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ST MARK'S OVERSEAS AID TRUST

# Newsletter - Winter 2011

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## *Dates for your diary:*

### Launch of Christmas Appeal

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 10am, St. Mark's Church

Full details of the appeal are included in the enclosed letter, and a speaker from Practical Action will talk about their work during the service.

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### Musical Evening

Songs, Recitations and light-hearted fun from Paul Weakley (*A Tenor's Worth*) and Roger Collis  
7.30pm Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> January - St Mark's Hall

Tickets will be available after 10am services at St. Marks, by phone (01737 772811), from committee members or on the door.

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### Quiz Evening

Advanced notice of a repeat of this ever-popular event - Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2012 - *More details in the next newsletter!*

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Further details of all SMOAT events will be available nearer the time on our web site:

**SMOAT.org.uk** or from any of the committee.

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# *Editorial*

SMOAT is now past its thirtieth year and if I had the time to gross up the funds that it has raised to present day values my guess is that we shall have passed the £1m mark. But more important things than records command us.

It has been a very busy and good year for SMOAT. The vigorous programme of events has included: a Scrabble Evening, thanks to the Perkins (28 January); an Evening with Chris Aldridge, set up by Ann Dale (4 March); taking part in the Borough Volunteer Fair at the Harlequin (5 March); a Barn Dance (13 May); an Open Garden with Strawberries, thanks to the Silcocks (10 July); a Jazz Concert, arranged by Ian Statford (7 October); and a Helier Dreux Quiz (4 November). Most, though not all, of these were for fun and fund raising. Many were reported in the Summer Newsletter: others are reported here. It has certainly been a very busy year.

Readers will not be entirely surprised to hear that this all takes time and effort. The Committee meet most months, but in addition sub-committees plan and control (if that is the right word) events and spend time seeking out sound organisations with effective projects to support with your money.

Yes, we all take this activity quite seriously but it also brings us fun and the reward of knowing our objective is of the best. In all this we feel supported by many from St. Mark's and elsewhere. It all adds up.

For my part I should like, for me, to break new ground by thanking the Committee. We are a disparate (not desperate) bunch. Believe it or not, though we have shared values, we often have different opinions! But there is a preparedness to accept consensus which makes the job of Chairman much easier. Especially on the night when an event takes place we all come together to form a coherent, mutually supportive team which it would be hard to better in any walk of life.

So, my thanks are very due to all the Committee for their devoted work throughout this very busy last year.

And here I have to tell you that we have lost Ian Stratford. This is not through dissent or even carelessness, but simply that he and Heather have decided they are still young enough to start a new life in Devon. Ian has been a member of the SMOAT Committee for as long as most

of us can remember and life without him just will not be the same. We shall miss you greatly Ian but we send our very best wishes to you and Heather in your new life.

Finally, without our supporters who come to the events and make donations, some on a regular basis, the Committee could achieve nothing. So, very many thanks to you too. Please think of SMOAT as your organisation and make known to us your views both on what is done and what you think should be done.

HARRY INGRAM

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## *The Purposes of Giving*

When SMOAT set out in hope over thirty years ago there was a great need to understand the problems and solutions required in what was then known as The Third World. It was our belief that those conditions were not inevitable and that something could and should be done about them.

Today we learn more each day about conditions from the news media and a variety of other sources and, whilst the general state may have improved, we are all aware that starvation and poverty are still all too frequently present.

Over the years you will have noticed that SMOAT makes gifts to a wide range of organisations in support of many types of project. That is partly because we understand better the varied needs and also because we know that our supporters have different preferences. Some want their money to go to help children in need and their education, perhaps

because those are the most vulnerable and dependant. Others prefer clean water projects basic to health. Others still see the needs of ministering to the sick as vital.

Some understand that growing the local economy may be the best way to foster independence and grow incomes so that the poor can fund the upbringing of their children and provide for the sick.

In a sense all projects seek to support independence and growth. The cure of the blind may release two, patient and carer, onto the job market. The nurturing of a child and its education produces a more able worker in due course.

Clean water, worthwhile in itself and which counters health risks, also releases time for work in other areas. Microloan projects such as the one for Build Africa (see the note later) are directly aimed at growing the local economy towards self sufficiency.

Most, if not all, SMOAT choices seek improvement through self help projects. The funding of the irrigation scheme in last year's Christmas Appeal sought, all in one package, to increase food supply, raise incomes, directly finance social and health provision and grow the local economy. The slogan of one microloan provider is "a hand up, not a hand out", and that would also reflect the ethos of SMOAT.

We use a small committee to tackle the difficult task of identifying and researching organisations and projects to find the best value for your money. Some organisations such as Practical Action (see this year's appeal) are quite large.

PA is renowned not only for its "small is beautiful" Schumacher background of inventiveness, but because of its expertise in devising sound schemes to fit the problems,

conditions and capabilities of the people of the particular area.

Other choices are for small organisations much in need of funding which have a personal and often direct connection and commitment to a particular locality. The Wash Room by Project Uganda in this year's Christmas Appeal is the work of an English village which supports the moving spirit, a father and his family which goes to Uganda for a month every year, and the grandfather and grandmother who go for two to three months at a different time. The families pay for themselves. This is a project where you really get "what it says on the tin".

In making our selections we spend much time and do our best. I hope you think we also do a good job.

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## ***JAZZ EVENING***

On Friday 7th October 2011, St Mark's Church Centre was transformed into a jazz club for the evening! No, it wasn't Louis Armstrong or Charlie Parker – even better, the Sussex Jazz Kings! Bringing with them their wonderful New Orleans traditional jazz, they provided a fabulous evening's entertainment for over 100 people. The Band is so popular that they have bookings all the way through to March 2013, which gives some indication of how good they are!

The evening was in aid of Workaid, a charity which tackles poverty by supplying disadvantaged people with the tools they need to acquire practical skills and become self-supporting. Tools and equipment are



collected from all over the UK, refurbished and sent to vocational training projects and self-help groups, mostly in East Africa. The article on page 11 of this newsletter gives more examples of their activities.

The aim of our evening was to raise money to part fund the shipment of a container of tools. On the evening we raised £1,167 and we have topped that amount up to donate a total of £1,500 towards this excellent charity.

We have already decided that, as it was so popular, we will be running another jazz evening in the future. We had a great evening's entertainment and, in Jazz terms, the whole event was lollapalooza (a humdinger)!! Neville Guille's photos give a flavour of the event.

BARBARA PERKINS



# *Build Africa*

Build Africa operates in rural Kenya and Uganda. It helps both schools and communities. It runs a tight ship with control of projects thorough plans, budgets, reports, quarterly liaison and field visits. For schools it insists on three year plans covering school management, infrastructure improvements, teacher training and monitored performance. It also supports planned community agricultural improvements.

In Uganda half of the population lives below the poverty line struggling to meet every day needs and unable to provide for family health emergencies or keep their children at school. Failed rainfall makes food availability precarious. Economic growth is restricted through the absence of facilities to save or obtain credit.

Last year in partnership with COAT and as a memorial to the Reverend Ian Kitteringham, a founder member of first SMOAT then COAT, we funded a new income generating scheme for the provision of micro finance.

That contribution helped establish 264 VSLA (Village Savings and Loan Associations) in the district of Misindi Uganda. This has been very successful in enabling individuals to run small scale enterprises in agriculture, craft

industry and marketing products. It has had a significant impact on raising low incomes and thereby nutrition levels, schooling and health care. We decided to support the extension of this scheme with £1344 mainly because Build Africa is an efficient organisation and the nature of the scheme is very "self help".

The scheme works this way. The money is used to set up and train the members of groups of about 25 people in the necessary record keeping and management.

The members then save by purchasing shares in the Group and these deposits are then lent out to members for monthly periods in amounts from about 5 to 15 pounds at 10%. The surplus generated from this adds to the value of the shares which may later be redeemed, though this, I understand, rarely happens. A separate fund is set up for Welfare support for family emergencies.

What is unusual is that, whereas in other schemes the funds for lending usually come from the finance which sets up the scheme, here the money lent comes wholly from the contribution of members.

In due course we shall examine the feed back from this scheme.

# *Campaign to save the SADC Tribunal*

The Tribunal of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is the only place where individuals, companies and groups can take their Governments to an independent court. By underpinning human rights and property rights the Tribunal plays an important role in promoting development through investment. Earlier this year the member states of the SADC suspended the Tribunal and a campaign has been launched to seek to persuade those countries, at their Summit in August 2012, to restore the Tribunal.

For more information, contact Claire Freeth at [claire@cfreeth.plus.com](mailto:claire@cfreeth.plus.com)

## *Practical Action: Nepal - "Access for Opportunities"*

You will understand from the accompanying Christmas Appeal why SMOAT is keen to support Practical Action projects.

Daily life in Western Nepal is in stark contrast to our own. The people of this mountainous country of rugged terrain with steep valleys and torrential rivers and streams, means that in the monsoon season whole communities are cut off from each other and throughout the year movement is only possible at a very high cost both in time and money which many local people cannot afford.

Currently goods are carried only in baskets on the backs of donkeys and porters. 40% of the population in Nepal is below the national poverty level and have a family income of less than £7 a month.

Affordable all year round transport is the key to progress for this region.

This Practical Action project has been devised with the co-operation of the



Upper station ropeway operator preparing to transport local produce to the lower station

Photo: A. de H. Vlieg

local population which will help in its construction, running and maintenance. The principle movement provisions are gravity ropeways for goods and Tuins (metal cages hung from cableways) for carrying people, but there is a package of measures to cover the full aim of the scheme which is the raising of incomes.

**The Process:**

- Irrigation systems (photo, below) and improved seeds to raise yields and crop variety to feed locals and provide marketable products.

- Building of 16 resource centres at the lower stations for the storage of goods prior to sale
- Construction of 10 Audio Towers to allow communication across the mountain gaps.

**Expected Impact:-**

- Far better access to distant markets.
- Benefit to 14,843 households and indirect benefit to 8000 more.
- 20% increase in farm productivity due to improved access to transport.
- 25% increase in income for producers through new processing practices.



Photo: G. Bhandari/Practical Action

Locals constructing an irrigation channel in Kirtipur village, Nawalparasi

- Training in agricultural skills to grow and process products to enhance their marketable value.
- Construction of 16 ropeways (for goods - see photo on previous page) and 24 Tuins (for people).
- Training in the management and maintenance of the ropeways and Tuins.
- Financial arrangements to ensure the maintenance costs of ropeways etc can be met.

- 25% increase in target households having access to previously inaccessible markets and services.
- 5 new crop varieties.
- 50% participation of women in all project activities.
- 5% of men and women gaining additional income through managing tuins and gravity ropeways.

The SMOAT gift of £1,600 will go towards the cost of ropeways.



## *A Word from the Treasurer*

Fundraising is at the centre of SMOAT's activities, and there are three main ways of doing that. Most obviously, we have fundraising events, and this year these, I hope you will agree, have been very successful both socially and financially. Then we have our annual Christmas Appeal, which has also been very successful in recent years.

Less obvious is regular giving by way of banker's order. We are very grateful to all our regular supporters who use this method.

This steady flow of income enables us to support more projects in developing countries than we could through fundraising events alone – you will find reports on two such projects (Build Africa's Village Loan Scheme and Practical Action's Nepal ropeways project) elsewhere in this newsletter.

If you are not a regular SMOAT donor but would like to make a regular gift, please let me or any Committee member know and I will gladly provide you with the necessary form, or you can find it on our web site. The great majority of our donations are

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made under the Gift Aid scheme, which adds 25% to the value of each gift and provides a significant boost to our income.

If you are eligible to make gifts under that scheme but have not made a Gift Aid declaration enabling us to recover the extra 25% on your gifts, please let me know and I will provide the relevant form (or again, via **smoat.org.uk**). It's really very simple!

And finally another, though less common, way of giving to SMOAT is by legacy under your will. We are fortunate to have received one this year. Again, if you would like to follow this up I should be happy to speak to you or your solicitor about it.

ALAN PRESTON

# QUIZ - 4<sup>th</sup> November 2011

The SMOAT Quiz has acquired quite a reputation over the last few years. We know our brains will be exercised and we know that we shall enjoy a really good evening. This is thanks to Helier Dreux who organises everything so well.

Teams of 8 people pit their wits against each other and individuals surprise their friends with their knowledge: e.g. Which country in Africa has its capital city named after an American president? Well, we all know now - it's Liberia with its capital Monrovia, after James Monroe.

Another: which cleric has Tucker and Mugabi as his two

middle Christian names? No, not Archbishop Tutu - it's the Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu. It really is surprising what you learn.

Fish and Chips are enjoyed during the interval when the raffle is drawn and the proceeds benefit a charity - this time Intercare who recycle medical products for use in the Third World and who need funds to ship out these goods. We were delighted to be able to send them a cheque for £1100.

We will be holding another such quiz in October 2012 - so keep your wits sharpened!

RUTH SIMMONS

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## Quiz Evening

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## *Workaid's Activities*

The preview of the Jazz Evening in our Summer Newsletter described what Workaid does and how it operates, and the report on the Jazz Evening on page 4 of this edition summarises their work.

Here we set out in more detail some examples of Workaid's activities.

To give an idea of the scale of those activities, in the second half of 2009 three containers were dispatched to 79 recipient groups in 6 African countries. They contained-

309 sets of tools (for Carpentry, Metalwork, Mechanics, Masonry, Electrical work, Plumbing, Shoe & Leatherwork, and Agriculture);

713 sewing machines (manual, treadle and electric);

177 typewriters (manual, portable and electric);

202 knitting machines with wool

63 other items, including pillar drills, lathes, Tilly lamps, boxes of nails & screws.

One recipient group of Workaid's shipments is *Buigiri School for the Blind* - a primary school run by the Anglican Church in Dodoma, central Tanzania. It offers the only education available in the region for sight-impaired children - and the chances of pupils going on to secondary school depend on portable typewriters supplied by Workaid.

Pupils at Buigiri are able to work in Braille but those who go on to the mainstream secondary schools have to submit all their work in typed form and provide their own typewriters, something most of them cannot afford.

Another group, *Maamba Youth Projects*, is based in a small mining town in Zambia, 250 miles south of the capital Lusaka. Through three separate colleges it offers dress-making, office skills and carpentry courses to around 60 students each year in a very poor rural area where there are no other further educational or training opportunities for young people. Many of the students have gone on to establish successful businesses designing and making clothes or furniture.

Based in an urban area of the Rift Valley in western Kenya, *Hope Craft Skills Development Centre* runs a wide range of employment-generating schemes to help single mothers, widows, disabled people and victims of tribal fighting. The beneficiaries are recruited through churches, community development workers, disability assessment centres, schools and self-help groups. Skills taught include tailoring, machine knitting, carpentry, shoe-making, soap-making and crafts such as beadwork, sisal weaving, tapestry and artificial flower-making. Participants are encouraged to set up their own businesses and are taught basic marketing, budgeting and record-keeping skills.

*St Elizabeth's Girls Home* is in Mengo, a suburb of the Ugandan capital Kampala, and is run by Sister Catherine Akiiki for girls without homes or relatives to care for them. St Elizabeth's takes girls from the age of 13 upwards and it has a strong vocational side, teaching them cookery, tailoring and secretarial skills. They also do outside catering which is in great demand and helps to pay the costs of caring for the girls.

These are just a very few of the hundreds of groups who have benefitted from what Workaid does: and, of course, that means that collectively countless individuals have been given the chance to stand on their own feet.

ALAN PRESTON

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*For more information, or to join our mailing list,  
please e-mail: [richard@smoat.org.uk](mailto:richard@smoat.org.uk)*

Harry Ingram (Chairman) e-mail: [chairman-harry@smoat.org.uk](mailto:chairman-harry@smoat.org.uk)  
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*For further details of SMOAT and  
our planned fund-raising events,  
please visit our web site*

**SMOAT.org.uk**