



Registered Charity 1110022

JUNE 2011

REBUILDING SHATTERED LIVES



Kirankulam playgroup during the floods

Welcome to our 12th newsletter. 2011 has been a busy year starting with the devastating floods of January. Several of our playgroups were damaged and sponsor children had to move to temporary accommodation in camps and church halls. Our flood appeal raised over £1500 and we were able to help directly some of those affected by the floods. .



SHONA REFLECTS ON HER RETURN TO SRI LANKA AFTER HER INITIAL VISIT IN 2005.

In April this year, I had the privilege of accompanying Dilanee on a return visit to Sri Lanka, five and half years after my initial visit which took place several months after the tsunami. A lot has happened in those five years; notably the civil war, flooding, the establishment of EOSL and a tenfold increase in the number of Ocean Stars Projects!

As somebody who has been involved with Ocean Stars since its inception, this trip gave me a chance to see not only how the initial projects which OST had been involved have developed but also to see how the new projects were meeting the needs of the beneficiaries.



We had a lot to pack into our eight days, so after our 11.5 hour flight we got straight to work and set off on our 6 hour journey to Grace Children's Home in Vavuniya which is in the north of Sri Lanka. This home has been supported by OST through Heatherside Infant School in Fleet for five years now.

I was struck by how warm and welcoming it was. To be honest, I was not expecting the home to be quite so homely, given that until recently, the home was located in the heart of the conflict area. I believe that this is down to two main reasons; firstly Mrs Nadarajah, the founder and matron mother to the boys and also to Ocean Stars, who as a charity has been fairly unique in my opinion in that it has partnered Grace for the long term and helped it to grow and develop. OST has not been like many other charities which give & then walk away. Not only does OST continually support the home financially but it also gives emotional and social support through regular visits and continued contact.



Mrs Nadarajah told us that she and all the boys would like to thank Ocean Stars for all the support we have given them over the last six years. "You have transformed our lives and the children look forward to your visits every year."



A new pair of shoes for a child costs £3. Your donations really do help. Thank you.

Thanks to Janaki: On behalf of all the trustees I would like to thank Janaki for her support, guidance and tireless work for Ocean Stars since 2005. We wish her well in her future endeavours. We thank her especially for the links she has established between St Luke's Primary school and Tarneland nursery in Brighton and playgroups in Sri Lanka.



Special points of interest:

Over £180,000 raised so far and currently funding over 25 projects:

- Focus on building wells and toilets for playgroups.
- Some roads damaged by floods but were being repaired in April 2011.
- Ben Carter resigns as OST Treasurer and Andrew Marshall steps into this vital role.
- Janaki Jayasuriya long standing trustee resigns after 6 years loyal service
- 500 children received uniforms from Christmas gift catalogue donations 2010
- Website updated
- Team of 12 volunteers prepare to go out in October 2011
- Shona and Dilanee visit 2005 post tsunami THOTEN project and catch up with two team members

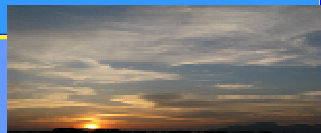




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GIFT CATALOGUE

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS

2011



One of the highlights of Shona and Dilanee's trip was the distribution of Gift Catalogue donations to recipients. The joy and happiness on the faces of children who received their first pair of school shoes or a bicycle to get to school will stay with us ever. Manjula receives her first ever bicycle to help her get to school.



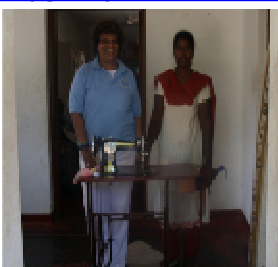
Shona presents new shoes for children whose parents cannot afford the £3.00 to buy a pair of shoes.



OST teachers wearing sarees donated by Ocean Stars receive uniforms for the children at their playgroup.



Rani proudly receives her new sewing machine. She is looking forward to starting her own sewing business and thanks Ocean Stars for giving her the opportunity to earn her own income.



Tables and chairs for children as well as a teacher's chair being distributed to playgroup teachers. A tractor was hired to transport the furniture to the playgroups; a journey of two hours.



Dilanee and Shona distributed the gift catalogue gifts to recipients who had travelled from afar to receive them. Words cannot express how grateful they were. All the gifts presented will undoubtedly make a huge difference to their lives and this shone through their wide beaming smiles.

SHONA CONTINUES HER REFLECTIONS ON HER RETURN TO SRI LANKA AFTER HER INITIAL VISIT IN 2005.

TRINCOMALEE

Our second stop was Trinco. Personally, this was quite an emotional day as I finally got to meet the children that both myself and my parents sponsor. It was simply wonderful to meet the children and their families in their home environment. Both families welcomed me into their homes and valued the time we had together. We then spent time with Janabdeen and his family. Janabdeen is the person who looks after all the sponsor families locally in Trinco on behalf of OST. Given the low level of awareness of English amongst these very poor families, he is a key link, and tries to keep the communication flow going between the Trinco families and their sponsor families in the UK.



CHILD SPONSORSHIP

Many Thanks to all our current child sponsors. We are always short of sponsors for our sponsorship programmes. It costs £10 a month and all the money goes directly to the family in Sri Lanka. We have 12 children who still need to be sponsored for 2011 so please contact us at the address on the front of the newsletter if you would like to sponsor a child. We also have short term sponsorship for older children who would like to be sponsored for three years while continuing their higher education. If you would like to be involved in this scheme then please do contact us. The money you send makes a phenomenal difference to the life of a child in Sri Lanka.

BATTICALOA

Shona continues... Our next stop was Batticaloa and to finally meet the OSL (Ocean Stars Lanka) Team. OSL is a not for profit organisation established in Sri Lanka and it is through this body that OST runs many of its key projects. OSL is managed by Ranchan and his team of five people who look after the projects in the Eastern province. Their primary focus is on pre-school education although its remit is broadening around this area. On our first day in Batti we were able to distribute several of our gift catalogue donations.



OSL Team from left to right back row: Dilanee, Christie (Field worker) Ranchan (Chairman) Mr Bavan (treasurer). Front row; Field workers Kugadashini, Thulia and Ranjini.

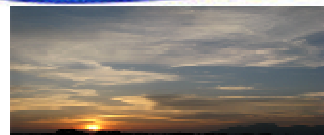


Ranchan and Christie busy at work



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OST/ SRI LANKA LINKS, PARTNERSHIPS

The following are some of the schools, playgroups and colleges that have links with projects in Sri Lanka.

- St Luke's primary school in Brighton
- Tarneland nursery Brighton
- Heatherside Infant School Fleet
- Charlton Horethorne Primary School, Somerset
- Forth Valley College, Falkirk
- Fleet Baptist Church Playgroup

If you would like to link up with a project in Sri Lanka then please do not hesitate to contact us.

GIFT AID

If you are a new donor please contact us about receiving a Gift Aid form. If you are a taxpayer, we are able to claim tax back on your donation.

Gift Aid is an extremely important form of finance to OST. It should be noted that if you are a higher rate tax payer, you may be able to obtain further relief on your Gift Aid donation in your tax return.

LITTLE STARS PLAYGROUP

It was also during our time in Batti that we were able to visit and lay the foundation stone of the first ever OST nursery, which will be called "Little Stars." This project was instigated by OST trustee, Matt Marshall, who has been fundraising for the construction of this nursery. It was located in a very remote area. Although it was only 30 kilometres away from Batti, it took us two hours to get there including the ferry! The area is probably the poorest area in Sri Lanka that we visited. The roads are mere dust tracks, there is no industry and the children have to walk an hour to get to school each day. The nearby villages have been badly bombed as this area was in the heart of the Tamil Tiger territory. The wildlife is immense with water buffalo and peacocks roaming freely! Dilanee laid the foundation stone and construction is now well under way & we hope to have the official opening ceremony in October 2011 when Team 11 visits.



GREEN PROJECT

Next door to Matt's nursery is the site of the Green Project and it was pleasing to meet the family who is going to provide the land and support the development of this project. Fundraising for this project continues and we hope to begin work shortly. As there is low level of employment in this area, it will provide a real economic boost to the local community.



GALLE

Our last stop of the day was to see an after-school project outside Galle which OST has been supporting for the past two years. The project is located in a new hilly post-tsunami village a good 30 minutes from Galle. The residents were all displaced in the aftermath of the tsunami and many lost immediate family members. They were rehoused in this post-tsunami village and many of the residents told us about how many of them found it hard to cope not being able to live near the sea.

This project provides extra tuition and support after school, something that most parents consider vital but few are able to financially provide. Dilanee and I were treated to a truly sensational performance by the children keen to show us what they had learnt in the classes. Most of the children were fascinated by us and keen to learn all about the way we lived in the UK.



TEDDIES



Each year the OST Team take with them teddies knitted by people all over the UK to give to children in Sri Lanka. Team 2010 took over 600 teddies with them this October. For a child who has no toys a teddy gives them something to cuddle and hold and possess. If anyone would like to knit teddies for us then please do so and get in touch with us to arrange collection. If you would like to knit a teddy for Ocean Stars then you can find the pattern at www.teddiesfortragedies.com



VISITS TO SRI LANKA

Janaki along with Helen, Sheila, Jo and Sarah visited Batticaloa in July 2010. Megan and Ruth, both students at University of East Anglia and studying International Development, will be doing their placements with OST in the summer of 2011.

OST has made so many people so happy. Thank you.



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JANAKI REFLECTS ON HER TRIP IN JULY 2010

People are genuinely warm and hospitable and can't do enough to please. They seem to be able to combine hard work with smiles and laughter showing no outward signs of stress. Nothing is too much trouble and everything we did was soaked up and appreciated. Our five days in Batti were mainly spent teaching

in different nursery schools apart from one day where we facilitated a teachers' workshop for 12 teachers. The teachers do a remarkable job with little resources and their love and kindness is apparent when you see the children happy and secure within their environment. It didn't matter that we were Sinhalese, Tamil, Scottish, and Welsh, we worked hard and laughed ourselves senseless at times. As a new dawn rises on Batti, we leave with a deeper understanding of humanity and a greater generosity of spirit. Thank you everyone for a truly memorable time.



FUND RAISING EVENTS 2011: Comrie Weekend (18/19 June) in Perthshire where Helen Oliver will be fund raising for Wells and toilets for playgroups. A Café Theatre in Fleet raised £600 and our annual Curry Evening raised £500.

Web Shop: www.buy.at/Oceanstars

We would like to remind you to shop at www.buy.at/Oceanstars. All you have to do is log on to our web shop at www.buy.at/Oceanstars and select the retailer that you would like to shop from. You will then be directed to the normal on-line web shop of your choice. Any purchases you make from the retailers will generate commission for Ocean Stars - at no additional cost to yourself. Many of the big-name on-line retailers feature on the web shop e.g. Amazon, Marks & Spencer, John Lewis etc and many have **free postage**. The commission they pay Ocean Stars is our reward for promoting their retailer.

Spicy Dhal Curry

METHOD

Dhal is the staple curry of a Sri Lankan meal. Eat with rice, roti or bread.



INGREDIENTS

- 200G dhal (red split lentils)
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp crushed fennel seed
- 50g chopped onion
- 1 tsp crushed garlic
- A few curry leaves
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1/2 tsp mustard
- 1 tomato chopped
- 2 cups water
- 1 tsp salt

Take a saucepan and boil the dhal, water, salt and turmeric until the dhal is soft. In a large frying pan, heat the oil. When it is hot add mustard seeds first, then add garlic and ginger and fry until brown. Now add curry leaves, onions, fennel and fry until the onions are brown. Add tomatoes and cook for about three minutes. Now add the cooked dhal and heat on low for about five minutes.



The word "curry" originates from the Tamil name for spiced sauces "Kari."

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter. We hope you continue to support our work in making a difference to the lives of the people of Sri Lanka. Donations made payable to "Ocean Stars Trust" can be sent to us at the above address. We will continue to keep you updated with our work

May God Bless you. Budhu Saranay.

Dilaneer Bunter: Founder, John Bunter: Chairman, Andrew Marshall: Treasurer, Joanna Barton: Secretary

Janaki Jayasuriya: Trustee, Maureen Johnston: Trustee, Bron Lambert: Trustee, Matthew Marshall: Trustee

Trustees of the Ocean Stars Trust, Registered Charity 1110022

