered water filtration systems to

provide a clean water supply, and improved hygiene and sanitation infrastructure critical for providing a full range of essential health services.

The donation and leveraged funds from SMOAT are contributing to funding these activities for 1 out of the 7 health facilities in the project. The project should be complete by the end of the year and we look forward to hearing more.

Our final donation for £1,000 was to **Money For Madagascar** via the Big Give which has been used to set up five school resource libraries.

The libraries each contain an average of 100-110 books, as well as educational games, which are used by all the schools' pupils (around 340 per school). They also include technical equipment such as tablets, which are used by children and teachers alike, to ensure interesting and enjoyable lessons and learning experiences.



The libraries are also open to the wider communities of which the schools are part. Older teens use them to prepare for exams, while adults use them to develop and research income-generating and other individual or community initiatives, and in many cases to help them improve

their own reading and writing skills – some from a starting point of complete illiteracy. Each library is used by around 800-850 adults, on average.

Rory O'Keefe wrote to me to tell me "SMOAT's donation has directly improved the educational experience of around 1,700 children, with 550 books and around 100 tablets, helping those children achieve their true potential. It has also helped young people achieve in further education, and given adults the ability to escape poverty and hunger for themselves and their children, and in some cases opened the door to reading and writing for the first time in their lives."

NAOMI FLOOD



Menuka Rai, an Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) who has been working at the Uhiya health facility for 2.5 years has experienced first-hand the critical impact of previous power outages on healthcare services and welcomes the reliable and uninterrupted power supply that E4H scale up project will provide.

Quiz Evening – and the project supported

Back in March SMOAT hosted one of Helier Dreux's famously entertaining quiz nights at St Mark's. The hall was bustling full of enthusiastic participants, working in teams to unpick Helier's challenging brain teasers and visual clues.

In order to mix things up a bit, this year the committee laid on colourful cheese and charcuterie grazing platters for our guests to nibble on over the course of the evening, which seemed to be very well received. The "surprise bottle" raffle also caused a stir. When winners picked their gift wrapped prizes they had no idea what to expect! It turned out they could be the recipient of a delectable wine, or merely a bottle of ketchup!

Over the course of the evening much fun and hilarity was enjoyed, but also a sense of shared pride that the event had raised nearly £1440 for the Joliba Trust in Mali. Our trustee Naomi delivered an informative and thought provoking presentation on how these funds would be extremely effectively spent.



We were inspired to hear how Joliba Trust has worked with 512 volunteers to stabilise 193 acres of sand dunes in 11 villages to sustain farming security of 17,521 people. Sand-dunes are created by increasing wind and sandstorms, which are increasing due to climate change. This can lead to villages being abandoned as they destroy precious fertile valley land. The sand also silts up streams and ponds which are used for irrigation and livestock.

The teams plant forest and root matting to stabilise the land – mostly euphorbia and marram grasses. It costs £360 to stabilise an acre of dunes which has a massive impact on the local communities who can continue to grow and live there. Our funding will stabilise 4 acres this year.

CLAIRE BOWERS

Treasurer's Report – June 2025

This report covers the year-end accounts for 2024 and activities to date for 2025.

SMOAT Financial Review of 2024

Our total income for 2024 was £15759. Our expenditure during the year was £172, covering our liability insurance, giving a net income of £15588. The results compared to 2023 are shown in the table below:

	2024	2023
Total Income	£15759	£19223
Total Expenditure	£172	£307
Net Receipts	£15588	£18916
Gifts Made	£18750	£21500
Excess of Income over Gifts	-£3162	-£2584

The breakdown by category is shown below:

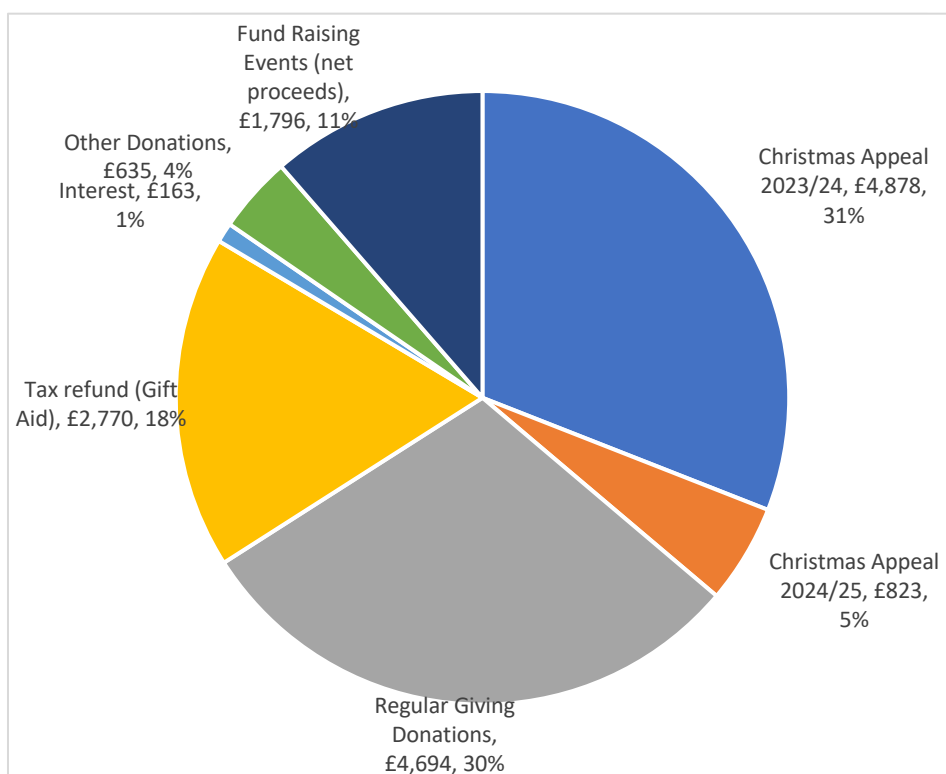
In spring 2024 we held our Bingo event and raised £597 for Porridge & Pens; this was topped up to £1000 from regular gifts. In May we had a barbecue brunch. This raised £960 for EdUKaid and we topped this up to £1500.

Our Christmas Appeal raised £5370 in donations – this includes donations received prior to 2023 year end. With gift aid we raised £6483. This enabled

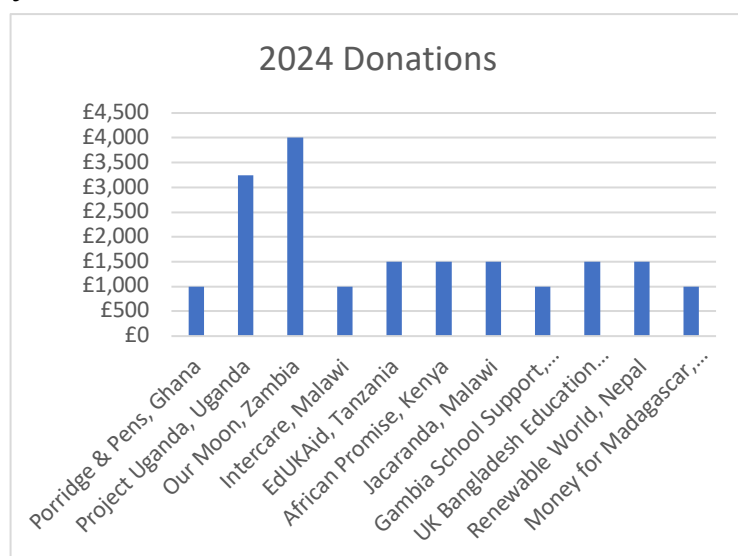
us to give significant donations to Project Uganda and Our Moon Education.

Again regular giving has been critical to helping us support vital development projects. Please do consider if you are able to make a small regular donation.

We received £2770 in gift aid from HMRC. If you are a tax payer and are not currently registered for gift aid please consider completing the gift aid form so we can claim the tax back on it – this will increase the value of your donation by 25%.



In total we made gifts of £18750 – the extra donations over income were made possible due to the surplus in previous years. The donations made during the year are summarised below:



2025 Activities to Date

The year got off to a good start with the return of our ever popular quiz night in March. This raised £1247 for Joliba Trust. This was topped up to £1440.

From our 2024 Christmas Appeal we have made donations of £4000 each to Doctors for Nepal and Team Kenya.

A huge Thank You again to you all for continuing to support us

through your donations and by attending our events.

JEAN WALLER

We are now making tickets for some SMOAT events available online through TicketSource.

For event details, see <http://www.SMOAT.org.uk>

(Please note that the web site has to be accesses as "http://", not "https", which some browsers assume and default to.)

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
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