

Welcome... to the latest round-up of news from the Batemans Trust. Life is as hectic as ever at the Open School, our hostels and St George's boarding home. For a taster, see the centre pages for Andrew Dean's amusing account of his volunteering stint in Chennai. Plus, there's plenty of other news and, of course, grateful thanks for the continued backing of all our supporters...

All smiles at water park

These children from St George's boarding home had a great time when they visited a water park near Chennai, on a trip funded by Batemans.

New building and new breakthroughs at Open School

Call for more volunteer teachers to build on heartening results at Batemans Open School

The Batemans Open School continues to go from strength to strength after moving to new premises in the second half of 2010.

Originally set up by the Batemans Trust in 2009 to support those who had been struggling in mainstream schools, the Open

School's new home is shared with Lisa Bhavan, the girls' hostel run by the Trust.

Since moving to the new building, the Open School has registered some significant successes in terms of results. The second group of youngsters to take their Open School

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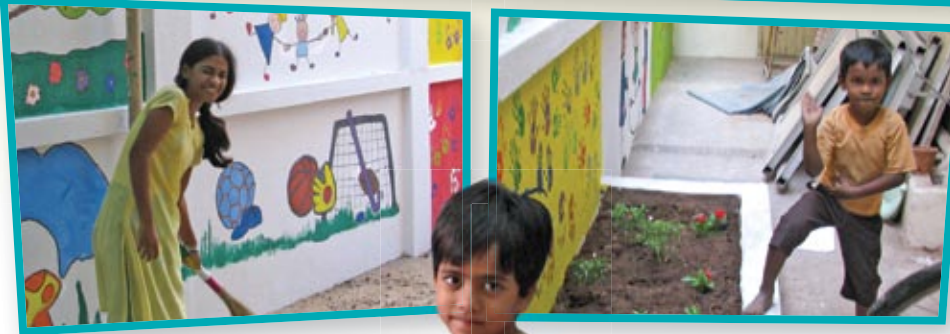
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Bright and breezy



Staff from the Deputy British High Commission in Chennai very generously gave their time to carry out some much-appreciated decorating work at Batemans' new building that hosts the Lisa Bhavan girls hostel and the Open School.

As our pictures show, they painted the outside walls and created a special garden area, while they also transformed some



inside rooms to make them bright and welcoming.

There are now a total of 23 girls staying at Lisa Bhavan. Of the older ones, four are at university, five are at mainstream schools, three are at the Batemans Open School, one is in vocational training and one has a full-time job. Of the younger children, five are at the Open School and four are at mainstream schools.

Mike heads up trustees

Mike Sewell is the new chair of trustees for Batemans. He takes over from Sophie Bessemer who has served as chair since 2009.

Mike is managing director of CPL, an editorial and design agency based in Cambridge. He became a trustee in 2007, following a nine-month stint volunteering in Chennai with his wife Becky, a teacher.

Mike said: 'I am honoured to take on

this role and look forward to working closely with all the trustees and our honorary administrator Nick Thompson. With the launch of the new Open School and plenty of developments in the bhavans and at St George's, it's an exciting time to become chair. There is so much important work to be done in Chennai and the need to raise funds has never been greater.

'I would like to thank Sophie for all her

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10th Standard exams – the rough equivalent of GCSEs – all passed. Well done to John, Shane, Donald and Angelica – and to their teacher, Monica, who has a 100 per cent pass rate so far. All four youngsters have now moved on to vocational training courses.

For the academic year which has just come to an end in April, there were six children in the Foundation Class, six in the Open Basic Class (equivalent of years four to six in the UK) and five in 10th standard in addition to the four who completed their 10th standard in December 2010.

Meanwhile, five children who went into the Open School Foundation class because they were struggling at their schools (or were not at school at all) have now secured places at other mainstream schools.

'We are delighted with the progress that has been made at the Open School,' said Batemans project director Alex Jacob. 'Our vision was always to offer an alternative for children who struggled to engage with the traditional Indian education system. The results that we have had – and the growth in confidence of others which has meant they can return to the mainstream – has been heartening to see.'

Another priority for the Open School was to develop the teaching skills of Indian teachers, with Batemans project director Alex Jacob looking to meld Indian and Western teaching styles in the most effective way possible.

She said: 'I have been focusing on helping the teachers with their lesson planning, teaching, differentiation and assessment. We are making some good progress but, in terms of teacher development, we could always do with more support. If any Batemans supporter knows a qualified teacher from the UK who might be interested in coming out to help work with our teachers for a few weeks we would love to hear from them.'



incredibly hard work over the past couple of years and it's great to know that she will be one of three former chairs who continue to serve as trustees, ensuring that there is plenty of continuity.'

Festive fun

The festive season is always one of the most memorable periods for youngsters supported by the Batemans Trust – and last Christmas was no different.

The stage at the St George's boarding home, with its bamboo roof, came into its own in the Christmas nativity play. Lena, senior matron, and her husband Willis, took the lead in organising rehearsals, stitching costumes and putting on the show.

Batemans project director Alex Jacob took a less active role than normal. 'It was amazing to sit and enjoy the finished product and watch some other people doing all the running around,' she said. 'Thanks to Lena and Willis, and everyone else involved, for all their hard work.'

Meanwhile, the Open School youngsters also performed a Christmas show, with the Three Kings (above right) played by three boys who had dropped out of mainstream school and are now getting a second chance at the Open School.

The Foundation Class loved their crib, as this picture of Tina, Thomas and Robert, with teacher Rose, shows.



Just give online!



The Batemans Trust has created a page on the Just Giving website – making it easier than ever to donate to the charity.

Visit www.justgiving.com/batemanstrust and follow the easy steps to donate. And if you want to carry out some fundraising for Batemans, it's incredibly easy to get friends and family to support you via Just Giving.

Celebrating our heritage

An article in the respected *Hindu* newspaper in February this year highlighted the historic associations of St George's.

Columnist S Muthiah recounted how he had visited a group of Australian fund-raisers who have been very generous supporters of the school and the Batemans Trust over the years.

Mr Muthiah wrote: 'In my brief address, I rather pleasantly surprised the gathering with the information that St. George's is the oldest Western-style school in Asia, that its once head, the Rev. Andrew Bell, introduced the Madras System of education in Britain and the rest of Western Europe, and the first Anglo-Indian immigrants to Australia (in 1853-54) included 24 boys from the Orphanage that became St. George's and they went out to work as compositors in the printing press that published *The Empire*, the newspaper owned by Harry Parkes, who founded the Commonwealth of Australia (the federation of the individual colonies).'

He also bemoaned those who failed to respect the heritage of one of Chennai's most historic buildings.

'Their gratitude for small things

There are often opportunities for adult volunteers of all ages to support Batemans' projects in Chennai. Andrew Dean recalls his visit at the turn of the year

was in Chennai for a wonderful seven weeks from early December to the end of January. I'm a 65-year-old business man who had once been a teacher ... but I

taught my last lesson in 1978 – so there was more rust than metal in my practice.

I worked at the new building that hosts the Open School and the girls'



hostel (Lisa Bhavan). It provides boarding accommodation for younger children and the older girls. On the top floor there are three classrooms catering for children aged from three to 18.

The experience was utterly of itself... I started teaching at 9.30am, carried on until 1pm, took a break until 5pm or 6pm and then did another hour or so in the evening. I was teaching either children who are very behind for their age or who, for one reason or another, were no longer studying at mainstream schools.

The classrooms (because the building was not designed as a school but as offices) actually run one into another, so to get to classroom three you have to go through classrooms one and two. With the additional fact that the cupboards for resources are spread about the building and are in different classrooms, then the potential for constant interruption is enormous.

I was mainly teaching the older pupils, who are boys aged between 13 and 18. These are already hyper active and hard to control and certainly struggling to concentrate for more than a minute or two at a time. When others enter the classroom every two or three minutes to retrieve something they left behind or get something from the cupboards, you can imagine the

Fancy volunteering for Batemans?

There could be opportunities to help in Chennai this summer! Visit the volunteering section of the Batemans web site at www.batemans.org.uk for how to apply.

was genuinely humbling'

difficulty in doing much more than contain the class.

There is another spanner clanking around in the gears (literally) in that the building is in a very densely populated area and the windows are open all the time (the ceiling fans don't work and it's hot). For the first two weeks I was there, someone next door appeared to be descaling a ship's

'I thought the chap with the hammer was also knocking a wall down with it to get the boiler out, but it turned out that the noise was me beating my head against the blackboard'

boiler with a lump hammer and a bolster. Having finished that job at Christmas, he opened up with a pneumatic drill.

Meanwhile, ladies are doing their washing-up in the alleyway alongside (Indians use stainless steel 'crockery' so the timpani section is well-augmented); street pedlars are shouting their wares; the inevitable transistor radio is trying to make itself heard above the drill; and dogs are barking just to join in. I thought the chap with the hammer was also knocking a wall down with it to get the boiler out, but it turned out that the noise was me beating my head



against the blackboard.

However, don't imagine for a moment that my experience wasn't wonderful. When I left and was asked to give a little farewell speech I told the truth when I said that I had received more than I had given. The warmth and unaffectedness of everyone I met in Batemans, their unspoiled pleasure in almost everything they did, their happiness and gratitude for small things was genuinely humbling. I recommend the experience.

● See more of Andrew's wonderful pictures from Chennai and the rest of his travels at <http://picasaweb.google.com/anddean/India2010#5564864637267928338>



Dear Diary...

Guy and Susan Robinson visited Chennai last year. Here is a brief extract from Susan's diary

To St George's School and Orphanage (the Boarding House). We met Monica, so bright and friendly. We saw the library first, then the dormitories, the dining hall and the tuition rooms. 100-130 children,

aged 5-16 from Anglo-Indian or part Tamil backgrounds.

Girls and boys together in dormitories from ages 5-11, and after that older boys in separate building with their 'house-father'. Monica teaches maths and also special

needs (extra tuition after school, one-to-one. About 15 of them identified for this).

Otherwise they are integrated into St George's. The curriculum is British-based, but the 15-year-olds have to take a Tamil exam in order to gain their (10th Standard) qualification.

We were given lunch in the dining hall with the children: veg curry, rice and greens. And we met the staff of the boarding house.

The buildings date from 1820. They

were becoming very dilapidated before Alex Thompson (now Jacob) arrived, and the Orphanage was threatened with closure. They need more mosquito nets over the beds and screens for the windows. Plenty of open space outside – they said they would love to have a hockey pitch.

We were so grateful for the warm welcome we received from everyone, staff and children. Monica especially made time for us although she was busy.'

'An enlightening experience'

Long-term Batemans Trust supporters Tommy and Annette Tucker were reminded of the opportunities that the Batemans Trust provides when they visited the boarding home and Lisa Bhavan during their most recent visit to India.

'What an enlightening experience it was seeing at first hand what it meant to the children to be given such a splendid chance in life,' said Tommy. 'We see so many youngsters in our travels in that wonderful country who just don't have a hope.'



Paul's riding high!

Two hardy Batemans supporters are supporting the Trust's work in Chennai by taking part in fundraising events this year.

First up is Paul Crosby, a Batemans Trustee, who is taking part in the Fred Whitton Challenge, arguably the hardest cycle sportive in Britain.

It is a gruelling 112-mile ride around the English Lake District, taking in six of the major passes en route and has about 1,200 riders attempting it each year.

This year's challenge begins early on Sunday 8 May with the route starting and finishing at Coniston, and includes the climbs of Kirkstone Pass, Honister Pass, Newlands Pass, Whinlatter Pass, Cold Fell, Irton Pike and finishes with the brutal Hardknott & Wrynose Passes.

Paul adds: 'There's a lot of very lumpy stuff in between that doesn't seem to get a mention. As well as being a tough route, it is undoubtedly also one of the most scenic routes to be had taking in most of the lakes on mainly quiet roads and lanes.'

Paul has done it twice before, with a time of 7:43 hrs on his first go, 7:06 hrs on the second attempt and this year with Batemans behind him is going all out to break the seven-hour barrier.

Meanwhile, Lovedip Dhaliwal will be taking part in the Berlin Marathon in September, again raising money for Batemans. Lovedip



Paul Crosby is pictured last year at Hardknott Pass, one of the toughest stretches of the ride.

is one of the newest members of the Tallow Chandlers, a City of London livery company that has been an extremely generous supporter of the Trust over the years.

- You can support Paul and Lovedip by visiting Batemans' new web page at www.justgiving.com/batemanstrust
- We wish both Paul and Lovedip the best of luck in their endeavours.

Dream on for Batemans: 2011 events

The Batemans Trust will once again be hosting a series of events this summer to raise money for our work in Chennai

Highlights include the latest in our Indian Connections series and an outdoor performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream in the gardens of St John's College, Cambridge.

Visit our website at www.batemans.org.uk to download the full events leaflet and book your place.

The full programme is:

May 12: Indian Connections – guided tour of the Royal Engineers Museum in Gillingham, Kent, and a talk on the history of the Corps in India.

June 21: The Manor House – tour of the Gertrude Jekyll-designed gardens at this house at Upton Grey in Hampshire.

July 7: Indian Connections 2 – tour of Daylesford House in Gloucestershire, previously owned by a former governor-general of India.

July 14: Cambridge Shakespeare Festival – enjoy a performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream in the

gardens of St John's College, Cambridge, with drinks and nibbles beforehand.

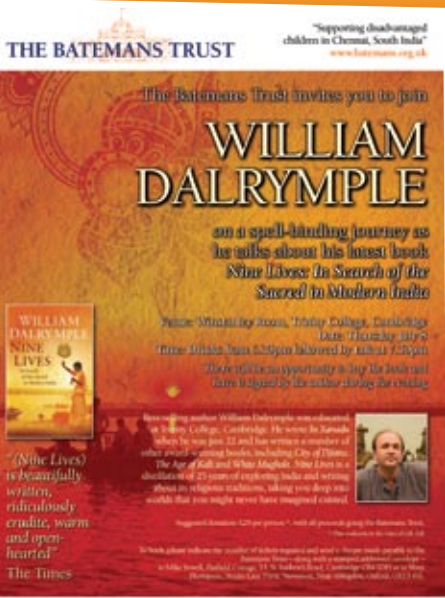
July 22-23: Truck Music Festival – experience one of the highlights of the music festival season and help to make and serve refreshments at the Batemans tent.

August 18: Highclere Castle – visit the historic home of the Earl of Carnarvon, the setting for the Downton Abbey TV series, near Newbury in Berkshire.

September 18: Spice Lunch – join the Batemans trustees to hear the latest news from our projects in Chennai – and enjoy a delicious Indian menu at the same time at Steventon, near Abingdon in Oxfordshire.

2010 highlights

The past 12 months have seen Batemans supporters attending a wide range of events and raising thousands of pounds for the charity's work.



Among the highlights were a talk at Trinity College, Cambridge, by best-selling travel writer William Dalrymple and a visit to one of southern England's finest country houses, Ditchley Park in Oxfordshire.

In addition, a number of people went out of their way to raise money for Batemans, not least the master of the Worshipful Company of Tallow Chandlers, Robert Pick. He decided to opt for an Indian 'Bollywood' theme for his annual Master's Event at Tallow Chandlers Hall in the City of London and arranged for the proceeds from a silent auction of his holiday cottage to be donated to Batemans. In addition, a batch of bangles from Chennai were sold at the event – and in total more than £1,280 was raised.

This was all after a group of Indian dancers had performed in the hall – almost certainly a first at this historic venue! Many thanks to Robert and Chrissie Pick for their generosity.

Why I'm a trustee

First in a series giving you an insight into the reasons why people serve as trustees for Batemans

Anne Desir

I was invited to become a trustee for Batemans in January 2009, after volunteering in Chennai for six to eight weeks as a teacher two years running.



I find being a trustee very rewarding as it enables me to carry on being involved with the charity here in Britain and getting regular news about the children and the project.

'My main role as a trustee is to recruit, interview and support volunteers before their

stay in Chennai: for this I can make good use of my experience in India but I have also developed new skills such as leading interviews.

'I have also taken part in educational projects such as training our teachers there and developing resources here in Britain.'

Paul Crosby

As a conservation architect my passion for the continuity of our historic environment was what brought me to the Batemans Trust as a volunteer in 1997.

'Having spent a year in Chennai living and working at the school organising the repair of the roof to the 19th Century boarding home, my life became entwined with those of the children.

'It has been the balance between the care of these forgotten children and my love of architecture that has driven my desire to be a part of Batemans. This involvement has evolved from a need to see



this small segment of underprivileged India become healthy and happy to a wish to give them the opportunity to fully integrate into modern India.

'I was as excited by the creation of the hostels for the older children as I am now by the widening of the support we can give through the Open School programme, all of which continues the maturing of our purpose.'

What does the Batemans Trust raise money for?



Money raised by the Batemans Trust goes towards three main projects in Chennai, South India.

1. Batemans Open School: This officially opened in 2009 and is designed for children who have had no previous schooling or who have been struggling in their studies at other schools. Around 20 youngsters, aged from eight to 16, receive dedicated tuition from Batemans teachers in a school that is run through the National Institute of Open Schooling. The Open School is now situated in the same building as Lisa Bhavan.

2. St George's Boarding Home: We

enable around 100 children to benefit from safe and secure accommodation, good food, healthcare and an education at St George's School and Boarding Home. Among other things we provide extra-curricular activities, drama, outings and Christmas treats.

3. Batemans Hostels: Our hostels, known as Bhavans, provide education and training for children at our Open School and for those who have left St George's School and moved on to higher education or vocational studies. The bhavans provide a secure environment for the young people.

See more at www.batemans.org.uk

Make a wish for Batemans

We raise thousands of pounds via our wish list – and many thanks to all those who use it so generously every year. Remember, the wish list is not just for Christmas; giving a gift to Batemans on behalf of a friend or family member could also make a great birthday or anniversary present. Download it via the Donating to Batemans section of the website at www.batemans.org.uk



Please dig deep!

The rising cost of living in India contributed to an increase in spending by the Batemans Trust during the last financial year. The main factors were rises in rent payments and one-off costs associated with fitting out the new girls' hostel and Open School building.

Mike Sewell, chair of trustees, said: 'It was quite a tough year for us financially, because our income was also slightly down on the previous year. We remain proud of the fact that less than five per cent of our income is spent on administration costs, but we do need to ensure that our income outstrips our expenditure.'

'We are immensely grateful to the

many hundreds of people who support our work by sponsoring a child, attending events or making one-off donations.

'We do need even more people to contribute to our work – even the smallest

'We remain proud of the fact that less than five per cent of our income is spent on administration costs'

contribution makes a difference – and our new page at www.justgiving.com/batemans-trust means it's easier than ever to give.

'We do ask our supporters to continue to dig deep to support the Trust.'

Where your money goes

