

THE NEEM TREE TRUST NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 2018

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.

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 are very grateful to the family of Christine Sylvester, of Bradford-on-Avon, who asked for contributions in her memory to be donated to The Neem Tree Trust.

FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

During the year The Neem Tree Trust was represented at the following events:

Christina Cornish's Open Gardens, Byde Mill, Corsham
John Kendall's stall at Rowde School Fete
Inner Wheel Club Yeovil Coffee Morning
John Kendall's Stall Mead Nursery
Mike & Alison's Coffee Morning, Winsley
John Kendall's Christmas stall



The above generated £6,678 and £997 came from other miscellaneous sales.

Kathy gave talks on the work of The Neem Tree Trust to the following groups:



Combe Down Ladies
United Church, Trowbridge, Woman's Hour
Keynsham Homemakers
Longwell Green Mothers Union
Wednesday Women's Group Midsomer Norton

A total of £666 was kindly donated by these groups.

John Kendall raised over £3600 for The Neem Tree Trust with his antiques and collectables. Look out for details of where he will be next year and snatch a bargain.

The following organisations generously made donations to The Neem Tree Trust amounting to £2097.

Ashton Mill Services
Rotary Club Bradford on Avon
Wroughton Vale Rotary Club
St Nicholas Church, Winsley
Colerne PCC
The Medlock Trust



SCHT BOYS HOME

During our Financial Year 2017/2018 the Trust provided a grant of £20,790 to the SCHAT Boys' Home.

Kathy Miller visited the home in January 2018 and stayed with the children for four weeks. Here are two of the boys' stories.

VELANKANI



Velankani is 17 years old and joined the boys' home in 2005, when he was just 4 years old. He lost both his father and mother at very early age and was brought up by his grandmother, who also later died. His aunt who is a widow is his only relative and she is also very poor.

Velankani is a very intelligent and well-disciplined boy. He is interested in learning the keyboard and tabla. Now he is writing his XII Std examination and he is very willing to pursue further studies at college. He is a native of Kadalaiyur in Thothukudi District.



Velankani with Kathy's son James on a trip to Delhi with the boys in 2010

MARIMUTHU



Marimuthu is 12 years old and he is studying VIII Std. He came to the boys' home in 2016. Marimuthu lost his parents at very early age and was brought up by his Periyappa (Father's elder brother). His Periyappa was an old man and also very poor. Since he found it very difficult to make ends meet he asked if the home could admit him, hoping that the future of this boy would be safe and secure. He is a very nice boy and very co-operative in the activities of the home. He is most interested in sports activities - particularly playing the game of Kabadi, which is a popular contact sport in Southern Asia that first originated in Ancient India. It is played across the

country and is the official game in the states of Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Telangana and Maharashtra.



The Boys' Home was started with the noble purpose of supporting differently-abled boys and orphans and even now it is a shelter for such boys. Without the backing of generous people like yourselves this would not be possible and the boys and staff constantly express their gratitude for your continuing support.

ST LUKE'S LEPROSY HOSPITAL

Dr. R. Vedabodakam established St Luke's hospital in 1954. The 65th Anniversary of the hospital was celebrated on 21st May 2018 as Founder's Day, the 130th Birthday of Dr. R. Vedabodakam.

100% of the hospital's expenses are met by donors and well wishers. Donations come through various adoption schemes tailor made for the need of leprosy patients and children.

Through The Neem Tree Trust, 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 their children as well as sponsoring beds in the wards and individual children. During our Financial Year 2017/2018 the Trust provided a grant of £10,000 to St Luke's Leprosy Hospital and we are proud to be one of the hospital's major donors.



When Kathy visited St Luke's Leprosy Hospital in January 2018 the gentlemen occupying The Neem Tree Trust bed in memory of her husband, Ken Miller, was Mr P Murugan. He is a 55 year old man married to Sivagami and they have three married daughters.

Many years ago Murugan noticed some pink coloured patches over his chest, abdomen and left arm. Since these did not hurt him he did not bother to seek any treatment. He did not know that these were the symptoms of leprosy so he did not go to a hospital and the disease spread even further. Leprosy bacteria destroyed the sensory nerves in both his hands and feet. Since there was no sensation, he could not feel touch, pain, heat or cold with his hands and feet.

He was an agricultural coolie worker. Whilst working in the fields, a thorn pricked and injured his foot. He did not feel the

injury and continued to walk with the injured foot without seeking any treatment. He was eventually advised by an ex-patient to go for treatment to St. Luke's Leprosarium.

Through a series of minor surgeries they removed all the devitalised tissues and dead bones and then gave him suitable antibiotic cover. Now the ulcers on his feet have begun to heal and in a few months they will be completely better.

He has been given special protective footwear to prevent recurrent ulcers and St Luke's have helped him apply to the government to get the disability aid meant for leprosy patients.

We are very grateful to our supporters for enabling us to assist St Luke's in the care of Mr Murugan.

There are a number of ongoing projects at St Luke's for which funding is needed including:

The renovation of the women's ward, including the replacement of the asbestos roof.

Purchase of a steam boiler for the hygienic preparation of food for the patients and staff.

Purchase of a commercial washing machine that will take 100kg of clothes.

Repair of the dilapidated structures of the rehabilitation centre.

More information on the needs of the hospital can be found on the hospital's website www.leprosarium.org.



Patients outside the women's ward



ROTARY AND YEOVIL INNER WHEEL SUPPORTS US ONCE AGAIN



In April 2017 Patricia Kinzett and Kathy Miller were invited to a coffee morning organised by The Inner Wheel Club of Yeovil, in aid of The Neem Tree Trust.

This was the second coffee morning the ladies of the club had held for the benefit of the children we support in India and we are extremely grateful for their continuing support.

The club members were particularly surprised and delighted to get a personal letter of thanks from Mrs Princess Chelliah, at the Boys' Home. We hope very much that our association with The Inner Wheel Club of Yeovil continues into the future.



Many children in rural India are quite unused to sleeping in beds and sleep on the floor with no complaints. However, an inspection from the State Child Protection Society in India recommended that the home should consider purchasing beds for the children in the future. We were delighted when the Rotary Club of Wrington Vale and Bradford on Avon Rotary Club both made donations to assist us in purchasing 15 bunk beds for the boys with extra funds coming from the Yeovil Inner Wheel Coffee Morning.

When Kathy visits the boys' home each year the children celebrate "Father Ken's" Birthday on the 21st January. We share a Birthday cake and we remember the love and support Ken gave Kathy when she first visited India in 1999. He was the co-founder of The Neem Tree Trust and had a unique and outstanding love for the children.



YOUNG PEOPLE OF OAKLEY HOLIDAYS SUPPORT ST LUKE'S LEPROSY HOSPITAL



Established in 1919, Oakley Holidays is a registered charity organised on a voluntary, not-for-profit basis, and run to provide opportunities for young people primarily aged between 12-18.

Holidays for up to 100 people are held during school Easter and summer breaks and last for one week. They currently hire the facilities of Bilton Grange Preparatory School at Dunchurch, just south of Rugby for their activities. The Charity's objects are to benefit children aged 12-18 through their leisure time activities, specifically through the provision of holidays, so as to develop their physical, mental and spiritual well-being, in order that they may grow to full maturity as individuals and members of society.

For the last ten years the young people at Oakley Holidays have supported St Luke's Leprosy Hospital during their Easter and summer breaks as part of their charity collection and also by feeding 5 pence pieces to their china pig, Megabucks, at the tuck shop!

This year the leaders of Oakley Holidays invited Patricia Kinzett and Kathy Miller to visit Rugby to bring the young people up to date with the work of St Luke's and to give a demonstration of how to wear traditional Indian costumes.

We had an extremely enjoyable and inspirational afternoon in the company of these young people and their leaders, and it was heartening to discover how keen they were to learn about the south Indian way of life and particularly the work of The Neem Tree Trust and the support the charity gives to St Luke's.



We claimed Gift Aid of £3273 from the Inland Revenue on donations from UK taxpayers.

In September 2017 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 £23,159.

MIKE & ALISON'S COFFEE MORNING

At Mike & Alison's Coffee Morning we raised an amazing £1,807.50. This year Mike & Alison's Coffee Morning will be held on Thursday 1st November at their home, 22 Late Broads, Winsley, between 10.00am and 12 noon. Everyone is welcome so please come along to support us!

OPEN GARDENS BYDE MILL, CORSHAM

We would like to thank Christina & Richard Cornish and Sue Bevan for kindly opening their gardens once again at Byde Mill, Corsham, in aid of our charity on 1st July this year. We are also grateful to their neighbour, Mr Paul Weaver, for providing space for car parking on his land. There were a number of stalls selling plants, books and Neem Tree Trust items made by the children we support in India, as well as John Kendall's treasury of antiques and collectables.

This is the second time we have held this event in aid of The Neem Tree Trust and once again it was a huge success - raising over £2,030.00



John Kendall, Doug Weiss and Michael Manser supporting us at Byde Mill



Christina with our Neem Tree Trust team serving cakes and teas to our supporters at her Open Garden Event

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE WHO HAS HELPED US WITH OUR FUNDRAISING.

NEXT YEAR WILL BE THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF KATHY'S FIRST VISIT TO INDIA AND HER ASSOCIATION WITH THE BOYS' HOME AND ST LUKE'S LEPROSY HOSPITAL.

WE WOULD LIKE TO MARK THIS REALLY SIGNIFICANT OCCASION AND WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR ANY OFFERS TO HOLD AN EVENT TO HELP US CELEBRATE.