

NEEM TREE TRUST

NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2009

Thanks to the fantastic support we have received The Neem Tree Trust has had another very successful year in raising money, and extending friendship to the Boys' Home in Tirunelveli and St Luke's Leprosy Hospital, Peikulam in South India.

FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

From April 2008 - March 2009 Ken and I were invited to visit the following local groups and schools to talk about the work of The Neem Tree Trust:

High Littleton Luncheon Club
Bath United Church Women's Guild
West Ashton Wives' Group
Chippenham Mothers' Union
Sixpenny Handley Mothers' Union
Box Methodist Church
Combe Down Union Chapel
Bradford on Avon Holy Trinity Mothers' Union
St Philip & St James Church Odd Down
Bradford on Avon Rotary Club
Chippenham Civil Service Retirement Fellowship
Swainswick Ladies Group
Chippenham & Pewsham WI
Bradford on Avon Wine Circle
Bath Probus
Poulshot Ladies Group
Batheaston Thursday Group
Rowde Ladies Group
Steve Biddle House, Salisbury
West Lavington Mothers' Union

Bathampton Mothers' Union
Bath Abbey Mothers' Union
St Cuthbert's Church Ladies Group
Bath Tangent Group
Midsomer Norton Hard of Hearing Group
Westbury Mothers' Union
Bath Inner Wheel
Abbeyfield House, Bradford on Avon
Lovemead Ladies Trowbridge
Townswomens' Guild Weston, Bath
Saxon Group, Bradford on Avon
Oldfield Park Methodist Church
Arthritis Care, Longwell Green
Longwell Green Mothers' Union
Kennet Friendship Circle
Box Methodist Church
Redfield Road Wives Club
Bathampton Afternoon Break Club
Key Ring Group, Keynsham
Senior All Saints Lunch Club, Weston
St Peter's Ladies Guild, Chippenham
Grove School, Trowbridge

Talks to these groups generated £4070 in donations and sales of goods.

We also had a presence at the following events during the year where we have manned a Neem Tree Trust stall and have sold cards and wrapping paper designed by the children, as well as fabric items made by some of the boys who are training to become tailors.

Westbury Garden Fayre
Westwood Flower Show
Neem Tree Trust Cricket Draw
St Laurence Street Party
Mike & Alison's Coffee Morning
St John's Christmas Fayre, Trowbridge
Winsley Village Project Fayre
Bradford on Avon Twinning Sale
Nunney Christmas Fayre
Bradford on Avon Late Night Shopping
Winsley School Christmas Fayre
Wiltshire College Trowbridge Sale



Events, sales of goods, sponsorships and the Grand Cricket Draw generated £6074.

NEEM TREE TRUST GO GREEN BAGS



John and Maria with one of our Go Green Bags

John Leach of Prior Park Garden Centre in Bath heard about the Neem Tree Trust through one of his customers and kindly agreed to stock our Neem Tree Trust Go Green Bags. The garden centre is selling the bags for £2 each with all proceeds from the sale of the bags helping the children we support in India.

Prior Park Garden Centre is well worth a visit. It is situated less than 1 mile from Bath city centre and is the home of good gardening, pet care and aquatics. They supply quality plants & sound gardening advice to guarantee success in your garden!

THE NEEM TREE TRUST GRAND CRICKET DRAW

The Neem Tree Trust Grand Cricket Draw to celebrate the charity's 5th Anniversary took place at The Poplars Inn, Wingfield on Saturday 27th September 2008 and was sponsored by Wadworth Brewery. Mr Bernard Camish, publican of The Poplars, had made arrangements for us to have lunch before the draw took place and for photographs to be taken in the pub garden.

Three trustees of the charity, Ken and Kathy Miller and Pat Kinzett were there to oversee events and we were very pleased that Lloyd Stephens, Tenanted Trade Director of Wadworth, was able to come along to draw out the winning ticket.

The runner up tickets were drawn by Anthony Allom, the tallest man ever to play County Cricket, and James Hall, an MCC Member, both of whom came aptly dressed in their splendid cricketing blazers!!

The prizes and winners were:

First Prize: Limited Edition Print, bat, ball & gloves signed by the former England Cricket Captain, Michael Vaughan

Winner: Mr Peter Barfoot, Chichester

Second Prize: Bat signed by the 2008 Surrey Cricket Team.

Winner: Mr Ricky Fenby, Frome.

Third Prize: Miniature Bat signed by members of the Surrey Cricket Team.

Winner: Mr Albert Green, Bridgwater.

Fourth Prize: Miniature Bat signed by members of the Surrey Cricket Team.

Winner: Mrs Gilly Surr, Sheffield



We would like to thank everyone who bought tickets and who helped us make our first Neem Tree Trust draw such a success and which raised almost £800.

GEORGE STONE, MACE STORE, BRADFORD ON AVON

George Stone has been a supporter of The Neem Tree Trust since 1999 and has generously sponsored our newsletter by paying for the postage each year. He has given sweets for the children as well as selling our Neem Tree Trust Go Green bags. George came to Bradford 60 years ago when he was 19 and started his business with an allotment and two greenhouses before opening his store. Sadly for the local community George and his wife, Joan, are about to retire and The Neem Tree Trust would like to thank them for all they have done in supporting us and many other charitable causes over the years and we wish them all the best for their well earned retirement.



Kathy with George outside his store in Winsley Road, Bradford

FAIR TRADE GOODS FROM BISHOPSTON TRADING

Bishopston Trading is a Fair Trade company whose sole aim is to provide employment for the people of K.V.Kuppam, a village in Tamil Nadu, South India, with whom they have been working in partnership since 1985. The company has four shops in the Southwest of England (Bradford on Avon, Glastonbury, Totnes and Bishopston in Bristol), as well as an online and catalogue mail order business and a wholesale department. They use Fairtrade certified organic cotton and are members of the World Fair Trade Organisation. The mission statement of the company is "To Import directly from rural India with the sole aim of Fair Trading". You can find out more about this fantastic company by visiting their website www.bishopstontrading.co.uk.

We are extremely pleased to announce that we have begun selling a limited number of Bishopston Trading goods such as appliqué cards, scarves, laundry bags, toilet bags and earrings which complement the items we sell on our stalls. Carolyn Whitwell, Director, Bishopston Trading, has also helped us design a unique Neem Tree Trust tea towel made from Fair Trade organic cotton which we are selling for £3.00 each. Each tea towel is decorated with our logo, birds of peace drawn by one of the boys at the home, as well as an Indian recipe.



Ken showing off one of our new tea towels before tackling the dishes!



At the Westwood Flower Show last August we had a Neem Tree Trust stall and we met up with Joe and his beautiful Eagle Owl. Joe told us that the Eagle Owl is the largest and most powerful owl in Europe, but its most noticeable features are its striking orange eyes! Joe and his owl are a well-known sight in Wiltshire raising money for a variety of charities. They are pictured here outside our purple gazebo wearing colourful malai from Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, which I brought back to sell at the show. If you would like to meet Joe and his Eagle Owl come to the next Westwood Flower Show on 31st August 2009!

KEEPING OUR EYE ON COSTS

For our first five years The Neem Tree Trust held a Treasurers' Account with Lloyds Bank TSB and we enjoyed free banking but towards the end of 2008 Lloyds TSB wrote to inform us that they had transferred the charity to a Business Account which incurred charges on all our transactions, including standing orders. In view of this our trustees decided that we should change our bank account to one which would not incur such charges. We have therefore closed the Lloyds TSB account and opened a CAF Cash account with the CAF Bank, which offers its services exclusively to charities, and is itself owned by a registered charity - Charities Aid Foundation (Registered Charity No 268369).

We deposit funds as they are raised into a CAF Gold account and in the financial year 2008/2009 bank interest amounted to £745. We claimed Gift Aid of £3475 from the Inland Revenue on donations from UK taxpayers.

Last August we sent out our annual newsletter to supporters giving them an update on the children's progress and inviting you to make a donation to The Neem Tree Trust for the benefit of the children at the boys' home and the patients and children at the Leprosy Hospital. Donations from individuals and organisations for both the boys' home and St Luke's, including regular standing orders, amounted to £25,242.

The Trust made grant payments to SCHAT Boys' Home and St Luke's of £36,975. We also spent £2,448 to purchase items to sell at events, thereby adding to the charity's income.

SUPPORT FROM LOCAL SCHOOLS AND ORGANISATIONS

St Laurence School, Bradford-on-Avon

The students of Westfield House, St Laurence School, Bradford on Avon have chosen The Neem Tree Trust as their charity. We were nominated by Martin Ecob, a sixth former who had heard about the work we do on behalf of the children in India. Presentations were made by students of Westfield House suggesting a number of different charities; Martin presented the case for The Neem Tree Trust, a vote was taken and we were selected!! Well done, Martin and thank you to all the students of Westfield House.

We have since visited the school to give an update on the progress of the children and we look forward to a mutually rewarding association with Westfield House in the future.

Grove Primary School, Trowbridge

We have visited Grove Primary School in Trowbridge on a number of occasions to talk to Years 4 and 5 and it has always been a most rewarding experience, with the children showing a genuine interest in life in South India. In fact some of their questions are extremely thought provoking! They enjoyed the projects we arranged with their teachers which included locating various places of interest on a map of Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, practising Tamil script writing and dressing up in South Indian costumes. After our visit the children in Year 5 had the idea of organising a cake sale in aid of the children and raised an amazing £100. Daniel Marsh-Jones, aged 10, went home to his mother and said he wanted to help the children he had seen on our film by getting sponsorship to have his very long hair shaved off!! Luckily she was not averse to this idea, as she had been trying to get him to cut his hair for years! Daniel raised £200 in sponsorship and we think he is a great lad!

Townswomen's Guild, Weston

After giving a talk about The Neem Tree Trust to the Townswomen's Guild, Weston we were delighted to learn that we had been chosen as one of three charities they wished to support in 2008. We were in very good company as the other two charities were the Hearing Dogs for the Deaf and the Neo-natal Unit at the RUH Bath. In November 2008 we were invited to their meeting in Weston and the Chairman presented each charity with a cheque for £900!! The TWG Weston is a thriving group with 100 members who raise an incredible amount for their chosen charities through their various interest groups including Gardening, History, Scrabble, Bridge, Walking, Singing, and Craft. Their Christmas Fayre this year is on Saturday 28th November 2009 between 10.30-12.00 at the Moravian Church Hall Weston, Bath - try to get along if you can.

We are always extremely grateful to receive donations from organisations and would also like to thank the following for their interest and financial support:

Bathavon Inner Wheel, Bath
Feilden Clegg Bradley, Architects
HSBC
Oakley Holidays
Projects Abroad, Goring, Sussex
Rotary Club, Bradford on Avon
South India Trust, Farnham, Surrey
Bridge Care Ltd Bridgemoor
Wadworth Brewery, Devizes



SCHT BOYS HOME



Outside the Main Gate at the Boys' Home

During the financial year 2008/2009 the Trust provided a grant of £16,627 to the SCHT Boys' Home to pay for:

- An outdoor recreation building.
- A new moped for the use of the wardens in their daily work.
- A generator to help cope with the frequent power cuts which occur in the area.
- Repairs and maintenance to the buildings including refurbishment of the kitchen and toilet facilities.
- Educational trips for the children.
- Assistance with welfare and rehabilitation when the boys return to their villages after leaving the home.

I visited the boys' home in January 2009 for five weeks and during that time saw the new recreation centre at the home being put to constant use by the children for various activities. I was really impressed by the improvements in the kitchen and the toilet facilities at the home and although there were a number of electrical cuts during my visit, the generator provided emergency power for lights and air-cooling fans. I also talked with Dr Karuna Chelliah and his Board of Directors regarding future needs at the home and learnt of their plans for improvements to the Main Hall. The doctor would like to provide at some point in the future an education facility for the younger boys who have special educational needs.

In 2008 our friend, Tina Vivian, ran the Bath Half Marathon for The Neem Tree Trust and, together with our other runners, raised a considerable amount of money in sponsorship that year. Tina runs with Avon Valley Runners and has completed scores of races over the last ten years and has accumulated many medals. When she heard that I would be visiting the children in January she donated over 50 of her medals to the boys saying that they were only gathering dust in her drawer!



Some of the boys looking so pleased with themselves wearing Tina's medals



Looking very stylish in Neem Tree Trust caps and RNID t-shirts

As well as financial support we offer a hand of friendship to the children and we would like to thank everyone who has helped us to enrich their lives with small gifts. The RNID workshop at the bottom of Wellsway in Bath donated t-shirts for the boys in India and once again Allan Brunton-Reed had 100 colourful caps made with the Neem Tree Trust logo embroidered on the front.

We also appreciated the support we received from Wadworth Brewery in the form of gifts of t-shirts, pens and balls which they donated for the children.

Our friend, Mary Baynton also buys t-shirts for the children each year.

ST LUKE'S LEPROSY HOSPITAL

Through The Neem Tree Trust, a number of supporters of St Luke's, mainly from the Isle of Wight and Scotland, made donations towards the feeding programme set up at the hospital for the benefit of the patients and children as well as sponsoring individuals.

The Neem Tree Trust sponsors a number of beds in the wards at the hospital as well as continuing to sponsor a young girl called Kannigaa who has an incurable skin disease, Epidermolysis Bullosa Simplex. St Luke's is caring for her free of charge, and with the help of your donations we are sponsoring this courageous young girl with the beautiful smile.

During the Financial Year 2008/2009 the Trust, through sponsorship and donations, supported the patients and healthy children of leprosy patients at St Luke's with a grant of £20,348. This money is sent as a donation to The Leprosy Mission Trust India who have created an Endowment Fund so that the interest earned can be used for the operational expenditure of the leprosy patients at St Luke's Leprosy Hospital.



Kathy presenting Kannigaa with a gift from The Neem Tree Trust

I visited St Luke's in January 2009 and once again had a wonderful time with the patients and children. I toured both the male and female wards and saw for myself the beds which are sponsored by the donors and the ongoing work being carried out to care for the patients. I met the new Chief Medical Superintendent, Dr Kingsly Robert Gnanadurai, who has taken over from Dr Jeyabalan who, after 35 years of dedicated service to St Luke's, has taken well-earned retirement.

I also met Mr Subramanian and Mrs Pitchammaal, who are both ex-leprosy patients. Mr Subramanian was admitted as an in-patient to St Luke's and, after regular treatment, his ulcers were healed. He was taught how to make and repair chappals (sandals) and is now earning a decent wage as shoemaker.

He met Pitchammaal who is an orphan and "with mutual understanding" they got married. They have a baby boy, whose name is Jeyabalachandran (named after Dr Jeyabalan and his wife Chandra!) and they are very happy now. Mr Subramanian says "today I have a hold on my life and dignity in the society and I am very thankful to St Luke's as well as to The Leprosy Mission".



Mr Subramanian and Mrs Pitchammaal with their baby boy, Jeyabalachandran



Fitting specially made rubber shoes for one of the patients at St Luke's

Footwear is very important to people who have suffered from leprosy. One characteristic occurrence is foot drop where the foot cannot be flexed upwards, affecting the ability to walk. The loss of sensation in the fingers and toes also increases the risk of injury. Special rubber footwear is made at St Luke's Leprosy Hospital and this is of utmost importance to the patients in preventing ulcers forming on their feet.

**We hope you have enjoyed reading our latest newsletter.
Thank you for supporting us during the year!!**