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ESTABLISHED APRIL 2005

Newsletter 21: JUNE 2015



2015 Highlights

- New Ocean Stars Lanka Team started work in April 2015
- Two Secondary Schools in Batticaloa to be visited by students of Calthorpe Park School, Fleet.
- 31 UK volunteers to visit Sri Lanka and Ocean Stars projects for 12 days in October 2015.
- New Pre School opened in Naripulthotam and a new classroom in Killinochi.

CURRENT WISH LIST

£25 per month needed to sponsor a teacher. 10 teachers still to be sponsored.

£10 per month to sponsor a child. 10 children still on waiting list.

£125: A sewing machine to help women start up a business.

PAGE 1: Chair's Message, and Ocean Stars Lanka Team.

PAGE 2: Reflecting on 10 years of OST.

PAGE 3: Kate Whyatt, OST Treasurer, takes a year off to explore the Oceans and Stars. Gift Aid. Easy Fundraising.

PAGE 4: Update on OST visit to Sri Lanka April 2015.

Ocean Stars Trust 2015 Ten Years On

OST Chair John Bunter writes about "Moving On", in the Spring of 2015...



It was on 21 April 2005 that four of us, Dilanee, Jo Barton (Secretary-elect), Shona Holroyd (Treasurer-elect) and myself, met to discuss about setting up a charity in the aftermath of Dilanee's "Mercy mission" to Sri Lanka a month before. Looking at the Minutes of that meeting, amongst our Agreed Actions were to a) Apply for Charity Status, b) Explore means of gaining more funds, c) Report from her SL visit by Dilanee, and d) Research organisations to whom we could present our new Charity. This was the beginning of a fascinating journey for all of us, including Trustees, donors, recipients of

our donated funds, and for those in Sri Lanka who have gained employment through us. I am not sure we actually visualised where we would be "Ten Years On"...

We marked "TYO" with a fundraising "Party" on 21 March in Fleet, which I am sure many of our readers will remember as a pleasant evening, with a bit of entertainment, a bit of OST news, a speech or two, good (all donated) refreshments, music and pictures, and a time to meet and chat. From the Trustees' point of view, it was great to meet with many of our donors and friends from over the years.

I was able to report in my words of welcome how the Trustees had just completed a very professional-looking "Away Day" conference to discuss "Where Next for OST?"

So... we are moving on from the strapline "Rebuilding Shattered Lives" to "Empowering Children in Sri Lanka". Readers will appreciate that OST has moved on from just funding Capital projects, to now establishing pre-schools, paying their teachers, and continuing with a range of child sponsorship. We are now also moving forward, as we agreed on our February Away Day, towards building the capacity of OSL (Ocean Stars Lanka, our Batticaloa-based office) so they begin to be self-supporting, and gain their own charitable income.

Again, readers will have observed over the years of this Newsletter the many different activities of OST. But be assured that we are indeed always thinking on how the Charity should be progressing.

John Bunter Chair, OST



OCEAN STARS LANKA TEAM: Kiruthika: Field Worker, Diana: Manager, Shihani: Office Worker, Mr Bavan: Treasurer and Field Worker.

We now have a new Team working for us and they are all looking forward to the next ten years. "We are all proud to be part of Ocean Stars family. You help the poor children of our region with their education. This gives them value to their lives. We give our heart full to all the donors who enable us to do our work. May God Bless you all. From Diana, Kiruthika, Shihani and Mr Bavan."

OCEAN STARS 2005-2015: Reflections of the last ten years of Ocean Stars Trust

WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED?

★ SPONSORSHIP SCHEMES ★

We have sponsored 175 children to date. We have also supported over 420 children and two Children's Homes by sending monthly donations to cover food and clothing for the children. The families always comment on how much the money helps with their children's education. To sponsor a child for £10 a month please contact Jo Barton : oceanstarstrust@gmail.com

★ BUILDING PLAYGROUPS ★

Karaveddy Playgroup, Little Stars Playgroup, Shining Stars Playgroup and Barathi Playgroup. This has meant that children who live in these remote communities are now able to access a pre-school education which sets them up for their life in education. It costs £10,000 to build and furnish a playgroup.

★ SUPPORTING PLAYGROUPS ★

Ocean Stars works with 18 playgroups. We pay the wages of the teachers, provide the children with uniform and school bags, the teachers with a bag and sari. We also provide each pre-school with resources they need during the school year. It costs £25 a month to sponsor a teacher's wages.

★ PRE-SCHOOL LINKS BETWEEN UK AND OST PRE-SCHOOLS, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS ★

We have set up cultural links between pre schools and schools in the UK and Sri Lanka. A group of 19 students and teachers from Calthorpe Park School in Fleet will be visiting their link schools for the third successive year in October 2015. Connaught Primary School in Bagshot donated funds to equip a primary school with electricity so that the students can access after-school clubs and classes.

★ GIFT CATALOGUE ★

Recipients of our GC Gifts are always grateful for the support OST gives them in setting up their own business. This April we distributed four sewing machines. The sewing ladies will pay back the cost of the machine in installments, thus and empowering OSL to earn their own income.

★ VOLUNTEERS ★

Several UK and world-wide volunteers have spent time helping out on OST projects in Sri Lanka. The message we often get is "they have so little but give so much."

★ FUNDRAISING ★

Regular activities include Curry Evenings, Variety Shows, and many sponsored events.



Mahadeva Children's Home - ongoing support since May 2013.



Kiruthika was sponsored by Ocean Stars in 2005. Now aged 22 she is working at the OSL office and is a paid member of staff. She translates for the teams when they visit and is hoping to go to

Grace Children's Home supported by OST from 2005 -2012. This home is situated in Vavuniya which was very much in the war zone during the ethnic con-



Karaveddy Playgroup rebuilt by Ocean Stars after the floods of January 2011.

Sponsor Children



A sewing machine £125

From Gift Catalogue



A Bike

£65

A Boat

£325

From Gift Catalogue



VOLUNTEERS REMINISCE

"We had met such amazing people with kind hearts and a great appreciation for what we were doing for them. It was hard to say goodbye, but we will never forget them "



OST Treasurer Kate Whyatt takes a year off to sail around the world with the Ocean and the Stars. We wish her Bon Voyage and Good Luck.

My Round the World Adventure

Last December I made the decision to join the Clipper 15-16 race and to race around the world in a 70 ft racing yacht. I had come to a time in my life where I needed a change in my day to day routine. I was thoroughly enjoying my GP14 sailing, helping out with Sailability at Frensham on Thursdays and Saturdays, and volunteering for Ocean Stars Trust, a charity that works with children in Sri Lanka, but my heart was not in my professional work anymore and I felt that it was time to take a break.

Why sail around the world you may ask? Because it's there, is one reason, but I also want to see the world from a different perspective. I don't think I have appreciated the size of the planet as I have travelled around at 30,000 ft so it is time to really understand how large and powerful the earth is as I go around at mean sea level. To experience sailing in the Southern Ocean, to watch the stars rise and set while on night watch, and to see the birds and sea life I have never seen before, are all reasons to make this trip. Fewer people have sailed around the world than have climbed Mount Everest – this is my Mount Everest.

What is the Clipper 15-16 race all about? This is a bi-annual race that was first launched back in 1996 by Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, this one being the tenth. The boats are a matched fleet of 70 ft ocean going vessels that have been specially designed to circumnavigate the world with an amateur crew. The course takes the boats more than 40,000 nautical miles right around the world, from west to east, and crew can either sign up for the complete circumnavigation or for one or more of the eight individual legs. This is a serious race and points are scored in a similar way to Formula1; 12 points for first, 11 for second, etc, with extra points for reaching a gate first, but also points deducted for, for example, rule infringements and equipment damage.

The skipper is a professional sailor and is responsible for guiding his/her amateur crew through the vagaries of the weather and sea states, and safely back to England. Ages vary from 18 to 70+ years with a mix of men and women from all walks of life. Amazingly, approximately 40% of those who sign up have never sailed before. Now that needs courage!!

As I travel the world I am hoping to raise money for two charities close to my heart, Ocean Stars Trust www.oceanstars.org.uk and Frensham Pond Sailability www.frenshampondsailability.org.uk. To this end I have set up a Virgin Money Giving page <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/KateWhyatt> and all donations will be split 50:50 between the two charities. Please support this epic adventure, a journey that is going to take me 45,000 miles around the world over 11 months, that is going to challenge me both physically and mentally and that will, at times, be terrifying.

Finally, in order to keep friends and family informed as to what I am up to as I prepare for and take part in the race I am writing a blog, so please have a look at www.katewhyatt.blogspot.co.uk



Ocean Stars Web-shop

Why not shop at www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/oceanstars?

All you have to do is visit our web shop at www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/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.

easyfundraising
.org.uk

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.

oceanstarstrust@gmail.com

ORGANISE A SPONSOR or FUND RAISING EVENT

Next Event:

FLEET ROCK CHOIR IN CONCERT

Church On The Heath,
Elvetham Heath: Fri 26 June
7.45 pm: £10 ticket.

Keep in touch

Keep in touch with us on your favourite social networks



@oceanstarstrust

REGULAR GIVING

If you would like to support our work then regular giving will help us plan better for our work.

Please contact us at

oceanstarstrust@gmail.com

We will send you all the details. £10 a month can transform a child's life in Sri Lanka.

Easter Visit 2015 to OST Projects in Eastern Sri Lanka

John joined Dilanee at Easter in a 9 day trip and it was an extremely busy time. With their first stop at Mahadeva Ashram Children's Home in Killinochi they formally opened the classroom funded by OST—mostly the funds that were raised by Phillip Wells' Barefoot Walk. The under 5 population at the Home has increased recently to almost 60 children, so OST has enabled pre-school education to be conducted in a safer environment. A quite amazing Opening Ceremony was arranged for this (see below left).

In Trincomalee Dilanee was pleased to present new fishing boats to two separate families. This allowed these fisherman to go further out to the sea to catch their load, rather than wade out to their necks to find fish. There was also a check on Vellaimanal pre-school, where many of our sponsor children were photographed to update progress for our kind sponsors in the UK.

The boats were donated from the OST catalogue and "Sorrows and Smiles" (an UK based project), and equally there were many more happy recipients from the OST catalogue and "Sorrows and Smiles" in Batticaloa, where John and Dilanee concluded their journey. Sewing machines, bicycles, a further boat, and chickens were given, and we hope readers may recall when and where they may have given these gifts.

John and Dilanee also opened the new Barathi pre-school building at Naripulthotam, were warmly welcomed by the Methodist minister at Mandoor, and also talked to the children at Kanthapoddi Primary School, where Connaught School, Bagshot, Surrey, had donated lighting for evening lessons to take place (see bottom right).



Ocean Stars Trust: EMPOWERING CHILDREN IN SRI LANKA

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



Dilanee Bunter: Founder, John Bunter: Chairman, Kate Whyatt Treasurer, Jo Barton: Secretary Maureen Johnston: Trustee



Matthew Marshall: Trustee, Danny Carter: Trustee Jennie Dunbar: OST Intern Ruth Hughes: Fund Raising Manager

Trustees and Committee of Ocean Stars Trust

REGISTERED CHARITY 1110022