



NEEM TREE TRUST NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2011

Thank you once again for the support you have given us in raising funds for the Boys' Home in Tiruneleveli and St Luke's Leprosy Hospital in Peikulam. We would like to thank the following groups for inviting us to speak at their meetings during the year April 2010-March 2011, raising £3,831 in donations and sales.

Rowde Ladies' Club
Kennet Friendship Circle, Devizes
Farmborough Womens' Institute
St Peter's Ladies Guild, Chippenham
Friends of the Moat, Bristol
United Church Trowbridge Woman's Hour
Tuesday Club, Bishop's Cannings
Redfield Road Wives Group, Bristol
CSRF Bradford-on-Avon
Weston Townswomen's Guild Garden Club, Bath
Bradford-on-Avon Rotary Club
Wilts West District Scout Council
Bath Rotary Club
Westbury Womens' Institute
Colerne Womens' Institute
Cameo Ladies Group United Church, Trowbridge

All Saints Westbury Mothers' Union
OASIS Group United Parish of Freshford,
Limpley Stoke and Hinton Charterhouse
Beaufort Townswomen's Guild, Bath
St Lawrence Day Centre, Monday Group, Wells
Pullen Court Day Centre, Shepton Mallet
Nunney & District Womens' Institute
Bridge (Holt) Women's Institute
Box Methodist Wesley Guild
The Saxon Club, Bradford-on-Avon
Christchurch Mothers' Union Bradford on Avon
Kingswood Methodist Church Wesley Guild
Paulton K.I.T. Club, Bristol
Prime Time Luncheon Club, Bath
Phoenix Club, Bromham
Hiway Club, Devizes

During the year we were represented at the following events:

Fair Planet Fayre B-on-Avon Music Centre
Freshford Autumn Fayre
Holy Trinity B-on-Avon Street Party
Mike & Alison's Coffee Morning
Royal High School Bath Christmas Fayre
Shockerwick House Christmas Fayre

Westwood Flower Show
Bathavon Rotary Club Gala Evening
The London Marathon
Royal High School Bath Silk & Spice Ball
Sue & Ian Bolden's Open Garden
Bradford-on-Avon Rotary Club Silent Auction

Events produced £4,496 with a further £1,090 generated from other miscellaneous sales.

The following organisations generously made donations to The Neem Tree Trust:

Bradford-on-Avon Rotary Club
Bathavon Rotary Club
Projects Abroad
Stephen Clark Charitable Trust
St Nicholas Church, Winsley
St John the Baptist Church, Colerne

Donations from individuals and organisations for both the boys' home and St Luke's, including regular standing orders, amounted to £23,788.



We claimed Gift Aid of £4,054 from the Inland Revenue on donations from UK taxpayers.

SCHT BOYS' HOME



Sudulai Mani, one of the boys at the home

The Neem Tree Trust made a donation of £25,000 to the boys' home last year. Dr Karuna Chelliah was very grateful to receive this money as it enabled the home to buy a new Tempo Minibus (at a cost of approximately £11,500), giving the home two safe and reliable vehicles to transport the children to and from school. They were also able to purchase a small motorbike for the use of the wardens, which cost approximately £400.

There is a very deep well at the home, which is used for washing, irrigating the land and also for supervised swimming sessions for the boys. With so many vulnerable young people living at the home it was decided by Dr Karuna Chelliah and his Board of Directors to use Neem Tree Trust money to pay for a very substantial safety cover with a lock to be installed, thus giving the staff complete peace of mind. The cost of this essential safety measure was approximately £2,500.

As in previous years, your donations have also paid for assistance with further education and training, support with business set-ups when the boys leave the home at the age of 19, an educational trip to Delhi in October, birthday treats for the children and important improvements to the fabric of the home.

Whilst I was staying at the home in January 2011 a new boy arrived. His name is Rajesh, he is five years old and suffers with mild cerebral palsy. His father had died and his mother was too poor to take care of him. At first he cried constantly, which upset me very much, but within a few days he became accustomed to his new surroundings and the older boys soon took him under their wing. He will not lose contact with his mother and she will visit him whenever she can. This is a picture I took of him holding a stuffed rabbit, one of the soft toys I had taken out in my luggage.



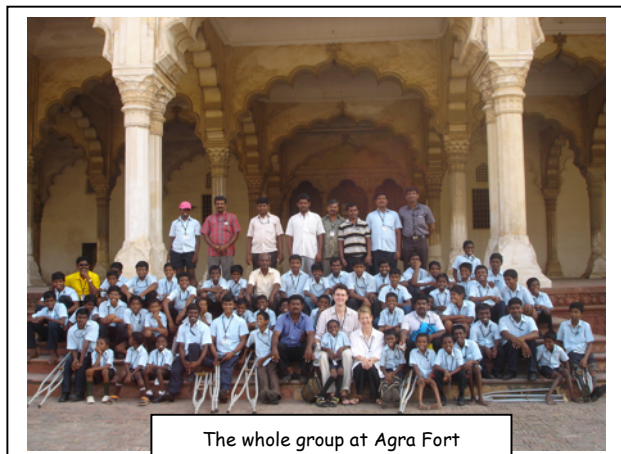
Rajesh - the new boy in January 2011



Warden Dhina harvesting white carrots in Mr Jeremy's Vegetable Garden

"Mr Jeremy's Vegetable Garden", was created in 2006 in memory of our friend Jeremy Surr who lived in Sheffield, and it is proving invaluable to the home. This is a picture of warden Dhina harvesting a crop of white carrots. They also grow snake gourds, lady's fingers, drumsticks, radish, eggplant and tomatoes, to name but a few - enough to feed everyone at the home and the surplus is sold at the local market.

DELHI EXCURSION OCTOBER 2010



The whole group at Agra Fort

In October 2010, over fifty of the boys from the home had an amazing excursion to Delhi and Agra which was funded by The Neem Tree Trust together with Dr Karuna Chelliah's friends in Tirunelveli. The boys set off from Tirunelveli Junction in the south of India and, after an exciting three day train trip, arrived at Agra, Uttar Pradesh. My son, James, and I took the opportunity of a short holiday and flew to north India, where we met up with the boys and the twelve volunteer assistants. Many people know the story of the Emperor Shah Jahan, who built the

Taj Mahal, being imprisoned by his son Aurangzeb in Agra Fort, from which he had a view of the building erected for his deceased wife. Together we all marvelled at the marble masterpiece, which is the Taj Mahal, and the massive red sandstone Agra Fort located on the banks of the Yamuna. Words cannot adequately describe the experience of seeing the sights through the eyes of these children - it will be a memory, which will stay with us forever. The next day we travelled with the boys by train to Delhi and together we visited India Gate, the Red Fort, and the Indira Ghandi Memorial Museum but the highlight of their stay was a meal at "Parikrama" a revolving restaurant which, at 240 feet and 25 floors, is India's highest. They enjoyed a 360 degree panoramic view of the city and for these children the experience almost, but not quite, eclipsed the Taj Mahal! Thanks to all the supporters of The Neem Tree Trust we were able to give the boys an experience that will last them a lifetime.



A photo opportunity with the older boys at the Taj Mahal



Some of the boys enjoying themselves at the Parikrama Restaurant, Delhi



James with Velankanni, one of the smallest boys on the trip

ST LUKE'S HOSPITAL, PEIKULAM

In my last newsletter I reported that Dr Haebus, the new Medical Superintendent at St Luke's Hospital, Perikulam, was in the process of putting into place new arrangements for the transfer of monies from The Neem Tree Trust, which had been specifically donated for the benefit of patients at St Luke's. With his agreement, The Neem Tree Trust delayed transferring funds until the new arrangements had been established. This has now been done and I am glad to report that when I visited India in January 2011 I signed,



Jesuraj with Kathy in the women's ward at St Luke's Hospital

on behalf of The Neem Tree Trust, a Memorandum of Understanding between St Luke's Hospital, the Church of South India Synod, and ourselves and we have since transferred £24,000 to St Luke's Hospital. Dr Haebus has deposited £18,740 into an interest bearing Deposit Account to provide income for future feeding and other patient support. The balance of £5260 will be used in the current year for children's education and general day-to-day care of leprosy patients.



Some of the girls at St Luke's

Leprosy is spread by airborne infection - coughing and sneezing, but is not highly infectious and over 95% of people are actually immune from the disease.

With minimal training, leprosy can be easily diagnosed and after only a couple of days of treatment, sufferers are no longer infectious and can be cured within 6-24 months, depending on the severity of the disease.

If a woman gets Leprosy she is almost certainly abandoned by her husband who usually marries someone else. In the past women would refuse to come into the hospital for treatment as an in-patient

because there would be no one to look after her children. St Luke's have opened their gates to these children who are housed, fed and sent to school.

St Luke's admit children of leprosy patients, orphaned children of HIV/AIDS victims, and children of physically handicapped parents. At the moment they have 33 boys and 23 girls in the Children's Home where they are cared for and educated.

The Girls' Home, which is 4,200 Sq feet, was a gift from Dr Gerhard Fischer from Germany and bears the name of his wife, Ann Fischer. It was constructed in 2000 and has three rooms for the girls' accommodation, two wardens' rooms, one sick room and toilets and washrooms. Due to limited funds at the time the roof was covered with tin sheeting, which is far from ideal during the extremely hot summers and monsoon seasons.

Dr Haebus has plans to convert the tin-sheet roof to a more substantial concrete roof and The Neem Tree Trust would like to do what we can to help him achieve this very worthwhile goal.

HOW PEOPLE HAVE HELPED US

People help us to raise funds for the children in interesting ways and varied ways. I have given a number of examples in the following pages, but would like to thank everyone for their support over the years.



Mary Hewetson with her Fairtrade hamper

For Mike & Alison's October 2010 Coffee Morning in Winsley we had a plant stall with some beautiful cyclamens donated by the Prior Park Garden Centre in Bath, a Fairtrade Hamper, which was donated by the Co-op Store, Winsley Road, Bradford-on-Avon and won in a raffle by Mary Hewetson. An amazing £783.90 was raised that morning! The 2011 Coffee Morning will be held on Thursday 27th October at 22 Late Broads, Winsley between 10.00-12 noon, do come along and support us if you are in the area.

In July 2010 Sue & Ian Bolden's garden in Bradford-on-Avon was open to the public and they kindly offered to sell ice creams in aid of The Neem Tree Trust. We also sold items, which were designed and made by the children we support in India. It was a sunny afternoon and they had many admiring visitors and raised over £230 for the charity.



Visitors admiring Ian & Sue's garden



Guests enjoying themselves at the Ball

A "Silk and Spice" fund-raising Ball was held in September 2010 at The Royal High school, Bath and was organised by Sara Spratt, Caryl Hodgson and Mel Lawman, Friends of the Royal High School. Raffle ticket sales, some spectacular auction prizes and the skills of BBC celebrity

antiques expert, Jonty Hearnden, raised enough money to donate £2,237 to the Neem Tree Trust and the same amount to The Crane Academy, the Royal High School's sister school in Kenya. Some of the profits also enabled the Friends to purchase new equipment for The Royal High School.



Organisers of the Silk & Spice Ball, Sara Spratt, Caryl Hogson and Mel Lawman



Alastair and Irina on their wedding day in Dubrovnik

I met Alastair Mackinlay, from Edinburgh, in 1999 when we were both volunteers in India. Like me, Alastair was humbled by his experience and he has since returned to Tamil Nadu with his fiancé, Irina, when the couple visited the boys' home and St Luke's Hospital. Alastair and Irina were married on 29th August 2010 in Dubrovnik, Croatia and in true Scottish tradition they were piped through the ancient walled city - what a wonderful sight it must have been. Even more wonderful was the fact that they asked their guests to make a donation to The Neem Tree Trust in lieu of a wedding present!

The idyllic early summer setting of the Roman Baths and Pump Room in Bath was the venue on 21st May 2010 for a Gala Fund Raising Evening organised by Bathavon Rotary in support of Friends of Bath Young Carers, a Kenyan education project managed by the Precious Sisters and The Neem Tree Trust. A champagne reception by the main pool of the Roman Baths was followed by a formal dinner with an auction of promises. Everyone who attended this event had a wonderful evening and Chris Steel, the then President of Bathavon Rotary, was able to present each of the charities with a cheque for £2,000 at a musical picnic at The Tythe Barn, Priston Mill on 17th June 2010.



The main pool of the Roman Baths looking resplendent for the champagne reception



Our friend, Mike Jones from Bratton, ran the London Marathon in aid of the Neem Tree Trust for the second time on Sunday 25th April 2010. He previously ran the race in 2008. Mike raised over £400 for the charity and also set up a Virgin Money Giving Charity Page to make it easier for his sponsors to donate. Several people have since used this page to donate to the charity - visit www.virginmoneygiving.co.uk and in the "Find a Charity" box type in "Neem Tree Trust".



Michael Manser and John Kendall have supported our charity for many years. Michael and John frequently visit India and they have told us fascinating tales of tribal people in Chhattisgarh in Central India as well as their friendship with the Maharaja and Maharani of Gondal, in the State of Gujarat. Although they have yet to visit southern India they are very interested in the work we do on behalf of the children in Tamil Nadu. John has a real fascination for antiques and each weekend during the summer rises very early in the morning to explore four or five car boot sales in search of small antiques which are



Michael Manser and John Kendall

interesting and beautiful and which he considers he can sell for a reasonable price and make a small profit. He does this not for his own benefit but for that of The Neem Tree Trust and the children we support in south India and last year he raised over £1,000 for our charity.

In May 2010 The Rotary Club of Bradford-on-Avon held a silent auction at the Leigh Park Hotel on behalf of The Neem Tree Trust and Ken and I were invited along to partake in the fun. There were very generous items up for grabs, including a 26" flat screen Sony television and, together with the other items generously donated and bidden for on the night by the Rotarians, the charity is now £600 better off!

Because our charity is associated with young people who have been affected by polio we feel a strong association with Rotarians who have done so much over the last 25 years to try to eradicate this dreadful disease. "As long as polio threatens even one child anywhere in the world, children everywhere remain at risk. The stakes are that high".