



THE NEEM TREE TRUST NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2015

Thank you very much for the support you have given us in raising funds for the Boys' Home in Tirunelveli and St Luke's Leprosy Hospital, Peikulam. During the year April 2014 - March 2015 The Neem Tree Trust was represented at the following events:

John Kendall's stall at Rowdeford School Fete
Mike & Alison's Coffee Morning, Winsley
Pat's Indian Evening, Dilton Marsh
Food & Wine Evening, West Barn, Bradford on Avon
Con Brio Concert, Steeple Ashton
Inner Wheel Yeovil Coffee Morning
Christmas Tree Festival, Trinity Church, Bradford on Avon

The above events generated £4,228 and £358 came from other miscellaneous sales.

In May 2014 Pat and I were invited to give a presentation to the Women's Institute Federation at Winchester. We were warmly welcomed by everyone and the donation we received together with sales of Neem Tree Trust items amounted to £372.

We claimed Gift Aid of £4,044 from the Inland Revenue on donations from UK taxpayers.

In August 2014 we sent out our annual newsletter to supporters giving them an update on the children's progress and inviting them 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 £31,430.

Included in the above figure is £3,976 donated by the following organisations:

Crisp Cowley Estate Agents, Bath
Projects Abroad, Goring, Sussex
Bradford on Avon United Church

Rotork Controls Ltd, Bath
Merchiston Castle School, Edinburgh
Zion Chapel, Isle of Wight



Donations in memory of loved ones are very special gifts and are deeply appreciated by our charity. It is a wonderful way to celebrate someone's life and we were very grateful to receive donations in memory of the following special friends and supporters:

Gilly Surr, Joan Macintosh, Win Knight and Peter Roland

SCHT BOYS HOME

During the financial year 2014/2015 The Neem Tree Trust provided a grant of £25,877 to the SCHAT Boys' Home to pay for:

- Assistance with welfare and rehabilitation when the boys return to their villages after leaving the home.
- Improvements to the buildings and facilities on the campus, including the outdoor dining and play area.
- A new vehicle to transport the children to and from school.
- Support for boys going on to further education

I visited the SCHAT Boys' Home in January 2015 and stayed with the children for one month. A wonderfully warm welcome, drawn on a blackboard, was waiting for me when I arrived!



During my visit this year a reunion was organised for the many boys who, having grown up at the home, had left at the age of 19 to find their way in the world. Over 50 boys came back to the home and enjoyed an evening of song and dance and a special meal. Many came on their specially adapted motor bikes, some came with their wives and children and they all spoke very movingly of their time at the boys' home and how Dr Karuna Chelliah and The Neem Tree Trust had given them opportunities in life they could not have dreamed of when they were young. This was a very moving occasion for me and made me fully realise how much our efforts are appreciated and what a difference you all have made to the lives of these young men and their families.



ST LUKE'S LEPROSY HOSPITAL

Through The Neem Tree Trust, a number of supporters of St Luke's have made donations towards the feeding programme set up at the hospital for the benefit of the in-patients and children as well as sponsoring individual children. During the financial year 2014/2015 the Trust provided a grant of £12,000 to St Luke's Leprosy Hospital.

ONE PATIENT'S STORY During my visit to St Luke's in January this year I met all the patients at the hospital including Rajathi who was occupying one of The Neem Tree Trust sponsored beds in the women's ward. Many years ago, Rajathi noticed some painful red nodules all over her body. Unaware of the signs and symptoms of leprosy, Rajathi did not seek treatment and after few months the nerves of her hands and legs were swollen and she was in severe pain. She thought that these nodules were due to an insect bite allergy so she took Siddha medicines and applied some kind of oil on her hands and feet but there was no improvement. The leprosy bacteria destroyed the sensory and muscle nerves and she developed deep ulcers in her feet and hands.



After many years she was advised to seek treatment at St Luke's and on her arrival they admitted her as an inpatient. Through a series of minor surgeries and the administration of adequate antibiotics her ulcers have healed completely. To protect her feet from recurrent ulcers she was given special protective foot wear and advised to apply to the Government for the disability aid meant for leprosy patients.

Since her husband deserted her when he discovered she had leprosy, St Luke's have kept her permanently in the hospital and she is now working as a ward attendant and helping the other patients. St Luke's is very grateful to The Neem Tree Trust for adopting Rajathi, as well as many other patients, and enabling them to be treated FREE OF CHARGE.

Most of the children at the hostel at St Luke's are children of leprosy patients. These children attend the nearby Higher Secondary School. In the early days, due to the stigma of leprosy, the public did not allow the leprosy patients' children to attend this school. After the Medical Superintendent personally visited this school and gave talks on leprosy health education to the staff and the parents of children the school management has encouraged the St Luke's children to study in this school and now a few of the children are top in the class.



After completing their schooling the children are sent for their higher studies to Industrial Training Institutions, Arts Colleges, Polytechnic Colleges, and Government Medical Colleges. The Leprosy Mission's Regional Vocational Training Centre at Vadathorasalur gives free ITI training to the children of leprosy patients. St.Luke's send children for this ITI training every year. A few of the children are studying para medical courses at Government Medical Colleges.

One of our supporters in Wiltshire had made some lovely hair clips and I took them to India to give them to the young girls at St Luke's. They looked beautiful clipped onto their hair which they keep glossy and shiny by applying coconut oil everyday. They were more than happy to show off their new gifts!

FUNDRAISING

BILL HAZELWOOD of Wiltshire Timbercrafts has generously donated a number of items to The Neem Tree Trust which he has handcrafted in his workshop in the village of Whitley, Wiltshire. Bill has been making original handcrafted furniture for 50 years. All the items are designed and made in his own well-equipped workshop where only native hardwoods are used, these being chosen with great care 'in the log'.

Bill is always willing to receive customers at his home to see production and talk about items of furniture you may wish to buy or commission. You can visit his website at: www.wiltshiretimbercraft.co.uk.



CERI PIMBLETT

I first met Ceri in 1999 when we were both volunteering with Teaching Abroad in India. We became firm friends and Ceri has always referred to me as her "Indian Mummy"! Since that time Ceri has married her wonderful husband, Steve, they have five beautiful children between them and they now live in Malta.

Last year Ceri ran the Chester Half Marathon, the Port Sunlight 10K and the Rhyl Marathon in memory of Ken and raised over £1,200 for The Neem Tree Trust. She has ambitions to run the New York Marathon so watch this space.....

CON BRIO is a mixed voice choir of 35 voices based in Bradford on Avon. They were established in October 2002 and have performed in a variety of venues both local and further afield raising thousands of pounds for charity. On Sunday 14th December 2014 we were privileged when the choir sang at St Mary's Parish Church, Steeple Ashton for the benefit of The Neem Tree Trust. Christmas songs, some audience carols and readings were followed by tea and cakes in the church and over £275 was raised for our charity.



Our friend John Kendall continues to support us by rising incredibly early each weekend and searching for treasures at boot sales to sell on behalf of the NTT.

Last year he raised £2500 for our children in India.

Look out for his stall at Rowdeford School Summer Fair on Sunday 15th May 2016.





TEDDY BEARS UK based charity "Teddies for Tragedies" acts as a central location where charities and volunteers from all over the world who want teddies can ask for them. It puts teddy-knitting groups in contact with each other and helps knitters and groups find homes for their teddies (and other knitted items). Countries that benefit include Malawi, Kenya, Peru, Uganda, Tanzania, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Romania. www.teddiesfortragedies.org.uk. Each teddy is beautifully knitted and comes in its own drawstring bag. I was delighted to receive an email from Lesley Hunt from Bradford on Avon, a teddy distributor, who offered over 50

teddies for the children we support. I arranged for them to be sent out to India and you can see from the children's faces how delighted they were to receive them!

FOOD & WINE EVENING 50 of our supporters enjoyed a wonderful evening at the West Barn in Bradford on Avon on Thursday 27th November 2014. John Philpot, together with Rob Hunt of Ruby Red, organised a cooking demonstration and wine tasting which included a truly delicious ploughman's supper. The lucky winners of a quiz sat at candelabra-lit table to enjoy the food cooked by John and assisted by his daughter Katie.

As well as demonstrating three different dishes, John regaled us with stories of his time as a chef at the Dorchester and Rob brought along some delicious wines for us to sample. Everyone enjoyed a really memorable evening and over £500 was raised for the children in India.



Christine and Babs enjoying Giant American-style prawns



Star Chef John assisted by his daughter Katie

MIKE & ALISON'S COFFEE MORNING

Last year Mike & Alison's Coffee Morning raised an incredible £1,653 plus Gift Aid which we were able to claim from the Inland Revenue on some donations.

This year Mike and Alison's coffee morning will be held as usual at their home at 22 Late Broads, Winsley on Friday 23rd October between 10.00am and 12 noon. Everyone is very welcome to come along. There will be the usual delicious cakes baked by our small band of loyal supporters, goods for sale made by the children in India, handcrafted wooden items and of course Mike's tombola.



ARUMUGAM is a boy who was affected by polio as a child and grew up at the Boys' Home. With the help of the Neem Tree Trust he now has his own tailoring business, "Alex Tailoring". He is a fine tailor and is building up a good customer base. He also makes many of the items we sell at our NTT events, and is training up new boys. In spite of his success he has not had any formal training and does not have academic certificates which would enable him to seek more work in the future. The Neem Tree Trust is therefore paying for him to attend an Industrial Training Institution for two days a week which fits in very well with his tailoring business and will improve his future prospects.



We are also supporting six more boys through college by paying their fees and food and lodging at the home. They come from very poor backgrounds and would not be able to continue their education without your help.



The newest arrival at the boys' home is baby Sally, who is the daughter of the senior warden, Dhina and his wife Glory. She was born on 23rd December 2014, a sister for their first-born daughter, Gladys.

Mr Jeremy's Vegetable Garden continues to provide for the children's daily needs. Dhina is pictured here with four of the boys and some bottle gourds they have just harvested.



A PLAQUE IN A SPECIALLY PLANTED FLOWER GARDEN AT THE BOYS' HOME IN MEMORY OF "FATHER KEN"



The new vehicle purchased by The Neem Tree Trust to take the children safely to and from school