

from

BATEMANS

Our new site benefits from the shade provided by coconut trees



Land ahoy!

New era for Batemans with purchase of land on outskirts of Chennai

An exciting new chapter in the Batemans story is set to unfold with the purchase of a plot of land to build our own primary school and hostel. The land is just outside Chennai to the north west of the city, about 50 minutes drive from the current location of the girls' hostel. The plot is about a third of an acre and is currently a shady smallholding of coconut and mango trees. It is down a rough track, surrounded by banana plantations and paddy fields and feels far removed from the hustle and bustle of the city.

Anne Desir, chair of trustees, is thrilled about the new opportunities this offers: "This step forward will not only help put the charity on a more secure financial footing but will also help us realise our vision of giving more underprivileged children an educational experience that will really change their life chances."

The trustees owe a great debt of thanks to Mr Ragland Samuel, project administrator, for his dogged determination. He has worked tirelessly gathering land deeds, pursuing government officials and badgering lawyers in order to seal the deal.

Why your support is so crucial to us

To build a new school and hostel will be a large capital cost for the trust, so the next few years will see a real fundraising push. The trustees will be working hard to find corporate sponsors both inside and outside India, but the contributions of our individual donors and supporters will remain as important as ever.

Anne Desir explains: "The purchase of the land will help stabilise our costs in the future, but there is no doubt that, with a weak pound and rising inflation in India, times are tough. We do need to ensure our income outstrips our expenditure.

"We are always incredibly grateful to the hundreds of people who support us in so many different ways but we do need even more to help us with our work. So we ask that you continue to speak to friends and work colleagues

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Donate to Batemans and make a real difference...

Visit our page at www.justgiving.com/batemanstrust

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about the Batemans Trust and rally as much support for us as you can. Thank you - we couldn't do our work without you!"

Legacy lays foundation for our new project

A hugely generous legacy from the late John Denham (pictured below with his wife Hilda) will enable work to start on our new project as soon as the building plans are approved.



John's interest in Batemans began after a chance meeting with Batemans' founder, Alex Jacob, while he was shopping for napkins in Udaipur in 2001. They struck up a conversation, and Alex told John about the work of the trust.

Since then, both he and his wife, Hilda, have been kind and generous supporters of the charity. John died in November 2017. The trustees are immensely grateful for this wonderful gift and for his friendship over the years.

Changing lives

Batemans firmly believes the best place for children to live is at home with their families. However, for some this is just not possible and our hostels offer these children a secure, loving environment. Their stories highlight Batemans' life-changing work

Bhavani, 7

Bhavani's parents were held as bonded labourers, forced to work for a moneylender to pay back a debt. Bhavani herself was held captive when her parents couldn't repay their loan to him, and was badly treated. She was rescued by the International Justice Mission and brought before the Chennai Child Welfare Board, which referred her to the Batemans Trust. Bhavani is now a bright, active and engaging child. She studied for a year in our Open School, but is now doing incredibly well in mainstream education and has just won a prize at her school's annual awards ceremony. She has amazing grit and determination and a wonderful ability to see the funny side of everything.

Bhavani at the park



Lakshmi, 12

Lakshmi's family come from Dindigul, a district near Madurai in Tamil Nadu. Her parents were very poor and both died within a year of each other. Lakshmi and her sister were left in the care of their aunt, who was referred to us by a local social worker. Lakshmi was in mainstream school, but was falling behind and suffering from low self-esteem. She now studies in the Open School, where it is wonderful to see her growing in confidence, contributing to school assemblies and making good progress with her English.

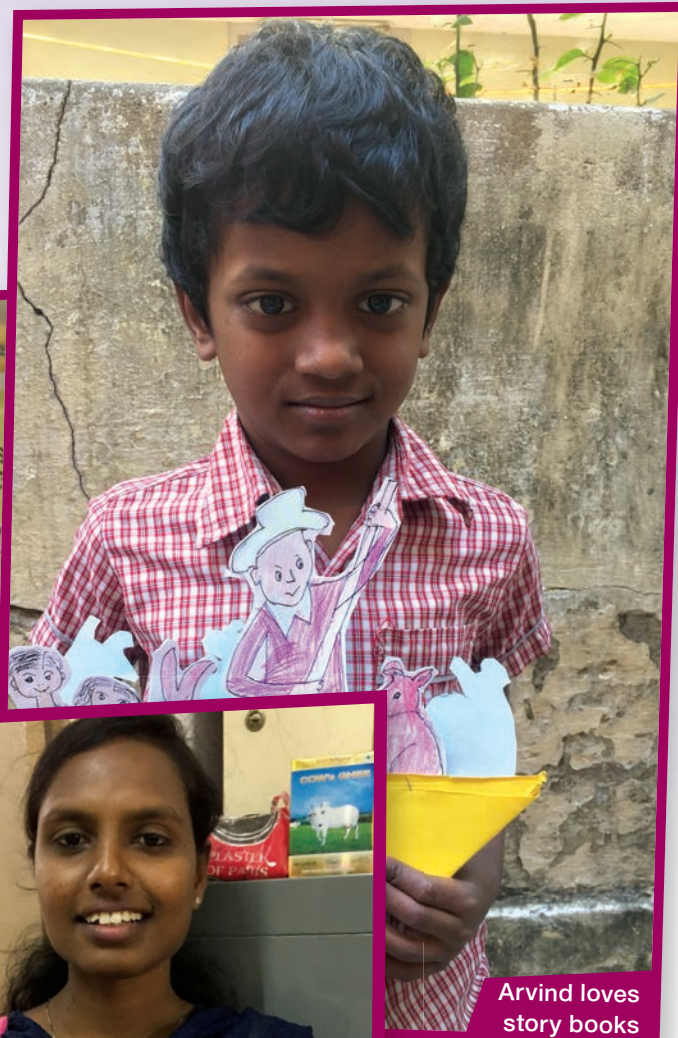


Lakshmi in science assembly

in Chennai



Rajendra receives a certificate at sports day



Arvind loves story books



Andrea with her certificate

Some names have been changed.

Rajendra, 13

Rajendra's father has addiction problems and his mother suffers from mental health issues that leave her unable to care for her children. She was helped by the members of The International Foundation for Crime Prevention and Victim Care, who referred the children – Rajendra and his sister – to The Batemans Trust, so they could have a safe and peaceful home. Rajendra is quiet and responsible, and it has been lovely to see him learn how to play again as he recovers from his troubled past. He was in the Open School, but is now coping with flying colours in mainstream education.

Andrea, 22

Andrea came to Batemans when she was 14 years old, after she lost her Anglo-Indian father to a chronic illness. Andrea's mother had been unable to access education and could not find a proper job. She needed help to support Andrea and her younger brother. Knowing of the Batemans Trust through our links with the Anglo-Indian community, she approached us for help. Since then, Andrea has been under the care of Batemans. She has just passed her second year Bachelor's degree in business administration at university and has a bright future ahead of her.

Arvind, 6

Arvind's mother and father died in a fire when he was three months old. He was left in the care of his grandmother. The grandmother is a 'daily wage' worker at construction sites and felt she could not give Arvind the care he needed. A local social worker brought Arvind to Batemans. He is a very intelligent boy, who is quick and eager to learn. He loves story books and playing football. He adores Michael, a Batemans alumnus who now works for the trust, and has nicknamed himself Junior Michael. Batemans has opened up a world of opportunity to him that he embraces with enthusiasm.



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

Christmas dinner for 10 children... £18

View from a sponsor

Sue Waters writes about what being a sponsor has meant to her over the years

I fell into being a sponsor by accident. My son-in-law had been given two tickets for a Batemans fundraising event in the City of London, and was unable to go. I went with my friend Pat, and we were both so impressed with the story of Batemans and the work that was being done, that we both signed up on the spot. Pat was assigned a little girl called Christobel, who is now a young woman working in a bank, having graduated from college last year. The little girl that was given to me was able to return to her family and I was given Joel, and then Tina. Joel is now 22 and is at college. Tina is now 13. I have been a sponsor for 16 years, and it has been an immensely enriching experience.

There is something very special about Batemans. Maybe it is because it is a small charity, so you feel you are joining another family. It is also because you know that every penny of the very reasonable sponsorship fee of £15 per month is spent on support and goes such a very long way.

Being a sponsor is a different experience for each individual. At a minimum you can just pay the money and know it is making a huge difference to someone's life. Some sponsors write letters to their children. I am not good at this because I wonder what to say to a child in a different culture that I hardly know.

Fortunately, I have good reasons to visit Chennai on a fairly regular basis so, over the years, I have got to know all the children very well. I am very involved when I am in Chennai, if somewhat neglectful at other times.

I have seen not just my two grow up, but all the kids. I am impressed by how they develop into caring,



Enriching experience... Sue Waters and the child she sponsors, Tina

responsible people, who support each other. I have seen the amazing way in which Batemans' project managers – Alex and then Monica – have created a real learning environment.

Tina was just four when we met. I asked Monica what she needed. Christobel came with us when we went down to the market to buy underclothes. On subsequent visits, I would take both Tina and Joel out to lunch (McDonald's!) or for ice cream on the beach, or shopping for a new

outfit. I quickly learned that if I gave something to Tina, I also needed to take something that could be shared by everyone, such as chocolate cake.

On some visits to Batemans, my husband Jerry has accompanied me. On one occasion, just before Christmas, all the children entertained us with a special performance of their Christmas concert, as we were leaving the next day. We feel very much part of this small community – and very privileged to be sponsors.

On the look-out for new sponsors

As the trust prepares to widen its remit and help more children, it makes sense to widen the net of Batemans sponsors.

If you don't sponsor a child already, could you do so?

If you already sponsor a child, could you make it your aim to spread the word

and find just one other person to sponsor a Batemans child this year? It only costs £15 per month. There is a sponsorship form on the back of this newsletter or one can be downloaded from the website at www.batemans.org.uk/donating/sponsor-a-child

Meet the new trustees

Vinod Hallan, Rebecca Lake and Suzanne Kuyser were all elected onto the Batemans board last year. Here, they give an insight into the reasons why they serve as Batemans trustees



Vinod



Rebecca



Suzanne

How did you first hear about the Batemans Trust?

Vinod: For many years, I was aware of the Trust through a work colleague, whose wife is Anne Desir, the chair of trustees.

Rebecca: I heard about the Batemans Trust through Alex Jacob. I had recently moved to Steventon and she invited me to one of its fundraising events.

Suzanne: I heard about it from Mike Sewell, a work colleague, when he was looking for marathon sponsorship.

Why did you want to be a trustee?

Vinod: I was chuffed to be asked. After attending a meeting as an observer, I thought about it, then met the chair, and decided I would like to say yes. It had to be a two-way thing. I was unsure how I could contribute, though I was keen; after working 36 years in education, I wanted to use my experience in a different context, as well as learn from others.

Rebecca: As a paediatric nurse, I spend a lot of time with children who are too ill to access education. With Batemans we're

helping to support children who may not be able to access education because of family situations. For me, it's great to be able to help well children access education they wouldn't be able to otherwise.

Suzanne: I have always wanted to help disadvantaged people in India after once receiving unsolicited, warm and generous help from some very poor cycle rickshaw drivers in Agra. I wanted to reach out to individuals directly. Batemans is a charity that helps youngsters and, just as a small pebble in a pond has a wide ripple effect, so the help we give to just one child will reach far further into their families, communities and generations to come. It's good work to be involved in.

Where do you feel you can make a particular contribution?

Vinod: I have personal knowledge of Indian commerce and bureaucracy, and I am a regular visitor to north India. This will be useful as we start our new building project. I hope to make a visit to Chennai soon. I think it's important to know first hand how the funds are used.

Rebecca: For me, the phrase 'healthy life, healthy mind' comes to mind. I would like

to help promote knowledge about personal health and wellbeing as part of Batemans' children's education.

Suzanne: I don't know – I just do my best to raise funds, contribute a few ideas, spread the word about Batemans and generally try to make people smile. It has been wonderful to see the huge appetite for helping among my family and friends, but particularly in my book group.

How would you complete this sentence?

I want to give my time to support the work of the Batemans Trust because...

Vinod: I am motivated by the charity's aims and objectives. I have always believed that education is a route out of poverty, yet the opportunity is denied to so many.

Rebecca: I want all children to be able to achieve their potential whatever their background, as there should never be barriers to health and education.

Suzanne: Whatever I give is little enough compared to their need, and their need is great.



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

Christmas dinner for 10 children... £18

Alex and family join the staff and children on stage after the Christmas show



Grabbing life with both hands

Trustees Alex Jacob and Becky Sewell have both visited Chennai in the last year. They returned feeling full of enthusiasm about Batemans' transformative work

Alex and her family arrived at Christmas and found the team and children elbow deep in the familiar craziness of exams, wrapping mountains of 'Christmas clothes', practising plays and dances and the making of elaborate props, including a working street light!

Alex and Lawrence's three little girls were quickly absorbed into the festivities and took part in the Christmas Show two weeks later. "The show was incredible," Alex remembers. "It included a very touching play about a homeless woman, several dances and then the most amazing piece that told the Christmas story using white gloves and ultra violet light!"

The opportunity to discover children's talents and boost their self esteem has always been part of our philosophy and it was wonderful to see that the project continues to stay true to our founding values."

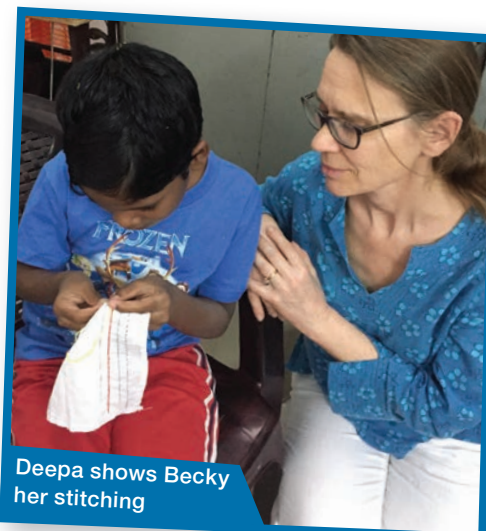
Becky, who visited in February, spent most of her days working with two new English teachers in the Open School. This small school is run for those children who wouldn't cope in mainstream education. Both teachers embraced new practices such as guided reading and synthetic phonics, and, in the month she was there, Becky could see the positive impact it was having.

"It clarified for me how important it is for us to have our own larger school, so we can reach more children and offer them an education that can have a real impact on their future."

On her last evening at the girls' hostel, the children prepared a farewell assembly and acted out a 'skit' based on the theme of gratitude. It made a deep impression. "I was struck by how little they take for granted. Despite some children's harrowing backgrounds, they feel they're the lucky ones. They grab life with both hands: whether listening with rapt attention to

a story, giving their all at sports day, or baking a cake."

Both Becky and Alex would like to thank staff and children in Chennai for making them so welcome.



Deepa shows Becky her stitching

Fundraising highlights

Trustees and supporters have had a busy year raising thousands of pounds for the charity's work

In July 2017, trustee Alex Jacob and her husband Lawrence led a team of volunteers serving up chilli to hungry festival-goers at Truck festival in Oxfordshire.

The annual Spice Lunch in September proved as popular as ever, while a group of supporters in Cambridge enjoyed an evening of soup and sausages at the Batemans Bonfire Party. In March 2018, new trustee Suzanne Kuyser organised a fabulous Bollywood evening in Chelmsford, complete with Indian food and dancers.

But it wasn't all eating and drinking. Batemans supporters have never been known to shy away from physical activity and trustee Vinod Hallan and a team ran both the Birmingham 10k and

the Birmingham Half Marathon, while Mike Sewell completed the Brighton Marathon in April 2018.

Paul Crosby and friends walked the Batemans K2K last summer, a trek across the stunning Lake District countryside from Keswick to Kendal. Paul is planning to do the same walk this year. See below if you fancy joining him.

■ We are sorry to report that an old friend of Batemans, Colonel Geoff Lee OBE, died earlier this year. As well as sponsoring a child, he was responsible for organising an annual donation to Batemans from Great Coxwell church in Oxfordshire. We pass on our condolences to Geoff's family and thanks to the congregation at Great Coxwell for its support.

Batemans' Birmingham Barge trip

Explore the heart of Britain's canal network from a traditional canal boat.

Sunday 13 May 2018

THE BATEMANS TRUST

Timetable for the day:

- 10am: Arrive at Birmingham Gas Street B1 2JT - free parking on street
- 10.15am: Tour of Gas Basin
- 11.15am: Board the Victoria canal boat
- 11.30am-2pm: Canal tour and lunch
- 2.30pm: Finish the trip back at Birmingham Gas Street

Price: £25 per person

To book please contact Vinod on 07795643970 or email vinodhallan@hotmail.com

All proceeds to The Batemans Trust www.batemans.org.uk

Dates for the calendar

Sunday 13 May

Batemans Birmingham Barge Trip - explore Britain's second city from a traditional canal boat. Contact Vinod via mail@batemans.org to book tickets and for more details.

Saturday 28 July

The Batemans K2K - a (very long) walk through some of the finest scenery in England from Keswick to Kendal. If you're interested in joining, email Paul Crosby via mail@batemans.org.uk for more details.

Sunday 23 September

The Batemans Spice Lunch: our annual curry lunch in Stevenon.

November (date tbc)

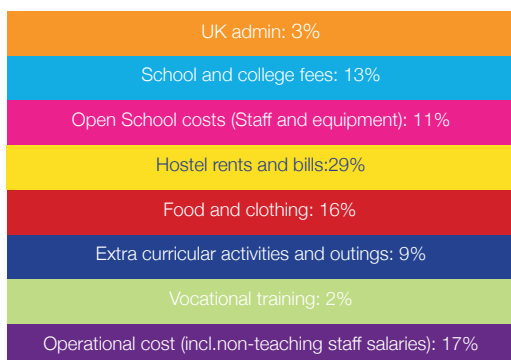
Auction of promises, Chelmsford. Details will follow in an newsletter.

Book publisher's generous gift

Usborne Publishing sent a very welcome package of reading books and science and craft activity books to Chennai in February. They were put to immediate use. The younger children fell on the reading books with

their usual enthusiasm, and Deepika, who runs art and craft lessons, was delighted with the activity books. She is planning new craft sessions with the Open School pupils. Thank you Usborne!

Where your money goes



With thanks to CPL for the design and production of this newsletter (www.cpl.co.uk)



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Christmas dinner for 10 children... £18

Scenes from Chennai life

The children and young people in our care study hard at school and enjoy a range of extra-curricular activities, from baking to karate. These photos give a taste of daily life in Chennai.



◀ Vinitha and Roshan read one of the new Usborne books



Morning yoga ▼



Republic Day assembly celebrating multi-faith India ▲



▲ The girls feeling proud of their block printing



▲ Sonam and Viki baking a cake



▲ The Open School science assembly

Sign up to become a Batemans sponsor

For just £15 a month, you can sponsor a child in our care. Or you can simply set up a regular donation for any amount. This will help cover a child's basic needs including their food, accommodation, clothes and school books.

Please fill in this form and send it to:

The Batemans Trust, 27, Stocks Lane, Steventon,
Nr. Abingdon, OXON, OX13 6SS.

You can also donate via www.justgiving.com/batemanstrust

Gift Aid

For every £1 you send us we can claim back 25p

Please sign here to allow us to reclaim the tax you have paid on your gift. (By doing so, you confirm you have paid an amount of UK income tax or capital gains tax equal to any tax deducted.)

Signature:

Date:

☐ Please tick here if you are happy for us to email you with follow-up news and events from Batemans Trust (maximum five emails a year).

I would like to (please tick a box)

- ☐ Sponsor a child in school / young person training (please delete) at £15 per month and £180 per year
- ☐ Sponsor a girl / a boy / no preference
- ☐ Donate £ ____ per month, or £ ____ per year
- ☐ Help the work of The Batemans Trust and enclose a donation of £ ____

Please fill in your details here:

Title:

Surname:

First name:

Address:

Postcode:

Email address:

If you have opted to set up a regular donation or to sponsor a child, we will send you a standing order form to complete.