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ST MARK'S OVERSEAS AID TRUST

# Newsletter - Winter 2017

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## *Important notice:*

To continue to receive our newsletter (or to sign up to receive it if you don't already)  
**please complete our contact-details form,  
or sign up online at [www.smoat.org.uk](http://www.smoat.org.uk)**

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## *Dates for your diary:*

**Launch of  
Christmas Appeal**  
Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November  
at St. Mark's  
at 8am and 10am services

**Annual Public Meeting**  
Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> May 11.30am

**Saturday Brunch**  
8<sup>th</sup> June - **Note changed date**

**Bingo**  
Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February

**Quiz with Helier Dreux**  
Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October

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Further details of all SMOAT events will be available nearer the time on our web site: **[SMOAT.org.uk](http://SMOAT.org.uk)**  
on Facebook via **[SMOAT.org.uk/facebook](https://www.facebook.com/smoat.org.uk)**  
or from any of the committee.

REGISTERED CHARITY No.280091



# *Generosity*

My Thesaurus gives the following synonyms for generosity: kindness, goodness, unselfishness, big-heartedness, readiness. I don't know about you, but seeing all these words together gives me a feeling of pleasure. What a wonderful world it would be if everyone had these qualities!

We can very often associate generosity with money and material gifts and, in a lot of instances, giving money is the easiest way to show generosity. Indeed, SMOAT relies on people's generosity so that we can then find projects worthy to receive the money given. Recently, one of our supporters organised a trip out for members of our local community. He booked everything and people paid him the money for the trip. He then donated all the money that they had given him to SMOAT. The wonderful thing is that he loves to do it. He gets the very greatest of pleasure from giving and you can actually see it shine out from him.

However, there are other ways to be generous and, in our endeavours to help people in the developing world to survive on a day-to-day basis, we come across many generous people. For instance, the parents of two of our Committee members give their time at almost all of our fund-raising events. Whenever they can, they turn up and help, sometimes for hours at a time. To be generous with your time is of huge value and, speaking personally, is always greatly appreciated. The Strawberry Tea we held earlier this year was hosted by two of our staunchest supporters and greatest friends. They spent days getting their beautiful house and garden ready for the event. They gave of their time freely and selflessly and we valued it enormously.

It always impresses me immensely when we talk to people from the organisations we support and they spend much of their time in the countries where people are struggling the most. Yes, we play our part by raising the money for the projects and we are a vital cog in the mechanism, but I have so much respect for the generosity of spirit and unselfishness of the people who go out to the countries, sometimes putting themselves in dangerous situations, because they want to find where the money is most needed and meet the people who will benefit from it.

At this time of the year particularly, it is lovely to witness the generosity and kindness of others. Last Christmas a voluntary organisation in Reigate came along to St Mark's Church hall and hosted a Christmas

lunch for 140 people who would otherwise have been alone on Christmas Day. Had it not been for that group of volunteers, who cooked a magnificent dinner and spent hours making sure those people enjoyed a wonderful day, they would have had a very lonely Christmas. I know that there are organisations like this all over the country and people who give their time and show their big-heartedness in abundance and it restores my faith in human nature when I witness these acts of kindness.

This year, we are supporting two projects with our Christmas Appeal, one through African Water Enterprises (AWE) and one through Kaloko Trust. We know that they have done their bit by going out to Gambia and Zambia to find out where the need is. You can read more about this in the Christmas Appeal letter. Now we need to do our bit to raise the money needed to fund the projects. As the Dalai Lama once said: *“Generosity is the most natural outward expression of an inner attitude of compassion and loving-kindness.”* I would implore you to give generously.

On behalf of the SMOAT Committee, I wish you a Christmas filled with love and happiness and a New Year filled with hope and peace.

BARBARA PERKINS, *Chair, SMOAT Committee*

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## *Strawberry Tea*

The SMOAT committee would like to extend their warmest thanks to Shirley and Elfrid Silcock, who once again allowed us to take over their beautiful country garden in Lonesome Lane last June to host another very successful SMOAT Strawberry Tea.

The jugs of Pimms and teapots flowed all afternoon, and the mountains of home-baked scones were devoured with strawberries and clotted cream. We were accompanied by the melodic



sounds of the 10 flautists that constitute the A2Z flute choir,

while children and adults alike enjoyed strolling around the beautiful garden admiring the flower beds and playing some giant garden games.

Through ticket sales, a raffle and a very popular homemade cake stall this wonderfully English occasion helped us raise over £800. The support we received from our regular givers enabled us to top up our afternoons fundraising to send African Water Enterprises (AWE) a cheque for £1,000. This charity is developing an innovative way of ensuring



parts means that in rural Africa the landscape is often scattered with broken pumps and taps while women and children trudge for miles to collect dirty water. See our Christmas Appeal letter to learn more about the work of this interesting charity and how it avoids those pitfalls.

CLAIRE BOWERS



sustainable safe water supplies in remote sub-Saharan Africa locations.

So often thousands of pounds are spent installing water pumps which become broken or damaged. Inadequate systems for recovery, repairs and maintenance and the inability to obtain spare



# *A Bridge2Aid*

With dental care of a high order readily available in this country, most of us have forgotten how excruciating and disabling tooth ache can be. When it goes on for weeks, months, and even years that is far worse. Dental problems, made worse by infection, are the main cause of illness in much of Africa. Local compresses usually fail and hospitals or clinics are often several days travel away. This is where Bridge2Aid comes in.

Bridge2Aid is a small UK charity which aims to provide emergency dental training to rural health officers. Since 2002 this charity has delivered 82 training programmes in Tanzania and Rwanda and successfully trained 452 government health workers, providing emergency dental treatment for over 4.5 million people.

Teams from the UK consist of 12 dentists and 8 nurses, and usually there are 4 trips each year. This is not a dental service as we would understand it. Fillings are not usually provided. The main work is training local health workers in extractions and infection control.

Each team of dentists provides some of the costs of the tour themselves, but much is funded by Bridge2Aid. When they leave, their work goes on and on. By any standards this is a good investment. At the end of the tour the dental instruments, which the newly trained health workers will need, are left for them. This is where SMOAT comes in.

Over the years we have funded many packages of dental equipment and sterilization kits, and in October we sent a further £1000 for this purpose. Such tools will be used for many years. Without them the rural health workers would be helpless to provide dental aid which is so widely and desperately needed.

HARRY INGRAM

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## *Reach for Rwanda*

Before the end of this year, we will also be making a donation of circa £1,200 to Reach for Rwanda which will be used to fund the construction of two water tanks in Kihere district. We funded a similar project in this region last year - more than 80% of the community have no access to water near their homes.

The project involves training of local women to build and maintain the tanks which has the added social and economic benefits for those undergoing the training. We await Sally Botteley's return from her most recent trip to confirm our locations and costings and look forward to hearing more about how other projects are progressing.

NAOMI FLOOD

# *Project Uganda*

It was to celebrate the Millennium that the Hampshire village of Winterslow finally decided to found an overseas charity, and thus became attached to Rukungiri, 300 km from Kampala in South West Uganda. Project Uganda was born.

From the outset Matt Gothard, a civil engineer with a heavy UK job, was very enthusiastic and his personal family and elderly parents supported him. Income was raised by the village organisations; Church, Scouts, Players, Drama Group, numerous other clubs and Truffles Coffee Shop! Often money came from local events such as live bands, sponsored all night hikes, drama performances, and similar events to those put up by SMOAT. Annual income averages £7300. This is a tiny sum when set against the achievements.

The first Ugandan project on their first visit was to build classrooms and workshops for the local Gables Vocation Centre which trains in basic craft skills. The brick-built buildings with strong roofs are state of the art. This led to the realisation that those leaving college still needed practical experience in the building trades. Knowledge of such skills is ground into the Gothard family.

Since then the charity has expanded with developments, for example, in perma-culture, a fruit processing "factory", and a green house made from used plastic bottles. But most are building projects. These improve the local infrastructure but, more important, improve the hygiene and health of the local children, and provide experience for the students who will go on to earn good incomes.

Matt's elderly parents go to Rukungiri for about three months every year to assist the newly qualified on mainly building projects for schools in the areas such as wash rooms, sanitation and rainwater harvesting, and wooden beds and structures to hold mosquito nets. Matt's mother helps train the girls, mainly in needlework skills. Matt and his wife take their annual holiday there. All such visits are self financed. They are, of course, the salt of the earth.

In the field of overseas aid, projects are not always successful but with Project Uganda you get exactly "what it says on the tin."

A few years ago a friend of mine visited Kugungiri to help set up the perma-culture project. He returned full of the problems and opportunities. The climate is not kind to agricultural innovation

and the learning curves are very slow. Patience and more patience is the first requirement. But the return of appreciation is also whole hearted.

This year we have supported a school rainwater harvesting project. Improving school facilities such as wash rooms is well worthwhile but sometimes the provision of fresh water is even more urgent. The alternative is often long journeys sometimes at

night with associated dangers.

Moses, the PU local representative, has identified the next school most in need as the mixed secondary school at Kyamakanda. The project will install a comprehensive rainwater harvesting scheme fixing gutters to all the existing buildings with down pipes to ferro-concrete storage tanks which are larger and more durable than plastic ones.

Sufficient clean water is a basic need but also has the following additional results:

- Lesson attendance and concentration levels will improve greatly due to the improved hydration.
- Greatly reduced rates of infection and illness associated with poor hygiene and sanitation.
- Students will no longer need to be out after dark when it is not safe collecting water.
- Students will have more time in the day to study.
- The tanks will provide water even in the dry seasons.
- Newly graduated students from the technical college will gain employment and learn new building skills

Materials for the project will be obtained locally improving local demand and generating local income.

SMOAT has donated £1,000 towards the total cost of £3,000 for this project.

HARRY INGRAM

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## *I can't remember a thing ...*

How long does a newly-acquired piece of knowledge remain in the memory? For many people, "not long" appears to be the answer.

We discovered this at the annual SMOAT Quiz held at St Mark's Church Centre on Saturday 7 October 2017. Masterminded and presented, as in previous years, by Helier Dreux, question-master *extraordinaire*, with invaluable organisational and score-keeping assistance from Ann, it was enjoyed by eight teams totalling 60 participants. The contestants

were given the opportunity to display their knowledge (or perhaps the lack of it) of a diverse selection of subjects ranging from islands to the Himalayas via sport and Bluetooth.

And there was a sting in the tail. It transpired that the first and last rounds of questions, entitled “forwards” and “backwards”, were effectively a reflection of each other, in so far as the answers to “backwards” were to be found in the questions of “forwards”. As simple a concept as this may sound, the challenge of trying to dredge up information that had been displayed on-screen maybe two hours earlier proved very difficult for many and impossible for some. After all, the bar had been doing a brisk trade throughout ...

At the half-way point, an excellent chilli supper was served. Generous support was given to a raffle, and in total the event raised the splendid sum of £915.

As always, the aim of the Quiz was to generate funds for a specific project that SMOAT wished to support. This year, money was being raised for BRINOS, the Britain - Nepal Otology Service. SMOAT has assisted BRINOS regularly in the past; it is a relatively small charity which regards SMOAT’s donations as hugely significant. The 2017 Quiz was seeking to raise funds to facilitate the purchase of an audiometer, a portable hearing measurement kit. While ear disease and hearing loss are widespread in Nepal on account of the country’s altitude, they can be treated if the resources needed - doctors and equipment - can be made available, and the work of BRINOS is invaluable in this respect.

Thanks to the generosity of those who attended the Quiz, those who could not be there but made donations, and the funds generated by those who give regularly to SMOAT, it has been possible to send BRINOS a cheque for £1,000 to finance the purchase of the audiometer. The availability of this piece of equipment will help many more residents of Nepal to regain their hearing.

It is easy for us to take such resources for granted. SMOAT’s trustees are extremely grateful to all who support SMOAT in its efforts to help BRINOS and other organisations improve the health and quality of life of those who face the particular daily challenges of living in a country such as Nepal.

DAVID LEAR

# *A Scout in Tanzania*

Sponsoring visits to the developing world is particularly important in providing first hand education opportunities for our young people, giving an opportunity for someone from our parish or community to make a personal contribution in the struggle to overcome world poverty. It also helps to forge links between our community and communities in the countries we support.

With this in mind, this summer SMOAT were delighted to provide a small donation to Adam Rayner, a local Scout who undertook an expedition to Tanzania.

Adam joined a group of 19 Scouts and Leaders going to Morogoro, where they embarked on



some rejuvenation work for the national Scout campsite. This involved plenty of heavy labour including digging new cesspits for the toilets, plumbing in water supplies, installing solar power, building a dining shelter and also constructing a bridge for access.

In addition, the group worked on some community projects including building primary schools, a medical centre and accommodation for doctors.

Adam clearly had an amazing and life changing trip, learning practical skills, working alongside local communities, and also learning more about the developing world.



In his words:

*“It has definitely made me look at life differently here in the UK. I say this because, when we went into the small villages, in the mountains or in the forest, we were able to see how different it really is. There was no electricity in the villages, and there was only one communal tap that everyone had to use. We got a good taste of Tanzanian cooking, tasting a few of their traditional dishes, such as Ugali, which was dried fish with tomatoes and maize. I’m afraid it wasn’t very good...”*

NAOMI FLOOD



# *Faith in Action*

This small local charity, not to be confused with the giant in the USA of the same name, is the brain child of Sally and Martin Jeffree who live near Crawley. For thirty years they have provided aid of various sorts to the Shire region of Malawi, one of the poorest areas of Africa. This is on the flood plain of a tributary of the Zambezi River.

They work through a local church organisation in Malawi which has mission, but also a strong branch which promotes economic growth in the region.

Over the years I have been greatly impressed by their very realistic and practical nature of the help offered. The aid is provided in a large variety of ways. Orphan support by giving goats to families which support AIDS orphans and in due course the goats' progeny are passed on to others. Seed banks provide seeds for areas where these are lacking. Bicycle ambulances provide transport during the hot days to distant clinics and hospitals. Eco-stove and briquette making businesses are sponsored to allow low-smoke cooking.

Its irrigation scheme, which uses wind pumps to pump up water, repays its considerable cost (over twelve thousand pounds) within three years, and surplus income is used to fund local clinics and other social services. Such start-up schemes are tailor-made to the needs of the locality. However, currently the resources of Faith in Action are down to £9,000.

In recent years climate change and nature has been very unkind to this region. Firstly, three years ago a harvest, villages, and irrigation schemes were destroyed by record floods which actually briefly made the news in the UK. Communities had to restart from scratch, largely on their own resources. The following year saw drought, bringing famine and very little aid from outside. People starved.

This year the harvest has been reduced by 70 % due to the arrival of the "army worm" from North America. This pest loves the warmer climate of Africa. It is a voracious caterpillar which spreads rapidly and attacks not only maize but wheat, rice, sorghum, most other crops and even the grasslands.

Its spread is being monitored by DIFID and it is expected that in the coming season most of sub-Saharan Africa will be affected. In spite of research there is, as yet, no reliable antidote. The western world seems hardly conscious of this severe threat, though time may bring it to Europe. But for the Shire there is no time and no alternative but to plant and do what they can to feed themselves.

Faith in Action is running an experiment on irrigated land ahead of the general planting season in November to test the effectiveness of pesticides, and other action such as hand picking, and SMOAT has contributed £1000 towards the seed bank for this project.

HARRY INGRAM

*For a more detailed report please see the November St Mark's Parish Magazine.*

# *SAFAD and Micki Johns*

One of SMOAT's objectives has been to assist young people with an interest in the Developing World. We do not sponsor "trips" unless they have a material objective. Jollies are out.

As an aside I recall, at Water Aid's twenty-fifth anniversary, meeting a graduate of SAFAD who we had sponsored some years before. He now held a top post with Water Aid. From little acorns grow...

Silsoe Aid for Appropriate Development (SAFAD) is a student-run Trust of Cranfield University which sponsors graduates for overseas aid assignments. Applicants have to raise much of their funds themselves.

Micki Johns achieved a Masters in Community Development of Water and Hygiene services in September, and wished to gain relevant experience with Haiti Outreach, an American not for profit organisation with long experience in water and hygiene projects. From correspondence he emerges as a mature, very realistic young man with a mission for the area he has chosen to specialise in. His assignment lasts a year.

In Haiti 52% of the population draws its water from contaminated sources and has virtually no sewage provision. 80% of the population do not have latrines.

Haiti Outreach employs mainly local workers, and village schemes require the active involvement of local communities with committees which raise subscriptions to fund maintenance. Such schemes also include anti-fraud systems. Over the last ten years 90% of schemes are still working.

SMOAT sent £500 towards the cost of his air travel. We wish him good luck in the present and a continuation of his commitment, and we look forward to hearing how he has got on.

HARRY INGRAM

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*For more information please contact any of the committee, listed below.  
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a paper) copy of the Newsletter, e-mail richard@smoat.org.uk*

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