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ST MARK'S OVERSEAS AID TRUST

# Newsletter - Winter 2016

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*Dates for your diary:*

## Launch of Christmas Appeal

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December at St. Mark's  
at 8am and 10am services

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## SMOATathon

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February - St. Mark's Church Hall

A fun afternoon of music making.

Full details on page 7.

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## Beetle Drive

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> March - St. Mark's Church Hall

Fun for all ages

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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.

REGISTERED CHARITY No.280091

# *Editorial*

Do you remember the old song, “Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat, please put a penny in the old man’s hat. If you haven’t got a penny, a ha’penny will do and if you haven’t got a ha’penny, then God bless you”?

It’s quite obvious what it means, but at this time of the year it is harder for people to commit money to charity. According to a recent survey, the average family in the UK is expected to spend £800 on Christmas this year. Now, we all know what the word ‘average’ means and there will be many, many people who can’t afford to spend nearly that much and, therefore, there will also be a vast number of families who will spend much more, probably an obscene amount. Don’t get me wrong, I love Christmas but we also need to remember those people in the world who are living in need every single day of the year, not just at Christmas.

The World Bank sets the International Poverty Line and, since 2015, a person was considered to live in extreme poverty if they were surviving on \$1.90 or less per day. The shocking statistic is that over 896 million people in developing countries live on or below that line. That is £1.50 per day, not just for food, but for clothes, health provision, education and more. **22,000 children die each day** due to conditions of poverty. Being a parent, I find that statistic harrowing. Imagine having so little money that you can’t afford to give your children enough nourishment to save them from death. Over **17,000 children die each day** from preventable diseases such as malaria, diarrhoea and pneumonia.

I have homed in on the statistics relating to children because they are our future. In another 40 or 50 years when we might not be here to see it, our children and the children around the world will be making lives for themselves. I can only hope that the world then is a more peaceful, safe and tolerant place to be, where people share their wealth, where they don’t fight for power, where they care about each other across the globe, where they don’t forget people just because they don’t see them. However, to get our children and children all over the world to think like that, we have to lead by example.

So this year, as you look forward to your family Christmas, I implore you to think of those with so little. If you can give to a charity or organisation which will help those people living in poverty around the world, please do. If you can only afford to give a little, it doesn’t

matter, a little could help someone to live and possibly give them a future to look forward to.

To quote a much more recent Christmas song, “In our world of plenty, we can spread a smile of joy. Throw your arms around the World at Christmas time.”

On behalf of the SMOAT Committee, I thank you for your generosity over the past year and I wish you a joyous Christmas and a peaceful and happy New Year.

BARBARA PERKINS, *Chairman*

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## *Wine, cheese and all that Jazz*

On the 24<sup>th</sup> September, St Mark’s Church Hall experienced a minor make-over in monochrome, transformed for the first ‘Reigate Jazz Club’ SMOAT event to raise funds for a Faith in Action project in Malawi.

As the audience arrived, local pianist Rachel Halton tickled the ivories with some contemporary jazz as our guests made their way to the candlelit tables and ordered drinks at the bar.

Then after a short introduction, the headline act hit the stage. Local jazz singer Angie Barton,



and her incredible three-piece live jazz band performed two long sets of well-known jazz and soul classics to an appreciative audience of around 100 people.

These professional musicians, a couple of whom have played at the famous Ronnie Scott’s jazz club, immediately had everybody’s feet tapping. The vicar and his wife Chris were among the first to hit the dance floor, demonstrating how their



dance lessons were paying dividends. While they set the bar high, this in no way deterred many others to follow suit.

To complement the wines and beers being served from the bar, an extensive buffet table of cheeses and homemade chutneys and accompaniments went down very well with our guests. And the distribution of Naomi's praline meringue kisses towards the end of the evening



topped off a gastronomic experience that beautifully accompanied the velvety tones of Angie's incredible voice.



This successful and well supported event enabled SMOAT to raise an incredible £1,546 after costs.

Boosted by some of our regular giving funds (and donations by friends of Sylvia and Keith Weatherald in honour of their Diamond Wedding Anniversary), we have donated £2,000 to Faith



in Action to help them repair wind-pump irrigation systems in a part of Malawi ravaged by terrible floods and droughts. How wonderful to think that

such beautiful music can help bring about such a difference to a community experiencing unimaginable difficulties.

CLAIRE BOWERS

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## *Faith in Action*

As well as the recent Jazz evening proceeds, we supported two other projects through Faith in Action, which operates in the very poor area of The Shire in Malawi, earlier in the year.

In March we sent £765 to buy three bicycle ambulances. These are being used in three villages, Mgombe, Mphwazi and Mkweza. These villages were chosen because they have been seriously affected by a cholera outbreak. Traditionally those sick enough to be taken to hospital were tied to chairs and carried, usually in the evening after the heat of the day is past. Delay sometimes proved fatal and journeys were very uncomfortable. Bicycle ambulances consist of a bicycle which tows a trailer with mattress on large wheels and umbrellas shelter the patient. They can be used at any time, are more comfortable for the patient and much quicker.

In April we sent £1500 from the 2015 Christmas Appeal to fund seven Eco Stove and seven briquette making businesses, which were destroyed in last year's floods. These trades produce stoves and briquettes, made from waste material, to replace open fires. These are more efficient on fuel (trees and scrub for fires are now scarce) and much more healthy because of the eradication of smoke and quicker and safer to cook on. They are part of a loan scheme so the repayments will fund further such businesses elsewhere.

HARRY INGRAM

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## *Village Water*

In April SMOAT sent Village Water £4500 from our very successful 2015 Christmas Appeal.

£3000 was spent to train a further manual well-drilling team and provide a full manual drilling kit. As part of their training the team drilled ten wells with pumps for ten villages who, under

supervision, installed their own sanitation facilities. The team is now drilling other wells for Village Water but also for other organisations on an independent basis boosting the local economy and bringing clean water.

The other £1500 was spent rehabilitating the only 4% of wells

dug by Village Water since its inception which have clogged. In one village where a pump had become clogged by sand the villagers reverted to the use of a scoop hole and diseases like

diarrhoea and eye infections returned. So these repairs are essential and the new wells will be protected by filters to keep out the sand and are made deeper.

HARRY INGRAM

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## *Project Uganda*

Many of our readers will remember that Project Uganda (PU) is a very small organisation supported by various organisations such as churches and Boy Scouts in the Wiltshire village of Winterslow. PU was formed and is now largely run by the Gothard family, the parents of which go every year at their own expense to oversee and help with projects. Matthew usually joins them when his work permits.

The project is centred on Rukungiri in Uganda and associated with a small "technical college" there, the buildings of which were brick built by PU soon after 2000. The students of the college are given experience by carrying out such projects as

sanitation, wash room construction and installation of mosquito netting usually for schools. More recently PU has sponsored a perma-culture agricultural project which is coming to fruition and attracting much interest in the locality.

Kishonga Primary School was chosen for a water harvesting project in 2015/6 because it had the greatest need for clean water in the area. Children used to walk 5km each day to bring water back to the school, which has 710 pupils.

The project involved buying and fitting gutters, pipes and 2000 litre storage tanks set on brick built bases to the middle and ends of each of the school buildings.

An existing tank was also repaired. The school children helped with the work, as seen in the photo, which has now been completed.

It is expected that there will be enough capacity to carry the school through the dry season.

HARRY INGRAM



# ***SMOATathon2017***

We can pin the blame on the Ancient Greeks. If the Athenians had not defeated the Persians in 490BC, the messenger would not have been called upon to undertake his heroic but ultimately fatal dash from Marathon to Athens to deliver news of the victory, and “marathon” would not have entered our vocabulary to denote - as well as a 26.2 mile running race - any event requiring exceptional stamina and powers of endurance. There would have been no Telethons, *Strictly Come Dancing* would not have its Waltzathon, and, crucially, SMOAT would not be staging its biennial SMOATathons.

After two highly successful events in 2013 and 2015, SMOATathon2017 is scheduled to take place in St Mark’s Church Hall on Sunday 5 February. Between 11.30 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. live music will be provided, coffee/tea and cakes will be consumed, and, most importantly, through donations and the sponsorship of those performing, much-needed funds will be raised for one of the projects that SMOAT is seeking to support.

At the time of writing, the identity of the specific project has not been finalised, but each of the first two SMOATathons raised in the region of £2,000, and the SMOAT trustees are optimistic that the 2017 version will produce similarly spectacular results.

## ***So, what is required to make the event as successful as its predecessors?***

Firstly, we need performers. If you sing or play a musical instrument, either on your own or with others, and would be willing to fill a time-slot, we should be delighted to hear from you. If this is not for you, but you know someone who enjoys displaying his or her musical prowess, please do spread news of the event. The length of the performance slots will vary widely, from maybe three minutes for some of our younger participants to a maximum of 30 minutes or so.

Children will be very welcome. The SMOATathon offers an ideal stage for younger performers to play or sing before an appreciative audience. Equally importantly, they tend to prove expert at attracting sponsorship!

Secondly, we would like the venue to be as full as possible. There will be no charge for admission, and, if you do not wish to be involved as a performer, we shall be very pleased if you can join us for a cup of tea and to listen to some of the programme. We are not expecting anyone to stay for the full five and a half hours! Please feel free to come and go as you wish.

It promises to be a most enjoyable afternoon of music that will raise much-needed funds to benefit a community in the developing world. If you or someone you know would like to take part, please contact us via the email address given at the end of this newsletter.

DAVID LEAR

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## *1066 [+ 950] and all that*

On the 950<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Hastings, hostilities were resumed at St Mark's Church Hall on 14 October when about 80 contestants, formed into a dozen teams, fought it out to determine who could claim victory in the 2016 SMOAT Helier Dreux Quiz.

Fortunately, no-one appeared to find it too 'arrowing'. Even the team ending with the lowest points total seemed happy enough. After all, apart from the winners, they were the only contestants whose efforts were rewarded with a prize.

The questions covered a wide range of subjects, from fractions to Beatrix Potter, and, as always in the case of Helier's quizzes, we learned new things while also dredging up bits of long-forgotten knowledge from the depths of our memories. What do the years 1066 and 1936 have in common? Each saw three different kings on the throne of England, the only years to witness such a phenomenon.

To cope with the mental challenge involved, the contestants required frequent refreshment, and the bar

was well patronised. At the half-way stage a chilli supper was enjoyed, and, with the raffle doing a brisk trade, the event raised funds of £1,200 in total.

This was an excellent result, which will help to bring significant benefits to families in Zambia, one of the sub-Saharan African countries severely affected by the spread of HIV/Aids.

The project supported by the Quiz is run by the Kaloko Trust Zambia. A high percentage of the country's working age population has died as a result of HIV/Aids, leaving large numbers of children orphaned, and many of these young people are now looked after by one or two grandparents.

The Kaloko Trust project helps such families to become more self-sufficient by training the grandparents (in practice, frequently a grand-mother on her own, hence the initiative being known as the "granny" project) and the older grandchildren in simple food production techniques.

The fertility of the land is established, seeds, fertilizers and pesticides are made available, and education is provided on issues such as irrigation, crop care and harvesting.

The Trust is selecting twelve families, comprising about 70 people in all, and will provide funding at a rate of £26 per



person. A total amount of about £1,850 is therefore required, of which some two-thirds will have been raised through the Quiz.

The SMOAT trustees are very grateful to all those who, through

their support of the Quiz, will help to make a real and significant difference to the lives of the families who will have the opportunity to take part in the Kaloko Trust project.

DAVID LEAR

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## *Kaloco Beekeeping project*

In addition to the project supported by the recent quiz, in October 2015 SMOAT had sent £1000 to the Kaloko Trust towards a bee keeping project at Luansabe in Northern Zambia. Kaloko is a small fund raising charity based in Brighton, with a sister organisation in Northern Zambia which helps develop a very poor area of unemployment and subsistence agriculture.

Subsistence farmers find it difficult to get by and to fund their

expenses. Selling honey is a tried and tested way of achieving this and Kaloko has set up the Luansobe Beekeepers Co-operative Society to face the market and achieve better prices.

Each trainee is trained in bee management and equipped with a starter kit including moulds from which mud hives can cheaply be made.

Our contribution helped train twenty five new bee keepers.

HARRY INGRAM

# *BRINOS - Nepal*

Dr Neil and Sue Weir were very pleased to be invited to talk to SMOAT earlier in the year and were thrilled to receive a most generous gift to help us to buy a more sophisticated operating table for the new operating theatre. This has been ordered from India.



The BRINOS Ear Care Centre (seen in the photograph) was due to be inaugurated on 19 November during the 59th BRINOS Ear Surgery Camp.

Just before this Neil Weir took part in a 2-day conference in Kathmandu on the future of Community Ear Care in Nepal. Neil says "This is an opportune time for us as we have now reached a critical phase in our development."

"BRINOS has been working in Nepal for 27 years, and we have conducted 58 ear surgery camps, introduced primary community ear care to Nepal in 2000 and have built the BRINOS Ear Care Centre. Now we need to expand our community ear care into more of the 25 districts of the two western regions of Nepal. To achieve this we ideally need to encourage the Government of Nepal to embrace community ear care."

HARRY INGRAM

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## *Working with MicroLoan Foundation*

Following our hugely successful retail sale with local boutique Quattro RISH back in May, SMOAT was pleased to donate £2000 to MicroLoan Foundation. In November, myself and Harry

were invited to Christie's in London for a reception evening to hear about Microloan's pioneering work and find out more about how our donations are being spent.

For the sale, we had specifically requested that our donation be used for agricultural loans to poor rural women in Malawi. In the last 2 years Malawi has seen devastating effects of natural disasters. Last year floods destroyed thousands of homes and businesses and Malawi is

now suffering the worst food shortages in over 20 years. The maize loan system is currently operating in the districts of Mchinji, Salima, Ntcheu and Mulanje. During the growing season of 2015 to 2016, a total number of 757 'tilime' or maize loans were disbursed.

## *Results*

The average numbers of bags of maize harvested were 41 x 50kg bags. An average family requires 25 to 30 bags for annual food security in maize. This is much higher than that of the 'control' farmers who produced an average of 33 bags per acre.

The average cost of production was 52 Malawian Kwacha per kilo which is a third of the market price at its lowest point.

For the growing season of 2015 to 2016, some areas in Southern Malawi were adversely affected by drought due to the El Niño effect and it was apparent that the methodology, when followed closely, may have reduced the impact of this challenging weather.



### *Giving hope not handouts*

As ever in the developing world, the application of new methodologies always involves a steep learning curve. The MicroLoan team explained how their teams are using this past season's results to learn lessons

and refine their methodologies. We are proud to be supporting them in the forthcoming season, and hope that the weather conditions will be more favourable.

In addition to the agricultural loans, MicroLoan also makes small loans and provides training, mentoring and on-going support to women starting small businesses. This might be buying produce/ commodities to then sell at markets or in a shop, or providing a simple service. Over time, the money these women generate from their own efforts, helps to ensure food security, improved housing, access to healthcare and an education for their children.

This year, MicroLoan Foundation's own Christmas campaign is focusing on the positive effects that the MicroLoan system has on children. Having enough money to send their children to school creates opportunities that so many mothers never had for themselves. Thanks to MicroLoan, thousands of children have the chance to finish their education. They are also growing up with strong female role models and are learning skills that will set them up for their futures and help them weather the storms in the future.

SMOAT has pledged an additional £1000 to MicroLoan's own Christmas Appeal which

will be used as matched funding – when others donate, it will be 'matched' and therefore doubled with our pledged funding.

At the MicroLoan reception, Harry and I heard about the organisation's ambitious plans for the future. In the next five years, they are intending to double their reach, helping over 100,000 women every year. When SMOAT first started to support MicroLoan a decade ago, it was a much smaller organisation. Their growth and success is fantastic, and we are immensely proud to have supported it in its initial growth. It is only by smaller trusts such as ourselves taking a punt and supporting small

organisations, that they have this opportunity to grow, learn, develop and truly achieve amazing and far-reaching outcomes and impacts.

NAOMI FLOOD



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*For further details of SMOAT and our planned fund-raising events, please visit our web site*

**SMOAT.org.uk**

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