

VIETNAM LAOS CAMBODIA



MEDICAL & SCIENTIFIC AID NEWS BULLETIN

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Celebrating Fifty Years of Aid to South-East Asia

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NEW HOPE CHILDREN'S HOME

In March, Trustees Mary and Peter Lidgard and Lynn and John Firth visited the New Hope Children's Home. It is situated in the countryside on the outskirts of Poi Pet, a city which is depressed, poor and scruffy. The Home is run by Rostitus and his wife Mara and is home, at present, to 26 children, either orphans, or from vulnerable or broken homes. There are many such children in Cambodia, where it is estimated that one third of the population live below the poverty line. Some of these children live on the streets, where they are vulnerable to alcohol and substance abuse, violence, trafficking and prostitution.

We last visited the Home in 2013 and we were keen to see how it was progressing, to inspect the shower block which MSAVLC had funded, and to witness the First Aid Project in progress, at the Home and at a neighbouring village.

We set off at 5.30 a.m. in a car with a local driver, for the long journey from Siem Reap to Poi Pet, which we reached in about three hours.

Rostitus meet us there and led us on his motorbike to a village just outside Poi Pet, where the First Aid Project was taking place. The neighbouring children were queuing up to be de-loused and treated for minor cuts and bruises. The village was very poor with corrugated iron or thatched houses, and litter and rubble scattered around. Most of the children were barefooted and wore ill-assorted clothes, but appeared

happy, and excited to meet the foreign visitors. We were glad to see that the First Aid Session was efficiently and kindly run.

When this session was finished we set off for the Children's Home, turning off the main road onto a dirt track, where we were thrown from side to side, as the car swerved to avoid the many deep pot-holes and gulleys. We reached the Children's Home in the village of Yeay Ort, and were shown around, recognising many of the children from 2 years ago. The children are housed in two separate buildings, one for girls and one for boys, with a dirt playing area in-between. We saw the shower block but unfortunately although the toilet was used, there was not enough clean water for the showers, as one of the rigid plastic pipes had fractured. Rostitus hopes to have this repaired in the near future. At present the children had to wash themselves in the kitchen, or sat on a chair with a bucket of water. Drinking water was collected from the ponds nearby and

boiled in a pan on an open fire. They were in desperate need of water filters.

At present the children were sleeping on mats on the floor and were in urgent need of mosquito nets, beds and other equipment. We were pleased to observe that the dining room floor had been tiled, an improvement from the dirt floor that was present on our last visit. Rostitus and his team grow rice, and are at present building a rice mill to provide food for the children. They hope to earn an income from the mill by processing their neighbour's rice. They also grow papaya and banana trees, and farm fish and chickens. The chicken house was made up of some of the old broken beds.

We had brought some toys with us, which were put on to a table and the children queued up in an orderly fashion to be given one each. It was a joy to see their eager little faces, and they were so patient! Every child received something and there were no squabbles or disputes.

Afterwards they played with their new toys, the older boys the footballs, and the younger ones settling in a circle to play with the Lego. What a world away from the commercialised western world that our children enjoy.

The Trustees of MSAVLC have since funded beds, mosquito nets, blankets, sleeping mats, storage boxes and a water filter for the Home. MSAVLC will try to continue to support the Home whenever it can.

Rostitus receives no funding from the



Unloading the beds, mats, mosquito nets and storage boxes

Cambodian Government, but is charged by them to register each child! However, he does receive some support from the local commune, and from Global Care, a Christian Charity based in Coventry, which gives them some financial support and help. But life is hard for everyone at the Home.

Apart from equipment which is purchased for them, most of the income for the Home is obtained from sponsorship of the children, and Global Care run a Child Sponsorship Programme for this purpose. This sponsorship is desperately important as the money generated from it is essential to keep the Home running. At present only 15 of the children have sponsors and 11 still urgently need help. The money from the sponsorship goes towards food clothing, education and health care for the children and general running of the Home. The sponsors receive a child profile, a photograph, and a letter each year, an



annual report on the child's progress at school, and a report on the work of the project as a whole. Without sponsorship the Trustees are concerned that life will become even more difficult for all at the Home.

If you feel you would like to sponsor a child, please contact Global Care at 2, Dugdale Road, Coventry CV6 1PB - Tel. 024 7660 1800

Mary Lidgard
Honorary Secretary

50 YEARS OF AID CELEBRATION

Medical and Scientific Aid for Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia celebrated the provision of 50 years of aid to the people of South-East Asia on the 10th of June 2015.

The event was held at the Churchill Room in the Palace of Westminster, thanks to the invitation of George Howarth MP, the charity's Vice-President, and it was sponsored by the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

In his opening speech Peter Lidgard, Chairman of the Trustees, thanked Vice-President George Howarth MP and His Excellency Ambassador Nguyen Van Thao and his staff for arranging such a wonderful celebration. He then welcomed notable guests who included the Vietnamese Ambassador and his wife Mrs Nguyen Minh Hien, the Lao ambassador, His Excellency Mr Sayakane Sisouvong, and two guests who had travelled from Vietnam specifically for the occasion, Mr Don Tuan Phong, Vice-President of the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organisations, and Professor Trinh Ngoc Trinh, Director of the Highland Education Development Association. Peter Lidgard then went on to welcome all the other



George Howarth MP, H. E. Ambassador Nguyen Van Thao, John and Lynn Firth and Mary and Peter Lidgard

guests to the event, including present and past Trustees and members of the Executive Committee: and loyal and long-standing supporters who had helped the charity provide so much aid in the last 50 years. He also noted with sadness those supporters who were not able to attend, especially those no longer with us but who had been such an inspiration, and he mentioned Dr Madeleine Sharp, Margaret Methley, Professor Ted Shellard and Dr Joan McMichael.

On behalf of the people of Vietnam, Ambassador Thao thanked MSAVLC for the support that it have given to Vietnam, and to Laos and Cambodia, over the past fifty years. He said that the Embassy had

always had a very warm friendship with the charity, and he hoped that would continue.

Mr Don Tuan Phong said that MSAVLC is very highly thought of in Vietnam, and he recalled the many visits that officers from the charity had made to Vietnam, and how his organisation had been able to help with their visits to projects throughout Vietnam. He presented MSAVLC with the Vietnam Order of Friendship, on behalf of the President of Vietnam, Mr Truong Tan

Sang. The medal is the highest award given to foreigners, and it is awarded for "great contributions to building, consolidating and developing friendship".

Peter Lidgard said that he was really honoured to accept the award on behalf of everyone who had supported the charity, past and present. Mr Phong then awarded the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organisation's Medal of Peace and Friendship to George Howarth MP, to Mary Lidgard, Honorary Secretary of MSAVLC and to Peter Lidgard, Chairman of the Trustees.

Finally George Howarth MP spoke about his role as charity Vice-President. He said that he was pleased to see that the

charity was able to do so much good work, and that he was impressed with the fact that such a large percentage of the funds raised, were spent directly on our projects in South-East Asia.

The guests then enjoyed an excellent buffet whilst being musically entertained by a group of Vietnamese students, some of whom had travelled from Birmingham and beyond, to attend the event.

The evening concluded with an entertaining auction of valuable items which had been donated specifically for the event. These included a signed autobiography donated by Dame Judy Dench, tickets to see the musical Miss Saigon donated by Sir Cameron Mackintosh, a book of memoirs donated by Chris Mullin, and a pair of flight tickets to Vietnam donated by Vietnam

Airlines. Thanks must go to all the donors of prize, and to the auctioneer, Mr Greg Phillips, who helped raise a grand total of over £2,000 to help the sick and needy in South East Asia.

It was a memorable night, and a fitting tribute, to everyone who has donated their time and money to the charity over the past 50 years.

THANH XUAN PEACE VILLAGE

In March four Trustees went to the Than Xuan Peace Village with our translator from PACCOM, Mr Nguyen Ai Nahn, to meet with the Dr Nguyen Thi Thanh Phuong, who is the Director.

Peter Lidgard, our Chairman, presented Dr Phuong with a framed certificate commemorating MSAVLC's 50th Anniversary. Dr Phuong thanked the charity for its continued support over many years, and expressed sympathy following the death of our late Joint-President, Dr Madeleine Sharp.

We asked about the equipment funded by a grant from MSAVLC after our last visit in 2013: two infra-red lights, an intravascular laser irradiation machine, a laser acupuncture machine and two paraffin wax machines. We were disappointed to find out that the Peace Village had been unable to afford the infrared lights we had budgeted for. Dr Phuong explained that the amount actually received by them from MSAVLC, after local bank charges and conversion from US dollars to Vietnamese Dong, was insufficient. Fortunately they did manage to fund the purchase using money from other sources.

Dr Phuong then gave an update on the situation at the Peace Village, which continues to be affected by the economic difficulties in Vietnam. All staff are very dedicated and receive ongoing training in the various treatments given, including speech therapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy. All the children have some kind of disability, mostly due to the lasting effects of the chemical Agent Orange, which was sprayed by the U.S. during the Vietnam War. They are taught how to dress them-selves and attend lessons in art, music and physical movement. In this way the Village looks

to improve the mental and physical wellbeing of its patients.

Dr Phuong informed us that over the last year they had acquired thirty extra patients making 156 in total, including 136 residential children.

The rehabilitation department is training about 25 staff from local universities as part of their aim to share their specialist knowledge and techniques. Staff from the Village give lectures regarding rehabilitation treatment, to staff and students at 70 different centres in the Hanoi area. The Village, in co-ordination with local disability associations, also provides help in more rural areas. The Village's specialism in rehabilitation



treatment is widely appreciated and Dr Phuong wants the Village to become one of Vietnam's leading centres.

Dr Phuong told us that she hoped that MSAVLC can continue to help them in the future. In 2014 they received no financial support from the Vietnamese Government, emphasising the importance of funds received from organisations such as ours.

We asked if there was a need for more equipment, as we were made aware on our last visit that children were having to share beds. Dr Phuong told us that she would like to submit a proposal for the purchase of beds and speech equipment. The need for such equipment became all too clear when we were shown around the

village.

In one of the classrooms the older children were busy sewing and printing, and Mary Lidgard was able to catch up with some of the young people she had met on her last visit. One young man was now supervising the other children making goods to be sold. Some of the dormitories were having to be used as classrooms during the day, which meant all the heavy beds had to be stacked at one end of the room in the morning, then had to be lifted down and set out at bedtime. Other dormitories were being used for day patients who come in for treatment.

It was very pleasing to see the equipment funded by MSAVLC being put to good use. This was emphasised by the medical staff, and the sight of two young boys having wax treatment on their limbs proved the point.

When we get proposals requesting equipment it is often difficult to envisage exactly what we are being asked to provide, how it works and if it is really what is needed. Seeing is believing, and the evidence we see and hear on our biennial visits confirms to us not only that the equipment is in use and of benefit, but also what the current needs are.

Having seen the equipment our charity funded (through the generosity of its supporters) relieving pain and helping give a better quality of life to the unfortunate children at Thanh Xuan, we know it is worth every penny. We saw how much is being achieved, but we also saw how much more still needs to be done.

John & Lynn Firth

Note: The proposal for 20 beds and a Vocastim Master machine for treating speech disorders was approved by the Trustees at their last meeting. – Ed.

SAN PEARUM

It is with great sadness that we have to announce the death of San Pearum, one of the graduate students trained by All Ears Cambodia and sponsored by MSAVLC.

Pearum was brought up in Kampong Thom Province, but he moved to Phnom Penh to study and volunteer for a youth group. A desire to help poor communities and an interest in supporting people with disabilities led him to join All Ears Cambodia.



Pearum worked hard during his two year training course and completed both clinical and theoretical examinations in 2014, to qualify as a Primary Ear and Hearing Healthcare Clinician.

As well as being a competent clinician he was known for his big smile and happy disposition. It is a cruel blow for his family and his colleagues to lose such a competent and caring clinician at such a young age. He will be sorely missed.

The Trustees and supporters send their sincere condolences to Pearum's family and his colleagues at All Ears Cambodia.

ON SAFARI IN FAIRFORD

MSAVLC supporters Christine and Stewart Benzie and Jane and Greg Phillips organised another Safari Supper in Fairford, Gloucestershire in May, raising the splendid sum of £1,200 for the charity.

The Trustees would like to thank the organisers most sincerely for their efforts, and also to all of the guests who cooked a course, and paid for the privilege! Special thanks must also go to Richard Wilkinson for organising the raffle. It was a wonderful evening.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please note that MSAVLC's Honorary Treasurer, John Firth has moved to:
**1 Hillside,
 Tregunnel Park,
 NEWQUAY TR7 2AJ**
 From now on please send all correspondence and donations to Lynn and John's new address.

STOP PRESS

We heard this week that a new toilet block has just been completed at the Primary School in Ban Kok Savahn in Northern Laos.

When Trustees visited the school in April this year, the toilets were in such a state that they could not be used by the children.

However, due to a small grant from MSAVLC, the toilets have been rebuilt. They now have running water, proper drainage and a new large sewage tank.

PROJECT EXPENDITURE 2014

Month Completed	Recipient and description	Grants (including bank charges)
	British Friendship Hospital, Ky Anh, Vietnam	
February	Joan McMichael prize money.	£330
April	Bed sponsored in Dr Madeleine Sharp's memory.	£1,030
	Highland Education Development Organisation, Vietnam.	
February	Midwives' training course in Nguyen Binh District, Cao Bang Province	£12,546
	New Hope Children's Home, Cambodia	
April	Three years' first-aid supplies and training costs	£3,072
	Disability Development Services Program, Pursat, Cambodia	
June	Two-year extension of Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Rehabilitation Project	£21,628
	Ky Anh Blind Association, Vietnam	
June	Radios and aluminium walking canes.	£508
	TOTAL	£39,114

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