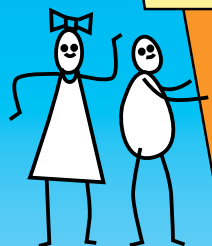


from

# BATEMANS



All smiles... Susee and Ezhilarasi are two of the youngsters in the Batemans Open School



## Total commitment

Our new chair of trustees, Anne Desir, reflects upon her recent trip to Chennai and the dedication of our staff

**M**y first trip to Chennai as chair of trustees started with a bang as I arrived just in time for Sports' Day!

Many teachers in the UK would regard Sports' Day as a chore rather than an event to enjoy. They certainly could learn a thing or two from India! Here it is a major event and you immediately feel a sense of occasion: there is a beautiful marquee for all the guests, each team wears a special uniform (with the team leader wearing white gloves), there are parades, flags, and numerous cups and medals.

There is music and both boys and girls perform well-rehearsed dances. Everyone, young and old, is clearly having a fabulous time. What an enjoyable day!

The first thing that strikes me, whenever I come to Chennai, is the warm welcome from everyone, adults and children. The children are respectful, helpful and keen to interact.

The new younger children, aged 4-5, are settling down very well, thanks to the care and professionalism of the whole team, as well as the support from the older children.

There is a rota of duties on the wall and everyone seems to get on with their tasks without any fuss.

Monica, Ragland and their team show total commitment to the hostels and the well-being of all children, well beyond the call of duty: Monica works every day and throughout the holidays, as an increasing number of children are unable to go home.

All this is achieved calmly, despite the many daily challenges of dealing with the authorities, with parents, with buildings, with our search for land, with schools, with staff, finances and much more.

I would like to thank them profusely for making me feel so welcome, for talking me through all their successes and their challenges, and for the amazing work they do every day!

## Welcome...

... to the 2016/17 Batemans newsletter.

As another year passes, it has been wonderful to see Batemans children thrive under the care of our wonderful staff in Chennai.

The Open School continues to provide quality education to children who would otherwise struggle in mainstream education and the hostels are a place of friendship and security for those who cannot live at home.

Thanks to our supporters' generosity, the children have been as busy as ever, enjoying educational outings, sports days, craft competitions and vocational skills classes.

The 2016-17 Wishlist is inside the newsletter, so please do remember The Batemans Trust this Christmas and give a gift that really can transform lives for ever.



Donate to Batemans and make a real difference...

Visit our page at [www.justgiving.com/batemanstrust](http://www.justgiving.com/batemanstrust)

# The power of print

One of The Batemans Trust's key aims is for every child in our care to reach their full potential.

We want them to become responsible adults who are economically and emotionally self-sufficient, and to ensure they find employment that not only secures their financial future but also taps into their unique talents and strengths.

For many of our children this means following an academic path and going on to university. For others a more vocational

take sewing and a new class in block printing has proved very popular.

Here Maria and Pringchi explain what they have been learning in their printing classes.

"We have now been learning how to block print for four months. First, we learnt how to hold the block in the right way and how to use our other hand to make sure that the printing was straight.

"We have to make sure that the border prints are properly joined together and that the bigger prints are equally spaced out. We practised on spare bits of cotton before printing on better materials, which we could then sew with.

"At the moment, we are making tops, like the ones on the photo. Next, we are planning to make bags, tablecloths and pillow covers. We are also hoping to use



Eyes down... Steffi Arnold in printing action

Blocks away... Maria Benny with one of her creations



training is appropriate and many go on to study vocational courses at college.

We are also offering our own vocational skills classes to the children and young people in the hostels. At the moment the boys can take classes in car maintenance and tailoring, and we are hoping to provide welding classes in the near future. The girls

natural dyes soon, although they are much more expensive.

"Currently, we are working very hard to make goods to sell at the Overseas Women's Club's Christmas sale. Let us know what you would be interested in buying in the UK!

"We enjoy it very much and it is a good skill for the future!"

If you'd like to buy some of children's work do please let us know!



## Karate kids

The Tamil Nadu government has recognised the benefits of karate to equip girls with a means to tackle threats but also to identify and avoid potentially unsafe situations.

It is now compulsory to have karate classes in all state secondary schools. Girls in the hostel have the opportunity to attend karate lessons every Saturday.

Amber explains: "In karate there are

blocks (defensive techniques) used mostly for fighting. There are 24 katas (which means 25 steps of fighting). The girls at the hostel have been learning two katas and I have learnt the fourth kata.

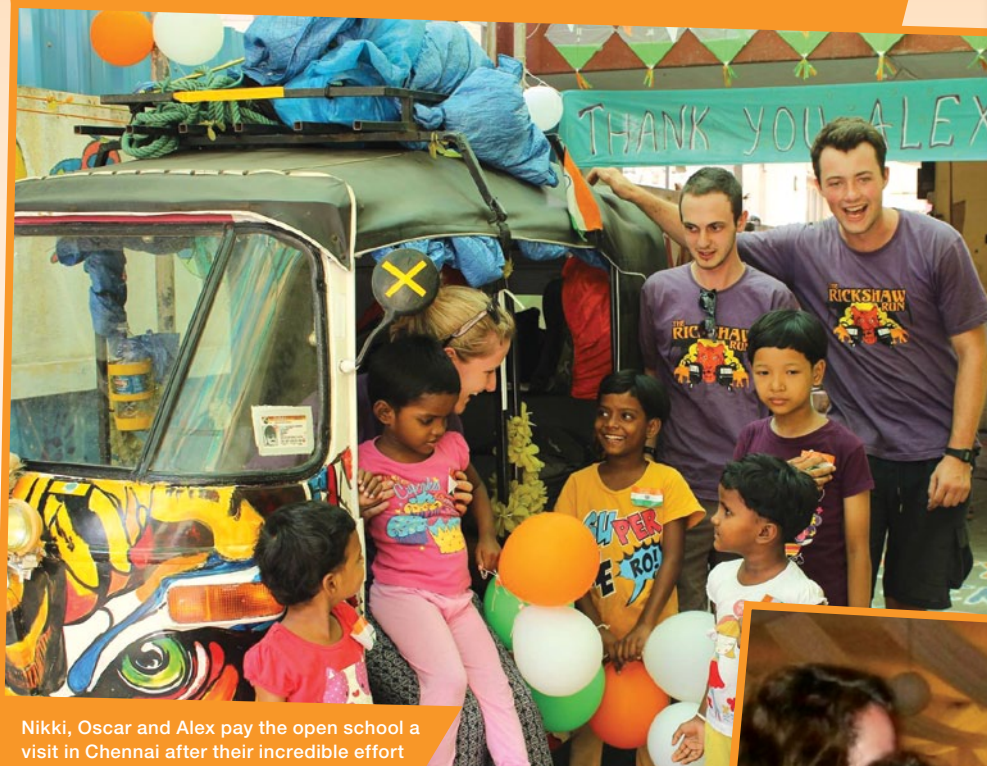
The names of the four katas are: Joneno, which has 18 movements; Pinanedan, which has 20 movements; Santan, which has 18 movements; and Okinawan, which has 21 movements.



As I am slightly more advanced than the others, I enjoy helping coach the younger girls during lessons.

We all look forward to our karate lessons every Saturday!

# Rickshaw runners



Nikki, Oscar and Alex pay the open school a visit in Chennai after their incredible effort



Three people who met at Bristol University, Oscar Cole, Nikki Shilladay and Alex Wilton, took part in the legendary Rickshaw Run this summer, raising more than £1,000 for Batemans in the process. It is an arduous, three-week, 3,500km journey that takes in the length of India in a famous seven horse-powered tuk-tuk. Here, Oscar tells their story.

"Our trip across India started in Shillong, where we met our tuk-tuk (later named Margot).

"We had no real idea where we were or where we were going but Margot was going to take us there. She was a seven horsepower tuk-tuk with a top speed of roughly 25mph, and she was painted like a tiger.

"We headed across the north of India stopping in Barpeta and Alipurduar before starting our ill-fated attempt to reach Darjeeling. The journey through the mountains was utterly stunning but certainly not made for tuk-tuks.

"Some of the locals looked like they had

never seen one before as we took a 'short cut' where we ended up pushing almost as much as driving.

"In fact, our progress was so slow we managed only 40km in about six hours, not helped by spark plug issues and the detachment of our exhaust.

"We made it to Lava, a very sleepy town in the Himalayas before deciding to head back down and begin our journey for real.

"The main part of the journey was down the East coast, passing through amazing countryside and memorable towns before finishing 16 days after we set out.

"The journey was in no way uneventful; we broke down a further six times, including our

engine falling off and the carburettor having to be taken apart by a local mechanic.

"We saw some amazing sights and met some wonderful people as we were lucky enough to be invited into some locals' houses for chai.

"However, the highlight of the trip had to be our visit to the Batemans Trust projects in Chennai, where we had the pleasure of meeting all the children on Indian Independence Day and were treated to three performances, which had been prepared just the day before.

"We had the most amazing time in India and all have decided that the only way to travel is by tuk-tuk."



It doesn't cost much to make a real difference...

Uniform for one child... £10

# Cambridge school extravaganza

St Bede's Inter Church School in Cambridge chose to support Batemans for its Charities Day in July.

This year the event was an Indian

Extravaganza, taking India – and all things Indian – as its theme. As well as the usual stalls run by the students, they ran a lunchtime Bollywood Dance

class and hosted an Indian Evening with food, music, dancing and singing. Much fun was had by all and they raised an incredible £1,200.

## Personal best for Jess!



University of Manchester student Jess Brightwell ran her first ever half-marathon in the city, completing it in under two hours and raising hundreds of pounds for Batemans. Thanks Jess!

## Mucking in at Truck



Batemans yet again supplied hungry Truck festival-goers with delicious food and snacks over a sunny July weekend in Oxfordshire. The tireless work of dozens of volunteers raised more than £4,000 for our projects in Chennai. Pictured above are a few people who helped out during one night shift stint. Thanks to all!

## Fundraising shorts

Everyone loves a **cream tea**... and so it proved this summer. Homemade lemonade, cakes, jam and chocolates were all enjoyed in the beautiful setting of an English country garden in Steventon, Oxfordshire. Thanks to Mr and Mrs Hornsby for hosting!

**Suzanne Kuyser** raised a magnificent £765 walking part of the European peace walk, which runs from Vienna to Trieste.

The ever-popular **Steventon Spice Lunch** gave supporters a chance to catch up on news from Chennai while enjoying a delicious curry.

**Rebecca Lake** cycled the length of Hadrian's Wall in three days, raising more than £650 for Batemans in the process.

## Volunteer for Batemans

The Batemans Trust is always keen to hear from potential volunteers, particularly people with practical or teaching skills. Visit [www.batemans.org.uk/volunteer](http://www.batemans.org.uk/volunteer) to find out more and, if you are interested in applying, please email [mail@batemans.org.uk](mailto:mail@batemans.org.uk) with the following subject line: Volunteering for Batemans.

## Trustees update

After lengthy terms as Batemans trustees, Kaushi Silva and Ben Arora have stepped down from their roles during 2016. We would like to say a massive thank-you for all they have done for us in so many ways. Ben is a former Chair of Trustees, while Kaushi played a huge role in improving educational standards and made a number of visits to Chennai to support our projects. Meanwhile, Anne Desir has taken over as Chair of Trustees from Mike Sewell, and we are pleased to welcome new trustees Suzanne Kuyser, Rebecca Lake and Rebecca Sewell. If you are interested in becoming a trustee, please contact us via [mail@batemans.org.uk](mailto:mail@batemans.org.uk)

Planning to do your Christmas shopping online? Why not raise money for Batemans at the same time? Visit [www.thegivingmachine.co.uk](http://www.thegivingmachine.co.uk) and search Batemans Trust to get involved.



It doesn't cost much to make a real difference...

Annual outing for one child, including ice cream, entry, bus, snacks... £6

Batemans is rightly proud of the way we sponsor children and young people for as long as they need us. Below, Michael O'Brien reflects on his experiences with Batemans, while we round up news of how some of our other alumni are getting on.

# "I want to give back"

**M**ichael O'Brien, who arrived at the Batemans Boarding Home at St George's when he was eight, has now joined the Batemans staff. He explains:

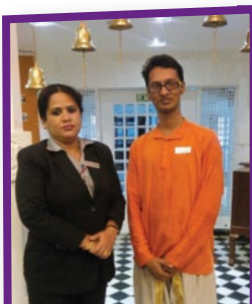
"I loved my time with Batemans at the Boarding Home! I especially remember all the drama activities that we took part in and the Christmas performances.

"I stayed at the home I until I was in 8th Standard. Batemans carried on sponsoring me throughout Secondary School and College. I did a BSc course in visual communication, which I finished two years ago. I love photography and filming. While

I was at college, I started working for Batemans, driving the bus.

"Now, aged 24, I am a full-time member of the team. I drive the van, help Mr Srinivasan with various administrative tasks, send regular photos to the UK and love teaching dancing in the boys' and girls' hostels.

"I want to give back!"



**Rickardo**, pictured here with his manager, has just finished his training and is now an employee at the Savera Hotel.



These five young people, who are all sponsored by Batemans, are in their final years at college, studying business studies and accountancy. They are all full of confidence for their futures. (From left to right: Clinton and Royston, Neil Clarkson, Isabel Ireland and Joel David.



**Rebecca Rodrigues**, supported by Batemans throughout her training, is now a primary school teacher. She intends to carry on studying, while teaching, in order to become an English teacher in a secondary school.

## Project update

The search is now on for a piece of land on which we can construct our own purpose-built school and hostels.

We have £60,000 of savings transferred to a bank in India and ring-fenced for the purchase. While this will leave us with very few reserves, we are aware we need to act quickly

as land prices are increasing all the time. Our trustees and team in India are undertaking diligent work researching and surveying potential sites.

Any little extra anyone can give will help ensure we get the best possible site for the children in our care.

# Batemans snapshot

As always, there's been plenty going on at the Batemans projects in Chennai over the past few months. Here are a few pictures showing just some of the things that the children and their amazing teachers have been getting up to. See more photos and videos on Facebook and at [www.batemans.org.uk](http://www.batemans.org.uk)



◀ Dollmaking competition winners



▲ Acting out the stories of Goldilocks and the Three Bears (left) and Little Red Riding Hood

▼ A visit to the Planetarium



▲ Cooking up a feast for Ramadan

▶ Enjoying a trip to the park



▼ All set for Sports Day



▲ A good sprinkling of rain for the kitchen garden



▲ Learning useful sewing skills



▲ Assembly for some Open School youngsters

